

MARCH MEETING

A Saint, A Chapel and a Policeman

A talk by Derek Leach

Reported by Terry Sutton

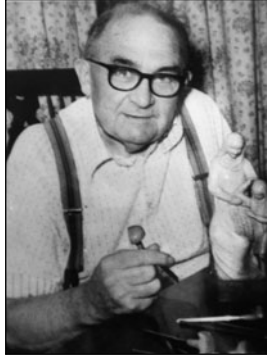
Our vice chairman Derek Leach, who is playing a major role in the restoration of the Maison Dieu, cleverly weaved three stories linked to the 800-year-old centre when he gave a talk to members in March.

He entitled his fascinating talk, 'A Saint, a Chapel and a Policeman,' relating to his trio of subjects: St Richard of Chichester (who died in the Maison Dieu in 1253), the thirteenth century St Edmund's Chapel in Priory Road, and the 20th century Dover police sergeant Bob Forsyth who carved many beautiful statues including the impressive one of St Richard of Chichester that stood in the Stone Hall of the Maison Dieu.

Much of Derek's presentation was about the legacy of Bob Forsyth's carvings, several now decorating churches in Dover. One yarn, related to Derek by a member of the Forsyth family, was that Bob was seeking a facial image he could recreate for St Richard's statue.

It came to Bob Forsyth one day when his front door was answered to the gaunt face of a door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman. "Thar's the face I want" exclaimed Bob who then continued carving his St Richard statue.

Derek, our former chairman, screened a series of images to supplement his very



Bob Forsyth

detailed explanation how this trio of subjects were all linked with the Maison Dieu, now closed to the public for the multi-million pounds restoration task work.

The evening's talk was completed by a short presentation by the Town Hall's community engagement officer, Martin Crowther, who told what had already been achieved and the programme ahead to

which the public will be invited.



St Richard – Carving by Bob Forsyth