



# Newsletter

25th Anniversary  
Special Edition

March 2013



*Jack Woolford birthday celebration at Cowgate*



## *The Objectives of the Dover Society*

*founded in 1988.*

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archæology, natural history and architecture of the area
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- and commitment to the belief that a good environment is a good investment.

The area we cover comprises the parishes or wards of Barton, Buckland, Castle, Lydden, Temple Ewell, Maxton, Pineham, Priory, River, St. Radigund's, Town & Pier and Tower Hamlets.

All members receive three Newsletters a year and in each year the Committee organises about ten interesting events – talks, tours, visits, Members' Meetings and usually a Christmas Feast.

The Society gives Awards for improvements to the area, monitors planning proposals and supports, joins in or initiates civic projects and arts events.

### *Our sincere thanks to:*

#### **London Fancy Box Co. Ltd.**

'Over the last few years we have been proud to help various causes and we are determined to continue our support of our local community. The London Fancy Box Co. Ltd. congratulates The Dover Society and is pleased to contribute towards this special publication'.

#### **Riverdale Publications**

'As a producer of books on Dover's past I am pleased to support this 25th anniversary edition of the Newsletter – Derek Leach'.

# Celebrating 25 Years of the Dover Society

*Compiled by Derek Leach*

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## Foreword

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This special edition of our Newsletter celebrates the first 25 years of The Dover Society and is dedicated to all those members who have served the Society in any way since 1988. This has taken many forms including serving on the Executive Committee or a subcommittee, representing the Society on other bodies, editing the newsletter, arranging speakers and social events, recruiting members, managing the finances, engaging in the many physical projects, giving talks, writing reports and articles, proofreading, distributing the newsletter, providing refreshments, washing up and running all those raffles. Without all these folk and their contributions, large or small, there would be no Society.

Perhaps a second dedication may be allowed: to that frustrated member who once said, 'The Society never does anything!'

## Before The Dover Society

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The Dover Society was not the town's first amenity society. Writing in 1988, Jack Woolford related the story of the Society's predecessor, The New Dover Group. It was formed by David (later Lord) Ennals when he became the MP for Dover in 1964 with the aim of supplying him with information and ideas about his new constituency. Initially, membership of its various committees for education, trade and industry etc. was by invitation. Jack Woolford was invited to become Chairman of its Planning Committee which, with the help of locally born architects and planners, produced a Plan for Dover and, with the help of the then Borstal Institution, a dream model of Dover in the year 2000. This is still in the custody of the Museum.

The party-political link was clearly inappropriate for what was in effect an amenity society and a number of members successfully urged adoption of the Civic Trust model constitution, which made membership open and secured democratic control. The New Dover Group then expanded in membership and achievement. It saved the trees in St. Mary's churchyard from felling and pioneered the concept of a riverside walk from Kearsney Abbey to the seafront. The Borough Council accepted in principle the dedication of a metre-wide strip adjoining the Dour whenever planning consents were granted.

Its record was impressive. On two occasions it helped to preserve Kearsney Abbey from housing proposals and

attempted to preserve Whitfield and Guston from the eastern bypass (for which it had campaigned). It helped to defend Alkham Valley from the assaults of a predatory farmer on Sites of Special Scientific Interest in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and took the lead in attempting to safeguard the seafront from the noise and smell of the new hoverport. Equally, it first opposed and then attempted to mitigate the adverse implications of the 1970s threat of the Channel Tunnel. It initiated the incredible archaeological excavations in York Street, preserved part of the revealed Roman fortress from destruction, and its members contributed labour and cash to the preservation of the Painted House. It was involved in the controversy over the design and construction of Burlington House and produced a second plan for the Dover District in 1980. The conservation and renovation of Priory Road Terrace was initiated, but failed to save the ancient *The Cause Is Altered!* pub from demolition. An action group coordinated representations to the Department of Transport on the route of the proposed new A20 from Folkestone.

So why did it die in 1982? According to Jack, the group failed to provide a social programme or to produce an attractive newsletter. None of its achievements (or failures) pleased everyone and Dovorians on the whole were more concerned with employment than conservation. Recruitment declined and the officers who died or retired were not effectively replaced.

## Birth of The Dover Society

With considerable concern over recent events in and around Dover Philomena Kennedy, artist and teacher at Dover Girls' Grammar School, approached several people and persuaded them to meet to discuss the possibility of forming a civic society. Issues included the futures of Connaught Park, Brook House, Pencester Gardens and River Recreation Ground, which was threatened with housing development. These, coupled with anxieties arising from completion of the Channel Tunnel with its threat of mass unemployment and with a desire to be involved in the proposed remedies of tourism brought the group together in March 1988. The inaugural meeting of The Dover Society quickly followed on 25th April in the Menzies Hall of Dover College with about a hundred people present. Peter Johnson, before proposing 'That The Dover Society be instituted and the Civic Trust Constitution be adopted' made these remarks: "Many people in Dover have felt a growing concern about what is going to happen to the town in the future. That concern stems to some extent from events during 1987 and the sometimes bitter conflict between the people and Dover District Council (DDC), mostly about the selling off of public open spaces. But the issues are far wider than that. It is this concern that has brought together a body of people who have felt strongly the need to care for the town, for its people and for its future. Let me at this stage say what we are not.

We are not a protest group.

We are not party political in any shape or form.

We are not demonstrators and, I hope, we are not cranks.

What are we then? I can only say what we aim to be, namely a body of people

concerned about the future of Dover, informed, experienced in a wide range of skills and activities, responsible in our actions and constructive in our criticism. We hope also to be influential. This will depend on the breadth of support we can win from the people of Dover and on the input those people can in turn provide from their knowledge, experience and wisdom. We hope to work with DDC and not against it. I think the majority support the council's plans for making Dover a mecca for tourists, but there is some thought that those plans are too narrow and lacking in vision, too heavily influenced by outside commercial advice and lacking in in-depth knowledge of Dover. They ignore little things, relatively insignificant in themselves but an essential part of our history and our environment.

As an example I would remind the meeting that yesterday was St. George's Day and the 70th anniversary of the capture of the Mole at Zeebrugge, one of the most historic and heroic naval engagements of all time. The bell from the mole hangs on the balcony at Dover Town Hall and yesterday at noon the Town Mayor rang eight bells and buglers from the Royal Marines at Deal sounded the Last Post and Reveille. The Charter Trustees, representatives of the Services and youth organisations and of the Royal Society of St. George were present and there followed a moving service in St. James' Cemetery where many of those who lost their lives at Zeebrugge on St. George's Day 1918 are buried. How many visitors to Dover, and indeed Dovorians themselves, know of the bell and its history engraved on the stone tablet set into the front wall of the Town Hall, dirty with age and neglected? This is just one small example of the little bits of history to be found in the town. The Dover Society as we see it would look at every aspect of the

town and, among other things, ferret out the smaller matters and perhaps initiate action to bring them to the fore.

The Society would also wish to make informed and constructive contributions to major development and pursue a quest for quality. Civic quality stems from good design, good taste and attention to detail.

The resolution which I put to this meeting tonight is that, "The Dover Society be instituted, that it be included in the national register of local amenity societies sponsored by the Civic Trust and that the model constitution prepared by the Civic Trust be adopted".

He concluded: "I believe that Dover has a great future. I am one of those who do not believe that the Channel Tunnel will have as disastrous an effect on Dover as some have forecast. On the contrary, I believe the port will continue to flourish in handling both freight and passengers. It is right, however, that we should be looking to the future by making the town itself a tourist centre. Dover is unique in the breadth of its history extending from Roman times to the present day and there is no reason why it should not become a 'must' for tourists comparable with Canterbury, York and Bath. I am not a Dovorian by birth, only by 35 years of adoption, but I regard myself as a citizen of no mean city. If I may borrow a phrase of today from the *Dover Express* 'I'm backing Dover' and I invite you to join me by launching The Dover Society."

Members of the temporary committee were then confirmed in office and others elected from the floor: Chairman Jack Woolford, Vice Chairman John Gerrard, Secretary Barry Smith, Treasurer Norman Willis, Press Officer Sybil Standing, Social Secretary Linda Clackett, Newsletter Editor Philomena Kennedy and Ken Berry,

Phyllis Dobbins, Jeremy Cope, David Elms, Michael Foad, Peter Johnson, Terry Khambatta, Viv Liggett, Mike McFarnell, Jim Truelove and Ken Wraight as committee members. The Countess of Guilford agreed to be President and a number of Vice Presidents were appointed: Budge Adams, Lord Ennals, Jack Ind, Ivan Green, Peter Johnson, Lillian Kay, Jonathan Sloggett and Ray Warner. To round off the evening Jack Woolford gave a commentary entitled 'Dover: Assets and Liabilities' with a selection of slides taken by Ray Warner and Philomena Kennedy. The new society was registered with the Civic Trust as a civic society on 16th May and affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies.

### ***The first year***

The Society soon got down to work. Some DDC Officers and District Councillors met members of the committee in June. The objects of the Society were outlined and the hope expressed that useful contacts with the District Council would help to avoid misunderstandings and enable the Society to offer informed comment in the future about planning applications and other issues. The futures of Connaught Park and Pencester Gardens were raised and the council's encouragement of upgrading properties in conservation areas by the use of small grants was welcomed. A tour of Brook House followed. The sad state of the interior of this attractive Victorian house formerly housing the Borough Council was all too obvious. Despite continuous pumping the high water table and unsatisfactory foundations had resulted in severe damp everywhere. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that several potential purchasers had lost interest.

### ***The Newsletter***

*The first Newsletter was published in June edited by Philomena Kennedy - not the refined*

*and professional version of later editions (number 8 onwards) but duplicated with her own pen and ink illustrations. The now well known logo, designed by Philomena, was used on the front page of the Newsletter from the outset. Later, it was produced as a car or window sticker and as a lapel badge.*

*Newsletter Number 8 produced in September 1990 was the first printed by A. R. Adams and formatted by member Budge Adams. Advertisements appeared for the first time. It was received favourably with Sybil Standing commenting, 'The tea is just as good but we have exchanged our Oxfam mug for Crown Derby!' This professional standard journal, edited first by Philomena, then by Merrill Lilley and latterly by Alan Lee, has stood the test of time extremely well.*

*Newsletter 30 in December 1997 was the last that Budge Adams, at age 88, page set. Having to pay for this in future meant that the Newsletter would be reduced from 56 to 44 pages. Newsletter 52 in April 2005 was Editor Merrill Lilley's last after 14 years. She had only taken over the job temporarily whilst Philomena Kennedy toured the United States! Alan Lee has proved a worthy successor.*

*The name 'Newsletter' does not really do it justice. The varied reports and articles provide a fantastic archive over the last 25 years not only of the Society's past, but of local issues as well as the many fascinating articles on aspects of Dover's history.*

A brainstorming meeting was held with DDC consultants, Kent County Council (KCC), Eurotunnel and others to discuss alternative employment for Dover when the Channel Tunnel became operational. Tourism was a possibility but Dover had an image problem - a transit town with run down properties, poor shopping, catering and accommodation with little entertainment. Suggestions included a heritage centre, a maritime quarter, golf

course, White Cliffs country park, a caravan park, reinstatement of the military tattoo and Dover's cricket week, sea festivals, firework displays, harbour boat trips, water sports centre, regattas, cable car to the cliffs and a bus service to connect the Maison Dieu, Painted House, castle and harbour.

