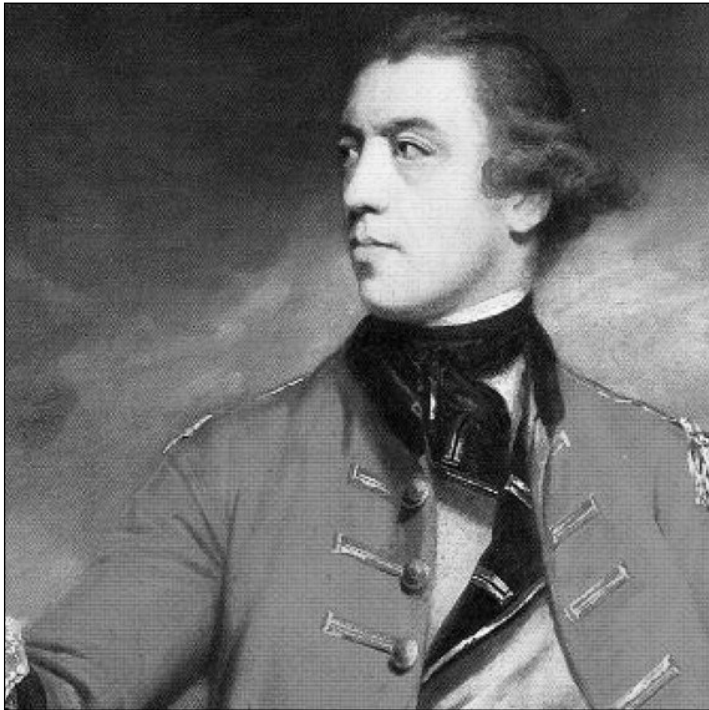


The
Dover
Society

Newsletter

No. 114
November 2025



General John 'Gentleman Johnny' Burgoyne

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THE DOVER SOCIETY

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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, archaeology, 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

Just a reminder, if you are planning to attend the Festive Lunch, at the Marina Hotel, on Sunday 7th December, could you please book up as early as possible? If anyone would like to donate a prize for the raffle, to be held on the day, please pass it on to a member of the executive committee, or bring it along on the day. The booking form for the lunch can be found in the centre pages of this newsletter.

We try to publish a wide range of differing views in the newsletter. I would like to point out that any article, or letter, we publish is not necessary the official stance of the Dover Society.

If you have an article that you think may be of interest to the membership, either a personal story, or one of a general nature, then please submit, or contact the editor to discuss it. The only criteria being that there must be a connection with the Dover area.

The Maison Dieu is now complete and open seven days a week, unless there is a private event taking place. The pantomime, "Cinderella", will be performed here between 16th and 28th December. Matinee and evening tickets are available from £14. This is one of many events that are taking place at this venue both at the present time and over the months to come. Keep an eye open for details in the local press or on their website.

On Saturday 6th December is Dover's Winter Light Up. Centred on Pencester Gardens it will incorporate a youth market, entertainment and a food village. At about 5pm there will be a lantern procession.

The planning of the Annual Dover Film Festival is well under way and takes place between the 1st and 7th March. The venue is the Dover Museum cinema, Goal Lane. Seats can be purchased at: the Dover Visitor Information Centre, Market Square, or Telephone: 07704 930892. There will be two or three showings each day. Further details on their website.

Alan Lee, Editor

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DEADLINE for contributions

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 115 will be Wednesday 28th January 2026.

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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A “Chronicle” of Christmas in Dover

Ann Tomalak

Many of us have family stories of Christmas celebrations in Dover in the last century. Family members might have gone to the Old People's Dinner in the Town Hall, or a children's party there, or even the Boxing Day pantomime. Most organisations, from churches to sports and social clubs and mutual societies, put on some kind of festive gathering for members and their families. Through December and well into January entertainments, amateur and professional, happened all over town. There were football matches on Christmas and Boxing Day mornings, or families could skate at the rink on the Promenade pier, accompanied by a live orchestra. Newspapers such as the Dover & County Chronicle give us a taste of Christmases past.

We may be able to take a break from Christmas Eve to New Year, but for some centuries Christmas was a single day. In the Middle Ages, the Twelve Days of Christmas gave a mid-winter respite to most people, the richer inviting their workers and neighbours to share in their fun and feasting, often to excess. After the Reformation, Christmas became more muted, with the Puritans banning anything whatsoever that might make the day seem special. Other denominations marked Christmas Day only, with a strong emphasis on religious observance.

Christmas Day became a legal holiday again in 1660, with the return of King Charles II, but only in England. Many weddings were celebrated since people weren't at work. By the nineteenth century, Dickens and other authors were emphasising the charitable side of Christmas, helping the needy and poor,

gift-giving, plus a family meal and entertainment, with a focus on children. Father Christmas became a “thing” and the Christmas tree was introduced from Germany. (Boxing Day only became a bank holiday in 1871; New Year's Day was officially added in 1974, within living memory.)

In 1852, the Chronicle was published as usual on Saturday, 25th December. A brief paragraph on p.3 acknowledges the day, indicating that the “national meal” then was beef and plum pudding, though some turkeys had been imported from France. But the main articles are on the Condition of Women, plus national and overseas news, parliamentary reports and a long obituary of Thomas Moore, the Irish poet. As was the custom, the front page consisted entirely of advertising, though only a wine merchant offers Christmas merchandise. The back page has a short Christmas poem among the market prices, timetables for trains and the Dover to Calais packet, and high-water times.

By 1875, the Chronicle, again published on Christmas Day as it was a Saturday, was a little more excited about the holiday, though with a bah-humbug twist, predicting that within a generation Christmas “with all its tomfooleries” would be a thing of the past. The paper decried “meaningless buffoonery, excessive revelry” and “Christmas boxes”, while encouraging Christmas trees and carol-singing – though not to collect money to be spent on “lawless pleasures”. The “more opulent” were asked to be charitable to the “really deserving and even the worthless”! This time ads for ball and evening gowns, Christmas and New Year cards, tobacco products and other novelties suitable as

gifts, plus seasonal foods and drinks, interspersed the more mundane items.

The idea of travelling some distance to visit family and friends was promoted by the railway companies surprisingly early. In 1886, the Chronicle published special arrangements including extra trains and the extension of return tickets to cover the whole period from December 23rd to 30th. Even the cheapest Saturday to Monday tickets were stretched from Friday to Tuesday. The notice makes clear that trains would run on Christmas Day!

Those who couldn't meet up in person made good use of the mail. In late November 1908, 80 sacks of Christmas mail left Dover for New Zealand; some 12,000 letters and 5,000 books and newspapers. In 1906 Robert J Dickie patented the first dispensing machine, which made it possible to buy stamps at any time of the day or night. In 1925, there was only one postal delivery on Christmas Day rather than the usual four, (last posting time for local delivery: 9.45pm on Christmas Eve)!

In 1889, the Chronicle published a 16-page Christmas "supplement" on 21st December. Not a themed supplement as we know it, it consisted of Christmassy items tucked among the usual news, reports and notices. There were lots of ads for food, drink and gift suggestions – including several for *cosaques* (pronounced "cossacks") which were, apparently, cracker *bombons* - the latest fad? The High School for Girls, then on Maison Dieu Road, had put on an extraordinary end-of-term entertainment with musical items and recitations in German, French and English. There was also a street-by-street review of Dover shops, including their festive window displays and additional goods available

through the Christmas season. It is noticeable how many butchers the town supported, and the range of poultry on offer. Entertainment at the Town Hall included a shorthand demonstration(!), and two hunts were advertised for Boxing Day.

By 1913, "Katie" was complaining in the Chronicle that the shop windows were dressed for Christmas mid-way through November and also that young children were sent around to collect for charity, thus teaching them to beg. It was a month of numerous bazaars and sales-of-work, providing many home-made gifts and food items, which annoyed the town's traders who felt they were losing customers.

Many of us remember past Christmas Days when nothing at all happened; no public transport, no shops open or places of entertainment, nowhere for a traveller to find shelter and a meal. But it was not ever thus. Apart from the essential jobs like feeding animals, nursing the sick and cooking meals, many poorer people were prepared to do their usual work. While shops in the town sometimes advertised extended closures, usually Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, for others it was business as usual. At the Spring Quarter Sessions of 1845 (Chronicle, 5th April 1845, p.3), Edward Larkies was convicted of stealing a box of cigars wrapped in a handkerchief and sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. But this crime took place on Christmas Day and the testimony shows several people hard at work. William Chidwick, a tobacconist in Deal, decided to send his brother, Edward, in Margate, also a tobacconist, 4lb of cigars, and so took them to Elizabeth Moon, whose husband drove the coach from Dover to Margate, even on Christmas Day. Mr Moon's assistant, William Beney, duly delivered them to Jane Chidwick, Edward's wife, at their shop. Almost

immediately, Larkies came to collect the box, saying Mr Moon had sent him, so Mrs Chidwick handed it over, thinking it delivered by mistake. Beney later saw Larkies with the box in its distinctive red handkerchief, and was promised a beer when the goods were sold – a bribe to keep quiet? Larkies claimed he had bought the cigars and even produced a fake bill, but the Court declared him guilty.

