

SOCIAL HISTORY

The social structure of Harwich and Dovercourt changed in the interwar period, particularly in terms of increasing numbers of the middle and working classes. Social activities and entertainment also expanded greatly. Cinemas and sports participation and spectating were particularly popular, while Dovercourt reached a peak of popularity as a seaside destination in the 1930s. Statutory poor relief was administered through the poor law until the system's abolition in 1929, after which local authorities took control of the distribution of benefit payments. The private charitable sector took on an increasingly prominent role as a result of the economic depressions, particularly in the early 1920s and early 1930s. Education in the public sector was provided at elementary and secondary levels, with an increasing number of pupils staying on beyond the age of 14. There were also a number of private schools in Dovercourt. Religious life was well represented by both Church of England and Nonconformist denominations.

SOCIAL CHARACTER

The borough's population comprised a small number of clergy and gentry, growing numbers of the middle class, especially in Dovercourt, and the working class. Parkeston remained a predominantly working-class area. A marked change was the absence of permanent Royal Navy personnel with Harwich and Parkeston no longer bases after the early 1920s, though there were occasional short visits by flotillas thereafter. The professional middle class continued to hold most posts in the church and local government.

Members of the gentry carried on participating in public life. Sir Henry Parsall Burt (d. 1936) represented the borough on Essex County Council from 1931 to 1934 and was a churchwarden at All Saints' church, Dovercourt.¹ Richard Combe Abdy (d. 1938), who bought Michaelstowe Hall in 1920, was high steward of the borough from 1925. In the same year he donated £1,000 to the Harwich and District Hospital and subsequently had the new wing of the hospital named after him.²

The Ward family continued to play an important role in the local municipal, social and military life of Harwich and Dovercourt. Arthur John Hanslip Ward (1859–1938) stood down

as town clerk and county court registrar in 1937 having served for 50 and 40 years respectively in each position. The freedom of the borough was bestowed upon him in 1938.³ His wife, Eleanor Katherine Mignot Ward (d. 1939), actively supported numerous local charitable causes.⁴ Another family member, E. A. Ward, became the second female borough councillor in 1933.⁵

Other prominent local municipal officers included Charles L. Hills (d. 1938) who was elected as a councillor in 1912 and continued to serve in the interwar period including twice as mayor.⁶ Lucy M. Hill, first elected as an independent councillor in 1921, was Harwich's first female mayor for two years from 1923 and again for four consecutive years from 1931.⁷ Her husband Robert Hill (d. 1926) was also a councillor, as well as serving as a justice of the peace.⁸

John Elliott, a councillor from 1924, served as the Harwich representative on Essex County Council for two terms from 1929.⁹ He was the prime instigator of a failed plan to connect Harwich and Felixstowe by a road tunnel and even arranged a hoax that resulted in 1,000 vehicles arriving in Harwich in anticipation of its opening in 1926.¹⁰ He was often engaged in controversy at council meetings with one particularly heated altercation taking place in 1935. A few months later Elliott was fined £5 and bound over to keep the peace in a separate incidence of assault.¹¹

The increasing numbers of working-class people in this period is evidenced by the council addressing the need to provide more housing and the fact that the class gained some representation in local government.¹² The working class were increasingly employed in the service and retail sectors as manufacturing and agriculture declined. The notable exception was the large number of railway and dock workers based at Parkeston Quay.¹³

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Bathing and seaside entertainment

