

The Dover Society

Newsletter

No.2. September 1988

*Registered with the Civic Trust
Affiliated to the Kent Federation of
Amenity Societies*

Editorial

On 27 June our second PUBLIC MEETING took place and was well-attended. Mike McFarnall spoke about some of the Council's plans for the improvement of Dover. John Gerrard, Chief Engineer of Dover Harbour Board and our Deputy Chairman, gave a very interesting account of the history and future plans of D.H.B. and showed a model of the proposed new café which is to replace the one which was badly damaged in the great gale of October '87. As a result of members' comments the design has been modified. Ken Wraight spoke about the activities of the Planning Sub-Committee.

The COMMITTEE has continued to meet monthly, invariably with a full agenda, and the Planning Sub-Committee is making a careful study of all planning applications in the district we cover.

As we noted in the first Newsletter it was evident to the Committee, on a conducted tour, that neglect and shoddy maintenance had done their worst in BROOK HOUSE and that its inevitable end was all too obvious. However we were shocked at the lack of understanding of public feeling which led to its unannounced destruction at 5 o'clock one morning. We are also very concerned about the confusion over its possible listing as a protected building. It is to be hoped that the site will now be quickly cleared and that future development of this area will be a real asset to Dover.

On the credit side we congratulate the council on its efforts to control and clear LITTER, and hope that it gets the support it should from the public. The MARKET SQUARE scheme has some attractive features - the lamp-posts with their globes and hanging baskets of flowers and foliage, the elegant gold-banded black metal posts and signpost, the contrasts of surface texture underfoot and its centre-piece the dandelion-clock-headed fountain. Trees are an asset to the Square though the wooden containers rather less so. A notice about the history of the Trough, which has a rather grave-like appearance in this setting, would help to explain its presence. There are some interesting angles which make even the west end of Castle Street look better and the two most attractive facades of the Square, the Old Market Hall and Lloyds Bank, make good backdrops. A measure of public approval is that many people obviously like sitting there and meeting in it during the day and this immediately makes it a much friendlier place and a better town centre. We hope that the development or improvement of the exits from the Square will be carefully considered.

The OLD TOWN GAOL in the Town Hall is an imaginative idea well-planned and promises to continue to be a great attraction for tourists and local people. Do visit it if you haven't done so already.

The Dover Society strongly approves of the preservation and proper presentation of the town's extensive Roman, as well as its Saxon and Norman, remains and is following all proposals with close attention. We hope that the District Council's plans for the HERITAGE CENTRE will soon be available for inspection and discussion and for comparison with those put forward by Brian Philp and the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit. The Painted House has been a fine example of archaeological presentation and has drawn many visitors in the eleven years it has been open. We should be glad to hear from any members with a special interest in the proposed Heritage Centre.

It seems that the much-debated CARAVAN SITE will be at Bere Farm, near St. Margaret's. The access from the narrow, winding B-2058 will have to be very carefully planned for safety and we hope that the promised landscaping will be well-done. A result of the preceding controversy is that people of Dover realised what they might lose in CONNAUGHT PARK. It is good to know that it is increasingly enjoyed by townspeople as well as visitors and that it is now tidier. Perhaps it could be better signposted? An appropriately-sited carpark would mean that it could also be used by more people including the elderly and less mobile.

It has been suggested that a centrally-placed display case to show WHAT'S ON IN DOVER would be a help to tourists and local people.

We send our best wishes to the DOVER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE for its ambitious plans for a trade and export centre.

The next PUBLIC MEETING and a very interesting TOUR of the Eastern Docks for members are announced later in this issue. Book early for the Tour to avoid disappointment.

THE DOVER SOCIETY has continued to grow since its inception in April and now has well over a hundred members. However a larger membership will allow us to offer more to our members and to be more effective. We hope that everyone will encourage at least one friend to join; a form is included for the purpose. Further forms may be obtained from the Secretary.

We look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Philomena Kennedy

PRESIDENT *The Rt. Hon. The Countess of Guilford.*

VICE-PRESIDENTS: The Rt. Hon. The Lord Ennals, the Rt. Hon. The Lord Rees, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, Mr. 'Budge' Adams, Mr. Ivan Green, Mrs. Marion Horsfield, Mr. Jack Ind, Mr. Peter Johnson, Miss Lillian Kay, Mr. Jonathan Sloggett, Mr. Ray Warner.

