



18th - 31st May 1992

Introduction

From 18th to 31st May, 1992, the first Festival of Dover offered residents and visitors a broad programme of events, embracing a wide variety of art forms. The Festival Committee was composed of staff from Tourism and Marketing, Dover District Council and the Arts and Libraries Department, Kent County Council.

This was a very ambitious project, covering heritage, music, dance, poetry, exhibitions, walks, talks and a special programme for children, which included workshops in schools and a holiday outing at Kearsney Abbey.

[cont. overleaf]



The Festival was advertised by posters throughout the district and by leaflets available in local libraries, shops, banks and tourist centres. Where advance booking was necessary for an event, tickets were available from the Deal Tourist Office, or could be booked by telephone and credit card. There was no Festival Centre in Dover itself until the Festival opened on 18th May and this factor may have influenced booking numbers. Many people were unsure of the procedure for booking tickets and it is likely that a booking centre in a strategic spot in Dover would have boosted sales.

Some events were highly successful and well-attended. Others, sadly, were less well supported, although of great interest to those who did attend. Although thousands of leaflets were printed, there were still some Dovorians who failed to appreciate what the Festival had to offer and missed the opportunity to attend concerts, films, walks, talks or workshops, which would have been of interest to them.

Nevertheless, thousands of people benefited and the venture should be acclaimed as a great success. It was ambitious, exciting, wide-ranging, even daring, in its scope and aims and the planning committee deserve high praise for their achievement.

It is to be hoped that the second Festival of Dover will be even more successful. The planners will be able to build on the experience of 1992 and the public will be more aware of the event as an annual occurrence and will plan accordingly.

It is also hoped that any future festival will have the support it deserves from the local press. The *Dover Express*, in the first week of the Festival, also a Bank Holiday weekend, carried no encouraging report of the Festival, the only reference being a small footnote that advised readers that tickets could be obtained from Deal. The newspaper's issue following the Festival contained a short report, stating that the Festival Committee were reviewing the results and mentioning the Kearsney Teddy Bear's Picnic as the most successful event, but it gave no indication of the scope of the project nor the high degree of success achieved overall.

Many Dover Society members, having had plenty of advance information from Peter Ryan, one of the Festival Planning Committee, in previous Newsletters, attended the Festival events of their choice and thoroughly enjoyed them, as can be seen from the reviews included here. We cannot report every event in the Festival, but the selection of reviews we have printed will give readers an indication of the variety of the programme and a taste for future festivals.

EDITOR

