

Memories of Dover

A Nostalgic Personal Perambulation.

Part Six - Yet More Memories of Dover...

Peter Sherred

Towards the end of the reminiscence in the last edition of the Society's Newsletter (105: November 2022), I finished with an almost throwaway line referring to the fate of the pissoir (which was marked as 'urinal' on a plan showing Trevanion Street). This was just one feature of the old Dover (exceedingly small in comparative terms) I remember as I was growing up.



Pissoir

The photograph shows this structure in front of The White Horse and St James's Church. Maybe the man with the bicycle shown was a cleaner of this facility? I cannot recall when this structure was taken down, with all evidence of its existence removed, but such facilities were quite commonplace in France in the 1950s and 1960s. Gradually removed, they have been replaced in the French street scene by the modern Dr Who 'Tardis' unisex facilities that automatically wash out after each use. That could be challenging if one is not quick! Memories of this Dover feature reminded me of a television series called *Clochemerle* which some may remember.

Clochemerle was a star-studded British take on a book written in France many years ago and which we would probably call a satire. Peter

Ustinov was the narrator and the likes of Roy Dotrice, Bernard Bresslaw and Nigel Green (remember them?) took starring roles. I think it was probably shown in the 1970s but it is no doubt available as a series on DVD. It is a send up of French society and culture and especially the Church and the Republic.

It centres on the desire of the mayor (maire) of a small sleepy village in the Beaujolais region of France to erect a suitable monument in the village square and yes, you may have guessed it, the structure was to be a pissoir and it would be sited near Clochemerle's church! A leading lady of the village and all the women, as well as the Church, are against the idea and turmoil results into which the army is sent. It is a contest between the Church and the secular Republic. All very chaotic and quite amusing, especially remembering Dover once had such a facility which was adjacent to a church!

In my memories of the High Street, I focussed on the stretch from Bridge Street going towards the seafront. At the bottom of Tower Hamlets Road is *The Eagle* public house. It is a prominent building and has undergone numerous changes, but it is still operating as a pub. But what about that other bird of prey, the falcon? Well, across the road from *The Eagle* standing proudly and substantially on the corner of Bridge Street with London Road, stood *The Falcon* hotel and pub. Oh yes it did and here is the proof! What a substantial building it was and very impressive on its corner site, but in the 1970s it fell victim to the demolition culture with the widening of Bridge Street to accommodate a broader pavement and a tree at this junction. But cast



Falcon Pub

your eyes to the left of the picture and you will see one of the old-fashioned shop blinds that were a feature of retail units in the 1950s and 1960s. They were good for protecting pedestrians from rain and in summer

acted as a parasol to protect people and especially food, in the windows of shops, from the sun and the heat.

The reason I draw attention to the blind is because just beyond *The Falcon* (and taking in about four or five shop units) was *Turnpenny Brothers'* furnishing store. Believe it or not Dover, in those days had other such stores and the names of *Flashman's* and *Henry Hart* ring a bell as well as *Hedgecocks*. *Turnpenny Brothers'* store included, at the rear, properties in Matthews Place and on Bridge Street, where workshops existed. When *The Falcon* was demolished the workshops were exposed and today we can see where they once were located. The *Turnpenny* business was a well-established feature of the town and the last in the line of the family-run business was John *Turnpenny*, who many will remember as being active in town circles. His father was Sydney *Turnpenny*, who had married an academically gifted young lady called Lillian. She went on to become the oldest resident of Dover by the time she died, aged just short of 110. She was a real character and I remember her as being very sociable and witty, with a liking for gin – indeed John put his mother's longevity down to gin at lunchtime and whisky in the evening. Now, that's the spirit!

John took the decision to close the shop on London Road in the early 1980s; the picture shows the extent of the enterprise. John had



Turnpenny London Road

a profoundly serious demeanour (possibly to counteract the jollity of his mother), but if one knew him one found an immensely helpful, friendly and amusing individual. His serious persona was best on display in his role of magistrate, where he became Chairman of the Bench. He was extremely helpful to me when I was President of the Chamber of Commerce and was active in the annual Calais Foire as well as being a trustee of the Dubris Trust and a keen golfer. A former Head Boy of Dover College, he died in 2011 in Kearsney Manor nursing home but not before I, together with Society member John Morgan, nominated him to Dover Town Council as an Honorary Freeman of the Town, to which he was admitted in 2010. The honour was richly deserved. There is something deeply satisfying about putting a person forward for recognition and it being accepted.

By the by, in issue 103 of the Newsletter (March 2022) when describing the area of the High Street where the *Drum Holding* shops are now (on the right-hand side going towards the sea between the High Street terrace and *Blackman's*) I mentioned the shops adjoining *Cunningtons* as being *Turnpenny* units.

Here is a picture to prove it and note *Cunningtons* also had a retail shop blind, which brings us back to the feature at the beginning of this reminiscence. The picture



Turpenny High Street

shows another substantial slice of old Dover now gone, but the nice picture of John Turnpenny shows him having received his honour from Dover Town Council.

If you are becoming bored with these ramblings do tell the Editor!

Editor's Note: With the restoration work on the Town Hall continuing, the name of Flashman is becoming familiar once more, as they made much of the furniture for the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour. After conservation, chairs and other items will go on display.



*John Turnpenny
Freeman of Dover*

Remembering the Unknown Warrior

Alan Lee

On the 9th November 2023 our new chairman, Jenny Olpin, attended her first wreath laying ceremony representing the Dover Society at the remembrance service, Marine Station.

After the service, held at the Railway Monument, within Dover Marine Station, the attendees moved through to the Cruise Terminal to witness the Dover Society Chairman lay a wreath at the plaque that commemorates the anniversary of the arrival at Dover of the Unknown Warrior.

The Dover Society lay a wreath here each year. A Gurkha lone piper, LCpl Simson Rai, played the most amazing lament and the chairman read out an appropriate passage. Jenny read Flanders Field which is very 'on message' as it speaks of handing over to future generations to ensure that the carnage and devastation of war do not happen again.

The Society would also like to thank Matt Bristow, Duke of York's Royal Military School,

for the photograph of the Chairman and Rob Bayliff for the photograph of the piper.

A wreath was also laid on behalf of the Society, by the Chairman, at the main Remembrance service held at the Town's War Memorial on Sunday 13th November.



*Ghurka Piper
L Cpl Simson Rai
D (Imphal) Coy
2 Royal Gurkha Rifles
© Rob Bayliff*



*Jenny Olpin
Nov 2022
Cruise
Terminal ©
Matt Bristow*