

NOVEMBER MEETING

Second Speaker

Oxney Court

A talk by Christine Waterman - Reported by Terry Sutton

The tree-hidden acres of Oxney Court, near St Margaret's, were, around 1911, a prime site for the mining of first class coal, the Dover Society was told at our November meeting. But mining never went ahead, otherwise hundreds of miners would have moved into St Margaret's.

Former Dover museum curator Christine Waterman spoke on the Mysteries of Oxney Court and told us that the mining rights were included at one stage when the land and mansion were offered for sale. At that time there was road access from St Margaret's into the estate.

Miss Waterman listed the families who, over the centuries, have lived at Oxney Court and told us that the current residents were a Russian family. They bought Oxney in 2012, she said.

There was evidence, she explained, of Bronze Age burials in Oxney's acres, where in 1872 there was a population of a dozen.

Around 1066, with the arrival of William the Conqueror, the D'aubervilles owned Oxney, with the Jeken family tenancing the property for 200 years from 1551. Wealthy Deal mayor John May bought and extended Oxney mansion in 1812, until he got in financial difficulties. He had made his money during the Napoleonic Wars. Other owners followed, with the mansion badly damaged by fire at one stage.

There was a great deal of interest from the packed audience in the yarns about Oxney and the haunting of the nearby Dover-Deal

road. These including reports of a "grey lady" who boarded a bus but was never seen again, a Dover masked highwayman hanged in 1757 near the spot where he had held up carriages, and other mysteries including the death in 1942 of an escaped Italian prisoner of war said to have suffered from shock.

After being destroyed by fire in the First World War, the house sat in ruins until 1998 when it was rebuilt. Now with its crenellations and towers faithfully restored, Oxney Court is a substantial classic gothic-style Grade II Listed house.

In 2012, James Clague Associates (JCL) were engaged to assist an overseas client with the purchase and set-up of Oxney Court. Since then JCL have designed and project-managed a number of additions for the family.

The first project was a first-floor extension over the flat roof at the rear of the main house. This provided an additional en-suite bedroom with exquisite joinery and unique bathroom design and was completed in only seven weeks.

Since then, other additions have been an oak framed external kitchen, an entertainment area, a new cinema room with a whole house entertainment system, the conversion of a barn to a gym, installation of a new internal kitchen, upgraded heating and hot water systems and an adventure playground.

The result is now an estate which is of an exceptionally high quality, with all the facilities suited to comfortable family living and entertaining.

Editor