



Newsletter

No. 113
July 2025



St James Memorial Plinth Unveil April 2025



THE DOVER SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1988

Affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies
Registered Charity No. 299954

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Contents

2	Editorial	Alan Lee
March General Open Meeting 2025		
5	“Dover Town Council Plans for the Unitarian Church”	
	A talk by Allison Buntin	Alan Lee
6	“Beekeeping or Apiculture”	
	A talk by Roger Knight	Alan Lee
April Annual General Meeting 2025		
8	Dover Society Income and Expenditure	Jane Jones
10	“Guglielmo Marconi”	
	A talk by Barry O’Brien	
13	Annual General Meeting 2025 Update	Alan Lee
15	Dorothy Bushell Plaque Inauguration	Alan Lee
18	St James Memorial Plinth Unveiling	Martin Webster
20	Lady Frederica Rozelle Ridgway Pierrepont 1925-2015	Patricia Allan
24	Application for Membership	
25	Dover Society Christmas Lunch 2025 Order Form	
27	Our River Dour	Mary Margery
28	The Maison Dieu Reawakens	Derek Leach
30	Dover Heritage Open Days	
	12th to 21st September 2025	Paul Wells
32	Around Dover Museum, Dover Replica	
	Bronze Age Boat on Loan to France	Vronni Ward
34	Planning Committee	Graham Margery
36	The Village of River	Margarita Waite
40	The Field Marshall (Ret’d) and the Empress	Barry O’Brien
43	Book Review Dover Promenade Pier	Alan Lee
44	Dover: Depressed, Down and Out, or What	Peter Sherred
46	Charles John Huffam Dickens and Dover	Derek Leach
	Inside Back Cover	Programme 2025/26

The Objectives of the Dover Society

founded in 1988.

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archæology, natural history and architecture of the area
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- and commitment to the belief that a good environment is a good investment.

The area we cover comprises Dover Town Council, Guston Parish Council, Hougham Without Parish Council, Langdon Parish Council, Lydden Parish Council, River Parish Council, St Margarets at Cliffe Parish Council, Temple Ewell Parish Council and Whitfield Parish Council.

All members receive three Newsletters a year and in each year the Committee organises about ten interesting events – talks, tours, visits, Members' Meetings and usually a Christmas Feast.

The Society gives Awards for improvements to the area, monitors planning proposals and supports, joins in or initiates civic projects and arts events.

Editorial

It has been a busy time for the committee of late. There have been many meetings recently with a number of individuals, as well as with local committees. This has also been the busy period for planning future events that the Society is involved with. Many thanks to all who have attended these meetings.

A special thanks must also go to the dedicated band of volunteers who make and serve the refreshments, wash up and keep the kitchen tidy at our monthly winter meetings. Well done!

I am still in need of another proof reader to proof the text for our newsletter. It works out at only about thirty pages three times a year. The only criteria are that you must have a good knowledge of the English language and grammar. If you are interested then could you please contact the editor. My details are inside the front cover.

More details of the Christmas Lunch appear in the centre of this newsletter. Places are limited, so it would be wise to book as soon as possible. This year the venue will, once again, be the Marina Hotel. Maybe, next year, we will be able to return to the, now restored, Maison Dieu.

I am, as ever, on the look-out for articles with a local connection. If you would like to contribute, then please contact the editor. There is also an opening for someone to report on the talks held at our general open meetings. These reports are important as it keeps members who are unable to attend the meetings in touch with the Society talks,

In the coming months there are many local events taking place, so keep a look-out for timings and venues. There should be something of interest to most people. Do try to attend one or two, as a lot of effort in planning these has taken place.

Alan Lee, Editor

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DEADLINE for contributions

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 114 will be Wednesday 1st October 2025.

The Editor welcomes contributions and interesting drawings or photographs.

'Paper copy' should be typed at double spacing. Handwritten copy should be clear with wide line spacing. Copy on computer disc or by e-mail is acceptable. Pictures via e-mail to be submitted in JPEG and not imbedded in the text of the article and must be in as high resolution as possible. Please ring 01304 213668 to discuss details.

Publication in the Newsletter does not imply the Society's agreement with any views expressed, nor does the Society accept responsibility for any statements made.

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DOVER GREETERS

Dover Greeters have been welcoming visitors to Dover for over 15 years. We love to share the unique and hidden parts of Dover, and signpost visitors to make the most of their time in this iconic town. If you would like to join us please contact:

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MARCH MEETING

DTC Plans For The Unitarian Church

Allison Buntin

Dover Town Council Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

Reported by Alan Lee

Opening our March meeting our Chairman, Jenny Olpin introduced our first speaker, Allison Buntin, to the audience. Allison then gave an update on what plans Dover Town Council had for the Unitarian Church, a grade 2 listed building in Adrian Street. Opened in 1820, it has survived war damage and a fire in 1987, but the congregation is now so small that they cannot afford the rising upkeep costs.

During the last two years, Dover Town Council has consulted extensively with people in Dover about what matters to them. During the process, one of the things that has been highlighted is the lack of spaces in the town centre for performance, support groups, NHS drop-in services and many other things that Dovorians would like to have happen in the town. Another factor to emerge was a strong desire for a clean, safe and beautiful town to live in, this would include the preservation of its historic and special sites, to be open to the public.



The Unitarian Church

At a DTC meeting in March, discussions took place on a document exploring options, from using existing Community Centres and halls, buying a high street commercial property or purchasing the listed Unitarian Church and its associated hall. If the Council were to buy a building, then the funding would be via a loan through the Public Works Loans Board (the only legal option for borrowing by a Town or Parish Council) at a fixed rate. This would add to DTC's part of the annual Council Tax Demand.

DTC is looking at estimated figures for the purchase and managed maintenance of the Unitarian Church. The likely annual increase per household in Dover would be approximately £7 per annum for the next 10 years. For this, the town would:

1. Take into public ownership a listed building, preventing unsympathetic development or eventual demolition (most likely by an out-of-town purchaser);
2. Create a large (100+ capacity) performance venue with excellent acoustics;
3. Have the use of a well maintained, modern hall for clinics, support groups, youth hub and other activities that residents have expressed a need for.

As a result, without DTC having made any decision, Dovorians were then asked to let the Town Council know, by 1st April, whether they are in favour of public ownership of the Unitarian Church and whether they feel that £7 per annum for 10 years on their council tax would be a price they would be willing to pay for this.

MARCH MEETING

Beekeeping or Apiculture

Roger Knight

Reported by Alan Lee

Our 2nd speaker of the evening, Roger Knight began by posing the question, "Why Beekeeping?" He then explained that his interest was first aroused, at eleven years of age, while a pupil at Archers Court School where he learnt that there are nine types of global honey bee species in the world.

The next question was, "What will the future hold when the honey bee population declines?" Bees are essential pollinators, responsible for pollinating 70 of the 100 crop species that feed 90% of the world's population. They are key to maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Without bees, pollination would have to be carried out by people by hand. Certain countries of the world have already seen 99% of their bees disappear, including eight states in America.

Honeybees have existed for over 150 million years and are one of the oldest forms of animal life still in existence. Honey from

wild bees was harvested in the Neolithic Age, 7000 - 8000 BCE and in Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt around 2400 BCE. In Spain, a 7,500-year-old cave painting depicts a honey hunter suspended over the side of the cliff, robbing a wild nest of bees. In Ancient Egypt there were about 270,000 beekeepers. They used pipe-shaped hives to attract the bees to nest and they discovered that smoke made bees more docile. The honey bee, found carved in stone, was a symbol of the kingship of Lower Egypt. In 800 BCE honey was so popular in Greece that all of their coinage carried an image of a bee.

Mead or honey wine, often dubbed the nectar of the gods, is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages, made by fermenting honey with water and yeast or a bacterial culture. For 4,000 years it has been common across cultures worldwide. The Vikings were particularly fond of mead.

During the Middle Ages, 500 to 1500 CE, ingenious monks re-established the use of beeswax from their apiaries to make beeswax candles, which are still made and in use today.

On January 14th 1779, the United States issued the forty-five dollar Continental Currency note, with an image of bee hives and bees. During World War I, the USA had a beekeeping program for honey to replace sugar for home use. In World War II they produced posters extolling the virtues of bees. Two were called "*Let the bees wax the way to victory*" and "*Uncle Sam says eat honey, save the sugar and help win the war.*"



Honeybees

A very well-known wide range of bee-related products, produced since 1984, are sold by a USA company called *Burt's Bees* and distributed in the UK.

Each beehive may hold up to 50,000 bees and have three types of bees.

The Queen – is the only fertile bee in the colony, she lays 2,000 to 3,000 eggs per day, up to a million in her lifetime. When ready to mate, the queen will then fly out of the hive to a congregation area where drones from other hives will also gather, waiting for her arrival. The queen will mate with up to twenty-four drones at each mating. Once the queen bee has mated, she returns to the hive and begins laying eggs. She can store enough sperm from a single mating flight to fertilize all the eggs she lays for the remainder of her life, which can be up to five years.

Drones – are male honey bees that develop from unfertilized eggs laid by the queen bee. Unlike female worker bees, drones do not have stingers and are larger in size than workers. They have beady eyes, a rounded body shape, and a louder buzzing sound. A drone is fully developed after five weeks. The colony may hold up to 300 drones at any one time, although during food shortages or overcrowding they may be expelled from the hive. Once they have mated the drone then dies. Although their life is a short one, they are fed and well looked after. They cannot feed themselves. While waiting to mate, they typically fly in a circuitous pattern near the hive in order to attract potential queen mates. Despite their importance, drones do not contribute to the labour force of the colony but play a role in regulating the hive temperature by vibrating their wings to produce heat or cooling the hive through fanning.

Workers – Are all females, but not fertile like the queen, and there up to 50,000 in each hive. These are the labour force of the hive and are responsible for running the hive. After twenty-four days they are fully

grown and only live for about six weeks in the summer. They do different jobs depending on their age. Each worker bee's life is a testament to selfless service, tirelessly contributing to the colony's success.

Housekeeper, 1-3 days old, cleaning out cells.

Undertaker, 3-16 days, removing dead bees.

Nurse, 4-12 days, feeding and caring for brood, feeding drones.

Queen attendant, 7-12 days, cleaning, feeding and protecting the queen.

Pollen packer, 12-18 days, packing pollen into cells.

Wax mason, 12-35 days, producing wax to build and maintain the hive.

Airflow controller, 12-18 days, beating wings to cool the hive.

Water carrier, 12-18 days, collecting water for hive needs.

Guard, 18-21 days, keeping unwanted visitors out of the hive.

Forager, 22-42 days, searching for and collecting pollen, nectar, and resin.

Scout, 22-42 days, searching for new hive locations and foraging areas.

A large number of tools are required by a beekeeper to care for the bees and produce honey, including the hive, the spinner and filters.

African hornets, now arriving in this country, pose a grave danger to honey bees. They are smaller than native hornets, have an orange head (from front), and an abdomen almost entirely dark, with fine yellow stripes and a yellow or orange 4th segment near the base. They have a black or brown thorax and legs with yellow tips. If seen they should be reported to the authorities or the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. An app is available for your phone.

