

The  
Dover  
Society

# Newsletter

No. 109  
March 2024



*Dover Lifeboat, The Severn Class 17-09 City of London*

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# THE DOVER SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1988

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## *The Objectives of the Dover Society*

*founded in 1988.*

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archæology, natural history and architecture of the area
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- and commitment to the belief that a good environment is a good investment.

The area we cover comprises Dover Town Council, Guston Parish Council, Hougham Without Parish Council, Langdon Parish Council, Lydden Parish Council, River Parish Council, St Margarets at Cliffe Parish Council, Temple Ewell Parish Council and Whitfield Parish Council.

All members receive three Newsletters a year and in each year the Committee organises about ten interesting events – talks, tours, visits, Members' Meetings and usually a Christmas Feast.

The Society gives Awards for improvements to the area, monitors planning proposals and supports, joins in or initiates civic projects and arts events.

# Editorial

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It is with great regret I must report that one of our founding members and long-time committee member, Terry Sutton, passed away on 3rd February. We send condolences to all of his family and relations. Terry, so well known and knowledgeable about the town, will be sorely missed by all who knew him. An article about Terry appears on page thirteen of this Newsletter.

I must also, with great sadness, notify members that on Friday 16th February the long-time previous editor of the Newsletter Merril Lilley, aged 93, passed away. Merril was a great help and inspiration to me when I took over the role of editor.

Membership is also due in April. Once again there has been no increase in the membership fees. The last subscription increase was in 1996. Very few, if any, organisations have held their fees at the same level for so long. This is excellent value for money so please try to get your friends, relations or acquaintances to join.

The annual service to commemorate the fallen during the Zeebrugge Raid in 1918, will take place on Tuesday 23rd April 2024, St George's Day. The main service, including wreath laying from 11.00am, will be at St. James's Cemetery. At midday, following the Mayor ringing the Zeebrugge Bell, there will be a short Remembrance Service, adjacent to the Maison Dieu, Dover Town Hall, at the People of Dover War Memorial, outside the town council offices, Maison Dieu House. More information will follow on the Dover Town Council website and event Facebook page.

After being our youngest member when she joined aged thirteen years, and running the raffle for the last eleven years, Denise, my daughter, has now relinquished the role to spend more time with her new baby, John. Many thanks for her dedication over the years. James Benjafield and Ben Elsey have now taken over.

Do you have a little time to spare each month? We always need volunteers to take a more active role in helping The Society grow. Help is required on sub-committees, projects, events, meetings and submitting articles and reports for the newsletter. If you are interested, please contact the Editor or any member of the committee.

*Alan Lee, Editor*

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## DEADLINE for contributions

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 110 will be Wednesday 5th June 2024.

The Editor welcomes contributions and interesting drawings or photographs.

'Paper copy' should be typed at double spacing. Handwritten copy should be clear with wide line spacing. Copy on computer disc or by e-mail is acceptable. Pictures via e-mail to be submitted in JPEG and not imbedded in the text of the article and must be in as high resolution as possible. Please ring 01304 213668 to discuss details.

*Publication in the Newsletter does not imply the Society's agreement with any views expressed, nor does the Society accept responsibility for any statements made.*

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## DOVER GREETERS

Dover Greeters have been welcoming visitors to Dover for over 15 years. We love to share the unique and hidden parts of Dover, and signpost visitors to make the most of their time in this iconic town. If you would like to join us please contact:

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Website: <http://dovergreeters.co.uk>

# OCTOBER MEETING

## Dover's Sky at Night

A talk by Ben Harding

The South East Kent Astronomy Society (SEKAS)

Reported by Alan Lee

Ben's talk on 16th October covered a slightly wider range than just Dover, as it included the whole of the universe in space and time. However, he did pin it down to things you can actually see from in and around the town.

He explained that, unlike a terrestrial map, the night sky moves, so that Jupiter might be "there" at 7pm, while at 11pm it was "over there", and in March it wasn't anywhere at all! He demonstrated, using a programme called *Stellarium*, what was visible during the evenings through the winter months, showing how planets moved and how constellations rose and set over hours and weeks.

Ben used photos taken from various sites around Dover to illustrate how light pollution seriously reduced our ability to see faint stars. A photograph using long exposure, revealing the Milky Way and tens of thousands of stars, was compared

with a short exposure that mimicked our eyes. This showed a brown haze and just a few dozen of the brightest stars.

Ben advised that some of the best places he'd found to observe the night sky were Broadlees car park behind Dover Castle, the sunken gardens on the sea front in front of the Gateway flats, and the Channel tunnel road opposite Farthingloe Farm. But in reality, while anywhere you can get away from direct lights is better, nowhere escapes the glow caused by just too many lights.

Ben then told us about the likelihood of being able to observe shooting stars. The best chance, in 2023, would be the late evening and night of the 14th and 15th of December. It has been estimated that there might be as many as 150 meteors per hour, two or three every minute, visible on that night. His colleague, John Male, also present, explained that shooting stars were



*Andromeda taken with a Dwarf II device*



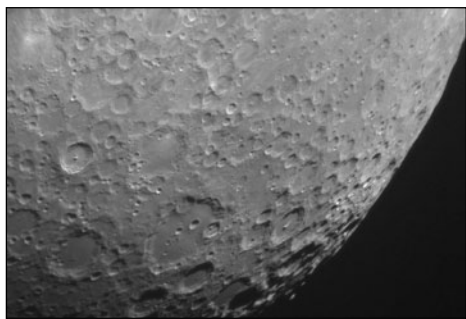
*Andromeda taken with a hand held camera*

the dust residue of comets that burned up as they entered our atmosphere, smashing into it at 100,000 Km per hour!

A few of the easier to see wonders of the night sky, including Perseus, Cassiopeia, Taurus and, in particular, Orion, were shown by Ben. He explained that while some things could be seen with the naked eye, even simple 10 x 50 binoculars would show much more detail. You could also use a camera, even a phone camera, to capture images. Using an exposure of five to ten seconds long would show much more detail than we could see with our eyes. When taking a long exposure, you must make sure that your camera or phone camera is resting on a solid surface, to avoid any unnecessary vibrations, which could lead to a slightly blurred image.

Ben then showed some wonderful Moon shots that he had taken over the years. Some had been taken with a camera and a long lens, while for others he had used much more technical equipment.

However, to see the real delights in the night sky you needed a telescope, or even a full observatory set up. Even a medium size, and relatively inexpensive, telescope will open up wondrous views of planets unable to be seen with the naked eye.



*Moon Shot by Ben Harding*

We were then shown a series of pictures taken by SEKAS members. All of them showed some amazing detail and really looked like something that the American institute, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] would have imaged.

On display for the audience to look at were a couple of telescopes and a selection of books and magazines, to show what was available. Ben also showed a tiny device called a Dwarf II Smart Telescope, which is a full observatory measuring 204mm x 62mm x 130mm (8 x 2.4 x 5.1in), about the size of a hardback book. It weighs 2.4lb, just over 1Kg. It can locate, follow, photograph and process astronomy images and can be controlled by a mobile phone. We were then shown a number of pictures this tiny unit can produce. A very clever and useful piece of equipment.

There were several questions raised by the audience, including ones about the joy and wonder of observing, and the potential of finding life elsewhere. Ben explained, in detail, that while we may never visit other stars, from here on Earth we can detect and analyse the atmosphere of distant planets.

During his final summary Ben stated that we could potentially detect signs of life, e.g. oxygen, phosgene or, sadly, industrial pollutants from on Earth. As Ben finished his final summary, he emphasised that, so far, the total number of planets showing these signs is one, this one that we're sitting on.

*South East Kent Astronomical Society have monthly meetings held on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Alkham Village Hall, Dover. Meetings usually start at 7.30pm but please check their website for any changes to the schedule and information on other events.*

# NOVEMBER MEETING

## Scoop

A talk by Graham Tutthill

Reported by Alan Lee

Why, and how, local journalist Graham Tutthill came to be known as “Scoop” by the emergency services was revealed at the society’s open meeting in November.

Graham, who worked for the *Dover Express* from 1965 to 1973 and then for the *East Kent Mercury*, *Dover Extra* and *Dover Mercury* (part of the Kent Messenger Group) until his retirement ten years ago, said he was so keen to cover local stories that he would often be seen following fire engines and ambulances to the scenes of fires and accidents. On two occasions he arrived before the fire appliances, and it was the firemen who first called him “Scoop.”

Graham was born at the Royal Victoria Hospital, (now Royal Victoria Place, High Street, Dover), 75 years ago this month. He attended Shatterlocks Infants School, Barton County Junior School and Dover Boys’ Grammar School. The photo of his class at Barton school also included Dover Society chair Jenny Olpin as they were in the same class. It was while at the Grammar that Graham joined an after-school club which researched what had happened to former

pupils since leaving school, and as part of that research he arranged to go to the *Dover Express* office on Saturday mornings to look through the old files. “It was while I was there that I became interested in the work of the journalists – including Terry Sutton, of course – and they took me on for work experience in 1964, the year before I left school,” said Graham. He became a cub reporter there in 1965. *The Express* office was then in Snargate Street, near where the junction with York Street now is, with the reception office at the front and the printing press at the back, thundering away each Thursday night as the papers were printed. In those days, the reporters wrote their stories using typewriters and carbon paper, and every word was read and checked by proof readers, with every page being read again by the journalists. “It’s a very different story today,” he said.

Graham called at Dover Police Station, Ambulance Station and Fire Station each morning, and attended magistrates’ courts in Dover, Deal and Sandwich. Once he was threatened by a defendant who said he would cause him serious injury if a word of his case



Barton School Class



St Paul's Church fire



appeared in the paper. The magistrates gave him six months, so Graham knew he was safe for a while!

Along with other reporters, Graham scratched his name on the press benches in both the court and the council chamber at Dover Town Hall – and they can still be seen today.

Council meetings, wedding and funeral reports, golden weddings and Women's Institute reports were all part of the daily schedule.

When Dover District Council was launched in 1974, Graham wrote a series of articles for the *Mercury* on each of the council's departments, explaining what they did and how the council worked. In 1988 a Dover office for the *Mercury* opened in Church Street and in 1998, when the *Dover Mercury* was launched, the office moved to the High Street. Eventually the office was closed, at the same time as the *Dover Express* closed their office, and Graham worked from home and then from Deal.

There were many major stories Graham worked on including fatal accidents, the Crypt Tavern fire in 1977 which claimed seven lives, the hovercraft crash in 1985 and, of course, the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster in 1987. He spent five weeks covering the inquest into this tragedy. He also reported on the deaths of fifty-eight Chinese people discovered in the back of a lorry at Dover's Eastern Docks in 2000.

Always looking for the positive side of stories, Graham wrote a series of articles about some of the refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in Dover in the 1980s and 1990s. In these he set out to explain the difference between our cultures and how they came together. As a result, he was invited to speak at a national conference

about the way the authorities could encourage the media to approach these issues.

During his career Graham met and interviewed many famous people, ranging from Margaret Thatcher, William Hague and Tony Blair to Myleene Klass, Cilla Black, Andrea Bocelli and Sophia Loren, not forgetting Dover's own Joss Stone (whose aunt was also in Graham's class at Barton school).

Graham noted that over the years there had been a huge increase in the number of people attempting and succeeding in swimming the Channel, from six successes in 1963 to two hundred and thirty-three in 2019.

In his spare time, Graham enjoys researching his family tree and discovered a link with Walter Tull, one of Britain's first black professional footballers and the first black British Army officer at a time when "men of colour" were banned from being officers.

Graham stressed the importance of having a balanced news content, with positive as well as negative stories, and he has always been keen to publicise the good work done by local people.

In the run-up to his retirement, Graham adapted to the changing media scene, providing stories for local radio and television outlets within the KM group, as well as websites and social media.

