

Forget the idea that Hitler's cross-Channel shells accounted for much of the eventual destruction:

- 1959 - Western outworks filled in by the Prison Commissioners (Home Office);
- 1959 - demolition of the South Front Barracks by War Department;
- 1961 - Dover Borough Council proposes to use the Lines (huge ditches) as a rubbish dump;
- 1962 - Dover Town Clerk describes as "nonsense" the listing as an Ancient Monument;
- 1963-67 - Archcliffe Gate demolished to make road and viewing point;
- 1965 - Grand Shaft Barracks demolished;
- 1966 - Grand Shaft staircase sealed;
- 1978 - Citadel: Napoleonic period powder magazine bulldozed by Home Office;
- 1990 - Home Office constructs Borstal Accommodation Block without consultation despite the Ombudsman's ringing denunciation of the earlier destruction which was then repeated.

In the light of this well-told, but sorry tale one can only hope that the Young Offenders' Institution in the Citadel may in the course of penal fashion someday go elsewhere, that its site may also someday cease to be in the "custodianship" of the Home Office, allowing the entire complex

to become a nature reserve far from the Ministries' eyes and vandalistic thoughts. Kirk Alexander (Project Manager of the White Cliffs Countryside Project) provides a short postface to the book which allows an upbeat ending: Dexter cattle on the slopes to manage the grass; orchids galore; and thanks to volunteers and current local authority for time and money invested in protection and management.

The illustrations are indeed "profuse" as the cover claims, but this reader at least would have liked to see the photographs dated, even approximately. That would have allowed the present-day to be instantly distinguished from the historic, making the narrative still more striking. The volume, furnished with maps both historical and current, is an excellent companion for any would-be-stroller over the Heights, as a foreword about access by May Jones (Dover Society) and a prefatory glossary seek to ensure. However, the Dover Society, whose chairman Jack Woolford gives a brief introduction explaining the background to the publication, disclaims, in a printed "warning", any status for it as a guide. This, though it might appear inconsistent, is certainly prudent as a protection against possible litigation. Anyone who visited the site with the 1995 KFAS Conference will agree that it requires some athleticism! Congratulations all round to the Dover Society for assisting the birth of John Peverley's baby into print.

## Tilmanstone in Old Photographs

----- TERRY SUTTON -----

The rapid changes that have overtaken the village of Tilmanstone, resulting in the loss of many picturesque thatched buildings, are described in a booklet just published by two residents, Bob and Kathleen Hollingsbee.

When Bob - a sub-editor on the *Dover Express* - and Kathleen moved to the village from Dover they admit they were considered to be outsiders. But soon villagers discovered here were two "townies" willing to put something back into the community.

They allowed Bob to copy old family photographs and told Kathleen old stories about the village when it had two bakeries, two forges, carpenters and wheelwrights, a village police constable, village nurse, two or three shops, a post office, two butchers and other amenities. They were the days when horse-drawn carriages, travelling between Dover and Thanet, used to stop off there.

Their booklet, *Tilmanstone in Old Photographs*, (£2 from 5 St. Andrew's Way, Tilmanstone CT14 0JH) contains more than 60 old photographs, each with a detailed caption. The authors say all is not lost, despite the inroads of modernity. Tilmanstone is still a unique place to live in, they say. One piece of history I learnt from the booklet is that St. Mary's

Church in Dover once owned land at Tilmanstone which was tenanted in the seventeenth century by the Boys family. The income was used by St. Mary's for charitable purposes. That ownership is remembered today by the name of St. Mary's Grove. There's a lot more of interest in this booklet. I recommend you to buy a copy. <>

*Spoken in jest?*

## *"The Grass is always Greener over Here"* MILES KINGTON

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... I have just made my first Eurostar trip to Paris and I think it is worth recording my first impressions while they lie hot and sticky on my mind, a bit like the *pain au chocolat* stains on my tie. Now the one thing I knew about the Eurostar route is that while going through Kent the Eurostar express trundles along at a snail's pace and while going through Northern France to Paris it races along at supersonic speeds. The reason for this, we have always been told, is that the Tory government, in true British style, has never been able to get its act together, to build the special Channel Tunnel rail link while the French, with all the determination that has already given them a nuclear power programme, the TGV and bombs in the Pacific, built their high speed rail link many years ago.

Now it is certainly true that the Conservative Party's main remaining talent is for selling things off — the Tory government is a car boot sale on a gigantic scale — and this doesn't help to get new railways built, but I have discovered at the week end that there is another reason for the difference in Eurostar speeds in Kent and in Northern France.

It is such a dull, flat, uniform landscape between the Channel and Paris that the only natural reaction is to get through it as fast as possible. Between you and the horizon, the land barely rises or falls at all, and if it does so, it is with no more enthusiasm than a brackish pond on a dull day. And on the landscape itself there is little more to be seen than vast fields merging into each other, occasionally separated by long straight roads leading to grey little towns. There are many parts of France with delightful

scenery, as we all know, but Eurostarland (Eurostarlingrad?) is not one of them.

It is very different when you pop up in Kent from the tunnel. The first thing you see (apart from a forest of little fences) is the side of a chalk cliff. It is the tallest thing you have seen since you left Paris and looks immense. And then you start crawling through the Kentish countryside to give you a close-up slow-motion view of an extremely intimate landscape, full of gardens, and trees in blossom, and oast houses, and pub gardens and village corners.

Now I know that this is deceptive, and that Euro-regulations have forced us to convert our oast houses into stockbrokers' homes, and grub up our apple orchards, and make Kent not the garden of England so much as the ornamental border of England ... but it still looks a lot better than what you get on the other side of the Channel. Even when you get into the suburbs of London, you realise ... that there is nothing in France to rival these suburban gardens jostling next to each other, these little Kew Gardens leading up to their own Dunroamin, each exactly the same in shape and size, and each completely different in shrubs and ambience.

... Look, I am as Francophile as the next man, and I would rather spend a weekend in Paris than in London, and I know that Ashford International Station looks like a temporary arrangement of scaffolding (and so does Waterloo International) but I still think that the best advice for a Eurostar traveller from Waterloo is this: if you intend to do any sleeping on the train, do it on the French side. <>