



# Newsletter

No. 110  
July 2024



*I Love My Pony - Alkham Valley Community Project*



# THE DOVER SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1988

Affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies  
Registered Charity No. 299954

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Derek Leach OBE
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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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The restoration of the Maison Dieu (Town Hall) continues and hopefully the work will be completed by the end of this year, or at the latest early next year.

For a quite and peaceful day out why not take a trip to visit the newly renovated Russell gardens and/or Kearsney Abbey. They are looking beautiful this time of year.

For something livelier there are many activities taking place around the town over the summer months. This includes, at Pencester Gardens and the Marina Curve, live music and plays for all ages. See the local press and the Dover Council websites.

**Honoury Treasurer:** The Society is pleased to announce a rare opportunity to join our friendly Executive Committee as Honoury Treasurer. This voluntary role provides for the overseeing and presentation of the Society accounts. A full job description is available, and training will be given to the successful candidate. Should you wish to discuss this further then please contact the Chairman, Jenny Olpin, [jodoversociety@gmail.com](mailto:jodoversociety@gmail.com) She looks forward to hearing from and meeting you soon.

**Original Newsletters Edition 1-7:** We have a small number of original foolscap sets that are now available to members. Please contact Sheila Cope on 01304 211348 or email; [sheilacope@willersly.plus.com](mailto:sheilacope@willersly.plus.com)

**Society Outings:** I am sorry to announce that our Summer Social Secretary, Rodney Stone, has had to cancel the trip to Dungeness as not enough members have indicated that they are interested in participating, so the trip is no longer viable. The Treasurer will refund any direct payments. Rodney will return any cheque payments that have been sent to him. If you have any suggestions for trips at a future date, then please contact a member of the committee. Members are welcome to participate in trips run by the Silver Phoenix Travel Club. Details are on their website then contact Iain on 07842 124094

*Alan Lee, Editor*

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Tel: 01304 213668    Email: Alan.lee1947@ntlworld.com

## DEADLINE for contributions

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 111 will be Wednesday 2nd October 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:

Email: [dovergreeters@virginmedia.com](mailto:dovergreeters@virginmedia.com)    Mobile: 07712 581557

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

# MARCH MEETING

## Developing the Citadel

A talk by David de Min

Reported by Alan Lee

David de Min introduced himself as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Dover Citadel Limited who are at present the owners of the site. He then stated that he has been in Dover for six years and soon realised the opportunities that a large development in the area could bring.

The Citadel, part of the Western Heights complex, is one of the highest points in and around the town.

Commencing his presentation, David showed the audience a number of pictures of the area of the Citadel where the development is likely to take place. The area is a brownfield site of approximately thirty-three acres in size, including fifty-four buildings. The development is expected to take about ten years to complete and will include small business units. Permission has already been granted for six units, a hotel and possibly a leisure centre, though it is uncertain as yet what size or style this will take. The cost has been placed at between £80 to £100 million. Historic England, Dover



*The Citadel, Western Heights Dover*

District Council and English Heritage are involved as consultants on various aspects of the scheme.

David then ran through a potted history of the Citadel, when it was built and the reasons that the defence works came to be developed in Dover. A fortunate find was the discovery, in a drawer, of some original maps, hundreds of years old.

It is planned to display some of the history of the site to inform visitors of what the buildings used to be. The 1890 barracks are likely to be opened up as workshops for tradespeople including smiths and metal workers. Other uses will include a hotel, education and gallery spaces, more workshops and accommodation. A playing field and cycle track will be incorporated within the scheme. The company is also looking at ways to connect with the rest of the site, such as the Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft.

The most impressive building on the site is the bomb-proof, two-storey, Officers' Quarters and Mess with walls five foot thick. Built in 1860 by Major William Jervois it was designed, in part, to be one of the last points of defence in the event of the Citadel being stormed by the enemy. Research from English Heritage has found that there were originally eighteen rooms for officers, on the top floor, and nine for servants, on the ground floor suggesting that the latter lived two to a room. This building is expected to provide sixty to eighty rooms as part of a two

hundred to two hundred and fifty room hotel complex which will be of a strongly heritage-led design. Bearing in mind that the whole of this site is an ancient monument.

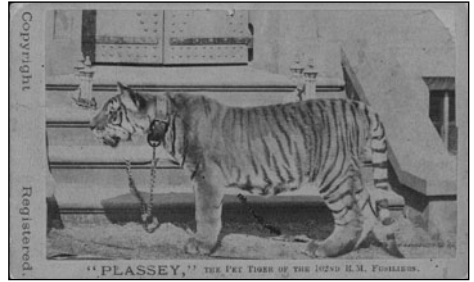
The area is home to some Napoleonic water towers with giant tanks on top. The wells beneath are some 450 feet deep, some of the deepest in the country, and have the capacity to supply 8,800 gallons per day. The company hope that they can utilize this resource as part of their own sustainable eco-system.

At present there few detailed plans, but when submitted they will also involve getting permission for scheduled monument consent.

The first defences on the Western Heights were constructed, by the militia, in 1779 during the American War of Independence. Between 1782 and 1796 the Drop Redoubt was constructed despite the fact that, in February 1782, the 1st Assistant Engineer in Dover, a Mr Bigges, was paying the labourers himself for want of money from the military authorities.

In 1804-5, with the threat of the Napoleonic invasion, work to greatly increase the fortification of this defensive position began in earnest. With four hundred and eighty men employed, much of the work, including the Grand Shaft, Grand Shaft Barracks and the hospital, was completed in three to four years, although the Citadel was not finished.

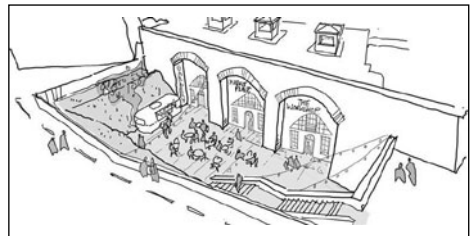
Improvements continued up until 1861 when the first infantry battalion moved to the Citadel. In 1870, the 102nd Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) arrived with their pet Bengal tiger cub, Plassey. He was named after Robert Clive's famous victory of 23rd June 1757, which was also a battle honour of the Madras Fusiliers. The cap



*Plassey*

badge of their regiment depicted a tiger, a beast much respected in Indian culture for its strength, grace and power. Legend has it that he was fairly tame and, on arrival in the UK, lived unchained with the garrison at the Citadel. He used to be taken for morning walks down to the town, but apparently alarmed the local inhabitants on several occasions. As he grew larger, he was reluctantly sent to the local zoological gardens, where he eventually died.

In 1955, the Citadel officially became a Young Offenders' Borstal Prison and started accepting male detainees aged 18 and over. In 2000, Dover Immigration Removals Centre (IRC) took over, run by the Prison Service. It had a three hundred and fourteen bed capacity. This closed in 2015 and the Citadel was handed over to the Ministry of Justice. In 2020, Dover Citadel Limited acquired the site and in 2022 they received an £18 million government grant to develop it.



*Architects sketch proposal of the Citadel*

# THE DOVER SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 299954)

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024

<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	2024	2023
Newsletter Binders	164.36	164.36
Debtors & prepayments [Insurance]	0.00	0.00
Building Society Account [Caf]	0.00	0.00
Bank Current Account	53,793.42	54,525.97
Cash in Hand	160.31	211.81
25 x Reckitt Benckiser shares gifted to Society 06.11.08	660.75	660.75
25 x Reckitt Benckiser shares gifted to Society 26.10.12	937.50	937.50
25 x Reckitt Benckiser shares gifted to Society 09.02.15	1,400.00	1,400.00
50 x Indivior shares from Reckitt Benckiser 22.01.15	81.50	81.50
Market value of shares at 31.03.23 was £4,712		
	<u>57,197.84</u>	<u>57,981.89</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Money held on behalf of 'Bluebird Trail'	777.44	777.44
Subscriptions in advance 2024/25	519.00	1,190.00
Advanced bookings for outings 2024/25	0.00	0.00
	<u>55,901.40</u>	<u>56,014.45</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund at 31 <sup>st</sup> March	30,944.66	31,374.88
Projects Fund incorporated into General Fund	<u>219.38</u>	<u>219.38</u>
General Fund at 31 <sup>st</sup> March	31,164.04	31,595.26
Publication Fund (formally the Peverley Fund) Note 2	4,713.39	4,545.78
Town Hall Fund Note 3	13,569.57	13,420.03
River Dour Partnership Note 4	6,454.40	<u>6,454.40</u>
	<u>55,901.40</u>	<u>56,014.45</u>
Jane Jones Treasurer		



**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2024**

<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS &amp; DONATIONS</u>	2024		2023	
Subscriptions	2798.00		2,359.00	
Donations received	<u>148.84</u>	2,948.00	<u>104.70</u>	2,463.70
<u>SOCIAL EVENTS</u>				
Christmas Gathering	180.95		390.85	
Wine & Wisdom	323.00		313.80	
Summer trip	6.00	509.95		704.75
<u>MEMBERS' MEETINGS</u>				
AGM and members' meetings		-33.60	<u>-94.08</u>	-94.08
<u>NEWSLETTER</u>				
Net Surplus (deficit)		-1,912.62	<u>-1,858.00</u>	-1,858.00
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS</u>				
Website	-395.00			
Photocopying & Stationery	0.00		-88.64	
Miscellaneous	-237.85		-486.63	
Postage, Telephone & Advertising	-12.00		-16.32	
Affiliation Fees & Insurance	-448.70		-397.19	
Committee Room hire and Expenses	<u>-605.04</u>	-1,696.59	<u>264.00</u>	-1,252.78
<u>OTHER ITEMS</u>				
Plaques	461.00			
Caf Account & other interest received			66.66	
Gift Aid attracted by subs etc to general fund	613.30		595.13	
Donations made: Normal	-410.00		-412.50	
Awards and presentations	0.00		0.00	
Badges	<u>-13.50</u>	-244.20	<u>341.50</u>	-92.21
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year		-430.22		-128.62
SURPLUS brought forward		<u>31,374.88</u>		<u>31,503.50</u>
SURPLUS carried forward		<u>30,944.66</u>		<u>31,374.88</u>

Bracketed ( ) items are debits or net costs. Unbracketed items are credits or net income

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024**

NOTE 1 - PROJECT FUND

The Fund arises from grants and awards made in respect of the Society's projects less cost incurred restoring Lydden Pond, Cowgate Cemetery and amenity improvement work.

