

ZEEBRUGGE BELL PLAQUE

By Sheila R. Cope

When this plaque was installed below the bell on the Town Hall on 20th April 2001 in time for the annual commemoration ceremony of the Zeebrugge Raid held on St. George's Day we felt that recognition of an important historical event had been properly restored. Refurbishing the existing stone explanatory panels was a first step and the new plaque provides further detailed information at eye level.

Our contractors, CJ Cloke scaffolders and Cleverley & Spencer masons, fulfilled their schedules, essential because of our tight deadline. Warren Kennett of Durrants even broke into his holiday to install the plaque on time.

Finance was mentioned in our April 2001 newsletter and we are most grateful to Society members who contributed. Many people co-operated over the installation of this plaque and particular thanks are also due to James Summerfield, deputy clerk of Dover Town Council, for his liaison work with the manufacturers and with Bruges and other authorities.

The Dover Patrol and the Zeebrugge Raid exhibition at Dover Museum until 9th September 2001 well repays an hour's visit. Most Dovorians are familiar with the memorial obelisk at Leathercote Point and may have seen

its twin at Cap Blanc Nez. This exhibition illustrates the crucial part the Dover Patrol played in the 1914-18 war.

The display reveals how civilian life in Dover was similar during both wars. In 1914 Dover was declared a fortress, special passes were issued and evacuation plans made. The first bomb, commemorated by the Society's plaque in Harold Street, was followed by further air raids resulting in the setting up of a warning siren and hanging of blackout curtains together with the use as shelters of the caves behind the oil mill in Snargate Street and the establishment of domestic life in them.

For those who missed Donald Sykes' talk to the Society on 17th April 2000 and reported in newsletter no.38, this exhibition explains by means of models, contemporary photographs and information panels the reason, action and result of the Zeebrugge Raid carried out by the Dover Patrol. No doubt many local men were involved and the mementos of Leading Stoker Albert Terry, born in the Pier district in 1895 and who survived the raid and was awarded the Croix de Guerre, have a particular significance. We are also reminded that on 9th May 1918 HMS Vindictive returned across the Channel to attempt to block the canal at Ostend. This mission was only partially successful and terrible losses were sustained. Most of the Dover Patrol was stood down after the Armistice and many destroyers moved to the Grand Fleet, but 16 drifters remained to clear the minefields and stayed in Dover until September 1919.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

SUMMER 2001

In this Newsletter I express again my annual thanks to those who pay their subscriptions on time or by standing order. Reminders are being sent out later than usual this year because of database revision but input now should reduce time and effort in future years. For example, hand writing of addresses will be replaced by windowed envelopes.

We are delighted to announce the arrival of two potential recruits to the Society. We congratulate members Clare and Joe Bevan on the birth of Josephine in February and Fiona and Chris Tapley whose daughter was born in June, just in time to be included here.

We welcome to full membership:- Mrs A Hall, Mr H Cleaves, Mrs L Jones, Mr C Fletcher, Mr R Donnelly, Mr R Greenhalgh, Mr S Webb, Mr M Burton, Mr T Bones, Mrs L Roberts, Mr M Miles, Mr N & Mrs A Humphery-Smith, Mr J & Mrs C Cotton and Mr J Graeme. This provides an excellent increase in our numbers to 430. We greatly appreciate the efforts of those who work hard to introduce the Society to their friends.

Sheila R Cope