As for other crime, in January 1906 two men appeared before the Petty Sessions, charged with trespass to poach rabbits with ferrets on Christmas morning. The court took a lenient view of their “work” and dismissed the case.

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, efforts to decorate homes and public spaces grew. In the hospital, the wards and entrance were made festive with evergreens, holly and bright paper flowers every year. The barracks were similarly decorated, the soldiers in friendly competition for best dressed room. They were relieved of non-essential duties on Christmas day and given a hearty meal. Even the Workhouse was decorated, carols were sung and a decent meal provided. In 1895, the 441 inmates consumed 560 pounds of beef, plus 370 pounds of pudding. Everyone got fresh and dried fruits, sweets and biscuits, plus gifts of tea, sugar and tobacco for the older people, and a bright threepenny bit for each child. Similarly, local people provided generously for the Gordon Boys’ Orphanage: festive food and drink galore, plus clothing and 6d for each boy.

The weather was always worth comment. In 1900 there was a collision in the Channel, thanks to dense fog. Other years saw heavy snow, gales or unseasonably warm weather. On 2nd January 1902, a letter to the Editor of the Chronicle

complained that the temperature inside Christ Church on Christmas Day was only 40° F, “dangerous for old people and invalids”, while at St Mary’s, who did things properly, it was 60° F!

On Saturday, 25th December 1915, the Chronicle was obviously weighed down by the war, but determined to stay cheerful, looking back to more pleasant times while telling readers that the true spirit of Christmas was sacrifice. Yet a programme of festive entertainments was planned in various halls around town. There were a few ads for Christmas gift suggestions, but also for winter clothing – perhaps to send to the Front, along with a home-made pudding? A Christmas sermon vied for space with local and national news, always returning to the war. With so many men called up for military service, Dover’s Head Post Office advertised for “intelligent female clerks”. The Mayoress’s Christmas collection was for destitute Serbian and Belgian women and children; allies “who have kept the war from our doors”.

Most people stayed close to home before travel became easier, but some preferred life on the road. Thus, at Christmas 1939 we see G. C. Taylor of Dover signing a joint letter of thanks for ‘kindly’ gifts received from the Master of Watts’ Charity in Rochester, otherwise known as the Six Poor Travellers’ House. (Medway Archives CHW/A02/37/003.) [Six months later, as the war progressed, the house closed since casual travellers were prevented from entering the protected area around the south coast. It never re-opened, except as a museum.]

The Chronicle ceased publication in 1927. More recent Christmases are recorded in the Dover Express (to 1999) and increasingly resemble our modern festivities.

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Planning Committee

Graham Margery - Co Chairman

Planning Activity: Over the last twelve months the Dover Society Planning Committee reviewed some 205 planning applications that are potentially of interest and made formal response to the Local Authority in respect of 71 of them. Since the last newsletter, we have reviewed some 62 applications and made response in respect of 20 of them. This is a much lower level of activity than usual and, whilst making the workload easier, is of some concern as mentioned below. 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. We are also looking for new members to join our small team, so if you are interested in town planning please get in touch.

Housing: There has been a lot of comment in the media recently that the Government's much vaunted housing target of 1.5 million new homes by 2029 is likely to be missed despite reforms to the planning system, particularly the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). We referred to this in issue 111 of our newsletter and submitted our comments to government through the public consultation process. Although many of the problems with the planning system and house building arise nationwide, there are some problems that relate particularly in the Dover area. For example, Dover is an area of social deprivation which results in house prices being generally lower than elsewhere in the country. This means that the potential

profit margin for a developer is generally lower than would otherwise be the case. This is a serious disincentive for a developer to proceed with house building or even submit a planning application in the first place. The planning regulations and housing targets make absolutely no difference. The problem is made worse by the requirement for expensive archaeological investigations where there is likely to be buried remains that need to be explored and recorded. With Dover's very long and rich history, this frequently arises.

One possible way of circumventing the developer's profit motive problem is for the Local Authority to take control of the potential development land using compulsory purchase powers. A suitable housing scheme could then be taken through to completion and sold on at lower profit margin than a commercial developer would expect. Such a scheme would require the formation of a central fund that could be accessed by the Local Authority and repaid at a later date. We intend to write to the Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on this subject.

Here are some examples of current problems. In September 2020, an outline planning application was submitted for 135 dwellings on the former Buckland Mill site. Planning permission was granted in December 2023 but no application has been made for the full planning permission that would enable the work to proceed. Also, in December 2018, a planning application was submitted to convert the former magistrates' court in Pencester Road to 46 flats. Planning permission was granted in

July 2019 but no work has started. Planning permission has now expired and the building is falling into dilapidation. It's not that the planning system has delayed their approval, but that the developer is not wanting to proceed.

HMOs: We have frequently criticised the uncontrolled proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in Dover and, sadly, the situation is only getting worse. Only HMOs for more than six people need planning permission for change of use and have to be registered, but smaller ones do not. This means that the numbers we have previously quoted do not tell the whole story. Of course, the provision of low-cost accommodation is important, but it should be part of a balanced mix of housing. Such a predominance of accommodation at the "bottom end" of the market serves to depress house prices generally and discourages the development of better-quality homes, to the detriment of the overall prosperity of the town. Other problems include increased pressure on local services and infrastructure, issues with anti-social behaviour, parking congestion, waste management, a decline in community cohesion and higher levels of resident turnover.

We are delighted to say that the Town Council has taken the initiative to try to bring the situation under better control. Having researched best practice in other Local Authorities, they have written to DDC to seek the application of Article 4 Directions, so that Planning Permission is required for all HMO conversions that include limits to the density HMOs in a particular area. We applaud this initiative. DDC's website gives the following explanation:- An Article 4 direction made by the local planning authority restricts the scope of permitted development rights either in relation to a particular area or site,

or a particular type of development anywhere in the authority's area. Where an Article 4 direction is in effect, a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted development. Article 4 directions are used to control works that could threaten the character of an area of acknowledged importance, such as a conservation area. This enables the council to control these minor developments so as to ensure that they accord with its policies to protect the character of a Conservation Area or the visual amenities of other areas and prevent developments that do not accord with those policies. This may take time to implement and may require public consultation, but we see this as an important step forward that gives the local authority the necessary tools to take control.

Update on Planning Applications: The controversial development on the site of the former leisure centre at the junction of Woolcomber Street and Townwall Street has been granted planning permission for a drive-through takeaway restaurant. This is the second such approval, with the application having been referred back to the planning committee after the first decision was challenged. There are 34 planning conditions attached to the decision which include measures to protect trees and wildlife as well as measures concerning drainage, parking, boundaries, litter and road layout. There is also a requirement for archaeological excavations. Sadly, there is no mention of a Section 106 public realm improvement contribution, but this may come later.

An application to replace dilapidated windows and doors with uPVC to a property in High Street, which we objected to has been refused. This is a Grade II Listed Building where repairs or like for like replacements are required in order to

maintain the historic integrity of the building, which in this case would mean timber construction. This is no doubt disappointing and even very annoying to the applicant, but we consider it to be of great importance that Dover's heritage is protected wherever possible, since so much of it has been lost over the years.

Applications to make further improvements to the Dover Marina Hotel have been approved. This also is a Grade II Listed Building, but the changes are sympathetic to the building as a whole and will help ensure the sustainability of the hotel. We supported the application.

Port of Dover: Dover Harbour Board has made application for a Harbour Revision Order. Many of the provisions affect operational matters within and around the harbour which do not concern us but there is also a change to the composition of the Board which is of concern. The proposal is to reduce the number of Board members appointed by the Secretary of State from 3 to 1 and increase the number appointed by the Board from 3 to 5. This includes the removal of the two so called "community directors" who have been in place for nearly ten years. The loss of this kind of input to the Board's discussions and decisions we regard as very much to the detriment of the town. We have

therefore written to the Marine Management Organisation to object.

The Bench: This new development (formally the Beacon Project) in Bench Street is progressing rapidly and in September reached a key milestone in the completion of the highest part of the building. To mark the occasion, a "Topping Out" ceremony was held in which Town and District Council officials, the contractors and other key partners including the Dover Society were given a tour of the work in progress. In his speech, the Leader of Dover District Council, Cllr Kevin Mills, explained that the building will provide for an education campus, business centre and creative centre, as well as public spaces including a café. It will provide an attractive link to the Market Square and the sea front. We would have preferred to see the older buildings restored and repurposed rather than demolished, but, when that proved to be impossible, we have engaged in the public consultation process at every opportunity to try and ensure the best possible outcome in the circumstances. What we have is undoubtedly modern and, unsurprisingly, rather controversial but it will provide an attractive link from the St James' area to this end of the Town.