He warned of the dangers of social media and said many people did not seem to realise that what they wrote on forums and other platforms could be reported in main-stream media and were still subject to libel laws and all other legal restrictions.

But overall, he said, he thought he had had the best of times as a local journalist.

# JANUARY MEETING

## Dover Royal Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

A talk by Andy Milton

Reported by Alan Lee

After introducing himself and the other members of the Dover RNLI present Andy informed the audience that there has been a lifeboat stationed at Dover for over 165 years. Over that time crew members have been presented with over thirty awards. The Dover station guards the straits from Folkestone to the South Goodwin lightvessel.

Andy then played a short recording showing seven rescues that had been carried out by the Severn class lifeboat. This included Lerwick (Shetland), Torbay (Devon), Rosslare (County Wexford), Arranmore (County Donegal), Dover (Kent) (aided by Walmer), Tynemouth (Tyne and Wear) and Holyhead (Anglesey).

The earliest record of a boat kept specifically for rescuing the shipwrecked was at Formby, Lancashire, in 1777. A London coachbuilder, Lionel Lukin, designed the world's first 'unimmegible' boat and patented it on 2nd November 1785, the forerunner of the lifeboat. In 1786 he converted a coble, a type of fishing boat, into an unsinkable lifeboat for Bamburgh. Making it the first known unsinkable

lifeboat and Bamburgh Castle the first lifeboat station of the time. In 1789 Henry Francis Greathead was asked to build a purpose-built lifeboat, from a design by South Shield's private Law House committee. To this he added his own modifications, named the design 'Original', and became known as the inventor of the lifeboat. This first lifeboat remained in service until 1830. The only surviving 'Original' class lifeboat is the *Zetland*, built in 1802 and operational until 1880, she saved over 500 lives.

Sir William Hillary's vision for a service dedicated to saving lives at sea became a reality in Bishopsgate's trendy London Tavern on 4th March 1824. King George IV granted the Royal prefix to the Institution's name, making it the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck. On 5th October 1854, the name changed to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The same year the first cork lifejacket was invented and issued to RNLI crews. In 1904 this was replaced by the Kapak lifejacket, then in 1972 by the modern Beaufort lifejacket.

The first Dover station was established in September 1837 by the by the Dover Humane and Shipwreck Institution. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution contributed towards the cost of the next boat, built in 1853 from its plans. In 1857 the RNLI took over operational control from the Dover Humane and Shipwreck Institution using the same type of lifeboats. In 1864 they introduced a slightly larger



Model of the 'Original'

lifeboat, the *Royal Wiltshire*, the first Dover lifeboat to be named, and the first to save lives in the harbour. This was followed, in 1878, by the *Henry William Pickersgill*, 1888 the *Lewis Morice* and from 1901 to 1914 the *Mary Hamer Hoyle*.

Dover's station closed in 1914 owing to difficulties in recruiting crew during the war years. It briefly reopened as a steam lifeboat station between 1919 and 1922, operating with the *James Stevens No 3*, and did not reopen until 1930. From 1930 to 1940 the *Sir William Hillary* was in service. This was Dover's first motor powered lifeboat and cost £18,446. Named and launched from the Wellington dock slipway, by HRH Edward Prince of Wales, on 10th July 1930, it was in service until taken over by the Admiralty and re-fitted. A relief lifeboat the *Agnes Cross* was used until 1941 when the station closed owing to WWII. Dover re-opened in 1949 with the *South Africa* being on station, replaced by the Waveney class *Faithful Forrester* in 1967. On 25th November 1956, the Dover lifeboat made history. With a BBC team on board, they had been filming on the South Goodwin lightship, the lifeboat received a distress signal from a fishing boat. The lifeboat answered the call, and the BBC crew filmed the rescue. That Sunday the BBC broke into their transmission and viewers were able to watch a real live rescue taking place, in high winds and heavy seas, in the Channel.



1985 *Princess Margaret* hovercraft after hitting Dover's southern breakwater

Another notable rescue took place when, at 4.26pm on 30th March 1985. The hovercraft, *Princess Margaret*, carrying 370 passengers and 18 crew, was entering the port through the western entrance, in high seas, heavy drizzle and a force 7 south-westerly wind. She hit the southern breakwater and ripped a 50-foot hole in her starboard side. The Dover relief lifeboat, the A.J.R. and L.G. Uridge, attended, saving many passengers.

On 15th March 1997, the Severn class 17-09 *City of London II* arrived, the largest class in the fleet, and remains on station to this day. It can self-right in six seconds, has a crew of seven and can carry over 100 rescued people. It takes, on average, two years to train a crew member. The coxswain and mechanic are the only paid members, the remainder of the crew are volunteers. Another thirty, important, volunteers keep the station running, raise funds and organise the shop.

The audience were then shown a recent rescue, recorded on body cams, of a family of five being rescued from a small inflatable. They were all hyperthermic, with the father and eighteen-year-old daughter the most affected. At one stage she was in danger of dying. They were all safely landed at Dover and later all made a full recovery.

During the question-and-answer session it emerged that crew had been insulted and threatened because they have been called out to rescue illegal immigrants. These 'idiots' should be reminded that the lifeboat will rescue anyone who is in a dangerous situation at sea. No matter what age or colour they are the crew will risk their lives to save all. All lifeboat crews and volunteers should be congratulated for the tremendous service they provide.

# Admiral Terence Thornton Lewin Baron Lewin of Greenwich

19th November 1920 – 23rd January 1999

Reported by Alan Lee

Sunday 19th November 2023 saw the unveiling of the eighteenth Dover Society plaque on what would have been the 103rd birthday of Baron Lewin of Greenwich. Originally planned as a series of ten plaques to mark the millennium in 2000, from a suggestion, by Terry Sutton MBE, a founding member of the society, they are now known simply as the Dover Society Blue Plaques.

Over thirty-five people gathered outside Moray House, now the Presbytery, of St Paul's Roman Catholic Church, 103 Maison Dieu Road, Dover for the unveiling. The Society would like to thank the Parish Priest, Father Leo Illah CSSp, the present occupier of the property, and the Diocese of Southwark for granting permission in siting the plaque.

The unveiling commenced with the piping *On Board* by a contingent of Sea Cadets followed by an initial introduction and

welcome by Jenny Olpin, Chair of the Dover Society. Martyn Webster, Dover Society executive member for plaques, then gave a short history and background to today's recipient. The plaque was then unveiled by Sue Roe, daughter of Baron Lewin, accompanied by her daughter and two grandchildren. Words of blessing were given by the Parish Priest, Father Leo Illah. The piping of *Still* by the Sea Cadets then concluded the ceremony.

All people at the unveiling were then invited into the church hall for tea, coffee and light refreshments served by a willing group of church volunteers. The Society wishes to thank all who helped on the day.

Terence Thornton Lewin was born on 19th November 1920 at Moray House, the home of his maternal grandparents John and Cecelia Falconer. The house was built for them in the late 1800's and named after Morayshire, Cecilia's place of birth.



Sea Cadets, Lord Lewin Pre Plaque Unveiling



Words of blessing from Father Leo Illah

Terence was the son of their daughter Margaret who married Eric Lewin a postmaster. Not long after he was born Terence and his parents moved to Tonbridge where he was educated at the Judd school, becoming head prefect. He excelled at athletics and rugby and would later represent the Royal Navy in both.

He joined the Navy as a cadet in 1939 and on the outbreak of war was posted to the cruiser *HMS Belfast*, then two months later to the battleship *HMS Valiant*. In October 1941 he transferred to the destroyer *HMS Highlander* and then in January 1942 transferred to the destroyer *HMS Ashanti* to the end of the war. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 1st July 1942. During 1942, aboard *HMS Ashanti*, he took part in Operation Pedestal, in August, to relieve Malta and in November the allied landings in North Africa. Then followed a further eighteen months of Arctic convoys before taking part in the Normandy landings in June 1944. He was mentioned in despatches three times and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1942 for saving many lives when the destroyer *HMS Somali* was hit by a torpedo.

In 1944, Lewin married Jane Branch-Evans; they had three children Timothy, Susan and Jonathon.

Lewin assumed command of the destroyer *HMS Corunna* in 1955 at the age of 35. Spells at sea interspersed with a variety of shore-bound staff appointments followed and in 1957, as a commander, he became executive officer on the royal yacht Britannia. In 1961, promoted captain, he took charge of the Dartmouth (naval college) Training Squadron, including two frigates.

He was appointed Member, Royal Victorian Order (M.V.O.) in 1958. Knight

Commander, Order of the Bath (K.C.B.) in 1973, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet between 1973 and 1975. He held the office of Flag Aide-de-Camp to HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1975. He gained the rank of Admiral of the Fleet. Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Home Command between 1975 and 1977, he was appointed Knight Grand Cross, Order of the Bath (G.C.B.) in 1976. He held the office of First and Principal Aide-de-Camp to HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1977 and the office of First Sea Lord between 1977 and 1979. He held the office of Chief of the Defence Staff in 1979 and through the Falklands war of 1982.

He was created Baron Lewin, of Greenwich in Greater London [U.K. Life Peer] on 19th November 1982. Appointed Knight, Order of the Garter (K.G.) in 1983. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) by City University, London and awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) by Greenwich University, Greenwich, London in 1993. He gained the rank of Life Colonel Commandant in 1995 in the Royal Marines.

He became Chairman of the Trustees of the National Maritime Museum, President of the Society for Nautical Research, a Liveryman of the Skinners' Company and of the Shipwrights' Company and an elder brother of Trinity House.

He died at his home at Ufford in Suffolk on 23rd January 1999.



Baron Lewin Coat of Arms

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# Terry Sutton MBE 1929–2024

**Derek Leach**

Well known Dovorian and Dover Society member, Terry Sutton, moved in January from his beloved Dover to Gloucester to live close to his daughter, Josephine. Sadly, after only a couple of weeks mainly spent in hospital, Terry died on 3rd February.



*Terry Sutton MBE*

Terry's career as a local journalist for sixty years means that there is little Terry does not know about everything and everyone in Dover, but what can be said about him? I am sure everybody has a story to tell about this cheeky chappy, but here is the official version!

Terry was born in Dover in 1929, the son of Norman Sutton, reporter and later, editor of the Dover Express. He went to Barton Road School and on the outbreak of war Terry was packed off to a safer place in Kent before joining Barton Road pupils in Wales, transferring later to the evacuated County School. With the end of shelling in 1944 the school returned to Dover with Terry proudly wearing his army cadet uniform.

1947 saw Terry called up for National Service straight from school. Demobbed in 1949 and, much against his father's wishes, Terry began his long career with the Dover Express. During his career that ended in 1994 when Terry reached sixty-five, he rose from cub reporter to chief reporter, newsroom editor, deputy editor and finally associate editor. Not having tired of reporting, Terry continued part time and then as a freelance reporter.

Despite the long hours of work and many evening attendances at council meetings, court hearings and other events, Terry contributed in so many ways to the life of the town. This included the Channel Swimming Association, which meant that Terry spent many uncomfortable hours accompanying swimmers in an open boat. When Ray Warner and others started the

annual Dover Film Festival, Terry wrote many of the scripts and also narrated. He was an early member of the League of Friends of Dover Hospital, the Dover History Society and Guide Dogs for the Blind as well as a founder director of Town Centre Management, founder trustee of St. Martin's Emmaus and a patron of the Roman Painted House. He was also a member of the Rotary Club of Dover, the White Cliffs Country Tourism Association, St. Mary's Parochial Church Council and Christians Together in Dover.

Terry was a member of the New Dover Group and joined its successor, The Dover Society, when it was formed in 1988. He was an active and valued member, Chairman for three years and served on the Executive Committee as well as being the Society's press officer until 2023.