Following a loss of funding it was felt more appropriate to incorporate the fund into the General Fund

NOTE 2 - PUBLICATION FUND (Formally known as Peverley Fund)

The Society has published John Peverley's account of the Western Heights fortifications.

Grants in hand at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023	5265.75
Grants/Donations received during the year 2023/24	<u>0.00</u>
Total grants received as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	<u>5,265.75</u>
Unrecovered costs at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023	-719.99
Proceeds of sales during year	139.50
Receipts from Town Hall booklets	<u>28.13</u>
Grants and sales less unrecovered costs & leaflets	<u>4,713.39</u>
Unrecovered cost at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024	<u>552.36</u>

The unsold stock of books in hand with Chairman is 80 cost value £87.76

The unsold stock of books in hand with M Weston is 229 cost value £251.28

NOTE 3 - Town Hall Fund

The purpose of the fund is to help towards project to renovate the Town Hall. The fund consists of shares donated to the Society, dividends thereon and money arising from guided walks within the Town Hall.

Fund movement for the Year

Balance at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023		13,420.03
Normal transactions during the year	Dividends	140.17
	Town Hall books	9.37
		<u>          </u>
Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024		<u>13,969.57</u>

(Share value in fund £3,079.75. Market value at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 £4,757.00)

NOTE 4 – RIVER DOUR PARTNERSHIP

This fund represents grants to less grants made by and expenses of the Partnership

# APRIL AGM MEETING

## Alkham Valley Community Project

A talk by Josianne Murrel

Reported by Alan Lee

The Alkham Valley Community Project (AVCP) is run as an independent charity with the aim to make horse-riding accessible, and affordable, to young people who would otherwise be unable to participate in this amazing activity. It is an active member of the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) and promotes their aims to provide specialist sessions for people with physical or intellectual disability at a subsidised rate.

A full and varied range of disabilities are covered with the riders that participate. The age range is for all ages from 5 years old upwards. The coaches are all experienced and RDA approved.

The AVCP project has, over the last five years, enjoyed close links with a number of specialist schools within the Dover District area and provides sessions tailored to their students' needs. Not only do they focus on the physical benefits of riding in the countryside, but they also recognise and concentrate on the calming effects that being around, and riding, horses and ponies has.

They recognise that the local area has some of

the most deprived wards in the country and that the cost of riding could be out of reach for many families. With this in mind, they work in partnership with the national Holiday Activities and Food Scheme (HAF). This means that they can offer fully funded holiday clubs for children aged 8-16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. In 2023 they were able to offer 360 individual holiday club spaces. At present, the plan, is to offer at least the same number of places for 2024. Through their own fundraising efforts, they also offer a limited number of subsidised sessions for riders in financial difficulty.

The book *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo is studied by many primary schools as part of their curriculum. The AVCP have linked to these schools and developed what they call *War Horse* days to expand on the equine references in the book.

They also have an interactive riding simulator which is available to novice and advanced riders. This is an effective teaching tool that allows the riding instructor to remain close to the rider as the student is introduced to what it feels like for a horse to walk, trot and canter.



*A lesson inside the covered school*



*Riding Simulator*

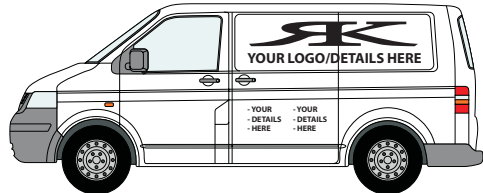


# GRAPHICS

## DESIGN • PRINT • SIGNS

### Shop Signs & Vehicle Graphics

- Business Cards
- Stationery
- Leaflets
- Posters
- Brochures
- Folders
- Printed Vinyl
- Vinyl Graphics
- Banners
- Display
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# Environment Committee Janet Dagys, Chair

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*Members: James Benjafield, Pam Brivio, Jeremy Cope, Carol Duffield, Lesley Easton, Ben Elsey, Deborah Gasking, Michael Jukes, Mary Margery, Mike McFarnell and Alan Sencicle.*

The Environment Committee continues to meet at the Dover smART premises, now located on Bench Street at the top of the underpass, 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 and monitoring 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.

A member of the Environment Team has been following-up with National Highways, which is responsible for maintaining the six badly rusted light poles on the seafront close to the Eastern Docks, two of which are missing a light. Progress on the project initiated in its Capital Renewal Programme has been very slow. It has been in the design phase

in 2024 and work is understood to have been approved for execution in 2025.

We encourage Dover Society members and members of the public to post photos of excessive litter they see onto the Dover District Council (DDC) website at <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 <https://www.dover.gov.uk/Report/Report.aspx>

The website <https://www.passion4dover.co.uk> displays many of the projects that the Environment Team 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 Team and work with other team members to move things forward on that project.

We continue to liaise with our colleagues: 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.

# Cowgate Cemetery June 2024

Deborah Gasking

The following have recently been identified at Cowgate Cemetery: -

## Common Lizard

A common lizard was seen basking in the warm sun atop a cut grass mound.

These are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. They are a Priority Species under the UK Post - 2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Living up to its name, the common lizard is the UK's most common and widespread reptile; it is the only reptile native to Ireland. It is found across many habitats, including heathland, moorland, woodland and grassland, where it can be seen basking in sunny spots.

Also known as the 'viviparous lizard', the common lizard is unusual among reptiles as it incubates its eggs inside its body and 'gives birth' to live young rather than laying eggs. Adults emerge from hibernation in spring, mating in April and May, and producing three to eleven young in July.

## How to identify

The common lizard is variable in colour, but



*Common Lizard*

is usually brownish-grey, often with rows of darker spots or stripes down the back and sides. Males have bright yellow or orange undersides with spots, while females have paler, plain bellies.

## Did you know?

If threatened by a predator, the common lizard will shed its still-moving tail in order to distract its attacker and make a quick getaway. This leaves a scar behind, but it can regrow its tail, although it is usually shorter than the original.

## Slow Worm

Spotted moving in the undergrowth. Neither slow nor a worm, and despite appearances, the slow worm is actually a legless lizard. Generally found basking in the sun on grasslands and in compost heaps in gardens.

These are also protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

It has the ability to shed its tail and blink with its eyelids.

Slow worms can be found in heathland, tussocky grassland and woodland edges where they can find invertebrates to eat and a sunny patch in which to sunbathe. They are often found in mature gardens and allotments, where they like hunting around the compost heap. However, if you have a cat, you are unlikely to find them in your garden as cats predate them. Like other reptiles, slow worms spend the winter in a dormant, hibernation-like state known as brumation, usually from October to March.



*Slow Worm*

### **How to identify**

The slow worm is much smaller than a snake and has smooth, golden-grey skin. Males are paler in colour and sometimes sport blue spots, while females are larger, with dark sides and a dark stripe down the back.

### **Did you know?**

The mating season for slow worms kicks off in May and males become aggressive towards each other. During courtship, the male takes hold of the female by biting her head or neck, and they intertwine their bodies. Courtship may last for as long as 10 hours! Females incubate the eggs internally, 'giving birth' to an average of eight young in summer.

### **Kentish Snail**

*Monacha cantiana*, or the Kentish Snail, is usually found in herbal layers of hedges, waste ground, shrublands, at roadsides and railways, also in dunes, but not in woods, preferring well-drained calcareous soils (chalk, limestone).

Juveniles are often attached high up on the vegetation for long periods. Sixty-ninety eggs are laid between June and September. Juveniles hatch after two weeks and reach maturity after one year.

Introduced to Great Britain with farmers in



*Kentish Snail*

late Roman times and spread mainly in the mediaeval period, occupying a compact area covering South and East England, and still continues spreading (isolated sites in Wales, West and Central England and Scotland).

### **Common Spotted Orchid**

This is the easiest of all our orchids to see: Sometimes, so many flowers appear together that they create a pale pink carpet in woodlands, old quarries, dunes and marshes.

In Cowgate, the spread is less than previous years; we think this is due to our reduced number of volunteers. But this is set to be corrected with the enthusiastic help of Jason from the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership and his volunteers.

It is in bloom between June and August.

### **How to identify**

The common spotted orchid gets its name from its leaves, which are green with many purple, oval spots. They form a rosette at ground level before the flower spike appears; narrower leaves sheath the stem. The flowers range from white and pale pink, through to purple, but have distinctive darker pink spots and stripes on their three-lobed lips. The flowers are densely packed in short, cone-shaped clusters.

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# Planning Committee

## Graham Margery - Co Chairman

**Objectives:** The objectives of the Dover Society Planning Committee are as follows: -

In support of the Society's objectives

- Review and comment on planning applications
- Initiate and progress Planning Enforcement and Section 215 actions
- Engage with local and national Public Consultations on Planning Policy and Transport Infrastructure matters
- Engage with and hold to account the Local Planning Authority
- Carry out Conservation Area Appraisals

If any Society member has any concerns regarding any of these matters, they may contact the committee via the website or directly by e-mail.

### Planning Activity:

Over the last twelve months 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 63 of them. In total since the last newsletter, we have reviewed some 77 applications and made response in respect of 22 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'.

### Traffic Gridlock in the Town:

Once again, at the start of the May half term school holiday, Dover was brought to a standstill by vehicles trying to access the ferry port. Most lorries abide by the traffic

signs although a few don't bother but tourist traffic in cars is just as big a problem. Bus services were suspended for a time, and residents were virtual prisoners in the own homes, being unable to go about their normal day-to-day business including missed hospital appointments. Commercial businesses were also affected as potential customers were unable to get to them other than on foot. At one point the St Jame's retail centre was completely empty. This is not the first time the town has suffered in this way and is all the more infuriating as it is entirely predictable. We have in the past raised our concerns with DDC, Kent Police, KCC and our MP but we have yet to see decisive action being taken. We will again be raising this issue which is becoming even more pressing as the new border controls come into effect in October which will only make matters worse.