By June the Planning Subcommittee, chaired by Ken Wraight, was in action but its attempt to save Brook House by seeking listed building status was pre-empted by a demolition without warning at 5am. During the first year the Market Square improvement scheme was welcomed as was the opening of the Old Town Gaol tourist attraction at the Town Hall. Proper preservation of Dover's incredible Roman ruins were urged (in addition to the Painted House opened 11 years previously). The Society was consulted from the outset by DDC and Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit about their conflicting plans for a heritage centre. A study was carried out to identify which Dover buildings should, if possible, be protected and which to allow redevelopment.

The Society made its first awards for amenity improvement with framed certificates for Buckland Paper Mill's refurbishment and to the KCC architect for the design of Dover's new magistrates' court in Pencester Road. DDC was invited to comment on the Society's new Dover Plan.

The Social Subcommittee organised its first outing in September when John Gerrard gave a guided tour of the Eastern Docks. This was followed by the first Christmas Feast attended by 70 people, which was held in the historic Norman refectory of Dover College. This became a tradition that continued until 2012 saw a dramatic change to a lunchtime event at the Marina Hotel.

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## 1989

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At the first AGM in 1989 more Vice Presidents were appointed: Lord Rees, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, Sylvia Corral (Dover Librarian), Marion Horsfield (retired Head Teacher of the Girls' Grammar School and Terry Sutton. Leo Wright began his long tenure as secretary.

Consulted about proposed development of the Western Heights, the Society took the view that it could be a major tourist asset if essential environmental safeguards were observed - 25 years on that is still the Society's policy. Relief was felt when Pencester Gardens received a reprieve from redevelopment for shopping, but a cutting blow came in August 1989 when Clement Freud declared in *The Times* that 'Dover was a nasty, surly town'!

A group was formed to remedy the neglect of the River Dour and the first clean-up took place in October 1989. It was a mammoth effort covering the whole length of the river from Temple Ewell to New Bridge, but there was no shortage of volunteers - 115 customers of 13 pubs along the route took part, assisted by brewers Whitbread and Shepherd Neame providing essential refreshment in the form of 600 cans of beer. This physical effort was complemented by the Society urging DDC to care for and maintain the river and its environs (note this was long before the Dour gained 'main river' status and the Environment Agency became responsible for its biodiversity and flood risk but not for litter clearance). With the Dover Engineering Works site being redeveloped for retail stores, the Society urged the inclusion of a riverside access as part of its aim for a riverside walk. Much later the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) erected riverside signs directing walkers along a very

tortuous route, often having to move away from the river. In a Newsletter article Jeremy Cope asserted that 'the Dour should be an asset to Dover'. Over 20 years later Jeremy and the Society are still repeating those words!

A Shop Front Award was instituted to help improve the image of the town and the first Awards Evening, held in October 1989, was attended by the Mayor and Dover MP, David Shaw. The landlords of the pubs who supplied the river clean-up volunteers received framed certificates and the Shop Front Award went to Brodys of Worthington Street for its retention of original shop front features in its refurbishment. In addition the Dover Society quiz winners with entrants from 7 years upwards received their prizes.

The first members meeting, designed to raise and discuss matters of concern, was held in November and was attended by 60 people. Concerns included threatened development of the Western Heights and the B&Q development at Charlton Green. There was also anxiety over record low water levels in the chalk aquifers supplying the springs for the River Dour as well as the local drinking water.

Attendees of the second Christmas Feast were entertained to old music hall songs by a group from Dover Choral Society in Victorian dress, but Christmas cheer was negated by news of the death of well known local photographer and producer of the annual Dover film, Ray Warner.

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## 1990

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Primavera, 'SE England's resident professional orchestra', provided a successful concert for 400 people in the Stone Hall of the Town Hall. This was largely due to the efforts on behalf of the Society of Leo Wright who secured free use

of the hall and local business sponsorship. As it was so successful it was repeated the following year. So began the Society's tradition of supporting music in Dover.

The first Wine and Wisdom evening was held in February with Clive Taylor as quizmaster. This popular event became a Society tradition every year and Clive is still asking the questions! It is also customary for half the net proceeds to be donated to Crabble Corn Mill. Later in the year 100 members visited Crabble Corn Mill to see the restoration work by the Corn Mill Trust. A framed Society certificate in recognition of the work was presented and members present donated another £100. The Chairman's guided walk around historic Dover attracted 85 members and summer outings further afield became an established feature of the annual programme.

A Projects Group led by John Owen was formed. This small enthusiastic group, prepared to get their hands dirty and their muscles aching, tackled an incredible range of projects over the next ten years. Almost always the group involved some young people, helping to give them a sense of community. Its first challenge came in March 1990 when, to celebrate Tidy Britain Year, litter clearing was organised involving Dover sea and air cadets competing to see who could collect most rubbish. In 70 minutes 70 sacks of litter were collected plus assorted trolleys etc. including part of an artificial leg! This challenge to local cadets became an annual event organised by the Society and sponsored by various businesses including McDonald's that supplied welcome refreshments. The winning team was usually presented with a silver trophy. National Environment Week in April saw some members helping to survey a section of the Western Heights for orchids.

On the planning front the Society joined opposition to Eurotunnel's plans for a huge cooling plant at the foot of Shakespeare Cliff; the battle was lost but a reduction in height was achieved. A warm welcome was given to the opening of the Hellfire Corner tunnels at the castle and the formation of the White Cliffs Countryside Project (later Partnership) to protect and manage the chalk grasslands around the town including the Western Heights, assisted by grazing Dexter cattle. A planned multi-storey car park on the empty Russell Street site to serve the new White Cliffs Experience was considered an unavoidable necessity by the Society, but suggestions were made to soften its impact; somewhat typical of Dover, it was never built.

Despite the Home Office being rebuked by the Ombudsman in 1980 when the New Dover Group complained that it had demolished without consultation a powder magazine on the Western Heights to build a new boiler house and chimney, disfiguring the skyline, the Home Office again did something similar. Jack Woolford prepared the Society's case to the Ombudsman against the Home Office for building a new accommodation block for the Young Offenders' Institution at the Citadel, part of the scheduled ancient monument, without consulting English Heritage or the Department of the Environment (informing DDC was thought sufficient). Once again the Home Office was criticised by the Ombudsman.

A milestone was hosting the Kent Federation of Amenity Society's 1990 spring conference with its theme of 'From Roman occupation to Channel Tunnel'.

In July 1990 a group of members was invited to see the renovation work being carried out at the Town Hall to arrest decay. When this work was completed our

editor welcomed the unveiling of the Town Hall in its 'newly cleaned and restored glory'. The roof had been replaced, the Stone Hall repainted, the High Street frontage stonework repaired, new toilets installed, a lift for the disabled and a furniture lift from the basement. Complete renovation would apparently take 10 years and cost up to £10 million. It never happened.

By now the annual pattern of the Society's activities emerged with monthly meetings of some sort from October to April, including the ever popular February Wine and Wisdom evening, presentation of annual awards in October and the Christmas Feast in December. Current local issues were discussed at members only meetings. Several summer outings became the norm, including a trip to France in September.

### ***Lousyberry Wood***



*Following the disastrous hurricane of 1987, the Society decided to replace the many trees lost from Lousyberry Wood close to the top of*

*Whitfield Hill. The Project Group with the assistance of some Temple Ewell residents and pupils from the primary school carried out site clearance and preparation, which was followed by the planting of 200 mainly beech trees. A start was made during National Tree Week and continued at weekends during the rest of November and December. The work was fully funded by a KCC grant, sponsors and a 'whip round' of Society members. Subsequently, the Society was presented with the Civic Trust 1990 Community Pride Award. Following the planting, every year thereafter a Sunday in November was devoted to 'aftercare', ensuring that brambles did not smother the saplings.*

At the Society's 1990 Awards Evening the renovation of new premises in Dour Street for A R Adams & Sons (Printers) Ltd was recognised. The framed certificate still hangs in their reception area. DDC was also rewarded for their Dover Town Trail interpretation panels sited throughout the town. The Society, Ivan Green and Joe Harman were consulted about the content. Sadly, many of the panels now need replacing. Kingsley Shipping Ltd also received an award for the renovation of their 'Old Brewery' building in Dolphin Passage. At the other extreme the MFI building on the corner of Castle Street and Woolcomber Street was highlighted as an example of what the Society did not want!

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## 1991

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**I**n February 1991 the Society held a public meeting entitled 'Save our sewage; rescue our river', to discuss the threat to health from unsatisfactory sewage disposal, polluted beaches as well as the neglected appearance and low level of the river. Representatives from Southern Water, the National River Authority, Friends of the Earth and DDC spoke and a lively discussion followed! A survey of the river from Castle Street to Ladywell was

carried out and Leo Wright took it upon himself to keep a close eye on the water situation for several years.

The home for the new museum in Market Square opened on 11th March 1991 charging 95p for adults and 50p for children. The imposition of entry charges to the Museum to increase DDC income was opposed by The Society but at least it gained the concession of free entry for local residents (lost in 2012 as it apparently contravened EU rules!).

The transport of nuclear waste through the port, which DDC was powerless to stop, was a cause for concern.

March saw another river clean up at Charlton Green with 25 members of 354 Squadron ATC, Dover Boys' Grammar CCF and TS Lynx Sea Cadets taking part who were presented with specially commissioned Dover Society shields.