Terry's incredible contribution to journalism and to his home town was recognised; firstly in 1991 when he was appointed a Member of the British Empire and later as an Honorary Freeman of Dover in 2011. The Dover Society elected him as a Vice President. We shall miss you Mr. Dover.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## To be Presented at The Dover Society Annual General Meeting 2024

**Jenny Olpin - Chairman**

The Dover Society is continuing to engage with a range of issues and agencies to meet our objectives. Do please revisit these objectives which are listed inside the front cover in our Newsletter. Our Vice Chair Graham Margery, President Derek Leach and I have frequent meetings with Dover District Council (DDC) officers which enable us to keep informed as to local developments and to discuss current initiatives. In addition to this engagement, we have been busy promoting the Society at the Dover Regatta and Urban Fete and have this year purchased a gazebo to protect us in both the rain and sunshine!

The Society has over many years been working to conserve and protect the environment at Cowgate cemetery. However, this is now proving a challenge as our volunteers are depleting in number. We are pleased that support is now being given by DDC with the grass-cutting maintenance. If you have an interest in helping our much-reduced team at Cowgate cemetery, then please do contact us. Fresh air and good company are assured.

We have been pleased to install two blue plaques during this year. In Temple Ewell we erected a plaque to commemorate the life of Laura Bomford, an artist (Paris Salon), the first female Kent County Councillor, Justice of the Peace, and a leader of the Dover Suffragette movement. Secondly, we installed a plaque on the St Paul's Church Priest's House, commemorating The Lord Lewin, Admiral of the Fleet, who was born in Dover in 1920. Our Executive Committee will be discussing our next allocation of a blue plaque over the coming year, ready for installation in 2025.

The Environment Committee now has a hybrid approach to meetings, including a WhatsApp group. They are busy mapping 'trees of interest' and also particularly focussing on the extremely neglected lampposts at the eastern end of the sea front. I am extremely grateful to our member Micheal Jukes for his continuing hard work in gaining some resolution with these much-neglected lights. This team have, amongst many other things, persisted in challenging the provision and quality of toilets in our town. We have been pleased with the upgrading of those at Stembrook but continue to seek an increase in availability.

The Society Planning Committee meet monthly at The Beacon and have been engaged with the plans for the Fastrack bus route. Earlier in the year they were involved with the issue of air raid shelters, which highlighted the lack of recording of such locations. The council's Local Plan remains a current focus for the team, and they continue to represent us with planning for the Beacon Development at Bench Street. Our planning team have developed a strong relationship with the Dover District Council planning department and have regular meetings and email contact that results in constructive dialogue that is welcomed by all participants. The Dover Society also has a strong relationship with the Dover Town Council Planning Group.

To commemorate the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the Society are commissioning a Queen Elizabeth Maple tree in Pencester Gardens. This is a work in progress, and we are hoping for its completion this year.



The Society also continues to take every opportunity possible to raise the problems with lorries being held at Aycliffe during Port delays. It is not only the noise and inconvenience that is very apparent, but the potential health issues.

We have been pleased to support our member Peter Sherrard in seeking support for obtaining possible city status for Dover. The opportunity to apply for this requires a national occasion and currently this is not available. However, Peter's hard work is in place for when that opportunity arises and is now held with The Society.

Our regular meetings continue with Kent Police, who are now well embedded back in the Ladywell station. Our discussion covers a range of issues, so just a reminder that if there is anything you wish us to raise with the Chief Inspector then do let us know but please remember that parking is the responsibility of Dover District Council, not the police.

Socially, we had a very successful summer trip to Windsor and the Thames. Our quiz night, in February, and our monthly winter open meetings attract both new and old members, as well as non-members. We offer a range of interesting speakers with topics that have

included The Duke of York's Royal Military School, The Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Dover's Sky at Night. Over 80 members enjoyed our Christmas lunch, once again held at the Marina Hotel.

The future of The Dover Society is assured as we recruit not only new members but also new members for our Planning and Environment Committees. We are committed to promoting and protecting the wellbeing, development, heritage, safety and natural environment of Dover in partnership with our local authorities and charities.

We have been saddened by the loss of Terry Sutton. We will very much miss his contribution to our executive meetings where he would regularly share his experience and knowledge, correcting us when necessary and allowing no room for 'small talk'!

Finally, my sincere thanks to my fellow officers and to all those who help with the social events, trips, campaigning, projects, recruitment, Newsletter and website, and represent us at the many meetings throughout the town. The Dover Society has a respected 'voice' in Dover so do come and join us as we collectively work towards making our home a 'very nice place to live'!

## **AGM**

### **A reminder to all members**

The Annual General Meeting this year will be held in St Mary's Parish Centre, Dover at 7.30pm on Monday 15th April 2024.

All resolutions for discussion and nominations for officers and committee members must be received by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. They should be supported by a proposer and seconder and nominations must include the written consent of the potential candidate, then submitted in writing to,

The Secretary: Carol Duffield, 46 Friars Way, Dover. CT16 2DW

Tel: 07855 045650. Email: [cddoversociety@gmail.com](mailto:cddoversociety@gmail.com)

*As this is the last of the winter meetings until October and the most important meeting of the year all members are urged to attend.*

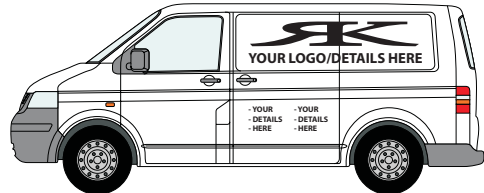


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# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Ann Burke

## \*Time to Renew Subscriptions\*

It seems to come around very quickly, renewal time. You can renew at our AGM on April 15th, in cash, or cheques made out to 'The Dover Society'.

Many members now renew by Direct Debit, or BACS, straight into the Society's bank account at Barclay's Bank, Dover. The account details are The Dover Society, sort code 20-02-62, account no. 80864803. Please use your name and/or your membership number as a reference. If renewing this way you might consider setting up a standing order which will avoid the need for future reminders. Our membership fee remains at £6 for one person and £10 for joint membership (two members living at the same address). You will receive three newsletters each year and each new member will receive a free membership badge. A bargain indeed in these expensive times.

### Looking Forward

How nice it is to see the daylight lasting longer each day; only a few minutes but still, it is lighter for longer. Those of us who garden can at last start planning seed sowing and planting, when the ground thaws that is. New colour to look forward to.

### New Members

We would like to welcome the following as members since the July Newsletter. Jennifer Bell of Devon, Barrington and Margaret Johns of Walmer, Francesca Jones of Folkestone, Mr R Mouland of Folkestone, Mr Peter O'Sullivan of

Ramsgate, Rev Polly Mason of St Margaret's, Monica Russell of St Margaret's and Dr Markus Reed of River. From Dover we have Suzanne Holloway and Linda Barks, Phil Rose and Ros Mcintyre, Brian and Celia Walters, Carole Barret, Marion Beatty, Fazlin Blakemore, Kenneth Chapman, Susan Hill, Julia Moore and Ashley Payne.

Sadly, we have heard of the passing of Mrs Merril Lilley, Miss June Nott, Mrs Jennifer Simmonds, Mr Terry Sutton and Mrs Nina Woolhouse. All were long-term members of the Dover Society. We send our condolences and sympathy to all their families and friends of these former members.

Please think about letting The Dover Society have your email address. Jeremy Cope sends emails to members covering upcoming exhibitions, concerts, talks and lots of other interesting events that you may not otherwise know about. It is a great resource for us all. We do not pass any of your details, including your email, to anyone, without your permission.

A New Year is upon us, and may I wish you a happy and prosperous one, all be a little late.

In West Yorkshire, where I come from, my grandma always brought a piece of coal for New Year's Day. I wonder if there are any local Kent or Dover traditions that you remember?

# Convict Stephen John Riggs

Patricia Allen

In the 18th century, there was a growing opposition to the death penalty for all but the most serious of crimes. Penal Transportation was the relocation of convicted felons to far-off lands in the British Colonies such as America, Australia and Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). It removed the offender from society and was thought more merciful than capital punishment.

In the period of the Industrial Revolution there was a huge surge in petty crime due to the economic hardships and unemployment caused by machinery replacing the work of men and women.

Stealing sometimes became the only means of survival for some people, and the prisons became overcrowded, especially after transportation to America ended in 1783 with the War of Independence.

Old prison ships known as hulks which were decommissioned war ships, were anchored in the Thames, at Portsmouth and Plymouth and were soon overflowing with convicts. The prisoners were shackled in chains at night, released at dawn and forced into doing hard physical labour.

In 1785, transportation to Australia commenced and convicted criminals were sent to penal colonies for periods of seven or fourteen years, or for life. They were transferred overseas in ships in the most appalling conditions, the journey taking months. Many died on the journey due to the unhygienic conditions, overcrowding, disease and hunger.

Once overseas, the convicts were set to work in gangs building roads, breaking

rocks, or if they were lucky, they were assigned to a free settler to work for him as a servant or farm labourer. Females worked as house servants or in a workhouse prison factory. Punishment was harsh, good behaviour could earn you an early ticket of release. Once free, many of the ex-prisoners settled in Australia and made a new life for themselves.

Guilty prisoners from East Kent who were sentenced to transportation were usually sent to Van Diemen's Land. Between 1830 and 1853 it became the main penal colony of Australia, changing its name to Tasmania in 1856. There is a town 83kms south of Hobart called Dover which was originally established as a convict probation facility from 1844 to 1848. Today it is a beautiful small fishing port, with idyllic cottages and English trees. It has a flourishing apple orchard business and successful fishing industry of salmon, abalone and crayfish. Between 1787 and 1868, more than 160,000 convicts, whose crimes ranged from picking pockets to murder, were transported overseas to serve out their sentences in the British Empire's most remote colony of Australia.



*Limekiln Street Dover*

Here is the pitiful story of one such unfortunate young man from the town of Dover, Kent, who crossed the oceans to serve out his punishment, undergoing the most extraordinary hardships and conditions.

Stephen John Riggs was baptised on the 10th July 1818 in the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin near the Market Square in Dover. His father was Charles Riggs, born and baptised in Lydd, Kent on the 23rd September 1785 his mother Jane. The family, with their three older children, Jane, born 1809, Charles Benjamin, born 1813 and William, born in 1817, were residing at 40 Limekiln Street, where his father Charles carried out his trade as a greengrocer. In early 1836, Stephen, who was employed as a fisherman, was charged with obtaining three score of whiting and half a score of plaice under false pretences and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. On the 29th April 1836 at the Kent Assizes, eighteen-year-old Stephen was found guilty of stealing a quantity of rope which he had cut from a fishing vessel, leaving the boat adrift in the harbour, and stealing the lifeline which was kept on the North Pier in case of disaster. He had sold these goods to a local marine store in the town. Stephen was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour. The 13th October 1837 saw nineteen-year-old Stephen back at the Kent Assizes being charged with fraud and found guilty, receiving another twelve months' prison sentence. On the 4th October 1839, at the Dover Borough Sessions, Stephen, now twenty-years-old, was charged with stealing a gabardine coat, the property of William Worringham. The prosecutor stated that he saw the prisoner asleep under the clock on the pier wearing his gabardine coat, which he had lost earlier that day, after having been laid on the beach to dry. The accused, Stephen

Riggs, protested that he had bought the garment off a young lad called Perkins who had charged him six pence. The jury returned a guilty verdict. The learned Recorder addressed the prisoner, and said that, on passing a lenient sentence on a previous occasion, he had distinctly promised the prisoner that if he were to be before him again, he should have to inflict a severe penalty upon him. He now had no choice but to sentence him to be transported for seven years. On hearing this news Stephen turned to his prosecutor and said, "Worringham, if I come back, I will mark you, for I am not guilty.... this time!"