COMMITTEE:

CHAIRMAN: Jack Woolford, 1066 Green Lane, Temple Ewell, Dover CT16 3AR.
Tel.822871.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: John Gerrard, 77 Castle Avenue, Dover. Tel.206579.

SECRETARY: Barry Smith, 51 Glenfield Rd., Dover CT16 2AL. Tel.214049.

TREASURER: Norman Willis, 24 Danes Court, Dover. Tel.202285

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Tel.201158.

EDITOR: Philomena Kennedy. Tel.852042.

CHAIRMAN OF PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE: Ken Wraight. Tel.823356.

Other members of the Committee

Ken Berry, Phyllis Dobbins (Dover Action Group), Jeremy Cope, Michael Foad (Advisory Member), Adrian Galley, Peter Johnson, Terry Khambatta, Vera Liggett, Mike McFarnall (Advisory Member), Jim Truelove, Leo Wright.

Letters to the Editor

The Other Tunnel ?

April 22, 1988

Dear Madam,

It is a great pity that your society was not formed sooner. As an ex-Dovorian I have watched, via the "Dover Express", the destruction of Dover's heritage. The five water-mills in the town went to the developers. Try to save the working part of Buckland Paper Mill. At the back of Connaught Barracks is a moat that could be a tourist attraction. I used to go blackberrying in it. No one else realised it existed as it was on war Office ground and had notices about trespassers. It was worth the risk for the blackberries. Ferguson used to rent the land for his cattle. There was also a Dummy Fort on the North Foreland Meadow, another of my playgrounds. In the earthworks at Dover Castle there are rooms and tunnels; I went in them before the war.

There is also in existence a tunnel from the Castle to the Market Square built during the Napoleonic Wars by prisoners of war. Very few Dover people know about it but it was uncovered by a bomb in Castle Street and hastily covered up. It's worth investigating. It is brick-built and its exit was in one of the basements of a shop in the Market Square. One of my brothers was an Air Raid Warden. He got buried by bomb debris in Castle St and, he told me, saw the tunnel but was told not to tell anyone. It was obviously secret because it was a direct route into the Castle, the centre of operations for the Western Approaches. But there is no need for it to be secret now and it could hold artefacts put there for safety and forgotten. The Dover Museum has discounted its existence. Hammonds, the coal merchants, is now swallowed up by a supermarket and restaurant, the River Dour almost obscured, Crundall's and Tolputt's timber mills are gone and Chitty's Flour Mill was replaced by Dover Engineering Works. Only Barton Brook remains as it was in my schooldays, but a bit shallower, of course, and used as a rubbish dump. I am 68 years old now but cannot forget Dover as it was, nor do I want to for that matter.

Yours Faithfully,

Ron. F. Warren
London SW1.

Arts Centre

Dear Editor,

I'm sure it hasn't escaped the notice of fellow members of The Dover Society that our town is culturally bereft - no theatre, no cinema, no concert hall and no art gallery.

It's the latter that concerns me most. At the beginning of this year I exhibited a large number of my paintings and drawings in other towns in East Kent. Several people asked why I'd omitted a showing in Dover and finally had to agree that the omission was inevitable once one looked at spaces available.

To be fair, Michael Foad at the Adult Education Centre at Westmount offered to display my work but available space would have severely restricted the quantity.

Surely it's way beyond time for Dover to include in its plans to promote itself a measure of accessibility to the arts, not just for visitors but for its residents as well. I know of so many local artists, writers, musicians and so on who have nowhere to meet, to exhibit, to absorb and to share. Just imagine the joy of being able to see a contemporary play, look at an exhibition of sculpture and generally just stay in touch with what's new without having to travel out of Dover.

I remember tackling Gladys Payne, the then Leader of the Conservative Group on Dover District Council about this very subject nearly 10 years ago. Her idea was to incorporate an impressive Conference Centre and an Arts Centre in one magnificent building which would be sited (yes, you've guessed it!) exactly where the Channel Tunnel works have devastated the land near Shakespeare Cliff! So much for progress and priorities.