Sea-water bathing and swimming remained popular among holidaymakers mainly visiting Dovercourt. Beach tents and bathing cabins were advertised in 1921 rendering the pre-war

bathing machines obsolete.¹⁴ Events on the sands and in the water also became regular features. The beach and water sports days for children first took place in 1919 but were discontinued in 1928.¹⁵ The *Daily Mail* organised a sand design competition at Dovercourt in 1922. Subsequently held almost every year, the event proved very popular with children and apparently reached a peak of nearly 1,000 competitors in 1934.¹⁶ A 'clock' golf green and a putting green were laid out in 1924.¹⁷ On Dovercourt beach a miniature golf course opened in 1931.¹⁸ 'Dodgem' rides were provided, probably from the late 1920s, with an annual dodgem carnival started in 1929. This facility apparently continued until 1936 when the 'Dodgems' building was purchased by the council.¹⁹ Aerobatic displays and pleasure flights over Dovercourt were advertised in 1931, but at the event two pilots and three spectators were seriously injured when an aeroplane crashed.²⁰

Theatre, cinema and other forms of entertainment

Theatre plays and concerts proved popular, with the most prominent venue being Alexandra Hall at the hotel of the same name in Dovercourt staging amateur groups' performances.²¹ Concerts were a popular resort entertainment at Dovercourt's bandstands: the Marine Parade bandstand re-opened in 1921 and a new band shelter on Lower Marine Parade opened in 1929, to be followed three years later by the much grander band pavilion (known as the Cliff Pavilion from 1934).²² The main local band was the Harwich Silver Band which was formed in 1921, eventually becoming known as the Harwich Town Band in 1934.²³ The town choir adopted the name the Dovercourt Choral Society in 1935, thus reviving a link with the pre-war organisation.²⁴ Organised dances became increasingly popular: for example, the Palais de Danse opened at the Victoria Hall at the rear of the Cliff Hotel in Dovercourt in 1924.²⁵

Cinema was in its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s. Besides the two existing cinemas, the Electric Palace in Harwich and the Empire in Dovercourt, the Regent opened in Dovercourt in 1927.²⁶ A year later the Bostock family acquired the Empire and the Regent.²⁷ The introduction of sound boosted the cinemas. The first 'Talkie' in the borough was screened in 1930 at the Electric Palace.²⁸ The Empire made the switch to 'Talkies' later in the same year.²⁹ A fourth cinema in the borough, built in classic Art Deco style, called the Regal, opened in Main Road, Dovercourt, in 1938, also under the control of the Bostock family.³⁰

Radio was in its infancy when the Dovercourt Sports Club invited members of the Chamber of Commerce to the formal opening of its wireless section in 1922; the Harwich and District Radio Society was formed the following year and in 1924 moved its headquarters to the Sports Club.³¹

Carnivals, fêtes and similar events were another popular feature. A fancy-dress street dance was held on Lower Marine Parade in Dovercourt in August 1926, and such events proved briefly fashionable.³² The first week-long carnival, partly aimed at attracting seaside visitors, took place in August 1933 when a variety of events were organised, mainly in Dovercourt, including children's sports, a procession and a regatta. Local newspapers reported that 'thousands of people' attended certain entertainments and that a profit of c.£150 was made.³³ Similar events were held the following year and in 1937 and 1938, again proving hugely popular.³⁴ Circus visits continued though their popularity diminished in the 1930s with only two visits to Dovercourt noted: Chapman's London Circus performed in 1934 and Sir Robert Fossett's Circus four years later.³⁵ Fairs were another traditional attraction in this period such as Charles Thurston & Sons' 'fair and carnival' in the 1920s and John Barker's fair in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁶ By the 1930s Harwich Green apparently ceased to be used as a venue since a fairground was erected on Harwich Quay in 1936.³⁷ The Guy Carnival continued to be held in spite of the tradition having said to have almost died out in the mid 1920s.³⁸

National commemorative events included Armistice Day which was initially observed with two minutes' silence, but later incorporated a parade.³⁹ As Remembrance Day, it was recognised up to the early 1930s, yet by 1935 it had evolved into commemorations organised by ex-servicemen.⁴⁰ Empire Day was occasionally celebrated in the late 1920s by local schools.⁴¹ The Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 was marked with a procession and thanksgiving services at St Nicholas' and St Paul's churches.⁴² Numerous events were held for the Coronation of George VI in 1937, including special services, the planting of a commemorative oak tree, a six-a-side football tournament and other entertainments, especially for children.⁴³