### **Lydden Pond**

*Yet another project commenced in March 1991. In partnership with KCC and Lydden Parish Council work began to reinstate Lydden village pond. The Society planted a willow tree to mark the event. During the next 12 months 25 work sessions totalling 240 man hours were put in. A contractor lined the pond with clay and then the pond bed was manually puddled with straw and clay by volunteers. The project received a Civic Trust Award of £500 and a £450 grant from Shell.*

*Later the Society and Lydden School were awarded the BBC Radio 1 Country File Award. November 1993 saw the completion of the project when we presented a bench seat to the parish council and the final batch of daffodils was planted. The pond has held water continuously since August 1993. Another job well done.*



The disastrous decision to route the A20 extension from the M20 over the cliffs and through the town to the Eastern Docks was a bitter disappointment for the Society, which favoured a route round the back of the town via Swingfield to join the A2 rather than cut off the town from its seafront. Dover has paid a heavy price ever since. More amusement arcades were opposed, listing was sought for the Charlton cemetery chapels and successfully urged restoration of the Elms Vale Road tram shelter. We were also anxious to retain the magnificent railwaymen's war memorial at Marine Station.

About 40 members had a preview of the White Cliffs Experience which the Editor described as 'an exciting architectural addition to the landscape'.

At the 1991 AGM with membership over 300 Sheila Cope became Membership Secretary when Merrill Lilley became Newsletter Editor. Sheila is still doing it after 20 years! In Newsletter 11 Merrill welcomed memories of old Dover. Children's views on Dover, local history

book reviews, a series on Dover's characters and articles by 'ordinary' people involved in 'Working for Dover' appeared in later editions.

The Society was quick to take up DDC's scheme to brighten up empty shop windows by arranging for local charitable bodies to mount window displays. The vacant Dickens corner shop in the Market Square was used for five months.

The condition of some listed buildings, especially the former Royal Victoria Hospital and Castle Hill House, exercised the Planning Committee which lobbied DDC who then agreed to inspect the buildings. The proposed Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel and its associated facilities was supported, but with a plea to make it sympathetic to its location and purpose. Most, if not everybody, would agree that the memorial actually built both honours the airmen who defended Britain and fits well into the landscape.

A May Day Dover Pageant was organised by member Mike McFarnell and eight members took part as Druids. Thereafter, members were 'recruited' for subsequent pageants, culminating in the event to celebrate the centenary of the first Dover Pageant in 1908.



An unusual extra Society event in May was Conviviality and Conundrums held at the

Bay Museum at St. Margaret's. Forty-two members were divided into two groups - in one group each person had a list of questions and individuals in the other group had one or two answers each. Then they had to socialise to get all the answers, thereby getting to know other members better. After refreshments, roles were reversed. For the next three consecutive years Philomena organised a quiz evening at Dover Museum based on its exhibits with members having to scour the building to find the answers. Needless to say, Philomena managed to stretch not only minds and legs, but also stamina and patience.

Astor School joined the Society as a schools member and three pieces appeared in the Newsletter about their outings to Whinless Down, Western Heights and Cowgate Cemetery.

The Society's contribution to the arts in 1991 was a concert by the Kent Concert Orchestra at the Town Hall in September.

At the November meeting Paul Watkins, Leader of the District Council, was urged to embark upon a major marketing initiative to attract retail shops concentrating on Cannon Street. In his talk Paul 'presented an encouraging and positive view of Dover's future' stating, 'It's not all doom and gloom, things are moving forward! Oh dear!'

DHB's Western Docks development proposals that promised 4500 jobs were welcomed. Included were a superstore, hotel and shops in a 10 year plan. To safeguard historic buildings from redevelopment, however, the Society applied for Grade 2 listing of three more buildings: the former Harbour Station, which was successful, the Customs watchhouse and the Clock Tower, which were not.

1992

At the 1992 AGM Planning Committee Chairman Adrian Galley retired after four years and was replaced by Ken Wraight. Lin Clackett retired as social secretary and was replaced by Joan Liggett who began her long and much appreciated tenure.

The vexed problem of absentee shop landlords and empty floors above (despite 75% grants available to renovate upper floors) caused frustration, whilst we were saddened by the loss of the distinguished Co-op facade in Biggin Street amid concern about the architecture of its replacement shops.

The first Festival of Dover in May gave the town a boost with a varied programme of heritage, music (from jazz to the Snowdown male voice choir), poetry, films, exhibitions, talks, concerts, children's workshops and a Teddy Bears' picnic at Kearsney Abbey. The Society contributed guided walks. This successful venture became an annual event.

### **Impact Scheme**

Strong links were formed with the KCC/DDC Impact Scheme following its presentation to the October 1992 meeting. Each body would contribute £400,000 a year for 3 years to make high quality improvements to streets and public spaces and to encourage investment in buildings, especially historic buildings. Needless to say, members came up with many suggestions, but priorities were Snargate Street, York St./Townwall St corner and Bench St/New Bridge. The actual projects chosen were the Grand Shaft entrance, the Leisure Centre car park, Army Careers Office (below Mote's Bulwark), repaving of Bench Street, Snargate Street paving, lighting and buildings facelift, New Bridge, the seafront, the Dour and Priory Station. Reproductions

of the leopard bollards were installed in the Stembrook area upgrading and in the Oswald Street passage. Notice was taken of The Society's reservations regarding planned seafront improvements and support was given to a revised application for new lighting, lawns, hedging, paving and shelters. The Society was represented by Lawrence Gage on the group considering a seafront artwork and he later helped judge the 80 entries for the sculpture. The winner was Ray Smith with his 'Channel Swimmers on the Crest of a Wave', which was put in place in December 1995. Impact finished in Dover in March 1996 after 3 years of improvements. The 1996 AGM heard from the Impact speaker that the seafront scheme in partnership with DHB had been completed and DHB's plan to continue with the rest of the promenade was welcomed (although it never happened). New Bridge and York Street corner were also completed. Victoria Crescent was still in progress and the highway safety scheme for Castle Hill was also awaited. The Town Centre Management scheme was to carry on as a thriving town centre was seen as essential to attract investment; Jeremy Cope represented the Society on the TCM Board until it folded in 2008.



Following the Museum's Words and Pictures children's competition, three children's poems about Dover were printed in the Newsletter, including 'Dover in the Night':

Roads and traffic  
 swirling around like a whirlwind  
 in the dark.  
 Car shadows on the pavement.  
 The sea and the beach  
 have purple sunset upon them.  
 Visitors staying in seafront hotels.  
 Cliffs gloating over the sunset.  
 Shop windows reflecting from the  
 car light.  
 Streets are bare, gradually it comes  
 silent except for the sea  
 Sucking on the pebbles and the  
 humming of the rocks.

*By Alison Hawkins, Age 10,  
 Langdon County Primary School*

Following objections to DHB's plans for a petrol station next to Marine Court, it was withdrawn. DHB was, however, back in the good books with assistance given in the recovery of the Bronze Age Boat when it provided a large mobile crane to lift the pieces, storage facilities in Cambridge Terrace and a 7000 gallon water tank.

The Society submitted a scheme for improved access to the River Dour and an extension of the riverside walk.

Another litter clearance was organised during Environment Week when cadets invited by the Society cleared rubbish from behind Pencester Road shops.

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1993

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At the 1993 AGM Brigadier Atherton was elected President following the death of the Countess of Guilford. Lawrence Gage became Planning Committee Chairman; after 5 years as Treasurer Ken Berry stepped down and was replaced by Jennifer Gerrard whilst Jenny Olpin became Press and Publicity Officer and Bruce Lilley Advertising Manager. Having resigned from the

Executive, Philomena Kennedy was made a Vice President. Issues considered during the year were submissions to the new Local Plan, the future of Marine Station and Dover Patrol Memorial, Royal Victoria Hospital Housing Scheme, architecture of the new Co-op in Biggin St., quality of shop fronts and problems with the proposed Whitfield village by-pass to Sandwich (A256).

The proposed sewage treatment facility at Broomfield Bank - Eurotunnel's vacated car park site off Folkestone Road - proved controversial. The Society preferred the Shakespeare Cliff platform site which, however, proved impractical. The new facility would be a massive underground box which would be landscaped and unseen apart from an access road. It would discharge into the sea via a 2.5 km long outfall from Shakespeare Beach, meeting EC regulations but with primary treatment only. The project would take three 3 years and cost £24m.



During 1993 Environment Week restoration of Dover's 'leopard bollards' by the Society began in various parts of the town. St. Mary's School pupils assisted a team of four in removing old paint down to the bare metal, priming and painting the bollards black and finally gilding the leopards' heads and bollard tops. After sessions every Saturday from March to May the job was finished and Joe Harman's dream realised. The annual

clean-up assisted by cadets concentrated on litter in the South Kent College area.



The Society reached a new milestone by August 1993 when membership topped 400.

Members Budge Adams and David Atwood initiated a campaign to move the Charles Rolls statue away from the seafront toilets to a more dignified location in The Gateway gardens close to its pre-war site. It was eventually moved and rededicated in June 1995.

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## 1994

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The topic for the January 1994 meeting was the future of local government with the options of the status quo or replacement of KCC by district councils combining into larger unitary authorities. After presentations by KCC, DDC, University of Kent at Canterbury, Kent Association of Local Councils and the MP, the opinions of the five discussion groups informed the Society's submission to the Local Government Commissioner. This was in favour of the status quo albeit with some improvements. The eventual outcome was not welcomed - retention of KCC but with the Medway Towns becoming a separate unitary authority.

At the 1994 AGM Terry Sutton, already a Vice President and having been co-opted onto the Executive during the year, was

formally elected and became Press Secretary. Jeremy Cope became a co-Vice Chairman with John Gerrard.

Members were asked via a questionnaire in the Newsletter about their vision for the future of Dover. The conclusions made interesting reading at the time and perhaps even more so now in the light of what has happened since! Whilst the Impact improvements, White Cliffs Business Park and Western Dock development were welcomed, a town master plan was said to be needed, rather than ad hoc planning approvals site by site - in other words a proactive approach by DDC. The Russell Street area in particular needed to be redeveloped as a whole, including the removal of the bus garage. Public car parks should be used to attract customers rather than raise revenue (in order to compete with free out of town parking), lorries banned from the town centre unless delivering, a new use for the redundant telephone exchange, the buildings demolished in front of the St. Martin le Grand ruins to create a park and a plea for the demolition of Burlington House! Also on the wish list were better shopping facilities, more people living in the town centre, streets to be cleaner and more attractive, new attractions such as a bowling alley, skating rink, a decent theatre, a facelift for Connaught Park as well as a maritime museum and cruise liner terminal. Finally, Dover with its many heritage assets should be promoted as a tourist town and not only as a port. Urged also was a review of the town centre one way system designed originally to help accommodate the freight vehicles to and from the docks (overtaken later by the A2/Jubilee Way bypass and the A20/Townwall Street). The Society included the need for a Russell Street masterplan in its submission regarding the new Local Plan.

