

The  
Dover  
Society

# Newsletter

No. 48

December 2003



SAINT - OMER

*La Coupole*



# The Dover Society

FOUNDED IN 1988

Registered with the Civic trust, Affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies  
Registered Charity No. 299954

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## *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, 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.

The area we cover comprises the parishes or wards of Barton, Buckland, Castle, Lydden, Temple Ewell, Maxton, Pineham, Priory, River, St. Radigund's, Town & Pier and Tower Hamlets.

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

*Merril Lilley*

Christmas greetings to all our readers.

We hope to see many of you, as usual at the Christmas Feast at Dover College Refectory on 13th December. An application form is included with this Newsletter. The cost this year is £17.00. Joan Liggett has arranged for Nicholas Harby and Elizabeth Luckhurst to provide a musical interlude and they will also accompany the carol singing. Please book your place if you have not already done so.

Application forms for the Wine and Wisdom in February are also enclosed with this issue.

The details of meetings for 2004 can be found on the back page, as usual, with the exception of the summer outings. Joan is working on the dates and venues for the trips and these will be available in the April issue of the Newsletter. Some advance information and booking forms may be ready by the March meeting.

The summer outings for this year are completed and were all very successful. They included the trip on the MS Pocahontas in June, the morning visit to Broadstairs in July, the outing to the House of Commons in August and the French trip to La Coupole rocket site in September. All four are reported here and we thank the members who wrote accounts of their impressions of the visits for the Newsletter. All the participants were unanimously enthusiastic in praising Joan for her excellent planning and organisation and, as ever, she deserves our thanks

The first meeting of the Autumn took place on 20th October, with two speakers,

Michael Hinton on Josephine Butler and Paul Bolas on the River Dour project. We have managed to include reports of these two talks although there was very little time to do so before the Newsletter was due at the printers. Jeremy Cope has written an account of Paul Bolas's talk and has also added his report on the progress of 'River-watch'. Terry Sutton has written on Josephine Butler. Many thanks to them both for meeting the deadline. The long-awaited Newsletter binders are now available and were first on sale at the October meeting. If you did not attend the meeting and wish to purchase some binders at £4.48 each please contact the editor. (Tel: 205 254)

In addition to our usual reports on Planning and Membership News, we have ongoing reports from Jeremy Cope and from Lesley Gordon on the success of the Cowgate cemetery project, which, as you will remember, is concerned with both the clearance of the site and the recording of gravestones. Both aspects of the project have been rewarding and produced pleas-

ing results. Much of this is due to the work of member volunteers who have given so much of their time to the project. The Society is also working with the White Cliffs Countryside Project to arrange for an information plaque to be placed in the cemetery.

Another ongoing project is the scanning of the Budge Adams slides, which has been undertaken by Derek Leach and another small team of volunteers, working each week in the library of Dover museum. After more than twelve months the team is nearing the end of its task and it may soon be possible to begin planning the CD and the booklet which will constitute a memorial to Budge.

Other pieces in this issue include articles by Ivan Green and Derek Leach, a report from Chris Taft of the Western Heights Preservation Society and two more contributions to the series 'Glimpses of the Past'. At the end of another year once again we thank all our contributors, advertisers and distributors.

### **Deadline for contributions**

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 49 will be Monday 9th February 2004.

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. Computer files are acceptable; please see guidelines on page 7.

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## Membership News Summer 2003

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*Sheila Cope*

Because so many members have been able to sign Gift Aid forms The Society has claimed £1645 from the Inland Revenue covering the three years ended 31st March 2003. Grateful as we are to those members, we are even more appreciative of the efforts of our treasurer Capt. Mike Weston who has meticulously collated figures and completed essential forms - an onerous but fortunately worthwhile task.

All current subscriptions are safely gathered in. Occasionally members ring me in panic, fearing that they have omitted to pay. No chance, all are rig-

orously pursued! Nevertheless we inevitably lose about 25 each year. However we have more than compensated - thanks to new recruits and we number 437. They include : Mr J Turnpenny, Mr A & Mrs L Lee, Mr J & Mrs C Culver, Miss S Friend, Mr D & Mrs R Godden, Mr G & Mrs P Shepherd, Mrs C Ellerington, Mr R & Mrs N Poole, Mr E Reumel.

Raffle prizes are always very welcome. It helps if you notify me about them in advance, particularly for the Christmas feast.

## The work of the Planning sub-committee

*reported by Jack Woolford, Chairman*

Dover is not without good news and the Planning Committee is gratified that many of its suggestions have fructified, thanks to the support of the Executive Committee, Dover Town and District Council officers, some councillors and others. The Society has played a useful part in a number of desirable developments.

Relationships between Dover Town Council and Dover Town Centre Management have greatly improved, witness the financing and joint reorganisation of the Xmas Lights and its splendid prospective Switch-On and the creation of a widely-representative Steering Committee comprising the Dover Society, District and Town Councils, Riverside Watch, River Parish Council, John Mahon's Buckland Flour Mill, (*et al*) to oversee the much needed regeneration of the River Dour. This was celebrated at the Flour Mill on October 3<sup>rd</sup> by what can only be described as a love-feast. The contribution made by the survey of the river by Dr Paul Bolas, whom we recruited, is immeasurable.

...Having failed, despite encouragement and financial help from Dover Town Council, to create a Buckland Village Association to upgrade that part of our streetscape, the formation of a London Rd. Residents Association (though not without controversy) at the King's Hall on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> was doubly welcome. Our own contribution has been to award Certificates of Congratulation to eleven businesses between Bridge Street and Buckland Bridge for spontaneous improvement of their facades. We hope that their displays of our

awards will reward them and encourage emulation.

We congratulate John Mahon of Criccieth Homes, whom we have supported, on receiving permission to preserve and enhance Buckland Flour Mill. Would that other developers would similarly turn Buckland Paper Mill and the St James' Projects from dreams to realities.

We admire the persistence which, after very much public consultation, the Heathfield Avenue Home Zone will materialise next April and which will also see the Town Clock to be erected on the 'Eagle' public house - not to mention the conversion of Maison Dieu House into Dover Town Council's Offices, the erection of a Historic Information Board in Cowgate Cemetery and the creation of a Nature Reserve on Whinless Down. We also trust that the controversy about Rix Scaffolding's premises, with its threats of appeal to the Ombudsman and judicial review, may at length be amicably resolved.

On the other hand we wonder if South Kent College really proposes to demolish the former Girls' Grammar School/School of Art in the Paddock. We question the value of Dover District Council's expensively glossy 'Best Performance Plan', and whilst we thank the Port of Dover for refurbishing the clock at the end of the Prince of Wales' Pier, as we requested, and for consigning Westport to oblivion, we wonder if the Marina will survive the Thirty Year Master Plan's determination to develop the Eastern and Western Docks exclusively for ferries and cargoes.