Dover Society
Income and Expenditure 2024/25

EXPENDITURE

			Sub totals
Affiliation Fees (CPRE)	40.00		
Insurance	444.72		
Newsletter	2,259.55		
Printing, Stationery, Phone and Post			2,744.27
Donations:			
Dover Film Society	50.00		
Unitarian Church	50.00		
Emmaus	80.00		180.00
Room Hire	547.50		
Projects:			
Society's plaques	1,326.40		
Cowgate	98.50		1,972.40
Misc:			
Wreaths/flowers	137.50		
Website	420.00		
Sundries for open meetings			
Sundries for promotions			
Sundries for committees/mtgs	50.00		607.50
Publication Fund			
Awards and presentations			
Outings:	390.00		390.00
Members' Meetings			
AGM	12.59		
October Meeting	95.33		
November Meeting	13.38		
Christmas Lunch	2,618.80		
January Meeting	77.97		
February – Wine & Wisdom	149.14		
March Meeting	87.56		3,054.77
Raffle Prizes			
AGM	30.00		
October Meeting	30.00		
November Meeting	30.00		
January Meeting	30.00		
March Meeting	30.00		150.00
Town Hall Fund			
River Dour Partnership			
Bluebird Trail			
Total Payments	9,098.94		9,098.94

INCOME

		Sub totals
Subscriptions	2,024.00	
Donations	180.24	
Newsletter adverts and sales	410.00	
Newsletter Binders		
Publication Fund	373.50	
Miscellaneous		
Project Fund: KCC plaque	250.00	3,237.74
Gift Aid reclaim		
Society Badges		
Members' Meetings:		
AGM	13.50	
October Meeting	5.00	
November Meeting	3.10	
Christmas Lunch	2,600.45	
January Meeting	8.50	
Wine & Wisdom	310.00	
March Meeting	8.10	2,948.65
Raffle Receipts:	92.00	
October Meeting	77.00	
November Meeting	70.00	
Christmas Lunch	222.00	
January Meeting	88.00	
March Meeting	87.00	636.00
Outings:	390.00	390.00
Advanced subs for 2025/26	1,178.00	1,178.00
Town Hall Fund:		
Dividends	147.23	
Town Hall Tours		
Donation	147.23	
River Dour Partnership		
Bluebird Trail		
Lottery current grant		
Total Income	8,537.62	8,537.62
RECONCILIATION		
Opening Balances:	01.04.24	
Cash in hand	160.31	
Bank balance	53,793.42	
Total	53,793.42	
Closing Balances:	31.03.25	
Cash in hand		10.24
Bank balance		53,382.17
Total		53,392.41
Income	8,537.62	
Payments		9,098.94
Totals	62,491.35	62,491.35

APRIL AGM MEETING

Guglielmo Marconi

Barry O'Brien

The pioneer of wireless communication Guglielmo Marconi is commemorated in many areas of the UK, from Bayswater in Central London, to Chelmsford, the Isle of Wight, Cornwall and more; perhaps it's time his connections with White Cliffs Country were more celebrated?

Napoleon was able to coordinate his empire and his army by means of an Optical Telegraph system invented by Claude Chappe in the early 1790s. While plans for a similar network of visual telegraphy across Britain had been proposed in 1684 and again some 60 years later, neither proposal was accepted. It was not until 1795 that the British Admiralty approved Rev. Lord George Murray's Shutter Telegraph with the first functioning chain employing fifteen sites which could pass messages from London to Deal in sixty seconds. By 1808 The Admiralty had a total of sixty-five sites active across Britain, although the system was retired in 1836. The site of the Shutter Telegraph in Deal, eventually managed by the Royal Observatory, and a Time Ball was put in situ.



Marconi

Many would argue, most notably among them Samuel Morse, inventor of morse code, that the term telegraph can only apply to systems that both transmit and record messages; such a system was first demonstrated by Francis Ronalds in West London, in 1816, but he was unable to suggest its practical uses. It was the Great Western Railway who first installed telegraph wires from Paddington to West Drayton Station (approx 15 miles) creating the world's first commercial telegraph. When this application proved to be such a success more than 60 telegraph companies formed, although less than one third prospered.

Eventually, in 1870, Gladstone's Government nationalised the inland telegraph companies to become part of the General Post Office, prompted in no small part by disagreements regarding the distribution of news, by telegraph, to regional newspapers. Exempt from nationalisation was The Submarine Telegraph Company, which laid the world's first international under water cable in September 1851 between South Foreland, Kent, and Sangatte, France, with the English telegraph station located within a private house in Dover. In October 1831 English physicist Michael Faraday concluded that electricity could be transmitted without the presence of wires.

In 1864 Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell predicted that coupled electric and magnetic fields could travel through space as an electromagnetic wave. German physicist Heinrich Hertz, in 1879, successfully proved Maxwell's theory producing and receiving radio in the very high frequency range. In 1889 William Preece, consulting engineer for

the GPO, succeeded in transmitting and receiving morse radio signals across Coniston Water. It was in 1896 that William Preece was introduced to a young Italian, Guglielmo Marconi, newly arrived in London together with his mother, Anna Jameson, Granddaughter of the founder of the Irish Whiskey Distillers that bore her family name.

Whilst attending classes at the Conservatoire in Bologna Annie had formed a relationship with Giuseppe Marconi an Italian aristocrat, banker and landowner some 15 years her elder. On her return to Ireland Anna continued to correspond with Giuseppe and the couple married on 16th April 1864 in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, returning to live in Bologna, Italy. Annie and their two sons, Alfonso and Guglielmo, removed to England for a three year stay in 1877 such that, by the time of their return to Italy, each son was fluent in English. Guglielmo eventually experienced formal education in Florence, something that did not go well for many reasons, among them being his perceived attitude, his apparent inability to mix socially with the other pupils and his strange 'foreign' accent.

Finally, however, he won his father's support when he declared an ambition to join the Royal Italian Navy, unfortunately failing the entrance exam. He also failed the University of Bologna entrance exam, but Annie was able to secure the support of a near neighbour, a lecturer at the University, who also agreed to allow Marconi access to the University library as well as certain of the laboratories within his remit. It was during this time that Marconi began to explore the use of Hertz's electromagnetic waves as a possible means of providing communication over distance by use of a telegraphy that would not rely on the need for wires and by the end of 1895 Marconi was able to transmit across distances of more than one and a half miles.

As Professor Ambrose Fleming, Chairman of Electrical Technology at University College London would later note, the novelty of Marconi's idea "is rather to be measured by its non-obviousness to experts than by the simplicity of the device and its proved utility".

External investment was now clearly necessary and a letter of introduction to the Ambassador of Italy in London caused him to suggest Marconi obtained a suitable patent while also encouraging him to travel to Britain, where, it was believed, he would find it easier to find the necessary funding to put his experiments to practical use.

Marconi and his mother duly travelled to England in February 1896. One fanciful tale has it that on his entry into England, at Dover, a Customs Officer opened Marconi's case only to find experimental apparatus of a previously unknown type at which point he alerted The Admiralty, duly gaining Marconi the interest and support of the GPO.

The more prosaic reality is that Marconi's cousin Henry Jameson-Davis facilitated that introduction through his business contacts; he also had a London office from which he would assist Marconi in obtaining his patent and organise Marconi's first English demonstrations, managing to raise financial backing in the process, such that Jameson-Davis would propose the cousins establish a company together.

On 20th July 1897, the Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company was founded, by which time British Patent number 12039, the first for a radio wave-based communication system, had been applied for and granted to Marconi. A further series of tests soon took place observed by both the Navy and the Army with wireless transmissions eventually reaching over a distance of almost 9 miles.

On receipt of Marconi's written advice that his patents had been assigned exclusively to the new company, Preece and the GPO withdrew all Governmental support until such time as he was able to "determine relations between your company and the government departments who have encouraged and helped you so much." The depth of Preece's emotions was further demonstrated by his decision to undertake his own wireless telegraphy experiments at Fort Burgoyne, Dover from which Marconi was to be excluded. However, newspapers soon carried accounts of the trials, alerting Marconi who advised Preece that he would be obliged to work elsewhere should the GPO not support his experiments.

When the results of the trials proved disappointing, Marconi was duly invited to attend Fort Burgoyne on 6th October 1897. One lasting legacy, however, saw George Kemp, who had served as an electrician and instructor with the Royal Navy before working for Preece at the GPO, moving to join the fledgling Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company where he worked as "first assistant" to Signor Marconi for the next thirty-six years. Marconi's connections with Dover did not end with the conclusion of the Fort Burgoyne tests, as the Corporation of Trinity House, responsible for all lighthouses and lightships, was greatly intrigued by this innovative wireless telegraphy. In December 1898 George Kemp was sent to the East Goodwin Lightship, from where, on Christmas Eve, he successfully made the first ever ship-to-shore radio transmission. Following this success the French government allowed Marconi to install transmission equipment at Wimereux, North of Boulogne.

In September 1899, the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was held at Dover's Maison Dieu where the Marconi Company exhibited their radio equipment using their wireless

telegraphy system to transmit messages across the English Channel including one to the Mayor of Boulogne. Several attendees were, though, uncomfortable with the commercialisation of science: For the historian there is, with Marconi's arrival, the feeling of entering into a different world, the world, not of the scientist but of the engineer and the entrepreneur.

The first Radio Distress Signal was transmitted from the East Goodwin Lightship when the merchant vessel *Elbe* ran aground on the Goodwin Sands. The signal was received by the radio operator on duty at the South Foreland Lighthouse, who was then able to summon the aid of the Ramsgate lifeboat. On 30th April 1899, the East Goodwin Lightship sent a distress message on her own account after she had been rammed by the SS *R. F. Matthews*!

The RMS *Titanic* had been equipped with a Marconi-leased telegraph machine with two young Marconi-employed operators on board, Jack Phillips and Harold Bride. Phillips went down with *Titanic*, sending distress signals into his last moments. Marconi, his wife Beatrice and their three children had been invited on board *Titanic* by the Chairman of White Star Line but had sailed for New York three days earlier to attend to urgent business matters.

One further connection with East Kent sees Marconi elected as a member of The Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club on 30th January 1925. His yacht, '*Elettra*', is recorded as being in Dover harbour on 12th May 1925 "preparatory to going across to Calais to carry out some important experiments".

In 1909, Marconi shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with Karl Ferdinand Braun, a founder of Telefunken, for their "contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy" (radio communications).

Colonel H Jameson-Davis died aged 82 on 25th December, 1936, at his home, "Estrella" in Woking, Surrey, following two months' illness. Marchese Guglielmo Marconi GCVO FRSA died in Rome July 20th 1937, aged 63.

this year we were 1 of 45 officially listed IMD stations, from Long Island and Cape Cod to Sydney and Vienna. This was the 3rd year Dover has marked International Marconi Day and will not be the last.

International Marconi Day is an annual amateur radio event usually held on the Saturday closest to Marconi's birthday. Transmitting from The Maison Dieu in Dover

Further details, corrections, information and enquiries about the self-published Words Without Wires booklet please contact barry@dovortales.co.uk

Annual General Meeting 2025 Update

Alan Lee

At the AGM in April the proposal to increase the annual membership fee was carried. From April 2026 the fee for members will be £10 for an individual and £14 for two people at the same address. The committee is sorry to say that this was inevitable. This is the first increase for thirty years and we still have one of the cheapest, and value for money, membership fees around.

All the people listed to stand for the Executive Committee were elected unopposed. Once again, for this year, our chairman will be Jenny Olpin.

D & L Wondercrafts

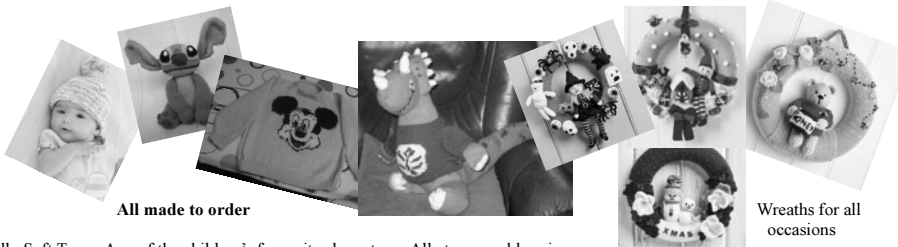
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Dorothy Bushell Plaque Inauguration

Reported by Alan Lee

At 11am on Monday 19th May a small group of people met to unveil the latest Dover Society plaque. Affixed to the house wall of no. 45 Wyndham Road, it commemorates the life of Dover's first woman mayor.