At the same time editor Merrill Lilley presented her vision of Dover in 2020. Langdon Cliffs Visitor Centre would be busy with tourists; most of the 2,000 passengers from a gigantic cruise liner in the harbour would be in the town on guided tours after taking the monorail into the town centre, viewing the Bronze Age Boat in the Museum, appreciating Dover's history in the Heritage Centre, visiting the Old Town Gaol, enjoying the attractive small shops as well as the vast shopping centre at the Western Docks; others would be resting in the open air cafés. Hotels were fully booked, including the new 5 star hotel on the castle cliff and the smaller hotel above the Grand Shaft. The Drop Redoubt with its new entrance was open to the public after extensive renovation. The attractive promenade and the clean beach were crowded whilst sailing and windsurfing were on offer at the water sports centre. At the Whitfield activity centre tenpin bowling, ice skating, indoor tennis and squash could be enjoyed whilst the commemorative Millennium Monument in the Western Docks towered over the town. Time is running out for Merrill's vision to become a reality!

A Town Trail Quiz devised by Philomena Kennedy was amongst the wide range of events during Festival of Dover week in 1994, whilst the Project Group helped Crabble Corn Mill with its annual tidy.

The reopening of the White Cliffs Hotel as a luxury hotel, renamed The Churchill, was warmly welcomed, but there were concerns about the Harbour Board's plan for a 60 bed hotel in the Camden Crescent car park. It did not happen. Considerable interest was shown in the future of Old Park Barracks, which was surplus to Ministry of Defence requirements.

Society and National Trust representatives met to discuss the proposed visitor centre

for Langdon Cliffs. The Society's view was that any scheme should not adversely affect the unique atmosphere of the cliff top and, therefore, felt unable to support the scheme which was, however, approved. Planning Committee Chairman, Lawrence Gage, assisted the judging of the architectural competition. The winning design was mainly of wood with a turf covered roof, making it hardly visible from the sea.



Thinking ahead to the Millennium celebrations, the Society organised an open meeting at the Town Hall to gauge the interest in applying for money from the national Millennium Fund of £66 million to finance a local project and, if so, what? There was no shortage of suggestions, including the radical idea of a modern pharos on the Western Height's possibly incorporating a revolving restaurant, conference centre and concert hall. As a result a working party was formed to prepare a bid. A Millennium Fund grant application was submitted in 1995. The major components were a national maritime museum, an institute for maritime development, a Millennium Pharos and a cruise liner terminal, welcome to Britain tourist centre, sea training activity centre, transport links to the attractions and a big event to welcome the new millennium. It was unsuccessful, but undaunted, it was suggested that other

lottery grants should be sought to achieve the Millennium objectives as separate projects. The Society would apply to regenerate the Western Heights as a managed nature reserve with a Millennium Pharos beaming light across the Channel. Unfortunately, the proposal received no support from DDC despite support from English Heritage and English Nature and so the scheme was dropped.

Travelling by hovercraft, 45 members spent an enjoyable hour on the Goodwin Sands watching Morris dancers, looking round the souvenir stalls, drinking canned beer or participating in elaborate picnics complete with tables and chairs! This successful event was repeated the following year.

The fifth annual Society clean-up was in the shopping precinct where 38 cadets removed stickers from street furniture and then touched up the paintwork. This was followed during Environment Week by the Society organising a clean up of Shakespeare Beach assisted enthusiastically by 60 pupils from Aycliffe School who received the Society's grateful thanks in the form of a framed certificate.

A Society member, Mrs Gillian Janaway, was congratulated on winning the *Dover Express* competition to name the Shakespeare Cliff platform created from the chalk spoil of the Channel Tunnel - Samphire Hoe.

The October 1994 meeting considered Dover's economic past and future. Budge Adams reminded the audience of a busy, prosperous town with a garrison, industries, many shops, liners calling, etc. Attracting tourists and industry was the hope for the future.

Various planning matters kept the Society

on its toes: the planning brief for Old Park (the Society suggested a regional sports centre) and the water sports centre study, a DDC workshop on a sport and recreation strategy, the new Snargate Street clubhouse for the Sea Angling Association (Bluebirds), DHB's plans for its Cruise Liner Terminal and opposing DDC's wish to demolish the Kearsney Abbey tea room, a listed building (the billiards room of the demolished mansion). White Cliffs Business Park Phase 2 was welcomed provided it was for business and not for more retail outlets. Good news was planning permission for a transport/travellers' centre at Whitfield catering for freight, coach crews and passengers which would create 200 jobs (part of phase 1 of White Cliffs Business Park) - but it never happened. The Society pressed successfully for the repair of the historic gutter in Laureston Place on the former turnpike road to Deal. A proposal to convert Burlington House into flats was strongly opposed - demolition should be its future! Use of Archcliffe Fort by the Emmaus organisation for the homeless was supported. At long last a route for the dualling of the A2 from Lydden Hill to the Eastern Docks was announced, but the Society had to oppose the proposed route. It never happened anyway!

The enthusiastic Project Group spent a day helping the East Kent Railway volunteers clear brushwood and erecting new fencing.

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## 1995

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Another year and another clean up - Along the river from Cherry Tree to Stembrook. The winning cadet team received a dartboard! During Environment Week the Project Group with cadets cleaned up the welcoming signs to Dover on the key approaches to town.



Leo Wright was, as ever, keeping a close eye on seawater and beach quality as well as levels of water in the river and lakes. Described as a turning point was the inclusion of the Dour by the National Rivers Authority (later absorbed into the Environment Agency) in 'rivers in need of urgent medical attention'. Almost all of the Society's demands were being examined or were underway i.e. river flow affected by water extraction, water demand in danger of exceeding supply, closing down some boreholes upstream and opening others downstream, flow being monitored and no new extraction licences. The NRA was also examining all housing developments and commenting on water availability.



A contribution was made to the £40,000 appeal for the Dover History Project to catalogue all the old Borough records going back to the 13th century held at the KCC Centre for Kent Studies.

The Society was well represented at the DDC public consultation on long term plans for the St. James' area. The master

plan included two four storey blocks of flats, demolition of the MFI building on the Castle Street/Woolcomber Street corner for housing, demolition of the bus garage to provide a public square focal point with cafes and restaurants, enlargement of the existing multi-storey car park, a new pedestrianised area by the river, a boulevard effect in Townwall Street and a hotel on the south side. All this was welcomed by the Society but it urged inclusion of Burlington House demolition! In the meantime relief was expressed when the application to convert Burlington House into flats was refused.



The new *Duke of York* pub at the Guston roundabout was opposed as 'phoney nostalgia'. Evening and night closure of Langdon Cliffs was also opposed but unsuccessfully. Members were asked to complete a questionnaire on the future of Connaught Park - access, parking, sport and other recreational uses. A good response produced a long wish list! Disappointment came when DDC turned down a suggestion for a sports centre at Old Park.

During Tree Week 50 trees were planted at Broadlees Farm assisted by pupils from the Duke of York's School.

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1996

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There was no let up in projects. At Melbourne School a play area was redesigned and some trees were planted,

helped by pupils. Cadets conducted a photographic survey of town centre trees for DDC using disposable cameras, which made a pleasant change from litter clearing. Unfortunately, John Owen's traditional camera had no film in it! During Environmental Week Walter's former shoe shop in King Street was cleaned up and its window used to advertise the Dover Festival and its Spirit of the Sea theme - it only lasted eight weeks due to vandals smashing the window.

The April 1996 edition of the Newsletter carried this very special offer:

'In recognition of the great interest which members of The Dover Society have shown in the discovery of the Bronze Age Boat the opportunity of a short trip is being offered in the newly-restored vessel. The Committee (whose members have been busy practising paddling skills in order to gain a Certificate of Proficiency) will take turns in crewing the boat with Lt-Cdr John Owen, Chairman of the Projects Sub-Committee, as captain. To take advantage of this totally unrepeatable offer you should assemble on the Snargate Street side of Wellington Dock between 9.30 and 11.30am. Be prepared to wait as only ten passengers can be taken on each trip. Please wear waterproof clothing and a life-jacket (just in case!). Obviously all trips must be completed by midday on Monday 1st April!

During the year some members joined in a White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) tidying up session of Cowgate Cemetery. Owned by DDC, it was in the care of WCCP with a policy of containment, preserving its status as a wildlife habitat. Little did we know what this would lead to!

At the AGM Jeremy Cope became Chairman of Planning following Lawrence

Gage's resignation over a difference of opinion on the strategy for improving Dover's prospects. Awards were made to Sanctuary Housing for its renovation of the former Royal Victoria Hospital, to Impact for Snargate Street improvements and DHB/Impact for the upgrade of part of the seafront. 1996 saw a rare increase in members' subscriptions to £6 a year or £10 for joint membership; 17 years later they are still the same - what fantastic value! Arjo Wiggins received a special Society award for its new gas driven power plant at Buckland Paper Mill. A free organ recital was held at Dover College Chapel in May.

The Spring Conference of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies was hosted once again by the Society.

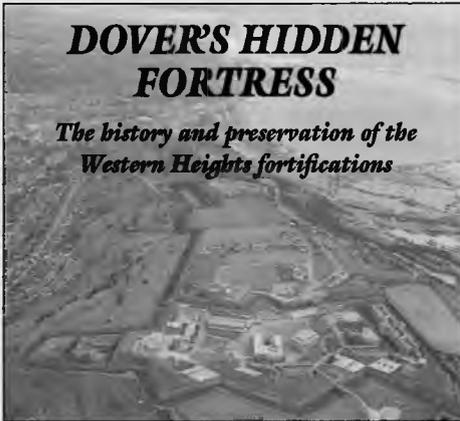
#### **Summer outings**

*1996 saw a record number of summer outings, which included a trial of outings for small groups - Chatham Dockyard, Kew Gardens, a French trip plus small groups to the Coastguard Station, Port Control, Buckland Paper Mill and a Swale barge trip. Over the 25 year life of the Society a fantastic variety of trips have been organised - annually to France, often to London (including Buckingham Palace, the Bank of England, the Houses of Parliament and the last Royal Tournament at Earls Court), several houses and gardens, not to mention more unusual visits such as hovercraft trips to the Goodwin Sands and visiting Dungeness Power Station.*

On the planning front 45 factory outlets at Whitfield were opposed whilst supporting a similar scheme for the Western Docks. More amusement arcades were also resisted. Business park development of the former Channel Tunnel Farthingloe village site was resisted because it was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, not in the draft Local Plan, poor road access and two other business parks were not fully used.

