

Bacon, Eggs and Making Beds

Patricia Knight - Past Secretary

Adeline Reidy - Past Chairperson

Forty years ago, when guest houses were at their prime in Dover, Adeline Reidy of Number One Guest House, identified the need for a local organisation to bring together like-minded businesses. With the enthusiasm of colleague Patricia Knight of East Lee Guest House, Patricia and myself came together to form the Guest House Group

Other small establishments soon joined, hence the birth of The Dover Guest House Group. Eventually, local hotels joined the organisation, and the title was then renamed The Dover Hotel and Guest House Group. With Dover Castle being a top tourist attraction, the guest houses and hotels thrived on visiting tourists from all over the world. Dover was the perfect steppingstone, providing close proximity to Canterbury, Folkestone, Deal and London now only just over one hour on the fast train.

The Group held monthly meetings, sometimes with representatives from the council and other governing bodies, keeping our industry informed and educated on localised matters. We became a voice to be heard when making representations to local government, tourism initiatives, and fundraising for local charities. Also working closely with the ferry companies, restaurants, and many tourist attractions, offering discounted rates.

Hotels already had their own star rating with the Tourist Board. In order that guest house establishments had some criteria to aim for, our own crown rating was introduced, giving assurance and credibility to the local industry. Visitors were able to identify their specific requirements from all

the advertising in tourism guides, and book directly or through the local tourist office.

As technology evolved, we moved forward with our own managed website, advertising local establishments, providing a booking platform incorporating comprehensive detailed information on all tourist attractions, where to eat, what to do, and numerous discounted vouchers.

Many other towns in the UK already had the brown tourism signs, Dover did not!! Once again, this sparked yet another flame. We worked closely with the local authorities, and after much determination and deliberation, our initiative brought about the implementation of the Tourism Brown Signs in and around the town, some of which are still in place today.

As the organisation grew, we proudly hosted a yearly Grand Ball at Dover Town Hall, always with a theme, black and white, spring, maypole, masked, Caribbean to name a few. Tickets were always sold out prior to release and became one of Dover's most popular social calendar highlights, with all profits going to local charities.

Over many years, the group continued to thrive with the valuable help and enthusiasm of the committee and members, of the Dover Hotel & Guest House Group.

With the introduction of various booking agencies now taking a prominent role in establishment reservations, the whole industry witnessed a monumental change, some for the good, some not. Corporate hotels and discounted chains have had a

great impact on the local industry with private owners unable to compete. The infrastructure of our roads and highways also enabled quicker journeys to Dover Port, with less people needing an overnight stay.

Sadly, to date, many guest houses have been sold, owners retired, others moved on in different directions. Unfortunately, we have witnessed the demise of many local establishments, some of which had been in business for over forty years. Guest houses, were and still are, a valuable British institution, not only providing extensive knowledge of the area, but also an invaluable personal service.

What was once a thriving local industry in Dover, sadly has now been reduced to just a handful. However, we wish the remaining establishments continued success for the future.

Dover Society Binders



Available at £5.25 each

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