## Sea Cadet Services

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*Jack Woolford*

Our super Social Secretary Joan Liggett, and Lieutenant Commander (RN), Dick, her husband (whose general company we enjoy at all our meetings and excursions and who so ably commanded the annual St George's Day Zeebrugge Commemoration Ceremony), were warmly honoured at a retirement presentation at TS Lynx (former Broadlees Bottom School) for their joint 30 year service to the Dover Sea Cadet Corps.

## Dover Society Reunion at Penhow

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*Jeremy Cope*

A happy gathering of members photographed after lunch at the Groes Wen Inn on 19th September. The party was made up of Jeremy and Sheila Cope holidaying with John and Jennifer Gerrard (now living in Winchcombe) on a visit to Ken and Del Berry who live in Penhow. The party, all of whom have at some time been involved with the running of the Society, included two ex treasurers and a former vice chairman a former chairman and our present membership secretary.





# KFAS Autumn Conference

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## *Hythe Civic Society's Report*

On September 20<sup>th</sup> Hythe Civic Society hosted the Autumn Conference of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies. The day was a great success, with about 45 delegates, three interesting and provocative speakers in the morning, a buffet lunch, town guided tours and a visit to the Town Hall (courtesy of Hythe Town Council) in the afternoon. We are affiliated to KFAS, and so receive its Newsletter which contains abstracts from the Newsletters of other Societies: the interesting thing is how we are all dealing with similar issues: insensitive developers 'getting away' with planning horrors, skate board parks, cycle routes, charity shops, telephone masts ...

In the opening talk, Lord Aldington offered a blueprint for a more prosperous future for Kent. Then Jeff Stack spoke on housing matters, especially affordable housing, social housing and resources; he showed us how little we can influence decisions – *but we are not giving up, for all that*. Finally Peter Horn of KCC described the abandoned car problem, and the operation of the brilliant CUBIT machine which reduces both cars and red tape in one operation.

## Guidelines for Computer Files

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*by Steve Franks*

Photographs taken on digital cameras should be submitted as the original file, at the highest quality the camera is capable of, preferably TIFF, but low compression (high quality) JPEG images are acceptable. These take several megabytes so ideally should be submitted on the original camera memory card, or CD-ROM if you have a CD writer. Floppy disks and email will not handle such large images, so should only be used as a last resort.

The editor likes to choose which photographs are published, so it would be helpful if you could include prints with the media. These do not have to be photographic quality, because inkjet prints alone are NOT acceptable for publication. The results are not of the high quality required by our printers.

All CD-ROMs and camera cards will normally be returned within 3 days of my receiving them.

Text should preferably be submitted as plain ASCII, but if in doubt use your favourite wordprocessor and I'll try not to lose any of your words. Please do NOT include photographs in the body of an article. If you wish to indicate where a photograph should appear please enter the name of the file between carets <>, or include a link to the photo.

If in doubt contact the author, on 366969, or email [steve-franks@btclick.com](mailto:steve-franks@btclick.com).

## Projects

### ***Cowgate Cemetery - Gravestones***

*Lesley Gordon*

As reported previously, the chance to record gravestones at Cowgate has expanded with work on an increasing number of plots by the Society's intrepid clearance parties. Last spring, Ian Merton, collector in chief of headstone information, became increasingly concerned at the number of stones lying dotted about, face down on the ground, their information seemingly lost. A plan began to form to see if any could be raised temporarily to yield their information before it was irrevocably lost to the damp earth and plethora of slugs and beetles underneath.

A tentative request to Dover District Council for assistance in raising the heavy stones brought an immediate offer of help from Roger Walton, the Council's Head of Property Services. So it was that, at 9am on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a small party from the Society stood at the cemetery gates to greet the arrival of a lorry from English Landscapes, contractors to the Council for land and ground maintenance.

Two of their men, Paul Cobbins and Darryl

Pendle, set to work with crowbars and blocks of wood, levering up the fallen stones while the rest of us peered and brushed and recorded any information thus exposed. We were pleased to find that the strength and skill of the two men in raising heavy stones, which had been lying flat and overgrown for years, was matched by their own interest in the task in hand. The presence of large numbers of slow worms and beetles, some surprisingly large, underneath the slabs, indicated what a haven for wild life the cemetery is.

Over twenty stones were raised in barely an hour. Some were too worn away to be of use and some, it later transpired, had already been captured before their fall, by Mrs. de Bourbel, who first recorded sections of the cemetery in the 1980s. The remainder yielded up their hitherto secret information, which has now been added to the Society's growing database. Thanks are gratefully recorded to the Council and English Landscapes for their help in this ongoing project.

### ***Cowgate Cemetery - Clearance***

*Jeremy Cope*

Our aim, as practised by The Society's project team and the White Cliffs Country-side Project (WCCP) volunteers, is to restore the cemetery to a hay meadow but one populated with trees and large shrubs. In this way Cowgate may be both a cemetery and wildlife area. It will require mowing in the autumn and again in early spring.

Five of the eight plots that make up the cemetery can be said to be at the hay meadow stage ( well almost). During the summer, whilst we were clearing undergrowth and rubbish from the remaining plots and from the cemetery borders and the vaults, nature had its way with the hay meadow plants and the grass and vegeta-

tion grew vigorously, hiding the tombstones and providing a romantic aspect. In August we started mowing the grass with petrol strimmers and grass hooks. Paul Hadaway used the WCCP mower which was a very great help and we should have the whole of the hay meadow area cleared by the time this article goes to press. We will then turn our attention to the remaining three plots to clear the undergrowth that has grown during the year. We shall also reduce the amount of shade from the trees by pruning the lower branches and this, combined with the clearance of the undergrowth, will encourage the grass to dominate and change the plot's vegetation to that of a hay meadow.

The Society has received an anonymous donation of £250 for the Project Fund for which we are very grateful. The commit-

tee has agreed to the purchase of a more powerful strimmer than currently available to us which will make a very useful addition to our resources.

WCCP are to install a cemetery information board which will include the history and details of flora and fauna. This is very welcome and the committee agreed to contribute £100 towards the cost. We have been asked to comment on the content and are currently circulating the proposed text to those involved for comment.

Finally if any member is interested in joining our clearance working parties they would be most welcome. You will only be expected to carry out work that is within your skill and I think that you will find us a happy bunch. (Contact Jeremy Cope on 01304 211348).

## The October Meeting

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### *The Dour*

*A report of a talk by Paul Bolas with an update on the restoration of the river*

*by Jeremy Cope*

The August issue reported on the survey of the Dour from Buckland to the sea. At the October meeting Paul addressed the Society with the subject of 'The River Dour Survey'. His talk covered the science, problems and potential of the river and how that potential might be realised.

The Dour, a typical chalk stream, gets its water from rain falling on the surrounding hills which is then filtered through the chalk and rises in springs to feed the river as clear, pure and oxygen-rich water at a constant temperature of 11 degrees. This

combination readily supports plants, insects crustacea and fish. The natural chalk reservoir provides a reasonably steady river flow.

