

The
Dover
Society

Newsletter

No. 65

August 2009



Zeebrugge Raid Commemoration



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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Contents

2	EDITORIAL	Alan Lee
3	MEMBERSHIP NEWS	Sheila Cope
	SOCIETY MEETINGS	
	The March Meeting	
4	Samphire Hoe from Abbot's to Shakespeare Cliff - talk by Paul Holt	Alan Lee
7	Eco-Tourism - talk by Phillip Merricks The April Meeting	Terry Sutton
9	The AGM Chairman's Report	Derek Leach
11	The Accounts	Mike Weston
12	The Dover Town Clerk - talk by Mike Webb	Alan Lee
15	SOCIETY PROJECTS - Cowgate Cemetery	Jeremy Cope
16	ST GEORGE'S DAY/ZEEBRUGGE DAY CEREMONY	Denise Lee
19	HERITAGE OPEN DAYS IN DOVER 2009	Derek Leach
	SOCIETY OUTINGS	
	May Outing	
22	Museum of Kent Life	Jack Woolford
24	The Friars Aylesford	Patricia Hooper-Sherratt
26	THIRTEEN DOVER BOATMEN IN MAIDSTONE GAOL	Peter Burville
31	SOCIETY PROJECTS - River Dour	Jeremy Cope
33	PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE	Jack Woolford
34	WESTERN HEIGHTS PRESERVATION SOCIETY	Chris Taft
37	BOOK REVIEW - The Short Sea Route: Dover - Calais	Terry Sutton
38	THE RESTORATION	Mike Igglesden
48	APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP	

The Objectives of the Dover Society

founded in 1988.

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

The area we cover comprises 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

I would like to remind the members that the last of the summer outings this year is the trip to Down House and Tunbridge Wells. Details are inside the back cover. The price is for the coach only and not for admission as printed in the last newsletter. There will be time for a visit to Tunbridge Wells afterwards. If any member has any ideas as to places to visit in the future then could you please contact the social secretary Patricia.

The chairman's report from the A.G.M. has been published in full. An extract from the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009 is included and if any member requires more detailed information then please contact the treasurer Mike Weston.

The next indoor meeting will take place at St Mary's Parish Centre on 19th October. The speakers will be Lorraine Sencicle and Barbara Walsh. Ruth Parkinson is booked as the speaker for the November meeting. If it can be arranged in time there will be a second speaker on an important subject. If this is not possible then there will be a brainstorming session to allow the members to let the committee know their wishes.

The next issue will carry reports on the Heritage Open Days and the Bleriot celebrations.

For better or for worse the large outdoor TV screen is now up and running. The reverse, at present blank, is going to be painted to try to improve its appearance.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Summer 2009

There is just routine news this time with membership of 442 at present. We lose an average of 30 members each year so just maintaining numbers requires constant recruiting efforts. Please bear this in mind if, for example, you pass on your newsletter to someone else. It would be good to hit the 500 mark.

Grateful thanks to you all who have paid your subs - with very few still outstanding.

Welcome to the following:- Mr A Meadows, Mr D & Mrs C Pike, Mr & Mrs J Bullen.

Sheila R. Cope

* * * * *

DEADLINE for contributions

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 66 will be Wednesday 7th October 2009.

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. Accurate fully proof-read copy on computer discs is acceptable; please ring 01304 213668 to discuss details.

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MARCH MEETING

Samphire Hoe *from Abbot's to Shakespeare Cliff*

A talk by Paul Holt reported by Alan Lee

The first speaker at the March meeting was Paul Holt, the Senior Project Officer for the White Cliffs Countryside Park at Samphire Hoe. Owing to a technical problem Paul was without the use of any visual aids. Without them he still delivered a most enthralling talk detailing the history of the area over the years.

In the nineteenth century Abbot's Cliff and Shakespeare railway tunnels were under construction but between these, and blocking the route, was Round Down cliff. The Royal Engineers, contracted to demolish this obstacle, drove three shafts 70ft into the base of the cliff and packed them with 18,500 pounds of gunpowder. On 26th January 1843 large crowds witnessed the detonation, by electricity, which shifted 400,000 cubic yards of chalk. This formed 15.5 acres of 'new land, which became known as the 'Great Fall' and at the time was said to be the largest man-made explosion in the world. This may or may not have been true.

The first Channel Tunnel began near Abbot's cliff in August 1880 and was 74ft



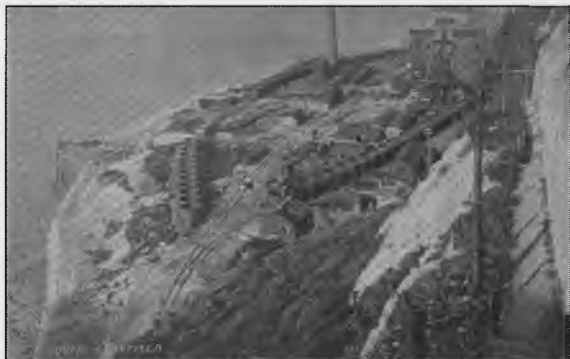
Round Down cliff and the 'Great Fall'

deep and 897 yards long, but was closed in 1881. A new shaft, sunk later that year near the Dover end of Shakespeare tunnel, had by 1882, when work stopped again, reached 500 yards out under the sea with a total length of 1052 yards. One earlier idea had been to build the tunnel out of ice so that, if the French invaded, a switch would be flicked, the tunnel would melt and become flooded.

During this same period in the 1880's a 130ft high skeleton lighthouse had been built above Shakespeare cliff. That was demolished in 1913.



Skeleton Lighthouse above Shakespeare Cliff Colliery



Shakespeare Colliery

The Kent Coalfield Syndicate took over the tunnel workings in 1896 and by November the first pit, Brady, had reached a depth of 300ft. This filled with water and on 4th March 1897 eight men were unfortunately drowned. The second pit, Simpson, and the number 3 pit were then sunk. The first coal seam was struck on 25th September 1903 but by March 1905 only 12 tons of coal had been mined at a cost of £125,000 per ton. Lenley's Phoenix Brewery purchased some of the first commercial coal from the pit and advertised their Dover Pale Ale as brewed by Kent Coal. This soon ceased as the coal was of such poor quality. Shakespeare colliery closed in 1909, reopened in 1910, finally closed in 1915 and anything useable was sold for scrap in 1918.

The Channel Steel Company formed in 1917 to mine iron ore on the site was not a success either but it was only wound up in the early 1950's.

Lydden Spout rifle range was established on the top of the Dover end of Abbots cliff in 1914. During WWII gun batteries and observation posts were added here and all along the cliffs.

Although inhospitable, this area has, over many years, been home to many people.

The Gatehouse family lived there the longest. William rented the foreshore between Abbot's and Shakespeare cliff and with his wife and five children lived in a hut. Whilst there they had another three children, one, Charlie, when employed on the Channel Tunnel, always above ground, cut the first sods for the workings in 1880. The family grew their own crops and William won many prizes for

his figs and carnations at the Dover Floral and Fruit Exhibition. The 'soil' made up of clinker from the trains mixed with seaweed and manure was great for growing. Later Charlie supplied the Lord Warden Hotel with new potatoes as they used to be ready three weeks earlier when grown at the base of the cliff. He also climbed the cliff to take peregrine falcon chicks, raised them and sold them as hunting birds. He remained on site as caretaker for many years until given his



Charlie Gatehouse

cards in 1950 at the age of 88. When he died in 1951, his coffin was taken to Dover by train and he was interred in Charlton Cemetery. His widow continued to live in the house at Shakespeare until she moved in the mid 1950's. The house was then demolished. This ended 100 years of the Gatehouse family living on the foreshore.

On the railway's completion in 1844 a bungalow and two cottages were built and were made available to railway workers for rent. In 1871 Thomas W Fagg and his family lived in one and his Uncle Thomas Tunbridge and his family lived in the other. The son, also Thomas Fagg, and his family then continued to live there until he was fatally injured in the Abbot's cliff tunnel on 13th January 1903. He died in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Dover on 26th January.

The bungalow was occupied at different times by various families these included the Russells, and the Barnes.

Another structure, the 'Cabin' was built in 1919 by ex-naval men returning from the war. In 1937 this was moved to a position on higher ground. Mainly constructed with driftwood it grew in size as more driftwood became available.

Located at the base of the cliff there were tents and huts occupied by different people including the Tee, Russell, Pascall, O'Neil, Holt and Chandler families.

On the site of the old colliery the railway company built a wooden platform known as Shakespeare Halt. Although primarily for the use of railway maintenance workers it was also used as a request stop by the local people.

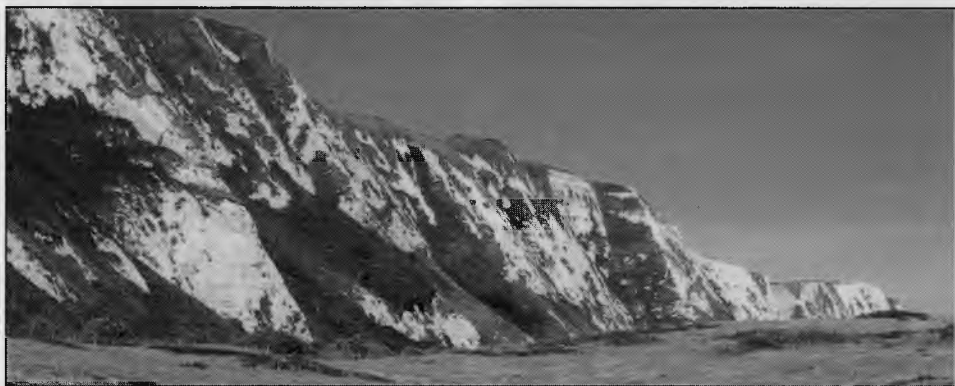
After another failed attempt in the 1970's the Channel Tunnel was finally completed and it carried its first tourist shuttle on 22nd December 1994.