Our Chairman Jenny Olpin commenced the proceedings with introductions and a welcome to all. She then handed over to our President Derek Leach who gave the following address to the gathering:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to celebrate the life of Dorothy Bushell, the first woman to be mayor of Dover in 1960/61, leaving the door open for several more female mayors since – one of them here today.

In 2004 I was told there was a very interesting elderly lady in a care home in Whitfield. This turned out to be Dorothy, aged 95, but still very much with it. Throughout her life she wrote pieces, which were sometimes published, taken from events in her own life. She also wrote in notebooks about some periods of her life, particularly a diary of her mayoral year, and wrote innumerable poems,

usually triggered by some happening in her life.

What follows is a brief summary of the memoir I produced of her very full and pretty tough life – a mixture of my recorded interviews with her and some of her written work, much of it retaining her own words. Sadly, only a couple of months after completing the memoir, Dorothy died on 11th July 2004.

Dorothy Peal was born on 28th October 1908 at 45 Wyndham Road, Tower Hamlets. Dad was a coal porter in the docks. It was a happy family, but life was a struggle, Dorothy being one of twelve children. She attended Tower Hamlets Methodist Chapel and the Girl Guide troop. In 1913 Dorothy started school at St. Bartholomew's in Tower Street.

She had memories of World War One, spending nights in a cave on Chapel Hill where horses were stabled. In her own words Dorothy told me this summary of her life":

"During World War One I was sent to get fish and chips for father's supper. On my return I took a plate from the cupboard, put the supper on it and then put it in the oven to



Dorothy Bushell, Mayor



Wyndham Rd Dover Society Members

keep warm. It was then I noticed that the wallpaper was different to ours! Quickly, I retrieved the supper from the oven, rewrapped it in the newspaper and rushed out, leaving a greasy plate on the table! I must have misjudged our house, walking in the snowy road with my head down. I never told anybody!"

"1919 lost its sparkle for us children when, two days before Christmas, mother left her handbag on the tram when she went Christmas shopping with her club money saved throughout the year. There was no chance of replacing it. So, I gathered a group of friends together and went carol singing and gave the money, £1.8s.6d., to mother."

"She made me leave school when I was thirteen. My teachers thought it was a great mistake, but mother wanted me to give a hand at home with all the washing and so on. However, I soon found a paid childminding job, from 9am till 1pm, six mornings a week, for 1s 6d plus my dinner. I gave it all to mum."

"I won a prize for writing when I was ten and was a prolific writer. The first thing I did when I could afford it was to buy a typewriter and then did some freelance writing. Some of it was published in *The Lady* magazine and *This England* and one or two articles appeared in local papers. I was paid £6 for some. I've written poetry all my life. After leaving school I just couldn't stop writing."

"Dorothy's love of writing poetry extended to the light-hearted. She wrote many limericks and won prizes for them in competitions. Here is just one:

*There was a young lady of Joppa
Who came a society cropper,
With a gentleman friend
She went to Ostend
And the rest of the story's improper."*

"The day they brought Nurse Cavell back, in 1919, the school was taken to the seafront to watch the coffin come ashore and be put on a gun carriage. From that moment I wanted to be a nurse but, with my background, I had as much chance as flying to the moon. However, I got a job as a cleaner in a London hospital and spotted an advert in the *Nursing Mirror*. At that time nurses had to buy their first uniform, which made it impossible for me to start, but I discovered that if you went for fever or mental nursing the uniform was provided. So, I applied, passed the tests and was accepted. My writing was good and there was nothing wrong with my tongue! I had no boyfriends – I had a one-track mind, nursing. I trained for three years as a mental nurse.

I had not had a Christmas at home for several years. At the Burlington Hotel I met my future husband, Edmund. I didn't know then, but he was a hereditary Freeman of Dover, tall, dark and handsome. We courted for quite a while and married in 1935. For the first six weeks of our marriage Edmund and I had to go and live with my mother to nurse my stepfather until he died. Our own house was right at the top of the steepest hill in Dover, Hardwicke Road, but we were very happy there. After two or three years the house at 1 Churchill Road became vacant. We had had enough of the steep hill and moved.

I had started training for midwifery, but when war broke out, I went to work at Buckland Hospital as a nurse in the operating theatre. We all had to be absolutely sterile and had to have a bath beforehand. I was there from September 1939 until 1942, including dealing with the Dunkirk wounded. Everything that the surgeons touched and used, I had to take away. Doctor Gertrude Toland was one of the main surgeons there and she was my own doctor as well." The Dover Society recognised Dr Toland's contribution to the Dover community and her war service at Buckland with a blue plaque at her Five Ways surgery.

"Father-in-law was bombed out and had to stay with us. In fact, he lived with us for twelve and a half years. My mother had a tumour on the brain, and I nursed her until she died. Not only that, but I also had two of the family's young wives in my house to deliver their babies.

Edmund was always politically minded. I was his unpaid secretary, but I never thought of getting on the council myself, until I thought, if it's good enough for him, it's good enough for me! I became a Labour councillor on Dover Borough Council in 1945 when I was elected in St. Bart's Ward to fill the vacancy created by Edmund becoming an alderman. I remained a town councillor for sixteen years and a county councillor for three years from 1952. The first meeting I went to as mayor outside the borough was an all-male gathering of councillors, except for me. 'What is she doing here?' somebody said. 'She's the Mayor of Dover,' was the reply. 'My God, what are we coming to?' I couldn't let that rest! I hit back. I was formally addressed as 'Mr Mayor' but the host at another event did not know how to address the husband of a female mayor, so Edmund whispered, 'Call me Madam.' At the end of my mayoral year in May 1961 the council recorded its appreciation for the outstanding services rendered by Alderman Mrs Dorothy Bushell in the office of Mayor. I did not fight the local elections as I had Edmund's father to look after, and I was very tired. I was still a county councillor, school governor and, as mayor, automatically a JP. That was the end of my public life, except for being mayoress when Edmund was mayor in 1965."

"Edmund died in 1965 whilst he was mayor. I got over my grief by doing something for somebody else, spending six months in Yugoslavia nursing injured children from an earthquake. All children cry in the same language. We had a good marriage, although it was unfulfilled as far as children were

concerned. I have been widowed for nearly 40 years and could have remarried a few times!"

"I shall finish this summary with an extract from Dorothy's diary as Mayor of Dover, May 1960 to May 1961, and one of her poems": 'Could I, ordinary Mrs Bushell, the very first woman Mayor of Dover in almost 900 years of recorded history, measure up to the standard set by my predecessors? Of all the things I hope to achieve this year, one is to leave the office of mayor with the dignity I hoped to acquire when accepting it and to have made it possible for other women to be so honoured!'

Dorothy's poem on becoming mayor, entitled *My Prayer*":

When first I occupied the Mayoral chair
My fluttering heart sent up a fervent
prayer:

O give me wisdom to conduct aright
The business of this town, O Lord tonight.
Let not my calling of the paras. stray,
Nor let dissension in the chamber sway
My sworn impartial judgement, Lord I
pray.

May I remember all the standing orders,
Nor metaphorically lean too much upon
the Town Clerk's shoulders.

Give me patience and the tact as needed
With dignity to press the business when
impeded

By councillors, both new and
uninstructed.

This first time, let it be, Lord, well
conducted.

"I hope that this tribute has given you a flavour of this talented, compassionate, hardworking conscientious woman with a cheeky sense of humour who gave so much of herself to others – Dorothy Bushell, first woman Mayor of Dover."

St James Memorial Plinth Unveiling

Words by Martyn Webster

At Charlton Cemetery 11am 19th April 2025

This event is unique and long overdue. It must be added to the annals of Dover as a significant moment in our town and port's illustrious history. To our generation, in our time, has now come the responsibility to put right where our predecessors fifty years ago, alas, fell short. Eastertide offers us the perfect opportunity to do this.

In 1973 the then Dover Corporation, as one of its last major decisions before the creation of Dover District Council the following year, agreed upon a plan to completely clear the graveyard at the old former parish church of St James the Apostle in Woolcomber Street to make way for a car park to a new (now demolished) leisure centre.

St James was for centuries Dover's second smaller parish, deconsecrated and merged with St Mary's in 1953. The population in the 1851 census was nearly 5,000 people.

The church building was severely damaged by shelling during the last war and compulsorily purchased by the corporation in 1970. It now stands as the so-called *Tidy Ruin*, an ancient monument and listed building, bearing permanent testimonial to the suffering of the people of Dover in wartime. Throughout and until this time the old graveyard had become overgrown and badly neglected.

In order to achieve its plan, the corporation had first to obtain the permission of the Secretary of State for the Home Office under the appropriate legislation (which pertains to this day) for the removal and reburial of all interred

human remains. All monuments and tombstones would be removed at the council's expense and destroyed. Heirs to those buried could apply for permission to rebury or cremate the remains. It is not known if anyone did.

Walker Brothers of Folkestone were engaged to undertake the huge, unenviable clearing operation which they did in June and July of 1973. This included the excavation of three tiers of vaults carved into the cliff face. This was a unique operation without local precedence for them and for Dover Corporation, all work discreetly done behind suitable screening. To everyone's consternation however, when thinking there were about one thousand graves to clear, the workmen were confronted with the harrowing task of removing several times that number interred to an approximate depth of four metres (thirteen feet).

All these human remains were conveyed to a site here at Charlton Cemetery and were reburied in a long trench by the roadside where the hedge now stands. It is believed that a small ceremony of blessing was conducted by St Mary's parish, but no record can be traced of it. In fact, despite sustained and persistent research by me and many others over the years, no official records of any kind can be found to have survived for any of this ponderous operation. This, therefore, is all the more reason for our presence here today fifty years later.

Although the burial register begins in 1576 the number of human souls represented by the reinterments here is incalculable

and must number among the thousands through the nearly one thousand years of the St James church's existence. Burials in the graveyard ceased in 1854 when the new St James Cemetery opposite was opened.

Nearly 500 graves and vaults with headstones were removed, with the loss of their valuable inscriptions. Fortunately, we have record of most of them, which include mayors, distinguished, sometimes titled citizens of our town and elsewhere as well as those from abroad and afar who died while passing through the port, not to mention the countless numbers of local townfolk and also many unknowns washed up on our shores. But the sad fact remains that the vast majority of the deceased are known only unto God.

Thus, we have arrived here today. On behalf of the Dover Society and the people



St James Memorial Plaque - Rev Melissa Carter, Jenny Olpin, Councillor Briggs and Councillor Cowan

of Dover past and present, I would like to thank Councillor Cowan, Chairman Dover District Council, in their responding to the omission in our history by their generously funding this fine memorial plinth on the fiftieth anniversary of the event. Also, for the presence here today of Councillor Briggs, Town Mayor, whose Town and Castle Ward embraces the old St James church and graveyard site. I must also add in the tributes particular mention of John Fagg and Neil Scrivener.

As all written record of the St James reburials was lost, reliance has had to be placed entirely upon first hand witness memories. Much knowledge of these events might otherwise have been lost forever. This is truly invaluable. John was park keeper and has maintained a close personal interest in these fine municipal cemeteries around us, having photographed every single headstone here. Thank you, John.

Neil Scrivener's work as the stonemason for this fine plinth could not have been excelled, so that this memorial will long endure as testimony to the people of the former St James' parish reburied here. I thank him most sincerely for his collaboration with Jon Iveson of Dover Museum in the creation of this wonderful piece of work.