Despite this, DDC approved the application provided it was completed by 1999. It wasn't and has never happened! Following the closure of Richborough Power Station there was a move to resite the impressive miner's statue in the Market Square but this was opposed by the Society which preferred the mining village of Aylesham. A system of cycle routes was supported despite many obvious difficulties and a spine cycle route from River to the sea with offshoots to the rest of the town was plotted and discussed with DDC.

### **Dover's Hidden Fortress**



October 1996 saw the launch at Dover Museum of *Dover's Hidden Fortress* by John Peverley, published by the Society. Civic leaders were out in force plus David Shaw MP who had first suggested the book after hearing John Peverley's presentation to the Society in April 1991 about the Western Heights fortifications, his involvement in attempts to secure their preservation and the responsibilities of various bodies to tackle the very difficult task of restoring the fortifications and opening them to the public. Inspired by this, the Society decided to publish a history of the Western Heights and their present neglect. The project attracted £1000 from Eurotunnel, £77 from DHB and £100

from Hammonds. Included in this modest booklet was a section by Kirk Alexander on the formation of the White Cliffs Countryside Project in 1989 and its work to date. In only six months 800 copies were sold. Many reprints later it is still going strong having sold over 3000 copies.

In the same month, following the exciting discovery of the Bronze Age Boat in 1992, Christine Waterman, Museum Curator, gave a talk on the history of lotteries and the harrowing experience of the Museum's successful bid for preservation of the boat, which was due back in Dover in 1997 to be 'moored' in its purpose-built gallery.

A shops survey from Bench Street to the Town Hall was undertaken to which 100 businesses responded. 45% declared a significant increase in trade when cruise ships were in port, but far more crew than passengers! Members then came up with ideas to attract cruise passengers - welcomers to be more knowledgeable about Dover's attractions, better publicity at the Cruise Terminal, a circular bus tour (open top summer bus tours actually started in May 97), acceptance of foreign currency and opening shops on Sundays when liners were in.

### **Unknown Warrior plaque**

Urged by member David Atwood, the Society, with the agreement of DHB, provided a plaque to the Unknown Warrior whose body was returned from France via Dover on its way to Westminster Abbey in November 1920. Costing £329 the plaque was placed in the Cruise Terminal reception area where cruise passengers would see it. It was unveiled in 1997 by the Chief of the Defence Staff and contains the following words: 'Near this spot on 20 November 1920 the body of the Unknown Warrior was brought ashore from HMS Verdun on the way to its final resting place at Westminster Abbey. The Dover

Society 1997. Now, following the annual Remembrance Service at the impressive Railwaymen's War Memorial in the Cruise Terminal, those attending move to the Unknown Warrior plaque where the Society's Chairman, flanked by very smart, uniformed pupils from the Duke of York's Royal Military School, tells the story and places a wreath watched by the many standard bearers of the Royal British Legion and more than a hundred attendees.



During this period the Newsletter carried a fascinating series of interviews with Budge Adams about his life and memories of Dover.

Worried by drought and with only 27% of average rainfall in 1996, river water levels were at their lowest ever. A meeting at Kearsney Manor was convened, chaired by the MP. Following presentations by the water company and DDC, it was clear that water pricing did not include anything for conservation of the Dour.

### ***Entente Cordiale***

*The Society has proved the Entente Cordiale alive and well over the years. In March 96 the Society welcomed L'Association France Grande Bretagne group at the Churchill Hotel and some joined the Society's trip to Cote d'Opale. Back in 1991 the Accueil Organisation and the Welcome to French Cities Association had welcomed a group*

*from The Society and then in May 1996 we welcomed a group from them at the Town Hall. Later the same year five members were invited to Calais for a very interesting day. Members have since attended three of their functions. Subsequently all three societies were welcome to attend each others meetings and excursions. One French family attended the 96 Feast and seven Society members with 28 from Dover Choral Society attended the 1998 New Year dinner of the Association France-Grande Bretagne in Calais with the Choral Society performing. The French link was renewed in 2006 when it was agreed to 'twin' with Les Amis du Chateau in Condette near Boulogne. This group was created in 1993 to further cultural, artistic and historic interests in Condette and around Boulogne. A Society delegation visited in November 2006 and in June 2007 13 members of the Society entertained 47 members of Les Amis to lunch in the Town Hall. Disappointingly, only five members visited Condette in August.*

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## 1997

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There was concern over the neglected state of Bench Street and the Society attended a meeting with DDC, TCM and shopkeepers. This led to a Society meeting suggesting that empty shops should be tidied up, shopkeepers encouraged to take pride, convert some to housing, cheaper parking, discourage more charity shops, unused upper floors of shops should be flats, put murals in empty shops and make use of them as a teenage centre, art gallery etc. Quality housing on the former Castlemount School site was, however, welcomed; the later amendment, however, to include three blocks of flats was opposed, but further revision and tree screening made it acceptable. The possibility of an art trail on the cliffs was resisted. There was no objection to the proposed removal of the 1916 iron walkway on to Admiralty Pier despite its listing, but the application was withdrawn.

Cadets were busy in March at St Martin's Emmaus at Archcliffe Fort restoring living and storage accommodation as well as clearing litter and planting a beech hedge. A silver trophy was presented. Beachwatch 97 involved 13 Society volunteers collecting, (60 sacks full plus large items), identifying and listing all the pollutants on Shakespeare Beach. The neglected state of shrub beds on the A20 at East Cliff contrasted badly with the well maintained DHB seafront. The Department of Transport lacked resources to do anything about it apparently, but agreed to DHB, KCC and the Society doing something. As a result volunteers cleared loads of weeds in two half day sessions.

Sheila Cope, the long serving Membership Secretary, was able to report a record membership of 440 at the AGM where there was talk of the Society 'going on the worldwide web' - whatever that was, some people thought at the time!

Three presentations to the Society were of particular interest. Keith Parfitt of Canterbury Archaeological Trust told us of the biggest dig in Dover for 20 years on the site of a new petrol station in Townwall Street. Remains of hovels possibly occupied by 13th century castle builders had been found with 40,000 pieces of pottery and two skeletons. The second was on future expensive plans for the castle including a hotel and conference centre in the former New Officers' Mess and improved town/castle links. They did not happen! The third presentation was by the new town clerk and Mayor on the first year of Dover Town Council (DTC) since gaining parish council status which the Society had campaigned for (replacing the 1974 Charter Trustees). Friendly relations had been established and Jack Woolford was attending council and committee meetings.

## 1998

The 1998 AGM saw the end of an era when Jack Woolford, Chairman since the founding of the Society ten years earlier, retired and was replaced by Jeremy Cope. President Brigadier Maurice Atherton presented Jack with a Philomena Kennedy painting and the Newsletter Editor wrote, 'The contribution of Jack during his 10 years as Chairman is incalculable. He has fulfilled his role as Chairman with admirable tenacity, strength and aplomb; his controlling presence will be sorely missed.' Jack continued to make a valuable contribution as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Mike Weston took over as Treasurer from Jennifer Gerrard and some chap called Derek Leach joined the Executive.

On the planning front views on the government's Integrated Transport Strategy were submitted - car sharing, better public transport and cycle routes. Objections were made to various plans for mobile phone masts in sensitive locations. 'Why can't companies share and not make them so ugly' was the cry. The return of Woolworth to the town was welcomed provided the GPO facade was retained, but both the Society and DDC lost this one eventually - the old facade did not fit Woolworth's store style. DDC was lobbied about the poor state of London Road beyond Ladywell. Unfortunately, a wish to see Camden Crescent fully restored following war damage came to nothing.

DHB was very active on the development front with plans for a second Cruise Liner Terminal, expansion of the marina, the third phase of De Bradelei Wharf and the purchase of Southern House. Whilst we objected to its proposed demolition of Marine Court on the seafront (which was subsequently withdrawn), its acquisition of Old Park was welcomed, but there were

reservations about its planning application. 'Why not dedicate the tree-lined slopes of Old Park for the use of townspeople?' queried Jeremy. Everything comes to those that wait for in 2011 the slopes became a nature reserve!

In commenting upon the latest draft of DDC's local plan the Society urged that AONB status should take precedence over development proposals and archaeological investigation of development sites should be mandatory. The adequacy of the water supply should be considered and the need for any more high quality offices (in the Western Docks) was questioned.



When 15 street signs were repainted by five Society volunteers on Saturdays and Sundays throughout March, Town Mayor Gordon Cowan commented that 'the town of Dover is fortunate to have such a group of local citizens who are dedicated to the improvement and to the heritage of the area... a shining example of civic pride.' DDC paid for materials and gave the Society £100. Another clean up by cadets of Shakespeare Beach produced 80 sacks of

litter plus larger items and members of Archers Court Youth Centre helped with another beach clean up. A different challenge for the Projects Group came when help was requested from the Abingdon Memorial Trust responsible for the restored St. Edmund's Chapel. A day was spent clearing gutters and soakaways from years of vegetation growth and litter. Gutters and downpipes were then prepared for painting the following spring.

After an outstanding career in the Civil Service Sir Clifford Jarrett had been appointed Chairman of DHB which he said was his most enjoyable job. Following his death, Lady Jarrett, his family and friends asked the Society to organise a suitable memorial to one of Dover's most talented sons. A bronze geographer plaque on a concrete base sited on the Prince of Wales Pier was agreed and Lady Jarrett unveiled it in April 1998.



We can let our hair down sometimes! Four members volunteered to be the Society's relay team in the Christmas Lights beer run. Each team member, dressed as wine waiters, had to run from Market Square to St. Mary's, carrying a tray with a glass of beer then drinking the beer and handing over to the next waiter who ran back in similar fashion. Our team did not win, but it was fun!

The Society was divided over a member's suggestion to resite the Zeebrugge Bell from the Town Hall to the lighthouse on the Prince of Wales Pier (reflecting its original position on the mole at Zeebrugge). Other possibilities were considered but the bell was deemed to be part and parcel of the listed building and so it was left where it was!



