

Blow That Horn, Man!

Terry Sutton

For the first time for 75 years Dover has heard the sounding of the town's Burghmote Horn stolen from the Town Hall nearly 50 years ago. The ancient horn, dating back to 1550, was used over the centuries to call Dover folk to a town meeting or to warn the town's freemen to gather with their tools to clear the silt bar preventing ships berthing in the harbour.

The Burghmote Horn was displayed in Dover museum at the Town Hall in 1969, along with other Dover treasures, when raiders broke in and stole a number of historic items. Fortunately they left the town's heavy golden mace, valued at that stage at more than £3,000, made in 1676 in memory of the landing of Charles II at Dover in 1660 on the Restoration of the Monarchy.

As a result of extensive enquiries by Kent and London detectives two men were arrested and jailed. A few of the stolen items were recovered but not the historic horn. Since then insurance company detectives have been on the watch at



Burghmote Horn Blown at Tudor Festival 2016

auctions and probing private sales, leading to investigations throughout Europe and further afield. It is believed money changed hands in the quest for information. Without a great deal of publicity Dover Town Council, responsible for the care of mayoralty regalia and other historic items, revealed the horn was back in its possession. And to prove it the ancient horn, claimed to be one of the best still in existence, it was blown several times on 1st October 2016 when members of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports paraded in Dover and during Dover's Tudor Festival.

Dover's Burghmote Horn

Martyn Webster

"Medieval Burghmote Horn has returned to Dover after it was stolen in the 1960's". So wrote Emily Stott in the Kent Mercury newspaper of 11th August 2016. Her article under quotes read as follows and is reproduced here with due acknowledgment to her and her newspaper: "A medieval civic horn which was stolen in a daylight raid on the Town Hall in the 60's has finally been returned to Dover after years of searching.

The Dover Burghmote Horn, made of copper alloy, was used to summon civic assemblies by the town crier. With reports from as early as 1558, it is one of ten of its kind with the nine

others in Faversham, Folkestone, Hythe, Ipswich, Canterbury, New Romney, Ripon, Sandwich and Winchester. On Monday 7th July 1969, it was stolen in a raid which also saw a large amount of silver and other treasures taken, including the (twice replaced since) Silver Oar of the Cinque Ports. It was reported that while councillors filed into the chamber for a meeting about housing, one of the raiders slipped inside and then waited to let the others in, before running off with the loot.

Allison Burton, Dover Town clerk said: "It's been a long fight and we're delighted to be bringing it home." At the time, there was a