On Friday, the 11th October 1839, Stephen John Riggs was removed to the *Fortitude* convict ship moored in Chatham Dockyard to begin his seven-year sentence. On the 18th July 1840, prisoner Stephen John Riggs, aged 21, a labourer who could read, was disposed of to Bermuda from the convict ship *Horatio*. Although it was one of the smallest penal colonies it was also the deadliest, with the warm conditions in the confined quarters being lethal for the spread of diseases. The prisoners were mostly contained on prison hulks moored in the Naval Dockyard. During the day they were freed to undertake massive public works, clearing land, or quarrying through the vast scale of hard limestone



*HMS Fortitude*

rock under the direction of the Admiralty. It was extremely hard labour.

No ex-convicts were granted the right to settle in Bermuda after their sentence had expired. Thus in 1846 we find that Stephen Riggs has been brought back to his hometown of Dover after his seven-year penal sentence has been completed.

On Friday 16th October 1846, at Dover Borough Sessions, twenty-seven-year-old Stephen John Riggs, who was lately returned from a sentence of transportation, was charged with felony. He had been drinking at the Dover Castle Tap, 15 Middle Row, Dover, that Sunday morning and, later in the day, in a state of intoxication, he had plundered some boats in the harbour, breaking into the brig *Chance* and the smack *Stedfast*. He broke into their cabins and stole numerous items of clothing including, a jacket and two shirts. The Recorder observed that he recalled previously sentencing Riggs to seven years penal sentence and, realising he did not want it repeated, felt it was his duty to pass a sentence of transportation for life. Riggs, on being removed from court, thanked the Recorder, saying, "It's the best thing you could have done, as you have made a man of me!"

Stephen John Riggs was received at Millbank Prison, London, on the 16th November 1846, where he remained in separate confinement until the 17th July 1847. Then he was sent to the *Stirling Castle* hulk at Portsmouth where he remained until the 24th January 1849, when he was sent back to Millbank Prison. On the 2nd of June 1849 he was removed yet again to Pentonville Prison and was again in to separate confinement. He was still confined in a solitary cell on the 14th July 1849, when he wrote a plea to the Right Honourable George Grey, Secretary

of State for the Home Department:

*"I hope your honor will take my sad case in consideration and release me from my present confinement to the Public Works for I can usher you for haven any hand or act in tring to breach a mutiny in the ship, it was the last of my thorts. I beg that you will do something for me as you are the only gentelman that can render me from the confinement wich I am placed in at present.*

*I remain youre humbel and obedient  
prisoner*

*Stephen John Riggs Prisoner No. 2342  
Pentonville Prison.*

Stephen John Riggs remained in solitary confinement until the 22nd September 1849. Then, on the 12th December 1849, he left England for Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land on board the convict ship *Eliza*, a 511-ton merchant ship built in British India in 1806. There were sixty convicts onboard and also men who had been discharged from the British Army, along with their wives and children, who were starting a new life in the Colony. There were also seven members of the Royal Marines with their families and eight members of the 99th Regiment of Foot, who were rejoining their Regiment.

The ship's surgeon, John Andrews, kept a medical journal of the voyage. Here is a short extract... *"Thirty-three prisoners were embarked from Pentonville Prison and 18 from Millbank Prison. These were for the most part men worn long by confinement and severe punishments. All being men of desperate and very bad character they were immediately on their arrival on board confined below in the prison cells - four cells for 15 prisoners each. These cells were very dark, close and hardly ventilated so that the men within a very short time were faint and giddy for the want of air. Most of them were quickly attacked with fits of an hysterical,*

*epileptic character and I had to quickly get them on deck as soon as possible.*" They were in transit for nearly five months, reaching Norfolk Island on the 30th April 1850. There were four deaths recorded.

Meanwhile back in England Stephen John Riggs' mother Jane had died, aged fifty-eight and was buried in St. Mary's Parish churchyard on the 20th September 1849.

In 1851, his widowed father Charles, aged sixty-seven, was still residing at 40 Limekiln Street and running his shop with the help of his married daughter Jane, who was now living with him, with her husband and two children. Charles died aged seventy-one and was buried alongside his wife in St. Mary's Parish churchyard on the 8th November 1855.

On the 30th June 1855, Stephen John Riggs was assigned to work for Captain John Bleach at a pilot station on the Island of Bruny, which is off the south-eastern coast of Tasmania. The station was built by convict labour and was established in 1831 until 1854. It was responsible for guiding ships into the river Derwent and providing safe anchorage at Hobart. The convict labour on the island built St. Peter's Church and the oldest lighthouse in the southern hemisphere, the Cape Bruny Lighthouse, built in 1836.

Tickets-of-leave permitted convicts to live and work for their own wages within a certain Police District. They were usually given to convicts with good behaviour who had served a particular amount of their time.

In March 1862, in *The Tasmania Reports of Crime*, the following statement was issued: *"The undermentioned ticket of leave holder Stephen John Riggs has failed to report himself in the month of December last at the*

*Police Office of the district in which he was recently released. His Excellency the Administrator has directed that his ticket of leave shall be revoked. This convict is now illegally at large."* Then in the month of June: *"A reward of £2 will be paid for the apprehension of the convict Stephen John Riggs."* On the 12th June 1862, this report appeared in *The Tasmania Reports of Crime*: *"A ticket of leave absconder Stephen John Riggs has been apprehended by the City of Hobart Municipal Police."* Then on 21st March 1864 in *The Tasmania Reports of Crime*, the following: *"Stephen John Riggs received from Port Arthur and discharged to freedom."*

Certificates of freedom were issued at the end of a sentence or granted on the basis of good behaviour.

Our man, Stephen John Riggs, now forty-six-years-old, had spent more than half his life in penal servitude. He did not return to his homeland and his hometown of Dover.

I like to hope he reflected on all his past mistakes and failures and made the best of the rest of his life, living out his years in Tasmania comfortably and contentedly. For a freed convict, life in Australia could be a land of opportunities.

But what is practically certain is that Stephen John Riggs left his mark in the colony. In Tasmania today, wherever you go, you see roads, buildings and bridges from the early colonial years and you can be certain that a convict was engaged in its construction.

After several reforms, new laws and legislation, the Penal Transportation system was finally abolished in 1868. It is interesting to note that one fifth of the Australian population are descendants of transported convicts.

# Speakers Day 2023

**Martyn Webster**

It was the annual Speaker's Day of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports on Saturday 7th October 2023. This year it fell to Dover to host the proceedings which are on a seven-year rotation between the five ports and two ancient towns, and so the office of Speaker is currently held by the Town Mayor of Dover, Cllr Sue Jones. The honour returns to Dover in 2030.

A colourful procession of officers, mayors, dignitaries and invited guests, many resplendently clad in red and trimmed robes, tricorne hats, wigs and gowns hung with mayoral chains and shoulder borne civic maces, assembled at St. Mary's Parish Centre. From here they moved off to the Market Square to join up with the remainder of the participants.

At 12 o'clock, a peal of bells from St Mary's Church was the signal for the procession to move off from the Market Square. Headed by a Scots piper, flanked by sea cadets, guides and scouts they followed behind a lifelike puppet creation depicting a channel swimmer. This eclectic parade processed via the underpass to the Esplanade, where a ceremony of "Thank You/Recognition to the Sea" was movingly conducted by the Rev. Catherine Tucker, the Dover Mayor's Chaplain. Pride of place was taken by the Town Sergeant bearing the Silver Oar, symbol



*Speakers Day 2023*

of the Lord Warden, whose post is currently vacant after the death of Lord Boyce, and whose replacement is anxiously awaited by a process described as "discernment". Present in his place was the Deputy Constable of Dover Castle, in full uniform, literally the Lord Warden's deputy.

A fine Mayors/VIP lunch, suitably addressed by Dover's Mayor, Sue Jones, was then served at the Dover Patrol Restaurant in surroundings which gave a superb panoramic view of Dover Harbour, perfected by a display by the two Dover Harbour tugs, choreographed with fire hoses.

The Dover Society was represented by Chairman Jenny Olpin and executive members Carol Duffield and Martyn Webster, who were in thrall to Freeman of the Borough Terry Sutton, Jeremy Cope (accompanied by his wife Sheila), Pat Sherratt and Adeline Reidy, all wearing their exquisite badges and sashes.

This was truly a unique historic and memorable occasion to savour in our minds in beautiful warm weather with clear visibility, which made all the difference.

Only to be greatly regretted was the fact that there had been next to no advance public advertisement given to it. To have done so would have alerted the good folk of Dover, especially the younger ones, to the depth of tradition, heritage and civic pride which this ceremony engenders. This is our loss, but all the better for those few who happened to be present in the streets at the time and were able to benefit from this great age-old spectacle.

The next Speaker's Day will be hosted in 2024 in Sandwich.





# Application for Membership

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Please make cheques payable to the Dover Society and send to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Ann Burke, 20 Victoria Street, Dover CT17 0EL. If you prefer to pay by bank transfer or standing order the details are: The Dover Society, account no. 80864803, Barclays Bank, Dover, sort code 20-02-62

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You can change your preferences or withdraw consent at any time by contacting us at: secretary@thedoversociety.co.uk.

I consent to my data being held and used in this way by The Dover Society.  (\*Please tick box) If you have a preference for how we contact you, please let us know.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

## Practical Help

I/We could sometimes give practical help with the following (please tick relevant sections)

Social events  Writing for newsletter  Projects e.g. clearance, surveys

Photography  Any other interests or expertise .....

**The Dover Society**  
**Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting**  
**7.30pm Monday 17th April 2023**  
**At St Mary's Parish Centre**

1. Apologies; Sheila Cope, Alan Sencicle, John Morgan.
2. Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Carried unanimously.
3. Matters arising. There were none.
4. The Chairman's report – Jenny Olpin
- 4a. Those present stood and observed a minute's silence in memory of those members who had died in the past year. Names reported in the Newsletter over the year.
- 4b. Chairman's update to the report included in the March 2023 Newsletter.
- 4c. The Society plaque to commemorate Lord Lewin is to be situated on the Priests' House next to St Paul's Church.
- 4d. The Executive is maintaining its regular meetings with local authorities with several taking place in the last month.
- 4e. Members are urged to get involved and to be active within the Society.
5. Appointment of President – Derek Leach.

Chair spoke to the meeting setting out the tremendous contribution Derek had made to the Society and to Dover. She spoke of his great love of the town and its history including the books he had written about Dover. The meeting was then asked to confirm the appointment of Derek Leach as Society President. Carried unanimously.

6. Treasurer's Report – Jane Jones

This is Jane Jones first report as Treasurer. The year has a small deficit of £128 due to exceptional cost of two blue plaques (£1340). Other matters include a drop in subscriptions (those that have not renewed over the year are being contacted). There were no outings and the deficit for the Society's evening meetings was slightly less this year. Newsletter deficit increased, due in part to postage. Thanks, given to Jean Marsh for bringing in £489 from advertisers. Administration costs show an increase due in part to room hire for committees. Interest received from CAF accounts remained derisory and these accounts have been closed and funds transferred to Barclays. Donations made were £412 and received £105. Gift aid was slightly up at £595. Jane emphasised the importance of members signing up for this. Miscellaneous costs, including wreaths for Memorial Day services, totalled £224. The Treasurer then described the various funds; Projects (included a generous donation of £500), Publications, Town Hall Fund, and funds held for River Dour Partnership and Bluebird Trail. The Treasurer's report and financial statement. (subject to audit) were accepted.

7. Election of Officers

Chairman Jenny Olpin, (proposed Derek Leach, seconded Jeremy Cope). Carried unanimously.  
 Treasurer Jane Jones, (proposed Mike Weston, seconded Jenny Olpin). Carried unanimously.  
 Vice Chairman (Acting), Graham Margery (proposed Jenny Olpin, seconded Derek Leach). Carried unanimously.  
 Hon. Secretary, Carol Duffield (proposed Jeremy Cope, seconded Jenny Olpin). Carried unanimously.