The soft chalk marl, which formed the spoil from the Channel Tunnel workings was landscaped and seeded and renamed Samphire Hoe when opened to the public on 17th July 1997. The area is now a designated coastal country park and visited by over 110,000 people a year.

Editor's note:

For a more in depth history of this area I recommend the following:

Shakespeare Cliff - A People's History 1843 to 1973. This is available price £4 from the site office at Samphire Hoe or from local bookshops.



Samphire Hoe today

Eco-Tourism

A talk by Phillip Merricks reported by Terry Sutton

A fascinating talk, by former High Sheriff of Kent and farmer Philip Merricks, about the Elmley Marshes nature reserve on the Isle of Sheppey was given to a packed meeting, organised by the society, at St Mary's Parish Centre on March 16th.

Philip is a great believer in eco-tourism and this became clear in his passionate description of the birds and other wildlife that inhabit the "untamed wilderness" of 3,000 acres that border the estuary of the Swale that he manages on behalf of the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds (RSPB) and which attracts 20,000 visitors a year.

He told how Elmley once had a population of 270 but was now down to four. The previous population was in Victorian times when the area was drained for the establishment of cement and brickworks.

Philip and his wife Corrine live in an ancient farmhouse with a dramatic history. It was there that James II (reigned 1685 to 1688) was detained after his arrest by the Constable of Faversham when, in 1688 on his abdication following the arrival of William of Orange (later William III), he prepared to flee to France, disguised as a chaplain. Philip told how he had shown Prince Edward the property when he was visiting the area.



Elmley Marshes, Isle of Sheppey

Using pictures on a screen the speaker described the many species of birds that flock to the wetlands where, over the centuries, man has constructed seawalls to turn some of the salt marsh into freshwater marsh suitable for grazing. The land, with its tidal creek system is poorly drained providing an ideal habitat for wetland birds, plants and other wildlife. To improve this habitat the RSPB leased the land from Oxford University in 1975.

Among the birds that visit Elmley are redshanks and lapwings, and various waterfowl that live on the rich food to be found in the low-tide mud of the Swale. When the tide covers their feeding grounds they form collective roosts.

Mr Merricks concluded his talk about the possibility of putting up lodges at Elmley where visitors could overnight to discover the wonderful bleak landscape which, in turn, he suggested could attract commercial investment and jobs.

APRIL MEETING

Annual General Meeting of the Dover Society, 2009

The Chairman's Report, Derek Leach

The Chairman's report has been reproduced in its entirety so therefore some items or events will already taken place - editor.

Your Executive tries to keep members up to date on most issues via the Newsletter and our website, but perhaps it is only through this annual report that members can really appreciate something of the range and extent of the Society's activities for the past year.

In this my fifth annual report to members and once again I must try to present fairly briefly the many and varied activities of your Executive Committee during the past 12 months - some you will be aware of via our highly respected Newsletter or website. We have been accused during the past year of being 'talkers and not doers'. I leave you to decide.

Membership

Our membership remains steady hovering around 450 despite the loss of some members through natural causes and lapsed membership. This is due to recruiting efforts by some members and the hard work of our membership secretary, Sheila Cope. Thank you, Sheila. I now ask you to stand as we remember those who have died....

Planning

Both our Planning Committee, chaired by the seemingly immortal Jack Woolford, and the Executive have, in addition to scrutinising and commenting upon the many routine planning applications, had a number of major issues to

consider. Regarding the Harbour Board's proposals for the redevelopment of the Western Docks, we were pleased that our submission for a water link between the Wellington Dock and any new marina in the harbour was accepted. The proposed Local Development Framework taxed us - particularly the plan for 10,000 new houses in the District. We considered that jobs before houses were a must. Tentative proposals for eco-houses on the Connaught Barracks site were supported, but we continue to monitor the future of Fort Burgoyne. Our concerns about air pollution from Townwall Street traffic remain. We objected to the Langdon Wind Farm proposal and made representations at the lengthy and costly public inquiry, but were pleased with the outcome. The so-called Olympic Legacy in the form of a massive, intrusive TV screen in the Market Square, broadcasting daily from 7am to 11pm, received the thumbs down from the Executive, but despite many objections and no recommendation from its officers DDC's Planning Committee approved it. We have felt it necessary to support an appeal to the Ombudsman for maladministration on the part of DDC in respect of an application for back garden development in Maison Dieu Road.

Feelings in Dover have run high throughout the year about the controversial review of its health services and the Executive has supported efforts for improvements. Member

Lorraine Sencicle, as Dover's representative on the Patient and Public Involvement Forum - Primary Care Trust, and others have worked tirelessly to achieve the best possible health care services for Dover. Recently elected as a governor of the newly formed East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust we wish Lorraine success in helping to deliver a successful result despite a number of obstacles.

Whilst we regret the lack of progress in redeveloping the St. James area and the Buckland Paper Mill site, we were pleased to be able to thank Dover Town Council for taking on the improvement and maintenance of the land beside the Dour adjacent to the recently vacated B&Q. We have contributed the text for an interpretation panel outlining the history of the Dover Engineering Works. Rare indeed, we thanked Kent Highways for at long last improving the Crabble Hill traffic lights junction.

Social programme

Another interesting and varied programme of summer outings and winter public meetings were organised, although we are concerned about the viability of the outings. Some of them made a loss and we had to cancel the annual French trip. With the credit crunch in mind this summer's programme is less ambitious and cheaper and we have abandoned the French trip. To save Patricia Sherratt worrying whether she will have enough people, please book early. Non members are also welcome. It would be good to hear from you whether it is cost, the venues, or even the early starts, that are not attractive! As for our Christmas Feast we would also like to know whether members would prefer a hot meal rather than the excellent, but cold, buffet. Thanks are due to Patricia Sherratt, Jack Woolford and their many helpers. A special mention must be made of Muriel Golding who has organised our

Monday evening refreshments for many years, but has decided to call it a day.

Newsletter, website and press

Our Newsletter edited by Alan Lee continues to be highly regarded by members and others. We are indebted to all the contributors, Jean Marsh our advertising manager and all our distributors for their efforts. The Newsletter is a useful recruitment tool and spare copies are available from Jeremy to attract new members.

The excellent website, managed by Mike McFarnell, also keeps members up to date and helps to interest internet browsers not only in the Society but in Dover as well. Its coverage has been extended with Lorraine Sencicle's articles on Dovers around the world and we are now planning a Dover history page making use of Kathleen and Bob Hollingsbee's archive.

A high public profile of The Society is also maintained by Terry Sutton's regular press reports.

Projects

Our regular working parties at Cowgate Cemetery, led by Jeremy Cope, continue to keep the whole cemetery attractive as a haven for wildlife and for people as well as respecting those buried there. Sadly, the team lost a long-standing working party member with the death of Peter Hargrave. There is a warm welcome to new workers. The Society continues to play a leading role in the River Dour Steering Group, although with the Environment Agency and the WCCP taking the lead on improvements to the river and litter clearance, the group now has more of a monitoring role. The Society continues to coordinate and publicise arrangements for some Dover properties to be open free of charge on a weekend in September under the national Heritage Open Days umbrella. Our specially printed leaflets were well received last year and will be repeated this year when I

hope that the number of properties participating will increase from 6 to 9.

Initiatives

Moving from 'more of the same' I turn to 'what's new' with quite a list. We supported the retention rather than the demolition of the Second World War ARP post by Priory Station; refurbished the plaque to the Belgian workers who repaired war-damaged houses in Saxon and Norman streets as a tribute to the heroic people of Hellfire Corner; planted a tree in Connaught Park to mark the 125th anniversary of its opening; supported the George Cross Campaign for a memorial to the civilians of Dover killed during WW2; and joined those organisations seeking a coordinated approach to promoting Dover's historic assets. This list would not be complete without mention of the fantastic Tallis Concert by Canterbury Cathedral Choir at Dover College last May sponsored by The Society as part of the Dover Festival.

Concerns

Concerned about the poor state of many of Dover's historic panels, we have urged Dover Town Council to take over the refurbishment and maintenance from cash-strapped DDC. We have also offered to pay for the urgent refurbishment of the Bleriot panel in time for the centenary celebrations in July this year. Following our approaches to English Heritage and DDC 3 years ago to mark the event, exciting plans both for improvements to the memorial site and a celebration weekend have been announced.

Concerned about the state of Mote's Bulwark, lack of public access and the deteriorating buildings at its foot, we have been in touch with the private owner of the buildings who is not interested in selling and held talks with English Heritage who have commissioned a feasibility study regarding the Tudor fortification.

Concerned about the terrible state of the former cinema and nightspot in Castle Street, still undeveloped by Wetherspoons, we have urged compulsory purchase. The continuing need for public toilets in decent condition has been stressed as well as the need to keep our streets free of litter.

Consulted by Dover Town Council about a redesign of the War Memorial garden, our view was that the white stones should be removed and the grassed area retained. We opposed a proposed signboard area in front of the Memorial and this idea has now been dropped.

There is growing concern about the state of the Maison Dieu. DDC has welcomed our suggestion of making a lottery bid for its refurbishment after the 2012 Olympics when more money should be available. In the meantime we have started our own modest fund.

With no provision for a leisure facility in DTIZ - I don't rate a visit to ASDA as leisure - we have floated the idea of a ten pin bowling alley (or even an ice rink), either in the empty B&Q or Charlton Centre premises, managed by a non-profit making charitable trust in the absence of any interest from commercial operators.

Conclusion

I have been honoured to represent The Society at various functions throughout the year and would like to thank all those whose efforts throughout the year make this Society what it is. In particular I would like to thank the new member of the Executive, Georgette Rapley, who has been prepared to help in any way and is now Queen of the Raffle. Mention must be made of Mike Weston's meticulous bookkeeping as treasurer - you try getting money out of him - and not forgetting his role as purchaser of fine wines for Society events. I submit my report to members and welcome any questions.