We have recently been working with DDC's Regeneration Delivery Manager on a Heritage Interpretation Strategy. This was one of the planning conditions attached to the granting of planning permission and we regard this as vitally important since so many of the historic streets and buildings in this area have been lost.

Linked to this project is the redevelopment of the underpass under the A20. Already colourful new display panels are being put up that depict scenes of Dover's rich history and this is proving to be of interest to those passing through.



The Bench

Broome Park

Derek Leach

Today, Broome Park is well known locally as a Grade I listed high class hotel and golf course, but not so well known, for its distinguished owners and history.

Broome was a manorial holding in the parish of Barham owned by the Digges family and in Henry VIII's time was farmland. The Digges family were influential landowners and engineers and did work to improve Dover's harbour. John Digges, son of Sir Dudley Digges of Chilham Castle, lived at nearby Digges Court (which still survives) and upon the death of his father inherited a substantial part of his estate. However, the younger son, Leonard, took as his share, a much smaller area known as Broome.

The first house was completed in 1639, following the purchase of the site in its sheltered valley from Leonard Digges by Basil Dixwell. He had become MP for Hythe in 1626, Sheriff of Kent in 1627 and was made Baron in 1628. Stables, a brew house and gardens were also created. Sir Basil died in 1642 with no heirs. His nephew, Mark, inherited but died soon after, leaving everything to his three-year-

old son, another Basil. His uncle, Colonel John Dixwell was appointed guardian and managed the estate.

The Colonel held strong Parliamentary views and was a signatory to the death warrant of Charles I. He was also responsible for the defence of south-east England. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Colonel fled the country, dying in America, aged 82, in 1689. Meanwhile, young Basil had come of age and was recreated Baron by Charles II. But he died young in 1668, leaving everything to his three-year-old son, yet another Basil, who lived another 82 years, dying in 1750. His sole heir was his sister's granddaughter Elizabeth, who married George Oxenden.

Sir George had to take the name of Dixwell as a condition of the inheritance, but died in 1753, leaving the estate to his father who gave it to his son, Henry Oxenden, born in 1756. He modernized the house. Sir Henry was a brilliant engineer and was involved in further improvements to Dover Harbour. A commander of a troop of Yeomanry, he died in 1837. The Duke of Wellington was one of his coffin bearers.



Col John Dixwell MP



Broome Park

The Oxenden family stayed at Broome Park until 1911, when Sir Percy sold it for £14,000 to its most famous owner, Colonel Herbert Kitchener, later to become Field Marshall Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.

Herbert Horatio Kitchener, born in 1850, was one of England's most distinguished soldiers. Map maker, engineer and campaigner, he had earned a great reputation throughout the Empire. Today, he is perhaps best known for his face on a poster appealing for volunteers upon the outbreak of the First World War.

With the mansion in need of many repairs, Kitchener's favourite niece, Nora, personally supervised a major programme of restoration and improvements to the house while her uncle was away on army duty. The building was strengthened and the addition of two magnificent fireplaces and the very ornate ceiling in the grand entrance hall show symbols reflecting Kitchener's life as a soldier and the campaigns in which he was involved. His intention was to house his collection of antiquities, acquired from his many journeys abroad, as well as provide a place to enjoy his retirement. However, Kitchener was drowned in 1916 when HMS Hampshire struck a mine and sank off the Orkneys. Unfortunately, he never lived in the mansion. With all the work still going on, he stayed in a cottage in the grounds during his visits.

The Field Marshall never married. His nephew, Toby, Viscount Broome, inherited Broome Park and subsequently leased it to boxing promoter, impresario and



Kitchener Poster

entrepreneur, Australian Hugh McIntosh. When declared bankrupt, McIntosh surrendered the lease to Toby's widow, but, with the mansion in great need of repair, the Viscountess had no wish to live there.

Between the two World Wars many of the great country houses declined, caused by death duties and the economic situation. This became a national concern.

Broome Park came to the attention of Mr G.C. Jell who bought it and opened it as an hotel. During World War II, the house and estate were requisitioned for military use as a hospital, with several Scottish regiments stationed there as well as a Canadian tank regiment. It is rumoured that tanks lie buried beneath the present golf course! After the war, the house resumed its prewar role until 1979 when the Jells retired. Mr Jell sold the mansion following the deaths of his son in a swimming accident in Australia and of Mrs Jell, who never recovered from a fall down the stairs at Broome.

Golf Leisure bought the estate and constructed the golf course. Eighteen time share apartments were created in the house and, later twenty-six units known as Regency Villas were built within the grounds. The house became a popular venue for various functions, including a wedding venue after Kitchener Hotels became the owners in 2017.

For further information see <https://www.broomepark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Broome-Park-A-Brief-History-Leaflet.pdf>

‘Museum in Miniature’ at Dover Museum

Vronni Ward

Our latest temporary exhibition, ‘Museum in Miniature’, presents an extraordinary collection of intricate models and miniatures encompassing architecture, maritime artefacts, and toys drawn from our stores. This exhibition explores the enduring fascination with scaled-down representations of the world around us - works that embody both artistry and imagination, crafted and cherished across generations.

The art of miniaturisation demands patience, precision and remarkable skill. Such objects have historically been fashioned in moments of celebration, advancement, nostalgia, or even confinement.

These are not merely models; they are miniature marvels - eloquent storytellers of history, culture and human ingenuity.

Exhibition Highlights

Ships - Intricate miniature ships feature in the exhibition. These delicate dioramas, sealed in glass bottles, are more than just decorative curiosities. They are rooted in both maritime culture and folk-art, capturing the essence of seafaring life.



Dover Museum

The golden age of ships in bottles spanned the late 18th to early 19th centuries, coinciding with the height of global exploration and naval supremacy. Sailors, known for their resourcefulness and creativity during long voyages, began crafting small replicas of their ships as keepsakes or gifts for loved ones back home.

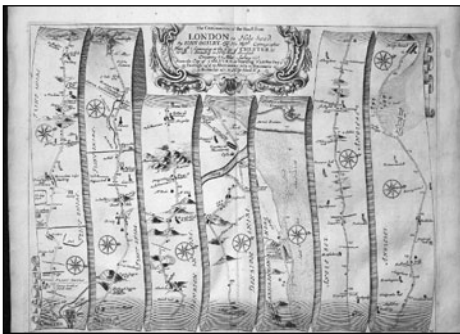
Dolls’ Houses - Among the artefacts on display is a wonderful collection of dolls’ houses and contents. On a world stage, the most notable dolls’ house is a model of Queen Mary’s famous dolls’ house, created for her between 1921 and 1924 at Windsor Castle. Designed by the leading British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, it contains works from over 1,500 of the finest artists, craftspeople and manufacturers of the early 20th century offering a captivating glimpse into the domestic ideals of its time.



Harbours - Dover Harbour boasts a history of more than 3,500 years. Evolving from a Bronze Age settlement using the River Dour estuary to a strategic Roman stronghold, a medieval Cinque Port, and later an important defensive and commercial port. Its naturally sheltered position between chalk cliffs and proximity to the continent has made it crucial for military and trade, from Julius Caesar's time to its role as Britain's "front line" during World Wars, and today it is the busiest passenger port in the UK and Europe.

Nationally, miniature harbours also hold pride of place. Celebrated examples include the meticulously reconstructed Cornish fishing village and harbour at Wolf's Cove (a National Trust property) as well as the detailed harbour scene and village at the Grade II listed The Model Village in Bourton-on-the-Water.

Maps - Our exhibition presents a rare and fascinating cartographic treasure; a map published in 1675 by John Ogilby, the first person to provide an accurate survey of the roads of England and Wales. Ogilby ultimately produced more than 100 maps, each depicting a "ribbon" of roadway connecting towns and cities across the nation.



Ogilby Map

This particular map commences in Southwark, progressing southeast through Blackheath and Dartford, before continuing into Kent, passing Rochester, Sittingbourne, Canterbury and ultimately reaching Dover's coastline. Ogilby recorded the distance as 71 miles - a little shorter than the modern route of approximately 75 miles, closely aligned with today's A2.

Ogilby's life was as extraordinary as his work. His earliest employment, in 1612, was as a dancing master. By the 1670s, however, he had risen to the esteemed position of Royal Cosmographer to King Charles II, producing elegant, meticulously measured drawings that, for the first time, placed England's roads upon reliable maps. His path to this achievement was far from ordinary: he endured fire, plague, warfare and shipwreck; he was an impresario in Dublin, poet in London, soldier and sea captain, secret agent, publisher and scientific geographer. Beset by danger, he carefully encrypted his personal history in codes and cyphers, a life as complex as the maps he created.

Worldwide, some of the most famous miniature historic maps were created by Abraham Ortelius of Spanish Belgium, produced in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These hand-coloured miniatures were derived from his renowned *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the first modern atlas. Another significant set of miniature maps are the English Miniature Speeds, which were pocket-sized versions of John Speed's larger maps, which enjoyed wide popularity in their day.

