

JANUARY MEETING

— Second Speaker —

Locating the Round Towers

A talk by Jeff Howe – Reported by Terry Sutton

Like many others, Jeff Howe has enjoyed the magnificent stained glass windows in the Maison Dieu hall. One which he found of special interest depicts Henry VIII in 1520 departing Dover for the Field of Cloth of Gold near Calais.

Jeff noticed that the scene included what appeared to be two towers on the dockside. Did they ever exist and if so where was their location in present day Dover?

This gave Jeff a subject as he studied for academic progress and so he turned historic detective taking him into researching national archives.

In January Jeff was a speaker at The Dover Society meeting at St Mary's parish centre when, using screened reproductions of ancient maps some going back nearly 500 years, he described his research.



The Twin Towers

“My original aim was to find out if these depicted towers existed at all. And, if they did, where were they in today's Dover?” he explained to his audience.

His research was assisted by names in the old Pier district, on old maps of rows of houses in Round Tower Street and Round Tower Lane. Now, of course, all gone.

Studying ancient sketches and maps he came to the conclusion the “twin” towers were built at slightly different times at the entrance to the old Paradise Pent and that at one stage they had rings attached to which ships could tie up.

A couple of other old sketches led him to believe that during the lifetime of at least one of the towers a cottage, possibly for a pilot, was built on top. With the help of the 1808 Will of Jatt Church, which showed where he owned property, Jeff pinpointed where he believes is the exact geographic position of the two towers in today's dockland. One, he submits, was near the base of the flyover that leads to P&O Ferries' offices, while the other is not far from the nearby former railway station—both well inland to where they would have been half a millennium ago.