

The river could become a real asset to the town and for tourists. Suggestions for improvement included a riverside walk. Consequently the Society lobbied DDC to form a steering committee (to include DDC, DTC, Town Centre Management, River Parish Council, Temple Ewell Parish Council, the Society, the Environment Agency and Folkestone and Dover Water Company) charged with preparing an improvement action plan for the whole river. As a result, the River Dour Steering Group (RDSG) was formed to coordinate, lobby and fundraise. Progress was bogged down for some time over a constitution that would involve local authorities, a government agency and private companies. This was resolved by not having a constitution at all, but by being a coordinating, lobbying and monitoring group with any work or expenditure being in the hands of the appropriate member organisations. With the Dour gaining 'main river' status from April 2005, the Environment Agency became much more involved, being responsible for the river's biodiversity and for flood risk management, but not for litter clearance. It soon proposed six priority projects and 16 others including a scheme to control litter, need for a river warden, a feasibility study for the removal of obstructions to allow fish to travel the whole length of the Dour, narrowing of some sections to increase the speed of flow and to increase the diversity of flora and fauna. Volunteers were allowed back into the river to clear litter provided they were supervised by WCCP employees after having been stopped by the Environment Agency on health and safety grounds. A substantial grant of £8,500 from People's Place covered the cost of tools and waders for the volunteers, tools, signposts for a somewhat tortuous riverside walk route, information leaflets and interpretation boards. The Society also lobbied DDC as the planning authority for sympathetic development of the river's banks as and when opportunities arose. Later, in 2008,

despite withdrawing from the RDSG, DTC 'adopted' the Charlton Green riverside area with the permission of the owner and proceeded to landscape the area, install seats and to sponsor an interpretation panel for which the Society provided the historical text.

The Group suffered a setback when cuts in WCCP funding threatened the monthly litter clearances by volunteers; however, whilst we tried to find alternative funding for the future, we, together with DTC and River Parish Council, found the money for the 2012/2013 year.

The Society organised a series of three free concerts at Astor College sponsored by DTC and featuring several pianists, including world class Yuri Tykhonenko. These recitals led to the formation of the Dover Music Society to give local young musicians opportunities to perform in public and to attract international artists to Dover. The inaugural concert was held at the Town Hall in 2004 with local pianist Oliver Poole, aged 13, and a Russian violinist performing to great acclaim.

Continuing its campaign to improve the look of London Road, the Society issued certificates of congratulation to 11 businesses between Bridge Street and Buckland Bridge for improvements to their facades. A London Road residents' association was also formed.

2004

The April Newsletter paid tribute to two members following their deaths, Ivan Green, aged 91, and Leo Wright, 88. Leo came to Dover to teach German and French at Dover College. He was a founder member of the Society and its secretary for ten years, taking the lead in our links with Calais, the Dover Festival and concerns about the river and water supply. Ivan came to Dover in the 1960s to

teach technology at Archers Court and was well known for pupils building go-karts, telescopes and hovercraft. Many of us knew him for his many illustrated lectures on local history. As a cofounder of the Film Festival, he presented his 'Then and Now' photographs of Dover every year. Ivan produced 23 books between 1935 and 2001, including teaching aids for technical students. His Book of Dover was the first about Dover for 50 years and Dover and the Monarchy was his last in 2001.

At the 2004 AGM Derek Leach was elected Chairman with Jeremy Cope Vice Chairman.

A new initiative was an attempt to soften the look of the pedestrian precinct with a number of trees. Society members contributed £1,000 and DTC £1,500. Only one trader contributed to the appeal to businesses. Progress was slow because of siting problems. Eventually, sites were agreed that did not obstruct the view of CCTV cameras, but it proved impossible to overcome the problem of interfering with underground utility services and the only solution was to put the trees in planters. By 2006 after three years of frustration all ten trees were planted, but sadly most were soon vandalised although eventually replaced by DDC.

The closure by the National Trust of Langdon Cliffs at night due to antisocial behaviour was vehemently opposed to no avail. Having opposed the original site for a new watersports centre, the new site was welcomed. The Society participated in the consultations over the wish list compiled by the Dover Pride consortium, (comprising KCC, DDC, SE England Development Agency, DHB, Government of the SE and the East Kent Partnership), but was highly sceptical about whether it would all happen - port expansion, new

businesses, more and better housing, shops, restaurants, hotels, more tourism improvement, A2 dualling, high speed rail link to Dover and a rail link to the docks. Whilst the Dover Chamber of Commerce was talking about a five star hotel and conference centre on the Western Heights, the Planning Committee discussed the Aylesham expansion plan, Phase 2 of the White Cliffs Business Park and the St. James' area redevelopment scheme, which was to be dominated by an ASDA supermarket - what an enticing view of Dover for the millions of travellers passing through Townwall Street!

2005

2005 was celebrated as Britain's Year of the Sea to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. The Queen and the Duke visited the port and a new Lord Warden, Admiral the Lord Boyce, was installed. It was not all good news - the former cinema in Castle Street was empty once again following the closure of Snoops nightclub. More shops had closed down and B&Q were relocating to Whitfield, but at least Netto had taken over the Co-op supermarket at Charlton Green.

At the 2005 AGM the Planning Committee report was rather like the curate's egg, welcoming the move of DTC into Maison Dieu House, the town centre trees in place, Dover in Bloom, extra marina berths and a second cruise terminal, but regretting no progress on the watersports centre, Buckland Paper Mill site, St. James' area redevelopment, the derelict Army Recruiting Centre, the loss of shops, postponement again of A2 dualling, Townwall Street traffic problems and the enormous cost of demolishing Burlington House! There was also concern over the many applications to convert buildings into flats particularly one bedroom flats in Folkestone Road.