The exhibition runs until April 2026. Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.00pm. Open Sundays in the summer (April to September) 10.00am to 3.00pm. Admission is FREE. Tel: 01304 201066 Visit www.dover.gov.uk/museum



Remembrance Poppies



Tommy Market Square

Increase in Membership Fees

Jane Jones – Honorary Treasurer

Dear Dover Society Members, A reminder on the 2026/2027 Membership Fees:
It was agreed at the Annual General Meeting on 21st April 2025 that subscriptions for 2026-27 would be increased from 1st April 2026.

The new subscription fees are as follows:

Couples (living at the same address) - £14.00 per annum

Single membership - £10.00 per annum

Please ensure that you contact your bank as soon as possible to change direct debits/standing orders.

Our details are:

Barclays Bank

Account number: 80864803 Sort code: 20-02-62

Pay "The Dover Society"

Many thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Jane Jones

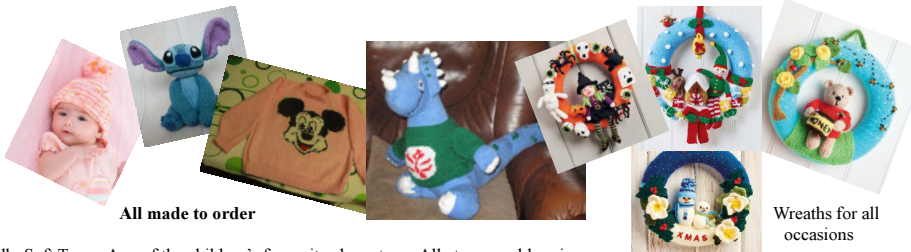
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Tribute to Roger Stephen Walkden

Alan Lee

Sadly, several months ago a long serving town and district councillor passed away. Roger Walkden represented the Maxton and Elms Vale ward for many years as a Conservative. He was much respected and well liked, and he served Dover well over a period of more than thirty years. He worked hard to promote local businesses and tourism along with the Dover management team. He also served on the Dover Town Council Planning Department. He was a trustee of the Dover municipal charities and an active member of the local Royal British Legion branch. At one time he was a director of Dover & District Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Roger was always helpful to many people in his ward and in Dover generally. He had a lengthy career in banking and upon his retirement he

owned and run a guest house in Dover. Several local councillors have suggested that a road in his old ward might be named in his honour.



Roger Walkden

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) John Peter Morrison

Peter Sherred

Following the article on the above in Issue 109 March 2024 (p. 46) regretfully news has come to my attention that John Morrison died on 8th October 2025. He will be greatly missed by many people who appreciated his company, friendship and ministry. John was very active in the Diocese of Canterbury including being a Licensed Lay Reader and a representative on the Diocesan Synod and Archbishop's Council. He was also Chaplain to the Sea Cadets. His significant contribution to the Diocese was recognised when he was made an Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral in 2023. He will be greatly missed by the congregation at St Mary-in-Castro who derived great benefit from his intelligent and thoughtful sermons which he delivered with authority and grace. He

richly deserved his recognition by the Cathedral in being made an Honorary Canon.



John Morrison 19.11.23

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The Gift Aid Legislation allows us to reclaim basic tax rate on your subscription and any donations. To do so, The Dover Society will provide your details to HMRC. Please state that you are happy for us to do this by signing the declaration below. This will come into effect from the date of signing and you can change your mind and withdraw consent at any time. (You must be a UK taxpayer and pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax we re-claim on your subscription or donation.) For joint membership, the first named is asked to sign as the taxpayer.

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

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Practical Help

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

Social events Writing for newsletter Projects e.g. clearance, surveys
 Photography Any other interests or expertise

**The Dover Society Xmas Lunch and Entertainment Sunday 7th December 2025
At Dover Marina Hotel
Dover Waterfront, Waterloo Crescent, CT17 9BP**

Price £30.50 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 provided by Barry Goss. 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,
Pre-orders are required two weeks before the event

- Welcome Drink:** a) Bucks Fizz
b) Fruit Juice
- Starter:** c) Jersey Royal Potatoes, Spinach & Leek Soup with blue stilton croute
d) Prawn Cocktail & baby mixed leaves, homemade cocktail dressing & malted bread
e) Ardennes Pâté with piccalilli, cherry tomatoes, mixed baby leaves & toasted granary seeded baguette
- Main:** f) Traditional Roast Turkey, sage & onion stuffing, crispy roast potatoes & all the trimmings
g) Slow cooked British Beef, rosemary red wine & thyme sauce, Yorkshire pudding, crispy roast potatoes & all the trimmings
h) Oven Roasted Sea Bass with a herb crust, saffron sauce, curly kale & dauphinoise potatoes
i) Nut Roast (v) rocket salad, wild mushroom sauce, seasonal vegetables, crispy roast potatoes
- Dessert:** j) Traditional Plum Pudding with homemade brandy sauce
k) Lime & Lemon Cheesecake with forest fruit
l) Seasonal fresh fruit salad with Christmas pudding ice cream

Freshly brewed Tea/Coffee and mince pies

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. Payment no later than 17th November 2025

Dover Society Festive Lunch – Sunday 7th December 2025 £30.50 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 @ £30.50 each..... Signed

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Lidice Plaque

Martyn Webster

The main photo here taken from a contemporary edition of the Dover Express was taken on 23rd September 1969 and shows the Mayor of the town of Lidice in the then Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic), Mme. Maria Yarosova in presence of Dover's Mayor Alderman William T. Muge, and also, out of the picture, of the then Czech Ambassador to the U.K., Dr. Miroslav Ruzek. This was at a rose garden area adjacent to the Riverside Centre that was specifically dedicated in 1967 by the council to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the mining town of Lidice's destruction and martyrdom of all male inhabitants by occupying Second World War enemy troops. An action which inspired worldwide revulsion and condemnation and subsequent memorialisation in many places at home and abroad. Particular attention was paid in the UK by the National Union of Mineworkers, as well as the Rotary Club, and locally by the NUM area secretary Jack Dunn, who, at the unveiling presented Mme. Yarosova with a sheaf of red roses. It is believed the garden and plaque were originally inspired by Dover Alderman John Hadden, who was/had been himself a coalminer. Lidice itself has a significant memorial in a large rose garden. Mme. Yarosova is seen pulling a cord releasing a tricolour flag covering the plaque which was made of copper. The wording of the plaque was thus: "This small garden was planted in 1967 as a local contribution to the international recognition then given to the 25th anniversary of the destruction of the mining village of Lidice in June 1942 and to those high qualities of flesh, mind and spirit exemplified in the rebirth of Lidice and the great international rose garden planted there". Unfortunately, at a time

and date so far unknown the copper plaque disappeared, although the fixing position may still be seen. Equally unfortunately the rose garden has now been concreted over! The question now remains as to whether there is any mood and/or funds to replace this plaque in the time we now all live in.

Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and acting Reichsprotektor Kurt Daluege ordered the complete destruction of Lidice and massacre of the inhabitants in reprisal for the assassination of Reich Protector Heydrich. All 173 men from the village aged 15 years or older were killed on 10th June 1942. A further 9 men, not present at the time, were arrested and executed soon afterwards along with 8 men, 7 women already under arrest and two boys recently turned 15. Most of the 203 women and 105 children were sent to a makeshift detention centre in a Kladno school; then the women were deported to concentration camps. 9 children, considered racially suitable for Germanisation, were handed over to German families and 82 sent to Chełmno where they were gassed to death. It is one of the most documented instances of German war crimes during the Second World War.

Editor



Lidice Plaque Unveiling

The Life and Times of General John 'Gentleman Johnny' Burgoyne

Barry O'Brien

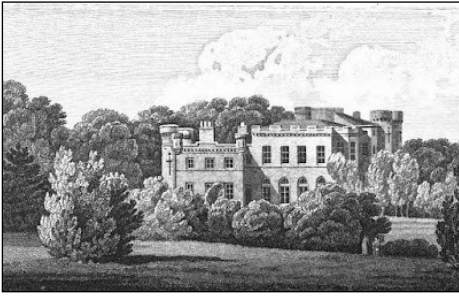
General John 'Gentleman Johnny' Burgoyne, was the father to Field Marshall John Fox Burgoyne, who gave his name to Dover's Fort. John Burgoyne was descended from the third Baronet, Sir John Burgoyne, and Anna Maria Burnstone, daughter of Richard Lucy, a wealthy merchant of Chalcote in Warwickshire. Born at the family home of Sutton Manor, Bedfordshire on 24th February 1722, Burgoyne attended the prestigious Westminster School from the age of ten where he was described as 'athletic and outgoing' and where he made numerous contacts and friends, most notable among them being James Smith Stanley, styled Lord Strange.