I then invited Councillors Cowan and Briggs to step forward and together unveil the plinth with some words of their own.

This was followed by blessings and prayers, given by Rev Melissa, incumbent of Charlton church, as is appropriate for the consecrated ground upon which we stand, where the remains lay and to the Christian rites to which their bodies were all first set to earth.

Lady Frederica Rozelle Ridgway Pierrepont 1925-2015

Patricia Allen

Whilst browsing through the online newspaper archives, I was suddenly drawn to a short article written by the illustrious 'Mr Dover' Terry Sutton who sadly is no longer with us.

Terry's Talk, Friday 13th September 1991 by Terry Sutton.

Yachtswoman Rozelle Raynes, who has a house on the cliffs at St. Margarets, has written another book. The latest, *The Tuesday Boys*, tells of an exciting experiment of taking children in local authority care on trips in her yacht; Rozelle used to be Lady Rozelle Beattie when she lived at South Sands House in the Bay. She used to work as a purser on one of Jack Dawson's Townsend ferries.

A Lady working as a purser on the ferries? Wow! How intriguing! I must find out more about this fascinating lady.

Here is the incredible story of the Lady who lived in our midst. Lady Frederica Rozelle Ridgway Pierrepont was born on the 17th November 1925 to Gervas Evelyn Pierrepont M.C. 1881-1955 and his wife Marie-Louise Roosevelt Butterfield 1889-1984. The couple had married in 1918.

Gervas, the eldest son of Evelyn Henry Pierrepont the brother of the 4th Earl Manvers, was educated at Winchester and Coopers Hill. He served in the First World War with the rank of Captain and was awarded the Military Cross, the Order of the Crown of Belgium and the Croix de Guerre.

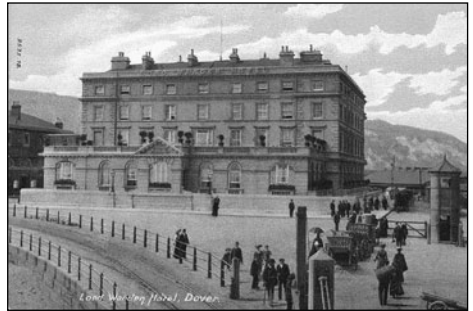
After the war Gervas served as a Justice of the Peace for the county of London and he became a County Councillor for Brixton, from 1922 to 1946.

Marie-Louise Roosevelt Butterfield, the only child of Sir Frederick Roosevelt Butterfield of Cliffe Castle Keighly, and his wife, Lady Jessie Kennedy Ridgway, was related to Theodore Roosevelt the U.S. President through her maternal grandmother. She was an extremely accomplished artist and exhibited a passion for art from an early age.

When Frederica was born in 1925 to Gervas and Marie-Louise she was their third and youngest child. Their first-born Mary Helen arrived in 1920, followed by a son Evelyn Louis in 1924. Tragedy struck the family when Evelyn aged four died of



Banquet at The Lord Warden Hotel



Lord Warden Hotel, Dover

scarlet fever in 1928 and only eighteen months later nine-year-old Mary died of septicaemia following an operation on her adenoids.

In 1940 Gervas Pierrepont succeeded his cousin Evelyn Robert and became the 6th Earl Manvers. The family moved into the splendid family seat of Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire, a massive sprawling Victorian mansion and estate. Young Rozelle (Frederica) as she was now familiarly called was fourteen years old. She felt stifled by her parent's love and was desperate to escape the high society lifestyle she was born into. War was raging and soon the estate was requisitioned by the army and became a training ground for British Army tanks and troop accommodation. Rozelle wanted to do her bit for her country, and finally when she was seventeen years old, her parents reluctantly allowed her to join the W.R.N.S. as a stoker, training at Portsmouth.

Although Rozelle deplored the war it was giving her a taste of the freedom she longed for. She was determined not to live the life of a debutante. Wren Stoker Pierrepont 65152 fell in love with the sea, the hard physical manual work of scrubbing decks and greasing engines. When she first took the tiller on a boat, she experienced a life changing moment; she adored the cold, the sea air, the freedom and excitement. She danced with sailors who affectionately called her Blondie, drank rum, and made friends as freely as any ordinary girl. She was adamant she wasn't going to return to her old life as an Earl's daughter.

Rozelle's job entailed crewing naval cutters which operated in Southampton Water and the Solent. In the weeks leading up to D-day she was employed in delivering men and supplies to the invasion fleet which

was growing daily. On D-Day itself, 5th June 1944, she witnessed the great armada on the move to France when her crew was sent down to Southampton Water in their tug, to bring back three personnel landing crafts which had broken down near the Needles. At last, the great day had arrived, and the hundreds of craft were moving southwards towards Normandy and a fate unknown. There were ships of all types and sizes; armed merchant cruisers, destroyers, minesweepers, corvettes, trawlers, ocean tugs, infantry landing craft, tank landing craft...no one knew if they would return. Days later she saw the devastating cost of war when the wounded troops were brought back home across the Channel.

When the war ended, with her stoker's badge to her credit, having been one of the first women to go on a stoker's course, Rozelle was demobbed. She burst into tears at the thought of returning to her previous life but was determined not to live the life of a privileged debutante, enjoying lobster, pheasant and champagne dinners.

Rozelle remained on the water on a freelance basis, at first joining the crew of a 100-ton Bermudan cutter as a deck hand. On her 21st birthday her mother bought her an old former lifeboat, a bit dilapidated but she none-the-less cruised the coasts of France, Belgium and the Netherlands, sometimes single-handedly.

In 1947 she joined the crew of the racing yacht Moonbeam.

In 1953 when Rozelle was twenty-eight years old, she married ex-Coldstream Guards Major Alexander Montgomerie Greaves Beattie, a former bodyguard of Winston Churchill. They bought Clarence Hatry's house *The Hermitage* at St. Margarets Bay in Dover, which they later

renamed *South Sands House*. In 1955 Rozelle inherited the Pierrepont estates when her father the 6th Earl Manvers died. The earldom title then became extinct as there were no male heirs.

Rozelle bought a 25-foot Folkboat the *Martha McGilda* in 1956 in which she sailed single handedly across the Baltic Sea to Russia, a 1200-mile trip. She was an extremely accomplished sailor having earned a Merchant Navy Lifeboatman's Certificate and a Yacht Master's Offshore Certificate. In 1961 Major Alexander Beattie and Rozelle divorced, they had no children.

In 1963 Rozelle had a luxurious new home built, high on the cliffs between St. Margarets and Dover. In the grounds stood the old South Foreland lighthouse, a landmark in itself for Channel shipping. She named the house Dolphin's Leap.

A few years later whilst working on the Townsend Ferries *Halladale* and *Free Enterprise* as an assistant purser, with Jack Dawson as her Captain, Rozelle met her husband to-be Dr. Richard Hollings Raynes. They married quietly in 1965, in the Registry Office in Dover, on Castle Street. The happy couple enjoyed many sailing voyages together, notably a three-month exploration of the Norwegian Coast. By now Rozelle and her husband Richard were splitting their time between St. Margarets and London, with the Manvers' estates being largely managed by the estate trustees.

The couple organised a scheme taking disadvantaged boys sailing on the Thames regularly. The boys aged only nine to thirteen came from horrific backgrounds. Teaching them the basics of sailing, safety, and navigation to give them a new outlook on life and improve their chances of a

better future was the aim. The scheme was regarded as a success and lasted for thirty years. Rozelle was complimented for the endless time and energy she had given to this remarkable enterprise.

Rozelle was concerned with helping to improve the welfare and happiness of people, and to help alleviate their suffering. Another one of her schemes was when she helped to rehouse twenty-seven Yugoslavian refugees, who had been displaced by the violence in their country. She helped to arrange the transport for them to the UK and found them accommodation in Nottingham.

Under the name Rozelle Raynes she wrote and published many books. The first book she wrote in 1968 was an account of her three-month exploration of the Norwegian Coast in her Folkboat and was called *North in a Nutshell*. Her memoir, *Maid Matelot* was published in 1971 and described her adventures in World War Two as a stoker. *The Tuesday Boys* was published in 1991 recounting her bold scheme to teach boys living in long-term care in the East End of London how to sail. *Memoirs of a Turkish Bear, Limehouse Lil, The Seabird, A Boat Called Martha*, and *27 Kisses followed*.

Lady Rozelle Raynes (nee Pierrepont) died peacefully in her sleep on Monday 22nd June 2015, at Thoresby, aged eight-nine years. Loving and loved wife of Dick Raynes, daughter of Gervas, 6th Earl Manvers.

Extraordinary Woman, Author and Mariner.

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**The Dover Society Xmas Lunch and Entertainment Sunday 7th December 2025
At Dover Marina Hotel
Dover Waterfront, Waterloo Crescent, CT17 9BP**

Price £30.50 per person to include arrival drink, three course meal, tea, or coffee and entertainment. Wine or other drinks may be ordered and purchased at the venue. The lunchtime entertainment will be clarified in the November newsletter. Arrival drinks will be available from 12.30 pm. Lunch will begin promptly at 1 pm finish at 4pm. Please select from the following menu,

- Welcome Drink:**
 - a) Bucks Fizz
 - b) Fruit Juice
- Starter:**
 - c) Jersey Royal Potatoes, Spinach & Leek Soup with blue stilton crouste
 - d) Prawn Cocktail & baby mixed leaves, homemade cocktail dressing & malted bread
 - e) Ardennes Pâté with piccalilli, cherry tomatoes, mixed baby leaves & toasted granary seeded baguette
- Main:**
 - f) Traditional Roast Turkey, sage & onion stuffing, crispy roast potatoes & all the trimmings
 - g) Slow cooked British Beef, rosemary red wine & thyme sauce, Yorkshire pudding, crispy roast potatoes & all the trimmings
 - h) Oven Roasted Sea Bass with a herb crust, saffron sauce, curly kale & dauphinoise potatoes
- Dessert:**
 - i) Nut Roast (v) rocket salad, wild mushroom sauce, seasonal vegetables, crispy roast potatoes
 - j) Traditional Plum Pudding with homemade brandy sauce
 - k) Lime & Lemon Cheesecake with forest fruit
 - l) Seasonal fresh fruit salad with Christmas pudding ice cream

Freshly brewed Tea/Coffee and mince pies

To book your place(s), please complete the form below and return it together with your cheque made payable to THE DOVER SOCIETY to the Social Secretary, Mrs. Lyn Smith, 2 Redlands Court, London Road, River, Dover CT17 0TW. If paying by BACS the details are: The Dover Society, account no. 80864803, Barclays Bank Dover, sort code 20-02-62, giving your name and FL24 as reference. If you require a table for more than eight people, please contact Lyn Smith. The form can also be returned by email to steve.lyn@uwclub.net. Payment no later than 17th November 2025

Dover Society Festive Lunch – Sunday 7th December 2025 £30.50 per person

Name:

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Telephone: Email

Please select for each person, your arrival drink and choice of menu

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Something for you

Our River Dour

Mary Margery

We all benefit by living near water. We have the lakes in Bushey Ruff, Russell Gardens and Kearsney Abbey and, of course, the harbour. All are linked by the River Dour, a very rare chalk stream. There are only about two hundred in the world (making it rarer than pandas!), so the Dour in Dover is really important for people and wildlife. It is fed by ground water from aquifers in Dover and Folkestone.

Chalk streams have clear water and stay at constant temperature. They host a variety of flora and fauna. The River Dour has good wildlife: brown trout, kingfishers, egrets, caddis fly, dragon fly, damsel fly and more.

As an urban stream, the Dour cleans the air and helps our mental and emotional health and wellbeing. But the river is at risk from climate change, pollution, litter and development that drains the aquifers.