How do we arrive at the present state of the river given its natural beauty and cleanliness? In the past rivers were seen as a cheap way of providing sewers, with culverting a method of hiding the subsequent spoliation. We are fortunate in that the Dour does not suffer from sewage outfalls although it receives toxic silt from paved areas. The litter-strewn river is evi-

dence that this careless attitude is still with us. Abstraction can be a problem although Folkestone and Dover Water Services and the Environment Agency are working to minimise the impact.

The river has enormous potential and value to Dover. One has only to think of the beauty of Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens. The biodiversity and the sound of running water make for a very attractive environment. The value of surrounding properties will be increased by an attractive prospect with riverside restaurants and pubs a tourist attraction.

Paul described the ways in which the improvement may be achieved through opening up culverts, riffles ( a patch of boulders in the river to enhance the flow), narrowing to help the flow but using the released river bed as flood plain and putting in weirs and fish passes at Halfords and the London Road flour mill. Future riverside developments should have porous surfaces (SUDS) so the any potential run off is soaked up by the ground rather than draining into the river. Education of riparian owners and of the public is essential if people are to take care of the river. Removing rubbish will encourage us all to value the Dour.

At the end of the talk Mike Webb, Dover Town Centre Manager, told the meeting that Riverwatch, using Paul's report, had made a successful application to Peoples 'Places for funding. John Mahon of Criccieth Homes intends to spend £100,000 over ten years on river improvements primarily at the flour mill's millpond. He also

reported the Harbour Board's offer of help with the outfall into the harbour.

Away from the meeting The River Dour Steering Committee has now been formed and has held two meetings. It has agreed the general principles and objectives by which it will be run. Briefly the committee is concerned with the whole river from its sources to its mouth in the Wellington Dock 'The Bubbles'. The committee's membership consists of the local authorities and associated bodies, the Environment Agency, The Society and Criccieth Homes. The committee sees itself as a co-ordinator of those involved in the restoration and as a fund raiser and lobbyist on behalf of the river.

At our last meeting it was agreed that Alexi Gilmartin of the Environment Agency should ask the Agency to fund preparation of a development plan for the whole river. Such a plan will no doubt build on the Bolas report but go well beyond Paul's brief. It should be all embracing, listing priorities, include financial implications and planning issues as they affect the river corridor. Funding is by no means certain but such a plan will enable restoration to be planned and executed in an orderly and efficient manner. It will be essential evidence to support any application for the substantial funding necessary to make a long term impact on the river. If the Environment Agency will not fund the plan, and we were given an estimate of between £10,000 and £15,000, then the Committee must decide whether or not to find the money.

# The Life of Josephine Butler

## *A Talk by Michael Hinton*

*reported by Terry Sutton*

THE life of Josephine Butler (1828-1906), the Victorian social reformer, was the subject of a most interesting and detailed talk by the Reverend Michael Hinton to fellow members of The Dover Society on October 20th.

Michael told us about Josephine's ministry among prostitutes at a time when the attitude to them was that they were deplorable sinners but Josephine saw them, for the most part, as victims. At the time there was a large surplus of women over men in Victorian England and she realised that few women were equipped to make their living in a more reputable way. She and her husband often rescued women from the streets and took them into their own home. When numbers increased they founded several rescue establishments.

Josephine was in the forefront of the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, which were brought in by the government to try to reduce the vast numbers of soldiers and sailors who contracted venereal diseases because they frequented prostitutes.

At the time the Acts were passed there were some 4,000 troops in Dover as well as many sailors. 'To cater for them the

area south of Snargate Street was full of beer houses and music halls, and it was there that prostitutes plied their trade,' said Michael.

Josephine, on a tour of garrison towns, gave talks at Dover's Wellington Hall against the Contagious Diseases Acts, under which any woman was liable to be picked up and checked for VD. In doing this she was flying in the face of contemporary attitudes and she was lambasted by the Dover Express!

At one stage in 1870 there was a disturbance in Star Street, over the hiring of a house for the medical examination of suspected prostitutes. Neighbours raised a petition against this. The controversial acts were finally repealed in 1886, after Josephine's 16 years of struggle.

She also campaigned for the raising of the age of consent for girls, which at that time stood at 12 and it was eventually raised to 16.

"Josephine taught that the sexual restraints expected of decent women should also be expected of decent men. The modern feminist attitude appears to be that women should imitate men in promiscuity," commented Michael, in conclusion.

# The Western Heights Preservation Society

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*Chris Taft, Publicity Secretary*

## **Success...**

The last account published by the Western Heights Preservation Society (WHPS) in this journal reported the successes of the Open Day, but we were not in a position to confirm details further. We are now delighted to be able to report that not only was the day a success, but it exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. Visitor figures were double that of the previous year and even after deductions for expenses the Society funds were given a great boost, to the tune of approximately £2000.

As a result of the Open Day the WHPS has become more widely known not only in Dover, but nationally. The Chief Executive of English Heritage has also expressed his desire to see the WHPS develop its work on the Heights, with their support. This is a fantastic development for the Society, who formed only three years ago, made one of its first aims to become more widely known and to disseminate more information on the Western Heights. English Heritage also recently included the Heights in a television series they produced for the ITV London region, which was presented by Dr. Simon Thurley, their Chief Executive.

## **Planning...**

It is important not to get complacent following our recent success and to use this opportunity to think about what we need to do next. With the onset of winter and the consequential decline in our outdoor ac-

tivities we shall again be working in earnest on our plans for the future. I hope by the next edition of the *Dover Society Newsletter* we shall have developed our plans further.

One of these is to restructure parts of the Society. As we get bigger and start to achieve more, it is realised that we need to be more professional. We are currently expanding our Publicity and Promotions team to help move the group forward. We also hope in the near future to enlarge other teams and create groups responsible for specific activities.

## **Update...**

Our current work is not all about planning. We are continuing with activities mentioned in the last issue of this publication. The project to record memories of the Heights as people who worked, lived and played there remember it is progressing well. Meetings are planned with people who wish to share their stories. Anyone interested in joining this project is encouraged to contact the Publicity and Promotions Chair, Tamsyn Edwards at 8 Astor Avenue, Dover Kent CT17 0AR or e-mail for more details.

The second batch of information sheets, are currently being produced, detailing a brief history of various parts of the Heights and while yet to be completed they are well on course.

## **Coming Up...**

In the coming months, while things invari-

ably slow down for Christmas, the opportunity to get involved remains. Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October will probably be the last work day of the year and will be held in the North Lines, providing the WHPS with its first attempt at clearing the heavily overgrown area, a job we have all been wanting to do for some time now.

### *Join Us...*

The Western Heights Preservation Society

is not all about getting your hands dirty clearing trees. It is also about supporting and moving forwards in promoting the Western Heights and help is needed at all levels. For more information or to join please contact the Hon. Secretary, Mr Dave Mallinder at 66 Union Road, Deal Kent CT14 6AR or visit the website and please remember to say where you read about the WHPS.