In August 1737, aged fifteen, Burgoyne purchased a commission in the Horse Guards where his duties were light, which allowed him time to cut something of a figure in London's high society. Through his association with school friend Lord Strange, Burgoyne was introduced to Strange's sister, the Lady Charlotte Stanley, daughter of Edward Stanley, the 11th Earl of Derby, an influential and powerful politician and a father who had somewhat set ideas as to who his daughter should marry. Sadly the likes of Gentleman Johnny did not feature in those plans and Lord Derby left the young Burgoyne in no doubt that he would never consent to such a match. However, news of her father's refusal left Charlotte devastated and in agreement to the suggestion that they should elope and marry. Furious at such scandalous behaviour, Derby cut off his daughter's inheritance causing Burgoyne to sell his commission in the 1st Royal Dragoons and use the money to finance the couple's first

years of married life. The newly wed Burgoynes travelled throughout Europe where John is said to have studied both French literature and continental military practices. With the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Elizabeth, in 1754, it was hoped that Derby's opposition to their marriage might soften and, with Lord Strange acting as an intermediary, they were accepted back into the family. Burgoyne soon became something of a favourite of his father-in-law, who used his influence to improve Burgoyne's prospects.

With the outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756, Burgoyne became first a Captain and later Lieutenant-Colonel in the Coldstream Guards. In 1761, he became MP for Midhurst in Sussex and, the following year, won distinction serving as a Brigadier-General in Portugal during the defeat of the Spanish at the Battle of Vila Velha.

Elected MP for Preston, Lancashire in 1768, he gained a reputation for being outspoken, particularly for his attacks on Lord Clive, who had made many enemies among those who feared the corrupting influence of Indian wealth on English public life. When it appeared that Clive's system of government in Bengal had not been as successful as had been imagined, and with evidence emerging of corruption among the East India Company, Burgoyne became vociferous among those demanding an investigation. Such demands eventually lead to Clive's trial before Parliament where he was, however, fully absolved from every charge as it was declared that he did "render great and meritorious services to his country."



The Oaks

As well as a military man and politician, John Burgoyne established a reputation as a writer, firstly with his play, *The Maid of the Oaks*, produced by David Garrick and staged at Drury Lane Theatre. Originally written in celebration of the forthcoming marriage of Burgoyne's nephew, Edward Smith-Stanley, heir to the Earldom of Derby, and Lady Elizabeth Hamilton, daughter of the late James Hamilton, 6th Duke Hamilton and Brandon, *The Maid of the Oaks* was a lavish masquerade and garden fête, which took place at Lord Stanley's hunting lodge, The Oaks near Epsom, Surrey. This house gave its name to the English classic horse race still run on the same course as *The Derby*. The 12th Earl of Derby's horse, *Bridget*, won the first running of *The Oaks* in 1779. Such was the notoriety gained by reports of the performance, it was decided to maximise the publicity and transfer to Drury Lane, where *The Maid of the Oaks* became something of a success.

Promoted to Major-General, with the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War Burgoyne left England while his wife was "lying dangerously ill", arriving in Boston shortly after the first shots of the war had been fired in May 1775.

The following year Burgoyne petitioned for permission to lead a force from Canada along the Hudson River, where he planned

to confront the American Militia and take control of upstate New York, to which end Burgoyne duly assembled "what might have been the best armed and skilled army that Britain had ever put together". In all there were to be three British armies involved in this campaign, the intention being for them to merge in Albany, New York. However, only one, that commanded by General John Burgoyne, made the final push to its destination. Having enjoyed early success, Burgoyne's force made good progress but began to run out of supplies and sent Colonel St. Leger a message requesting support from his position to the west. Regrettably any supplies failed to arrive and by the time Burgoyne reached the American fortifications at Bemis Heights, New York, south of Saratoga, his army was short on both supplies and morale. Rather than retreat as his fellow officers proposed, on 19th September 1775, General Burgoyne led his forces into *The Battle of Freeman's Farm*, successfully driving off the Americans but suffering heavy losses in the process. Still awaiting supplies and reinforcements, General Burgoyne was forced to put his men on rations before ordering the attack on Bemis Heights, where they were roundly defeated before retreating to Saratoga, only to be besieged by the Americans. Finally, on 17th October, General John Burgoyne suffered the greatest ignominy when he was forced to surrender himself and his, almost, 6,000 men to the American patriots, handing them their greatest victory at that point of the Revolutionary War, a victory which



Surrender at Saratoga

proved to be something of a turning point, as France was soon prompted to enter into an alliance with the Americans.

The subsequent indignation felt toward Burgoyne in Britain was great and he was granted leave by his captors to return at once in an attempt to defend his conduct. Burgoyne demanded, but never obtained, a trial. Not only was he duly deprived of his regiment but now had to face the future without his wife, Charlotte, who had died during his absence in America.

Although some suggest Gentleman Johnny never remarried, he, nevertheless, went on to father four more children with the actress and opera singer Susan Caulfield, whom others say he married in 1781. Party politics as we know it today did not exist in the 18th Century, the so-called King's Friends, from whose ranks George III preferred to draw his ministers, coming from both Whig and Tory traditions and from neither. On his return from the Americas, Burgoyne chose to distance himself from his former Tory colleagues and associate more with the Whigs so that, when they achieved greater influence, Burgoyne was restored to his rank, given the colonelcy of the King's Own Royal Regiment, made Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and appointed a Privy Councillor.

Had it not been for the unwanted notoriety his role in the American War of Independence had brought him, Burgoyne may well be foremost remembered today as a dramatist as, following his success with *The Maid of the Oaks*, he went on to write *The Heiress* (1786) and assist Richard Sheridan in his production of *The Camp*, which he may also have co-authored. He also wrote the libretto for William Jackson's only successful opera *The Lord of the Manor* (1780), and translated a semi-opera version of *Richard Coeur de Lion* for the Drury Lane Theatre.

Often portrayed by historians and commentators as a classic example of the marginally competent aristocratic British General, who acquired his rank through political connections rather than ability, those that served under him noted that Burgoyne "shunned no danger, his presence and conduct animated the troops (for they greatly loved their General)".

John Burgoyne appears as a character in George Bernard Shaw's play *The Devil's Disciple*, first performed in 1897 and set in New Hampshire during the American Revolution, including the 1959 and 1987 film adaptations, when he was portrayed by Laurence Olivier and Ian Richardson respectively.

General John 'Gentleman Johnny' Burgoyne died at his house in Hereford Street, Mayfair 4th August 1792m bequeathing the bulk of his estate to his second wife, Susan (Caulfield) Burgoyne, with rotation to their son, John Fox Burgoyne and siblings. "The Right Honourable John Burgoyne, Lieut. General of His Majesty's Forces, Colonel of the Fourth Regiment of Foot, and one of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council of the Kingdom of Ireland" was buried in the Cloister of Westminster Abbey near his first wife, The Lady Charlotte, and their daughter, also named Charlotte, who had pre-deceased him aged only ten years old. He appointed his brother-in-law by his first marriage, the former Lord Strange, now the 12th Earl of Derby, as guardian of his four surviving children, the eldest of which was the ten-year-old John Fox Burgoyne who, later, went on to enjoy an illustrious military career and give his name to Dover's Fort Burgoyne.

(c) Dover Tales 2021
for The Land Trust



A House and its Residents Back in Time

Patsy Allen

Dover has a wealth of old houses just waiting for the stories hidden within their four walls to be told. Every house conceals the story of the previous occupants; their life, family history, experiences and memories, and personal journeys, whether they be happy or sad.

No 4 Victoria Crescent, High Street, Dover.

In June 1993 demolition gangs began the work of knocking down parts of the Royal Victoria Hospital, which was being converted by Sanctuary housing into town centre flats and accommodation for the homeless. The disused and derelict hospital, which had opened in 1851 and was paid for by public subscription, had been empty since 1987. Despite a campaign by patients, staff and Dover residents, the decision was made by the health authority to close the Grade II listed building which had served the town admirably for nearly 140 years.

Mary Hutchinson, of number 4 Victoria Crescent, stood on her doorstep watching the demolition of her beloved hospital where she had worked for many years as the theatre superintendent. She was extremely sad to see the old operating theatre, which was facing Maison Dieu Place, coming down as she had spent many years of tense work there as Sister Yorke. One such operation was one of the first aorta grafting operations ever carried out in the country. Her role in the theatre meant that she had to live extremely close to the hospital, within a three-minute call, so that had made her decision to live opposite in the crescent. Another of her duties was making sure her nurses were safely tucked up in bed by ten o'clock every night.

Watching the destruction of her former hospital from across the road, seventy-seven-year-old Mary looked back on her remarkable life with sorrow and the upmost pride.

Mary was born Violet Mary May Hope Robertson on the 20th of February 1917 in Christchurch Hampshire to Leslie Hope Robertson and his wife Violet Agnes Helen, nee Fletcher. During the Great War Leslie served as a Captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery and then in 1920 he enrolled in medical school to become a dentist.