So, we all have responsibilities to care for the Dour.

- Save water and only use what you need.
- Pick up litter along the river.
- Only flush pee, poo and toilet paper; never wet wipes or facial tissues (they contain plastics).
- Never flush domestic fat or oil; solidified fat goes in the food bin and oil to the council tip.
- Do not use the river to dispose of garden or other waste. Grass cuttings can be particularly harmful to water quality.
- Avoid using weedkiller, fertiliser or pesticides near the river (or anywhere).

- Water should not be taken from the Dour.
- Ensure that your domestic appliances are plumbed in correctly and not discharging into the river. (This may occur following kitchen or bathroom renovation.) Southern Water has an illegal connections team.

Report pollution incidents to the Environment Agency 0800 807060.

Fishing by anyone over the age of twelve requires a rod license from the Environment Agency. Fish caught should be returned to the river.

No fishing is permitted from 15th March to 15th June as it is the close season. Between November and April 1st no one should enter the water, not even litter pickers.

There are other specific responsibilities for riparian owners – anyone who owns land or property next to the river.

If we all act responsibly then everyone can continue to enjoy the Dour and all it brings to our town.



River Dour - The Urban Chalk Stream

The Maison Dieu Reawakens

Derek Leach

The weekend of 10th/11th May saw the iconic Grade 1 listed Maison Dieu reopen to over 2000 members of the public, having been closed since 2021 to allow the £10 million ambitious and complex restoration work to be carried out. The Dover Society first raised its concerns about the condition of the building in 2010, convening a meeting with Dover District Council and Dover Town Council. It was agreed that a major scheme was needed and in the meantime The Dover Society would organise guided tours to make visitors and the local community more aware of the building and its incredible 800 years of history. The project really got going in 2014 with DDC, DTC and The Dover Society becoming project partners. Specialist consultants were appointed and the scheme devised over the next couple of years. A major grant application was submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, which was eventually successful, but required substantial match-funding. The Dover Society pledged £10,000, which was spent on a model of the Stone Hall now on display in the Hall.

Other funders that must be thanked are DDC, DTC and The Wolfson Foundation.

Between 2021 and 2025 the Maison Dieu was transformed from a somewhat leaky, crumbling and inaccessible building to a sparkling events and heritage venue, fit for the 21st century.

A huge team was involved, including architects, designers, project managers, building specialists, conservators and volunteers. First, the lead roof and drainpipes were replaced to make the building watertight. Next the building was stripped out. Important medieval features were discovered beneath crumbling plaster. A forest of scaffolding sprang up both internally and externally, providing platforms for high-level work. The scaffolding allowed access to some magnificent grotesques! Over a thousand people took part in hard-hat and high-level tours to see restoration work in progress.

New plumbing, heating, electrical, lighting, sound and fire detection systems were installed, not forgetting kitchens, toilets and WIFI. Asbestos was removed. An accessible High Street entrance was created to welcome



Connaught Hall, Maison Dieu



Stone Hall Model



Maison Dieu, Dover



Stone Hall, Maison Dieu Dover

visitors, including a new lift. Skilled craftspeople conserved over 100 historic doors, re-laid Victorian floor tiles and repaired the Connaught Hall dance floor and stage. Damaged stonework was repointed and replaced. The Victorian bracket clock ('the frying pan') was carefully lowered for repair and the weathervane restored.

A studio was built in the Stone Hall to conserve the building's historic furniture, oil paintings and regimental colours. Over 5,000 people visited 'conservation in action' events including local schoolchildren. Others became skilled conservation volunteers. The colourful stained-glass, including Edward Poynter's Dover history windows, were carefully cleaned and conserved. Over 100,000 recyclable cotton buds were used to remove surface dirt.

Then, in what for many was the real highlight, the decorative scheme of Victorian architect William Burges was reinstated. To the rhythmic tapping of stencil brushes, the gilded designs of dragons, birds, flowers and foliage advanced across the Connaught Hall, Mayor's Parlour and other spaces in a magical transformation.

Over 100,000 people took part in an ambitious community engagement programme inspired by the building and its collections. The work was recorded by a team of young

photographers learning skills and techniques from experts.

Finally, the Maison Dieu was made ready for its reawakening. Historic paintings, arms, armour and civic regalia were redisplayed. To explain the different phases and stories of the building nine interactive touch screen displays, films and audio displays have been added. Now, with all the hurdles overcome, including delay due to covid and substantial increases in costs, the building is ready for the next phase in its history and to take its place as one of Kent's most exciting new events and heritage venues.

The Dover Society can be proud of the part it has played in this project, and I have been privileged to be so involved since 2010 as the Society's representative on the Core Management Team, witnessing the enthusiasm and expertise of so many professionals. Our involvement will continue with several members acting as volunteer guides (called Ambassadors) and as Friends of the Maison Dieu group.

The Maison Dieu is now open free of charge to the public seven days of the week for self-guided tours. Prebooked guided tours are also available.

Photographs courtesy of Nastia Photography/ Maison Dieu.

Dover Heritage Open Days

12th to 21st September 2025

Paul Wells

After a successful 2024 event, bolstered by the reopening of the Roman Painted House, Dover is once again taking part in the national Heritage Open Days event which runs from Friday 12th to Sunday 21st September 2025, co-ordinated by Executive Committee member Paul Wells.

Now spearheaded by the National Trust, with funding by the People's Postcode Lottery, every September thousands of volunteers across England organise events to celebrate our fantastic history and culture. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences, all of which are FREE to explore.

Headlining the events again this year will be the Maison Dieu project, which is also assisting with the print and design of the glossy leaflet.

The Maison Dieu offering this year, back inside the reawakened building, will include an action-packed weekend of architecture-inspired activities for adults and children on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September, including special tours of the Maison Dieu

and of the Mayor's Parlour holiday let, in partnership with The Landmark Trust. In addition, the offer will also include specialist talks and a tour around the exterior of the building to investigate building details, building stones and geology.

The Western Heights Preservation Society will be partaking by opening the Grand Shaft and running tours of the North Entrance Road Tunnel on the Western Heights. The Land Trust, partnered by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, will be opening Fort Burgoyne. The National Trust at Wanstone Rediscovered will show their discoveries at the World War Two gun sites on the eastern cliffs.

Dover Harbour Board will be leading tours of the Marine Station and the recently restored Admiralty Generating Station – home to the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company memorial. The building also saw use in the First and Second World Wars.

Once again, we have many churches taking part, many of them also taking part in Ride and Stride on Saturday 13th, St Peter and St Paul Charlton, Unitarian Church, St Paul's Roman Catholic Church, St Marys Church, St



Grand-Shaft Western Heights



Fort Burgoyne



St Edmund's Chapel

Edmunds Chapel, St Martin's Church and St Margaret of Antioch Church at St Margarets at Cliffe.

For the first time illustrated Teatime Talks will be included. Subjects on the "Lost Architecture" theme will cover:

- Dover Promenade Pier - Martin Easdown and Martyn Webster
- Dover's Lost Medieval buildings - Keith Partfitt
- Western Heights fortifications - Andy Rayner, Western Heights Preservation Society
- Shakespeare Colliery - Colin Varrall
- Past River Dour industries - Barry O'Brien

All will be held at the Dover Museum cinema in the Market Square from 15th to 19th September at 6pm and booking will be required.

Also, for the first time, a number of guided walks will be included. (Booking will be required so please check the full event listings):

- St James Cemetery - Martyn Webster,

Dover Society

- Dover's Brewers Distillers and Wine Heritage - Barry O'Brien
- Western Heights - Andy Rayner, Western Heights Preservation Society
- Samphire Hoe - White Cliffs Countryside Partnership
- White Cliffs - Melanie Wrigley, National Trust

Dover Transport Museum will be holding a session on the history of Old Park, from mansion to military barracks and how they developed and restored their buildings to become a popular tourist attraction. Dover College will be leading tours of the remains of the medieval priory. The Roman Painted House will also be open for extended hours during the duration of the events.

The events are still several months away and are subject to change, so please keep up to date with what is taking place on www.heritageopendays.org.uk. A glossy leaflet with full details should be available at Dover Regatta on 12th July.

Further details will appear in due course, along with booking details where required. Bookings will be available from Monday 25th August and more details can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/DoverHeritageOpenDays>
<https://thedoversociety.co.uk/heritage-open-days/>



Dover Transport Museum Interior

Around Dover Museum

Dover Replica Bronze Age Boat on Loan to Prestigious Exhibition in France

Vronni Ward – Dover Museum

We have the great honour of lending Dover's very own replica Bronze Age boat to the National Archaeological Museum at Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye on the outskirts of Paris for their temporary exhibition entitled, *Les Maitres du Feu: L'age du Bronze en France 2300 – 800 J.C. (Masters of Fire: The Bronze Age in France 2300 – 800BC)*.

The 2012 Reconstruction Project

In 2012, a team of archaeologists and volunteers brought to life a half-size replica of the Dover Bronze Age Boat, one of the oldest seagoing vessels in the world. This endeavour not only shed light on ancient boat-building techniques but also underscored the challenges of reconstructing prehistoric technology. The opportunity to build the half-scale replica

came after six years of consultation and negotiation, culminating in 2011, in an international partnership of cross-channel institutions, proposing a project to study the Bronze Age archaeology of the Transmanche zone.

The interregional European funded project, 'BOAT 1550BC', was an outstanding example of European liaison, involving archaeologists and educationalists in France, Belgium and the UK. The project created a travelling exhibition in the three partner countries, an innovative and ambitious programme of education and outreach, and the construction of the replica.

The replica was designed by Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, a Danish nautical archaeologist



Replica Bronze Age Boat in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

and Richard Darrah, an ancient woodworking specialist and experimental archaeologist from Norfolk. The boat was constructed by a team led by Richard Darrah, project-managed by Peter Clark of Canterbury Archaeological Trust with Paul Bennett MBE FSA former Director of Canterbury Archaeological Trust and the present Chairman of the Dover Bronze Age Boat Trust. He was responsible for boat construction as an onlooker and part-time volunteer.

Challenges and Setbacks

The construction faced immediate challenges as at its maiden launch in Dover Harbour, the vessel began to take on water and had to be quickly retrieved. The leakage was attributed to the modern materials and tight construction time which left insufficient time for thorough water testing.

Refinements and Successes

Undeterred, the team revisited the construction, this time adhering strictly to Bronze Age techniques. They replaced modern materials with authentic ones – using moss mixed with animal fat for caulking and willow withies for stitching. The refined replica demonstrated stability and manoeuvrability, participating in events like the Great River Race on the Thames and various maritime festivals across Europe.

Legacy and Educational Impact

The replica stands as a testament to the value of experimental archaeology. It not only provided practical insights into ancient shipbuilding and navigation but also engaged the public in Britain's rich maritime heritage. The project highlighted the complexities of reconstructing ancient technologies and the importance of meticulous adherence to historical methods for successful outcomes.

Sadly, Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, after whom the boat has been named, did not live to see the boat completed. Richard Darrah saw the boat tested on the Swale and launched in Granville Dock. Richard steered the boat for the first time into Dover Harbour. Richard passed away in 2017 and Peter Clark in 2021, after crewing the boat on many of her voyages.

Recent Renovations

Paul Bennett and Terry Buchan along with other volunteers have worked tirelessly to make the replica boat ship-shape for her journey to France, so she looks her best for visitors to the French National Museum. The replica boat starts her journey across the Channel on a DFDS ferry on Monday 26th May for display from 13th June until 9th March, 2026. We wish her 'Bon Voyage' and a safe journey.