The Dover Society

An extract from the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st. March 2009

The following extract from our accounts represents the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet. The supporting notes to the accounts are not reproduced due to lack of space. However, the complete accounts are available for inspection upon request to our Treasurer, Capt. Mike Weston [telephone 01304 202059] or Email [mike@weston71.freemove.co.uk].

CURRENT ASSETS

Society Badges
 Newsletter Binders
 Debtors and Prepayments
 Shares gifted to Society
 Cash at Bank and in Hand

	2009	2008
	27	27
	66	66
	0	30
	661	0
	26,476	25,547
	27,230	25,670
CREDITORS:		
Amounts falling due within one year	(1,918)	(3,291)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>25,312</u>	<u>22,379</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>£25,312</u>	<u>£22,379</u>
FUNDS	<u>£25,312</u>	<u>£22,379</u>

CREDITORS:

Amounts falling due within one year

NET CURRENT ASSETS

NET ASSETS

FUNDS

The Society's Funds are represented by:

The General Fund	19,199
Rolls Memorial Fund	50
Projects Fund	566
Publication Fund	4,836
Town Hall Fund	661
	<u>£25,312</u>

Statement of Financial Activities for the year Ended 31st March 2009

	General Fund 2009	General Fund 2008
INCOME		
Subscriptions	2,470	2,529
Donations	27	73
Social Events	648	655
Gift Aid attracted by Subs etc to General Fund	593	588
Bank Account Interest	964	1,184
TOTAL INCOME	<u>4,702</u>	<u>5,029</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Members and Meeting expenses	-62	-44
Administrative Expenses	1,179	947
Newsletter Expenses	1,164	
Other Items [including donations]	80	1,130
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>2,543</u>	<u>3,197</u>
NET (OUTGOING)/INCOMING RESOURCES	<u>2,158</u>	<u>1,832</u>
Total Funds Brought Forward	17,041	15,209
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>£19,199</u>	<u>£17,041</u>

Capt. M.H. Weston

The Dover Town Clerk

A talk by Mike Webb reported by Alan Lee

It is three years now since Mike Webb took over as Clerk to Dover Town Council (DTC). He originally came from a marketing background and his last position was with Dover Town Centre Management. He spoke with some pride of his involvement in heading that organisation and some of the initiatives taken. Two in particular that are still working well today are the *Shop Watch* scheme, taken up nationally and *River Watch*, now under the River Dour Steering Group.

Mike mentioned some of his many links with the Dover Society including the blue plaque scheme and especially the one that marks the spot of the first bomb dropped by plane on British soil.

He said how vital it was that people should know what is happening in the town and how sad it was to see the closure, after 150 years, of the Dover Express office. This is the first time since the publication of local newspapers in Dover that there would not be any local offices. He hoped that the Town Council along with the help of the Dover Society could facilitate the storage of the Dover Express archives locally.

The Mayor is the first citizen and is chair of the Town Council. The Town Clerk as the Proper Officer and Chief Executive is not answerable to any single member of the council or the Mayor but only to the full council. He is responsible for checking the legal standing of decisions that the council takes.

DTC comprises eighteen elected councillors and employs four full time and seven part time staff. In contrast, Calais employs 1,400 staff. The council has an annual turnover of £800,000 with the main income coming from the rates and investments. It is organised into various committees (all councillors sit on at least one) and these report to the full council. They can resolve (make a decision) or resolve to recommend (pass the decision on to the full council). Owing to the large



Mike Webb, Dover Town Clerk

number of committee meetings that take place the full council only meets about every five to six weeks. DTC have adopted an open and transparent style and limit the times that they exclude the public from sensitive items, always printed on pink paper.

The responsibilities of the town council are slowly increasing due, in part, to the district council being rate capped. This sets a limit on the amount of money they can raise through the rates while the town council has no such limit. The town has, at present, an eight star council rating, one of the highest in the country.

Town councillors do not receive payment and most stand for election out of a sense of public duty.

Two major achievements in the early years of the council have been the purchase and refurbishment of Maison Dieu House for use as council offices and the purchase of the Town War Memorial for a nominal sum from the District Council.

The Mayor and representatives from DTC were the first Britains to meet the new Mayor of Calais Mmm. Natacha Bouchart officially. A member of President Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP party, her election in 2008 ended 37 years of Communist rule in Calais. The meeting discussed the Olympic flame coming through Dover, which has the backing of Calais and Belgium. Over in Calais they have proposed that they erect a huge billboard to advertise the Olympics. The estimate is that 80 million people will see it before the start of the games.

On a completely different note - DTC

have just taken over another 30 plus allotments from the Municipal Charities, bringing the number under council control to well over 200. These make a small loss but to encourage their use the cost to the public is set deliberately low.

The town council at present has initiated its own award system to recognise the good work carried out by townspeople to help the community. Meanwhile the House of Lords is reviewing the situation whereby the town could grant the freedom of Dover to individuals once more.

If present in the office, the town clerk or his deputy will always see members of the public who wish to see them.

After the talk questions followed and it emerged that when the town clerk issues a press release the only embargo is on politically and legally sensitive statements. He also admitted that he has mellowed and was more outspoken when he was on the Town Centre Management team.

The town council are legal consultants to the district council and as such, they should be listened to more on planning matters within the town. Another slightly contentious issue occurs if the council raises a planning matter with the district council. They classify it as one objection as was the case when a single person raised an objection.

One concern highlighted was the poor condition of some of the buildings that would be on the route of the Olympic torch, if it comes through Dover. Mike agreed and said that as a last resort in tidying up the town the district council had the power of compulsory purchase.



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SOCIETY PROJECTS

Report by Jeremy Cope

COWGATE CEMETERY

I have to report the death of Peter Hargrave. Peter was one of the longest serving members of our Projects Working Parties having been involved with Lydden Pond and Lousyberry Wood through to Cowgate Cemetery together with work on the River Dour with White Cliffs Countryside Project. We will miss Peter who was not just a very committed member but also the very best of companions.

The cemetery was cleared by the end of the winter season, thanks to Paul Willmot of White Cliffs Countryside Project with his reciprocating mower. The wet weather meant that we were well behind but Paul and mower enabled the worst of the wet matted grass to be cut.



Paul Willmot with his reciprocating mower

With the summer now here the cemetery looks at its best with the grass and other plants allowed to grow to maturity on the plots but with the paths kept clear. To my mind, although I am biased, it is well worth a visit.

We celebrated Jack Woolford's 92nd birthday at our June Thursday working day; should you care to become a project worker we will be only too happy to celebrate your birthday. Contact Jeremy Cope on 01304 211348.

Our Working Party dates for 2009 are as follows:-

Thursday	Saturday
6th August	15th August
3rd September	10th September
1st October	10th October
5th November	14th November
3rd December	12th December

We start at 9.00am and finish around 12.30pm.



St George's Day

ZEEBRUGGE RAID COMMEMORATION

Thursday 23rd April 2009

Reported by DENISE LEE

On Thursday 23rd April I was allowed time off from school to go to the services to be held that day. It was a sunny day and a large number of people had gathered in St. James' cemetery to commemorate the 91st anniversary of the Dover Patrol's raid on Zeebrugge. The service started at 11.20am and was led by the Reverend David Ridley of St. Mary's Church, Dover. After *The Bidding*, the *Last Post* was played, followed by *The Silence* (not a sound from the crowd) then the *Exhortation*. *Reveille* followed and the *Kohima Prayer* and the *Zeebrugge Citations* were read. The *Prayers for the Fallen* were followed by *The Lord's Prayer*, then *The Blessing*. Wreaths were laid on the memorial by the Town Mayor, representatives from Belgium, local dignitaries, members of the Armed Forces and ex-service organizations. The Chairman Derek Leach OBE laid the wreath for the Dover Society.

After the service two coaches took everyone back for the service at the old Town Hall.

At 12 noon The Right Worshipful the Town Mayor of Dover Councilor Diane G Smallwood sounded "eight bells" on the Zeebrugge bell. The service then followed the same format as at St. James' up to the Zeebrugge Citation and finished with the Blessing.

This was the first year that the flag flown from HMS *Vindictive* was shown during both services. The shrapnel holes could clearly be seen in it.



After the service everybody was invited into the council chamber for refreshments.

The Zeebrugge Raid

The fleet finally sailed on 22nd April, the eve of St George's Day, and from the destroyer *Warwick* Admiral Keyes made his famous "St George for England" signal. From the *Vindictive* came the reply "May we give the dragon's tail a damn good twist."

In just over an hour of fighting more than 160 men were killed and some 383 were wounded. Later another 28 died from their wounds, 16 were missing and 13 were taken prisoner.

After the Raid

The *Vindictive* arrived in Dover at 8 o'clock the following morning to great cheering from all the other ships in the harbour. The residents of Dover, including Admiral Keyes' wife, reported that during the raid they could hear the guns on the Belgian coast seventy-five miles away and that the sound had rattled their windows.

The Zeebrugge Bell

In the belfry high up in front of the Town Hall hangs the bronze Zeebrugge Bell. The Germans had stolen it from a Belgian church and hung it on the Zeebrugge Mole to give warnings of attacks. The bell was a gift of the King of the Belgians and is a memorial to the sacrifice of British Servicemen in the Raid on Zeebrugge on the 23rd April 1918.

The bell is struck eight times at noon every year on the anniversary.

The same year naval raids by volunteers were also carried out on the port of Ostend as well as on Zeebrugge. The main aim was to deny the Germans the effective use of these ports. These aims had only a limited amount of success, although the raids were a considerable achievement.

Awards for the raids on Ostend and Zeebrugge

Eleven Victoria Crosses (eight for Zeebrugge) and 679 other decorations were won for bravery. About 200 British Servicemen were killed and 400 wounded. A number of the dead have been buried in St. James' Cemetery, Dover.



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HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th September 2009

Once again the Dover Society is coordinating arrangements in Dover for Heritage Open Days, organised by English Heritage and the Civic Trust every year. This event celebrates England's fantastic architecture by encouraging free access to buildings that are usually closed to the public or would normally charge an admission fee.