Amateur sport

The most popular sport continued to be football. Harwich and Parkeston Football Club achieved its greatest period of success in the 1930s including winning the AFA Senior Cup three seasons in a row from 1934–5.⁴⁴ The other main local team was Parkeston GER (later Parkeston Railway) which played at the new Hamilton Park, the ground opening in 1920.⁴⁵ There were many other local teams, with 24 identified, including church and works teams.⁴⁶

Participation sports flourished in the interwar period. Cricket was revived after the war by the Harwich County High School team and a club called the Veterans.⁴⁷ The year 1930 saw the innovation of Sunday cricket, in which local teams took part in matches on Barrack Field.⁴⁸ Tennis experienced a brief surge in interest in the 1920s, with the first and only municipal tournament taking place in 1925.⁴⁹ The Harwich and Dovercourt Golf Club ran into temporary financial problems in the mid 1920s when it accumulated a debt of £350 prompting comments that the club was a ‘great asset’ to the town and seaside resort.⁵⁰ The main local hockey club was the Old Hervicensian Association (OHA), formed by the ex-pupils of Harwich County High School. On one occasion in 1925 the women’s team was supplemented by six men due a shortage of female players.⁵¹ The Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston Swimming Club hosted popular events at the new bathing pool in Dovercourt in the 1920s and 1930s, including in 1925 its first water polo match.⁵² The Dovercourt, and the Parkeston and District Cycling clubs were formed in 1934 and 1938 respectively.⁵³ Rugby union was played for the first time in the borough in 1936 by the newly formed Harwich and Dovercourt RUFC.⁵⁴

The Royal Harwich Yacht Club regatta was revived in 1920 and included George V as a participant in 1921 and 1923.⁵⁵ The separate Harwich town regatta was held in 1920 and 1921, but subsequently seems only to have been staged in 1926 and 1928.⁵⁶ In 1939 it was decided to move the RHYC headquarters to Pin Mill, near Chelmondiston (Suff.).⁵⁷

Traditional leisure activities were revived locally when the Essex and Suffolk Foxhounds met for the first time on The Green at Upper Dovercourt in 1925; they were occasional visitors throughout the 1930s, sometimes attracting as many as several hundred spectators as in 1938.⁵⁸

A popular indoor sporting event was boxing which was held at the Victoria Hall, Dovercourt, in the winter of 1919–20 and, separately, at the Drill Hall, Dovercourt, in June 1920. After a

lengthy gap boxing fights were revived in the winter of 1933–4 at the Retreat.⁵⁹ Other indoor sports and pastimes included badminton and bowls. The popularity of bowls was reflected by the opening of an indoor rink at the Cliff Pavilion in 1938.⁶⁰

Recreation

Participation in recreational activity expanded greatly. Local sports days continued to be held by the armed forces in the years immediately after the First World War.⁶¹ New leisure facilities were built in Dovercourt by the council to cater for residents and resort visitors. A landing stage and boating house for the boating lake were constructed in late 1922 or early 1923.⁶² Three new tennis hardcourts run by the council were opened in 1923 in Dovercourt, with another three built at Harwich.⁶³ In the same year a new swimming pool opened near the boating lake, along with a model yacht pond at a total cost to the council of £7,650.⁶⁴ An agreement to buy the premises of the well-established Dovercourt Sports Club was made by the council in 1924 at a cost of £5,115 to enable it to become a municipal asset. The purchase was apparently delayed due to Dovercourt Sports Club Ltd going into liquidation the following year.⁶⁵ A public enquiry in 1928 sanctioned the borrowing of £7,874 for purchasing the club and carrying out improvements.⁶⁶ The premises were leased back to the members in 1939.⁶⁷