Despite this, it was felt that the bell should be better promoted and a plan was agreed to clean the existing stone plaque and to install a new plaque at eye level. So it was that the St George's Day 2001 Zeebrugge Raid event included the unveiling of the new plaque paid for by the Society, DDC, DTC and the City of Bruges. Fifty members of the British Legion were on parade plus four Society members (who did not keep in step and were asked to drop out - what a relief!). The Society had first been officially invited to the St. George's Day Zeebrugge Ceremony in 1999 - first a wreath laying at HMS *Vindictive's* grappling iron on the seafront, (now outside Maison Dieu House), then to St James' Cemetery for a service and wreath laying where many of those killed in the raid are buried along with their commander, Admiral Keyes, and finally to the Town Hall where at noon the Zeebrugge Bell is rung. The Society is represented every year and lays a wreath at this moving ceremony, which attracts more organisations every year.

## 1999

At the 1999 AGM we said goodbye and paid tribute to two Society stalwarts, Jennifer and John Gerrard who were moving out of the area following John's retirement. To remind them of Dover they were presented with two Victorian prints of Dover and a photograph of Connaught Park. We heard that the thrice yearly Newsletter was costing £2400 a year, although offset by £500 worth of advertisements and a donation of £400 from Pfizer. During the past year donations had been made to St. Mary's Bells restoration fund, Crabble Corn Mill, Christmas tree lights, the carnival programme, the 1999 Dover Pageant (at which the Society was well represented as usual), Countdown to Millennium Fund, Buckland League of Friends and Dover College Music Dept, (in lieu of a fee for our Christmas Feast entertainment). The AGM was followed by Jonathan Sloggett talking about the future of the port.

'Operation looking fine' was the grand title for yet another litter clearance by cadets - this time on Castle Hill.

Yet another proposed reorganisation of local government - the third in 30 years - had to be considered, including Regional Development Agencies not directly elected with the South East Region stretching from Dover to Oxford, which the Society thought made no geographical, economic or historic sense. Also proposed were annual elections, polling stations at supermarkets, elected mayors and single tier unitary authorities. The Society preferred the return of power and resources from central government to county and district councils. Not included in our official submission were committee members' comments like 'the road to hell', 'big on promises' and 'short on action'.

Locally we welcomed the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme in the London Road Conservation Area (left hand side), but objected to Lidl moving into the MFI site as being out of character in the Castle Street conservation area. With Buckland Paper Mill closing down, the Society applied for the listing of the mill's Crabble Hill facade and the clock tower, but it was refused. Residents of Victoria Crescent received a Society award for the exterior refurbishment of their properties.

Budge Adams paid a Newsletter tribute to Philomena following her death in October 1999. The Society later celebrated her life and contribution to the Society by donating an annual art prize to Dover Girls' Grammar School where Philomena had taught. It was first awarded in July 2002 when the winner, chosen by her peers, was presented with £25 art materials. The school was presented with a memorial plaque and two of Philomena's paintings donated by members.

As part of the Millennium celebrations sixth formers were invited to enter an essay competition. The topic was 'Discuss ways in which Dover town could build upon its historic past to benefit the town in the next century'. In December 1999 the winner, Amy Packman of Dover Girls' Grammar School, was presented with a £50 book token and £100 of books for the school.

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## 2000

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Accounts of Dover's elaborate Millennium celebrations on 31 December and 1 January appeared in the Millennium issue of the Newsletter in April. Surprisingly, Jack Woolford's talk in January, entitled The First Millennium, was his first to the Society.

## Millennium Plaques



Two years previously, Terry Sutton's suggestion to commemorate the Millennium by providing and erecting a number of commemorative Society plaques was agreed, but soon hit insurance problems. Undaunted, Sheila and Jeremy Cope set about producing 10 plaques costing £225 each. Their efforts were rewarded when the first two were erected in February 2000: in Taswell Street, commemorating the first bomb to be dropped in Britain on Christmas Eve 1914 and on the TSB/Lloyds Bank (now Dover Gateway) building in Castle Street, celebrating the last shell to fall on Dover during the Second World War. The Town Mayor did the honours in Taswell Street and the Chairman of DDC in Castle Street. Others followed commemorating: the town's instruments of punishment, use of the old Market Hall as a temporary mortuary for those killed in the 1918 Zeebrugge Raid, William Burgess (painter and author), Philip Yorke (Lord Chancellor), Lord Warden Hotel (used by Napoleon III), the Bronze Age Boat discovery site and Charles Dickens who lodged in Camden Crescent. The tenth plaque commemorating the site of Dover's public gallows was finally erected in 2002 on the Eagle pub after resolving a number of difficulties. When all the plaques were in place an accompanying plaque trail leaflet was produced. Financial assistance and practical help came from DDC, DTC, DHB, Lloyds/TSB and an anonymous donor.

November saw the launch of *Collected Memories of a Century* as part of the Society's Millennium celebrations. Merrill Lilley, Budge Adams and Derek Leach created Triangle Publications in order to publish this book of memories of Dover previously published as articles in the Newsletter. Whilst the Society provided no funding, any profit was for Society funds. It was a sell out.

Society members also bought three flagstones at £145 each for the Millennium path around the new Pencester bandstand, which was finally completed with 100 flagstones in 2001. Each stone was inscribed with an historic Dover event.

The Society acted as a catalyst to bring together interested parties in an attempt to improve the London Road area and offered congratulations to the owner of the former Buckland Wesleyan Church which he had restored and opened as the King's Hall.

Some members were invited to the opening of the purpose-built Bronze Age Boat gallery containing the excavated and preserved portion of the 3600 year old boat. The Society had donated £1250 to the trust fund set up to save, restore and maintain the craft.

A flood of consultation documents from KCC and DDC deluged the Planning Committee and Executive. One gave three options to be considered for the St. James' area redevelopment: either inclusion of a factory outlet or a superstore or a mixed development of high quality housing, restaurant and pubs - the last being favoured by the Society. The eventual DDC planning brief did not stipulate a superstore but that's what emerged as an essential anchor tenant! There was also a strange proposal for a funicular railway from Maison Dieu car park via an underpass to cross Maison Dieu Road, up

Godwyne Road to a tunnel under the castle moat, but the Society preferred a glazed lift from the sports centre up the castle cliff. As always, many grand ideas, but came to nothing.

### **Cowgate Cemetery**



*John Owen retired as projects leader after many years and many successful projects. With nobody prepared to take on the role, Barry Late agreed to coordinate projects with different leaders for each. A brainstorming session produced ideas for new projects - sponsorship of roundabouts and flower beds, restoration of the Gateway gardens fountain and even renovation of rundown properties. These ideas were soon overtaken by the Cowgate Cemetery project. This was prompted by two articles on Cowgate in the Newsletter - one by Paul Hadaway of the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership and the other by Derek Leach, following a guided walk round Cowgate led by member Martyn Webster. The Society was challenged to help with maintaining the closed Victorian cemetery as a haven for wild life, but also respecting it as a burial ground. Following a site meeting with WCCP we agreed to take on the maintenance of one of the eight sections, although once a power strimmer was employed progress was much quicker and by 2002 the Society was maintaining four sections. Two teams of volunteers each working once a month were formed with a third team to record all the (legible) headstones except the 400 previously recorded*

by Mrs De Bourbel. Whilst DDC held a full list of burials there was no plan. 7624 bodies were interred from 1837 with up to 12 bodies per grave. Even fallen headstones were lifted temporarily to expose well-preserved inscriptions. In 2003 the Society provided the historical text for an interpretation panel at the cemetery and contributed £100 toward the cost. By 2004 the whole two acre cemetery was being maintained and the recording of inscriptions was completed after 3 years. In addition maps of the eight plots were made with the location and grave number of each recorded headstone. In addition the information was donated to the museum and a second book of maps was presented to DDC. The Kent Family History Society also made the information available on microfiche. The incredible maintenance project, coordinated by Jeremy Cope, continues.

Although a closed cemetery, the final burial occurred in 2006 when William Ebenezer Petchey, the last surviving member of the family of sextons who had maintained the cemetery for three generations was interred in the family plot.

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## 2001

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### **Budge Adams project**



2001 started sadly with the death of Budge Adams in January at the age of 91. At his 90th birthday celebrations he said that his best present was having his driving licence

renewed for another three years, but sadly he did not make full use of it! The Newsletter contained tributes by the Chairman and both Vice Chairmen - a good man with a deep and lasting love of Dover who loved to look back but was also forward thinking; a man of strong views who expressed them. Budge maintained that he needed to live until he was 120 to do all that he wanted to do; it was not to be, but he had a jolly good try!

Budge's collection of over 100 books, maps and memorabilia plus more than 2000 slides were donated by the Adams family to the Society. This became quite a project. First, everything was catalogued over one winter. Then, in order to make them available to the public, the books and maps went on permanent loan to the library and the slides to the museum. Many of the slides were taken by Budge whilst others were borrowed and copied. Society volunteers, Bob Hollingsbee and Derek Leach, then scanned the slides onto the museum's database. The final stage was to publish a selection in book form as a tribute to Budge. Dover Tribute appeared in 2003. It proved immensely popular; members received a free copy and the public bought the rest within three weeks, making a reprint necessary, which also sold out.

DHB produced a highly controversial Westport project plan to cope with the expected increase in traffic by 2015. This was to be to the west of the Admiralty Pier with the loss of Shakespeare Beach.

At the 2001 AGM Jeremy relinquished the Chair after three years and Terry Sutton took over. Bill Naylor replaced Leo Wright as secretary who retired after 10 years at the age of 85. Hugh Gordon took over projects and Jack was made a Vice President.

Triangle Publications, now without Budge, decided to publish another book, entitled *Dover and the Monarchy 1066-1688*, based

upon Ivan Green's Newsletter articles which was launched in October. This was soon followed by a third book researched and written by members Julia and Peter Burville called *White Cliffs of Dover*, which told the story of the community that lived in cave dwellings in the famous cliffs, including some of Peter Burville's ancestors.

The Society did not take kindly to the hotel eventually built on the site of the imposing Marine Court, describing it as of industrial design, concrete blocks, factory-type roofing with a cylindrical attachment resembling an industrial water tower! Plans for the conversion of the closed White Cliffs Experience into the Discovery Centre housing the library and adult education centre with a cafe and theatre were welcomed.

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## 2002

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On the planning front plans to dual the A2 from Lydden Hill to Dover, already 25 years behind schedule, were resurrected, but it was not to happen before 2008 - and never has happened despite the desperate need to relieve Townwall Street of lorry congestion and pollution. Welcome news was DDC's Dover Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal - analysing the wealth of listed buildings and the potential for enhancement. Plans for development on the Western Heights were opposed by the Society and rejected by DDC. John Peverley had previously saved the moats in the 1950s from the Borough Council's plan to infill with domestic rubbish! An invitation from DHB to join the Port Consultative Committee was accepted.