Mary Robertson Nursing in France 1939

Mary (Violet) trained to become a State Registered Nurse at the King George Hospital in Ilford, qualifying in 1938. She then immediately joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, becoming one of the first women to serve overseas in the Second World War.

In September 1939, Mary crossed to France with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), helping to nurse the first casualties of the war. Then she found she was trapped in France with the thousands of troops and the wounded soldiers. Miraculously, there was the dramatic evacuation of Dunkirk in June 1940, where hundreds of little ships joined up with the larger vessels to rescue the thousands of our troops who were trapped on the beaches by the advancing German army. On June 4th Dunkirk fell to the enemy, then Brest, Cherbourg and St. Malo. Hours before France capitulated, Mary escaped from St. Nazaire with the members of the Casualty Clearing Station and Evacuation Unit and many of the wounded soldiers. Mary was the Military Nursing Sister in charge of the last hospital train into Saint-Nazaire. The train was lucky to escape bombing attacks and was thought to be lost to the enemy before it finally arrived at the French port, to great relief. The wounded soldiers were safely put aboard the last hospital ship, HMHS Somersetshire and taken back to England for treatment.

[The troopship HMT Lancastria was not so fortunate, being sunk by a German bomber on the 17th of June 1940 as it was leaving Saint-Nazaire. The Lancastria Association lists the names of 1,738 people known to have been killed. Estimates of total casualties vary widely with the loss of between 3,500 and 7,000 lives including at least 1,000 civilian refugees. It was the largest loss of life in British maritime history. Owing to the immense loss of life the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill,

suppressed news of the disaster through the D-Notice system. There were 2,488 survivors. Editor.]

Months later 25-year-old Mary married 50-year-old Major Harold Ernest Pierpoint Yorke MC in Holborn, London. A divorcee, he was a doctor serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps whom Mary had met whilst in France with the BEF. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His citation read that "He displayed great courage and determination in tending the wounded under heavy fire. Later, although wounded himself, he continued to carry out his work".

In 1941 he was retired from the army due to ill-health, but was sent to work in St. Bartholomew's Hospital under wartime regulations. Married women could not serve in the Queen Alexandra nursing service, so Mary joined the Civil Defence force, working as a nurse in London during the bombings of 1941 and 1942. Whilst working during the Blitz, having been put in charge of the Old Bailey Casualty Clearing Station, Mary was nearly killed when the building received a direct hit, and



Mary and Harold Yorke

she was buried by debris until she was fortunately dug out. After this episode she was put in charge of the Emergency Underground Shelter at St. Paul's tube station where some of the tracks had been filled in with concrete to make more room for those sheltering.

In 1944 Harold Yorke accepted a role with the World Health Organisation in Barbados. He arrived in San Juan on the 22nd of May before travelling on to Barbados. Mary joined him months later with their first child, baby son Harry. It was a very worrying time for the family with all the German U-boat attacks on Allied shipping especially in the Atlantic.

In February 1949, the Yorke family moved to British Guyana, sailing from Liverpool on the ship *Empire Bure*. Daughter Phillipa was born there, only months later. In Georgetown, Mary actively helped with the nursing of the leprosy and tuberculosis patients living there until, in 1954, the family came back to live in Folkestone at 20 Cherry Garden Avenue.

Sadly, just two years later, on the 9th of January 1956, Major Harold Ernest Pierpoint Yorke died at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone, aged only 64 years. He was buried on the 12th of January and is commemorated with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in Hawkinge Cemetery.

Mary returned to work, becoming a theatre sister at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Dover and moving to number 4 Victoria Crescent opposite her place of work. Her son Harry, attended Dover College and then later entered Sandhurst before joining the Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Kent Regiment. Today it is named the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires). Her daughter Phillipa, would

have attended one of the schools in the town.

In 1968, Mary married for a second time to 75-year-old Frederick Heap Hutchinson, a retired consulting engineer originally from Cottingham in East Yorkshire. Very sadly he died 7 years later, on the 7th of January 1975.

In her later years, Mary devoted much of her time to raising money for charity, especially for the Poppy Appeal. Every year she could be seen outside the Royal Victoria Hospital with her two dogs, selling poppies for the charity. Having pride in the town of Dover and with her love and welfare of its residents at heart, she frequently wrote letters to the *Dover Express* which were published in the *Readers Letters* section, voicing her opinions regarding the town, raising important matters or making suggestions for improvements. Her passion was writing poetry, setting down many of her experiences of trauma and compassion in verse. In one verse she recalled her first husband Major Yorke's words when he told her, "Tell our children, and remind them to tell in turn, that you stood with their father on the roof of St Bart's and saw the city burn."

Sister Yorke... Violet Mary May Hope Hutchinson of 4 Victoria Crescent, Dover, a remarkable woman who lived a remarkable life, passed away on the 22nd of May 1995 aged 78 years.

Her moving memories and copies of her prose, together with tapes of her reminiscences have been deposited in the archives of the Imperial War Museum as a permanent memento of her lifetime work.

With thanks to the articles of Bob Hollingsbee and Terry Sutton published in the Dover Express and the information found on Ancestry.

Dover Heritage Open Days

Paul Wells

What a week! After a glorious lead up to the event, the weather was sadly atrocious on the main Saturday of Heritage Open Days, and quiet blustery and shower for the rest of the week, but despite this only one event was cancelled and people battled the elements to visit places like Fort Burgoyne and the Wanstone Battery!

Currently we have broken the 3,000 mark of attendees across 35 events, from walks, talks, buildings, and tours. The Teatime Talks held in Dover Museum Community Cinema had over 220 attendees on some fascinating subjects on lost architecture of Dover including the Promenade Pier, Shakespeare Beach and a very busy session from Keith Parfitt on medieval archaeology. It has been the biggest Dover Heritage Open Days programme ever.

Thanks to the various organisations which participated - Dover District Council, Maison Dieu, National Trust, White Cliffs



Bottom Grand-Shaft Entrance

Countryside Partnership, English Heritage, Dover Transport Museum, Land Trust, Dover College, Western Heights Preservation Society and the Port of Dover. Thanks also to Keith, Andy, Martin, Barry and Colin for their illustrated talks and walks, and the various churches around



Wanstone Battery 15 inch gun Clem

the area for opening up.

Preparations have started for next year's events which will be held from Friday 11th to Sunday 20th September 2026.



Heritage Open Days



Heritage Open Days

Newsletter New Delivery Procedures

Sheila Cope

Members who receive their newsletters by local area distribution, rather than by post or by email, cannot fail to have noticed that in July their newsletters arrived without envelopes. This was all part of the Society's new plan to streamline deliveries, and the initial trial appeared to have worked well.

In future, A. R. Adams & Sons (Printers) Ltd will not only print our newsletters, as they have done so efficiently since 1990, but will also label and stuff envelopes for postal deliveries. Area distributors will each collect their own batch of newsletters from Adams premises in Dour Street, together with a list of their "clients".

These new procedures will enable Jeremy and I to withdraw from our former task of assembling and distributing the paper newsletters. We would like to express our grateful thanks to all the area distributors, past and present, who have cheerfully and efficiently collected or received their batches from us for more than three decades. It has been a pleasure to know and to maintain contact with you and we have valued your friendship.

The continuing success of the Society depends on such members who beaver away in the background, often unnoticed. We are thanking and recognising you now. Best wishes to you all.

Sheila and Jeremy Cope.

The Battle of the Bypass

Dr. Brian Philp, MBE

It was June 1969 when the telephone rang. It was John Clithero, secretary of the New Dover Group. My help was needed with a major problem about to start on the west side of Dover. A new dual carriageway, the York Street Bypass, was pending and this might expose something of historical interest. He brought the plans along to my Reculver excavation.

How right he was. The new wide road was planned to cut some 13 feet deep into the hillside and it was clear that such a major operation was bound to reveal good archaeology in such a historic town. Some Bypass! It knocked down 100 houses, four pubs, two schools and a large cemetery.

I cancelled our major excavation planned for Reculver in 1970. After raising some essential funds from the Dept. of Environment, Pilgrim Trust and a small amount from Dover Corporation, I took our whole team, tools, equipment and machinery to Dover in June.

Our timing was good, and we started on four sites on the line of the intended Bypass, just ahead of demolitions. Next, we had to work out our basic research objectives. The key one was a "missing" late-Roman fort of the Saxon Shore. Whilst never seen it was listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (late fourth century) and, in 1929, my old friend Sir Mortimer Wheeler



Roman Fort Work in Progress

had suggested a possible outline centred on the Market Square. This idea had been struck from the archaeological record 40 years later by an unwise academic. The doyen of world archaeology was thus "given a sentence of dismissal" (as he later lectured). My own enquiries some years earlier had been to a Mr. Warner, the then curator of Dover Museum. Uninterested in his career prospects or salary scales, he was always genuine and helpful.