## Philomena Kennedy Art Prize 2003

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*Sheila Cope*

This prize, in memory of our founder member, is awarded annually by the Society to the Lower VI student at Dover Girls' Grammar school who, in the opinion of her peers, has made the greatest contribution to Art during the year.

Elizabeth Savage was presented with her £25 cheque to be spent on art materials by Jeremy and Sheila Cope representing the Society at an informal ceremony on Wednesday 23rd July.

Photographs were taken of Elizabeth in front of Philomena's paintings, donated by Gordon King, which are on permanent display in the School's Castle Avenue entrance hall. Mrs Thompson, head of the VI form described Elizabeth as 'a very worthy winner, passionate about Art and all things connected, including encouraging younger girls to join the Art club which she runs very effectively. Her own work is outstanding'.

### *New Books*

#### **From Riverdale Publications**

Derek Leach at 24 Riverdale, River, Dover CT17 0QX (01304 823926)

#### **Our Town, Dover 1945-2000 £12**

by Derek Leach and Terry Sutton

#### **From Triangle Publications**

Merril Lilley, 5 East Cliff, Dover, Kent CT16 1LX (01304 205 254)

#### **Soldiers of the Castle £10**

by G. M. Atherton

## Summer Outings

### *River Thames Trip aboard m.v. Princess Pocahontas*

*Capt. Mike Weston*



Following our Society's very successful river trip in June 2001 aboard the m.v. *Princess Pocahontas*, [for a description of this cruise see the December 2001 Newsletter], Joan Liggett was persuaded to do a repeat trip this summer. So on June 18<sup>th</sup>, on an average summer day weather wise, 28 members of the Society once again set sail from Gravesend on this fine little vessel. On this



*Queen Elizabeth II Bridge - Dartford River Crossing*



occasion numbers were not sufficient for us to charter the vessel, as previously we had done, for our sole use. Consequently we shared with normal day trip passengers the amenities of the vessel, which in no way detracted from the enjoyment of the day.

Instead of a straight cruise up to Chelsea Bridge and return, extra stops were made at the Tilbury Landing Stage and at Greenwich Pier in both directions to pick up and drop off passengers. This added interest and variety to the trip.

The same very articulate captain from our last voyage was still in command, so once again passengers were given a full and highly descriptive commentary of places of interest as we passed them.

It is always a difficult decision to decide whether a trip, which has been very successful once, should be repeated again. I am sure others who were on this outing would agree with me that second time around this trip from Gravesend to Chelsea and back lost nothing through being repeated. Thank you Joan.



*Riverside Cranes*

## Visit To St. Peter's, Broadstairs

*Reported by Derek Leach*

On 10 July nineteen members visited St. Peter's Broadstairs to take advantage of a guided walk around this ancient village, which still retains its village atmosphere despite being today a 'suburb' of Broadstairs. These walks date from 1994 when a guided tour of the parish church was arranged. This small beginning led to a tour of the village being organised for Easter 1995 incorporating costumed characters who were met en route. It was run for several weeks with over 1000 visitors before the end of the season. Now there are over 10,000. Over 100 volunteers are involved with up to 40 per morning. The tours are available on Thursday mornings from May to September -free of charge!

Our tour started in the large parish church, founded by Benedictine monks in 1070 and sumptuously refurbished internally in Victorian times. The monks of Minster Abbey used to visit the churches of St John, Margate, St Lawrence, Ramsgate and St Peter's. Their ancient footpath between the churches can still be walked. During the Napoleonic Wars the church tower was used as a signalling post manned by Royal Navy personnel. As a consequence the church is one of only two in the country still entitled to fly the white ensign. In one part of the church is the Children's Corner, refurbished in the 1960s in memory of Annette Mills of 'Muffin the Mule' fame. Annette lived close to the church. This same church corner was the meeting place of the Lovejoy School set up for 24 children in 1694. Edward Heath learned to play the organ here. The churchyard is possibly the longest in the country.

After leaving the church we came across John Wesley on the village green, which was a farmyard until 1970. Before dismissing us with a blessing Wesley told us how



*1850 Village Constable*

he preached in the village in 1788, aged 85. Overlooking the green is a Dutch style farmhouse dating from 1682. The farm was owned by the Mockett family who played a leading part in village life from 1657. Close by lived Walter Sickhart (from 1934 to 48), the father of modern British impressionism and thought by some to be Jack the Ripper!

The village constable, dressed in his 1850 uniform, saw us safely across the road, pointing out the stocks which are still legal after 600 years. Perhaps they should be used for today's litter and lager louts! Passing by the former village school, which Edward Heath attended, we arrived at the (former) workhouse and met the manager and his wife who told us the history of the rather grand building and the living conditions of its former residents. An inmate tried to bother us, but was quickly chased away. The building was converted into Nuckell's Almshouses after the residents were transferred to the new Union Workhouse at Minster in 1834. Walking on we came to The Coves, built in 1769, and heard about its connection with smugglers and the maze of smugglers' tunnels under the village.

Next we were accosted by a lovely French lady, but we were warned that she was probably a French spy! We arrived at the site of the Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens, although only Flint Cottage, the Steward's Cottage and the Assembly Rooms remain. The owner of the gardens told us how popular the gardens were - a copy of the Vauxhall Gardens in London - with the summer visitors. The 2.5 acres opened in 1818 with up to 1600 visitors per day paying 2s 6d entrance. Jugglers, ventriloquists, singers, actors and bands entertained un-

til sunset. Margate soon did something similar and took most of the trade away and the gardens closed in 1852.

We moved on along the ancient monk's track, encountering a 10 century abbess from Minster, before entering a lovely garden where refreshments were gratefully received on a hot day. By some workers' cottages we met a smuggler who had a number



*Smuggler*

of tales to tell and at the Red Lion pub we saw a Victorian doctor and nurses. They told us about the smallpox outbreak of 1867 when the pub became a temporary hospital and the beer cellar became a mortuary. A local girl had become a Nightin-

gale Nurse in the Crimea.

Back at the church the roles of the churchwarden and his staff were explained, including poking anybody who dozed off during the service! In the vestry we met the rat catcher who related some disgusting details about his work, including a nice little earner - rat soup, which was a 'cure all' and cost 1d per pint. Fortunately, we were not asked to buy any!

Lunch in the Red Lion concluded a very

entertaining and interesting morning. I can thoroughly recommend it.

One final thought. If the village of St Peter's can involve 100 volunteers in such a venture, what could and should Dover do with so many more people to call upon and so much heritage to offer. Another project for The Dover Society, I think. Come on somebody, volunteer to get it started. The terms are generous - no pay, but lots of satisfied customers appreciating Dover's past and present glory.

## *Visit to the Houses of Parliament and Somerset House - 14<sup>TH</sup> August 2003*

*reported by Adeline Reidy*

The Coach left Dover at 8.20 sharp for the journey to London with an arranged visit to The Houses of Parliament, or for the correct title 'The New Palace of Westminster'. The driver was able to make good time and our tour guide was waiting for us. We went in through the 'Royal Entrance' and after the usual security check were placed in two groups of 15.

