

NOVEMBER MEETING

————— First Speaker —————

Western Heights Commonwealth War Memorial

A talk by John Pegg

Reported by Harry R. Harris

On Monday 19th November John Pegg gave us a comprehensive and informative view of the plans for the Dover Commonwealth Memorial.

John outlined the history of memorials in the UK, starting with the Cenotaph in London (1919), and then the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. The Dover Commonwealth Memorial would be the third leg of the “tripod”.

Why Dover? Dover has a “unique brand identity”, John explained. The castle is the second most visited castle in the UK with a throughput of 300,000 visitors per year. Then there are the White Cliffs making Dover an icon with thirty million visitors passing through every year.

With 2018 being the 100th anniversary of the World War 1 Armistice, there has been a general growth in the rise of Remembrance and the secular sacred. Memorials have a national significance, the

Holocaust and Normandy memorials were cited as examples.

Why the Western Heights? John explained that a fifty-year decline had left the western side of Dover severely neglected. The demise of the Grand Shaft Barracks, owned by Dover District Council, had left a scar which needed attention. There was an excellent business case for building the Memorial on the Western Heights as well as a topographical one. Situated in a hanging valley, the Memorial is projected to attract around 200,000 visitors per year.

Under the 2006 Scheme the Memorial itself would consist of 1.7 kilometres of wall to represent the 1.7 million dead. There would be a thousand names per lineal metre. The emphasis would be on accessibility; one step would cover 1500 individuals.

There is also an ecological dimension to the plans as various animals and birds have to



CWM Perspective Facing East

be respected and protected from encroachment on their habit. John mentioned dormice and bats as an example, an important aspect of any project of this magnitude.

For John the project has been a fourteen-year journey working with the Western Heights Preservation Society, Dover District Council, Kent County Council and various other agencies. There have been three design options with a public consultation in 2018. Funding, of course, is of paramount importance with a budget of twenty million pounds envisaged from various funding sources.



Proposed War Memorial Section of Wall

In conclusion, John's enthusiasm and efforts for the project were clearly visible. We would wish that his fourteen-year

journey has a successful conclusion. The benefits for Dover and the wider community will be a worthy legacy for years to come.

New Summer Social Secretary

Rodney Stone

Hello - I have taken over from our dear Patricia, valiantly backed by Patrick, as organiser of the Society's summer events. Equally, I will be supported by my Doreen. The events consist of trips usually put together by our friend Iain of Leo's Pride Coaches. Enclosed are details of three proposed trips for this year, agreed by the Executive Committee from suggestions by Iain based on his wide experience of taking parties to such places. May I ask members, please, to give early consideration and, where they wish, to sign up to those outings that appeal to them. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions and/or

expressions of interest if for the moment you are unable to commit. The Society has to go firm on trips well in advance of their dates for the sake of hosts and participants.

My being thus involved in the Society is something of a coming home for me. While I have lived much of my life in West Kent, my father was born at 309 London Road and my grandfather reputedly was Head Postmaster of Dover and Warden of Charlton Church between the Wars.

Beverley will continue so ably to organise the winter events.

Good wishes to all members.

Contact: Rodney Stone. Dover Society Summer Social Events Organiser.
Bahia, 10 Lighthouse Road, St. Margaret's Bay, Dover. CT15 6EJ
Telephone: 01304 852838 Email: randdstone29@gmail.com