Needing a rapid start, we took out large areas of concrete, debris and rubbish on all four sites. On all four, important Roman deposits appeared and, with our team of fifty, progress was excellent. This attracted much local interest. One day a still-youthful figure appeared and declared that he worked for the *Dover Express* and that his name was Terry Sutton. He was happy to give our project good coverage and remained a firm friend for the next 50 years!

Within two days the south wall of the non-existent Roman fort appeared and also a complex of earlier Roman buildings over a very wide area. In the fourth week, I was able to identify these as part of a totally unknown Roman naval fort, of the *Classis Britannica*. Clearly Dover had been a major naval and army base for three centuries and this explained, for the first time, why Dover had the only two Roman lighthouses in Roman Britain. At the end of eight weeks the discoveries and artefacts were legion, and the fears of the New Dover Group were fully justified. But what now?

The proposed large-scale demolitions advanced slowly and by June 1971 we were able to return and continue on more sites only just available. This included a massive new site close to where *The Cause is Altered*

public house, still just survived. Again, this produced substantial numbers of Roman military buildings, mostly surviving to a remarkable extent including barracks, granaries with roads, drains and water pipes. However, the pending destruction of such major archaeology for the bypass was becoming a real problem.

Suddenly, the road contractors arrived and showed less than helpful interest. They cleared another major area south of Queen Street which, again, was clearly bristling with more upstanding Roman buildings. There was no alternative but to seize the area, fence it off and continue with frantic non-stop excavation. Then the confrontation started and at one time I was effectively attacked by two engineers and three contractors, all in ugly mood. They demanded four of our unfinished sites and I had to firmly challenge them and seek support elsewhere. However, the immediate and deliberate damage to a major Roman bastion was the last straw and we arranged for a TV crew to televise the damage and to expose the overall disastrous situation. This was now war!

The cause was not improved when the then Mayor, fearing that any delay might cause extra cost to the council, declared (whilst on a conducted tour by me) that the public would prefer to see our discoveries on paper rather than the real thing. This was torpedoed by his wife who declared, "This is wonderful, it's just like Pompeii." At least the ladies in Dover understood our case and the *Cause was NOT Altered*. – I remarked would he prefer to see Stonehenge on a piece of paper and see the real thing destroyed?

So, our ten-point Action Plan swung into action. This was developed on many rescue sites elsewhere, most notably on the Roman Forum site in central London in 1968-9, where we had to take on four sets of contractors working a 24-hour shift. We

stayed there for 120 days, rather longer than the nine days we were offered!

At Dover this meant long nights in the telephone box in the Market Square, drumming up support at local, county and national level. My old friend Sir Mortimer Wheeler joined in, and I dragged the Chief Inspector of Ancient monuments out of bed on a Sunday (whoops). Then I got Peter Rees, then M.P. for Dover, to the site. As a result the engineers reluctantly agreed that the road could be raised by just 18 inches! With Roman walls standing six feet high this was hopeless, or a "ludicrous compromise," as one slightly anonymous archaeologist declared in *The Times*.

So, we then surveyed the bypass and found that with a modest change in levels in the adjacent Queen Street the critical central area of the bypass could be raised six feet. Happily, the Minister of Transport agreed and everything was saved at the last minute. It had taken a non-stop 140 days of work, and our large team had dwindled to just four in the final days of a very cold November. To speed up the process we also had to work at night by the light of car headlights in the last two weeks – but the road was raised, two major Roman forts had been saved, and this was a victory for the Nation. We called it the Battle of the Bypass! A considerable bonus was the discovery, at the same time, of the first room of the Roman Painted House in nearby Market Street (see Newsletter No. 111, November 2024, page 34). The following year we had to save that too from being an underground carpark. The mayor wisely kept quiet that time, though I did suggest that I might give his wife a grand tour.



Letter from the British Academy



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Ron Chatburn - A Man of Our Times

—Peter Sherred—

I have had the privilege of knowing Ron Chatburn for over 50 years and am aware he has led an extremely full and interesting life. I have spoken with him recently to gather the information which, together with material he has supplied, has resulted in the following tribute. Ron is one of Dover's most distinguished activists and talking with him is always stimulating but can be challenging. This is therefore his story, in his own words, as given to me. Clarke was the maiden name of his mother, and all her married sisters gave this name to one of their sons.

Ron has lived in Dover for 54 years and is now 92. He is a founder member of the Dover Society. He was born of Yorkshire parents on 29 July 1932 in the village of Wellington, a few miles north of the delightful cathedral city of Hereford and 16 miles to the east of the border with Wales, hence his accent. Shortly afterwards, the family, including his elder sister and brother, moved into Hereford. He was educated at All Saints, St. Owen's and the Grammar School. Ron says that he spent the best years of his life in the arms of another man's wife – his mother! Regrettably, his parents died within eight months of each other when he was eighteen or nineteen. He thinks of them every day. He vividly remembers the Second World War.



St Owen's School

Ron was an altar boy, choir boy and deputy organist at a local church. He did a lot of walking and dancing, activities which he pursued for many years. He was always interested in steam-operated railways and, at the age of sixteen, he worked a 28-lever signal box – but don't tell anyone!

In 1948, at the age of sixteen years and one month, he became an articled pupil for four years to the City Surveyor of Hereford. He then became a permanent member of the staff. Ron studied each evening after a hard day's work and at weekends for seven years. This period of appointment was extended while he carried out two years of National Service, which young men normally commenced at the age of eighteen. He enjoyed applying his love of all aspects of mathematics in surveying, designing and constructing roads, sewerage systems, water supplies and street lighting, especially in connection with the provision of housing estates when houses were much needed after the end of the war.

During his youth, he played most sports and was the secretary of the Hereford Caving Club, where members enjoyed crawling through the limestone caves of south Wales. There were no Health & Safety regulations in those days! At the age of twelve, after taking piano lessons, he was in a concert party which entertained convalescing troops in hospitals. He played for singing, dancing and had a spot of his own. He also remembers entertaining African-American soldiers just a few days before D-day (6 June 1944). He was given lots of chewing gum!

Eventually, at the age of almost twenty-two, Ron commenced his National Service in the Royal Engineers. After basic training in England, he was selected to be a Clerk of

Works. On 6 January 1955, he sailed to Singapore through the Suez Canal, the voyage taking forty-two days instead of the normal twenty-eight days, as the ship crossed the equator to call at the island of Mauritius. This journey impressed him, as at that time, there was no TV, jumbo jets or package holidays, which now make people aware of the world. He worked with Chinese contractors constructing new buildings and maintaining and renovating existing buildings. He took some lessons and could speak quite good Malay. He always said that his experiences during his National Service were at least equivalent to going to university.

After finishing his two years in the army, he returned to the Hereford City office for one year, then worked in the County Highways office carrying out major improvements to increasingly busy roads and designing a motorway; but he had itchy feet, and, in 1958, he went to western Canada to work with a firm of consulting engineers in Edmonton, the capital city of the province of Alberta, designing and constructing first-time sewerage systems, water supplies, roads and sidewalks (footways). He also worked in their offices in Calgary, Vancouver and Saskatoon. The provinces of Alberta and British Columbia were becoming populated quickly, so Ron was very busy. He felt like a true pioneer!

In May 1960, he married Eve who had emigrated from London before Ron. She was a radiographer in a hospital. They spent their honeymoon travelling through the Rocky Mountains and western America. For various reasons, they returned to England in 1962.

Ron worked as a Senior Engineer for the Sittingbourne Council, carrying out major drainage systems and road widening projects. During this time, Ron and Eve had three bonny sons, Byron (1963), Dean (1965) and Fraser (1968). Sadly, in 2003, he and Eve

divorced. He said that she was an excellent wife and an outstanding mother.

In September 1970, Ron came to Dover Borough Council as Chief Engineer and later became the Deputy Borough Surveyor. He very quickly realised much was needed to improve the infrastructure of the town and drew up programmes of work over future years. He also worked hard to increase the enthusiasm of his staff. On 1 April 1974, local authorities were reorganised under the Local Government Act of 1972, Dover Borough, Deal Borough and Sandwich Borough Councils together with Dover Rural Council and Eastry Rural Council were combined to form Dover District Council (DDC). Ron was appointed Chief Engineer in this new authority.

I was a solicitor in the legal department of Dover District Council (DDC) and for a short period, I had the privilege of working with Ron, including appearances in the Magistrates' Court. He was responsible for new roads and the maintenance of existing roads, the sewerage systems including pumping stations, street lighting, traffic signals, car parks, waiting restrictions, pedestrian areas, concrete structures and sea defences. Perhaps his legacy to Dover could be summed up in the phrase *si monumentum requiris, circumspice* [if you seek (his) monument, look around] which was originally the epitaph for Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral.

Ron was a committee member of the southern branch of the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Institution of Municipal Engineers, the Institution of Highways and Transportation, and was Chairman of the Association of Kent Surveyors. He was secretary of the Dover History Society, organising speakers, outings and the annual convention and was a member of the Chamber of Commerce so that he could discuss their needs more readily.