Our tour guide was a happy chirpy chap called Jeff, who knew all about Dover as he had been stationed there with the Junior Leaders. He married a girl from Dover whose family still live in the town.

The tour commenced, through the Queens Robing room, followed by the Royal Gallery, Princes Chamber, House of Lords, Peers Lobby, Central Lobby, Commons Lobby, House of Commons, St. Stephens Hall, and Westminster Hall.

For more than seven hundred years Westminster has been a cradle of democracy, as Parliament has developed from its early role as the King's Council into a fully rep-

resentative body, which votes on measures and calls the Government to account. The advent of television coverage allows people to see this process in action in the chambers of the two Houses and in their various committees. This wonderful building combines the historic site of the old royal palace with the good planning and fine craftsmanship of the mid nineteenth century. It was built to display the history of the nation, but it now has to cope with the every-increasing demands of a busy Parliament. While it lacks the full number of offices that are needed, the quality of its architecture and sense of history ensures the need to preserve and enhance it. I would urge everyone who has never been, to do so, and marvel at the external and internal wonders created by the architects Barry, Pugin and their successors. Eleven hundred rooms, 3 miles of passageways on an 8 acre site gives you some idea of the size of the building. Justice cannot be done to this magnificent structure with its su-

perb detailed decoration and past history in such a short article, but as we passed through the various rooms our guide brought humour into his tales with snippets of information. In the House of Commons there is a carpet with a red stripe around it. In days gone by when members were debating they would cross the floor and strike the offending fellow. That was not acceptable behaviour so a width of 2 sword lengths plus 1 inch was introduced



so members were kept apart. In modern times the carpet with the red strip is the barrier not to cross the floor, hence the saying 'toe the line'.

Behind the speakers chair is a very large green felt bag. Before technology arrived, constituencies who wished to have a question raised in the house by their M.P. would have it delivered to the House. It would be then placed in this bag to be read out by the nominated person, this method has long gone, but the saying 'in the bag' came from this procedure. In the Royal Gallery our guide stopped to tell us about two very important paintings. The Battle of Trafalgar and The Death of Nelson. Speaking of the latter he described the role of women on board, who lived with various crew members. In the course of time they would become pregnant and with no private quarters of their own, the main deck was their delivery room. The other women would use blankets to make a shield tied to the guns on deck. The baby would be born and another well-known saying came about 'he's a son of a gun'

The Great Hall now called, Westminster Hall has a quiet emptiness compared with its previous use for coronation banquets, the last being George IV. It is now used for great parliamentary and royal ceremonies, the last one being the Lying in State of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Here history must stand still until our next visit. Our tour ended and we were out into the hustle and bustle of London life. Members took off to their various venues or to stroll and soak up the wonderful weather along the embankment. A short walk over Waterloo Bridge took us to Somerset House to see The Gilbert Collection, a fabulous Exhibition of great craftsmanship in English silver, mosaics, gold boxes, portrait miniatures, art enamel and furniture. The collection was formed over four decades by Sir Arthur Gilbert, a Londoner who moved

to California in 1949 and made this extraordinary gift to the nation in 1996. He wished to give it to the country of his birth. With the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund this preeminent collection is beauti-

world famous art collection of the Courtauld Institute Gallery, the Gilbert Collection and the Hermitage Rooms. There is an ongoing programme of exhibitions, workshops and seminars on changing



fully housed in over 17 galleries and is a perfect setting for the Nation's treasures. I do recommend you visit when possible.

Somerset House, built in 1547 and rebuilt in 1775 by Sir William Chambers for George III. The building is now fully open to the public for art and cultural exhibitions, after extensive renovations. This magnificent building is the inspirational setting for the

themes. The Courtyard and Edmond J Safra Dancing Fountain Court are at the centre of Somerset House and provide a venue for open-air events.

Our time was now over and the coach departed at 4.45 pm. A steady drive brought us home to Dover by 6.45 pm and our farewells were said. Our thanks to Joan for another splendid day out.

## *Visit To La Coupole - 13th September 2003*

*By Maurice Wilson*

Those of us of a certain age clearly remember V1's and V2's although, fortunately, we did not have to suffer the V2's in Dover - only the shells, bombs and a few doodle-bugs that went astray on their way inland. But, even those in the prime of life, have heard of the German 'terror' weapons and so it was with great interest that on the

tons of concrete topped by solid concrete dome 42 metres above, 72 metres in diameter and 5.5m thick. Railway trucks brought the materials straight into the workshops and deportees from concentration camps, under SS guards, worked to complete the rockets. When they were ready, they were trundled out on a railway



13<sup>th</sup> September, thirty members of the Dover Society went to France for the day to visit La Coupole.

This was built by the Germans inside a chalk hill adjacent to a quarry so that the rockets could be assembled in workshops built inside the hill, protected by 55,000

into the quarry and then fired, the target being London. The original intention was to fire every hour throughout day and night but fortunately this target was never reached. Not only were the operations under constant bombing by the RAF but there were also difficulties and failures in

the launching of the rockets. Nevertheless, there were enough fired to cause much damage in the capital and as there was then no way to fire them accurately, it was sheer luck where they landed.

When the site was captured in 1944, one of the first actions taken by the Allies was to dynamite the railway lines and plat-

up to the top of two exhibition floors. Here there are working models of the site as it was when it was in action, many static exhibitions covering many aspects of the war as well as different rockets to show you the development. There are also two cinemas which continuously show films about the period and Peenemunde, where the Ger-



*World War II Tank*

forms, but in recent years the site has been developed into a very interesting museum. You walk into one of the tunnels, past a German WWII tank, which still looks impressive and worrying. There are many rooms and corridors hacked out of the chalk for storage and working spaces, reading the informative signs as you approach the centre before taking an automatic lift

mans developed rocketry. It is ironic that after the war the chief developers, including Werner von Braun, were taken by the Americans to continue the building of rockets which resulted in the trip to the Moon, satellites and the Space Age.

As usual, our trip had been well organised by Joan Liggett but as so often happens, she had a very worrying time. All the ar-



rangements had been made many months ago with La Coupole who also arranged a restaurant for us, sending us a menu for our choices, but 48 hours before our trip, Joan was advised 'Sorry, the restaurant is full and can't take you, you'll have to go elsewhere.' They did give her an address in

was a typical French village restaurant, very clean and comfortable, obviously used by the locals as well - always a good sign - with the not uncommon (in France) unisex toilets. Our coach, from Gilles, was also very comfortable and the driver sympathetic and helpful - taking the 'scenic' route



*La Coupole Restaurant*

Wizernes, a nearby village, but all Joan's carefully laid plans for the meal were wasted. However, on arrival at the restaurant, strangely enough, also called La Coupole, we were warmly welcomed and served a very good three course meal with introductory aperitif, wine and coffee. It

on the way there so we could all see something of the countryside.