Museum News

Our new 2025/26 temporary exhibition opening in June at the museum is 'Museum in Miniature: An exploration of miniature versions of things from life that people have produced and enjoyed'. The exhibition includes models and miniatures from our collections ranging from architectural models to children's toys. We open: Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.00pm. Open Sundays in the summer (April to September) 10.00am to 3.00pm. Admission is FREE. Tel: 01304 201066 Visit www.dover.gov.uk/museum

After its £10.5m renovation, the Maison Dieu is now open seven days a week Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm and at the weekends 10am to 4pm, so visit free of charge and see the stunning Connaught and Stone Halls. The Roman Painted House is free to visit and open on Saturdays 10am to 4pm and more frequently during school holidays.

Planning Committee

Graham Margery - Co Chairman

Planning Activity: Over the last twelve months the Dover Society Planning Committee reviewed some 195 planning applications that are potentially of interest and made formal response to the Local Authority in respect of 70 of them. In total since the last newsletter we have reviewed some 91 applications and made response in respect of 36 of them. As ever we would encourage members to look at planning applications that may be of interest to them and make comment to Dover District Council as they feel appropriate or contact our Planning Committee with their views. Applications can be found on the DDC website or the Dover Society Website under Planning.

Former Leisure Centre: I expect that members will now be aware that, following the issue of the Decision Notice to grant Planning Permission for a drive-through fast food restaurant (McDonalds) on the site of the former leisure centre at the corner of Townwall Street and Woolcomber Street, that decision has been challenged with an application for Judicial Review. The District Council received a Pre-Action Protocol Letter which is the first step towards a Judicial Review and as a result have conceded the challenge. This means that the Decision notice is revoked, and the matter will be referred back to the DDC Planning Committee to be considered again, giving greater weight to the protection of heritage assets compared to any economic benefit. However, the outcome of these deliberations is by no means certain, and the decision could still go either way. This being such a controversial scheme, whatever the outcome, one party will be delighted and the other left disappointed

and considering further action. Our last remaining hope is that, while all this is going on, another developer will approach DDC with a completely different proposal that will be more sympathetic to this historically sensitive area, but no one has come forward so far that we are aware.

Metropole Hotel: In October 2023 we were contacted by a resident of the apartments in the former Metropole Hotel in Biggin Street above the Weatherspoons public house. Scaffolding had been erected over the facade to facilitate refurbishment work during the course of which, the balconies with their ornate wrought iron railings had been removed. We looked into this and found that there was no planning application for this work which should have been submitted as it is in a Conservation Area and does not constitute permitted development.

We reported this to DDC as a potential planning breach and subsequently was informed that an enforcement case had been opened and the matter would be investigated. In following this up with DDC over many months, we were at first told that investigations were under way and later that enforcement action was being considered. The scaffolding was later removed with the refurbishment work completed but the balconies were not reinstated. We have recently learnt that DDC does not intend to pursue enforcement action, and the case would be closed. Apparently, the balconies were rusty, deemed to be unsafe, too costly to replace and the cost of legal action would be prohibitive. The fact that substantial, unauthorised work can be carried out in a Conservation Area, a clear breach of

planning regulations and there be absolutely no repercussions, is beyond belief! The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 clearly states that the Local Authority should give special attention to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and this they have failed to do in an important part of the town centre much visited by tourists. Already we have seen the progressive degradation of the character of the area with the acceptance of modern and often garish shop fronts and now, through a combination of neglect, recklessness and apathy, we see yet further loss of our historical and architecturally significant town centre.

Building Conversions: We have over many years lamented the proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in Dover because an increase in concentrations of HMOs in an area alters its character, changing the population mix, impacting on the facilities and services that can be supported, as well as affecting residential amenity and social cohesion. It can give rise to noise, nuisance, more callers, a higher parking requirement and visual deterioration of buildings and gardens. This is acknowledged in the Dover District Local Plan. Nevertheless, the number of such properties in Dover continues to rise, there now being 68 properties with accommodation for 705 occupants on the latest published HMO register. There are only four such properties in the rest of the district and the total is far lower than in neighbouring districts. We therefore usually object to planning applications to convert a building into an HMO as the area they are in is often not originally designed for such intensive residential use. Furthermore, a proliferation of such properties causes house prices in the area to be depressed which discourages the development of the higher quality

accommodation which would help lift Dover out of its deprived area status.

On the other hand, where a building is being converted to self-contained flats, the occupancy is much lower, the standard of accommodation is higher, and the problems associated with HMOs are less likely to arise. We are usually keen to support this type of conversion, but we always try to ensure that minimum space standards are being met. There were two recent good examples of this. The former veterinary practice at Five Ways on Maison Dieu Road was originally a residential dwelling and has now been granted planning permission for conversion to four flats. We supported the application. Another is at 1-5 Waterloo Crescent where offices and the former Yacht club are being converted to 17 flats. This is a Grade II Listed terrace which has fallen into disrepair somewhat, so its restoration and conversion to its original residential use is something to be welcomed. Its original exterior appearance is being preserved, and the internal historic features are also preserved or reinstated where possible. This is a quality conversion of the type Dover desperately needs, and we have been pleased to support it. The application has not yet been determined.

Moving Forward: The Maison Dieu opened mid-May after a £10.5M refurbishment which we as a Society have been proud to support both financially and with volunteer work. The opening weekend was a roaring success, and we look forward to this being a major attraction bringing visitors to the town. The Roman Painted House is now opening regularly, a further reason to come and visit Dover. This will be developed further in the future. The Bench Street development is progressing rapidly and is currently ahead of schedule. Three good reasons to feel proud about our town despite all the difficulties!

The Village of River

Margarita Waite

Hon. Secretary River WI

This account was discovered in the archives of River WI which suggests that it was written by WI members. We think it might have been written in 1957. Does give an interesting perspective of the village.

Seventy years ago, River, which is now an ever-increasing suburb of Dover, was then a separate village without main drainage or street lighting and many houses relied on their private wells or the village pump. The inhabitants were principally employed in paper-making, brick-making and agriculture.

Approaching the village from Dover by way of the passage alongside Buckland churchyard, under the railway arch and along the footpath through Crabble Meadows, where St. Andrew's Terrace and Crabble Athletic Ground now stand, the Lower Road was reached near Crabble Paper Mill.

On the left of the road stands Crabble Farm, formerly known as Parsonage Farm, and which may have been an outlying property of St. Radigund's Abbey. Many of the



Crabble Corn Mill

cottages and outbuildings previously attached to it have long since disappeared.

Crabble Corn Mill and the quaint cottages adjoining it form an outstanding feature of this part of the village and with the mill pond, the swans and wild fowl, and the pleasant surroundings and background have always been a great attraction, especially to artists and photographers. The mill was probably rebuilt at the beginning of the C19 to provide supplies for the Army and Navy, considerable forces being stationed in the area during the Napoleonic Wars.

Opposite the mill are two well built old houses, one now occupied by Mr E Mannering, was formerly River Parsonage, the other, which is now River Clinic, was the home of Mr E Colman who farmed much of the surrounding land. The sloping meadow behind the mill will be remembered by the older inhabitants of Dover as the venue for Sunday School and other treats and the exciting adventure in those days of being conveyed to the spot in the miller's horse-drawn vans.

A little further on, the road divides, one part crossing the bridge to the right and proceeding through the main part of the village, the other, Valley Road branching off to the left, with a short road leading to what were Lewis's Brickfields and now part of Lewisham Road.

On the western side of this junction stands an old house which has served several purposes. Until 1835 it was the River Union Workhouse for the parishes of River, Alkham, Capel, Hougham, Buckland, Charlton and Whitfield. When the

workhouse in Buckland Bottom was built, the River poor-house was closed. In 1841 it was used by the Wesleyans for religious purposes. Later on, it became a select private school known as Hofwyl College and was under the direction of Mr and Mrs Weston. Its upper storey was eventually removed, and it became in turn a dairy and a private dwelling now occupied by Mr J Mannering.

Having crossed the bridge and proceeding through the village, one notices 'River Dale' formerly the home of Mr Willsher Mannering, and in the near future likely to become a junior school for Dover College. Old buildings in this part of the village include Rose Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage and 'The Oak', a well-known public house which was built sometime during the reign of Charles I. The upstairs room was site of the first 'Penny School' started by a Mr Halliday who was a school master in River for 56 years. Where the newer houses now stand and stretching beyond the site of the present Co-op premises, older residents recall waving cornfields and pleasant orchards. The small nursery is known as 'Orchard Nursery'. The land between Lower Road and Valley Road was known as Thorpe's Meadow. Mr H W Thorpe, for many years a member of Dover Town Council, built a commodious residence at the southern end of the meadow and had the road, now known as Beresford Road, made. Modern

residences occupy nearly all the meadows and recent builders have certainly obeyed the vendor's instructions that, "No houses of less than £400 be erected on the site".

In 1926 Common Lane, the road joining Lower Road, was carried over the river, previous to which vehicles crossed the river by a ford; a small footbridge provided for pedestrians. Near this ford stood the village pump. Several local inhabitants remember that in their younger days one of their daily tasks was to fetch water from the pump.

Close by is a fine old Elizabethan house called 'Weeford', for many years a farmhouse and now the residence of Mr W Fish. Opposite 'Weeford' stands River Bakery, rebuilt and enlarged in 1887, and for well over a hundred years was kept by members of the Tritton family. Mr Robert Tritton was a well-known man who kept an active and keen interest in everything connected with the village and its development. River Bakery was also River Post Office for many years.

About twenty years ago several very old cottages on the south side of Common Lane were pulled down to make way for modern dwellings. In Common Lane stands River School which was built by River School Board. It was later enlarged and is now a provided school of Kent Education Authority. Adjoining land is reserved for its future extension. At the top of Common Lane and stretching across to Minnis Lane is River Minnis on which the poor of the parish formerly had 'common rights' over an area of some 300 acres.

Returning to Lower Road, it is interesting to note that the first Co-op Society in this area was formed in 1880 by Mr Radford Evans and a few others. The tiny shop next to the 'Dublin Man of War' was opened with a capital of £139 and was chiefly supported by



Common Lane Ford at River

the paper makers of the district (In 1906 it had a capital of £42,729). The society rapidly grew, and larger premises were taken which were improved a few years ago. A flourishing bakery business steadily developed. This was transferred when the new Co-op Bakery opened in Maison Dieu Road.

At the lower end of Minnis Lane were River Paper Mills either founded or owned by Thomas Radford. Mr William Phipps married one of Mr Radford's daughters and the mill came into his possession and it remained in the family for three generations. Members of the Phipps family were owners of considerable property in River. The mill was demolished several years ago and the cottages in River Street which were built for the paper makers are in the process of demolition. One of the cottages still in use was formerly The Vine public house.

Mill House, for many years the home of the mill managers, is still occupied. Near it stood the Dublin Man of War, the licence of which was transferred to the house of the same name in Lower Road. It is reported that Mr William Phipps, a man of dominant personality, marched across the road in frockcoat and tall hat and cleared the house when he thought his workers were spending too much time there!



River Bakery

River Church, which was served by the monks of St Radigund's Abbey until the Reformation, was rebuilt in 1831 and restored in 1876 when the high-backed pews and the west gallery were removed. It is a plain substantial building without ornamentation. At the beginning of the C19 the musical service of this church was assisted by the paper makers. When Mr Plater was vicar, a barrel organ was in use; its ten tunes offered little variety, and its action was not reliable. It was succeeded by a harmonium and later an organ. The present organ was installed by the vicar Rev. D Townsend, himself a keen organist. The church contains an ancient font of great historical interest. It came from the ancient church of St Mary Magdalene in Canterbury and was consecrated by St Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered by the Danes in the year 1010. Two new vestries have been added recently.

