

SOCIETY PROJECTS

Report by Jeremy Cope

THE RIVER DOUR

A meeting of the Dour Steering Group was held on 10th October at Crabble Corn Mill but prior to the meeting committee members received a guided tour of recent works carried out by the Environment Agency along Barton Path. The Agency has excavated within the riverbed to form a continuous and deeper channel. The resultant gravel has been used to form islands within the river. We now have a section of river whose movement is visually more alive and varied and is much closer in nature to the original Dour. In time the newly formed islands will be covered in natural vegetation, an altogether superior prospect. Committee members were very impressed. Member Joan Liggett had previously told me of her pleasure in the effect created by the new works including the wildlife to be seen, for instance amongst the birds, a heron. I would urge members to go and look for themselves.

At the meeting we received reports by the Environment Agency of similar works carried out at Kearsney Abbey and Pencester Gardens. The agency will also re-examine the work carried out last year when logs were used in an attempt to form a narrower winding and faster flowing waterway. Unfortunately the logs have become a trap for rubbish and hence rather ugly. The formation of the restricted waterway will also take

much longer than this year's method of excavating channels. The Agency has also carried out their annual maintenance work to ensure an unimpeded flow along the river. There was an update on the effects of this summer's flooding and of the liaison with local groups to mitigate future problems.

The White Cliffs Countryside Project has this summer operated its rubbish clearance working parties, Green Gangs and guided walks. They have worked on the signage, a thankless task with river walk notices, which for some odd reason fall victim to lorries. The organisation does not have any funding for its river work so that we must be very grateful for their commitment. If you want to see one result of its work look at the B&Q lake. When I last did so there was minimum rubbish, water birds and a strong growth of rushes and other plants that gave us a little nature reserve in the middle of the town.

The District Council continues with the clearance work of areas under their responsibility. I raised two matters brought to my attention by members, rats and dog fouling, and in both cases these are being addressed, but if you see problems do report these to the Council's environment department.

The Town Council is seeking to obtain a

licence from Netto to allow it to clear the banks of the river particularly around the B&Q lake. There were also reports from the Harbour Board and Folkestone and Dover Water Services. I was impressed by everyone's commitment to the Dour and their recognition of its qualities and potential. It bodes very well for the

future. However, the people of Dover must play their part. The rubbish which so spoils our river and its banks, is dropped or dumped by us and not by anyone else. In addition, if anyone wants to volunteer for the rubbish clearance parties you should contact the White Cliffs Countryside Project on 01304 241806.

COWGATE CEMETERY

With autumn comes the task of mowing the cemetery; of cutting back the growth of spring and summer. The vigour of the growth never fails to surprise me. It makes for a lovely, wild display but this is paid for in our mowing and clearance work. We are making good progress and if anyone is interested in joining our working parties please contact me on 01304 211348.

Over the past few months we have spent a substantial amount on upgrading and repairing our equipment. I am particularly pleased with the two trimmers we have acquired. They are powerful and effective and have rapidly shown their worth. We have also purchased safety helmets fitted with ear protectors and mesh visors. With this upgrading I feel much more comfortable about our volunteers' safety.

This upgrading has been made much easier with the help of Brandon Tool Hire of Holmestone Road. This is the first local supplier who has been consistently reliable, particularly in

repairing our equipment. Brandon's have also recognised the contribution we make without cost to Dover and have been generous in calculating its charges. Our thanks to Brandon's.

We are very grateful for the very generous anonymous donations, towards projects, we have received over the past few years. It means that the overall cost to the Society has been substantially minimised.

Dover Society - Cowgate Cemetery Provisional Working Party Dates 2008

Thursday	Saturday
3rd January	12th January
7th February	16th February
6th March	15th March
3rd April	12th April
1st May	10th May
5th June	14th June
3rd July	12th July
7th August	16th August
4th September	13th September
2nd October	11th October
6th November	15th November
4th December	13th December