Dover has a great wealth of historic buildings, but only some are normally open to the public such as Dover Castle and the Roman Painted House. This year seven buildings will be open to the public free of charge.

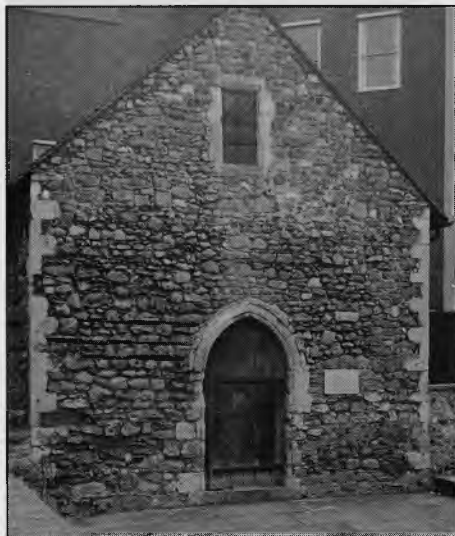
1. Maison Dieu House.



This fine Jacobean house in Biggin Street is the oldest domestic building in Dover. It was built in 1665 as the Agent Victualler's residence close to the Maison Dieu, which Henry VIII had requisitioned as a store for the Navy Victualling Office following the Dissolution. In 1834 it became the residence of the commander of the Royal Engineers in Dover before becoming a private residence. Two families lived here during the 19th century, the Kingsford family, concerned with brewing and milling, and the Mummery family who owned the Stembrook tannery. Bought by the Corporation in 1899, the house became council offices until after the Second World War when it became the public library. Following the move of the library to the Discovery Centre, the premises were purchased and beautifully restored by Dover Town Council for its own use. The town's regalia will also be on show.

2. St. Edmund's Chapel.

This tiny cemetery chapel in Priory Road was consecrated by St Richard of Chichester in 1253 in memory of his friend, St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury 1234-45, and was probably used as a cemetery chapel for the Maison Dieu close by. Hidden for many years by development around it and used as a workshop, it was revealed again following war damage to the surrounding buildings. The chapel was restored and reconsecrated in 1968.



3. Dover College.

The remains of St. Martin's Priory: built in the 12th century, it was suppressed in 1540 as part of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. The site was then leased for farming and most of the buildings fell into disrepair. Fortunately, the grand Norman refectory was used as a barn and this survives to this day. Dover College opened on the site in 1871 when the refectory and gatehouse were restored and the king's hall became the college chapel. Part of the cloister also survives. The entrance is from Effingham Crescent.

4. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin.



This prominent building in Biggin Street, dating from Saxon times, was built originally by the secular canons of St. Martin Le Grand, but was rebuilt by the Normans. At the Dissolution it was saved from demolition when Henry VIII granted it for use as a parish and civic church. Unfortunately, because of its weak foundations, it was rebuilt in 1843, although its original arches and columns were reinstated. The magnificent tower survived this restoration.

4a. Bell Tower of St. Mary the Virgin.



In the gallery of this Norman tower visitors will see how the bell-ringers operate and in the clock chamber they will see the clock workings and various artefacts.

5. The Unitarian Church.

This brick-built octagonal church sitting above York Street was constructed in 1820 and its worship area reflects the shape of the building. The origins of the church go back to 1643 to a local community of Baptists who established a meeting house in 1655, but were persecuted following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In 1692 Samuel Taverner made part of his house available for worship and part of the garden as a burial ground. Freedom of belief and form of worship as a Unitarian Church was agreed by members in 1916. Following Second World War damage, the chapel reopened in 1952. During the Heritage days there will be an art exhibition, flower festival, music played on the 1855 Holdich pipe organ and refreshments.

6. The Grand Shaft Staircase.

This unique triple staircase was started in 1804 and finished in 1807. It connected the barracks and fortifications on the Western Heights through the 250 foot high

cliff to sea level, Snargate Street and the Pier District, enabling troops to move quickly up or down its 140 steps within the cliff plus another 59 into the barrack yard. In 1812 a Mr Leith of Walmer rode a horse up the staircase for a bet. The entrance is in Snargate Street.

7. St. Radigund's Abbey.



This premonstratensian abbey founded in 1191 was visited by several monarchs. Following its Dissolution in 1538, the great abbey church was demolished and the remaining buildings with its lands were leased to tenant farmers by the monarch. Today the refectory is the farmhouse surrounded by abbey ruins. A gatehouse and a guest house survive.

* * * * *

Publicity leaflets are available from the Tourist Information Office behind the Town Hall, Dover Town Council Offices (Maison Dieu House), Dover Museum and Dover Library.

For more local information contact: Derek Leach on 01304 823926 or email derekriverdale@btinternet.com

To find out about other buildings open in the region call 020 7539 7921 or visit www.heritageopendays.org

Key to Map and Opening Times.

1. Maison Dieu House
Saturday only 10am to 4pm
2. St. Edmund's Chapel
Saturday 10am to 4pm
3. Dover College
(St. Martin's Priory remains)
Guided tours only at 11am and 2pm on Saturday
4. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin
Saturday 9.30am to 4pm
- 4a. Bell Tower of St. Mary the Virgin
Saturday 10am to 4pm and
Sunday 12.15pm to 4pm
5. The Unitarian Church
Saturday 11am to 4pm and
Sunday 11am to 2pm
6. The Grand Shaft Staircase
Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm
7. St. Radigund's Abbey
(off the map), directions: take 66 bus or drive to River bus terminus then 30 minute walk (or drive) up to end of Minnis Lane then along farm road to farmhouse. Guided tours on Saturday 10.30 to noon and 2.30pm to 4pm



Society Outings

MUSEUM OF KENT LIFE

Reported by Jack Woolford

I book up for Society outings without knowing what and where they are because, though some are even better than others all are good. So on May 20th, waiting outside the Railway Bell at 08.30 (to try, successfully, to grab the front seat), I could only hope that the Museum of Kent Life would be more attractive than it sounded. On a more beautiful day than usual, for May 2009, the cross-country ride itself, in good company, was a puzzling pleasure. I thought that Sandling was the railway station for Hythe but it turned out to be another Sandling, a stone's throw from Maidstone, and close

to Aylesford, in one of the best-conserved corners of the Garden of England.

As a nonagenarian I could, and perhaps should not be tempted to *Cuddle Corner*, *New Fun for Kids*, *New Piglet Racing*, *New Donkey Rides* or *Vale Farm Play Barn*, but I was. My camera and I were enchanted to renew acquaintance with the geometrical magic of cylinders and cones of four Oast Houses, to picture and smell unbelievable growths of herbs in a garden, and to stand and marvel at the higgledy-piggledy of lovingly preserved old tools and machines in a Smithy.





As a historian, I was delighted to observe the series of improvements to huts for the housing of hop-pickers from the 17th to the 20th centuries, and, as a beer-lover, to walk through a hop garden with its poles, strings and stilts. The Lenham cottages were full of bygone domestic delights of kitchens, parlours, bedrooms and more than a plentiful amount of steps. The Cuxton chapel boasts a splendid (!) pink, corrugated iron roof and I could not resist sitting on the teacher's chair in the

annexed classroom, in front of the desks of my childhood, and threatening them with waving arms and fists.

Having kept pigs myself in an Anderson Shelter on an allotment in Woodensborough, I could only envy the splendours of the piggery with its two, prize, black and white sows. It was unfortunate their racing piglets were absent.

I had no time for the Top paddock, the Victorian farmhouse, or the village hall etc, etc, because the shades of Aylesford Priory were beckoning, but I did drink the health of our wonderful social secretary Patricia and her jovial husband Pat in (un-hopped) tea for their efficient but unobtrusive organization in the excellent Tea Room.

I never enjoyed a Museum more. Roll on the next one: Wherever!



THE FRIARS AYLESFORD

Reported by Patricia Hooper-Sherratt

After our morning visit to The Museum of Kent Life, we arrived at the Friars around lunch-time to a stampede of 1600 children. I was informed there would be a group of children, but not how many! I had to tell Jack to stand still; he was almost in the head-count. They had just finished a service held outside, and were making their way to the picnic area. I have to say, they were very well behaved and if we hadn't experienced the stampede we would hardly have known they were there. While we were in the restaurant having lunch, the children finished their picnic and boarded the coaches to head back for their respective schools. All was very tranquil for the rest of the day.

Visitors were able to watch the potter at work but unfortunately the upholsterer was not there that day.



Aylesford is a centre of prayer and pilgrimage. It has a guesthouse that can accommodate up to 80 people. There is also a conference Centre for businesses and educational projects. The West Barn, built in the 17th century, has been restored to house the tearoom and shop.

Carmelites first came to England with knights returning from the Crusades in the Holy Land. In 1242 Richard de Grey, Lord of Codnor founded a house for them on his manor of Aylesford, with the consent of the bishop of Rochester. As the founder's means were insufficient to complete the building of the church, on 25th January 1247 the Bishop of Rochester, Richard of Wendover, granted a relaxation of thirty days of enjoined penance to all who should contribute to the work. When dedicating the church on 31st August 1248, in honour of the Assumption of the Virgin, the bishop granted an indulgence of forty days to all who visited the church on the day of the dedication and the following week, and who contributed to the support of the house.

Richard of Ingworth, bishop of Dover, visited the White Friars of Aylesford in July 1538 and found that they had sold



much of their necessities. The friars told him that two men came to the prior, saying that the house was given away, and that they had commission to put them out at their pleasure, so they sold what they had and paid their debts. The house was in a 'meet state' (a fit state). Before 13th December 1538, the house was surrendered to the bishop of Dover.

The property was put under the charge of Sir Thomas Wyatt and was in 1542 granted to him by the king in exchange for other estates. Wyatt leased it to John Morse for forty years at an annual rent of 102 shillings. The land consisted of nine acres of arable and eleven of pasture, besides the churchyard, gardens, orchard, ponds, etc. Some of the houses and gardens had been leased shortly before the Dissolution to William Tilgeman and his wife, and to John Clyffe.