### Former Leisure Centre Site:

The site of the former leisure centre at the corner of Woolcomber Street and Townwall Street has remained vacant for a number of years now. Its closure was much lamented at the time as its location in the town made it easily accessible on foot and by public transport whereas the new leisure centre in Whitfield is much more difficult to visit other than by car. There has therefore persisted a hope that the old site would be used for some sort of recreational activity such as a bowling alley or climbing centre. These hopes were dashed by the publication of a planning application from McDonald's to create a drive through fast food outlet.

I commented in the last newsletter that

the proposed Pencester Road Bus Contraflow had generated an unprecedented level of interest within the Society and the wider public, but this scheme has proved to be even more unpopular with in excess of 300 objections having been submitted. We too have objected. This is a prominent site and in the vicinity of a number of heritage assets including St James Church, the Castle, the Western Heights, Victoria Park and Castle Street and this scheme will do nothing to enhance the historic setting and will be damaging to it. Furthermore, the risk of a serious litter problem is great despite measures proposed by the applicant, with the result that windblown litter will end up along the A20, in St James Church, the beach and the sea. This being a 24-hour outlet, noise and light pollution will also be an inconvenience to nearby residents.

Most significantly, this scheme will worsen an already serious traffic problem. The A20 already suffers from high volume of vehicles and, at times, serious congestion that affects not just the port traffic but the town overall. We fear that this will only make matters worse. The similar McDonalds 'drive-thru' at the Whitfield roundabout illustrates very well how queuing traffic can back-up onto the trunk road reducing the effective width of the road for all other traffic. The situation will be even worse on Townwall Street and nearby local roads given the higher volume of traffic and our experience of traffic chaos even without this new facility.

With so many objections this application will have to be considered particularly carefully, and it's interesting to note that National Highways have asked the application not to be determined before 22nd July to allow time for their concerns about the traffic to be fully explored and remedied. We wait and see.

### **Old Metropole Hotel:**

I commented in the November newsletter that a number of premises in the town were undergoing some redecoration and repair to improve their overall appearance to keep the town looking tidy, so when scaffolding was erected in Cannon Street and work started on the old Metropole Hotel, this appeared to be something we would welcome. To our dismay, the historic iron balconies were then removed, and, with the redecoration complete and the scaffolding dismantled, they have not been replaced. This building is part of the Dover Town Centre Conservation Area, and a planning application should have been submitted although it is unlikely it would have been approved. We have raised our concerns with the DDC Planning Enforcement department requesting that the balconies be reinstated. Their investigation may take some time so again we will have to await a satisfactory resolution.

### **Pencester Road Bus Contraflow:**

Although the public consultation closed in December we have no news yet of any progress towards a decision. We have had replies regarding the concerns that we raised but these are largely just assurances that these matters have already been considered and all will be well! Another case of wait and see!

### **Bench Street:**

The development of the former Funky Monkey bar at 14 & 15 Bench Street moves forward with the publication of the planning application for the so-called Beacon Project which will include -

- 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.
- The building design incorporates all of these elements in a single structure made of red brick. Although broadly supportive of the scheme we have made suggestions to better blend with some of the much older buildings in the vicinity. It remains a rather controversial proposal with some regarding it as overbearing and incongruous in its historic setting, but we believe this can be mitigated with the some of the suggestions we and others have made.

### **Trees in Crabble Avenue:**

We were shocked to see a number of mature trees being felled in Crabble Avenue in the athletic ground. On making enquiries of DDC we were told that one tree had fallen into the garden of a neighbouring property but without damage to the house. Since all the trees in the vicinity were of the same species and were planted at the same time, there was fear that others may fall with, possibly, more serious consequences. As the trees were not the subject of a Tree Protection Order nor in a Conservation Area, DDC as landowner was at liberty to prune or fell trees as it saw fit. In all some eighteen trees were felled but, considering the cost involved, this is not a decision that would have been taken lightly. We are assured that they will be replaced with a mix of indigenous species.

## *D & L Wondercrafts*

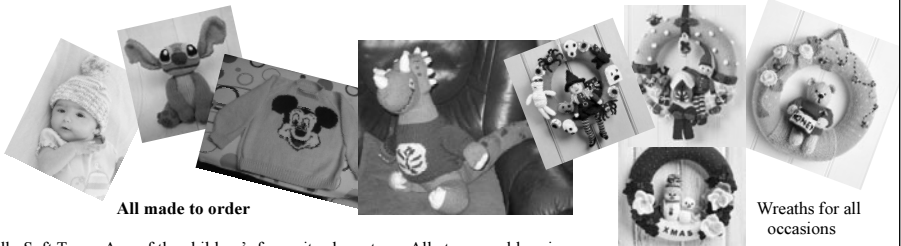
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# Dover in 1858

Edited by Derek Leach

On 7th August 1858 the Dover Express published its first issue and in August 1933 it celebrated its 75th birthday with an article about what Dover was like in 1858 - what existed, some of what had disappeared and some of what was to come.

In 1858 there was a seafront built on the shingle ridge, with Marine Parade dating from 1820, the Esplanade from 1830 and Waterloo Crescent from 1834. The bay was still unenclosed, but work had started, in 1847, on constructing the Admiralty Pier.

Mains drainage had recently been installed in the town and the waterworks were only four years old. People were still talking about the banquet celebrating the completion, which was held in the grand, underground water reservoir before it was filled.

The railway had arrived via Folkestone in 1844, terminating at the Town Station in the Pier District. The adjacent, grand Lord Warden Hotel had opened in 1851. In 1858 stage coaches still ran to Canterbury until the railway line from Canterbury opened in 1861, with its Priory Station in the fields of Priory Farm. The Deal stage coach ran until 1880. Telegrams could be sent in 1858, but only from the railway station. Dover's Post Office

was not connected to the system until 1869, following the government's takeover of the telegraph system. A public telephone service was not introduced in Dover until 1886, although a private line had earlier connected the fire station and the waterworks; connection to London came in 1887.

Folkestone Road had not been developed beyond Christ Church, which was opened in 1844. Neither had the slopes below the castle been built upon; Victoria Park dates from 1864. Charlton Back Lane ran through Maison Dieu Fields, becoming Maison Dieu Road when New St. James' Church was built in 1860 on Tinkers' Close, as it was known. This was a sort of no man's land where 'navvies' cutting the Shakespeare railway tunnel organized a big, illegal, prize fight, seemingly beyond police jurisdiction. Circuses were also held there (now it is St. Mary's School playing field). Pencester Road did not exist, since access to Biggin Street was blocked by the Gunman family mansion. Nearer the sea, the old, heavily built up area of Trevanion Street and Woolcomber Street survived until 1894 when Woolcomber Street was widened.

Beyond the Maison Dieu in High Street, the Royal Victoria Hospital had opened in 1851 with money raised by Doverians to celebrate



*Shakespeare Beach*



*Western Dover Harbour Docks*

escaping the recent cholera epidemic. The former home of papermaker Dickenson, called Brook House, was purchased for the purpose.

Charlton still existed as a village up to the Maison Dieu, and Charlton Green was connected to the High Street by Black Horse Lane (now Bridge Street) with its own church by the river, the Red Lion pub, a watermill, Barton Farm and a few cottages. Beyond was countryside until the latter part of the century when Castle Estate and Barton Estate houses appeared.

On the main road to Canterbury (London Road), connecting Charlton to Buckland village, there were some desirable residences, but the area was not completely built up. The turnpike gate across the main road at the junction with Black Horse Lane had only been removed in 1855. The Black Horse hostelry stood where the Eagle now stands, with its very popular tea gardens (later Templar Street and De Burgh Street). This corner was also popular for an entirely different reason: watching public executions until 1839. Black Horse Lane continued across High Street to the little hamlet that existed before 1860, when the bridge over the new railway line caused the road to be realigned to use it; the railway company having failed to gain approval for its preferred level crossing. The large scale development of Tower Hamlets followed.

The ancient church of St. Andrew at Buckland had been restored and altered in 1851/52. It has the distinction of being the only church in Dover's current boundaries to be mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. During the alterations, Buckland worshippers had to walk to the Maison Dieu for church services. There were no trams, of course, until 1896 and even the hourly omnibus service from The Bull to the Pier District did not start until 1881. The omnibus ended its

days as a field shelter between Dover and Canterbury.

Buckland Village was still partially isolated. Buckland schools in London Road date from 1860, although there were church schools earlier in Willow Walk, on the site of Brookfield House. The greyhound racing stadium in Willow Walk was very popular at the time. An annual horse race meeting was also held on Swingate Downs. The lane from London Road along the Coombe Valley had become Union Road following the construction of the Union Workhouse in 1836. At its junction with London Road was a farm on one side and Kingsford's Brewery on the other. Across the road was Buckland flour mill, still powered by its water wheel, with Harding's brewery behind it.

Dover was well off for breweries. At the other end of town was Archcliffe Fort brewery, Satchell's in Limekiln Street, Leney and Evenden's midtown, Poulter's off Russell Street and yet another at Maxton. There was no shortage of public houses either, with one per 100 inhabitants compared with one per 262 in 1933. Other amusements were few, although there was a Clarence Theatre in Snargate Street, the predecessor of The Hippodrome. Travelling theatrical companies, concerts and amateur dramatic productions could be seen at the Wellington Hall and the Apollonian Hall, also in Snargate Street. School entertainments were not at all frivolous; plays were excluded. On one occasion parents were entertained by a dissertation on astronomy with a number of small boys each giving information about a star or planet.