The Society joined the campaign 'to save our public loos' which were under threat of closure due to DDC cuts. We also objected to the 45% cut in the museum's budget

with curators reduced from three to one, fewer custodians and the loss of temporary exhibitions. Tourism staff were reduced from five to one. Even the Town Hall was under threat. A good piece of news was that the idea of a riverside walk, first mooted by the New Dover Group 40 years before, had been taken up by KCC and DTC. In despair about some of Dover's eyesores, the Society decided to shame them in a letter to the local newspapers, naming Burlington House, Woolworth, Premier Inn, B&Q, the Townwall St/Bench Street corner, some King Street shops, the derelict Crypt site and rubbish behind shops in Biggin Street. On the other hand De Bradelei Wharf was praised.

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## 2003

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A plan to convert Buckland Flour Mill into flats could open up its millpond as part of the riverside walk; however, the application was rejected and when revised and represented there was no public access. The planning brief for Buckland Paper Mill was also released with a mixture of housing and employment plus access to the river hidden for so many years underneath the mill buildings. We waited eagerly to see the site redeveloped, but had to wait until 2011 for a start!

With a new managing director DHB did an about turn on its idea for a Westport outside the present harbour. Instead it proposed a new 30 year masterplan to cope with a doubling of traffic - first maximising use of the Eastern Docks and then redeveloping the Western Docks when necessary.

### ***River Dour Steering Group***

*The Society asked DTC to finance a survey of the river to identify opportunities for improvement and how best to achieve them. The report raised concerns not only about rubbish but also pollution from upstream.*

*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.

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## 2004

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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!

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## 2005

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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.

## Heritage Open Days



*Every year Heritage Open Days are organised when places of historic interest not normally open to the public are opened free of charge for up to four days in September. The Unitarian Church in Adrian Street had participated since 2000 - the only Dover property to do so and in 2003 the Society was asked to help staff it, which it did, but also included a guided walk round nearby Cowgate Cemetery. This taster led to a new project for the Society with Derek Leach encouraging other properties to participate in future years by taking on the administration involved and the local and national publicity. This resulted in five properties opening their doors in 2005: St. Edmund's Chapel, Maison Dieu House complete with town regalia, Archcliffe Fort, the Grand Shaft and the Unitarian Church. This has continued every year since with one or two new venues added each year (St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Bell Tower, Town Hall, Roman Painted House and St. Radigund's Abbey) now totalling 10. This acts as a shop window for Dover with visitors from near and far.*

Once again the Society was inundated with consultation documents - the South East Plan, Kent and Medway Structure Plan, Local Development Framework, DTC's Five Year Plan, St. James' area scheme (now known as Dover Town Investment Zone or DTIZ), White Cliffs Business Park Phase 2 etc. The Dover Pride partners were employing consultants to produce a

Dover master plan to feed into the Local Development Framework. The Society was quite clear on its priorities - extending the high speed rail link to Dover, a rail link to the docks, dualling of the A2, improvement of Townwall Street and upgrading of Dover Priory station, not to mention the need for jobs by the thousand to stimulate everything else! DDC sought views on the number of houses to be built in the District between 2006 and 2026 - 5900, 7900 or 9900.

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of Dover Harbour Board in 2006 we suggested that they should erect (once again) a bandstand in Granville Gardens.

A brainstorming meeting wanted better access to the Bleriot Memorial in time for the centenary of the first flight across the Channel in 1909, a new exit road from the Eastern Docks to ease congestion and a lorry holding area on the M20/A20 to keep traffic moving in Townwall Street at peak times, port expansion, docks rail link, new water supplies, a hospital and a higher education centre. No grand schemes were felt to be needed merely to make the most of what Dover already had.

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## 2006

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At the 2006 AGM Sheila Cope took a well earned rest after many years as 'Queen of the Raffle' held at every Society meeting, but retained her Membership Secretary role, reporting a record membership of 444. Another record was very worrying - Dover had 500 houses and 50 shops empty. The closure of Connaught Barracks meant the end of a military presence in Dover except for the Deputy Constable still living in Constable's Tower and the Society was concerned about the future of Fort Burgoyne within the site. The AGM heard how the Chairman's role extended beyond charring meetings of the

Society and its Executive since he (we have still not had a female Chairperson) also represented the Society at functions such as the installation of the Lord Warden, the annual Zeebrugge Raid ceremonies, the mayor making and the Remembrance Services. Something completely new was Society Christmas cards using images from Budge Adams' Collection.

The Society continued to make modest grants to local projects such as £250 toward publication of the Townwall Street dig report, £300 to the Painted House appeal and £200 toward the cost of the Bronze Age Boat Conference.

To cope with an expected doubling of traffic in the next 25 years, DHB produced an ambitious masterplan which would eventually provide four new ferry berths at the Western Docks and would require the filling-in of the Granville Dock and the Tidal Basin. Wellington Dock would be landlocked and surrounded by a hotel, restaurants, shops and apartments. To compensate for the loss of the yachting marina a new marina would be sited to the east of the Prince of Wales Pier. The Society wanted to retain the Customs Watchhouse and remnants of the historic North and South Piers and we were pleased that our submission for a water link between the Wellington Dock and any new marina in the harbour was accepted.

A spate of welcome news came before the end of 2006: Priory Station was to be upgraded at long last and the high speed rail link would be extended to Dover despite the cost of enabling trains to go through the Shakespeare tunnels; Wetherspoons would be moving into the derelict cinema site (we are still waiting), the Netto superstore opened and the Seasports Centre was to be built. However, the Society joined in the many protests

against Connaught Barracks becoming an open prison. The proposal was eventually dropped for a number of reasons, but the proximity of the Duke of York's Royal Military School being the most compelling. Instead, 500 carbon neutral houses were planned - not the hospital or university campus as some hoped. We did not object but repeated our concerns about the future of Fort Burgoyne.

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2007

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At the 2007 AGM a record membership of 450 was reported. Joan Liggett retired as Social Secretary and refused any presentation, but agreed to become a Vice President. Pat Hooper stepped into her shoes. Tribute was paid to member Joe Harman, Freeman of Dover, who had died, aged 92, in January.

The website, managed by Mike McFarnell, became much more popular when Lorraine Sencicle's articles on the many Dovers around the world, first published in the *Dover Mercury*, were included. A Dover history scrapbook was added soon afterwards making use of Kathleen and Bob Hollingsbee's extensive archive.

## 2008

The 2008 AGM saw the membership record broken again at 464.

As its contribution to the 2008 Dover Festival, the Society underwrote and organised an expensive Tallis Concert in the ancient refectory of Dover College where Thomas Tallis (born 1505) would have eaten during his six years as organist at St. Martin's Priory. It was a unique occasion with a 40 strong Canterbury Cathedral choir. The Festival included yet another Dover Pageant, which celebrated its centenary. Member and Pageant Master, Mike McFarnell, vowed that it was his last!

It was good to hear that several empty properties were to be brought back into use by converting them to dwellings: the Salvation Army Citadel, the Churchill Club (former Buckland School), the former college in Ladywell and the URC church in High Street - tragically the last was burnt down just before completion. Plans to improve Station Approach were welcomed, but we lobbied for many more station parking spaces than the existing 29 to cope with the expected increase in commuters using the high speed trains. Air quality concerns caused by ships and lorries were voiced as were worries over so many new houses planned without new jobs. We supported Langdon Action Group's opposition to a wind farm so close to dwellings which eventually succeeded after a public inquiry.

Recognising the 125th anniversary of the opening of Connaught Park in 1883 the Society planted a holm oak.

Lorraine Sencicle's long battle to secure a new hospital for Dover appeared to be reaching a successful outcome in 2008, but subsequent controversy over a suitable site

(Whitfield or town centre) caused lengthy delays. The official choice of the town centre was scuppered by Environment Agency concerns over flood risk and the Buckland Hospital site, despite its access problems, was eventually chosen.

Our attempt to tidy up the area at the foot of Mote Bulwark and possibly open the historic site to the public was frustrated by no co-operation from the private owner and Kent Highways opposing any access off the A20. We had better luck with refurbishing a plaque in Saxon Street commemorating the help Belgian workers gave in 1946 repairing war-damaged houses in the area.

A proposal to create a lorry park for 3000 vehicles to replace Operation Stack and to reduce congestion in Townwall Street when ferries were disrupted was considered, but - guess what - it never happened! We also objected to too many houses proposed for the Westmount site in Folkestone Road, which is still derelict.

### **Town Hall project**

*A talk during the Dover Film Festival by John Clayton, retired DDC Director of Technical Services, led to the Society approaching the owner, DDC, as to whether a major lottery bid to refurbish the Town Hall might be possible after the 2012 Olympic Games (when lottery funds might be more plentiful); DDC agreed. A modest Society Town Hall Restoration Fund was opened using a block of shares donated by a member. The Town Mayor, Sue Jones, was enthusiastic about our hopes for the restoration of the Town Hall and a joint approach was discussed with Jon Iveson, Museum Curator. As a result the Society convened a meeting with representatives from DDC (the owner), Sue Jones (the Town Mayor), Dover Rotary Club and Thanet Leisure Force (the Town Hall operator) which agreed to form a group to consider*

*the feasibility of restoring the Town Hall to something like its Victorian splendour aided, it was hoped, by a major Heritage Lottery Fund grant, making its history better known and increasing access to the building.*



*The first task was to make the public both near and far more aware of the building and its history. A modest start was made in May 2011 with guided tours every Wednesday morning once a month with guides provided by the Society and Kent Greeters. From September, with the opening of the new History Room in the old Court Room, tours are now available every Wednesday. By May 2012 500 people had visited. With this increased momentum, publicity was aimed also at groups attracting up to 40 people at a time. Attracting cruise passengers proved more difficult!*

*The project is now in its second and more difficult phase of preparing the ground for a major lottery fund bid considering what should be restored and how it should be used and managed in the future to maximise its potential for commercial, community and heritage use.*

A short, sharp campaign was waged to save a Second World War ARP post in Station Approach - one of the few surviving - which resulted in its listing. The Society pursued with KCC, thought to be the owner, the possibility of us cleaning it up

and keeping the area around it tidy. Unresolved ownership frustrated our offer to adopt the site.