On the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt, son of the above, the property was forfeited to the



crown. It was rated for Thomas Morse in 1557 at twenty-six years' purchase, at £132.12s. but it does not seem to have been purchased by him. Elizabeth granted the priory and lands to John Sedley, son of John Sedley of Southfleet. The subsequent history of the site is given by Hasted.

It was the perfect end to a lovely day.

Thirteen Dover Boatmen in Maidstone Gaol

by Peter Burville PhD

The Dover Express of 14th May 1859 reported, "We have the gratification to state that the thirteen Dover boatmen who were lately consigned to Maidstone gaol for the costs in an action for salvage of an Austrian brig have been released, and have returned to their families."

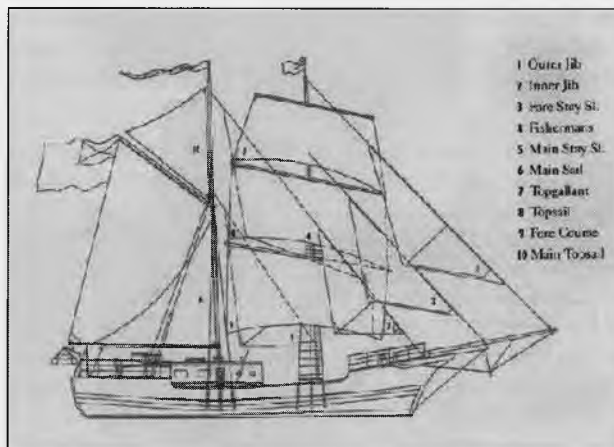
A few days later further information on the matter was given in the South Eastern Gazette of Tuesday 17th: "A HARD CASE - Eight or nine months ago an Austrian brig ran ashore in Dover and was saved from total wreck by the exertions of 13 boatmen, who succeeded in getting the vessel off and bringing her into the harbour. For this service the men claimed salvage but, not being well-advised as to their method of proceeding, it was not allowed by the Admiralty Court, and the boatmen, instead of being rewarded, were mulcted (punished by a fine) in £250 costs. Being unable to pay this, they were committed to Maidstone gaol for contempt of Court, their contempt being their inability to pay. Twelve of these poor men were married, and the families amounted to thirty-nine children. They have remained in confinement until now, and would probably have so remained for life, had not a subscription been raised in their behalf. The result is that the men are released, and on Thursday returned home to their families."

What series of events could have led to the breadwinners of twelve families and one other unfortunate being put in gaol at a time when the only recourse for their

dependants would have been the workhouse? The answer to this question is recorded in the High Court of Admiralty papers held by the Public Record Office (National Archives, HCA 18/290 4381) at Kew. A summary of that information, which consists of a series of depositions or statements presented at the court hearing, followed by the judge's decision on the case is given below.

On 17th February 1858 the 262-ton Austrian brig *Aureo* set sail from Shields (Newcastle upon Tyne) with a cargo of about 300 tons of coal bound for Constantinople, (now Istanbul), in Turkey. The ship was registered in Trieste, then part of Austria, but in 1918 it was annexed by Italy. Brigs, with their long bowsprit, two masts and square rigging, were popular vessels through to the end of the 19th century for both naval and mercantile purposes.

Late on Friday 12th March 1858 the *Aureo* landed the pilot at Deal and continued down channel in blustery weather. Following some tacking activities, not a forte of the brig's square rigging, the ship grounded on the Varne Bank some nine miles southwest of Dover. With the strong wind and large waves the ship was soon afloat again but she was taking on water. According to the ship's master, Franscesco Guisepepe Francovich, there was about 2ft 6ins of water in the hold and the pumps were manned. As the water was gaining on the pumps the master decided to head for Dover Harbour. Because of the bad sea



conditions and lack of any assistance it was decided to beach the vessel rather than attempt to enter the harbour. At about 10.30 pm on Saturday 13th March 1858 the *Aureo* was beached at East Cliff near Guilford Battery.

Once grounded on the beach local boatmen immediately approached proffering help, an offer the master refused several times. The evidence in the depositions, on what happened regarding the grounded *Aureo*, provides views from the different perspectives of the deponents.

We start with that sworn to by six of the local boatmen, Benjamin Burvill, Stephen Pilcher, Thomas Pilcher, Richard Ladd, Edward Spain and Thomas Ladd. At about 10 pm on Saturday 13th March 1858 the six boatmen, together with William Ladd who was away at the time the deposition was made, saw the brig heading for the beach but showing no lights or signals of distress. Thinking the crew had no idea they were heading for the beach they attempted to warn them but the ship grounded. Together with the men from the coastguard they launched two boats through the heavy surf at great personal

risk. Offers of assistance were rejected by the captain and the coastguard chief boatman was threatened with a spike by the *Aureo* crew.

At about 3am on Sunday Mr Sisco, the agent, needing to engage six or seven hands for one tide called these deponents over and hired them as they were well-known to him. They were needed to save the ship's stores and provisions but Sisco said he was not clear

about the master's intentions. The boatmen duly took many items ashore as requested by the master.

The master asked Burvill to take an anchor off the brig and anchor the craft to the shore but the boatmen felt that if the vessel were to be saved a seaward anchor should be set. Having removed the ship's equipment including compasses, chronometer and barometers at the master's instruction, it was the boatmen's opinion that "the captain and crew were evidently desirous of slapping the ship", that is to abandon it on the beach, having removed the cargo. Mr Latham the Austrian Vice Consul (shipping agent) who had taken over from agent Sisco then advised the boatmen. A debate followed between Latham and Burvill as to whether the craft could be towed round to the harbour, a suggestion not supported by the master.

About 9.30am on Sunday, as the *Aureo* was starting to float on the incoming tide, the boatmen used one of their boats to fetch the *Sir William Wallace*, a steam tug that was out in Dover Bay. The master left the beach in Burvill's boat but his request to be

put on the *Aureo* was refused by Burvill who felt there could be no delay in exploiting a helpful tide to get the ship to safety.

With the original boatmen, together with further local boatmen hired by Latham, manning the pumps the craft was towed by the tug into the harbour. While being towed the *Aureo* passed the harbour steam tug pulling the two barges that Latham had ordered to take the cargo off the ship. The *Aureo* grounded in the harbour and the District Agent of Admiralty Droits took possession of the vessel as if it was a derelict. Over the next four tides, having emptied some of the cargo and continued with the pumping, the boatmen succeeded in getting the vessel safely alongside the quay.

The additional local boatmen James Cambell, Stephen Clements, George Singleton, Henry Prescott, James Gillispie, George Young, George Muddle, Richard Betts, John Spice, William Spice and Charles Westo also swore a deposition. This stated that on the morning of Sunday 14th March 1858 they were hired by Mr Latham the Austrian Vice Consul, to go aboard the *Aureo* "to strip the ship aloft and clear the decks in readiness to take out the cargo as he said there was no doubt the vessel must remain on the beach". Already onboard there was one member of the crew and seven boatmen who had been working all night. As the ship started to move, with the rising tide, the recently recruited eleven boatmen agreed with Burvill that they should man the pumps and take the craft to the harbour. Cambell, under the direction of Burvill, took the helm for the towing by the tug. In the harbour the ship grounded near the Dolphin.

Next we get the view of James Spain a



customs officer. As duty officer he went to the beached *Aureo* in order to get her victualling bill and to access what might be brought ashore from her. In order to get the information wanted for the Tide Surveyor, his superior officer, Spain attempted to board the ship but despite explaining his business, the master refused, as he had done to the boatmen.

At about 3am on Sunday 14th March 1858 he was able to get the required information with the help of Mr Sisco of the firm of Messrs Hodges and Company. Spain also stated Burvill and all his boatmen were to "receive eight or nine shillings a tide but if the boatmen should get the vessel off the arrangement had nothing to do with that as it would then be a case of salvage and paid for accordingly". Of the disagreement between Latham and Burvill over attempting to move the ship Slain stated "... if the said vessel had been allowed to remain on the beach, as was the evident desire of the captain, she must

have become a wreck as at the next tide the wind blew very hard and it would be impossible to get her off'.

Now for the matter as seen by coastguardsman Edward Sneller of Casement station in East Cliff. Sneller was one of the crew of the first boat to offer the *Aureo* assistance but, as stated above, the master of the brig would not countenance anyone going aboard. Sneller returned to the shore and at midnight his commanding officer, Lieutenant Roysse relieved him from duty until 5am on Sunday 14th March 1858. On his return Sneller found Burvill's boatmen had landed stores, provisions and rigging on the beach. Other boatmen then joined them at about 8am. Burvill "had full charge of everything and directed all to be done that was done, as the captain and his crew (with the exception of one man) had left the ship before I returned to duty ... indeed the captain appeared in no way anxious to save her". At about 10.30am Burvill decided to employ the tug as the ship was afloat but the captain was still against rescuing the ship. With the boatmen manning the pumps the brig was towed across the bay to the harbour. Sneller concluded his statement by saying, in his view, without the efforts of the boatmen the *Aureo* would have soon been a wreck on the beach.

Once the *Aureo* was in the harbour Mr John Iron, Deputy Harbour Master and Admiralty Receiver of Wrecks hired Edward Spice and John Bowling with others "to assist in discharging the cargo of coals from the brig". Their statement records that "unassisted Burvill and his crew attended each tide endeavouring to get the brig alongside the quay which they ultimately succeeded in so doing after working four tides".

Finally we have the statement by the master, Francesco Guisepppe Francovich. When the boatmen offered assistance, soon after the

ship was beached, at about 10.30 pm on Saturday 13th March 1858 the master stated he felt nothing could be done immediately and he would wait for the morning. The boatmen's persistence did not change his mind as "knowing what these sort of men often are I feared being robbed during the night". Similarly, Mr Galante (Gallante), a clerk to shipping agent Mr Latham, was denied boarding permission but later Mr Sisco of Hodges and Company shipping agents was allowed on board. Sisco who undertook to send a telegraph message to the ship's owners in Trieste was taken ashore to return at about 2am on Sunday. The master then agreed to Sisco hiring seven boatmen to take various stores and items ashore to a place of safety where they would be guarded by ship's crew. The boatmen were hired at 5/6d per tide and an extra 6d as it was a Sunday. About 6.30am Latham arrived and the master went ashore to consult the agent and Mr Irons the Deputy Harbour Master.