Reading opportunities were many: the Proprietary Library in Castle Street, Working Men's Institute in Market Street, the Philosophical Society's library, a reading room in the newly built Museum, Waterer's Library on Marine Parade, Batchellor's

Library at New Bridge and Licence's Marine Library in Woolcomber Street.

Cricket was played on the meadows where Beaconsfield Road was built. Football does not get a mention, but skating was popular in hard winters, using Priory Ponds, at Effingham, as well as Maison Dieu Fields, which were deliberately flooded for the purpose.



*Early Ferry at Admiralty Pier*

Cross channel traffic in 1858 was carried out by Mr. Churchward's local company on behalf of the government's Mail Service, although the South Eastern Railway also operated a vessel to Calais. The Admiralty Pier was not completed until 1875, but it was put into partial use in 1851. The paddle steamers, assisted at times with a lug sail, took on average one hour and twenty-five minutes for the crossing.

The Crimean War had ended in 1856, but what we call the Indian Mutiny was not over, although Queen Victoria's speech proroguing parliament, reported in the first issue of the Dover Express on 7th August 1858, expressed hopes for an early end. That happened and in January 1859, 'in the still dilapidated Maison Dieu', officers of the Dover garrison gave a dramatic entertainment to raise funds to provide a window, which is a memorial to soldiers who fell in both conflicts.

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At Dover Marina Hotel  
Dover Waterfront, Waterloo Crescent, CT17 9BP

Price £30.95 per person to include arrival drink, three course meal, tea, or coffee and entertainment. Wine or other drinks may be ordered and purchased at the venue. The lunchtime entertainment will be clarified in the November newsletter. Arrival drinks will be available from 12.30 pm. Lunch will begin promptly at 1 pm finish at 4pm. Please select from the following menu,

- Welcome Drink:** a) Bucks Fizz  
b) Fruit Juice
- Starter:** c) Winter Vegetable Soup (v) herb crackers  
d) Finest Quality Smoked Salmon Celeriac remoulade, lilliput capers  
e) Ardennes Pâté Rustic toast & red onion chutney
- Main:** f) Roast Free-Range Turkey served with all the trimmings and roasting juices  
g) Roast Beef served with all the trimmings and roasting juices  
h) Grilled Sea Bass with a tomato, olive & caper sauce, vegetables & potato wedges  
i) Nut Roast (v) roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables & vegetable jus
- Dessert:** j) Traditional Plum Pudding (v)with brandy sauce  
k) Warm Chocolate Brownie (v) with vanilla ice cream  
l) Apple and Almond Crumble with vanilla ice cream

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To book your place(s), please complete the form below and return it together with your cheque made payable to THE DOVER SOCIETY to the Social Secretary, Mrs. Lyn Smith, 2 Redlands Court, London Road, River, Dover CT17 0TW. If paying by BACS the details are: The Dover Society, account no. 80864803, Barclays Bank Dover, sort code 20-02-62, giving your name and FL24 as reference. If you require a table for more than eight people, please contact Lyn Smith. The form can also be returned by email to [steve.lyn@uwclub.net](mailto:steve.lyn@uwclub.net). Payment no later than 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Dover Society Festive Lunch – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024 £30.95 per person**

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Telephone: ..... Email .....

Please select for each person, your arrival drink and choice of menu

Name(s)	Arrival Drink	Starter	Main	Dessert
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No. of places @ £30.95 each..... Signed .....

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Photography  Any other interests or expertise .....



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# The River Dour

Deborah Gasking

Fresh air and exercise have long been recommended as a way to feel physically and mentally better. For many, nature provides a sanctuary, a place to find peace and serenity. Our beautiful river can thus offer plentiful opportunities.

A strong connection with nature can facilitate a close relationship (an emotional attachment) to our natural surroundings. Research shows that those who are more connected with nature are usually happier in life and more likely to report feeling their lives are worthwhile. It can generate many positive emotions, such as calmness, joy and creativity, and can enhance concentration. Nature has a very wide definition. It can mean green spaces like parks, woodland or forests, and blue spaces like rivers, wetlands, beaches or canals.

Pencester Gardens, in the very heart of our town, provides oodles of opportunities to connect with nature. It is the best place in our urban environment to experience our delightful river. Further upstream, at Kearsney Abbey, Russell Gardens and Bushy Ruff, we have possibly the absolute best places in South East Kent to connect with blue and green spaces.

Evidence has shown that natural spaces, especially those within the urban confines, can lower exposure to air pollution, extreme



*River Dour 1906*

heat and noise, increase opportunities for physical activity and social engagement, and decrease stress and depression as people make contact with nature. Rivers, in particular, have been linked to beneficial outcomes for our mental wellbeing. Thus, urban natural spaces are great potential buffers to protect and promote human health, physically, mentally and socially. Additionally, literature suggests that a neighbourhood waterscape is more beneficial for psychological and mental health than a neighbourhood green space.

Researchers are now beginning to look at the health benefits of living near water. So far, studies have shown that this can lower risk of premature death, also lower the risk of obesity, as well as enhancing mental health and wellbeing.

However (yes, there's always a downside), cleanliness, such as the absence of litter, in natural spaces is also a factor in how much our mental health benefits from spending time outside. Cleaner nature areas are linked to lower rates of depression. This demonstrates how effective White Cliffs Countryside's regular litter picks are, not just all about nature, but they enhance our welfare too.

Interestingly, researchers studying the effects of blue space delivered through virtual reality have also found that people see it as restorative, fascinating, and preferable to a built-up environment. This shows how technology could be used as a way of studying how being near water affects people.

Did you know: – in England and Wales, people have access to a network of over 2,000 miles (3,218 km) of canals and rivers.

# Les Trois Fourchettes

Patricia Allen

The incredible and deeply moving story of the owner of one of these personal objects.... a fork.

The story started when Alan Lee on behalf of the Dover Society received an email from Herve' Savary a retired French Gendarmerie Officer (Major).

*"I devote part of my free time to carrying out research on the fighting (last stand) which took place in June 1940 during the battle of Saint-Valery-en-Caux (Normandie). The 51st were captured. I research family descendants, write articles in local newspapers and organise ceremonies. I am in contact in particular with The Gordon Highlanders, Black Watch and Duke of Wellington's Regiment.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about my extraordinary discovery that occurred a few weeks ago concerning a soldier (from Ramsgate) who fell in June 1940, declared "MISSING" and who appears on the Ramsgate Book of Remembrance and the Dover Memorial.*

*I live a few kilometres from the places and villages where fierce fighting took place in the pocket of St-Valery-en-Caux on the 11th and 12th June 1940. A retired Officer, I consult the registers of town halls and the Army historical service, cross-check information with archives and books and finally collect testimonies and organise commemorative ceremonies.*

*A few weeks ago, I was handed 3 forks which had been found by a resident of Houdetot where the 1st Black Watch Battalion fought on June 11th and 12th 1940. (twenty Black Watch Highlanders are buried in Houdetot Communal Cemetery). Two of these forks*

*bore the inscription BW (Black Watch) and the numbers 4095 and 4211. I finally found the key for me to succeed.*

*The owner of one of these moving personal objects was Private Robert Balfour of the 1st Black Watch Battalion, number 2754095. I discovered that this soldier was "MISSING" on June 12th 1940, in Houdetot and is commemorated on the Dunkirk, Ramsgate and Dover Memorials.*

*Now in touch with Robert's nephew who is living in Broadstairs, I am organising the official delivery of this registered fork back to its family in Kent.*

*Eighty-four years after the terrible and sometimes forgotten battles of 1940, this exceptional and moving find only reinforces my desire to commemorate the history of these fighters. I hope you liked this story and I remain at your disposal for any further information on the Balfour family."*

Further research revealed that Robert Horne Balfour was born 2nd October 1914 in Perth, Scotland to Thomas Balfour 1879-1958 formerly a soldier in the Household Cavalry and Beatrice Louise Screen 1882-1926. Robert was their third born son after John, born 1906, and George, born in 1910.



Fourchettes BW Mappen et Webb 1939

In 1917 their daughter Elizabeth Margaret was born.

When he was of age, Robert enlisted in the military, joining the Black Watch Regiment and was stationed in Dover, Kent where he met a local girl.

On 9th January 1939 Robert Balfour was married in Dover at Christ Church to Doris May Dawkins, the daughter of James Henry Dawkins 1873-1947 a dock labourer and Faith Hessegrave Allison 1878-1944. The wedding was reported in the Dover Express and East Kent News on Friday 13th January 1939.

“The bridegroom and the best man were dressed in the full Highland uniform of their regiment; the Black Watch and two pipers played the bride and bridegroom out of church. The cars were supplied by Messrs. Lewis Bros.”

In the 1939 Register newlywed Doris Balfour and her baby son James Robert, born 29th June, were living with her parents at 26 Adrian Street, Dover. Her husband Robert was away fighting for his country.

The following year Robert and Doris welcomed another son, David. In June 1940 Private Robert Balfour was reported as missing in action. In the Dundee Courier and Advertiser of Wednesday 13th 1944 it was reported that ... “Private Robert Balfour who had been reported as missing since June 1940 was killed in action at St. Valery.” He was 25 years of age.

On 2nd February 1944 widow Doris Balfour married Josef Antoni Borysiewicz, a Polish born citizen. They lived with their children very happily in Ramsgate where Doris died in 2014 aged 94 years. Today we remember Robert Horne Balfour ...GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS **Ann Burke**

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership,  
there is still time to renew for this year.

We have gained eight new members since March 2024:

Katherine Williams of Chilham, Kent

Camilla Otaki of Dover

Michael Parkinson of Dover

Penelope James of Canterbury

Yvonne Parker Brown of Dover

Brian McGee of Dover

Bob Henderson of Dover

Mr R Clifton of Dover

We sadly heard of the death of Mr T Wheildon Brown who passed away in August 2023.

We send our condolences to Mr Clifton, his friend, and all his relatives.