8a. Election of the Executive Committee

Executive Roles - Ann Burke Membership Secretary, Lyn Smith Winter Social Secretary, Alan Lee Editor, Lesley Easton Environmental, Graham Margery and Ann Burke Planning & Local Government, Jean Marsh Advertising Manager, Alan Lee Web Master, Deborah Gasking Projects and Ecological matters, Martyn Webster Plaques, Alan Sencicle, Patrick Sherratt, Derek Leach, Mike Weston. Executive Members. Carried unanimously.

8b. Non-Executive Roles not subject to election

Terry Sutton Media Officer, Rodney Stone Summer Social Secretary, Jeremy Cope Email Communications, Mike McFarnell Deputy Web Master.

9. Appointment of Audit Committee

John Widgery, John Morgan. Carried unanimously.

## 10. Any Other Business.

Rodney Stone briefed members on the September day trip which includes a Thames boat trip and a visit to the Royal Savile Gardens.

*Then the meeting broke for refreshments followed by drawing of the raffle.  
After the interval the speaker was Andrew Nunn "The Duke of York's Royal Military School".*

## THE DOVER SOCIETY

### 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting: 7.30pm Monday 15th April 2024 At St Mary's Parish Centre

Resolutions for discussion and nominations for officers and committee members should be submitted to Carol Duffield, 46 Friars Way, Dover CT16 2WD, cddoversociety@gmail.com, by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Nominations should be supported by a proposer and seconder and the written consent of the potential candidate.

#### AGENDA

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- 3) Matters Arising
- 4) Chairman's update. Report included in the March 2024 Newsletter
- 5) Treasurer's Report
- 6) Election of Officers

*Chairman to stand down for election of new Chairman, to be supervised by  
Vice-Chairman or another Executive Member.*

- 6a) Chairman                    Jenny Olpin (proposed Alan Lee and seconded by Carol Duffield)  
*The elected Chairman to take control of the meeting. Named Executive posts be voted on followed by the  
Committee. Any other dominations received by the deadline will be added to the list for a vote.*
- 6b) Hon. Treasurer            Jane Jones (proposed Alan Lee and seconded by Jenny Olpin)
- 6c) Vice Chairman            Graham Margery (proposed by Jenny Olpin and seconded by Derek Leach)
- 6d) Hon. Secretary            Carol Duffield (proposed by Jenny Olpin and seconded by Alan Lee)
- 6e) Election of the Executive Committee  
Existing members willing to stand have been proposed by Jenny Olpin and seconded by Graham Margery, Ann Burke, Lesley Easton, Deborah Gasking, Derek Leach, Alan Lee, Jean Marsh, Alan Sencicle, Patrick Sherratt, Lyn Smith, Martyn Webster, Mike Weston,
- 6f) Nominations for any other members willing to stand for the Executive Committee  
Paul Wells                    (proposed by Jenny Olpin and seconded by Alan Lee)

The Executive will appoint elected Committee members to fill the following roles at the earliest opportunity. Until that time existing holders, if elected, will remain in post.

Membership Secretary, Editor, Advertising Secretary, Environment Planning & Local Government, Ecological Projects, Minutes Secretary, Web Master, Plaques, Winter Social Secretary, Summer Social Secretary. Non-Executive Roles will be appointed by the Executive Committee if and when required.

- 7) Appointment of Audit Committee  
John Widgery and John Morgan
- 8) Any Other Business

*The meeting will then break for refreshments followed by the drawing of the raffle.  
After the interval, the speaker will be Josianne Murrel on "Alkham Valley Community Project".*

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# The Lindemann Monument

Peter (Jim) Green

On Dover Sea Front, behind a transparent panel set in concrete, is a large rectangular piece of metal known as the Lindemann Monument. Painted on it is an eagle carrying a projectile, flanked by the words 'Es flogen gegen Engeland' and above two lines of winged and numbered shells, each with a date over. How many people, I wonder, have just walked past without pausing to read the inscription below?

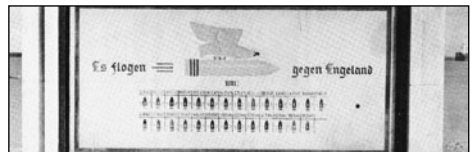
The piece of metal, now rusting somewhat and with the inscriptions beginning to fade, is actually a section of armour plating from one of the German World War Two guns used to bombard Dover and the surrounding area, and the painting is a sort of 'score sheet' recording the number of shells fired on particular days. It was presented to the town of Dover by the Calais Branch of the British Legion in 1954 as a memento of the bombardment. This commenced on the 12th of August 1940, a couple of months after the first enemy bomb fell on the town, and lasted until the 26th of September 1944, during which time 216 civilians were killed, with many more injured, and 957 premises completely destroyed, with 2194 severely damaged.

The armour plating on display came from the Caesar Casement, one of three guns in the Lindemann Battery, situated at Sangatte on the French coast, just west of Calais. Made by Krupp, they were the largest calibre of seventy-three long range heavy guns. Situated in the Pas de Calais region, they were capable of firing their 406mm shells up to a distance of some thirty-five miles across the Channel. The shells each weighed up to 1,323 pounds. The Lindemann Battery, incidentally, was named after the famous Kapitan Lindemann of the battleship Bismarck. The guns were operated by the German Naval Coast Battalion rather than by the army.

Following the Normandy Invasion (D-Day) when it became obvious that the German guns would soon be captured, the crews were instructed to use up all their ammunition, so Dover suffered an intense bombardment from the early days of September 1944, shells falling on just about every day until the guns were captured by the North Shore Regiment of the Canadian Army. During this period 239 dwellings were destroyed and 1,936 damaged. On the 13th of September, a shell fell on Dover Priory railway station, killing several people, including my grandmother who had just returned from visiting her husband in London to where, as a Customs Officer, he had been relocated.

Being only two at the time, I can recall very little of it all. I remember the Anderson shelter buried at the end of the garden and I remember seeing my grandmother once. In later years she seemed similar to the granny in the Giles Cartoons. Strangely, I remember the old gas holder in Union (now Coombe Valley) Road before an enemy parachute mine destroyed it, which, I think, was in 1943. I can't remember the explosion, only the mess it caused when the plaster fell down from the ceiling in my parents' bedroom.

Now, 2024 will be the 80th year since the shelling of Dover finished. I hope that we don't forget it and that it will be commemorated in some form or another, and that the Lindemann Monument will receive some loving care and attention before it is too late for it to be restored.



*The Lindemann Monument, Dover*

# Around Dover Museum

## Swimming the Channel with a Rolex

Vronni Ward – Dover Museum

“I passionately love the sea; nothing else moves me as it does. I love and understand its mood; and I sometimes fancy that the sea knows and understands me, too.”

Regular readers will know I really admire strong women and there is probably no one stronger than Mercedes Gleitze (1900-1981) the subject of this article. She was phenomenal: a long-distance swimmer of the first order, the original ‘pin -up’ sensation, celebrity endorser and philanthropist. Her life in and out of the water is fascinating.

Her parents moved to Brighton where there was a growing German immigrant community. Her father was a baker and her mother taught languages. It was in Brighton that Mercedes learnt to swim at a young age. She adored the English culture and was most comfortable here. Born in the UK, during her childhood she went back to Germany twice, first as an infant for nine years and second when WWII broke out. At the end of the war Mercedes wanted to return to the land of her birth. However, her family was traditional and felt Mercedes' place should remain in the home. Her determination and fearlessness then manifested itself at the tender age of seventeen with her running away, sleeping in cornfields and eating bread and butter. However, she didn't get far and was repatriated with her parents. They finally agreed that she could work and therefore she saved for her ticket back to England.

In London she worked as a secretary and stenographer and during that time she became more aware of poverty and homelessness. This prompted her interest

in helping people less fortunate than herself. She also practiced long distance swimming in the river Thames on her days off. In 1923 she broke the British Ladies' Record for Thames Swimming (10hrs 45mins) and in 1927 she completed a 120-mile course from Westminster Bridge down the Thames and around the headland to Folkestone.

When on holiday she would come down to Folkestone and practice sea swimming. On 7th October, 1927, after eight attempts, she became the first British woman to swim the English Channel. During the days that followed, her record was in doubt as another woman, Mona McLennan, claimed to have swum it faster. Subsequently, this was proved to be a fabrication, but it marred Mercedes' victory. Under pressure from the media, she undertook a ‘vindication swim’ even though the conditions were bad, and she had to abandon it. Nevertheless this convinced the judges that her record should stand. During that swim she wore a



*Mercedes Gleitze*

2024 © Copyright National Portrait Gallery

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.

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# Rotary's Successful 'Celebration of Christmas'

Jenny Olpin (with Peter Sherred)

"A wonderful atmospheric evening in the most beautiful of places;" "A brilliant evening full of Christmas joy;" "It was a pleasure to be involved." Just three out of the many comments that followed an event on the evening of 21st December, when the Channel Cluster of Rotary clubs provided a 'Celebration of Christmas' at St Mary-in-Castro, Dover Castle, a unique venue which provided a perfect setting for such an event. Advance notice of the event was reported in the Society Newsletter 108 of November 2023 page 35. The church was full, with Rotarians from the various clubs in the cluster together with members of Inner Wheel clubs and the public, all of whom experienced a brilliant evening full of Christmas joy. Distinguished guests at the event included the Chairman of Dover District Council, Councillor Gordon Cowan and the District Governor (DG) Elect of Rotary District 1120, Brian Dunne.

The organising club behind the event was Dover's Rotary Club of South Foreland which has as one of its members, Society member the Reverend Peter Sherred, an Assistant District Governor (ADG) for Rotary District 1120 South East, responsible for the oversight of the Channel Cluster of Rotary clubs stretching from Sandwich in the east to Romney Marsh in the west. In between Deal, South Foreland, Dover, Folkestone, Folkestone Channel and Hythe Rotary Clubs are members of the cluster. Peter is also the current Honorary Coordinating Chaplain of St Mary-in-Castro (see Society Newsletter 108 page 33) a former garrison church, located in the grounds of Dover Castle managed by English Heritage.

Together with his wife Mary, President of the Inner Wheel Club of Dover, Peter, ably supported by members of the South Foreland club, took a leading role in planning the content of the evening, engaging all the cluster Rotary Clubs as well as the Pharos Chamber Choir from

Dover with organist Stephen Yarrow PHF, who also directed the choir at the event. Stephen is Founder/Director of the Pharos Chamber Choir and a former member of the Rotary Club of Dover.

At the commencement of the evening President of Dover's Rotary Club of South Foreland, John Dunkley, a past District Governor of Rotary District 1120 (DG), welcomed everyone to the unique event and thanked his club members and the ADG for promoting the collaboration of the clubs which form the Rotary cluster, and for being willing to assist in the preparations for the evening.

Everyone present was encouraged to participate in and enjoy the evening programme by being prepared to take part in the singing - which they did with enthusiasm! ADG Peter welcomed everyone on behalf of the Church Council and stressed the aim of enjoying the 'Celebration of Christmas' through a combination of religious and secular readings and songs. Everyone had been provided with a souvenir programme each containing the full content of the evening's intentions. The items would flow seamlessly from beginning to end without interruption or announcement. People were urged not to be reticent about enjoying themselves during the event despite being in a church building!