Playing fields

An allotment site on the east side of Parkeston Road was offered to the Harwich school education committee for use as a playing field in 1921.⁶⁸ In 1928 LNER land in Foster Road, Parkeston, was set aside as a children's recreation ground; the agreement was terminated in 1938 due to vandalism of the site.⁶⁹ Barrack Field in Dovercourt, already used by schools for sports days, was developed specifically as a sports ground from 1929 with the consent of the military.⁷⁰ The freehold of Cliffe Park was purchased for c.£3,000 by the council in 1934 and a children's playground opened on the site two years later.⁷¹ War Department land adjoining Cliffe Park was purchased by the council in 1936 and the park was extended three years later to take in the site formerly occupied by Park Garage.⁷² Public open space of c.64 a. in the west of Dovercourt was included in the Town Planning Scheme of 1937.⁷³ In 1939 grants of £1,050 and £1,000 from the National Playing Fields Association were accepted by the

council to contribute to the purchase of 17½ a. of land at Dovercourt and for laying out Harwich Green, both for use as playing fields.⁷⁴

Other organisations

There were many local fellowship groups. Harwich's tradition of freemasonry continued with the Star in the East Lodge as the most prominent institution. It formed the Harwich Masonic Hall Club in 1928, the same year that Harwich Masonic Hall Company Ltd entered voluntary liquidation.⁷⁵ Also attached to the Star in the East Lodge were the Royal Arch Order of Masons and a daughter lodge, the Hanslip Ward Lodge.⁷⁶ Another local lodge was the Essex United Services Lodge which also met at the Masonic Hall.⁷⁷ Further fellowship societies which mainly carried out charitable activities included the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, the Loyal Excelsior Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows and the Harwich and District Brotherhood and Sisterhood.⁷⁸ The Sailors' Rest, funded by the GER and the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, was erected in Station Road, Parkeston, in 1919 and became the headquarters of the Parkeston Social Club two years later.⁷⁹ Temperance meetings continued to be held on a regular basis, no doubt a response to the still high number of public houses in the area.⁸⁰

Social and special interest groups proliferated as civic society continued to expand. A social club for ex-servicemen, called the Harwich United Services Men's Club, was founded in 1920 and secured premises at Stourwell House, Orwell Terrace in Dovercourt before deciding to move to a property adjacent to the Drill Hall, also in Dovercourt. Several committees were formed, including for swimming, cricket and outdoor games, billiards and indoor games, and entertainments.⁸¹ The Dovercourt branch of the British Legion was founded in 1922, followed by a women's section two years later.⁸² Its premises on Barrack Field in Dovercourt were destroyed by fire in 1924; new facilities in a similar location were opened in 1927, only for them to be partially ruined by another fire three years later and subsequently rebuilt.⁸³ There was a Girl Guides movement and the local group of the Boy Scouts' Association was re-formed in 1923.⁸⁴ The new Navy League Sea Cadets Corps began its operations in early 1939 with its headquarters at the Pavilion on Harwich quay.⁸⁵

New groups covered a diverse range of activities. The Harwich, Dovercourt and District Model Yacht Club proved especially popular from its formation in 1924, having a full membership of 67 by the following year, holding an annual regatta from 1927 and opening a clubhouse in 1929.⁸⁶ The Harwich Meccano Club held its first annual exhibition in 1925 and these continued until at least 1934.⁸⁷ The Old Hervicensian Photographic Society was formed in 1925,⁸⁸ and the Dovercourt and District Philatelic Society began in 1937.⁸⁹

Intellectual pursuits were catered for by the Harwich and Dovercourt University Extension Society which ran a series of lectures through the winter months of 1927–8 and 1928–9.⁹⁰ The League of Nations' Union, which was formed in 1928, began a study circle the following year, an iteration of which two years later suggested among its topics for discussion 'Hitler, His Rise and Fall' and organised a public rally in 1931.⁹¹ Another initiative, called the Peace Ballot and part of a national campaign, was launched in 1935.⁹² The continuing absence of a public library exercised the local inhabitants. A public meeting was called in 1933 to campaign for one to be opened, but in spite of lobbying the cause was not taken up by the council.⁹³ There was a subscription library at the Mill House Arcade in Dovercourt run by John Elliott in the 1930s.⁹⁴

