

funding. He asked how they could apply for project funding if they did not get the core funding necessary to exist.

It made him sad to reflect that our town did not make use of its opportunities. He said 'it is a marketeers' dream. Who could ask for more, the beauty, the infrastructure, the castle, the people going past our front door, and somehow we cannot make a success of it. It's unbelievable.'

But, he said, there were changes afoot which gave cause for optimism. He had spoken to Bob Goldfield, the new Managing Director of the Harbour Board, to Nadeem Aziz, the new Managing Director of Dover District Council, who were both very positive. Another newcomer to the town is Clive Cook, the new principal of South Kent College, an enormously energetic person.

He went on to say that TCM must change its own direction. We have done a lot of populist things to raise money and if that is what the town wants then that is what TCM will continue to do; Christmas lights road show, pop groups playing, boat races on the Dour, Father Christmas on midsummer day giving out Easter eggs and the talent show which became a national attraction.

As well as these the Board decided we should focus on the key things which we do so well. The first of these is SHOP WATCH, which we introduced and for which we won an award. This grew out of Dover TCM initiative. We now have nearly 90 different companies on two-way radio and CCTV.

The next is RIVER WATCH to look after the beautiful River Dour and keep it clean, a project supported by the Dover Society for many years. The river is amazingly clean from an environmental point of view and there are trout in almost the whole length of it. What is needed is not just the occasional clean-up but an on-going system of care. Watch this space! The Co-op is already giving us financial and legal support. There is one problem.

We are unable to cut weed because of a rule of the Environmental Agency. One of the worst areas is outside 'Riverside' where the weed is rife and allows rubbish to collect.

Lastly there is another project for which we need a name. We do not want to call it SLUM WATCH, but that is what it is. We are trying to get errant landlords to clean up their properties. There are, of course, difficulties. Often it is not known who owns a property and they are protected by an Act of 1990.

He went on to say that TCM wants to work with the Town Council and he welcomed Councillor Drew, the first independent councillor. He ended by saying that the TCM has support from many sources who say it is a model. The latest example is an exclusive, in the form of a letter from HRH Prince Charles, who was aware of Mike's column in the 'Dover Express'.

LIFE IN DOVER **DURING THE** **FIRST WORLD WAR**

A summary of Derek Leach's talk

DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR Dover was in the front line with troops coming and going, both the fit and the wounded, the dead constantly being brought ashore from damaged and sunken ships to be laid out in the Market Hall, the warships and aircraft coming and going, and the efforts of the Dover Patrol to protect our shipping against U-Boats. This meant that Dover was also a target for bombardment both from the sea and from the air. The lives of ordinary Doverians changed out of all recognition.

The great new naval harbour had been completed five years earlier but was not prepared for war. It would have had no defence against the German Fleet if their

10 vessels had breached the minefields. The harbour defences were improved with booms at the eastern entrance and two blockships at the western entrance to narrow it. The land defences of the harbour were equally neglected and in 1914 air defences were non-existent. Fortunately, it was many months before they were needed. The first planes soon arrived at Swingate Downs, although the aerodrome had not been built! They were tied to stakes for the night. The planes were unarmed and had no bombs but the pilots had pistols!

On August Bank Holiday, 3 August 1914, crowds of locals and Londoners on a day trip came to see the war preparations, hoping to catch sight of a naval battle. At teatime buglers on street corners summoned sailors to rejoin their ships in the harbour. As the destroyers went out on their first patrol the crowds cheered.

War was declared on 4 August 1914. Shoppers were out in force stocking up their cupboards; otherwise, all was calm.

Normal cross-Channel services stopped immediately. Holidaymakers rushed back from abroad. The Dover Fortress extended from St Margaret's Bay to Folkestone Pier. Access to Dover was only by rail or by the main roads and entry and exit permits had to be produced. All Dover newspapers had to be vetted by the Army for the first year.

The Dover Police Force was augmented by 150 Special Constables including all the doctors in the town. Police were also in charge of Fire Brigade work and kept a close watch for espionage - most aliens had been removed. They also had to process the dead arriving at Dover after naval actions and disasters, Dover Scouts guarded telephone lines and tunnels and also acted as messenger boys generally. A Sea Scout troop was formed to watch the coast. Women took on unfamiliar jobs such as tram conductresses and preparing mines. On the outbreak of war Dover pubs had to close at 9pm but then fell into line with the rest of the country - noon to 2.30pm and 6pm-8pm.



Women preparing mines

The Expeditionary Force moved safely across the Channel, including the three infantry regiments based at Dover, with bands playing and flowers thrown by the crowds. Five battalions arrived taking over the Duke of York's School, the Citadel and Connaught Barracks. Volunteers arrived in Dover to be trained. A great fleet of buses and lorries arrived in Dover for use in Flanders.