# Charles Chitty and Chitty's Mill

Derek Leach

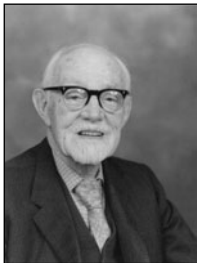
Looking through Joe Harman's local history archive I came across the recollections of Charles Chitty, written in 1972 when he was ninety-eight. Joe's wife, Rosa, was Charles' secretary for some years and he always sent them a Christmas card until his death in 1979 aged one hundred and four. His family owned Chitty's Mill by the river in Bridge Street.

Charles was very well known in Dover and Deal and when he died Joe kept the local newspaper articles published at the time. These and Charles' memoir provide a good picture of his life.

Charles was described as indomitable, a philanthropist, photographer, active Unitarian, lifelong Liberal, miller, Justice of the Peace and YMCA supporter for half a century.

Born when Gladstone was Prime Minister, his childhood was spent in Deal when the only way to get to Dover was on foot, on horseback or by a coach and four horses.

Charles attributed his long life to keeping active and abstaining from alcohol and tobacco. An active member of Dover Temperance Council, he always claimed that he gave up alcohol before he was three



Charles Chitty

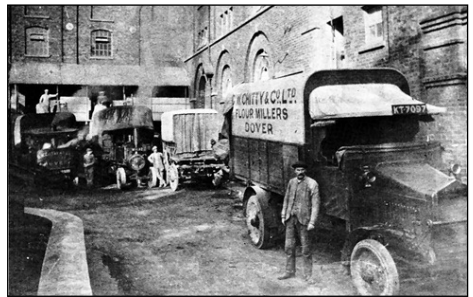
because his mother used to give him sips of ale when he was a baby. His father, however, was a staunch teetotaler and Charles followed suit.

He studied engineering in Leeds and after university

went to Switzerland to learn the milling business before joining the family's milling business in 1892. He, with his father and cousin, became partners in G. W. Chitty & Co., where he became expert in modern milling. 'It was hard, working from 7am to 7pm six days a week; on Sundays I was expected to go to church twice and to help at Sunday School in the afternoon. My father even expected me to go to his political and temperance meetings. I had no free time at all!' On his twenty-first birthday he was not allowed time off to cycle to Deal for a birthday tea at his grandmother's.

Facing strong competition, Charles made the mill more efficient and started to produce self-raising flour. This required a certain chemical to be added which the mill produced itself, converting old stables into laboratories. When the patent ran out after the First World War, Charles found that the flour quality was improved by heating.

The government took over all flour mills during the Second World War and Chitty's mill worked night and day seven days a week. In 1943 the mill caught fire during shelling; part of the mill was burnt out.



Chitty's Mill Yard (John Bavington Jones)

Although plans were made to rebuild, the decision was taken to sell the business to a national company, which then closed in the 1950s. Charles, already over seventy, retired, but the brand name of Chitty's Self-Raising Flour lived on for some years.

Charles loved to travel and visited most countries in Europe, especially Switzerland where he enjoyed mountaineering and made many friends over the years.

At seventeen the family moved to Castle Avenue in Dover, where he lived until moving to a care home in very old age. He enjoyed a long and happy marriage with his wife Marian, but they were never blessed with children. Marian, whom he called Birdie, died in 1945. Charles was still

driving at ninety-two and was President of the Dover Liberals from 1924 until 1972. When one hundred, his remaining ambition was to see a Liberal MP representing Dover and Deal.

Charles' father was a Unitarian. When a boy he asked his mother, a Baptist, what that was, she replied that they were people who did not believe in Jesus. Despite that Charles became a Unitarian and in 1924 became Chairman of the Dover Unitarian Church in Adrian Street, saying that he was tied to no creed, free to believe what seemed to him to be true. Charles wrote his own epitaph in his memoir: 'I hope that I have not been unfair to or misjudged anyone. I have no enemy. I have experienced great kindness from many quarters and from many friends.



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# Dover Train Ferry Dock

**Joe Harman**

*Written in 1988*

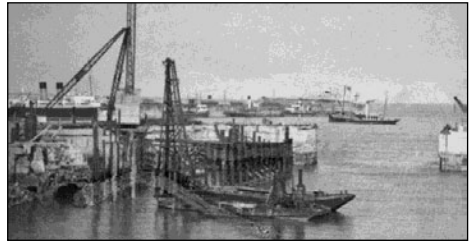
In 1933 not far from the Crosswall terminus of the Dover trams a start was made on a large engineering project. I had discarded my old no.2 Brownie camera for a vest pocket-folding Kodak and began to take pictures of the work going on. This camera would fit snugly under my tramway uniform and was to hand if needed to capture some event. Our terminus was right outside the Hôtel de Paris and this caused me to ask the landlady, Mrs. Cone, if I could go on to the roof to take some of my pictures and to this she readily agreed.

One day, when I was on late shift, I clambered out on to the roof to record the work that had begun on the construction of the dock gates. The resulting pictures were shown to some of the workmen and they suggested that I should show them to the foreman. I was duly escorted into the presence of Mr. Hardgraft; he was delighted and asked me to get some copies done. He knew that the bosses in Glasgow would be interested as no official photographs had been taken. I was then accepted and as a result was able to wander in and out and add to my collection of pictures of the work in progress. I took photographs of groups of the workers and was able to sell postcards at sixpence a time, which almost covered the cost of my films! I made some good friends among the workers and they kept me informed of progress and also when to be available.

One day I was warned off by a new overseer, but it was my lucky day as a short while later one of the one hundred and fifty foot derricks collapsed. I must confess that next day I slipped in to photograph the twisted remains. I continued with my recording until the day before the Southern Railway took possession and managed a shot of the first trucks being shunted on to the Hampton Ferry.

At the beginning it was planned to build a coffer dam and construct the dock inside. The pile drivers began work and chalk was rammed down between sheet piling. The engineers, however, chose to ignore the views of local seafarers on the effects of the easterly gales. We did get a sustained blow that year and the coffer dam was in a right mess. A fresh start had to be made and they called on the services of Sapper, the Dover Harbour Board's floating crane, to remove the twisted piles. I came to work one day, and was told that Sapper had pulled itself under water because the piling would not budge.

Ten-ton concrete blockswere then laid round the outside with the help of divers. A caisson weighing five-hundred and twenty-five tons had been made on the Tyne; this was floated down to go across the entrance of the dock. Then a number of pumps were placed in position, but due to fissures in the chalk they could not keep pace with the inflow of water. In January 1935 a special dredger was brought in and this gradually removed the faulty layer of chalk. It took until the autumn to finish the job. The divers then went down and levelled off the floor of the dock and assisted in the laying of concrete blocks until the whole of it was impervious to further seepage.



*Construction of the Train Ferry Dock Dover*



This caused delay and extra expense, and the special vessels, Hampton, Shepperton and Twickenham, arrived too early. These ships had coal-fired boilers, until converted to oil in 1947. At first they were all under the British flag, but in 1937 the Twickenham was sold to the French.

During 1935 a wall had been built across part of the Tidal Harbour to reclaim land for the railway tracks. The infill was shingle from the beach at Dungeness, brought in by rail. When this was completed it was possible to start on the dock gates close to the Crosswall footbridge and old fish market. Staging was built out into the Tidal Harbour to make a platform for the construction of the sill on which the gates were to be hinged. I had the privilege of going down inside the sill while it was being assembled.

I could have made good use of ear muffs and I still marvel at the skill of the gangs as they tossed the hot rivets from the forge to the fixing place, using pneumatic hammers. Then there was the day when the structure was lowered into the water by large jacks, which had been placed on massive beams to carry this out. It was then towed into the Granville Dock. Mr. Hardgraft was in the forefront of the operation to get it safely into the dock.

While all this was going on they had been completing the dock gates, adding the hinge portions of greenheart timber, which was shaped with the use of adzes. The first gate was launched about six months later down a special ramp. The rear portion was raised and chocks put in place, but I was unable to be present. However, I was in a good position for the second launch in July 1935. Between the launchings there was a serious accident when a steam railway crane toppled over the seawall.

The dock was now taking shape and they took the caisson away to float the sill and gates inside. The contractors had now erected the

pump house with a pit down below sea level. It was necessary to make an entrance for seawater to be fed to these pumps and a small coffer dam was built outside the wall. I was enticed to go down to inspect this effort, and possibly take a photograph. This was out of the question as it was very dark and the water was gushing through the sheet piling. The sill had now been placed in position and filled with concrete. The gates were then floated into their slots and the cables connected.

The linkspan was also being erected, which could only be engaged when the water level had been adjusted. The railway tracks had been laid and a transit shed built. The old customs building survived among all the activity and is still there. On September 28th 1936 the Hampton ferry was manoeuvred into the dock and the first railway trucks were shunted aboard.

On March 23rd 1988 I was able to go with other members of the Chartered Institute of Transport on a visit to see the old dock again, and it brought back vivid memories of some fifty years earlier. We were able to see the Cambridge ferry come in and one of the gates rising out of the water. We were then taken down to see the new berth, which was due to become operational on May 12th 1988. This berth is near to the gun turret on the Admiralty Pier and one hopes that it will stand up to gales similar to the one we had in 1934. It came through the hurricane in October 1987, but at that time much of the structure was not complete. Contractors' huts were demolished and railway lines wrapped round lamp-posts!

No doubt someone more expert might say that I have not used the right terms for some of the engineering work, but I am sure the friends I made in the ferry dock construction team would approve this record of their achievements. Sadly, when the new berth takes over the old dock will be filled in.

# Dover Outreach Centre

**Judith Shilling**

**Chair of Trustees, Dover Outreach Centre**

The aim of Dover Outreach Centre is to support people on their journey to a better life. We believe in giving people in need a hand up rather than a hand out, and we offer this in a number of ways.

## **Drop in Centre**

The centre is open five days a week and has a range of facilities for anyone who visits. These range from showers and a laundry service to access to computers and phones, as well as several health services. We have recently engaged a resettlement support worker who helps foreign nationals return to their country.

