

128 The Wellington Docks project would, Mr. Shaw believed, bring town and port together. He saw Dover moving away from its long-held defensive role to that of a welcoming one to incomers. Tourism and leisure he rated highly in this transformation. English Heritage were reviewing plans for the refurbishment of the Officer's Quarters in the Castle as a five-star hotel. This was a project he had supported from the beginning and he said it should bring with it 100 jobs.

Speaking of his awareness of his responsibilities as Dover's MP he added slyly that equally he was not unaware of the elevation in office of his predecessors, on which note of humour, he concluded.

Finally, Mr. John Moir, of Dover District Council, spoke of the Council's continuing support of the White Cliffs Countryside Project. The Western Heights continued to be a problem area. Various proposals had been made but times were difficult. Fortunately the attitude to the environment had changed for the better. He said the Harbour Board proposals for the Western Docks were all he had hoped they would be. He had taken his management board up to Shakespeare Cliff so that they could see and understand just what to expect. The A20 problems had demanded difficult decisions and there was an unpleasant year ahead for all.

Car parking was another essential requirement if tourism increased. Superstores, while solving some problems, created others. The demise of Sainsburys could, however serve to bring back the small shop. The Cannon Street Award should set the standard.

He spoke of the East Kent Initiative; the Task Force to tackle unemployment; plans for the transition period when the tunnel opened, which would involve government departments and the private sector; industrial diversification which was regarded as essential. He said that they knew they would not get everything right and expected criticism. He could trust the Dover Society to provide considered and well-balanced opinions. He hoped the Society would continue to grow in numbers for it had a vision of Dover and was participating in bringing that vision to fruition.

After thanking all who had taken part in the evening's business, especially the guest speakers, the Chairman brought the 1992 A.G.M. to a close. Δ

Wines & Spirits

OR, to be more accurate, Wine and Spirit.

— Jean Pearce

WINE making in England and Wales has had quite a chequered history since the grape was first grown on southern slopes by the Romans many years ago. Delightful crisp white wines graced many a table until the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries when wine-making was forbidden. From then until after the '39-'45 war there have been several attempts to begin again, but various setbacks thwarted most of them.

This potted history was imparted to 32 of us by our hostess, Mrs Wilkinson, of St. Nicholas Vineyard at Ash on a sunny day in May.

A 40-minute coach ride through lovely Kent countryside brought us to the vineyard which was named after the nearby church. 129

In 1979 German vintners brought some of their vines and helped plant the sheltered south-facing, gently sloping, cow pasture with rows of vines. They showed our hosts how to cultivate and care for the fruits which eventually produced a variety of wines.

Questions were a-plenty and all were patiently answered. Q: "Why are rose bushes growing at the ends of the rows?" A: "Because they act as disease detectors".

From the field we moved into the cool winery, full of strange receptacles, pipes and gauges. Whereas the field-work is very labour intensive, the winemaking is less so, but it is a most precise science.

After following the grapethrough its journey from crusher to bottle, we adjourned to a table under a shady tree where we sampled several very palatable and distinctive wines. These are great achievements, in spite of the lack of government interest and the imposition of VAT and excise duty. Quite the reverse of their EEC counterparts!

There was much musical clinking as we left the winery shop and strolled back to our coach.

I haven't mentioned the spirit? Nor, have I? Well, the spirit we did not see. We were told he was a 29-year old Elizabethan gentleman and is to be seen occasionally in the 400-year old house and outbuildings, and answers to the name of 'Henry'!

The Historic Dockyard

at CHATHAM _____ PETER BURVILLE

On a sunny day in June thirty-seven members of the Society set off on the leisurely trip to Chatham for a quite fascinating day exploring the historic dockyard. On our way it was a pleasure to see the delightful blue flowers of the flax in the fields we passed: such a pleasant contrast to the aggressive yellow of the rape so evident earlier in the year.

Arriving at Chatham we turned into the car park and saw a vast deserted area with no obvious pattern in its layout. At the reception area we were briefed by a "host", then left to our own devices; for some it was talk-talk whilst for others it was walk-walk. We chose an anti-clockwise tour starting at the Wooden Walls Gallery. These adapted sheds provide a wonderful setting for entertaining and instructive exhibits, telling the story of an 18th century apprentice at the yard. Lots of information and statistics were given by the audio-visual system as we progressed round the various sections. With the Rio Environment meeting still fresh in our minds, it was thought-provoking to hear that Chatham ship-building had required some seventy-five acres of 80-year old oak trees for