

A dedicated person is employed to help the homeless to return or to start employment. They link with many businesses and education establishments to improve basic literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Jobs, education, training and events have been provided locally thanks to a grant from Dover Big Local. This encouraged youngsters to attend sports and music events in Pencester Gardens. Others have been on sailing ships and courses with West Ham Football Club. These also help to

teach community values and working together.

"My Streets" is an initiative started in Canterbury. It includes a tour of the city but also teaches people where they can obtain help, have a wash or a bath when needed.

During her talk it became obvious that Fiona had a great passion for helping the homeless through her work with Porchlight.

————— Second Speaker —————

Invicta Miners – Stories of the Kent Coalfields

A talk by **Jim Davis**

Reported by **Terry Sutton**

The era when there were 7,000 miners working in the Kent coalfield was recalled when Jim Davis, an expert on the industry, was the guest speaker at our meeting on January 18th.

A number of former Kent miners were among the appreciative audience at the public meeting at St Mary's parish centre.

Jim knows what he's talking about. He worked at Betteshanger colliery for 33 years starting as a haulage hand and finishing his mining career, as the last employee there,



Statue of Miner Now Moved From Dover

by filling in the pit shaft when Betteshanger closed. In retirement he went on to become a successful Dover businessman.

Using film and other screened images he told how work on an abandoned Channel Tunnel at Shakespeare Cliff confirmed the belief that there was coal to be found under Kent. Coal had been mined from the same seams under Belgium and France since the Middle Ages, he said.

In the quest for the hidden coal East Kent



Shakespeare Colliery 1905

was peppered with exploratory boreholes in an area ringed by Dover, Deal and Canterbury. As a result it was estimated there were ten BILLION tons of coal and 200 million tons of iron ore under Kent.

To win this coal it was proposed to sink 17 collieries in Kent with an expected output of 13 million tons of coal a year.

Jim then explained why some 4,000 miners moved to Kent from all over the country, some even walking from Wales and Scotland.

In the 1920s and early 1930s there was widespread unemployment in the country's coalfields elsewhere while there were great expectations in Kent. Many of those out of work miners, a few years earlier in the 1914-18 war, were in the Forces under-mining German enemy defences to blow them up. They returned home to find themselves jobless-hence the march to East Kent.

In Kent they were not always welcome. Newspaper advertisements offering accommodation often stipulated "not for miners." There were also difficulties over the varied dialects.

At that stage it was believed a mining workforce of 147,000 would be required in



Chislethorpe Colliery 1930



Betteshanger Colliery

Kent along with 48,000 iron workers and detailed plans were drawn up for large villages away from the pits. At that stage, Jim pointed out, there were no pithead baths and the miners would walk to their homes covered in black dust to be cleaned up by their wives.

He recalled the expectation that Kent coal would be exported and one port considered was the "secret" wartime port of Richborough (where at one time 20,000 were employed) but eventually the owner



Collier Using A Jigger [Air Pick] 1980



1980 Setting Steel Bars

of Tilmanstone colliery came up with a scheme that carried coal the seven and a half miles from Tilmanstone to Dover docks by aerial ropeway.

This ropeway, with 600 buckets, strode across the green fields of East Kent and

then through a tunnel in the cliffs to a bunker at the end of the Eastern Arm to feed calling ships.

Jim scotched the myth that one or more of the Betteshanger coal seams was mined under the sea.

Refurbishment Committee Jeremy Cope

Of the matters of interest to us I update some of them below.

First I am very pleased to report the funding cut to Police services has been rescinded. Chief Inspector Barlow will not be moving which, given his work for Dover, is good news. Jenny Olpin and John Cotton will continue to hold regular meetings with CI Barlow to express concerns. If, at time, you have any matters which you believe should be brought forward do please contact Jenny on jenny.olpin@uwclub.net

The replacement of street lights is something, we believe, should reflect the nature of the area in which they are situated. For example Castle Street with its buildings has a particular aspect and changes need to be compliant with that sense. We do recognise that the style of replacements is very much one of taste and also in this day and age of cost. However the more of us content with changes the better. DDC with its recent building on the corner of Castle Street and Woolcomber Street gave the design such consideration and is, to many of us, a happy result.

We have been in correspondence with Tim Waggott, Chief Executive of Dover Harbour Board. Our first concern was for the Jarrett Plaque situated on the Prince of Wales Pier. The plaque is a brass geographer which aligns with Dover landmarks and thus

requires correct positioning in any relocation. Our concerns have been noted together with the need for a proper location if it is to "work". The second matter was that in any redevelopment of the Western Docks that the Dour outflow is unimpeded allowing for migrating fish to freely enter and leave the river. We also seem to be attracting seals into the Dour - obviously an increasingly popular place for sea creatures to visit. We received assurance that the flows would be similar to that currently experienced.

Jenny Olpin is now taking up the task of searching for funding appropriate signage to the pathway from the Castle via the Bleriot Memorial to the Cliff pathway. The present signage is fine if you are a walker with the proper maps but not too helpful to most locals and particularly visitors. For those unacquainted with the path it offers a much safer alternative to walking alongside of Upper Road.

If any of our members have any issues or problems with regard to litter enforcement then please contact Jenny Olpin. Tel: 01304 825011 E-mail: jenny.olpin@uwclub.net

Lastly we are looking forward to a talk in February from Andrzej Kluczynski "AJ" who leads the litter enforcement team. It should be very interesting to hear how the team works, its problems and how the public can help.