Before we caught our P & O ferry back a short visit was made to Cité Europe where many of us made good use of the local Tesco and Carrefour shops.

# John Wesley And Dover Methodists

*by Derek Leach,*

*based upon an article written some  
years ago by Graham Tuttle*

This year Methodists have been celebrating the birth of John Wesley 300 years ago. It was on 24 May 1738 that John, already ordained in the Anglican Church, attended a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London and felt his heart strangely warmed. 'I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.' Shunned by the established church for his views, John took to preaching in the open air and made the world his parish.

He first came to Dover in 1756 and established the first society here. 'I preached at noon at Dover to a very serious, but small, congregation. We afterwards walked to the Castle on the top of a mountain' he wrote in his journal. He came again in 1759, preaching in the recently finished 'new room'. In the following year his brother Charles preached in Biggin Street and John made another visit commenting, 'Who would have expected to find here some of the best singers in England!' He came again in 1764 and 1765 when he rebuked members of his society who were still busy as smugglers! Until then the society had been meeting in a cooperage in Queen Street, but then started meeting in Limekiln Street where two homes had been knocked into one. Visiting again in 1767 and 1768 he wrote, 'Many were obliged to go away after the house was filled.' In 1770 he climbed Shakespeare Cliff 'with some difficulty'.



There were more visits between 1771 and 1788. On his visit in 1789 (at the age of 86) he recorded, 'The new house, large as it is, was far too small, so that many could not get in'. This referred to new premises in Elizabeth Square in the Pier District. Throughout his life Wesley resisted calls to set up a separate Methodist Church and expected his followers to attend services at their parish church. Methodist meetings were held at different times to avoid clashes, but, following his death in 1791, his followers established the Methodist Church. Locally, a preaching place was established at Buckland in 1806 and in 1810 a Wesleyan Chapel was built at London Road (now Cairns the chemist). In 1823 St John's Chapel was built in Middle Row in the Pier District by a splinter group. The Elizabeth Square chapel proved to be too small and in 1834 a new chapel was built

in Snargate Street next to the Grand Shaft staircase entrance. Another large chapel was built on the terrace in London Road. It provided the first day school in Buckland. The imposing building is still there, but no longer a church and is now called the King's Hall. In 1850, Striker Finnis, the builder of Tower Hamlets, gave the Wesleyans a site for a chapel, which closed

tive Methodists - because they felt that the original spirit of Methodism was being lost by the Wesleyans. It was not until 1932 that they were all reunited into the Methodist Church we know today.

The Primitive Methodists did not appear in Dover until 1848. They established small preaching places. One was in Round Tower Lane in the Pier District and another was



*River Methodist Church*

for worship on 31 August 2003. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Wesleyans needed a church in the town centre and built Wesley Hall in the Folkestone Road in 1910. It was destroyed during the First World War but was rebuilt and damaged again during the Second World War. It closed in the 1981 and is now the Menzies Hall, part of Dover College.

Within 30 years of Wesley's death many of his followers had formed separate Methodist Churches - the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians and the Primi-

in a cowshed loft at Brook Street. There was a chapel in Strond Lane in the Pier District by 1858. Yet another chapel was built in Peter Street in 1860 and this was followed by another in Round Tower Street in 1874, which had to make way for the railway in 1879. Compensation money enabled Belgrave Road chapel to be built in 1882. Yet another Primitive chapel was built, the Maxton Tabernacle. Since the Second World War, the Snargate Street, Belgrave Road and Maxton chapels have closed.

The London Road church was built by the 'Prims' in 1901 to replace the Peter Street building. On 31 August 2003, London Road Methodist Church ceased to exist as such, but began a new life as the home of 'The Beacon Church' uniting the members of London Road, Tower Hamlets and the United Reformed Church in a new venture. River Methodist Church is still with us. Apparently a visiting Methodist preacher spoke to a small crowd outside Tritton's bakery in Common Lane in 1834 and when the River Workhouse closed in 1836, Wesleyans moved into the vacant building (now River House in Valley Road) until they were expelled in 1842. We know that a visiting preacher held services in a cottage next to the Royal Oak in 1871. Serv-

ices were held subsequently in two rooms in a cottage behind the Royal Oak. The chapel in Common Lane (now the church hall) was built on land donated by Mr Churchward of Kearsney Abbey and was opened in 1876 at a cost of £162 plus £80 for the adjoining cottage. The adjoining Lewisham Road site was acquired in 1935 for a new church, but the war intervened. The new church finally opened in 1956 and was soon followed by new school rooms for the expanding Sunday School. River Methodists and Anglican friends at St Peter's in River enjoy a very good relationship and intend to put it on a more formal footing. Nationally, the Anglican and Methodist Churches are renewing their efforts to unite. I think Wesley would approve.

## Dover and the 18th century Sea Wolves

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*by Ivan Green*

In the 18th century Dover was the premier port for cross channel ships, and the centre of much coastal seaborne traffic, principally the distribution of goods from the Western ports of France, Spain and the Western Mediterranean. These miscellaneous goods were imported by increasingly prosperous Dover merchants and stored in bulk in the warehouses beside the harbour. There were two shipyards, a small one dealing mostly with running repairs, and the manufacture of ropes and rigging, and a large one producing sea-going ships, especially the famous Dover fast and nimble sloops.

Besides legitimate enterprises there were

others of questionable legality. One of these yards was the home base of local privateers which preyed on French and Spanish ships in the Channel. Of these, one was owned and operated by a Dover mayor, John Bazely. A privateer was distinguished from a pirate by operating under Letters of Marque, issued by the sovereign, but this was only recognised in England. To other nations such a ship was only classed as, and dealt with, as a pirate. Others, often called 'Sea Wolves' were just pirates, preying principally in the Atlantic and off the shores of central and south America, much as Drake and Frobisher had done a couple of centuries earlier. These, for obvious reasons

could not usually use large naval ports like London and Portsmouth. Dover's diverse activities formed a convenient cover for building pirate ships and repairing and provisioning them.

Spanish domination. His activities were officially frowned upon, but tolerated, by the British authorities. He was a most successful pirate, even capturing the *Gamo*, the large Spanish treasure ship, and this exploit



*Speedy capturing Gamo*

One such ship, built and often provisioned in Dover, was the *Speedy*. A fast and very manoeuvrable three-masted brig of 158 tons and carrying 14 guns, the largest being a 14 pounder. She, like others of her type, was launched in Dover in June 1781 and was the very first command of Cochrane, known as the 'Sea Wolf'. Later in his career he became an admiral. Cochrane was a superb seaman, reckoned to be superior in this respect to everyone except the great Admiral Nelson himself. He preyed on French and Spanish ships and was instrumental in helping to free central and south American settlements from

is shown in the painting.

Note that he rammed the *Gamo* amidships, a favourite manoeuvre of the very early Dover Cinque Port seamen, a tactic only possible by a fine captain, a good crew, and a superbly handling ship.

