

# MARCH MEETING

## 1st Talk

### Kent Greeters

A talk by Peter Shaw reported by Terry Sutton

**I**ncreasing numbers of cruise passengers coming ashore at Dover are seeking the help of Kent Greeters and more volunteers for the group are needed.

This was the message given at The Dover Society public meeting at St Mary's parish centre on March 15th when one of our two speakers was Peter Shaw from Thanet, the director of operations of Kent Greeters. Mr Shaw told how the international Greeters organisation started in New York 18 years ago with the formation of the Big Apple Greeters group, set up to show visitors to the city the many attractions to be found there. The scheme was so successful that the idea crossed the Atlantic to Thanet (the first Greeters group in Europe) and from there to the White Cliffs Country (the Dover district).

The aim, said Mr Shaw, was for the organisation to grow countywide in time for the 2012 Olympics, when Kent can expect an increasing number of visitors. There were now about 60 members in Kent Greeters and it was hoped to increase membership to 100 by then. He explained that Kent Greeters, now

with links with Nord Pas-de-Calais, was receiving financial help from Europe through Interreg (Inter-regional) funding.

Just who are Kent Greeters? Mr Shaw explained they are volunteers. He said, "Basically Kent Greeters are people who love the area where they live and are proud to pass on what they love about the area. They are often the first friendly face of tourism," They are not professional tour guides added Mr Shaw. The volunteers have knowledge about interesting facts of their area and are delighted to pass on this information to visitors. They are also able to explain how the public transport system of their area operates, advise on restaurants, places of entertainment and historical centres such as castles.

Those requesting the free services of a Greeter have to give at least 14 days notice so that the administrator can locate the best Greeter to suit the requirements. Greeters must not accept payment or tips and any journeys must be by public transport and not in private cars.

Among the audience was Mrs Denise Smith of 4 East Cliff (01304 206458)

who told there were, at that time, 16 local members of Kent Greeters and that there were an increasing number of requests from cruise passengers arriving at Dover who had been able to give 14 days notice of their arrival at the port. She added more local Greeters were needed

because they had to bring other members to Dover from Deal and Sandwich to cope with the number of requests.

\* More information about Kent Greeters can be obtained on [www.kentgreeters.co.uk](http://www.kentgreeters.co.uk)

## — 2nd Talk —

### White Cliffs Countryside Partnership

A talk by Melanie Wrigley reported by Alan Lee

For the second talk of the evening Melanie outlined how the WCCP came into being in 1989, originally for three years, with three staff and seven funding sponsors.

Now it has grown to thirteen staff and thirty funding organizations. It has changed its name to 'Partnership' instead of 'Project' to

reflect its changing role in managing green spaces in the White Cliffs area.

The Heritage Coast stretches from Dover to Folkestone and Dover to Kingsdown and includes areas of beautiful landscape. These are the nearest Heritage Coast areas to London and have the richest biodiversity of chalk downland anywhere.



*Dexters grazing on St Martin's Battery Field*