

FOCUS ON COWGATE

New member, Jeane Dutton-Hill, researches one grave in Cowgate Cemetery

HELLO DOVER SOCIETY, I'm Jeane Dutton-Hill your newest member! I'm a part time Civil Servant and also a Parapsychologist and Reiki therapist (an unusual combination I know!) I live in London with my fiance Jeremy. My interest in Dover goes back many years. As a child I enjoyed pleasant days out here with my parents. Growing up it was day trips to France and in recent months my interest in Arthur Beresford Pite, a London Architect who was responsible for the building I work in. I had been carrying out some research about him and, with the help of the volunteers who had been clearing Cowgate cemetery and logging the names on the graves, discovered where he was buried. I visited Cowgate for the first time in March and think it's a wonderful place. The work the volunteers have carried out is nothing short of amazing and I wish them continued success with the project.

ARTHUR BERESFORD PITE 1861-1934 *buried in Cowgate Cemetery*

Arthur Beresford Pite was born on 2nd September 1861 in Newington London to Alfred and Hephzibah. The Pite lineage originated from Woodbridge, Suffolk, and has been traced back to the late 1600's. Alfred worked as an architect and he and Hephzibah had six other children, Francis, Percy, Horace, George, William and Annie. Young Arthur was educated at Kings College School. In 1877 he entered the office of The Builder's Journal doing mainly literary work, he also attended the Royal Architectural School. In 1878 he became a partner with the notable architect John Belcher; he was then 24, Belcher 44. They had already been friends for sometime. He worked in the Belcher office until he won the RIBA Soane Medallion for his design for the West End Club House in 1882. Following this Arthur travelled to the continent with his brother William (also an architect) and they were joined by Belcher and J W James for part of the trip. Arthur returned to Belcher's practice and the partnership lasted 12 years.

The Pite family transferred to Ramsgate, Kent where Arthur and William shared rooms and an architectural office. In 1887

Arthur married Mary Kilvington Mowll and they moved back to Brixton in London. They had four children, Grace Sarah (1888), Ion Beresford (1891), Molly (who died shortly after birth) and Arthur Goodhart (1896.) Arthur continued working on his commissions including the Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly, two churches in Brixton, Kampala Cathedral in Uganda, a hospital in Jerusalem, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Moorgate, a library in Islington and buildings in Marylebone to name but a few. He also served as professor of architecture at the Royal College of Art and Cambridge University where he was considered a gifted teacher and speaker. As an active church member he ran a bible school for young students and a weekly bible class for prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

In 1889 he built Earlywood, a large family house at Frinton, Essex. Here he enjoyed many happy holidays with his wide circle of friends and relatives. In 1903 he moved to York Gate, Regents Park and it was there that his beloved wife Mary died in 1905.

In 1906 Pite began his commission to

build the headquarters of the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company at 30 Euston Square. It was a magnificent building of Portland stone, Grecian in style and spanning seven floors. The building took two years to build and was opened on 22nd January 1908. The main entrance hall was decorated in yellow and sage green Doulton Parian ware, tiled arches and a curious ceiling of dentils. The mosaic floor features an astrological design. The director's boardrooms on the first floor are lined in oak with oak strip floors and

Details of the main entrance hall



stunning marble fireplaces as their focal point. The basement housed the records for the Assurance Company; the walls are three feet thick in places and further protected by steel 'bomb blast' doors. The new office building was also fitted with a passenger lift, electric lighting and oil-fired central heating, all very modern for its time. Pite's detail was meticulous; each window arch was lined with white glazed brick, which can only be seen if you lean out of the window backwards! Light, which flooded the lower floors, was provided by five light wells also lined in white glazed brick. Further light was provided to the basement level by skylights. Pite was asked to add further extensions fronting Melton Street almost as soon as the Euston Square building was finished. He continued to enlarge the building for almost 20 years with the addition of the 9 Melton Street tower being his final work there. With the widening of Euston Road in the late 1920's the final expansion took place; the architect this time was not Pite but one of his contemporaries Josiah Gunton. The London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company had moved out in 1910, the new occupants were the National Amalgamated Approved Society.

I played a significant part in having the building upgraded from Grade 2 to its current Grade 2 special listing in 1999 due to its significant architectural importance. At least half of Pite's smaller commissions were in the Marylebone area off Oxford Street. He always retained an office in this vicinity even when he lived in Brixton and Beckenham. At 48 Harley Street Pite was asked to make alterations on the property for Gibson Sankey. His trademark style of mosaic tiling, this time in blue glass, still remains today surrounding the entrance. Pite built 82 Mortimer Street circa 1900 for Doctor Dudley Buxton as a family house and consulting rooms. It was constructed of

red brick and Portland stone over 4 storeys with a basement and slated mansard roofs. The sculptures flanking the 2nd floor, seated male and female figures, were not by Pite but produced by Farmer and Brindley. Pite regularly attended the Nash built All Souls Church in Langham Place where he was invited to design the Peace Memorial



The Mowll family vault, Cowgate

floor of 1918/19. Its Byzantine mosaic style is reminiscent of his floor in the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company's entrance hall. The similarities are so great I knew it was his work before I even verified the fact.

In 1914 Pite moved his home to Hampstead. Following Mary's death his sister Annie cared for Arthur and his family. His daughter Grace who suffered ill health spent most of her time at Earlywood with Sadler, the family's old nanny as she felt the coastal air more beneficial.

In 1930 Arthur moved to Beckenham, Kent in order to live near his brother William and this is where on 27th November, 1934 he died from exhaustion and skin cancer. He is buried with his wife Mary Mowll in the Mowll family vault at Cowgate cemetery in Dover, Kent.

PLANNING REPORT 2003-04

We lamented the loss of Leo Wright but welcomed his widow Marjory to the Committee.

Deeply involved in all of them, we continued to await desirable decisions on these issues: widening A2 from Lydden to Dover; Danish State Railways takeover from Connex/SRL; Channel Tunnel Rail Link through Shakespeare Tunnel; Dover Harbour Board/Dover District Council 30 Year Plan; River Dour Survey; Heathfield Avenue Home Zone; housing at Westmount and the Art School in the Paddock; continued train services to Kearsney; removal of the gate at Langdon Cliffs; naming of the Preferred Developer for Buckland Paper Mill; resolution of Residential Parking; planning application from Rix Scaffolding; Town Hall improvements from Thanet Leisureforce; Beachwatch in action, and implementation of our proposed Town Centre Trees project.

We were pleased to acknowledge these outcomes: no Market Square statue or metered sausages; our townscape awards to 13 London Road shops; conversion/conservation of Buckland Flour Mill; improved Christmas Lights; Dover in Bloom; Oswald Passage improvements; the Maison Dieu/Castle Street Puffin Crossing; and taxi de-zoning.

Deeply involved in them, we noted developments in the relationships on Dover Town Council Committees and between Dover Town Council and Dover Town Centre Management.

The work of the

PLANNING

Sub-Committee

Reported by JACK WOOLFORD, Chairman