It was agreed Irons should get the harbour tug ready with two lighters ready to possibly tow the ship to the harbour should it float off the beach, failing that to off-load the cargo into the lighters. The master agreed that Latham should extend the employment of the seven boatmen and engage a further eleven boatmen to help with the work. About 10am the Master wanted to get aboard the brig as it was starting to ease off the beach. Leaving Latham's clerk Galante on the shore, with instructions to look out for his signal to run to the harbour and have Irons bring the harbour tug round, the master got in a boat to go to the *Aureo*. However, boatman Hammond got in the boat with him and instead of heading for the brig



they went out to the tug *Sir William Wallace*. The master protested saying he wanted to see the state of his ship before it was towed out to sea. The protesting continued as the brig was towed to the harbour in what he considered an irresponsible manner.

Much of the master's statement was concerned with keeping payment costs down and defending his position as behaving in a responsible way regarding his charge of the ship, crew and cargo. The Dover Telegraph of 20th November 1858 reports that two actions of salvage services were made at the High Court Admiralty before Dr Lushington both for £400. One was by the 18 boatmen and the other by the owners of the tug *Sir William Wallace*. The counter-claim was that the salvaging was done with great peril to the *Aureo* and contrary to the master of the ship's wishes. In the counter-claim Thomas Pain, Notary Public of Dover, used the evidence of the *Aureo's* master, Samuel Metcalfe Latham and George Fielding in the preparation of his case.

At the court Lushington found for the counter-claim and the boatmen were required to pay £185 13s 2d to Guiseppa Bettini of Trieste, the sole owner of the

Aureo, and Antone Poicharei of London, owner of the cargo. That was over £10 for each of the men and then there were their legal costs to be covered. This meant that Maidstone Gaol awaited the thirteen men who could not raise the £20 each. At the time a small cottage could be bought for £50 so the fine was no small matter.

The Dover Express of 21st May 1859 reported: "We are able to state, with reference to the thirteen Dover boatmen who were last

week liberated from Maidstone, that their release was effected without the interference of any political party whatever, but solely by great exertion on the part of Capt. Hyde (who waited on the Secretary of State), and at much personal expense and inconvenience that this desirable object was obtained. The legal adviser of these men in Dover has acted with great consideration towards them."

The following year Captain Samuel Hyde, a Lincoln-born retired East India merchant, was instrumental in Benjamin Burvill, his brother William Burvill, Stephen Pilcher, Thomas Pilcher and Martin Pearce each being awarded a bronze Board of Trade Gallantry Medal.

Hyde's letter published in the Dover Express of 6th October 1860 stated: "... in the heavy gale of Monday night, 24th Sept., the schooner '*Renard*', Captain Stych, of Jersey, with a crew of 7 hands, drifted on the rocks near East Cliff, and as the laudable efforts made by the coastguard to convey a line on board the schooner unhappily failed, owing to the becket of the mortar-line breaking, the lives of the '*Renard's*' crew were in the most imminent peril. At this critical moment, and when timely assistance was

of vital importance, all hands were rescued by the heroic conduct of Benjamin and William Burvill and their boat's crew...."

Three of these heroes had been in Maidstone goal the previous year. The medal with the inscription round the rim 'WILLm BERVILLE, Wreck of the "REYNARD" of Jersey off Dover, on the 25th Sept 1860.' is now in the possession of his great-great-grandson William.

Given the evidence was justice served in this case? Were the boatmen who were clearly skilled in the matter of rescuing both people and ships justified in "taking charge", or was the ship's master right to accept the *Aureo's* probable fate on Dover beach rather than risk losses? Certainly the reputation of "Dover Sharks" was known to the master, as when first grounded he refused to let even

coastguards and customs officers aboard his ship.

On a personal level, Benjamin Burvill features in my "Troglodytes of East Cliff" article (Dover Society Newsletter No. 32, August 1998) and in the book "The White Cliffs of Dover" written by Peter and Julie Burville. Both article and book are illustrated with copies of William Henry Prior's charming watercolours of the cave-cottage where Benjamin James was born. At the time of Benjamin's incarceration in Maidstone goal his wife Martha Elizabeth had just given birth to their first child Benjamin Charles.

This article is based on material from "An East Kent Family: the Burville's", a book in progress that attempts to record the lives of the family through the centuries and suggests an origin for the surname.

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SOCIETY PROJECTS

Report by Jeremy Cope

RIVER DOUR

The White Cliffs Countryside Project 2009 working parties are now underway clearing the rubbish from the river, a vital job if we are to make the most of one of our most important natural assets. If you want details please contact the project on 01304 241806 or at their website at

www.whitecliffscountryside.org.uk

The River Dour Steering Group met in April to exchange views and news. Dover Town Council said that they intended to complete their project at Charlton Green

this summer. The Environment Agency despite budgetary pressures has plans to improve the natural resources of the river. Dover District Council's plans include the river as an important feature of developments in the town with members of the group continuing to lobby for further improvements.

Dates for the working parties.

Thursday 20th August
Friday 25th September
October to be advised

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The work of the

PLANNING

Sub-Committee

Report by JACK WOOLFORD, Chairman

Patricia and Pat Sharrett represented the Society at the AGM and Spring Conference of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies at Chatham on Sat May 16. I summarise their enthusiastic report.

The recent collapse of the Civic Trust into liquidation due to overambitious projects with inadequate financial resources was explained. Then followed an account of the virtual explosion of support for a new national-but-grass-roots organization, from the National Trust, English Heritage, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and more than five hundred Amenity Societies (like the Dover Society). Other notable supporters are Cliff Rhys-Jones, the daughter of Lord Duncan Sandys (founder of the Civic Trust) and the Prince of Wales.

On "The Regeneration of Kent", Cllr Alex King, deputy leader of Kent County Council, contrasted the Kent of 25 years ago, when there was so much industry, with that of 25 years time. He said society depended on communities where people wanted to be and we ran the risk of a lost generation if we do not create job opportunities and training now.

Robin Cooper, Director of regeneration and development for Medway, focused on new riverside houses, shops and five hotels. He said Chatham would be second only to Bluewater as a shopping centre, with big pedestrian areas and a new bus station. Also planned were an Innovation Centre, Sure Start Centres, Academy

Schools, a new E-On Power Station, NHS Healthy Living Centres and a University for the Creative Arts, 40,000 new jobs, 16,000 homes and a 50,000 increase in population ...

Claudette Forbes, KCC Director of Economic Development, gave an address: nothing we have not heard before and frankly, seemed a waste of time.

As for Dover, we noted unsurprisingly that the 4th draft of the Business Plan is indicative only and that Kent Highway Services will, on schedule, repaint the bridge in Bridge Street but if Dover Town Council wants it earlier it will have to pay! Father Sherrad's Coleman Trust Commemorative Bench can front Maison Dieu House but only on the removal of an existing bench.

More seriously, we were deeply impressed by the speed of Morrison's take-over and rebuilding of the old B&Q store as contrasted with the delays to ASDA and St. James, Crescent Housing and Buckland Mill, the hospital replacement and the Bleriot celebration, etc. Also impressive, though noisy and disruptive, was the erection of the giant TV in the Market Square - not a harbinger, we must hope.

We have given supplementary support to the Woolhouses' of 105 Maison Dieu Road in their appeal to the Ombudsman against Dover District Council's consent to the erection of a house over looking the back garden of 106.

The Western Heights Preservation Society

Report from Chris Taft, Publicity Secretary

On Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May 2009 the Western Heights Preservation Society (WHPS) welcomed over 1000 visitors to the Drop Redoubt as part of the Western Heights open weekend. The weekend was a huge success with many more people visiting the other attractions organised as part of the weekend. As well as the Drop Redoubt the Grand Shaft was open to visitors and on both days there were stalls, demonstrations and displays taking place across parts of the site. Historical re-enactors gave visitors a feel for what life might have been like when the Heights had a garrison in the 19th century. On the Sunday re-enactors created a feel for what might have been when they acted out a typical 19th century skirmish with British and French soldiers involved in musket fire and hand-to-hand combat. The sight, smell and most significantly the sound of battle was apparent to all and wonderfully organised.

It gave a real impression of what might have been had Napoleon's forces ever attempted to capture the Drop Redoubt.

Visitors not able to drive to the Heights and not keen on the walk up the hill were able to take advantage of the free bus service, provided by a wonderfully restored vintage bus from the East Kent Road Car Heritage Trust.

The weather was very kind to the event and many visitors spent a number of hours exploring the site and taking advantage of the refreshments on offer. On display for the first time was the replica breech loaded gun, typical of the sort of weapon that would have been in place on the Heights. The gun was made by the Society with money raised through the Heritage Lottery Fund and was delivered to site shortly before the open weekend. The next focus for the Society is raising the money to have a wooden



carriage made. This will then enable the society to have the gun properly displayed next year.

The WHPS is grateful to all the volunteers who helped on the day and in the many weeks leading up to the event. A huge amount of work goes into making the site ready to

welcome visitors and it remains an ongoing task on top of the many other work-day projects the Society gets involved with throughout the year.

These types of events are only possible with the support of volunteers and members, to all of whom the Society is very grateful. More people are always welcome to help on a number of levels throughout the year and anyone interested in getting involved is encouraged to contact the Society or to



turn up at one of the open days advertised on the WHPS website: www.dover-western-heights.org.

The Society is also grateful to English Heritage for allowing it to open the Drop Redoubt and to Dover District Council and Dover Town Council for support and funding and to all who exhibited and supported the event.

In 2010 the WHPS will be celebrating its 10th anniversary and we are making plans to mark this milestone. The plans for an open weekend in early June are underway and other events are under consideration. The Society also hopes to complete its application to become a registered charity that it has been considering for some time. This will put the Group on stronger footing to move forward in the years to come.

