

THE CHRISTMAS FEAST

— *by Merril Lilley* —



THE CHRISTMAS FEAST was held on December 14th 2002 in Dover College Refectory, its usual venue, and those who attended enjoyed the customary splendid buffet provided by the College caterers and a welcome sherry and ample wine, provided by the Society. There was the customary raffle, with many excellent prizes suitable for the festive season, and some carol singing, accompanied by an elaborately-illustrated song sheet, put together by Joan on her computer. Lillian Kay gave a reading from Dickens and led the carol singing with her usual enthusiasm.

Many thanks are due to Joan who organised the event, to Mike who supervised the wine, Lillian who led the singing and Sheila and Jeremy who ran the raffle.

However... there was one disappointment and this was the attendance at the event. It was the lowest number of members we have had since the Feast was first held at the College.

Only 54 members were present and, while this number was just enough to cover the cost of the evening, this was not our main concern. It is a large hall, needing a large gathering to promote a convivial atmosphere. The accoustics are poor and it is difficult for voices to carry here. The carol singers did their best, but sounded oddly weak with such reduced numbers. In the past we have had between eighty and

one hundred people at the Feast. We would like to attract such numbers every year to make this a festive gathering.

So what is the answer?

We would be reluctant to change the venue. We tried this once, without success. Also, new members attending the Feast for the first time, were delighted and awed by their surrounds, declaring it a marvellous place for a Christmas feast.

Why did we have fewer members than in the past? Was it the cost of the evening - £18.50, the same as 2001? This was not unreasonable, considering the price included the hire of the hall, the delicious buffet with attentive service, a generous schooner of sherry on arrival, ample red and white wine provided on each table and coffee and mints to follow.

Joan is investigating the possibility of reducing the cost next year but it would not be substantially less than this year's figure. In addition the committee has discussed at some length the question of providing entertainment and hopes to do this next time. In the past we have had various contributions from individual performers, or groups, such as the 'Barber Shop'.

We would like to have some views and suggestions from members. What would you like? Have you ideas for entertainers? Please reply as 'Letters to the Editor' and we can print your views.