15,000 refugees plus wounded soldiers arrived in Dover when the Germans captured Ostend and Dunkirk. Doverians raided their wardrobes to provide them with clothing.

The newly-completed Marine Station and the railways were in constant use, first transporting Belgian refugees at the beginning of the war, then soldiers going to and from France, the wounded returning as well as army and navy stores throughout the war. Up to 20 hospital trains per day left Dover. 101,872 special trains carried over 12 million soldiers including one and a quarter million wounded during the War. Many of the latter could not continue their journey beyond Dover and were taken to the Dover Military Hospital on the Western Heights where many died.

In November 1914 a 500 strong Volunteer Training Corps was formed in Dover commanded by Sir William Crundall and undertook guard duty and digging trenches around Dover. In December four battalions of Dover volunteers were formed as part of 'Kitchener's Army' and then three reserve battalions - all billeted in civilian homes for months. There were several camps around Dover, both permanent and temporary: at the Castle, Fort Burgoyne, Western Heights and Connaught Barracks built during the War; the Duke of York's School was taken over, Langdon Fort, Archcliffe Fort, Guston Aerodrome, Swingate Aerodrome, Northfall Camp, The Danes, Broad Lees, Longhill, Langdon Prison and Maxton. In addition there were rest camps at the Oil Mills, Victoria Park

and South Front Barracks. There were also tented camps but civilian billets were used during the winter! The Army Pay Corps was based in Dover throughout the war with empty houses commandeered as offices and military quarters as was part of the Dover Union and, later in the war, Victoria Park and Dover College. There was a lack of military training facilities in Dover. Two rifle ranges were set up on the east cliffs and two more to the west of Dover. There were also schools for bombing, mortar training etc. A seaplane base was established on Dover Sea Front by converting the old skating rink. AA defences were improved with searchlights at Drop Redoubt, Castle Keep and Langdon Battery.

The German government offered a prize to the first airman to bomb England. On December 14 it happened - in Mr Terson's garden in Leyburne Road. The great guns across the Channel could be heard over the Christmas church bells. Parade services were held at New St James' Church for most of the War. Soldiers attended Temperance Teas at St James' Parish Hall but numbers dwindled and meetings ceased. In church prayers were offered on behalf of the enemy but not with unanimous approval. One patriot at New St James' did not say amen but regularly said, 'May they lick the dust!'

1915

A fortress full of soldiers, a harbour full of sailors and a town full of evening-free flappers soon created a situation that had to be faced. This led to the opening in April 1915 of the Girls' Patriotic Club in a room over a grocer's shop, which remained popular for the rest of the war. There was great rivalry between the soldiers from the Western Heights Barracks and the sailors. On many occasions they would meet in Snargate Street, pile up their hats and belts and have a fight. Married women invited soldiers' and sailors' wives to weekly Happy Afternoons, held above the Co-op.

An emergency committee was set up in

- 12 case Dover civilians had to be evacuated before an invasion or if the German Fleet bombarded the town. When air raids became prevalent it arranged the first siren warning in England. Hand bells were kept at Dover Police Station for issue to specials to warn people to leave for their allotted spots behind the hills. Fortunately these arrangements were never needed.

In March the first U-Boat was sunk off Dover. The crew was captured and imprisoned at the Castle. The marching of the crew through Dover caused great excitement. The naval air station at Capel was completed - used by small airships for spotting submarines. Zeppelin raids began in 1915 dropping many bombs in the harbour and around the town but causing little damage. Severe lighting restrictions were imposed and places of entertainment closed at 10 pm. Officials decided Dover was in little danger!

1916

In January 1916 a daylight attack occurred when a seaplane dropped bombs near the

harbour's eastern entrance. Later in January came the first real air raid, by moonlight, causing damage in several parts of the town and a fatality. A man picked up an unexploded bomb and took it to the police station in a sack. Fortunately, it was a dud. Other seaplane attacks followed throughout the town killing several people including a seven year old boy on his way to Sunday School.

In February the P&O Liner *Majola* was sunk near Dover with 155 drowned. Bodies were brought to Dover with the Market Hall used as a temporary mortuary. It served this purpose throughout the War. In the same month Dover was bombarded by destroyers but shells fell harmlessly beyond Dover, except for one in Glenfield Road. Two British destroyers attacked and two German destroyers were sunk and three badly damaged. All the dead were buried at St James' cemetery - the Germans in a mass grave. In May seaplanes attacked at night and no attempt was made to stop them. From the end of July onwards the siren went every night.



German aircraft attacking Dover Harbour



Boys cheering US troops in Market Square

1917

US soldiers arrived in Dover with an enormous amount of money and with loads to eat but they were very generous. Odd items would 'fall off' their ration wagons, always it seemed where there was a group of children. Troops returning from France marched up Castle Hill to the delousing station and children would watch as they undressed completely and then marched naked from the first building to the second. Fumigated clothing was returned badly shrunken!