## **Winter Night Shelter**

The night shelter operates from December to March in a ten-bedroomed property in Dover. Meals are prepared and delivered by teams of volunteers. Most residents are found somewhere to live before they leave. Outside the night shelter months, the rooms are used by DDC for emergency accommodation.

## **Accommodation**

We lease three properties in addition to the one running the night shelter, which offer a total of forty-four beds. Victory House and Roman Quay are for those with high support needs, and Oban House is for those with medium/low support needs. We are actively looking to find properties that our residents can move on to where they can thrive, living independently, with minimal support being the goal.

## **Sunrise Café**

The Café has been open since 2022 and operates a “pay what you can afford” approach. It is open to all, and we have a

good number of loyal customers as well as those who have no way of paying for food.

## **Foodbank**

We've recently brought the Dover Foodbank under our umbrella. It continues to provide food for those in an emergency, and last year it moved into permanent premises at the Charlton Centre.

## **The Bridge**

On Sunday afternoons, this group meets at Victory House to share faith stories and discuss Christianity. It is currently running an Alpha Course.

## **Personnel**

We have nineteen employees (fifteen full time) across the organisation and governance is offered by seven trustees along with our Chief Executive Officer.



*Some of the volunteers at Dover Foodbank*

# Reverend John Ripsher

## The Story Behind The Headstone

Derek Leach

In a prominent position in St Mary's Cemetery there is a fine black marble headstone featuring a cockerel. Although commemorating a man who died in 1907, it was not installed until one hundred years later, in 2007. This is unusual to say the least but is explained by a fascinating story.

Born in 1840, John Ripsher attended the parish church of All Hallows and ran a bible class for local children. In 1882 he created a football club in Tottenham to help keep boys off the streets. What could the team be called? The Tottenham area was associated with the Percy family and one of the family was known as Harry Hotspur, so John named the team Hotspur. He established a home base for the club, providing kit and equipment as well as spiritual guidance. John was also the club treasurer and became the first Club President (for 11 years). The club was soon playing other teams and was noted for its fair play and sportsmanship.

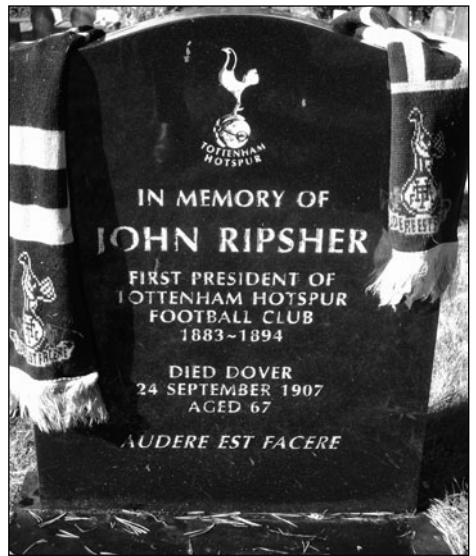
It turned professional in 1895 as Tottenham Hotspur. Due to ill health, John moved, in 1894, to Dover, to live with his sister who ran the Diamond Hotel. With failing health, he fell on hard times; blind and penniless he went into the Union Workhouse, died in 1907 and was buried in a pauper's grave, marked only with a number.

Forgotten for a century, John's grave was discovered by Peter Lupson when researching the origins of famous soccer teams for his book Thank God for Football. This led to the Tottenham Tribute Trust, which exists to help needy former players

and staff, to fund a headstone in memory of John Ripsher incorporating the Spurs emblem and motto.

The headstone was unveiled at a dedication service on 24th September 2007 attended by the Spurs Executive Director, Paul Barber, club officials and supporters. In his speech Paul Barber stated that 'John Ripsher, father and founder, was being brought back into the Spurs family after so many years away.' Dover Mayor, Bob Markham, who hosted a civic reception after the ceremony, said that 'Dover was proud to adopt John.'

Relatives of Walter Tull also attended. Walter was one of Britain's first black footballers when he played for Spurs before World War One.



Rev John Ripsher Headstone

# The Enthusiasm of a Local Volunteer for Dover Community Radio

—Peter Sherred—

Has anyone heard of Dover Community Radio (DCR)? Does anyone listen to DCR? Two pertinent questions that could be directed to Dover Society members. What exactly is DCR? Well, it is a local community radio station the operation of which is entirely determined by the commitment and dedication of passionate enthusiasts all of whom work voluntarily. It was founded in 2010. An initial meeting was held in the White Horse Public House in St. James Street, Dover and a steering group met several times over the following year or so at The Railway Club in River, now known as the Phoenix Social Club. When it finally emerged DCR mostly served as a “Podcasting” service on the Internet. DCR is a voluntarily run Community Interest Company (CIC). Those greatly involved with it are always having to seek funding simply to cover the expenses of the operation, currently costing in the region of £10,000 per annum to operate. DCR does receive occasional Local Authority and Government Grants, but they are never enough to maintain operation of the radio. As a result, the volunteers must sell advertising on-air simply to keep DCR alive. Perhaps DCR has been a little-known operation to many people in and around Dover, and that may be a reason why it has to struggle to survive.

Martin Turner joined DCR in 2011 and enjoyed pre-recording radio shows which were listened to via the DCR website. When Martin and his wife Linda's daughter, Kelly, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer (DSRCT) he paused his radio activity in 2015 but rejoined DCR in 2018, a year or so after the tragic loss of Kelly whose death, caused by the cancer, occurred when she was just

seventeen years old. Those who walk the Marina Curve will see a memorial bench for Kelly as they walk from the landward side of the Curve on the pathway running alongside the Marina basin and not far behind the new building which houses the Marina operations centre. The bench is usually easily identified by bunches of flowers tied to its back and on its arms.

Martin has been a radio presenter since 1978 when he joined the Gateway Hospital Broadcasting Service (Dover's Buckland Hospital Radio) and where he served for 20 years. He has presented on Radio Boulogne Littoral (France), Atlanta Radio (SW 49m band), White Cliffs Sound (Dover), Shepway Sound (Folkestone), Coastline FM Dover (where he was also Station Administration Manager), Radio Seagull (Harlingen Netherland), European Klassik Rock, Radio Caroline (on Astra Analogue), Atlantis 87.7FM Tenerife, Hastings Rock Radio and he broadcasts regularly on DCR (104.9Fm). He



*Martin Turner*

has a good deal of experience of radio presentation under his belt.

DCR's main on-air studio is currently located in Leighton Road Dover. DCR's studio equipment generously came from the BBC World Service. Many of DCR's presenters operate their 'live' shows from home studios - Martin Turner's home studio is in Elms Vale. As mentioned earlier, Martin joined DCR in 2011.

After their daughter Kelly passed away in 2017 due to DSRCT Cancer, which offers no chemo possibilities or cure, Martin and Linda continue to campaign for funds, to help the Institute of Cancer Research work towards an effective chemotherapy or a cure for DSRCT Cancer. Donations to the cause may be made at [www.justgiving.com/kellyturnerfoundation2017](http://www.justgiving.com/kellyturnerfoundation2017)

When Kelly was diagnosed, Martin paused his radio activity in 2015 and retired from his 46 years of service with H M Customs (Border Force) due to illness. He was able to concentrate on providing rock shows for radio which he continues to do during his stint on Monday nights. Martin became the Advertising Manager for DCR around the time of DCR winning its FM Licence (on 104.9FM) towards the end of 2021. Martin finds the selling of advertising a very challenging proposition! DCR is always seeking voluntary help - can Society members help in this regard? More details at the end of this article. DCR attends many local events where its volunteers try to fund-raise.

Despite all the challenges confronting DCR it has been able to operate 24/7 365 days of the year on 104.9FM since May 2022. It is also on the Internet and has a new website - [www.dcrfm.co.uk](http://www.dcrfm.co.uk). DCR covers a significant local area from Sandwich to Dover on the coast and inland towards the Barham/Bridge areas where Radio "X" takes over on 104.9FM.

The scope of DCR is vast as it is also available worldwide on Wi-Fi Radios, Phone Apps and if Society members have Alexa, they simply have to ask Alexa for "Dover Community Radio".

DCR offers live shows from 07:00 each weekday morning and on afternoons and evenings throughout the week. Martin's live show is heard on Mondays 2100-0000. DCR endeavours to "reflect the sounds and voices of the White Cliffs Country." Importantly DCR can promote local events which The Dover Society should do well to remember. All that is required is to email event flyers to [website@DCRFm.co.uk](mailto:website@DCRFm.co.uk) This channel of promotion is a useful tool for all local clubs, societies, and organisations. DCR is worthy of support as it promotes the people and town of Dover and its surrounds by offering local news, views and music. It deserves support from Dover and its inhabitants.

Opportunities to be involved with DCR include:

Help with administration, publicity, fundraising and supporting events and local activities including Live Outside Broadcasts, in addition to presenting shows.

If Society members have any knowledge of businesses who may wish to advertise on DCR, or make a voluntary contribution, they are encouraged to contact Martin Turner who has now been with local radio for many years and remains DCR's advertising manager. [Advertising@DCRFm.co.uk](mailto:Advertising@DCRFm.co.uk) If any Society member wishes to advertise on DCR (104.9FM) they can contact Martin by email at [martin@dcrfm.co.uk](mailto:martin@dcrfm.co.uk) As an alternative use [Advertising@DCRFm.co.uk](mailto:Advertising@DCRFm.co.uk) Martin can receive texts on 07761 775005.

One can also Join "Friends of DCR". [www.DCRFm.co.uk](http://www.DCRFm.co.uk) Are any Dover Society members interested in presenting live radio shows? If so, make contact with DCR and also Martin.

# Reflections on a Life in Local Government

Lesley Cumberland

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of Dover District Council, when the three boroughs of Dover, Deal and Sandwich were all incorporated into the new district, along with Dover Rural District Council and most of Eastry RDC. Long retired, I was unaware of this milestone, but, once alerted, much of my career in Local Government flashed before my eyes! Patchy memories were at once distilled in chats with a good friend whom I met on my first day as an articled clerk in the Town Clerk's office at New Bridge House, Dover, in summer 1965. After fifty years we should all be well aware of how the local government system is set up in this country. The dramatic 1974 change and further proposed changes in the late 1990s (which never materialised) have been well reported in this magazine and the press. Even so, for someone who experienced it first hand, retirement has dimmed much, and I offer you some random memories that remain.