Yours faithfully,

Lesley Gasking

PUBLIC SPIRIT

Five pupils of Astor Secondary School and our Membership Secretary, Barry Smith, are making heroic efforts during the summer holiday to tidy and clear various sites in Dover. More about this in the next issue but meanwhile they would be glad to swell the size of the donation they are making to THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME. Offerings, however small, to Barry please at 51 Glenfield Road, Dover.

SECOND PUBLIC MEETING

The Society's second public meeting on June 27th in the London Road Methodist Church Hall was attended by over 50 members including three of our Vice-Presidents, Budge Adams, Jack Ind and Lillian Kay.

Mike McFarnell, Dover District Council's Project Officer, displayed a number of enlarged prints and a sequence of slides illustrating various aspects of Dover's problems and projected developments and detailed the anti-litter campaign. He fenced quite skilfully in answer to critical comments on details of the District's plans.

After the service of refreshments (during which nine new members were recruited) John Gerrard, the Society's Vice-Chairman, who is the Harbour Board's Director of Engineering, outlined the long history of Dover's harbour. He went on to describe and illustrate various possible

the art of queueing, and when the trams all arrived together a great melée ensued. The Maxton people could get off at both ends of theirs, but as some of them rushed across to catch the Pier transport they passed the stream from the Buckland one; the most exciting scrum was outside Murdoch's. The waiting crowd immediately pushed to the middle of the road round the step, effectively blocking the descent of those who wished to rush across the road to go to Maxton - or even to get on with their shopping in time for the next tram back. Very soon the conductor pulled the wire string that rang the bell - ding ding - we all got out our old penny (halfpenny for children) and peace reigned for another ten minutes.

Would you like to come on a ride with me from the Centre of the Universe to the Packet Yard? If so, see our next issue.

Lillian Kay (one of our Vice-Presidents)

* Listed Buildings - your suggestions requested

A study is being undertaken by the Planning Sub-Committee to look at buildings of interest in Dover. Its aim is to identify buildings which are notable and worthy of protection and, conversely, those which stand on sites more suitable for redevelopment.

Your suggestions and comments will be very welcome. Please send them to Adrian Galley, 3 Wellington Court, Dover Road, Walmer, Deal CT14 7JP (Telephone 368348).

(The current list may be seen at Dover District Council Offices at Whitfield).

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DOVER

I passed through Dover in 1976 on a wet, cold, stormy day. The ferry was delayed and I ventured out from the Western Docks to explore. My first impression was of a grey, bleak, rainswept seafront, enormous road signs to help you leave and the total absence of information, welcome, shops, or refreshments, if you wanted to stay! I retreated to the boat. Little did I think that in less than twelve months I should be living there - or at least in River.

Yet in 1977 as I drove down Jubilee Way on a fine day, the blue sky, the sun on the sea and the White Cliffs created an unforgettable impression. To go along the front and back towards the Castle soaring above, remained one of my favourite diversions, while the cliffs and the sea always combined to put things in perspective. With such natural advantages Dover should surely be a magnet to visitors.

As I got to know the town there were other favourite spots - Castle St, of course; the Regency terraces, many with the original balconies; the parks and gardens; even a viewing gap through the Gateway. And there were some disappointments, notably the neglect of the potentially splendid Market Hall; the dreadful litter and the peeling paint; the empty shops and characterless new building; and the apparent lack of pride in such a great heritage. Yet there were so many exceptions, with good local books, the splendid "Then and Now" slides, the archival annual films - so much material and so many people with affection for and pride in the town.

While living at River I visited the USA and it became yet more obvious to what an extent Dover took for granted and ignored potential which other societies would value so much. Boston had many parallels to Dover, but the visitors could find so much more. One simple device was the 'Freedom Trail', a visitors' route painted blue on the roadside - a visible trail taking in both buildings and natural features. At each point there was well-presented publicity material and the guide to the whole route took the form of a town walk. I was delighted to learn that Philomena Kennedy is preparing one of these for Dover and do hope it will be made widely available on boats and on railways as well as throughout the town. There is so much in any town in England that the visitor will miss without some help, and even more so in a historic spot like Dover. The Dover Society will, I am sure, be supported by all true Dovorians, native and adopted. It is a splendid, much-needed and potentially exciting venture and its founders and members are to be warmly congratulated on their determination to "Back Dover". If 'country members' are accepted I should very much like to join and offer my moral support (and a subscription!).