Passages from scripture telling the nativity story, as well as Christmas Bells by Longfellow and TS Eliot's Journey of the Magi were read by representatives from the eight Rotary clubs participating as well as the President of the Inner Wheel Club of Dover. Some of the livelier traditional carols were sung such as Ding Dong Merrily on High and God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, as well as O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, We Three Kings of Orient Are, Angels from the Realms of Glory and the beautiful song When a child is born. A rousing

finale included Jingle bells and We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

Interspersed through the programme the Pharos Chamber Choir, directed by Stephen Yarrow, sang songs with a high quality: including The Little Road to Bethlehem by Michael Head, The Coventry Carol and Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar by Peter Cornelius. Within the beautiful church, with darkness outside, these pieces were especially moving.

Everyone joined in a 'Commitment to Fellowship and Service' which emphasised the value of service as Rotary and other clubs, including Inner Wheel Clubs, strive to help others, not only in their local communities, but nationally and internationally. The evening was an excellent example of Rotary clubs working collaboratively to provide an event open to the public as well as for raising money for charity. Those attending were invited, should they choose, to show their appreciation as they left

the church by providing a voluntary donation. All money so donated would be given to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The audience's appreciation of the evening resulted in donations amounting to an impressive £700 being raised for the RNLI. Members of the Dover RNLI crew were present for the event.

Refreshments were kindly provided in the nearby hall after the event, courtesy of the Church Council. Many people stayed to eat, drink and chat before leaving with a feeling of Christmas good cheer and clutching their souvenir programme. Dover's Rotary Club of South Foreland members had every right to feel satisfied with taking on the daunting task of organising the event. Entertainment, public participation, a good sum raised, and a worthy recipient of the donations were the defining elements of this collaborative event. I was very pleased to attend what was a fine example of what Rotary does best!

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# The Dover Express

Derek Leach

Recently I came across some notes I made from some research into Dover's newspapers and with the departure from Dover of Terry Sutton, a veteran Express reporter, it seems a good time for a Newsletter article. I hope that Terry will forgive me if there are any inaccuracies!

The Express dates from 1858, founded by John Thomas Friend. It operated from 133, Snargate Street, moving to 185 Snargate Street in 1859. The four pages cost one old penny, undercutting the other local newspapers that charged 3d. The first copy contained adverts for Flashmans, upholsterer in Market Place, Dover, John Scott, dyer and cleaner in Snargate Street, Forster's, a chemist in Castle Street, Charlton Mill offering best quality flour at 37s 6d a sack and Dover Races with a racecourse by the castle. News included a report of the Board of Health meeting where it was said there were five hundred places in the borough that were not clean. At the quarterly meeting of the borough council somebody complained that some streetlights were 'like a rushlight in a turnip'. There was also mention of a forthcoming reading of Shakespeare with appropriate music at the Wellington Hall in Snargate Street. Names were given of famous people arriving, staying, or leaving Dover.



Dover Express office in Snargate Street

The weekly cross Channel traffic figures were 803 passengers arrived and 1273 departed.

In 1871 John Bavington Jones purchased the Dover News and Echo, which he then amalgamated with the Dover Express purchased from John Friend, in 1873. For the next seventy-six years John Bavington Jones and his sons, Oliver and Russell ran the paper and saw all its rivals disappear – the Dover Standard, Observer, Chronicle and Telegraph. John died in 1922, Oliver in 1933 and Russell in 1949.

John was born in Shropshire in 1840, the son of a miner who had been killed in a mining accident. John worked at the pit from ten years old to support his mother and sisters. Self-educated he went into journalism in various parts of the country. He accompanied Matthew Webb on the famous first cross Channel swim in 1875 and championed the development of the Kent coal fields. Perhaps John is best known for his untiring research into Dover's history published in books such as *Records of Dover*, *Annals of Dover* and *Dover, A Perambulation*.



John Bavington Jones, wife Phoebe.  
Russell (left) and Oliver (right)

As Honorary Dover Librarian he catalogued the ancient corporation records and was made a Freeman in 1918.

Oliver was born in 1872 and acquired a wide knowledge of Dover and its history, reporting on Dover Council meetings for forty years – surely, he deserved a medal! He excelled at cricket, football, golf and rifle shooting.

Russell, born in 1876, concentrated on the business side of the paper and became joint editor with his father when his brother died. He also had a vast knowledge of local history and played chess for Kent.

Norman Sutton, a keen footballer, cricketer and rifleman succeeded Russell Jones as editor in 1949. A local boy, he attended St. Martin's School and Dover County School. Wounded in France during the First World War, Norman joined the Express in 1919.

During the Second World War twelve bombs and shells fell within one hundred yards of the Express offices in September 1944, but only one issue was late (Saturday instead of Friday) due to a loss of electricity. For long periods during the war the only editorial staff were Norman and Russell. During WW2, the censor would not allow the Express to state where bombs and shells had fallen. Reporters could only say that 'a South Coast town was attacked', but everybody in the town knew. When the censorship ban was lifted from weather reports and forecasting in newspapers, Norman Sutton telephoned Dover's weather to national newspapers. On one occasion Norman was telephoning the weather from a telephone box, but was overheard by an army officer. Thinking he could be a spy, the officer pulled out his revolver and challenged Norman. His explanation was not believed so Norman suggested they went to the police station where he was well-known, causing some amusement!

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 brought about a big change. Instead of adverts filling the front page, they were replaced by bold headlines with reports and photographs. In 1964 it boasted that it had never missed a single weekly issue despite the bombs and shells that fell on Dover during two world wars. From 1964 to 1966 the paper was printed out of Dover for fifteen months, caused by a mighty crash in the machine room when the seventy year old press collapsed requiring a new machine room to be built and the old press scrapped. The Snargate Street premises were demolished in 1971 to make way for the York Street/A20 roundabout. Norman was succeeded as editor by the chief reporter, Stan Wells, who died only seven months later aged forty-seven. George Pepper then became editor. He had joined the paper in 1950 and resigned in 1987 after twenty-four years. Tony Richardson followed him and then Jeremy Wells. By this time the Express and the Folkestone Herald had a single editor. Now the editor role covers several local newspapers in the area with no Express office in Dover.

A Bavington Jones, Robin, was still a director in 1966. This family tradition continued in 1949 with Terry Sutton, son of Norman, becoming a cub reporter at twenty following National Service. During his fifty-nine years with the paper, Terry became chief reporter, news editor, deputy editor, acting editor for a few months and finally retiring as associate editor when he retired officially in 1994 at age sixty-five. He continued, however, in a part time capacity then as a freelance for many years. With his father's forty-five years' service, Terry and Norman served the Express for over one hundred years! Bob Hollingsbee also worked for the paper for forty-four years following in his father, Eddie's, footsteps.

Today, with local newspapers struggling, one wonders how long the Dover Express can survive.

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# Cowgate Cemetery

Deborah Gasking

**W**ow! What a difference having help with the care and maintenance of our wonderful piece of nature and history. I am speaking of and praising the efforts of a White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) staff member, Jason, with a few of his volunteers.

Not only is it the physical help, but their presence has lifted our spirits. I, for one, was becoming quite despondent with our dwindling numbers. The whole wildness of nature was increasingly becoming the winner. We could barely keep the original pathways and pruning up to acceptable levels.

But now! Here we are. Swathes of the area are now trimmed ready for Spring growth. But, get this, with the extra help a far greater wild section of ivy has been extracted from the entrance pillars and revealed reasonably ornate finials. The brickwork is in great need of repointing, and Jason has put in a request for Dover District Council's maintenance department to repoint, but this can only happen after all the ivy has been removed – all on our to-do list. Furthermore, once these

pillars are tidied up, we have plans to repaint these lovely gates. So, the whole 'entrance experience' will be splendid. And hope that our beautiful cemetery will be respected by everyone, including the party-goers.

And the love doesn't stop there – we are going to strip the ivy off the walls, with particular attention to the lower (north) wall and shifting the soil that has been dumped over the years from, probably, local gardeners, which has raised the levels around the entrance despoiling the original vista. With particular attention to this tidying of the entrance, we are hoping that garden refuse dumping will cease or at least lessen.

And there's more . . . I've asked Jason if we could have a couple of log benches in the open area in the Northeast corner. These will offer resting only pews, hoping they won't encourage loitering, and, hence littering. We'll see how it goes, and if results are good, I have earmarked another spacious area.

Signing off, optimistically . . . Deborah

## Lady Arbuthnot

Peter Sherred

**O**n 25th November 2023, both *The Times* and *The Telegraph* reported the death, on 13th November 2023, of Jean Arbuthnot (Lady Arbuthnot) at the age of 104. A mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, she was the widow of Sir John Arbuthnot, First Baronet of Kittybrewster and former Member of Parliament for the Dover constituency until defeated in the General Election of 1964. Society members will have had the

benefit of an article in Newsletter number 96 of November 2019 (page 37) which paid tribute to Lady Arbuthnot for all her activities locally, when she ably supported her husband, Sir John Arbuthnot, with his political responsibilities.

Four of her five children survive her, together with ten grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

# Planning Committee

## Graham Margery - Co Chairman

Over the whole of 2023 the Dover Society Planning Committee reviewed some 200 planning applications that are potentially of interest and made formal response to the Local Authority in respect of seventy-three of them. Over the last couple of months, however, this has been a particularly quiet period, to the extent that the Town Council cancelled their planning committee meeting three times for lack of business. In total, since the last newsletter, we have reviewed some sixty-five applications and made response in respect of twenty-one of them. As ever we would encourage members to look at planning applications that may be of interest to them and make comment to Dover District Council as they feel appropriate or contact our Planning Committee with their views. Applications can be found on the DDC website or the Dover Society Website under Planning.

**Pencester Road Bus Contraflow:** It's not often that we receive comments or questions on an issue from the wider Society membership or the general public, but the proposal to create a bus contraflow in Pencester Road, with associated alterations to junctions and the removal of on-street parking, has sparked interest like never before. In November, KCC announced and launched a public consultation in connection with the new Dover Fastrack bus service that is due to be operational in Spring 2024. Although DDC supported the scheme, the Dover Society objected to it, having received numerous adverse comments and nothing favourable.

The reason behind the scheme as given is that the return route of the Fastrack from Dover Priory Station, through the town and

back to Whitfield, is problematical in adverse traffic conditions. A return via York Street and Townwall Street could be impeded by traffic queuing for the Eastern Docks and the existing route via Priory Road and Ladywell is undesirable for reasons that are not at all clear. Hence the proposal to return via a contraflow in Pencester Road.

We were astounded that the return route was not properly thought out earlier when the Fastrack was first proposed. We agree that a return route via the A20 is not viable but, overall, we consider the proposed scheme to be unnecessary since the return via Priory Street and Ladywell already exists and brings passengers to a stop in Maison Dieu Road at the end of Pencester Road.

Specific problems are,

- Loss of parking in Worthington Street and Pencester Road and the potential impact on local businesses.
- Increased traffic pressures in Queen's Gardens resulting from the above loss of parking.
- Serious problems for St Paul's Church which will now be in the middle of a traffic light-controlled junction. This will make it impossible to safely drop off disabled worshippers and cause similar problems for a funeral hearse and for weddings.
- Similar problem of dropping at the doctor's surgery in Pencester Road.
- The proximity of the new Maison Dieu/Pencester traffic light to the



existing pedestrian-controlled crossing in Maison Dieu Road will be confusing and dangerous.

- The restriction in width of pavements in places is contrary to the desire to encourage pedestrians.
- Not clear that the redesigned junctions will enable heavy goods vehicles to turn without mounting the pavement and demolishing railings.
- The existing bus route along Priory Street and Ladywell brings passengers to the heart of the town either by the Maison Dieu or opposite the old Magistrates Court building which is close to where the buses would be stopping in Pencester Road under the proposed scheme.

The consultation closed in December, so we now have to wait for the results and the outcome.