The crews of such ships received no wages, but were given a share in the booty captured from successful raids. Many a local inn and small business was financed by such adventures. Indeed, it was one of the very few ways in which an ordinary sailor could ever acquire any capital to set up in business for himself.

## Gl glimpses of the past

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### *1915-1917 Experience with Print*

Another extract from the memories of Budge Adams.

I have said earlier that 1915 was a year of great significance for me and it is certain that our return to Castle Street set the pattern of my adult life. The shortage of staff resulting from my half-brother and Charles Southey going off to war and 'Nimble' Burton being called up for war service early in 1916 was more than critical. It left my father almost on his own (a frail Miss Wells was still with him) and in a business such as ours, with its dual base, one man working almost alone cannot earn enough to support a family. And so I began working in the shop - if what I did can be so described. Whether I was pressed into it, persuaded or enticed I cannot remember - I like to think that I went into it of my own volition.

By the end of 1915, at 6 years old, I was capable of doing Miss Wells's job, feeding the hand-striker ruling machine, and to do so I stood on a box nine or ten inches high. In no sense was this the exploitation of child labour; it was an activity requiring only a moderate degree of manual dexterity and it was something that I wanted to do. I 'worked' in very short snatches, ten minutes or so at a time, and this also suited my ailing father who amongst his other jobs was the pen ruler. As he became more and more unwell the work he as able to do became less and less and the business thus declined until it was forced to close down. The workshops below the living quarters then again became my playground and so continued until we

opened up again after Charlie Southey's return from the war.

During this time I would play with quads and spaces on a 'stone' in the comp shop, mostly building castles and getting my fingers very black with the lead of which the quads were made and the ink - black, of course - that adhered to them. Very soon I was aware of the inter-relationships within the 'American' points system (I questioned why it was called 'American' when it was used in England. ~ later I knew why) and also that pearl and mignon, burgoise, brevier, great- and longprimer, pica and double-pica, type sizes that had been used for hundreds of years, had no inter-relationship and were by then anachronisms, though I am sure I didn't then know either the meaning or the use of that word. My father, I am sure, realised the value of all this and could see that I was subconsciously absorbing much of the knowledge that would be so necessary to me in the life that was, apparently, already mapped out for me. When my father could again get about, he taught me to set type and to find the 'nick' in the letter without looking for it so that, again without looking, I could put the letter in the composing stick both right way up and right way round.

The box I used to stand on to feed the ruling machine, about two feet square and say ten inches high, had a hinged lid and was known as the 'Stationery Box' and it contained the shop's entire stock of visiting and memorial cards in all their sizes and varieties. Later my father bought a lovely

mahogany cupboard with five shelves and panelled doors and the name was upgraded to 'Stationery Cupboard'. It had originally been a cupboard for the storage of revolvers and signal pistols in a ship's captain's cabin, and was recovered from a ship being broken up by the Stanlee Shipbreaking Company at East Cliff, Dover. At that time the names 'Eastern Docks' and 'Western Docks' had not been invented. Sometimes the eastern area was referred to as the 'Admiralty Dockyard,' but mostly the term used was 'The Dockyard'. The cupboard was fixed to the wall immediately inside the old forwarding shop, the back room on the ground floor at No. 37. For many years I kept the 'Stationery Box' because of my sentimental attachment to it. It was the first item of ancillary equipment I ever used to help me to do a job and although it was still at Castle Street when I returned from the war, I lost sight of it and don't know what became of it.

Towards the end of 1915 there began a chapter of accidents that was to have far reaching effects on the family business. The young woman who worked for us and whose name I cannot now recall, left the firm 'to go into munitions'. Early in 1916 'Nimble' Burton was called up and towards the end of that year Miss Wells died. My father was thus left to manage alone, and with disastrous results. He worked hard and for long hours in an effort to support his family and around about March 1917 when I was approaching eight years of age, he collapsed and spent the next two years on a sick bed. Possibly the skills of modern medical science would not now allow this to happen but it appears that at that time 'the state of the art' looked upon retirement to bed as normal. To this day I do not know the actual nature of his illness

though in later years my mother, without actually saying what it was, implied it resulted from gross over-working without any assistance.

To me it was doubly tragic because though I still played in the shop I was forbidden to move or operate any piece of machinery - my one desire - and an eagle eye was kept on me to prevent me 'pie-ing' a case of type. But then, as my mother became more and more occupied with looking after a very sick husband I was left very much to my own devices. I wonder if my father worried himself about what I was doing in the shop below. I can't remember doing anything particularly catastrophic but I was really learning the whys and the wherefores of paper and ink, of type and ruling pens and leather and glues and all the things covered by the wide diversity of activities in the workshop of a jobbing printer and bookbinder. Whilst sick in bed my father contracted pleurisy and at one time his life was in the balance. Dr Kent, who daily monitored my father's condition, called one day and finding him very sick, took off his coat, his waistcoat, his collar and alternately massaged and watched his patient. I know little of the facts of pleurisy, or indeed of any other illness, but as I watched Dr Kent's diligent and exhausting efforts I realised he was saving my father's life.

My mother kept the doctor going with frequent shots of whiskey and I can see him now, after all this time, flopped back in an armchair, shattered (exhausted is the proper word), after this very long period of intense physical and mental effort. Always my father had a half-bottle each of Dunville's V.R. Irish Whiskey and Holland's De Kuyper's Gin at his bedside but this was the only occasion when I saw either bottle touched.

## *A Letter from India*

*contributed by Peter Burville*

This is a transcript of a letter passed on to me, as the Old Pharosians' Society Archivist, by John H Turnpenny Esq. of Dover. The letter was sent to his mother Miss Lily Valentine Vass by Geoffrey Coombs.

As ex-pupils of the Dover County School they are both Old Pharosians. That is 'old boys' of what is now the Dover Grammar School for Boys. Lily was at the School from 1905 to 1912 and was awarded a BA degree by Bedford College, London University, in 1915. Geoffrey was at the School from 1908 to 1912. After nearly six years war service, in the East, Geoffrey was discharged during 1918 from the Indian Army as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. In 1923 he was awarded a BA degree by Liverpool University.

The Pharos, referred to on page 2 of the letter, was the School magazine which was

published for many decades, but sadly no longer. The 'cheels' referred to on page 4, are the birds of prey also called pariah kites. Mr. Tomlinson (page 6) was a mathematics teacher at the School. HMS Natal (page 6) suffered a magazine explosion on Hogmanay 1915 in the Cromarty Firth and over 300 lives were lost. According to the January 1998 recollections of Mrs. Turnpenny, 'The Well' (see page 8) was a 1st floor classroom, in the Ladywell building, referred to as such because one stepped down into it.

The letter is written on headed paper of the 1-4th The Buffs (E. K. R.). The original was offered to the Buffs Museum but they did not respond. A copy is lodged in the Old Pharosians' archives, whilst the original has been deposited in the East

Kent Archive Centre at Whitfield.

Page 1.