As ever the Society is keen to hear from people who want to get involved or who have questions about the Heights and its history. If you are interested then please get in touch via the website at:

www.dover-western-heights.org

or write to:

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The Short-Sea Route: Dover - Calais

by Terry Sutton

When Dover-born John Hendy was taken on his first trip on a Dover ferry to France he was aged seven. "From that time I have been hooked on the ships that ply the Dover Strait," says John, now aged 61 and living in retirement on Romney Marsh.

The author was educated at River primary school, then at Castlemount and Dover Grammar School for Boys. Before embarking on a teaching career he worked at the docks for the AA and then as a humble ticket collector for Dover Harbour Board.

The former schoolmaster's deep interest in the ferries sailing out of Dover is obvious in a new book: "The Short-Sea Route: Dover - Calais (£18-50: Ferry Publications).

This 130-page hardback, illustrated with about 200 pictures, is packed with information about the history of the twin ports and the scores of ships that have regularly plied between them since the 90-ton Rob Roy sailed in 1818.

His well-researched book unravels the complicated story of the various take-overs, mergers, and name changes of the various ferry operators that confuse so many who write about the subject, including the author of this review.

John Hendy's examination of the early days of steam, dating back to 1816,

demonstrates how Dover shipowners once dominated business on the Channel and how the arrival of the railways at the ports, at Dover, Folkestone, Calais and Boulogne, impacted on the trade.

This is illustrated with the list of ferries showing the dates of introduction, the builders, tonnage, and most interestingly what eventually happened to them. Many of the later ferries were sold to Spanish or Greek interests but even more went to the scrap yards, a sad ending for some magnificent ships that conjure up so many happy memories.

The author also writes about those noisy hovercraft that proved, for many, an inspiration in the late 1960s and their replacement by Tasmanian-built Seacats. He pulls no punches in his sorrow about the policies of James Sherwood's Sea Containers that resulted in 'the protracted fall from grace' of this mode of Channel transport.

I can recommend this impressive publication to all with the slightest interest in Dover's most important industry and I suggest it is a must for any who have worked for, or on, those fleets of ferries sailing from our port.

The Book is on sale at Dover Museum and local bookshops.

THE RESTORATION

• • • *by Mike Igglesden* • • •

After her restoration the *Seafarer* lived in the tidal basin in Dover Harbour, moored fore and aft to cables running down the wall to accommodate the 16 foot range of tide. Each low water she rested thankfully on the mud, enfolding old discarded lengths of chain, paint cans and other unsavoury rubbish and gently oozed out the water she had gained over the previous 12 hours. She was the focus of my life - probably to the detriment of formal education. This account of her voyage to Folkestone, described in a somewhat dramatic but factual manner, originally appeared in *Bygone Kent* in November 1998.

Two teenage boys are scrambling down the old iron runged ladder set into the slimy tidal basin wall. Upon reaching water level the first boy hooks the bow mooring line of his boat with his left foot and then pulls her towards him. After neatly stepping aboard he holds the line taut to enable his companions to follow his lead. From above, a small canvas bag descends, lowered on a light line by a third boy and is then neatly stowed into a locker built under the centre thwart. Boy number three then joins his mates in the 16ft ex-ship's boat, which had been converted into a Gunter rigged sloop, and was now the pride and joy of the eldest boy.

All his spare time over two years, with very limited skills and finances, had been spent restoring the wreck he had found in the back garden of a bombed out house in Dover in late 1944. He had endeavoured to put some of the counselling of Arthur Ransom, Percy Woodcock, Adlard Coles

and a dozen more of his nautical mentors into practice. Here he was, with his younger brother and a friend, off for a sail in the harbour - or such was their intention.

The tide was ebbing. The rudder shipped, the moorings slipped, then, since no wind was apparent under the lee of the dock walls, the two younger members of the crew pulled strongly on the oars, whilst the skipper commenced the preparations for the day's sail. The heavy steel dagger board was lifted off its stowed place on the floorboards and carefully lowered into its case. Then, in anticipation of a following breeze, a nail pushed through a hole halfway down the plate prevented it from falling into its fully down position. The mainsail's throat and peak halyards were



'Seafarer' in Dover Harbour

'Seafarer' has just rounded Prince of Wales Pier



bent on, the jib unstowed from under the little fore peak, hanked onto the forestay and the sheets set up.

Halfway down the length of the Prince of Wales Pier the boat was luffed into the light northerly. They hoisted the sails and the boat moved off onto a broad reach heading for the end of the pier. This was the point of sailing *Seafarer* really enjoyed. Her long Park Avenue boom (which never really fulfilled its designed function of giving the foot of the sail an aerofoil shape) holding out the large tie-dyed looking main, with the bamboo gaff falling to leeward just enough to match the angle of the boom. The capacity of Mum's copper had proved to be just a little too small to take the complete immersion of the mainsail in a rather belated tanning process. The hand sewn patch the boy had put in the full length of the luff (about 20 feet) bore tribute to the soundness or otherwise of the sail's material. Still it had until then served the boat well and given many hours of fun. By the time they cleared the end of the pier the breeze had picked up to a

beautiful 10 knots. Sunshine touched the little white horses and life was good.

Discussion arose as to just how to spend the day. A beat into the outer harbour? Or how about venturing outside? The closest they had previously been to venturing outside - an area often fraught with strong tides and large waves - was the fishing spot over the block ship sunk in the Western Entrance during the war. They decided to sail through this entrance and up to the Eastern Entrance, a distance of less than a nautical mile, then to return inside the harbour in time for an early tea. Food was never far from their thoughts. In order to clear the block ship, with its breaking waves around the jagged remaining superstructure, the boat headed for the end of the detached mole, which, together with the end of the Admiralty Pier, forms the Western Entrance to Dover Harbour. This was an adventure and one, which, half a century later, is still vivid in the skipper's mind. The huge granite blocks forming the mole towered above the boat, its skirt of seaweed swaying and lifting to the greeny

grey three foot swell. The sails suddenly became limp spreads of cloth as they came into the wind shadow. They filled again as the tide pushed the boat, destined to be for her last time, out into the Channel. Sea conditions were perfect for small boat sailing. The light northerly gave a relatively flat sea and good sailing breeze.

The irresponsibility of the exercise had not yet dawned upon any of them. There were no life jackets on board and the boat was ballasted with cast iron sash weights so any capsize would be a sinking. No one had been told of the intended destination of the voyage or of its probable duration. In fact, they should not even have been sailing in the harbour under those conditions, of course, but attitudes to safety were, to say the least, casual in 1948. Indeed the intended destination changed every few minutes. "Why don't we sail down to Folkestone? Its only six miles and we could be there and back in four hours. Twelve o'clock now so there is plenty of time." The boat was gybed and a course set for Folkestone.

The canvas bag, which had earlier been stowed in the ship's locker, was broken out and its contents of sandwiches and chocolate distributed. From about half a mile off shore the chalk outcrop, which is Shakespeare Cliff, The Warren (a marvellous stretch of untamed foreshore which had been their camping site a few days earlier), and other familiar landscapes slid past all looking so different and exciting from a seaward viewpoint. There were a couple of ships out to sea and a fishing boat putting out from Folkestone, but otherwise the seascape was their own. Absolutely beautiful - although nagging doubts had already begun to spoil the day for the oldest boy.

But nothing could spoil the incredible feeling of achievement and excitement upon entering Folkestone Harbour. The first landfall they had ever experienced, a foreign port! The breeze was just strong enough for the little boat to stem the ebbing tide into the outer harbour. By 1330 hours she had been made fast to the railings lining the stone steps, a stern line put out to an anchor, and the crew, after giving their ship a harbour stow, climbed ashore to 'explore' the town.

That they travelled by bus or bicycle at least once a week during the summer months from Dover to the swimming pool below the Folkestone Leas, and that they knew this town almost as well as their own, did not diminish to any extent this excitable pleasure.

"We will just have time to check on any interesting boats in the inner harbour, buy an ice cream and then we must set off home again." By 1415 hours these aims were accomplished and they were back at the steps. Mud patches were appearing on the harbour floor. Mooring lines and chains, which had spent the previous hours restlessly see-sawing narrow trenches in the mud, were now visible and still. All the fishing boats were lolling to port or starboard and little streams of brown water were cutting steep sided channels towards the harbour mouth. *Seafarer* was just afloat, but it was obvious that she was to be in her present berth until the beginning of the next flood tide.

What to do? Go home on the bus! The Harbour Master would have to be found to obtain permission for the boat to be moved to a more suitable berth for an overnight stay. Contact with officialdom was in itself somewhat of a deterrent, with the strong possibility of at least a reprimand for their exploits. There was also the probability of a weather change from the light to moderate

conditions to that of a more boisterous nature, not unusual in the English Channel.

The advice of an 'old' fisherman (he probably was at least 40) who was leaning on the railings and had been regarding the boys with a somewhat whimsical smile was sought. "She'll be afloat again in a couple of hours. Weather will hold until tomorrow morning. You will have a foul tide up to Dover. Take you three hours in this breeze which is getting round to more of a south-easter."

Discussion arose. "Lucky with the wind shift. If we leave at 1530 hours we should be home by 1830 hours. Let's do that." None of the boys had telephones at home and, even if they had, it was doubtful if a call would have been made. "With some luck we'll be back before we are missed."

By 1515 hours, punting with the oars, rowing and paddling slowly, ever so slowly, *Seafarer* eased towards the harbour mouth. The fishing boats on their moorings were still held hard and fast in the black mud. The mud also held hard and fast to the oars and on the boy's arms and hands as they pulled themselves along any convenient mooring line that would help their progress. The dagger board was lowered about 50 yards from the entrance and sail was made. Some difficulty in clearing the moles against tide and wind was experienced, but by about 1545 hours they were in the open sea heading for Dover.