### **Update on Planning Applications**

#### **Land Adjacent to Stanhope Road:**

In August 2019, a planning application was submitted for the construction of thirty-two dwellings on vacant land at the top of Stanhope Road. Subsequently there have been some amendments to the original plans but there remain very strong local objections. These have been based mainly on increased parking pressures on an already congested road and also the impact on the ecology. The most recent amendment is to remove the proposed affordable housing as the Local Plan excludes such a requirement from developments in the Dover Urban Area.

As Dover is a recognised area of high deprivation, to specifically preclude the requirement for affordable housing seems perverse, so we have raised the matter with Dover District Council. We are told that

housing development in Dover is particularly difficult and therefore costly because of the steep hills, often difficult site access, and the likely need for archaeological investigations. With the average house price in Dover being considerably less than elsewhere in the district, the developer cannot recoup these costs with lower priced houses, so the choice seems to be either no affordable housing or no housing at all! The problem is intractable and will only be resolved when the Dover's overall prosperity improves by making it an attractive place to live work and visit.

#### **Whitfield Urban Development:**

The residents of Whitfield are understandably concerned by the scale of the Urban Development which has been happening in recent years and the Parish Council has been a strong voice in raising these concerns. There is a general lack of provision for social and community infrastructure and services, rights of way blocked off, amenity green spaces not provided, trees and hedges removed and not replaced, not to mention the failure to comply with planning conditions during the construction work. With the Phase 1 development well advanced and nearing completion, there are now further planning applications being submitted for approval as part of the Phase 2 development totalling some seven-hundred units so far. We have no confidence that the problems associated with Phase 1 will be better handled in Phase 2. The Parish Council is calling for a full public consultation on this next phase and its findings to be taken into account and enforced. We add our support and wish them every success.

#### **Bench Street:**

With the demolition of numbers 14 & 15 Bench Street, the former *Funky Monkey* bar,

now complete there has been a fresh public engagement event regarding new proposals for the site.

The new development will provide -

- An education campus providing training opportunities in the fast-growing creative and digital industries, expanding access and the curriculum for local students.
- A business centre, providing flexible, affordable facilities for start-ups and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to attract and retain skilled workers and provide new employment opportunities.
- A creative centre, funded by the Dover District Council and the Government from the Future High Street fund.
- A riverside parklet, creating accessible green space for local people and visitors.
- Expansion of the new Dover Click2Cycle bike hire scheme.

The new proposal represents a considerable improvement on that originally presented earlier in the year. It now appears as a better-quality scheme of some architectural merit rather than a plain rectangular box. It is good to see that consideration has been given to the design of all four sides of the building including multi-faceted features as it will be seen and accessed from every direction. The proposed use of brick rather than concrete or cladding will better fit with the surrounding area and its historic context. We have suggested further improvement by the use of contrasting colours in the window reveals and door frames to match the styles in Cannon Street and Victoria Park. We also suggested, amongst other things, the use of shrubs and hanging plants on the edges of the roof to soften the

flatness of it or perhaps some other hard structural feature.

The results of the consultation will be published early in 2024.

### **The Citadel:**

Originally built as part of the Napoleonic fortifications of the Western Heights, in modern times the Citadel has served as a Young Offender Institution and an Immigration Removal Centre. Since these functions have ceased, the site is now in private ownership. The new owner has already been granted approval to make improvements to some of the casemates to make them useable as commercial units and some of the more modern buildings in the complex have been granted permission for them to be used as secure training facilities for the emergency services. This provides an income that will help maintain the site and fund future developments. We understand that the owner is keen to preserve the ecology of the site as well as respect its historic significance and also make the site more accessible to the public over time. We will learn more of these plans at the March Society meeting where our guest speaker will be David de Min, the site owner.

### **Roman Painted House:**

Sadly, the Roman Painted House has not been open to the public for most of last year. There have been changes to the management arrangements recently, giving Dover District Council more direct control of the site. We have been told that it should be re-opened by the Summer or perhaps the Spring. Furthermore, the vision to modernise the building and improve access across a re-excavated Roman Lawn is not dead. Of course, all this will take time and a lot of money, but we can all be optimistic about Dover's precious jewel.

# Memories of Dover

## A Nostalgic Personal Perambulation.

### Part Eight - Cherry Tree Avenue

Peter Sherred

To round off my series of perambulations in Dover like the last article on Castle Street I thought it appropriate to take another diversion off the main street and venture along one of the roads connecting the principal avenues of the one-way system. Cherry Tree Avenue is the street I have chosen for this last ramble. As a youngster I did not live near Cherry Tree Avenue and only, infrequently, went up or down it but whenever I did, I had the impression it contained a rather self-contained community with a good range of houses, shops and services but what can the little grey cells remember?

If one is turning right off London Road, travelling towards Buckland, on the right-hand side of Cherry Tree Avenue, walking towards Barton Road, I recall the vacant area of land now used as a taxi car park and I believe the first shop was a betting shop (Fred Hendy's) and next was a wool shop run by a Lilian Pelham who was a member of London Road Methodist Church. People could go into Lilian Pelham's shop and order however many balls of wool they needed, and she would happily keep some of them back for collection when required by her customers. That was typical of the helpful way small businesses operated in those days of the 1950s and 1960s. Where the current Aldi Store and carpark is located there used to be, until quite recent times, Thompsons Ford premises. Alan Thompson also ran the garage and petrol station opposite the now demolished sports centre in Woolcomber Street the site of which is currently occupied by the Travel Lodge and some shop units. The Cherry Tree Avenue site included a body

repair shop (for vehicles I hasten to add) and some SEGAS premises with a hall on the frontage which, if my memory serves me right, had a timber framed frontage - it was called the Garden Hall and served as a social club which was probably a popular and well-used venue. After this came the current row of four houses to Balfour Road, connecting Beaconsfield Road to Cherry Tree Avenue. In one of the four houses lived the caretaker of what was then called Barton Girls' School, Joe Hardy with his wife May. Joe was also caretaker of London Road Methodist Church prior to Jack Ash. Also living in this small block of houses was a jobbing plumber Walter Mills and his wife Lilian. They were the parents of Walter Paddington Mills, otherwise known as Sonny, who was also a well-known plumber in the town and who died as recently as 2006. Before crossing Balfour Road let me just rewind to the junction with London Road and recall what was on the left-hand side of Cherry Tree Avenue walking towards Barton Road. First was a large building that served as a depot for Ayers Coaches. East Kent Road Car Company buses and coaches had a distinctive livery of dark red, (or maroon), and cream but Ayers livery for the coaches was brown and cream. Dover Transport Museum has one such coach, 569 KKK, which



*Ayers Coach at Cruise Terminal  
by Peter Sherred*

was displayed at one of the recent Cruise Terminal Christmas Markets. I recall these were described as 'luxury' coaches and were the

only private operators I remember in the town although there may have been others.

Next to Ayers was a transport, or haulage company, depot which operated under the name of Snellers and was run by Harold Sneller (helped by his brother-in-law Bill Hopper) being sited immediately opposite Balfour Road. Harold Sneller also had premises in Tower Hamlets Road at the junction with De Burgh Street. Neither Ayers nor Snellers remain in Cherry Tree Avenue and, indeed, when a road rearrangement with London Road was carried out, this involved the demolition of some old cottages on the London Road frontage and took in a largish garden area along the side of the former Ayers building. Currently Watling Tyres and the Kwik Fit buildings occupy the sites of the former depots for Ayers and Snellers although I seem to remember a KAP Datsun dealership may have made a brief appearance.

Back to the right-hand side and, after crossing Balfour Road, a corner shop (no 17 Cherry Tree Avenue) existed, currently a gent's hairdresser but previously it may have been a grocer's store. Although I cannot remember the name it may have been George Reason's shop located next to Cherry Tree Garage. In the mid-1970s this corner shop was an antique shop called Collectors' Corner.

Next up, Cherry Tree Garage which used to be Lewis Bros and, in more recent years, was



*Lewis Brothers, Cherry Tree Avenue*

owned and run by Keith Tutthill up to near the time of his death. The garage still operates under new management. I note from the picture that the corner shop adjoining has 'Furniture' referred to in its name above the shop window. Next to the garage is the River Dour which bordered a large car breaker's yard, Copping and Hollands, where I have many memories of going to find parts for my first car, an Austen A35. The site was packed with vehicles of all shapes and sizes and to the back of the site was a building or shelter structure. All was cleared out some years ago and its entrance on Cherry Tree Avenue is now totally overgrown. I guess the land may well have to be decontaminated if put to another use, such as residential, if petrol and similar substances remain in the soil. The car breaker's yard was, in planning terms, a non-conforming use in a town centre or residential area. Next along the Avenue was Barton Cottage attached to which was a much larger building I seem to recall was a chemist, named Pratts, latterly a doctors' GP surgery – run by Pankaj Premnath.

Between the chemist shop and Barton Path there used to be a splendid variety of small shops many of which have been converted into houses, most with bay windows thereby removing their shop frontages. Here I am a little hazy as to what the now converted shops were but there was a mixture of food shops and others. In the latter category I believe there was a tobacconist's shop, an electrical shop, a sweets and model shop called The Handy Stores (run by a Mr and Mrs Allen) and a clock shop or jewellers (run by Mr and Mrs Pendreich). Newman's was a DIY shop run by John Newman. The Avenue was well served with the variety of its shops including several grocers and fruiterers. The Cherry Tree fish and chip shop (once run by Mr and Mrs Tritton, which for many years had been operated by Mr. Randolfi who, retired two or three years ago, reopening as the 'Codfather' in 2022. Unfortunately, in the summer of

2023 the premises were badly damaged by fire and have yet to be re-instated.) came next after which I believe was a newsagent, a post office (a post box remains), a greengrocer's shop (another George Reason's?) with, on the corner with Barton path, a ladies hairdresser. This final stretch now comprises a Londis shop and the Tennessee takeaway food shop. Between Barton Path and Barton Road was/is an open area, the site of the former St Barnabas' Church on the corner with Barton Road. This is now the playing field of Barton Junior School.



*St Barnabas Church, Corner Cherry Tree Avenue and Barton Road*

This church and its hall had a noticeably short life span having only been built in the early years of the twentieth century before being irreparably damaged during the Second World War and finally demolished in the 1950s. I believe the site now forms part of the playing fields for Barton Junior School.

Back to the left-hand side of Cherry Tree Avenue and after Snellers' depot just over the river, the road surface crossed the river by way of a bridge. The river now flows beneath the road surface through culverts on either side of the impressive Co-operative building showing the wording 'Dover and District Co-operative Society Limited Established 1880' that can still be seen near the top on its side nearest to London Road. (The year is rather eroded so 1880 is my best interpretation.)



*Co Op, Cherry Tree Avenue*

The Co-op store with its butchers is now three shops at street level including Ann & Pam's florists and an estate agent. The upper parts are in residential use. After the Co-op building the current row of a dozen or so houses stretched (and still does) down to near Barton Road but were "topped off" by three or four shops which included, to my memory, another John Lukey wine and spirit merchant's store. This was what used to be called an Off Licence and John Lukey seemed to have a number of these in the town - opposite the Town Hall, in the High Street and Bench Street.

With all these outlets and the number of public houses in the town between the 1950s and more recent times, one could be forgiven for thinking Dover had a drink problem - at the very least a drink lust!

That is a quick canter along Cherry Tree Avenue - an erstwhile bustling, self-contained, community it seemed to me. It was always beautifully set off in the spring each year when the cherry trees along its length were in full blossom. That's all folks.

[My thanks to Graham Tutthill who kindly furnished me with the picture of Lewis Bros garage as well as jogging my memory where it had lapsed!]



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# The River Dour

Deborah Gasking

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to our long-term River Ranger, Iona, as she is going back to her family's home in New Zealand with her toddler daughter and partner. All we river volunteers wish her well for her young family's future, but she will be massively missed. Iona's personality and dedication generated a huge friendship group of volunteers and has been very successful in gaining funding grants.

