

The Dover Society

at the Dover Pageant: Libby Mason

With a brilliant blue sky overhead and plenty of sunshine, we arrived at Connaught Park. The Society tent was already up and people were busy setting up tables for refreshments and raffles. John Owen, Budge Adams and some of their friends had arrived soon after eight in the morning so everything was practically finished due to their sterling efforts!

It was obviously going to be an eventful day, as the tannoy system echoed around the grassy verges with the message "Will all those with lost dogs, cats or children go to the Victim Support Tent!"

Once the tables, chairs, cakes, prizes and members were ready, all that remained was the start of the show.

The gates had opened and people were already finding their special places to picnic and to watch the events in the main arena. Fortunately this was immediately in front of the Society's tent. With any luck we had a ready-made clientele for the refreshments on the stall. Wagging tails of excited dogs and laughter of children seemed to be the order of the day. Everyone who passed by appeared determined to enjoy the day off work. The Dover Society was extremely honoured to receive a visit from none other than Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth I (Mrs Lorraine Sencicle) who greeted us with a regal "Hi, how are you?" She then swept away to meet her many other loyal subjects, ranging from Ancient Druids to young ballet dancers!

The Pageant began: it was a real contrast of modern technology and days gone by – the camcorders recording the events to show in later years to children, or grandchildren, perhaps. History never dies and we are all part of it.

Many local Groups and Schools played their parts as history unfolded before us; Druids, Romans, Saxons, St. Augustine, Vikings, William I, The Black Prince, Henry the Navigator, Magellan, The Cabot Brothers, The Court of Henry VIII, the Court of Spain, Columbus and the American Indians.

Then followed the now famous Chariot Races, our official starter being Dover's own Pearly Queen. Some of the charioteers had either had a lie-in or perhaps one too many the previous evening, as there were several requests for replacements for absent team members. Needless to say everyone, originals or replacements, participated with tremendous enthusiasm.

Meanwhile back in the Society tent wine began to flow and reminiscences were being shared by Society members. Some new members signed on the dotted line too!

So the Pageant ended with the Duke of York's School's military band and "Keep off the Grass" catering for different musical tastes. An excellent day out was had by one and all. Our Society claimed some new members and advertised that there are people in Dover who really care about the town and the surrounding environment.