Joan Hasler

Further accounts for this series are requested. Ed.

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REVIEW

Channel Tunnel Study

Now that the Channel Tunnel is, if not a *fait accompli*, (though work at both ends is behind schedule) a fact of our daily life, many might like to brief themselves, soberly and impartially, with factual information about the past, present and future of the project. They could not do better than study this excellent piece of reportage. The SKN stands for the South Kent Newspapers (Dover Express and Folkestone Herald) who commissioned it and the SKC stands for South Kent College, six of whose students (aged 16 - 18) researched and compiled it this summer.

The history of the tunnel project starting from 1802 makes very good and often amusing reading. The facts are not documented - but then, this is not a Ph D thesis. The events and discussions leading up to the present works are very fully documented. The works themselves are studied under six headings. The four contenders: successful Eurotunnel and unsuccessful EuroRoute, EuroBridge and Channel Expressway are explained, Eurotunnel itself very thoroughly. Full coverage, without comment, but not without humour is given to the political discussions in this country before the Treaty and also to regional and local disquiet about employment and environment. This document will not satisfy those who are strongly and emotionally against - or indeed for - the Tunnel, but it does very well what it sets out to do: to present the facts.

The format is a folder of some forty pages of "fact sheets". I would expect that members of the Society and many other Dovorians would like to have a copy for reference. It could very conveniently be used in schools. For teachers of French seeking "authentic" material for the GCSE, similar material in French is available at Eurotunnel CTG Coquelles/ Fréthun, though, at the moment, nothing so good as this study, which can be purchased at Dover Express office. It is a very creditable piece of work and good value at £2.50.

Leo Wright (Member of Committee)

What does The Dover Society stand for?

THE OBJECTS OF THE DOVER SOCIETY ARE:-

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture;
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archaeology, 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.

We wish to explore constructive solutions to problems in our area and to encourage public involvement, not to act merely as a protest group. The Dover Society is totally non party-political and aims to represent a broad cross-section of interests. We are convinced that we can do more in partnership than we can separately and welcome links with other groups.

TOUR OF EASTERN DOCKS FOR MEMBERS (ONLY)

Saturday 17 September 3 p.m.

led by the Director of Engineering and Public Relations
staff of Dover Harbour Board.

The tour will last about 2 hours. Places are limited so you must fill in and send the form on page 9 to Linda Clackett. Phone her to check on availability and meeting arrangements. It promises to be very interesting; we will undoubtedly see more than the usual tourist or traveller.

OPEN MEETING 'Good for Dover!'

Tuesday 4 October 7.30

the United Reformed Church Hall, High Street

The Rt. Hon. The Countess of Guilford will present
The Dover Society Awards

Awards for the improvement of Dover's amenities will be presented to Buckland Paper Mill for its refurbishment and to KCC architect for the new Magistrates Court.

There will be illustrated talks on "Buckland Mill and Dover" and on "Architecture in Historic Towns Like Dover".

REFRESHMENTS

Application for
TOUR OF EASTERN DOCKS FOR MEMBERS
Saturday 17 September 1988

Cut on line

NAME(S) (Please print)

ADDRESS (Please print)

..... TELEPHONE

Please send to LINDA CLACKETT, 3 MAISON DIEU ROAD, DOVER.

Forthcoming attraction. Christine Waterman, Curator of Dover Museum, will talk about the Old Town Gaol.

Please invite a friend to join The Dover Society.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF
THE DOVER SOCIETY

NAME (Please Print)
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

ADDRESS (Please Print)

.....

POST CODE TELEPHONE

I agree to abide by the Constitution of The Dover Society.

Signed Dated

(A copy of the Constitution may be read in the Reference Department of Dover Public Library. It is closely based on the Model Constitution published by the Civic Trust).

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY - tick as appropriate:

One year: £2.50 Five years: £10

Please make cheques payable to The Dover Society and send to the Membership Secretary: Barry Smith, 51 Glenfield Road, Dover CT16 2AL (Telephone 214049).

It would help us in our planning if you could fill in some or all of this section.

Special Interests:

.....

Can you offer any expert knowledge or experience?:

.....

Do you belong to other relevant organisations?:

.....

Please cut on line