Adjoining Kearsney Railway Station is Kearsney Manor. The original manor house together with the manor lands was held in Norman times as part of the Barony of Saye, being a knight's fee for the guarding of Dover Castle. In the early part of the 19th century it was bought by Mr J M Fector, a well-known Dover banker. About the beginning of the present century the premises were acquired by French nuns who opened a day school there and accepted several boarders, mostly from the Continent. More recently the Manor House has been used by the nuns as a guest house. It was destroyed by fire during the last war but has been rebuilt; a part of it becoming a nursing home.

In 1822 Mr J M Fector built Kearsney Abbey as part of the manor grounds using in its construction stones from the old Dover wall. The Abbey, which stands in delightful grounds with a lake formed by the junction of two branches of the River Dour, was

purchased a few years ago by Dover Corporation and is now a popular pleasure ground. Much of the original building has been demolished. Many of the plants for Dover's public gardens are propagated at the Abbey. The Marquis of Ely was a distinguished resident at the Abbey in the latter part of the last century.

The extension of the electric tram system from Buckland to River Church in 1905 did much to encourage the rapid development of River which has taken place in the last fifty years. The tramlines were originally laid on sleepers and ballast. The track, which was fenced like a light railway ran through the old brickfields. Lewisham Road was afterwards built on the track, and houses were soon erected along the route. The trams were superseded by buses in 1937. The improvement to Lewisham Road with its present delightful avenue of flowering trees, the laying out of River Recreation Grounds, the development of Coxhill Estate and many other areas in the village have taken place during the lifetime of most of the local inhabitants.

In 1956 the new Methodist Church was opened in Lewisham Road; the original building in Common Lane which had become inadequate for the needs of its supporters is now used as a Sunday school.

Apart from the erection of several desirable residences on its Western side, little alteration has been made to London Road, generally known as the Upper or Top Road, although the workshops of J Robson and Sons, agricultural engineers, no longer exist. For many years Robson's Traction Engines were well known throughout Kent and further afield (some are currently available on vintage sites).

During the hunting season a former attractive sight was the assembly of

huntsmen on the skyline of the Old Park slopes with hounds working through the gorse below.

River suffered some damage from bombs and shells during the last war. One of the first cross-channel shells landed near Minnis Lane. Two houses in Valley Road were destroyed and other houses in that road and in The Meadway were badly damaged. There was considerable tension in the vicinity of River Bakery for some weeks while the Bomb Disposal Squad were unearthing with difficulty two large, unexploded bombs, one of which had gone under Ivy Cottage, the other falling near the back of Brooklands. A bomb which landed in a manure heap on a farm in Kearsney ensured a good crop of vegetables for all the surrounding gardens! In 1947 food parcels were received from Port Dover WI in Canada who adopted River.

Soon after the First World War, River Hall Company was formed under the chairmanship of Mr H E Russell, a former Mayor of Dover; two large army huts were purchased and converted into recreation rooms known as River Hall. These are now the headquarters of River Women's Institute, and they are also used for educational and various entertainment purposes. During the war, the village hall was taken over by the military, but the Women's Institute never missed a meeting, convening in members' houses until the Church Hall became available. A successful preservation centre was run by the Institute on behalf of the Ministry of Food, and, in four years, the total of jam alone was 30,000lbs!

A former landmark adjoining these premises was a large barn which stood at the junction of Common Lane and River Street. The barn was destroyed by fire and the corner shop which stands on part of the site was for some time known as 'Ye Olde Barn'.

The Field Marshall (Ret'd) and The Empress

Barry O'Brien

Although almost three years into his retirement Sir John Burgoyne found himself playing a small but far from unimportant part in French history.

The British newspapers of September 17th 1870 carried the news that "All classes of French residents in London have established a Committee of National Defence. The committee sit from 9am in the morning until 7pm in the evening at 8 Old Compton Street, Soho."

With France under the rule of Emperor Napoleon III, nominally alongside a National Assembly of restricted power, discontent had been growing across the country particularly among the more socialist minded of the French population.

Elsewhere, as the Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, sought to unify the German States, many around the French Emperor, including his wife, the Empress Eugénie, were concerned that success for Bismarck might jeopardise France's status as the dominant power in Europe. Despite various diplomatic demands and discussion, the continuing alliance of

German states significantly strengthened Prussia's military position so much so that France mobilised its army on July 15th 1870, with the North German Confederation responding likewise later that day. On July 16th, the French declared war on Prussia and invaded German territory on August 2nd causing the German coalition to respond accordingly and invade North Eastern France on August 4th. Napoleon chose to lead his troops into battle but on realising his own military limitations, proposed returning to Paris. The Empress subsequently responding by telegraph: "Don't think of coming back unless, you want to unleash a terrible revolution. They will say you quit the army to flee the danger."

One month after the outbreak of hostilities, the Emperor capitulated to the Prussians on September 2nd at The Battle of Sedan and was taken prisoner, effectively leaving France without a government. When news of Napoleon's defeat reached Paris two days later, leading Republicans declared a new government assuming control of all affairs in France, thereby ending the Second Empire and the birth of the Third Republic.



Napoleon III and Otto von Bismarck speak after the Battle of Sedan

As hostile crowds formed near the Tuileries Palace in Paris the Empress Eugénie slipped from the palace along with one of her entourage and sought sanctuary at the home of Court Dentist and confidant, American, Thomas W. Evan, who arranged for her to travel to Deauville, from where, on September 7th, so popular reports suggest, "she took the yacht of a British official to England".

The British press of 1870 suggest that Eugénie's escape from Paris was perhaps

not quite so straightforward, reporting that on leaving the Palace she was separated from her associates by the crowd and recognised to cries of "To the guillotine!". However, Eugénie managed to lose herself in the throng and made her way to the house of Thomas Evan who advised that she should not attempt to flee Paris by train but instead secured her passage on a cart returning to Normandy. After three days and two nights travel the fleeing Empress arrived in Trouville near Deauville, south of Le Havre, and only 15kms from Honfleur, and from here the tale is best told by the correspondent for The Times newspaper: "Sir John Burgoyne's yacht was lying off Trouville when a Frenchman came on board asking to be allowed to look over an English yacht. Sir John, half suspecting him to be a French spy, allowed him to look about. Soon after this visitor was gone two French gentlemen came on board with the same request and, after asking many questions as to the sailing powers of 'The Gazelle', begged to be allowed to speak with Sir John alone. They told him the history of the Empress's escape and asked for her to be taken to England. Sir John promised to do so. She came on board privately and the yacht weighed anchor at once and set sail for Ryde.

The Empress was wholly unprovided with luggage, not having even a comb and brush, or a change of linen with her. The crossing was very rough, the sea washing over the deck, and the Empress was wayworn and exhausted when she arrived at Ryde."

The Empress Eugénie was soon ensconced at the Marine Hotel, Hastings while Napoleon III and his entourage of thirteen aides were held in comfortable captivity near Kassel, Germany with Eugénie travelling there incognito to visit him.

While Bonapartist candidates participated in the first elections for the National Assembly of The Republic they won only five seats, and the newly elected assembly officially declared the removal of the emperor from all power. Napoleon was released from captivity once a peace was arranged between France and Germany, the Emperor arriving into exile in England March 1871.

Napoleon, Eugénie, their son Louis and their entourage, having been received by Queen Victoria, settled at Camden Place in Chislehurst, Kent although the deposed Emperor's health soon began to deteriorate; despite surgery he died on the January 9th 1873 and was buried at St Mary's Catholic Church, Chislehurst. However, after Louis, a serving officer with the British Army, was killed in South Africa their bodies were moved to the Imperial Crypt at St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough, Hampshire.

The deposed family's association with the United Kingdom was commemorated in 1887 when Eugénie became the godmother of Victoria Eugénie of Battenberg, Queen Victoria's Granddaughter and later Queen Consort of Alfonso XIII of Spain.

With the outbreak of WWI Eugénie donated her steam yacht Thistle to the British Navy and funded a military hospital at Farnborough Hill as well as making large donations to French hospitals. The former Empress died in July 1920, aged 94, during a visit to Madrid and is also interred in the Imperial Crypt at St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough.

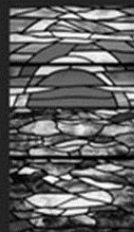
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BOOK REVIEW

Dover Promenade Pier

by Martin Easdown and Martyn Webster

Reviewed by Alan Lee

This well researched book, the latest in a series on piers, contains over eighty illustrations and is well worth a read. It follows the fortunes of the Dover Promenade Pier from the initial proposal in 1847, unto it was demolished in 1927.

To fund construction, the Dover Landing Pier Company was formed in July 1847, with an original capital of 800 shares at £10 each. Owing to many objections and delays, the first pile was not driven until 1891 with the pier finally opening in 1893. The pier was an impressive 900 feet long with Moorish-style kiosks and, over the years, boasted a number of different amenities to attract the public.

The pier always struggled financially and in 1913 it was purchased by the Admiralty and renamed the Naval Pier. It was from here that the ships of the Zeebrugge Raid sailed on 23rd April 1918 and, in 1919, the body of Nurse Cavell was landed here. From 1921 to 1926 it was leased and reverted back to a pleasure pier. Dover Town Council then declared it unsafe and in 1927 Dover Harbour Board demolished the pier.

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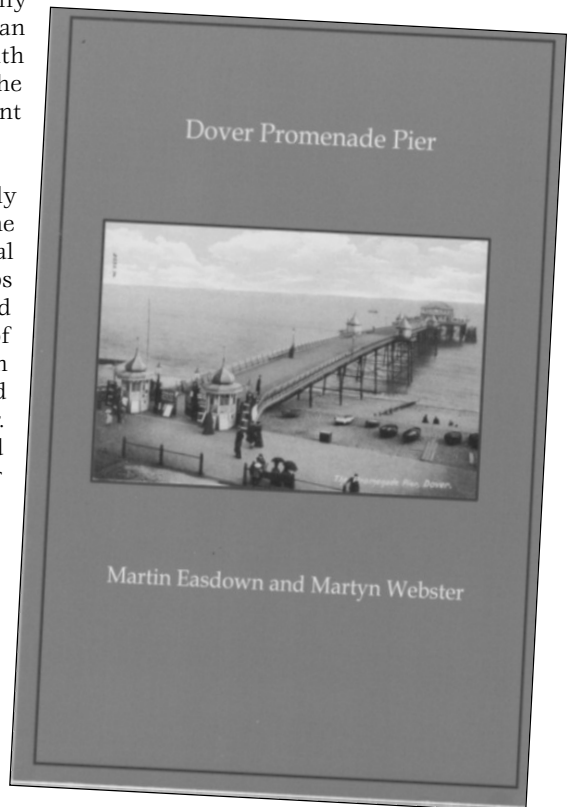
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By Post. Cheque payment, post details of your order with a cheque for the correct amount, made payable to "National Piers Society Ltd." to N.P.S. Sales, Mrs. Frances White, Rose Cottage, Caldecott Green, Farndon, Chester. CH3 6PE. Please check availability on the website or telephone 01829 271275 before ordering.

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Dover: Depressed, Down and Out, or What?

—Peter Sherred—

Dover was recently described or named as Sh*tville in a report in *The New Statesman*. So said Mary Kenny in an article produced for the magazine *The Oldie* (March 2025 issue), her article carrying the headline "Dover's lost its soul". Comparing and contrasting Dover and its coastal neighbour Deal, she reported Dover is among the most deprived places in England, being number 94 in the total list of 326. It contains the highest number of people on sick benefits, with 18.7% of the working age population being 'economically inactive', which is often a sign of depression, low motivation, addiction problems and of falling victim to the vibe of general decay. She found walking around Dover town a dispiriting experience as people look poor, sad and down-at-heel, but a redeeming feature is St James's which has a *Marks and Spencer* store! The article is a description of abject dingyness in a town where a Turkish business owner and resident confided in her that Dover has "too many people on benefits". What has happened to Britain's Protestant work ethic seems to be the ultimate question uppermost in this resident's mind.

