

# JANUARY MEETING

## Wanston Rediscovered

A talk by **Jon Barker**

Reported by **Terry Sutton**

**M**ore than 300 volunteers are working with the National Trust to investigate the wartime history of the huge guns that once fired shells into and across the Dover Strait.

This was one of the interesting details related to the Dover Society's public meeting in January by Jon Barker project manager of the National Trust's archaeological investigation to discover how the gunners lived and died at Wanston (near St Margaret's) and Fan Bay during the 1939-45 war.

Jon's presentation also covered the anti-aircraft gun battery at Wanston provided, at first, to protect the cross-channel guns and later used against pilotless buzz bombs.

He explained how the National Trust inherited the military history of the once-secret gun batteries when the Trust purchased the farm at Wanston, off the old Dover-St Margaret's road, adding to its

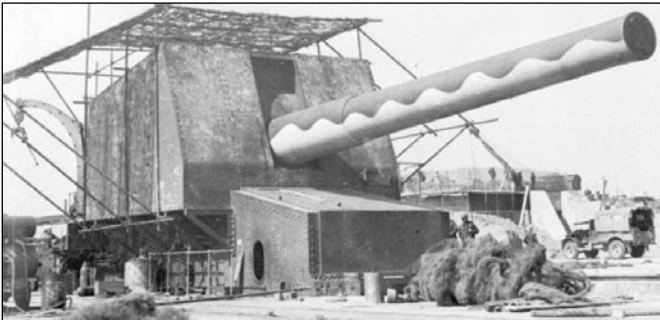
ownership of the cliff-top land of the White Cliffs of Dover.

Details were given about the huge task of removing tons of debris from the cliff-face Fan Bay installation including the discovery of the shipping plotting room.

Jon also told the meeting how the huge guns, originally for Royal Navy battleships, were of a different caliber initially installed to defend against invasion but later, super-charged, capable of firing one ton shells to hit enemy fortifications on the French coast. It was possible to fire two rounds a minute.

He explained there was still a lot of excavations to be carried out and mentioned the remains of the Clem battery (the two BL 15-inch Mk 1 guns were known as Clem and Jane) but he doubted if that would be achieved because it could involve the removal of 3,000 tons of debris and soil.

Anyone interested in joining the volunteer team working at Wanston should contact Jon Barker at The National Trust's HQ at Upper Road, Dover CT16 IHJ or phone 01304 200004.



*15 inch Gun Jane Wanston Farm Battery WWII*