We now have our River Dour Centre at Buckland Bridge which has been used with school nature study groups and as a hub for tea and coffee making for us volunteers. Further programmes will follow.

Several grants have provided equipment for volunteers on our regular litter-picks.

Pond dipping at Buckland Bridge and the steps facilitating these activities were also initiated and led by Iona.

These few are from the top of my head, as I am very late in submitting my regular

report! So read all this and magnify her contribution to our town's magic watery feature.

Iona's replacement is the great Martha who has already introduced herself on the latest litter-pick expedition. She is a lively, well qualified and experienced ranger, and all we volunteers are looking forward to a great time together.

And finally, after eighteen months of negotiation and patience, the newest piece of wall art will be produced on the Barton School wall, backing onto Barton Path, and will be happening this Spring. This is thanks to Laura and Dawn at Dover smART Project, who gained Arts Council funding. Dawn and I attended a January assembly at Barton School to introduce the project to the pupils who will (with guidance) be producing nature-based panels, the whole being eventually depicted on the large wall by two professional wall artists. How satisfying is this!

## *Letter to the Editor*



### **Pencester Gardens**

2024 marks one hundred years since Pencester Gardens were opened to the public. I have asked the leader of Dover District Council the following question for the full council meeting:

"2024 marks a century since Pencester Gardens were opened to the public in 1924.

What plans does Dover District Council have to celebrate this important anniversary for Dover?"

Graham Wanstall  
Dover Town Councillor

# Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) John Peter Morrison

Peter Sherred

Licensed Lay Reader Lt. Col. (Rtd) John Morrison is a much respected and well-loved man who serves in the Ministry team at St Mary-in-Castro and who has had a most interesting life worthy of a stand-alone article. Since it ceased to be a Garrison Church in 2014, this extra-parochial church within the Diocese of Canterbury has been served by a Ministry team comprising four ordained priests, a Licensed Lay Reader and a Lay Chaplain.

He was born in Hastings, East Sussex in 1950. His father worked in the town, and, with his older sister and mother, the family lived in Battle until 1959. They then moved to Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. The family observing a Baptist faith throughout John's childhood. A keen member of the Boy's Brigade he had an interesting but happy childhood, attending Bletchley Grammar School. He joined the Army Intelligence Corps in October 1967 and during basic training was selected to go on to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. It was here John was baptised and confirmed into the Church of England. Commissioned back into the Intelligence Corps in 1970, initial training required an eighteen-month period with the King's Own Scottish Borderers, as a platoon commander, which included two very exciting tours in Northern Ireland.

John was duty officer one evening in Templer Barracks, Ashford when one of his senior officers summoned him to Wye to make up numbers at a formal dinner. Apparently, a post-graduate student from Rhodesia had bought a minivan from the family and, when cleaning it out, she had discovered a long-lost ladies inscribed gold watch, a precious first anniversary present. She had instantly been invited to dinner, and the party needed to be balanced, hence

John being summoned. The two took an instant dislike to each other, he with his tales of 'derring-do' in Northern Ireland and she with the importance of her botanical experiments for her doctorate. When the lady left, John felt it politic to make his excuses at a decent time after. To his surprise the lady was still sat in her 'new' minivan with a distinct smell of petrol in the air. He helpfully explained that the van's carburettor was flooded, forgetting that the lady, Liz, had driven many tractors on the family farm. It was a prickly relationship, which lasted into marriage in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe) in August 1974, and which persists today some 49 years later.

After a tour in Cold War Berlin, John and Liz were posted to Hong Kong. Almost as soon as they arrived, their son Douglas was born in September 1977 in the British Military Hospital. The doctor in command wanted to court-martial the doctor who had allowed Liz to fly so late into her pregnancy but, unfortunately for him, the doctor who made that decision was the village GP in Wye and therefore not subject to military law. He had judged that Liz was safer with John in Hong Kong than crying on his shoulder in his surgery. As the military hospital was north of Boundary Street in Kowloon, it has been a family joke that Douglas still has his national service to fulfil in the People's Liberation Army of China. After a further period in Northern Ireland, initially in Derry/Londonderry and then Lisburn, John was appointed to the training team in Ashford. During this time in England, son James was born in March 1981. John was particularly lucky with postings heading to Washington DC, the Falkland Islands (after the war), Germany and Cyprus, always with the family until



the two boys went to the King's School in Canterbury as boarders.

After a successful period as a student at the Joint Service Defence College at the Royal Naval College Greenwich, John was selected to an operational and training regimental command in Leicestershire as a Lt Col. Following this, Liz was appointed to a science teaching post at the King's school, and they settled down in Canterbury. Time in Whitehall was followed, in Bedfordshire, helping to move the Intelligence Corps and other Defence intelligence elements from Ashford and elsewhere to Chicksands in Bedfordshire. Operational appointments then followed, with NATO in Bosnia Herzegovina and with the UN in Abkhazia, Georgia,

He was appointed Military Secretary for the Permanent Joint Headquarters, Northwood during the 1st Iraq War in 2003. Being separated from his family was not to his liking, so at the end of the year he left the Regular Army to become a civil servant in the Ministry of Defence. Employed to support the move of Royal Engineer elements from Rochester to Bicester, Oxfordshire, John was then posted to Shorncliffe, as the discipline officer for the Southeast of England. Finally, he was posted to Regent's Barracks, Whitehall to support Specialist Military Units and the Defence and Security Media Advisory Committee. This took John to places as diverse as the Security Service headquarters and the Daily Telegraph newsroom.

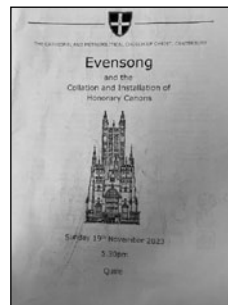
John retired in 2017 after exactly 50 years of public service. Throughout his career, he had been an active church member and a member of the Army Archdeaconry and the Forces Synodical Council. It was a natural progression from such engagement to put himself forward for selection as a Lay

Minister or Reader. After the appropriate theological training and placement, John was licensed in Canterbury Cathedral in 2011. After contributing to the Church of England at all levels, as a National Church Peer Reviewer of other Dioceses, a C a n t e r b u r y

Province lay panel member for the Clergy Disciplinary process, a member of the Archbishop's Council, an elected member of Diocesan Synod, Deanery Treasurer and a Parish Safeguarding Officer, John has been selected to join the College of Canons of Canterbury Cathedral and this was carried out during a service of Evensong on 19 November 2023. This was a much-deserved recognition of all that John represents. Currently, as a member of the Ministry team, he is leading and/or preaching at St Mary in Castro, Dover Castle (his former Garrison Church) every month. Otherwise, he is a member of St Peter's Church in Canterbury city centre.



*Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Canon John Morrison celebrates his selection into the college of Canons of Canterbury Cathedral*



*Cathedral programme for Evensong and collation of Canons*

For all that he has experienced and achieved in life John is an incredibly humble individual. Unfailingly polite he is clearly comfortable as a Licensed Lay Reader. St Mary-in-Castro is extremely fortunate to have his talents. He does

not need to self-promote and his commanding vocal talents ensure the services he leads and the sermons he preaches are all clearly heard by those who attend St Mary-in-Castro. In his role in the church John serves Dover well and, with others, has ensured that the church continues to be an open and active church in the Diocese of Canterbury. John has contributed greatly to the continuing ministry of St Mary-in-Castro in its unique and privileged position in Dover. Long may

he continue to do so. His recent appointment as a Canon of Canterbury Cathedral is a wider recognition of his dedicated service and ministry



*John Morrison in Lay  
Reader robes for Cathedral  
service*

## Environment Committee Janet Dagys, Chair

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The Environment Committee continues to meet at the Dover smART premises next to the Yacht Club on the second Monday of January, March, May, July, September & November. Members also communicate and share information through a WhatsApp Group. We continue to focus on the appearance of the town, cleanliness, litter, rights of way and tourism, taking action when and where we can be effective and can make a positive difference. The Dover Society includes many rural areas around the town, and we would welcome new members from these areas to have their voice heard on these topics.

Ongoing areas of interest have been the Dover Beacon Project on Bench Street, the Discovery Centre & the Roundhouse Theatre, the Painted House, the state of buildings in the town centre, the availability and condition of toilet facilities in the town and on the seafront, litter and the conservation of listed buildings and trees.

We have been following-up, with Crown Estates, its responsibility for the six badly rusted light poles on the seafront close to the Eastern Docks, two of which are missing a light. Progress in actioning the repairs is going very slowly! Crown Estates has initiated a project in its Capital Renewal programme, and

it is supposed to go into design in 2024.

We encourage Dover Society members and members of the public to post photos of excessive litter they see to the Dover District Council (DDC) website at [forms.dover.gov.uk/xfp/form/1184](https://forms.dover.gov.uk/xfp/form/1184)

We also encourage Dover Society members and members of the public to post photos of buildings in a poor state of maintenance in the town centre on the DDC website at [dover.gov.uk/Report/Report.aspx](https://dover.gov.uk/Report/Report.aspx)

The website [passion4dover.co.uk](https://passion4dover.co.uk) displays many of the projects that the Environment Committee is working on and is maintained by a member of the team. If you are passionate about Dover and one of the projects on this website, please join the Environment Committee and work with other team members to move things forward.

We continue to liaise with our colleague and Dover Town Council 'Walkers are Welcome' promoter Pam Brivio on walks in the town, Jayne Miles (Town Centres Manager, Dover District Council), Chris Townend (Growth & Development, Dover District Council) local Kent Police and other local town, district and KCC councillors.

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# PROGRAMME 2024

*Non-members are welcome at all meetings except that only members may vote at the Annual General Meeting. You may join, pay on the night and vote at the meeting.*

- March 17           **Grand Shaft Open Day – Western Heights**  
Sunday            Access via Snargate Street CT17 9DA  
10.30am – 4pm   Drop Redoubt Road CT17 9DZ - Free entry no booking required.  
More details from The Western Heights Preservation Society
- March 18           **General Open Meeting**  
Monday 7.30      **Speaker: David De Min**      “Developing the Citadel”
- March 20           **Sound Mirrors Open Day**  
Saturday 11am   Langdon Cliffs – National Trust  
Details obtainable from The National Trust Langdon Cliffs, Upper Road, Dover,  
Kent, CT16 1HJ
- April 13           **Dover History Day**  
Saturday           Dover Museum Cinema – 4 speakers - Free entry - Ticket Only.  
10am – 4pm      To book: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/826809287837>
- April 15           **Dover Society Annual General Meeting**  
Monday 7.30pm   **Speaker: Josianne Murrel**      “Alkham Valley Community Project”
- June 22           **The Marina Showcase**  
Saturday           Marina Curve  
All Day Event    This will be the first time that the marina industry and general public can  
experience a full set of re-developed facilities, as the Wellington Dock opens in  
the spring, and the new Outer Marina enters its second season.
- July 6             **Port of Dover Regatta 2024**  
Saturday           Dover Seafront and Marina Curve  
All Day Event    Dover's most popular and anticipated event will return to the seafront this July.  
A highlight of the summer fun planned on Kent's coast, the Port of Dover  
Community Regatta is back with live music and performances, water displays  
and much more to be announced soon. See the Port of Dover website.

## **Dover Society Trips 2024**

I am sorry that I have not yet come forward with firm proposals for any Society trips this year. Iain Robertson, our organiser, has not been very well recently, and I have not wanted to press him for proposals. There are a number of possibilities we are working on. Members are welcome to book trips with Silver Phoenix Travel Club, mainly run from Canterbury. Details are on their website. The Dover Society is not involved in arrangements.

Rodney Stone, our Summer Social Secretary.

*All indoor meetings are held at St. Mary's Parish Centre  
Non-members are welcome on all society outings.*

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