The last daylight raid was in August. September 24, 1917, was Black Monday with 40 bombs falling on Dover killing seven and heralding a week of air raids. Shops were ordered to close by 6pm and everybody went to dugouts or the caves.

A variety of air raid shelters were used. There was a nightly pilgrimage to the caves. The majority from the poorer homes went to the Oil Mill caves, which could hold thousands. Other caves under the Castle were reserved for servicemen and their families, which were bomb

proof. Storage vaults under the Phoenix Brewery and the caves in Trevanion Street and tunnels in the Western Heights including the railway tunnel were used. Two sets of caves at the back of High Street were used as was the Grand Shaft, the crypt under the Town Hall and even the police cells. Budge Adams remembered, 'St. Mary's air raid shelter was in the basement of Sir Richard Dickeson's provision warehouse opposite the school in Queen Street where hundreds or even thousands of sides of bacon hung. We sat on the floor between the rows of bacons. If a bomb had fallen on the warehouse with us in it, it would have been difficult to differentiate between boys and bacon!' A large number of shelters were built in the town but very few were completed due to the shortage of labour! A tunnel was dug from Folkestone Road to Tower Hamlets but raids were over by the time it was finished. The Garrison used dugouts. However most people stayed in their houses without cover. Cinemas and theatres stayed open.



In September 1917 several parts of Dover were hit, including Wesley Hall in Folkestone Road and Dover Gas Works with seven killed. 29 September was one of the worst nights. On the next night Dover

Engineering Works was hit.

With food in short supply a Food Production Committee was organised locally, then a Food Control Committee. Allotments were extended. Flowers in



Wesley Chapel, Folkestone Road in ruins

gardens were replaced with vegetables. The Archbishop was consulted about the propriety of gardening on Sunday and his qualified permission enraged the Sabbatarians. The Committee introduced food rationing. Most people lost a bit of weight but were otherwise OK! Coal shortages led to the creation of the Dover Fuel Control Committee. Even light, gas and electricity were rationed during autumn of 1918. Increasing air raids caused public lighting to be abandoned.

1918

The Zeebrugge Raid main force left Dover on 22 April 1918. Nothing more was heard other than tremendous gunfire during the night. After the raid, 23 April 1918, the battered old cruiser *HMS Vindictive* returned to Dover and received the homage of every ship in port as well as the cheers from the crowd on shore. 156 died and 400 were wounded in the raid. The dead were taken to the temporary mortuary in the Market Hall. 66 were buried together at St. James' Cemetery. All Dover watched the procession.

From July 1917 to November 1918 nearly 4 million troops went from Dover to France.

The heaviest bombs to fall on Dover dropped in May 1918. Few if any of the raiders got back home. The last bomb to fall on England was on Dover in July 1918. At least 184 bombs and 23 shells from ships had fallen on Dover itself and another 370 fell within three miles of Dover.

There was a threat of attack on the town in order to break the lines of communication with France. Every precaution was taken. In July 1918 instructions were issued entitled *NOTICE TO EVACUATE THE TOWN IMMEDIATELY*. People were to meet at places of assembly and await orders, carrying warm clothing, food and drink for 12 hours. Everybody would move by different routes to Acrise, then by train to the West Country. Preparations were completed but the

threat of invasion receded as the Germans retreated.

In August 1918 a big armada including the battleship *Glatton*, was assembled at Dover to recapture the Flanders coast. On 16 September the *Glatton* was at anchor at the eastern end of the harbour when a big explosion set the ship alight. There was a threat to other ships, the harbour walls and the town itself from the big store of ammunition on board. The decision was taken to torpedo the vessel with men still trapped on board. More than three-quarters of the complement were killed or injured. 57 men were missing - trapped in the hull. The *Glatton* was treated locally, unofficially, as a war grave until it was lifted years later.

On November 11, 1918 came the Armistice. All the ships' sirens honked continuously, rockets were bursting everywhere and aircraft did wild capers over the town and harbour. Assistants rushed out of their shops, clambering up on horses and trams. The vicar's wife went into the garden and banged a gong!

POW's started to arrive soon afterwards and were given a great welcome by crowds and the Prince of Wales. The whole of Dover turned out the week before Christmas 1918 to greet Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and his commanders when they returned to England with an escort of destroyers and aeroplanes, landing at the Eastern Arm and then driving along the crowd-lined seafront. Sir Roger Keyes had received the Freedom of Dover a few days earlier in the Connaught Hall. "Hail, dauntless Dover' was sung at the tops of our voices", said Mrs Rudkin, the vicar's wife. The Mayor announced plans for a Dover Patrol Memorial on the cliffs. Prolonged salvoes of Kentish fire clapping accompanied Sir Roger as he unwrapped the Zeebrugge bell.

There was a plan to give every Dovorian, who had stayed during the war, a medal but various problems meant it was dropped. So Dover's many heroes were never recognised.