
Second Talk

Dover Heritage Trail (The Blue Bird Trail)

A Talk by Derek Leach

Reported by Terry Sutton

Our chairman Derek Leach, called upon to give a 'last minute' talk, described progress on Dover's planned heritage trail designed to attract tourists and other visitors into the town centre.

Derek gave his talk at our March meeting which was very well attended. Guest speaker was to have been educationalist Chris Russell who was unable to attend. He was to have spoken on Education in Dover. Members of the Port and Community Forum, established by Dover Harbour Board, have elected Derek as their chairman, as has a subgroup tasked with progressing a proposed heritage trail, the so-called Blue Bird Trail. The society is well represented on the forum and the subgroup.

Derek explained to our March meeting that the heritage trail subgroup had drawn up a provisional list of major and secondary historical sites in which visitors were likely to be interested.

Although the planned Blue Bird Trail could be joined anywhere, it would start at the Admiralty Pier where, it was hoped, it would be joined by passengers coming ashore from the cruise ships.

From Snargate Street the trail would continue along the sea front, crossing into Townwall Street, Castle Street, through the main street to Dover Priory (Dover College) and then to the Town Hall.

There are many features along the route including: the Grand Shaft, views of the Western Heights, Charles II monument,

The Rifles monument, the various statues on the sea front, Motes Bulwark, the tidy ruin of St James' church, the White Horse Inn, St Martin-le-Grand, Charles Dickens' association with Dickens' Corner, St Mary's Church, the Roman Painted House, the remains of Dover Priory and its links with Thomas Tallis and, of course, the magnificent Maison Dieu Hall.

The significance of a number of the sites was already explained by Dover District Council's interpretation panels but others would be needed, added Mr Leach.

Dover Harbour Board's Miss Barbara Buczek and Dover District Council's Tim Ingleton had already had a meeting with a representative of the Heritage Lottery Fund with the aim of financing the initiative. Feedback had been positive.

One of the ideas was to use smart technology so that a walker on the trail could use a mobile phone app to read the history of the attraction they were studying.

A major project was to embed in the pavement, at various stages along the route, a Blue Bird emblem to mark the direction of the trail. This idea was already the subject of discussions with the Highway Agency.

**Full phase delivery of the ambitious project is scheduled for the tourist season of 2015 and it has been agreed The Dover Society will handle the governance of the group while Dover Harbour Board is providing the secretariat.*