Meantime Deal is described by Mary Kenny as a veritable nirvana on earth – with several 'high-end' restaurants, gastropubs and 26 cafes. House prices are, it appears, soaring



Amenity Area - The Curve

and rentals are expensive. Mary Kenny admits to an affection for Dover, but then why wouldn't anyone who has an intimate knowledge and experience of the town?

The economic climate has created many challenges, especially for the retail sector which may very well have impacted on the frontages in the town, but then Dover has always suffered from a somewhat over-extended main street stretching from the Market Square to Buckland Bridge - too long, realistically, for a vibrant shopping centre, although London Road maintains quite a number of busy retail units providing a rich variety of opportunities for a shopping experience.

But does Dover's strength surely lie not in its geography or its rich and impressive history but in its greatest asset –the hard working, friendly and welcoming people who, by and large, have a considerable pride in their town? And why shouldn't they have such pride because, among other assets, Dover boasts arguably the most attractive seafront in the country and it remains the busiest contemporary lead port of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports? In Pencester Gardens and Connaught Park it boasts of two large areas of open green space for the recreational benefit of the residents of Dover - not forgetting Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens at River. On the educational front Dover offers two grammar schools – both the girls' and the boys' grammar schools - as well as Dover College in the town centre. It also has the Duke of York's Royal Military School on its outskirts (the site of the recent installation of the new Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports).

In its Town Centre Dover has a commanding structure in the impressive Grade 1 Town

Hall building or the Maison Dieu, newly reopened after a multi-million-pound restoration and which contains a unique collection of military colours and artefacts, including arms and armour from the Royal Armouries. It also contains a fine collection of oil paintings, including those of former Lord Wardens of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports. The restoration project included restoring the work of Victorian neo-Gothic architects Ambrose Poynter and William Burges and the Town Hall will provide amenity spaces for many activities for the people of Dover in a building that will reflect the beauty of the Victorian era in works to its internal structure. Aided by Lottery grant money, the restoration of the Town Hall, with parts dating from the thirteenth century, is testament to the scale of investment in the town on just one project for the benefit of the future of the town.

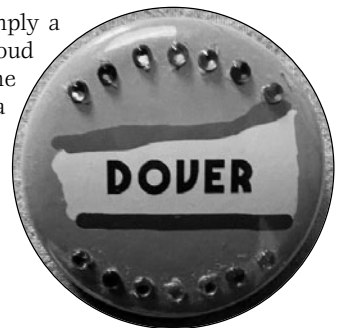
But that is not the only positive sign of confidence in the town for, ongoing at the present time near the underpass to the seafront, is a substantial development site being prepared to receive an educational campus and business centre known as the Dover Beacon redevelopment site in Bench Street. This is another multi-million-pound project which demonstrates confidence in a town that has by no means lost its soul. Further, Dover Harbour Board has completed a development of the western side of the seafront including the creation of a large open amenity space on the shore side of what is known as 'The Curve'. Infilling of dock areas is currently under way to provide facilities to ease issues relating to travel abroad.

In short Dover currently is receiving massive financial investment of a sort that would not normally be attracted by towns affected by general decay or which have lost their souls. There is an appetite for life in the town and for transformation for its future and the possibilities for its residents. Decisions by

Central Government in recent years, controlled by both major parties, particularly in the promotion of the Channel Tunnel project, have had adverse impacts on the town but, as with challenges during wartime, Dover (and its residents) has not been defeated and the level of current investment activity is testament to an intention of not permitting the town to fall into depression but rather offers an insight into the character of a town preparing for the future in a time of transition. Dover boasts two Rotary Clubs – the Rotary Club of South Foreland and the Rotary Club of Dover. Both engage in many aspects of the town's life and members of both are often to be seen collecting for worthy causes and not just at Christmastime. It is on occasions such as these that the generosity of spirit of the people of Dover is shown to its fullest advantage. Its people are the town's greatest asset!

A new parliamentary representative is in place who needs to establish a track record of representing the interests of the town over and above party allegiances, so that at every level of representation there is a demonstrable positivity for the town currently and for the future. Sh*tville, Dover is not! It remains a vibrant forward-looking town with an optimistic future - provided those elected to represent the town do precisely that and not put other interests ahead of the well-being of the town. Sorry, Mary Kenny, but Dover has not lost its soul!

It is quite simply a place to be proud of and the wearing of a Dover badge would show that pride.



Charles John Huffam Dickens and Dover

Derek Leach

I am sure that every member of The Dover Society will be familiar with the novels by Charles Dickens, having read some of them or seen films or TV series based on them. Perhaps not so many will be aware of what Dickens had to say about Dover, either in his books or elsewhere. The Society commemorated, with one of our blue plaques, Dickens' three months stay in Dover in 1852 at 10 Camden Crescent when working on *Bleak House*. But he passed through the town many times to and from the continent.

With the completion of the railway line from London via Folkestone to Dover, Dickens took the train for the first time in 1851 and in the magazine *Household Words* compared it with his journeys from London by road on the mail coach. He was very pleased with the rail experience, marvelling at leaving London Bridge station and arriving in Paris in only 11 hours, compared with 22 long, weary hours by coach. In 1857, again in *Household Words*, he describes a trip from



Portrait of Dickens, by Jeremiah Gurney

London to Dover and back, standing on the footplate of the steam engine! He left London at 8.30pm, spent the night at the Lord Warden Hotel, returning at 8.30am. Dickens described the entrance to Shakespeare Tunnel as like 'a pair of upright letterbox slits, developing on nearer approach to a monastery doorway apparently'.

During his 1852 stay in Camden Crescent he liked to visit Pilot Field (by the present Adrian Street) and rest in the sunshine. Writing to Mary Boyle from Camden Crescent, Dickens commented, 'It is not quite a place to my taste, being too bandy (I mean musical, no reference to its legs) and infinitely too genteel! But the sea is fine, and the walks are quite remarkable'. It seems that Dickens was not so keen on noisy, band music, since he made the same comment about Broadstairs.

As for describing Dover as too genteel, a description of the Pier District in *A Tale of Two Cities* is less complimentary: 'The little, narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away from the beach and ran its head into the chalk cliffs, like a marine ostrich. The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling wildly about, and the sea did what it liked and what it liked was destruction. It thundered at the town and thundered at the cliffs and brought the coast down madly. The air among the houses was of so strong a piscatory flavour that one might have supposed sick fish went up to be dipped in it. A little fishing was done in the port and a quantity of strolling about by night, and looking seaward, particularly at those times when the tide made and was near flood. Small tradesmen who did no business whatever, sometimes unaccountably realised large fortunes, and it was remarkable that

nobody in the neighbourhood could endure a lamplighter.' Was Dickens suggesting that smuggling was going on in Dover of all places?

Dickens stayed at the Lord Warden Hotel again for a while in 1861 and wrote to Wilkie Collins stating, 'It is very beautiful here. I can work well and walked by the cliffs to Folkestone and back today, when it was so exquisitely beautiful that, although I was alone, I could not keep silence on the subject.'

Rough weather during his stays in Dover obviously made a big impression on Dickens. He described a storm he endured: 'The bad weather has not in the least touched us, and the storm was most magnificent at Dover. All the great side of the Lord Warden next the sea had to be emptied, the break of the waves was so prodigious, and the noise so utterly confounding. The sea came in like a great sky of immense clouds, forever breaking suddenly into furious rain; all kinds of wreck were washed in, among other things a very pretty brass-bound chest being thrown about like a feather. The unhappy Ostend packet, unable to get in or go back, beat about the Channel all Tuesday night, and until noon yesterday, when I saw her come in, with five men at the wheel, a picture of misery inconceivable.'

In *The Uncommercial Traveller* he has more to say about rough weather at Dover: 'The sea makes noises against the pier, as if several hippopotami were lapping at it, and were prevented by circumstances over which they had no control from drinking peaceably.'

And again in one very long sentence: 'There the sea was rumbling in, with deep sounds after dark and the revolving French light on Cap Gris Nez was seen regularly bursting out and becoming obscured, as if the head of a

giant light-keeper in an anxious state of mind were interposed every half minute, to look how it was burning.'

On one occasion Dickens seems to be in a bad mood waiting on the packet boat for the mail train to arrive and wrote: 'Dover always goes to bed when I am going to Calais with a more brilliant display of lamp and candle than any other town. Mr. and Mrs. Birmingham, host and hostess of the Lord Warden Hotel, are my much-esteemed friends, but they are too conceited about the comforts of that establishment when the Night Mail is starting. I know it is a good house to stay at, and I don't want the fact insisted upon in all its warm bright windows at such an hour as I wait here on board the night packet for the South Eastern train to come with the Mail. Dover appears to me to be illuminated for some intensely aggravating festivities in my personal dishonour. All its noises smack of taunting praises of the land, and dispraises of the gloomy sea, and of me for going on it. The drums upon the heights have gone to bed, or I know they would rattle against me for having my unsteady footing upon this slippery deck. The many gas eyes of the Marine Parade twinkle in an offensive manner, as if with derision.'

Finally, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens describes conditions on the Dover Road, travelling by Mail Coach when even the turnpiked roads' conditions were pretty bad. Consequently, it was a great relief to be warmly welcomed at The Royal George Hotel in Dover.

As Leslie Smith, author of *Stories of Dover and the Grand Tour*, wrote: 'These glimpses of old Dover from the pen of Dickens are probably the best we have from anybody.'

Source:

Stories of Dover and the Grand Tour by Leslie Smith, published in 1981.

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PROGRAMME 2025/26

Non-members are welcome at all meetings except that only members may vote at the Annual General Meeting. You may join, pay on the night and vote at the meeting.

September 20 **Dover Big Local Urban Fete – Pencester Gardens**
Free Event. Annual community fun day. A day of music, food, activities and fun! An alcohol-free event for families and all age groups. There will be a variety of entertainers providing live music throughout the day.

September **Heritage Open Days**
12th to 21st Free Event. More details are on page 30. Paul Wells has also arranged five illustrated “teatime talks” at the Dover Museum cinema from 6pm to 7pm.

15th September Keith Parfitt “Lost Medieval Buildings”

16th September Andy Rayner “Western Heights”

17th September Martin Easttown “Promenade Pier”

18th September Barry O’Brien “Dour industries”

19th September Colin Varrall “Shakespeare Colliery”

You will of course all be welcome to attend these free events. There will be Eventbrite booking pages nearer the time

October 20 **Dover Society General Open Meeting**
Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Chris Townend, Dover District Council.
Topic: He will be speaking about Dover, in his role as Head of Investments, Growth and Tourism

November 17 **Dover Society General Open Meeting**
Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Simon Bill
Topic: Dover Arts Development. A talk, slide show and discussion from Simon Bill who is the author and artist of the book *Dover, 12 essays*. This project was funded by The Arts Council England

December 7 **Dover Society Festive Lunch & Entertainment**
12.30 for 1pm **The Marina Hotel, Dover Waterfront**
£30.50 pp Price to include arrival drink, three course meal, tea, or coffee and entertainment. Extra wine or other drinks may be ordered and purchased at the venue. Arrival drinks are available from 12.30pm. Finish at 4pm. Details & booking form on p25.

2026

January **Dover Society General Open Meeting**
Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** tba Full details in the November newsletter

February **Dover Society Quiz Night**
Monday Our ever-popular light-hearted quiz evening held in St Mary's Church Hall.
7.00 for 7.30pm Make up your own table of six, or, if you are unable to, we will fit you in where
£ tba p.p. appropriate. Full details in the November Newsletter

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