By keeping inshore it was hoped the adverse tide of about 2 knots would be minimised, and with a 10 knot south-easter blowing they could just lay their course on starboard tack. This is a very rock strewn foreshore and the swell of

about four feet capped by two foot waves made for exciting sailing for the inexperienced. Every now and then a cheeky wave would slop aboard, some of which was returned by means of a large biscuit tin bailer that was scraped along the floorboards as the boat rolled and the water sloshed towards the bailer boy.

In spite of the warm sunshine they were all getting cold. None wore waterproof clothing and their lumber jackets and long grey school trousers were by now very wet. The mood aboard was apprehensive but cheerful. Although keeping well out from the surf line, every once in a while a larger wave would rear up and carry the boat a few yards towards the beach. On each of these occasions the skipper found himself gripping more firmly the ash axe handle, which he had selected for its pleasing shape as much as for its strength, when making up the boat's tiller. Concern for the safety of his young crew, for whom he rightly felt responsible, and, of course, the fate of his beloved boat, was rising rapidly. It would only take the shipping of one of those extra menacing waves to spell the end of the voyage and, possibly, the end of them all. He considered running through the surf and attempting a landing on the steep bank of stones and pebbles of Shakespeare beach. The boat would be lost, of course, but since they could all swim well enough to probably survive such a landing, it was a real option. Now was the time to make the decision.

The towering grey wall of the Admiralty Pier was looming up three quarters of a mile ahead. The roar and suck of the pounding waves on the beach could now be clearly heard. To make the harbour entrance a tack would have to be made out to sea for about half a mile and then the Western Entrance, with its hazard of the block ship would be visible. "Ready about." The boat was swung

onto port tack and headed away from the beach, her motion changing as her new course took her more squarely into the waves. The wind had increased and *Seafarer* was over canvassed. They had never attempted to reef down whilst sailing, let alone in these conditions. The long overhanging boom touched the wave tops to leeward more and more often as the sheet was eased to relieve the wind pressure on the mainsail. Should have reefed an hour ago, too difficult now. To hand in the jib would result in the boat having too little drive to punch through this head sea. The skipper could not hide his concern, which, anyhow had been shared by his shivering crew for half an hour now. It was two and a half hours since they had left the safety of Folkestone and the wrong decision to sail had long ago been uppermost in their minds.

The design of the boat with its narrow forward sections and straight stem gave little reserve buoyancy, causing her to shovel into the waves, some of which were breaking over the starboard bow. Bailing was now continuous. The boy not bailing was sitting out on the windward gunwale using the tail end of the lee jib sheet for support. The skipper, due to the short length of the tiller, was unable to do likewise. He was occupied in trying to ease the boat over the most menacing waves and control the mainsheet to keep the boat moving towards their immediate goal - to clear the Admiralty Pier and enter the Western Entrance. Time dragged on. Each minute took at least an hour to pass. The



Shakespeare Beach

next go about would be critical. Look for a flat spot between the waves. "Ready about." *Seafarer* with her long straight keel always took an age to respond. Very slowly she came into the wind. A wave smacked her port bow and her swing onto the other tack was aborted. She gathered sternway. The boy on the helm pushed the tiller away from him towards the port side of the boat. The next wave struck the bow head on and pushed her further astern. "Back the jib!" She swung round and was safely on her new course heading for the entrance.

What relief. Surely now we will make it. Three hundred yards from the entrance the boat's motion changed as the waves were now broadside on. The full force of the south-west setting tide was now in evidence and was running down both sides of the detached mole at two and a half knots and pouring out of the entrance. Impossible to make it through the gap without fouling the block ship. "We will have to sail along the outside of the mole and come in at the other end." The respite from bailing which had been enjoyed since the last change of course was short-lived. Fear gripped the crew. The skipper was the

calmest of the three since he had a job on hand which called for complete concentration. This was the first time in his short life he had been really frightened - even the worst part of the London blitz had not been this bad. Then it had been the luck of the draw. Now he had a chance to control his destiny, and that of his terrified crew. Backs and arms were in agonising pain from the incessant bailing. The sounds of sobbing became apparent. Bail, bail, bail. An endless succession of white capped seething waves came roaring down from windward, passing under the boat to be rebuffed with a solid 'womp' by the detached mole, which was now only fifty yards down to leeward. The sea from the resulting back surge was very confused. Broken water, grey green peaks and troughs of unpredictable size and shape rising up from nowhere and cascading back into the valleys, occasionally tumbling across the leeward gunwale into the boat. The outboard end of the boom was now continuously in the water with the sail shuddering and cracking as it was eased off to relieve the overpowered craft.

A jumble of thoughts surged through the young skipper's mind. He had roved a new main halyard a couple of weeks ago but most of the other gear was definitely suspect. It would have been nice to have some money to spend. Didn't matter now. Surely the people fishing on the mole, watching three boys about to drown, would run to the Harbour Control people and get help? No. One even waved to them. If we capsized would the sash weights and the bags of shingle ballast fall out of the boat? If this were to happen it would at least give the boat enough buoyancy to provide some support until help arrived. If it arrived. Bail, bail, bail. Later in life the skipper was to realise that here was a classic situation confirming the old adage that the world's

most efficient bilge pump was a frightened boy with a bucket - but in this case a biscuit tin.

The bilges were now a foot deep in the sloshing cold water and the floorboards were responding by lifting and surging around, substantially hindering the efforts of the boys to fight the losing battle to keep the sea outside the boat. With aching backs and blanked minds, where survival was the only thought, progress towards the Eastern Entrance was hardly noticed and seemed of little consequence. Eyes stinging with salt, the skipper made out the eastern end of the mole. "We just have to clear that and then we are safe." Wind and tide then controlled their destiny and the little boat was swept through the entrance, round under the lee of the mole and within a few seconds was in calm waters. An indescribable mixture of feelings - joy, remorse, exaltation, thankfulness and relief then engulfed the exhausted boys. Memory is able to recall those feelings, and savour them, completely undiminished, even after the passing of more than fifty years.

Inside the harbour the citizens of Dover, were enjoying a beautiful summer evening. A mixed fleet of dinghies was engaged in a round the harbour race. People were fishing from rowing boats. In the distance could be seen deckchairs on the beach and brave souls were swimming and diving. *Seafarer* was not sailed back to the tidal basin. The closest possible place to leave her was on a groyne outside the submarine pens. They moored her as best they could, allowing for a tide range of about 16 feet. Then, a group of wet, shivering and much shaken boys had to face both a two mile walk home and the music to follow. Next morning *Seafarer* had sunk. All loose gear, floorboards, rudder, boom, oars were gone. Not a total wreck but...

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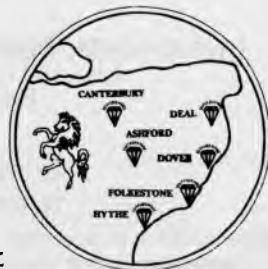
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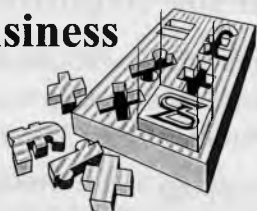
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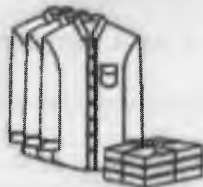
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Application for Membership

Membership: Individuals - £6 annually
 Joint membership - £10 annually
Payable on 31st March

New Renewal Joint

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

2nd Name if joint membership

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

The Gift Aid Legislation allows us to reclaim basic tax rate on your subscription and any donations. Please state that you are happy for us to do this by signing the Declaration below. You must be a UK taxpayer and pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax we reclaim on your subscription/donation. For joint members the first named is asked to sign as the taxpayer.

Declaration

I wish/do not wish* the Dover Society to benefit from the new Gift Aid Legislation. This Declaration applies to all subscriptions/donations I make on or after 6th April 2000. (* Delete as applicable)

Signed

Date

Please make cheques payable to the Dover Society and forward the cheque or cash to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Sheila Cope, 53 Park Avenue, Dover CT16 1HD

I/We could sometimes give practical help with the following (please tick boxes)

Social events Writing for newsletter

Projects e.g. clearance, surveys, photography

Any other interests or expertise

PROGRAMME 2009 - 2010

Guests are welcome at all meetings except the Annual General Meeting which is for members only.

2009

SEPTEMBER 12

Saturday

£15.50

**Does not
include
admission**

Down House and Tunbridge Wells

Down House - the home of Charles Darwin reopens this year with an exciting new exhibition to celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth and the 150th anniversary of *On the Origin of Species* which he wrote here.

Entrance costs to Down House:

Adults - £8.80; Children - £4.50; Concessions/Students - £7.50

English Heritage Members - Free

Before heading home the driver will take us into Tunbridge Wells for approx. 1½ hours, where you may browse the shops or take tea.

Pick-ups: Railway Bell 0815; Frith Road 0825; Brook House CP 0830

OCTOBER 19

Monday 7.30

Speakers: Dr Barbara Walsh: "Early Cross-Channel Flights"
Lorraine Sencicle: "Haunted Dover"

NOVEMBER 16

Monday 7.30

Speaker: Ruth Parkinson: "Pavilion and Lord Warden Hotels"
Either Brainstorming Session or a second speaker.

DECEMBER 12

Saturday

7.00 for 7.30

£22.50

Christmas Feast

This year we look forward to a hot carvery instead of a cold buffet following a request from a majority of members. Anyone requesting a vegetarian meal must let the Social Secretary know when returning the booking form. As usual the Christmas Feast will be in the Refectory at Dover College. Price includes a sherry reception, wine, soft drinks and entertainment by two of our own members, the renowned pianist Nicholas Harby accompanied by soprano Madeline Mee.

2010

JANUARY 18

Monday 7.30

Speakers: Steve Lang: "Dover Castle Renewed"
2nd Speaker: awaiting confirmation

FEBRUARY 15

Monday

7.00 - 7.30

Wine & Wisdom: Details in next newsletter

All indoor meetings are held at St Mary's Parish Centre

Please book as early as possible. Non-members are welcome on all Society outings.

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