What prompted an only child from a working-class family in the East Midlands to get a degree in law from King's College, London was a mystery to my family. However, seeking further training in local government towards becoming a solicitor was clearer. It paid a living wage during training, unlike much of the private sector at the time. As I waited for my final exam results, an advertisement on the front page of *The Times*, commencing 'South Coast Town Clerk seeks articled clerk ...!', prompted me to seek employment out of London, and the rest is history.

With its castle, port and close association with the Cinque Ports, Dover seemed a prestigious place to be. I was made very welcome by the councillors and staff,

especially the typists at New Bridge who seized the chance to adopt the new fashion for miniskirts, forbidden until I turned up in one (just over the knee). I had to learn about the committee system: there were twenty-four councillors in all, six of whom had been elected Aldermen and wore red fur-trimmed robes on ceremonial occasions. James A Johnson, the Town Clerk of fearsome reputation, presided over them at Council and Committee Meetings and kept us all in order. I should add that he was always kind to me and, I learnt, carried out many acts of a charitable nature in the town, which remained private.

After two years learning the ropes, I spent six months at a law college in Liverpool, where I did my final exams. I returned to Dover to find the Town Clerk on the brink of retirement, his Deputy (Ian Gill) about to replace him and a new articled clerk (also a woman) already appointed and in situ. My options were limited. Either look elsewhere for a position or become Deputy Town Clerk, if they would have me. I became probably the youngest Deputy Town Clerk in the country. Within a few years the much-heralded Local Government Act 1972 came into force, and it was all change.

The five local authorities thrown together by the Act had already appointed a number of officers (including me) to prepare the disparate councils for the event, whilst continuing to run the existing ones as before. Each council had its own method of doing things and the integration to one system had to be agreed and ready in time. The Local Land Charges Register, for instance, which solicitors search whenever a private property is about to change hands, were kept in five different paper



*Lesley Cumberland 1974*

systems in 1972, but in good time had all been incorporated into the single Kalamazoo system favoured by the largest constituent authority. Overwhelmed by paperwork and archives, it was time to get to grips with IT.

KCC made a brave offer to produce an integrated, online, computerised version of all thirteen district registers of electors in Kent. Eventually, they succeeded, but at a far higher cost than anticipated – the shape of things to come! The new Dover District Council took office in April 1974 with fifty-six members (since reduced to thirty-six), again with offices scattered throughout the district. This meant more travelling, more committees and much more political intrigue from the beginning. Life in the office was rarely dull for any department.

I remember we coped with ever-reducing resources as central government clamped down, over time, on all expenditure. Early on, we lost control of business rates, and matching grants for expenditure from government rapidly diminished and disappeared. Then came privatisation, compulsory in the Thatcher years, so that many services are now provided by the private sector, with the public sector footing the bill. Change is periodically needed in any organisation and can and should be welcomed, so long as somewhere someone is keeping a reckoning. When further amendments to council powers were mooted, it was then my personal belief that we would be better off with a much larger Unitary Authority, with

virtually all powers (education, social services etc), much like Medway Council and many larger towns and cities have now adopted. However, it would have had to be based, say, in Canterbury, as it would have acted as a regional authority in place of KCC, and the report of the investigating Government Commission quashed the idea on the basis that consultations had found little appetite for such a change.

In recent years of retirement, I have wondered whether public interest in local government has been diminished to near oblivion by increasingly larger authorities, with numerous unpaid councillors trying to serve their electorate in the face of seemingly hostile governments. To have purpose and clout, it is still my belief that we do need larger authorities, but with fewer councillors, paid an attractive fee, (not a salary), for serving. If one MP can serve fifty thousand voters or more, why should not say, three to five members elected by each joining authority, provide, in whatever way they choose, semi-regional government? Part of the problem is lack of interest and less available information, caused in part by the reduced presence and interest of the press, battling as they are with new on-line means of communication. At least the local parish councils would remain, but I am not sure if they are any better known or talked about by their constituents.

Could a more strategic authority revive the public's interest? Or should we stand back and let things stay as they are? Has local government passed its heyday, with almost no one knowing their local councillor, never mind their county council representative, or was that always the case? This needs fresher brains than mine. I shall return to my armchair and leave further discussion, if needed, to those better placed and interested.

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# Terry Sutton a Personal Appreciation

Peter Sherred

During the early days of April 2024 tributes were made to one to whom the Dover Mercury referred as “a legendary journalist”, a member of the Dover Society and its former Chairman, a certain Terry Sutton MBE. On 11th April, the Rotary Club of Dover organised a celebratory dinner at the Holiday Inn Whitfield where several tributes were given by people who were dubbed “Team Terry”. I was privileged to be one of them. Others included John Angell, Honorary Freeman of the Town, Derek Leach, former Chairman of the Dover Society and now its President, Graham Tutthill, also Honorary Freeman of the Town and former colleague (and competitor) of Terry in the local journalistic world and James Rouse of the Rotary Club of South Foreland,



*Terry Sutton*

The tributes covered differing aspects of Terry’s life although inevitably much overlapped. The next day, 12th April, a memorial service was held in St Mary’s Church where those attending heard tributes given by Councillor Gordon Cowan, Chairman of Dover District Council and former Mayor of Dover, Sue Jones, the current Town Mayor of Dover, Mike Field, a former work colleague and friend of Terry, and Deacon Barry Barton of St Paul’s Roman Catholic Church in Maison Dieu Road who spoke of Terry’s engagement with ‘Christians Together in Dover.’ Such tribute events marked out Terry as a very special person in the life and history of Dover and recognised that with his death the Town had lost a premier supporter of Dover, the town into which he

had been born in March 1929.

I do not know if Terry had subscribed to the view that journalists, writers, and artists (creative people) pray that work will last to the end but what I do know is that in his case it did. Not long after he retired (so called) I was chatting with him and said

“Terry, shouldn’t you now stop producing articles for the Dover Express? After all, you are retired.” His reply was “Peter, when I am gone the Dover Express should have at least six months’ worth of material from me in its possession so it can continue to print articles for at least that period of time after I have gone”! Time will tell if we continue to receive thoughts from Terry beyond the grave!

But that response seemed to sum up the man I was privileged to call a friend, for Terry let his work do the talking. He did not follow the route of self-promotion and self-importance to which so many attach significance in our current age. Terry had two important factors that worked to his advantage – longevity and a great memory. Little wonder people consulted him and when they did, they were assured of an authoritative response.

Our paths crossed so often over fifty plus years -- so that we became friends. I guess what truly cemented our friendship was the fact we both harboured an abiding love for this town of our birth, and, in our differing ways and individually or collectively, we took every opportunity to promote its interests and endeavoured to protect its history for posterity. Both of us were born in Dover, both worked in Dover,

both lived in Dover, both loved Dover. It seemed inevitable we would become friends. Interestingly, we both spent some time away from Dover during our lives: Terry when he was evacuated as part of Barton Road School to Ynysddu and Pontllanfraith in South Wales during the Second World War and I when I first found paid employment in London. We both returned to Dover to contribute to the life of the town.

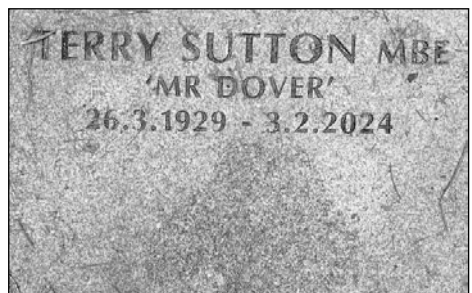
In addition to being Rotarians together in the same club over many years (as well as being members of other organisations and bodies including the Dover Society) three areas of activity, during the decades we knew each other, stand out. When I was the Deputy Director of Legal Services of Dover District Council one of my tasks was to attend committee meetings and occasionally, when the director was absent, council meetings. In the corner of the meeting rooms would be a table with two chairs one of which would be occupied by Terry the other by his competitor, Graham 'Scoop' Tutthill. I often wondered just how much, if at all, people appreciated the work Terry undertook (and the sacrifices he made) so that they could be properly informed about the civic life of the district and town and its implications for them. He sacrificed so many evenings to his profession and the people of Dover were the beneficiaries of his commitment and diligence. His wife Danielle and their daughter Josephine were deprived of his presence when he was out at various evening meetings. Sacrifice was made by all three family members.

It took a great talent to understand what was going on at some of these local authority meetings. But then to condense it and produce it in a coherent form so people could understand matters that related directly to them required great

journalistic skill. Interestingly, Terry never felt the need to dramatize his reports (unlike some journalists of today) preferring to produce lucid and readable reports for the Dover Express. If there was something Terry did not understand or did not follow, he would telephone me to seek clarification to ensure his report was, as far as possible, factually correct.

A second area where we frequently connected was when I was President of the Chamber of Commerce. Again, he would attend chamber meetings, (along with 'Scoop'), and afterwards we would meet to go through the issues, so he was armed with the correct detail for his excellent and impartial reports – all for the benefit of the people of Dover.

The third area of engagement between us was when in private practice I undertook a significant caseload of court matters. When attending the magistrates' court in Dover in the Town Hall the press reporters would sit just below the magistrates' bench and ahead of the advocates' seats. Terry has spoken about his engagement with the court process many times. He would faithfully report on the proceedings but, and this was important, he knew where and what he could report without challenge. If he had doubt, he would telephone me afterwards, so his report was



*Terry Sutton Plaque*

factually correct and within legal boundaries. He admitted to the fact that his name (rather than just his initials) was inscribed on the surface of the table he worked at, as was his father's name. It simply confirmed my suspicions that his initials, at least, were engraved into the wood of the table at which he was sat! It seemed to be the tradition at the time and no doubt such activity passed the time in quiet moments!

