

MARCH MEETING

— Second Speaker —

Dover's Old Pubs

A Talk by Paul Skelton

Reported by Terry Sutton

How a classroom project led Paul Skelton to investigate the history of more than 8,000 public houses in Kent was described to our members at a public meeting in St Mary's parish centre in March.

Paul explained that one of his teachers at Dover Grammar School tasked him with a classroom assignment. He chose photography and decided to take pictures of Dover pubs. His interest grew about the subject and as a result has so far tracked down 697 pubs in business in Dover over the years. He's calculated that in one year, 1851, Dover had 251 pubs.

"Now I have taken on the research of every pub in Kent and my website includes over 8,000 of them", Paul told his audience.



Licensee, New Mogul, Dover, 1891



Last Lane Dover, 1950's

His talk, about a few Dover pubs and characters associated with them, included the history of The Criterion in Last Lane, the Dover Arms in 1846 in Oxenden Street, Rutley's wine vaults in Snargate Street, the Newcastle Inn in Limekiln Street, the Endeavour in Bulwark Street and the Shakespeare Head beer house that stood virtually on the beach below the cliffs to provide refreshments for labourers working on the railway.

Each of these licensed premises had their own stories. One related to a man who worked at Rutley's wine vaults (later Courts wine lodge) who rejoiced in the name of Titus Knott who, true to his name, hanged himself!

Paul has extensively researched the files of old newspapers to discover many interesting items about his selected pubs.

He found that coroners carrying out inquests often held their courts in public houses. Paul says this was because the pub's cool cellars were useful in keeping the bodies of the deceased preventing putrefaction.

His research led him to believe that at one stage, in 1840, the daughter of a large family, Sarah, with an invalid mother was running The Endeavour when only 11 years old.

Paul screened a picture of the facade of the Criterion in Last Lane which, he recalled, was reproduced as part of the wartime street scene provided when the White Cliffs Experience attracted visitors to what is now Dover Discovery Centre.

The Criterion building, over the years, had several names including The Lass, the American Stores, Who'd a Thought it and then in 1867 the Oxford Music Hall before

in 1888 becoming the Criterion.

One creepy fact from Paul was about the coroner's possible verdict of *felo-de-se* instead of suicide. If the former verdict was decided the deceased was likely to be buried at crossroads with a stake through the heart. And all his property forfeited to the monarch.



Hotel de Paris, 1920 Dover

River Dour Partnership

— Deborah Gasking —

We're in the waiting room.....
We're waiting to hear about funding for the River Dour info kiosk and river wardens.

We're waiting to hear about funding for the complete repair and refurbishment of our lovely Victorian Barton Path railings.

This does not mean bad news, just awaiting the good news. Apart from the waiting game, the monthly upkeep work - mostly litter picking - continues apace. And when we've completed one of these

tidying up days, the river looks glorious - a Dover Gem for us all to take pride in.

Please consider joining us for these tidy up days. Contact me by email at: deb4tune8@yahoo.co.uk or Sue Bradford at White Cliffs Countryside Partnership - 01304 241806. We'd love to see you there.

And we guarantee you will leave very satisfied knowing that you've not only done your bit to help keep Dover looking spick and span, but our wildlife benefit from our efforts.