

Rolex Oyster watch which withstood the low temperatures. This launched her advertising partnership with the company, and she is still used in their publicity to this day. She was the Keira Knightly of her time! She went on to endorse Paddy Whiskey, Lipton's Tea, Be-ze-be Honey and she appeared at a corset demonstration for Kellett's. Mercedes fever was in full force, her fame was widespread, and men adored her for her beauty and bravery.

Mercedes went on to swim in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Gibraltar, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. She was sponsored for these attempts and with the proceeds she opened the first Mercedes Gleitze Home in 1933. This was a large house in Leicester that was converted into flats for homeless families. She also worked with schemes to help unemployed workers find employment.

Mercedes married engineer Patrick Carey in Dover in 1930 with the American swimming twins Bernice and Phyllis Zittenfeld as bridesmaids. In 1932 she retired from swimming and became a

mother and homemaker. With Patrick they had three children together. Due to chronic ill health (some of which was brought on by the extremes of swimming in such harsh environments) Mercedes withdrew from public life. She never really talked about her achievements and lived quietly with her family until her death in 1981.

Mercedes is the subject of a new book written by her daughter Doloranda Pember entitled 'In the Wake of Mercedes Gleitze Open Water Swimming Pioneer' Published by The History Press the royalties from the book go to the Mercedes Trust Fund. Copies of the book can be found in our museum shop.

Our current temporary exhibition 'Channel Crossings' runs until May 2024. Come see how we crossed the channel by air, sea and tunnel. Accompanying the exhibition is a FREE passport trail for youngsters to complete. We open: Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.00pm. Open Sundays in the summer 10.00am to 3.00pm. Admission is FREE. Tel: 01304 201066 [www.dover.gov.uk/museum](http://www.dover.gov.uk/museum)

## **Dover Society Christmas Lunch 2023**

### **Denise Lee – Raffle Co-ordinator**

This will be my last occasion that I organise the raffle. I am stepping down so that I can concentrate on looking after my newborn son John. I will still attend the open meetings to listen to the talks whenever I can. James Benjafield and Ben Elsey have kindly agreed to take over, so you will be seeing them at our meetings.

The lunch back in December was, yet again, a resounding success with over eighty-five people present. The entertainment on the day was supplied by John and Ellie, a popular local Country Blues duo.

On the day, the raffle raised a magnificent £360. The proceeds this year have been donated to the Beehive, Dover. This is an organisation that provides support for those suffering from domestic abuse whilst providing a pleasant environment to meet and chat and purchase high-quality second-hand clothes.

Beehive has replaced the Roman Quay pub at Stembrook, as a shop, café and community space. The centre's opening times are 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Saturday.