

MY TIME IN DOVER

Charlène Mineau

Everything started on Friday 31st, January 2014 after being stuck for four hours in a ferry due to the bad weather conditions. As soon as I saw the White Cliffs, I knew my dreams were going to come true again, exactly as in 2012.

I met my host family, in Waterloo Crescent a few days later and, everything was fine. The view from my window was absolutely stunning and every night I could hear the voice of the sea which, I confirm, as Kate Chopin wrote, really speaks to the soul. I also liked watching the ferries and contemplating the lights under a dark and starry sky.



Charlène Mineau

I met so many people this year and all of them contributed, without knowing it, to make this stay a truly memorable one. Among them, there is Mike McFarnell, always kind and still available if needed. Then the Greeters, especially Liz Dimech and Denise Smith who share the same qualities. Denise was the biggest surprise of this stay as we did not know each other. She really made my stay! And, she knows why...

I was really happy to meet all the Dover Society committee, Ray Newsam from the River Dour Partnership -which is henceforth hosted by the Dover Society, Lynda Pierce, Bryan, etc. A huge thank you to all of them and also to the Dover Town Council for lending me the Quiet Office and to Alan Lee who kindly asked me to write this article! **Thank You!**

It is good to see the people of Dover dedicating their time and energy to making their town a still more beautiful place to stay for several hours or ... perhaps forever.

It was also nice to see Graham Hutchison, Liese Holden, Tony Jayms and Chris Tutthill again with whom I had kept in touch since 2012.

I am so grateful to the Dover Society committee for accepting me under their organization for those four exceptional months. For letting me manage their website, even if we have different points of view, to set up a Pinterest and Twitter account as well as to manage their

Facebook one. Also to allow me to work with the Dover Greeters and at the Dover Town Hall.

I would also like to say thank you to a group: Dover for Dovorians, a group of local residents, created by Terry Clear on Facebook. This group is absolutely fantastic as are those who have joined it. Members are very helpful and willing to make Dover a better place to live.

Over the last four months, I did appreciate creating a marketing strategy for the Dover Greeters, getting more people involved in different matters such as the 2014 Film Festival and getting them interested in discovering the evolution of their town. I am also delighted to note that I have improved my IT skills by updating and managing the Dover Society and the Dover Town Guide websites as well as designing logos and leaflets, discovering Photoshop and designing a map. Likewise, I am thrilled that visitors appreciated the E. Clapson's exhibition I had prepared for them.

Making available on the internet the church records of Saint Mary-in-Castro was interesting to do as one of the book dates back to 1813! I also enjoyed welcoming visitors at the Leisure Centre. I taught four Dover Society members so that they can continue to carry out work on and with negatives when I am gone. I corrected and undertook translations into French and Italian.

Getting in touch through emails, with organizations such as Dover Conservatives and asking them to promote one of my team was also exciting.

Communication was an important part of my stay. That is why I attended various

meetings and events from extracurricular activities at the Transport Museum to more serious ones. I am thinking of:

- Dover Society committee meetings
- Dover Big Local meetings
- The Dover Society AGM
- The Friends of Dover Castle meetings
- A meeting with James Adams
- River Dour Partnership
- St George's day
- A Special Tour of the Castle
- Different trainings
- Job Fair etc.

As for the most unexpected one ... one evening at 18.20hrs at the bus station, Pencester Road Denise Smith and I welcomed a visitor, Noelyn. She had to stay in Dover for two days and we celebrated her 21st birthday as the Kent Greeters thought it would be nice to meet her and buy her a drink. We did not know her and the only thing we knew was that she was coming. Without consulting each other, Denise and I bought her a birthday card and a present. We spent the evening together, had a lovely dinner down by the seafront, and showed her our lovely town, Dover, by night! I wish you could have seen her eyes... She was so happy...A really unexpected evening!

To thank us, she made and uploaded a video on YouTube "Noelyn goes to Kent" with these first words: "Dedicated to Denise, Maria, Sylvia, Charlène and Abigail; thank you for making my 21st birthday a memorable one". She sent a message this week saying she is planning to come back soon. To use her own words, "Thank you Dovorians for making my second stay in your town a memorable one!