L/cpl G. Coombs

No 2275

"D" Company

1- 4th The Buffs (E. K. R.).

Bareilly

India 21/3/1916

Dear Lily,

It is a matter of considerable difficulty to sit down after so many months to pen a missive to you. It is not the lack of news or items of interest which make this difficulty but rather the method of procedure. You told me when last I saw you in Dover that I was to write to you occasionally, but I often think that you have forgotten my existence and will resent me writing in the familiar tone which the commencement of this letter seems to indicate. What makes me think this so likely to be the case is that I have already written to you, just twelve months ago. I wonder if you ever received that letter. I should like first of all to offer my congratulations on the success you obtained



in your B. A. examination. You see your fame has spread even

Page 2.

to this out-of-the-way spot. A friend sent me a copy of the *Pharos* wherein I read of your success. Of necessity this letter must be mainly of myself and my doings and what little I have to say may be of interest to you but if not, it will come in the way of a diversion after your labours.

After an uneventful voyage we arrived at Mhow on December 4th 1914. How long ago that seems. Here we stayed 8 months. As soon as the novelty of the strange people & scenes had worn away, we became wholly miserable, partly perhaps due to home sickness but mainly due to the restrictions and hard conditions of garrison duty. All my pre-formed notions of the mystic East were soon dispelled when I saw the filth of the bazars, the indescribable squalor among the native habitations, the filthy

Page 3.

habits of the people, the servitude of the women and the general stench which seems to attach to all the natives and their ways. Mhow is a second class hill station in the Indore state. It is situated about two thousand feet above sea level & for miles around the volcanic nature of the earth is so prevalent that only here & there is the ground cultivated & planted with wheat & cotton, a very pretty water fall with the musical name of Patel Pani (Falling water), is the only place of interest worth visiting. I did visit the ancient, uninhabited city of Mandu, where stands one of the finest examples of Afghan architecture extant in India. Paths have been cut through the jungle to all the buildings. At the end of July we left India for active service at Aden. I cannot tell you much of the operations there as our letters are still partially censored.

Page 4.

We went into action on two occasions only, sustaining a few casualties, but as the General said we fought in a waterless desert under the most trying conditions found in any part of the globe. We marched in places up to our knees in sand with the temperature over 120' in the shade. There was no growth of any kind bar shrub and I marvel to this day how I arrived back in the trenches alive after walking more than 20 miles with practically no rest. On the second occasion we were shelled for over 7 hours while lying in the open desert. We did garrison work in Aden as well. Aden itself is easily described being the result of a volcanic eruption. The rocks rise to a highest point of 1900 feet, and are absolutely destitute (sic) of anything but the scantiest vestige of vegetation. Only sea birds and cheels

Page 5.

dominate the air. The sea surrounds Aden on three sides and provides employment for hundreds of fishermen. Sharks infest the waters so that very little bathing can be indulged in. Conditions were such that we spent on the average three nights a week lying on the hard rock or sand. Those of us who were in the trenches were better off as we could sleep most nights on native beds (charpoys) to the rear of the entrenchments. After this you can guess we were glad when we heard we were going to India for a rest. So here we are again. Basically reminds me of Waldershire Park. English

flowers grow in the Gardens and these, together with Indian flora, remind me of Old England more than anything I have met. The white population here is not large but very distant to a Tommy.

Page 6.

I have only spoken to two white ladies since I left England. Doubtless by now you are fed up with the "I", "I", "I" of this missive. I should very much like to hear from you & learn of your doings, past and future, I have written to Mr. Tomlinson months ago & have had no reply. I begin to think that I have done something wrong. I suppose I ought to have been killed or seriously injured by now & that may be the cause of the trouble. On January 1st of this year my brother lost his life on the occasion of the destruction of the 'Natal' by "internal explosion" while in harbour. I have another brother at sea besides my Dad. If you look upon the map you will find that Bareilly is in the United Provinces, some few miles to

Page 7.

the east of Delhi. The heat is very oppressive here in the summer which necessitates the sick going to the Hill station, Raniklet. So far I have enjoyed the best of health and am one of the few men in the battalion who has escaped infection. Malaria is a very common fever & few have missed catching it. I hope shortly to go away on leave and shall of course visit the Taj Mahal at Agra & the historic sights of Lucknow, Cawnpore & Delhi. There were no British Troops in Bareilly when the mutiny broke out. The native troops revolted & murdered many of the Europeans residing here. The Church contains interesting memorials to many of the fallen. It is no use bemoaning one's fate but at times we do get heartily fed up with life. After parade hours we have nothing to do & no where to go. We have to

Page 8.

make our own amusements & the hours between nightfall & "lights out" are the most miserable of all. I do not believe we shall go home before the end of the war and we pray with thousands of others that the end may be soon. I do not think I shall ever settle down to the hum-drum of the life I led before the war. The old manner of things does not appeal to me at all. I hope you get this letter but even as I write I feel that this missive may go astray as the last did. I have heard from W. G. Stuart Morris. You remember him of course. He has been in France many months, & when last I heard was at Boulogne. I often think of the old days in The Well and wish I were sitting with you. I whiling away the time looking at the pictures, you swotting at - all sorts of things.

Yours Very Sincerely

Geoffrey Coombs

# The Dover Society website

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Read reports on meetings, check the programme of events

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- Dover District Council: - [www.dover.gov.uk](http://www.dover.gov.uk)
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- Dover Topsy: - [www.topsy.demon.co.uk](http://www.topsy.demon.co.uk)
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- Gateway Hospital Radio: - [www.ghbs.org.uk](http://www.ghbs.org.uk)

## **Venturing outside Dover:**

Kent County Council: - [www.kenttourism.co.uk](http://www.kenttourism.co.uk)

Kent Federation of Amenity Societies: - [www.kfas.org.uk](http://www.kfas.org.uk)

**Contact the editor, Mike McFarnell or a member of the committee  
 if you want more information.**

4 Harold Street, Dover, Kent CT16 1SF

**Tel: 01304 201711**

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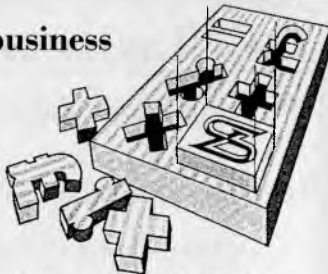
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February 16 Monday 7.30	Wine & Wisdom with Clive Taylor Application Form enclosed.
March 15 Monday 7.30	Speakers: Martin Lloyd: 1. Without let or hindrance, The story of passports 2. Paper Mill Brief
April 19 Monday 7.30	AGM Speaker Martyn Webster: Dover's Alien Clerks
Summer Outings	May, June, July, August and September Details in April Newsletter
October 25 Monday 7.30	Speakers: Mike Dawson: Planning for Dover Jon Iveson: Future of the Western Heights
November 15 Monday 7.30	Speaker: Lynn Young Brainstorming
December	Christmas Feast

All Indoor Meetings are held at St Mary's Parish Centre

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