Terry, of necessity, had to engage with many people in his role as local journalist and, of course, a variety of people came within the scope of his radar. A couple are worthy of mention as they highlight the character of Terry Sutton. He was not afraid to stand up to those in power when need arose. Those who remember the days of James A Johnson, Town Clerk (as well as Coroner), will know he could present as a quite intimidating and authoritative character. Certainly, London barristers were apprehensive of a rough ride in any coroner's case over which he was presiding. James A (as he was known) was just one individual with whom Terry came into contact. Terry told me James A once told him "I walk around with a writ in my jacket pocket specially prepared - with your name on it"! Possibly this was said to impress Terry and perhaps to keep him in line but when Terry told me this, I remember asking him how it made him feel and whether it influenced his work. His response was it did not concern him, and it most certainly did not influence how he approached his work at all!

Another individual who challenged Terry caused him more than passing amusement. A member of the business community of the town sailed very close to the wind on many matters. Terry contacted me to say he had received a complaint from this individual about a

report he had written for the Dover Express. When I asked the nature of the complaint Terry said he had written a report, if memory serves me right, about candidates in a local election and had referred to the complainant as an 'entrepreneur'. This person had taken such umbrage at this that he threatened to sue Terry for defamation of character! He clearly did not know what an entrepreneur was!! Terry was tickled pink by this.

Terry was rightly made an Honorary Freeman of the Town of Dover and well deserved his MBE because, in addition to his local focus of work, many national papers were indebted to him for work he submitted to them. He was 'a legendary journalist'. I have no doubt his name will crop up many times in conversations well into the future when people talk about aspects of the town's life, and particularly its history and many in such conversations will not have had my privilege of meeting or knowing him. Dover Society members will no doubt remember him from his attendance at general meetings of the Society when, invariably, he would sit at the front row from where he could make meaningful asides, particularly if someone had said something about the town that was incorrect! Only a year or so ago I was delighted when, as a close friend, this nonagenarian accepted my invitation to join a celebratory family occasion together with Danielle. A lovely group picture was taken of the occasion, and this could possibly be one of the very last occasions when he and Dany were photographed together in public. It is a picture and a memory I treasure. Wrapping up this personal memory I end with these words: 'Rest well Terry, you good and faithful friend, and a person who truly did love Dover.' A legend indeed. Condolences to Danielle and to Josephine and thank you for letting Terry out to play!

# Merril Lilley 1931-2024

Sheila and Jeremy Cope

Merril was Editor of the Dover Society Newsletter for fourteen years, having taken over from Philomena Kennedy who was responsible for producing the first ten issues, the first seven of which were A4 pages stapled together. With the major assistance of Budge Adams, the eighth issue became the booklet which is so familiar to this day and Merrill succeeded Philomena for No.11 in September 1991. Budge and Merrill worked closely together, and it was under Budge's influence that Merrill bought her first computer. Imagine trying to produce such a publication without one now! The role of Editor was supremely suited to Merrill's talents and interest in creative writing and language. Articles were varied and interesting and Merrill drew upon a wide selection of resources, using some gentle arm-twisting in the process. Our Newsletter became an important ambassador for the Society and made a connection with members who were unable to attend meetings and events.

Merril was born into a close-knit community in Pontypool in Gwent. Aunts and grandparents lived nearby and she had a younger brother Colin. At the local Girls' Grammar School, Merrill's main subjects were English, History and Geography and she continued with these at Aberystwyth University choosing PE as a subsidiary subject, having always enjoyed hockey as she was a fast runner. This proved to be a good choice which served Merrill well when applying for subsequent teaching jobs.

While working at a holiday camp in Rhyll during the vacation, Merrill met Eric, her future husband, but in the years before marriage she enjoyed halcyon days, including



*Merril Lilley 1931-2024*

a trip to Paris with a girlfriend and many London theatre performances, as she was living with an aunt in Essex. Merrill's first teaching post was at a comprehensive school in Dagenham, where she was able to engage the pupils with Athletics and Gymnastics. Merrill and Eric, also a teacher, had three children, Derek, Peter and Alison, and remained in the Greater London area, moving homes as the needs of their growing family and promotions dictated. Merrill became a lecturer in English and Primary Studies at Middlesex Polytechnic and with the children approaching adulthood, she and Eric agreed to an amicable divorce.

Sometime later Merrill joined the Jane Austen dating society. One may imagine why the name appealed. There she met Bruce, a widower. After a few meetings, Bruce surprised Merrill by booking a room at the hotel in Cala D'Or, Majorca, where she was staying with Alison and her friend. Their subsequent marriage surprised no-one. Merrill's brother Colin and his family had settled in Cala D'Or and Merrill and Bruce spent many summers there, eventually buying a holiday home of their own nearby.

Approaching retirement, Merrill was offered redundancy and Bruce sought to sell his business. It was called Indeline and manufactured the white paint used for marking out sports' pitches. Fortunately for us all, Merrill and Bruce decided to settle in Dover and bought a house at East Cliff which was large enough to accommodate Merrill's mother, Betty, in her own suite. Later, Bruce's mother, Ivy, went to live there too. For a time Merrill did supply teaching locally and then joined U3A and started a writing group. The couple

played golf and went on cruises, making many friends along the way. Merrill and Bruce had a gift for friendship and hospitality, and recognised the importance of bringing people together. All this time Merrill was editing the Newsletter.

For five years Merrill and Bruce lived at Cavalry Court in Deal but finally returned to The Gateway and the Dover they both loved, in all spending a total of almost thirty years here. Sadly, Bruce's health deteriorated and Merrill was left alone, helping to keep his memory alive with Bruce's Story, Newsletters 81-84. Two years later, she was persuaded to move to sheltered accommodation near to Peter and Alison in Bishops Stortford where, needless to say, she set up a creative writing group. An anthology of poems and articles was published in 2018. At Merrill's funeral, The White Cliffs of Dover was the introductory music and Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach was read by Peter.

We have a copy of the anthology and also a booklet of Merrill's poems and her autobiography, which any member is welcome to borrow. In her autobiography Merrill often mentions her luck, but she achieved her own luck, having the courage to perceive and seize opportunities. With her sharp intelligence, Merrill's contributions to committee meetings were relevant and valuable but her greatest legacy to the Society will always be Newsletters 11-52, published under her Editorship.

We knew Merrill and Bruce quite well and were invited to their home at East Cliff on several occasions. Merrill recognised the importance of bringing people together and was always active in promoting the social side of the Dover Society.

I took over from Merrill as Membership Secretary in the early days when she offered to become Editor of the Newsletter, a role

supremely suited to her talents and interest in creative writing and language. We understand that she continued with this type of work even after leaving Dover.

Merril was much missed when she left the committee because her contributions were always valuable. We regret that there will be no more Christmas cards arriving with small notes inside.

### **The Sea**

**Written by Merrill Lilley**

*Read by niece Victoria at the funeral service*

I love the sea,  
 I like to live on the edge of it.  
 I lived on the seafront  
 For four years in the fifties,  
 Now I only remember  
 (I don't know why this is)  
 The sweep of the grey,  
 Of Cardigan Bay,  
 And days when violent storms  
 Could lose the promenade,  
 Obliging us to battle our way home  
 Buffeted through the backstreets.  
 Now, on the kinder south coast,  
 Half a century on,  
 I have time to observe its complacency.  
 It may lie, languid and limp,  
 Lapping innocently on the shoreline,  
 Lulling one to a tranquil contemplation of its  
 beauty;  
 While beneath it may be simmering  
 Like an unattended pan,  
 Waiting to froth and boil  
 Over the unsuspecting quay  
 In unexpected fury.  
 The chameleon furtiveness of it  
 Fascinates me;  
 The change from limpid blue,  
 Through turquoise to sea green,  
 The slate grey, is accomplished  
 Within the hour.  
 It can lift flagstones, move buildings,  
 Shatter windscreens, terrorise us  
 With immense ten-foot waves.  
 I fear the sea.

ben elsey  
piano tuner

phone: 07579 008 217  
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## Dover Society Binders

Available at £5.25 each

Contact the editor at:

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# PROGRAMME 2024/25

*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.*

October 21      **General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker: Michelle Crowther**      "Kent Maps Online"

November 18      **General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker: Chris Townend**      "Dover District Council"

December 8      **Dover Society Festive Lunch & Entertainment**

12.30 for 1pm **The Marina Hotel, Dover Waterfront**

£30.95 pp

Price to include arrival drink, three course meal, tea, or coffee and entertainment. Extra wine or other drinks may be ordered and purchased at the venue. The entertainment will be clarified in the November newsletter. Arrival drinks available from 12.30 pm. Lunch will begin promptly at 1pm finish at 4pm. **Menu details along with the booking form can be found in the centre pages of this newsletter.**

## **To book:**

**By post:-** Send your completed form, together with your cheque, made payable to The Dover Society, to the Social Secretary, Mrs. Lyn Smith, 2 Redlands Court, London Road, River, Dover. CT17 0TW

**Electronic payment by BACS:** Account name:- The Dover Society.

Barclays Bank Dover, Account Number; 80864803. Sort Code 20-02-62 giving your name and FL24 as a reference. Return the form by email to:- [steve.lyn@uwclub.net](mailto:steve.lyn@uwclub.net)

If you require a table for more than eight people, please contact Lyn.

**Payment no later than 10th November 2024**

## **2025**

January 20      **General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker: Martin Crowther**      "The Maison Dieu"

February 17      **Dover Society Quiz Night**

Monday      Our ever-popular light-hearted quiz evening held in

7.00 for 7.30pm St Mary's Church Hall. Make up your own table of six, or, if you are unable to, £ tba p.p. we will fit you in where appropriate. Prizes for the winning team (in the event of a tie, there will be a play-off). Full details in the November Newsletter

March 17      **General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker: tba**      "Topic tba"

April 21      **Dover Society Annual General Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker: tba**

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

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