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## 2009

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**H**aving persuaded DDC to celebrate the centenary of Louis Bleriot's historic 37 minute first cross Channel flight on 25 July 1909 and to have a lasting legacy of the celebration by improving the memorial site and access to it, we were pleased with the work done and the ceremony on the day. The event was made more special by an original Bleriot XI plane flying across, a fly past by the Red Arrows and their French counterpart and a display of veteran aircraft at the Duke of York's School followed by dinner in the castle grounds and fireworks.



Concerned about the neglected state of the town's historic interpretation panels and with DDC too cash-strapped to help, we urged, with only partial success, DTC to take on their maintenance and we offered to fund the replacement of the Bleriot panel in time for the centenary. Our suggestions that the empty B&Q premises at Charlton Green should become a bowling alley and /or ice rink and that Snoops (the empty former cinema) should be compulsorily purchased for a community centre both came to nothing.

The proposed Local Development Framework taxed us - particularly the plan

for up to 10,000 new houses in the District, including 5,750 at Whitfield. We considered that jobs before houses were a must.



The so-called Olympic Legacy in the form of a massive, intrusive TV screen in the Market Square, broadcasting daily from 7am to 11pm, received the thumbs down from the Executive, but, despite many objections and no recommendation from its officers, DDC's Planning Committee approved it. From installation until the 2012 Olympics no sizeable audience was attracted to justify the running costs paid locally or for the eyesore created. With DDC now responsible for it, this half million pound monstrous white elephant may be too expensive to demolish and so Market Square may be blighted for many more years.

We felt it necessary to support an appeal to the Ombudsman for maladministration on the part of DDC in respect of an application for back garden development in Maison Dieu Road.

### **Refurbishment Committee**

*With all the grand regeneration schemes making slow, if any, progress, the Society was anxious to identify and lobby for a range of modest improvements to make the town more attractive to residents and visitors and to promote some civic pride in our surroundings. These ranged from tackling the continual litter problem and other antisocial behaviour to forcing some property owners to*

*maintain their buildings. The Refurbishment Subcommittee was set up to concentrate on these issues. In addition, it undertook a survey of Dover's buildings to review listed buildings and conservation areas, whether other buildings should be listed and to check the state of the buildings for possible enforcement action. As DDC lacked resources, we offered to monitor conservation areas for them and to report problems but DDC had to point out that, unfortunately, enforcement action would be very limited due to staffing cuts. After providing a priority list of buildings that we urged should be repaired compulsorily, DDC decided in 2012 to trial the application of 'Section 215 action'. DDC carried out legal checks and DDC issued warning letters, resulting in 50% of owners reacting positively without enforcement action. The initial scheme, covering Castle Street, has since been extended to other areas of the town.*

A new Society plaque was installed to commemorate Thomas Pattenden, draper and stocking seller, but, more importantly, a Dover diarist who recorded daily events for over 20 years throughout the Napoleonic period. Put on St Mary's Parish Centre it overlooks the churchyard where he is buried, but where all trace of his grave was removed in 1978.

Something of a bombshell was the financial failure of the Civic Trust, which had provided a national voice for amenity societies for many years. After careful consideration of the cost benefits the Society chose not to join the successor organisation at least for the time being.

With DDC and ASDA unable to agree over whether the associated car park should be free for users or not, the supermarket withdrew from the St. James's redevelopment throwing the whole scheme back into the melting pot. We wondered whether it was a blessing in

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.

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## 2010

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### ***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.

2011



With the Society's funds receiving virtually no interest consideration was given to increasing membership subscriptions which had not changed since 1996 - £6 or £10 for a couple. Fearful of losing members who would not change their standing orders, it was not pursued.

Barry Smith, the Society's first secretary, died during 2011.

The old and almost illegible stone plaque commemorating the Granville Street Boys' School, destroyed by enemy action in 1943, was replaced by The Society and unveiled in February 2011, funded by Charlton Primary School, Charlton Church and our members.

With Jack Woolford in a poor state of health, Patrick Sherratt became acting Planning Committee Chairman. Our reaction to the government's Big Society policy (to offset the effects of necessary cuts in public finance by increased efforts by volunteers) was that there was already a massive contribution by volunteers and without the support of cash-strapped local authorities volunteers would become disheartened.

Land owners submitted over 100 new sites for possible development to be considered

for inclusion in the Local Development Framework. The Society's comments included objections to the possible loss of Crabble Athletic Ground. An unusual consultation was that for a new cemetery with the Society opting for Elms Vale as the most suitable site on offer.

One of the three remaining Swingate Second World War radar masts was demolished without warning, resulting in the Society lobbying for the listing of the remaining two. Another unwelcome surprise was the proposed closure of Dover Castle during the winter months (except at weekends). The many objections, including ours, proved pointless. A meeting with DDC's Roger Walton discussed our concerns about the lack of seafront toilets, the sad state of the seafront Lindemann plaque, Connaught Pond, cleaning contracts, increasing traffic wardens' duties to include litter offending and antisocial behaviour, the new rubbish/recycling collection arrangements as well as flower beds and planters.

We responded to DTC's draft Ambition Plan (or wish list) which was a mixture of tasks that DTC could undertake and lobbying others.

### ***Western Heights development***

*A highly controversial and ambitious scheme was floated by China Gateway International which envisaged some visitor facilities for the Western Heights fortifications, but also a hotel and housing, plus more housing at Farthingloe coupled with a country club and park. Our initial reaction was that the Western Heights Ancient Monument should be protected; however, since private money appeared to be the only way to preserve and promote this valuable heritage asset, we should not close the door without considering some sensitive, limited development if there were a substantial gain for the Ancient Monument that outweighed any drawbacks.*

*The original proposals were substantially modified, following consultations, in the subsequent outline planning application submitted in July 2012. The Society could not support it without a guarantee that the benefits for the Drop Redoubt were guaranteed as well as concerns over quality of materials and design. English Heritage opposed the application, but with DDC keen to regenerate the area, negotiations with the parties continue.*

We continued to meet the DDC Director of Community and Development informally to discuss progress - or lack of - on all the major regeneration schemes. A start on redeveloping the Buckland Paper Mill site at long last brought sighs of relief. Meetings were attended about, or we submitted views upon, DDC's draft Heritage Strategy, its Open Space Policy, its standards for shop fronts in conservation areas, the Green Infrastructure Plan, the Dover Surface Water Drainage Scheme, the proposed River Dour cycle route and the Localism Bill (now an Act). At long last DDC and DTC were taking legal action on our aim to see neglected properties improved or repaired and the Society nominated 60 for some attention. We were also lobbying about the need to bring the many empty homes back into use and were keeping a close eye on the derelict former cinema in Castle Street hoping that its proximity to the St. James' development would at long last galvanise Wetherspoons into action.

Our response to the Local Government Resource Review with its proposals for business rates to be retained locally was that it would be good for thriving towns, but could put struggling towns like Dover at a disadvantage. We were, however, pleased to see that some of our major concerns about the government's controversial national planning reforms were alleviated somewhat in the final

version of the National Planning Policy Framework - the automatic presumption in favour of development was omitted, brownfield sites and town centres should once again be considered before green spaces are used and the term 'sustainable development' was at least defined, but would probably create a load of legal wrangles.

Member Alan Sencicle sets a fine example litter picking voluntarily in the town, but one man cannot do it all! Our request for DDC's civil enforcement officers' (parking attendants) duties to be extended to include certain antisocial behaviour and litter dropping eventually resulted in DDC implementing a zero tolerance policy early in 2013. On a brighter note, we were pleased to congratulate Morrison's for the much improved area around their store. The state and lack of public toilets continued to give concern especially on the seafront. Efforts to get Kent Highways to replace any diseased street trees removed were rebuffed due to financial constraints. The need for an easily accessible and safe footpath to link the castle to Langdon Cliffs via the Bleriot Memorial resulted in the Society proposing a route. The cost of repairing Connaught Park pond meant that its future was in doubt, but after constant lobbying DDC eventually found the money.

### **Talks**

*Talks given at Society meetings, free of charge to the public, have ranged far and wide over the 25 years with many covering aspects of Dover's long and fascinating history, some highly topical or controversial such as regenerating Dover and the future of the Harbour Board. Perhaps just a few may be mentioned as particularly memorable. Dick Bolton's unusual History of Bricks proved fascinating. The most moving was almost certainly by Richard Sturt, former Dover Coroner, about his most difficult and*

*controversial inquest on 187 of the 193 people who died when the Herald of Free Enterprise capsized off Zeebrugge in 1987. On the other hand, the most convivial has to be the talk on beer by the Head Brewer of Shepherd Neame, helped considerably by all the free samples! 'Who Hung the Monkey' was surely the strangest title when Jack Woolford told the story of his home town of Hartlepool. Finally, the prize for the longest talk goes to Budge Adams when he took us on a walk from Shakespeare Cliff to Langdon Bay, which ended at 10.45pm!*

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## 2012

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The 2012 AGM saw the election of an Executive Committee without Jack Woolford for the first time since the Society was formed in 1988. Failing health meant that he played little part in Society affairs during 2011 and at 94 the time had come for him to retire. Jack, with Philomena Kennedy and Peter Johnson, were the founding fathers of the Society which had been the centre of Jack's life ever since. The Chairman paid tribute to his outstanding contribution and added that we would miss his enthusiasm, wisdom, experience, wit, command of the English language - plus the champagne on his many birthdays! A presentation of a kindle was made by the President later. Jack remains a Vice President.

Yet more Society historic plaques were being considered with the first in memory

of Doctor Koettlitz to be placed on the newly restored Charlton House.

Despite poor weather during the summer, the vision and hard work of member Mike McFarnell was well rewarded when thousands of Dovorians and others enjoyed the fantastic Military Tattoo at Connaught Barracks to help celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June. The Olympic Torch arrived in July and, despite the rain, huge crowds thronged the seafront to see it, the entertainment and the fireworks display.

### *and finally...*

At the 2012 AGM when introducing his annual report Chairman, Derek Leach, said, 'When asked, "What is The Society for?" I always summarise our objectives by saying that we care about Dover's past, its present and its future. To do this we have to react and comment upon what is going on around us both locally and nationally, but we are also proactive by taking the initiative ourselves or by influencing others. A common thread running through our efforts...is making the best of what Dover already has. As usual, time will only allow me to give you the headlines of all the activities carried out on your behalf, but underlying them all is the continual and dedicated bread and butter work that goes on year in and year out by a relatively small number of members. All taken together makes The Dover Society what I hope, indeed I know it is: a force for good in Dover, a force to be reckoned with and a force respected.'

Long may it continue.

# THE DOVER SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1988

Affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies  
Registered Charity No. 299954

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