

NOVEMBER MEETING

Dover – Book and Tour

A presentation by Simon Bill, Dover Arts Development

Reported by Alan Lee

Simon Bill is an artist and writer, born in 1958, at Kingston-upon-Thames. He studied at Saint Martin's School of Art (1977-80) and the Royal College of Art (1982-85). He moved to Dover in 2018, became a Dover Arts Development (DAD) Guardian in 2020 and a DAD director in 2024.

Simon's first solo museum show, in 2014, titled 'Lucky Jim', was at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. In 2016, his novel, 'Artist in Residence', a satire, was published and in 2020 the rights were acquired by Corestar Media and a TV series is planned. In 2017, he was appointed artist in residence at the Gulbenkian Science Institute, Lisbon and is a regular contributor to several publications.

With an Arts Council England grant, DAD commissioned Simon to run a project entitled 'Dover – Book and Tour', then in 2023 to complete four Op (Optical Illusion)

Art murals in Dover with the additional help of a council grant. This followed five that he had completed along Great Yarmouth seafront in 2022. His book 'Dover', was published by DAD in 2025.

The Book originated from Simon's blog where he recorded his experiences exploring in Dover and the surrounding countryside on foot. An aim being to encourage people, both locals and visitors, to explore the beautiful and strange hidden Dover and to bring it to life.

The thirteen parts consist of the existing six blog texts are titled 'Light', 'Too Much History', 'Tunnels and Caves', 'Nature', 'Patriots' and 'Dover's Dead', based on an oft heard remark, online and in day-to-day interactions. True, the high street is struggling, so 'dead' here means that Dover is not a shopping destination. Along with this are six new essays and a new introduction.

The tour consisted of fifteen venues, starting on 10th January 2025 and ending with the presentation to the Dover Society on 17th November 2025. The evening was structured as a 'slide talk' with Simon talking about a selection from the hundreds of photographs he has taken whilst exploring.

The Book 'Dover' is available at £10 from: Amazon, The Dover Museum shop in the Market Square, The Margate Book Shop, Kollektiv Folkestone, Colony Room London and Original Projects Great Yarmouth.



Op Art at St Radigunds