

disguise offering perhaps an alternative with quality and style. A new scheme was unveiled with smaller retail units and retaining the old street layout, which the Society welcomed as much better than the ill-fated ASDA scheme, but with reservations regarding the quality of the buildings and landscaping.

Another controversy was the bid put together for Dover by SEEDA, KCC, DDC, DHB and English Heritage for grants under the Sea Change programme to improve coastal resorts. No consultation was held until grants had been received already ring-fenced for specific projects which had to be match-funded locally. These included refurbishment of the Bleriot Memorial, the expensive and grand furnishing of Dover Castle's keep (the Great Tower project), a new reception building for the castle, renovating the officers' mess, a feasibility study for a cable car project and yet another improvement to the sea front. We objected to spending £2m on what was already an attractive promenade in front of Waterloo Crescent when so much of the town centre was and still is in desperate need of a facelift. The money could not, however, be spent anywhere else.

Concerned about the cost effectiveness of the DDC wind turbine at Whitfield we discovered that it would take 55 years to recover the capital and running costs! After firing a broadside at DDC for closing two of Dover's public toilets without warning in its attempt to transfer the cost to DTC we were pleased to see one reopened after a public outcry. DDC's Local Development Framework for the years to 2026 was approved by government including 14,000 new homes in the District and an expectation of 6,500 new jobs! The subsequent exhibition of Phase 1 of the Whitfield Urban Housing Scheme raised concerns about density, A2

congestion and possible impact on town centre retailers.

We welcomed the occupation of large empty premises by Peacocks and Morrisons, but remained despondent about the 26 empty shops between Townwall Street and the Town Hall.

The unauthorised enclosure of some land, including an established public right of way, resulted in the Society taking legal steps to protect the path.

The December 2009 Newsletter carried an obituary of Peter Johnson (1922-2009), a Society Vice President and founder member.

2010

Western Docks Redevelopment and Future Ownership of the Port

Considering our response to the formal proposals by DHB for redevelopment of the Western Docks (called T2) and for restructuring of the Harbour Board took up a great deal of time in the first three months of 2010. These proposals were considered so important that we consulted the membership by post about the Executive's recommendations before finalising our submissions to the Secretary of State. We had already agreed in principle the Western Docks T2 development with certain provisos, most of which had already been met. Our formal submission to the Secretary of State confirmed our support but with a number of conditions. Regarding restructuring of the Board, we covered all possibilities. Whilst preferring to retain the status quo i.e. Trust Port status, we considered this unrealistic in the economic climate with any government looking to sell some of the family silver and the need for the Board to borrow money for T2 development without increasing the national debt. Therefore, we suggested an amended Trust Port status with the ability to borrow money

without increasing the national debt and enabling the Board to support the local community financially via a charitable trust. On the other hand if the government opted for privatisation, then we would prefer the government having a 51% share in the new company with a number of provisos which applied equally to 100% privatisation. These included a guaranteed income for a charitable trust managed by and for the community and an employee share scheme.

Future ownership of the port was again time consuming in 2011 but had to be a top priority, involving several meetings with the Chairman and CEO of DHB and carefully considered submissions to the Secretary of State. To complicate matters even further the Dover Port People's Trust (DPPT) was launched with the aim of acquiring the port for the benefit of the people of Dover rather than private investors. We examined the scheme and its financial viability and then urged the Secretary of State to give the DPPT equal consideration with the DHB proposals. DTC held a referendum for the town's residents which resulted in an overwhelming vote for the DPPT. Some of our members with a strong interest in the future of the port felt disenfranchised and so the Society gave all its members the opportunity to vote. With a 68% response (cf DTC's 25%) 94% opposed the sale of port as proposed by DHB and supported transfer to the Dover community instead. With no decision from government we continued to be closely involved with developments to seek the best possible deal for Dover. Views were submitted on the government's proposed revised criteria for the sale of Trust Ports and the final criteria required the local community to have a long term involvement in the future development of the port. This caused further delay with DHB being given time to reconsider its proposals. A significant development was DHB handing over to representatives of the community the task of setting up the Port of Dover Community Trust (part of its original

proposals) should it be needed. The Society was represented on this independent working group considering the aims of any such Trust, its structure, how its board members would be recruited and the area of benefit. We responded to DHB's subsequent revised proposals in July 2012. At the end of the year the Transport Minister decided not to approve DHB's privatisation plan since there were alternative ways to finance T2 and there was insufficient community involvement in port development.

We agreed in principle to the possible erection on the Western Heights of a memorial to the 1,700,000 commonwealth troops from 54 countries who died in both world wars.

June brought the centenary celebrations of the first two-way Channel crossing flight by Charles Rolls with a grand display of vintage Rolls Royce cars on the seafront in front of a cleaned-up Rolls statue, where a ceremony was conducted. This had first been suggested by the Society to DDC who organised the event.

The December 2010 Newsletter launched two new series highlighting listed buildings and local heroes. A listed buildings section was also added to the website.

Society members were involved with river litter clearances which in one year and in only six sessions produced 300 bags full plus 19 cones, 18 scooters, two trikes, two pushchairs, four bikes, three trolleys, a TV, an ironing board and a garden pond! Oh, people of Dover, what an indictment!

Dover Town Council exercised its newly won right to appoint Honorary Freeman during the year by appointing Society members John Turnpenny and Jack Woolford plus Royston Tant. Our own Terry Sutton was honoured the following year.