In his personal life, Ron did much DIY work. He was on the parents' committee for St. Martin's school and the Boys' Grammar school. He became chairman of the 3rd Dover Scout group. He was a member of the Goodwin Sands Potholing Group and reckons that he is the only person to have performed magic on the Sands. He played the four-manual concert organ in the Maison Dieu for community singing at the monthly charity dances held by the town Mayoress. He has recently lent recordings of playing the organ so that copies may be made in connection with the re-opening of the Maison Dieu in May, after a long and expensive renovation. He was a member of two walking clubs and often planned and led walks.

Ron took the opportunity of early retirement to leave DDC in 1987. After a short time catching up on the maintenance of his house and garden, he went to Lesotho, Southern Africa for two years as a technical advisor to the Government. The country is one of only three countries in the world which are completely surrounded by just one other country. Lesotho is surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, which causes many problems. In Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, he had the experience of constructing a road for Pope John Paul II to travel on in his popemobile. He played the organ in a church. He often went walking in the Maluti Mountains and also did much pony trekking.



Maluti Mountains Lesotho

He was active in the local Save The Children organisation. He often talked with the President, who was Queen Mamohato and also with her eldest son, who later became King Moshoeshoe. He was a member of the Rotary Club of Maseru and travelled widely in South Africa and Swaziland.

He then worked in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, as a technical advisor. The expected lifespan for a man there was 36 and falling! He played the organ in a church there and when the priest, in the local language, told the congregation that the organist was from England, they gave him a standing ovation. Ron later sent recordings of the organ in the Maison Dieu to accompany the choir when there was no electricity because they could not pay for it.

Ron then worked for a Danish firm of consulting engineers all over Tanzania. During his time there, he visited the island of Zanzibar. Having an addiction to playing The White Cliffs of Dover on a piano in unusual places, he was reluctant to play one in a church because the ivory notes were so yellow. It was pointed out to him that the colour of the notes was no indication of its playing capability – it just so happened that the elephant had smoked too much! He also played an organ in a church there, including variations on The White Cliffs of Dover.

He then worked in Cambodia with a French firm. Cambodia used to be part of the French empire, and many professional people still speak French. Ron's French was considered good enough to work with them. Later he worked as a volunteer with a charity trust helping the Zulus in Natal, South Africa. Before going, he read books about the history of the Zulus. He impressed them with his knowledge of their history and culture. Being aware of their part in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1897, they were proud when he told them that they had killed many British soldiers.

With a bell and dressed as Father Christmas, he did a little magic for the children before giving them presents.

On returning to Dover, he drove in a large convoy of over ninety vehicles to Romania, taking all sorts of aid to help the poor, abandoned children in orphanages. The buildings and the care of the children was terrible. There, he dressed as Father Christmas, and handed out presents to 110 children, who had their photographs taken on his knee. He also drove to what was then Yugoslavia during their civil war, taking aid for the many displaced people.

In 2000, at the age of sixty-eight, Ron trekked to the base camp of Mount Everest in Nepal.

He prepared classical music programmes for Dover Hospital Radio and held classical music evenings for over thirty years. As a member of the Elgar Society, he gave talks about the composer locally to raise money towards the £60,000 for a statue near Hereford Cathedral. He attended the unveiling ceremony and enjoyed talking to Dame Janet Baker, the president of the Elgar Society.

He is a Friend of Dover Museum and was vice chairman and membership secretary of the Friends of Dover Castle, and also Kent Archaeology. He is a patron of Dover Operatic and Dramatic Society, Dover Youth



RHDR Turntable

Theatre and of the Folkestone and Hythe Symphony Orchestra. With the White Cliffs organisation, he enjoyed clearing bushes and trees and constructing steps for the convenience of walkers. Ron is a Friend of the National Railway Museum in York. He worked on the preserved railway at Shepherdswell and belongs to the Remembrance Line Society, which is endeavouring to have a tram line leading to the harbour in Folkestone. Ron is a member of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch narrow gauge railway, and a photograph of Ron on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday shows him holding a special engine plaque commemorating the occasion. He is member of the British Music Hall society, and the International Brotherhood of Magicians – often inventing tricks which are published in magazines in the UK, America and New Zealand. He was a guide for the Western Heights and the Castle. He enjoys gardening; he says is no expert but undertakes the tasks just to keep fit. He often goes to the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury. He visits elderly friends who are in care homes. He uses his free bus pass to advantage and has a senior rail card giving a one-third reduction of all fares.



Ron Chatburn

He spent much time in Calais and was a member of the Rotary Club of Calais Risban and the local magic club. Also being a member of a magic club in Ashford also, he reckoned that he was the only person who took part in the activities of two clubs in two different countries. Continuing his interest in Rotary, he joined the clubs of South Foreland and of Deal. He also attends the social events of the Rotary Club of Dover. He enjoys raising money, which is used for good purposes, planting bulbs on roundabouts and picking up litter. On his ninety-second birthday, he walked with Rotary friends along the cliffs from Dover to St. Margarets. He is also a member of Dover Probus - ex. PROfessional and BUSiness people. He was a member of the local Royal Engineers Association and paraded in Dover and Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday and is a member of the Royal British Legion. Together with Rotary, he sells poppies in November.

Ron has been to India ten times, each time for three months. He goes for magic conventions, where he is made most welcome and meets magicians from all over the country and Bangladesh. Many of them, from all walks of life, invite him to their part of India where everybody makes a big fuss of him and he is often taken to areas where people have never seen a white man before. He stays with an Indian family in Kolkata (Calcutta) and meets with their relatives, friends, work colleagues, and neighbours. In 2018, Ron played the organ in a Methodist church for the wedding of the daughter of the family. He played music by Wagner, Handel, Purcell, Bach, Schubert, Elgar, Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn. The congregation had never heard this sort of music before, nor of their composers. While in India, Ron is not a tourist but one of the people. The trains are extremely cheap. The only non-Indian with 1,500 Indians, he has great fun travelling long distances in air-conditioned carriages with

sleeping berths. They share food, sing to each other, and he does a little magic. He visits some of the thirty-six Rotary clubs in Kolkata. At one club, he taught a choir to sing at an evening dinner celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Rotary. He had the experience of pulling a rickshaw puller in his own rickshaw. A photograph of the event is displayed on the wall of his lounge. He pays for the education of poor children in Hyderabad.

He plays chess, duplicate bridge, whist and sudoku. He uses his computer to further educate himself, but becomes very angry when his computer fails to co-operate. He is an avid reader of books on all subjects. Ron has been a member of the local U3A (University of the Third Age) for many years, enjoying their monthly speakers and their winter courses including French, German, Psychology, Tai Chi and picture-frame making. He has taught chess.

Ron has obviously contributed much to the development of the Dover district and to its social and community life. He is most grateful to the many people of various nationalities and languages who have been so kind and helpful during his life. He has been to seventy-seven countries. He considers himself to be fortunate in being British and has had the opportunity to express himself and help others through his profession, even though working in all extremes of climates and subjected to noise, dust and fumes has worn him out. He says he was born at an early age into an old world and has continually exhausted himself trying to rejuvenate it. He is thankful that his mind and memory are still alert and fertile. He agrees with his father who said that you only get of life what you put into it. Ron believes in wearing away rather than rusting away, and that he who manages his time, masters his life. He retains an entertaining sense of humour.

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PROGRAMME 2025/26

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.

November 17 **Dover Society General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Simon Bill

Topic: Dover Arts Development. A talk, slide show and discussion from Simon Bill who is the author and artist of the book *Dover, 12 essays*. The Arts Council England funded this project.

December 7 **Dover Society Festive Lunch & Entertainment**

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

£30.50 pp

Price to include arrival drink, three course meal, tea, or coffee. Barry Goss will provide the entertainment. Extra wine or other drinks may be ordered and purchased at the venue. Arrival drinks from 12.30pm. Finish at 4pm. All details and the booking form can be found in the centre of this newsletter on page 21.

Pre-orders for the meal are required two weeks before the event.

2026

January 19 **Dover Society General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Melanie Wrigley, Ecologist National Trust.

Topic: Ecology and Geology of the White Cliffs.

February 16 **Dover Society Quiz Night**

Monday

7.00 for 7.30pm

£5 pp

Our ever-popular light-hearted quiz evening held in St Mary's Church Hall.

Make up your own table of six, or, if you are unable to, we will fit you in where appropriate.

March 16: **Dover Society General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Martin Easdown, National Piers Society

Topic: Dover Promenade Pier

April 20: **Dover Society Annual General Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** Martin Crowther, Maison Dieu Engagement Officer.

Topic: The A to Z of the Maison Dieu

Members are reminded that the new subscription rates take effect from April 2026.

May **Dover Society General Open Meeting**

Monday 7.30pm **Speaker:** tba in the March newsletter

For the first time, The Dover Society will be holding a meeting during May. We hope that you will be able to attend. If it is successful, it will become a permanent fixture.

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



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