SOCIAL WELFARE

Charities

Several long-standing charities continued to operate. The Dovercourt Church and Poor Lands Charity provided for the poor in the form of small pensions and coals; in the latter case as a result of having taken over administration of the Charity of Robert John Bagshaw for Coal in 1920.⁹⁵ Some of the church charity's land was offered for sale or hire, including in 1934 a building lease being advertised on some land, presumed to be Snake Meadow, and 58 a. 2 r. 32 p. in Low Road which was sold soon after.⁹⁶ The Henry Smith Charity functioned as the Dovercourt Coal and Blanket Club Charity.⁹⁷ The Church Lands Charity funded repairs and improvements to St Nicholas' church.⁹⁸ The same church distributed payments from Wiseman's Charity and Offley's Gift, and from 1930 Stuarts Annuities, apparently the gift of I. O. P. Stuart. In 1930 poverty was so prevalent that additional amounts totalling £15 10s. were made to 155 recipients.⁹⁹

Poor relief

A relief fund was established by the mayor in late 1921 to address the effects of unemployment and this was continued for the following two winters and occasionally thereafter.¹⁰⁰ A municipal soup kitchen opened in premises adjoining the market in Harwich in January 1926 and for the two subsequent winters was operated by Councillor George Washington. During that time the total number of children fed (presumably individual meals) was reported to be 40,000.¹⁰¹ The soup kitchen closed in January 1932 due to lack of demand but it was operated by the Salvation Army the following winter.¹⁰²

The poor law unions were abolished under the Local Government Act (1929) and responsibility for distributing poor relief was transferred to the county council public assistance committees, with the last meeting of Guardians taking place in 1930.¹⁰³ In the same year E. A. Ward, the wife of mayor Robert Almond Ward, began the practice of distributing parcels to needy inhabitants of the borough at Christmas, and the council established the Harwich Voluntary Boot Association.¹⁰⁴ The tradition of slate clubs continued to provide relief: by the mid 1930s the local Slate Club Association had as many as 20 institutions from Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston affiliated to it.¹⁰⁵ Another self-help organisation, the Parkeston Mutual Aid Society, was operating by 1931.¹⁰⁶ The Harwich Women's Constitutional Club distributed coal to old age pensioners and widows in the borough in February 1936.¹⁰⁷ Individuals also contributed to poor relief. Lord Claud Hamilton bequeathed £100 to the mayor in 1925 to provide an annual gift of coal to the poor of Harwich borough.¹⁰⁸ John Pybus, the local MP, donated 400 joints of meat to needy families and a further joint to the Guy Carnival fund in 1932.¹⁰⁹

Medical services

The borough medical officer of health oversaw general health provision and also served as school medical officer and port medical officer. In 1922 the Harwich and District Cottage Hospital and Fryatt Memorial opened, catering initially for private patients only, and from the end of 1925 patients under a contributory scheme.¹¹⁰ An 'Electrical Annexe' to provide physiotherapy treatment was added in 1927, along with X-ray facilities and a waiting room,

while an extension was added to the annexe five years later.¹¹¹ A child welfare centre opened at the school clinic at 27 West Street, Harwich, in 1920,¹¹² and an orthopaedic clinic for children, also at Harwich but serving Parkeston as well, started in 1927. The following year a tuberculosis dispensary for Harwich borough and Parkeston was established.¹¹³ The isolation hospital in Upper Dovercourt closed in 1938 and subsequently all infectious patients were sent to Colchester Hospital with the exception of the refugee children based at Warner's Holiday Camp in the winter of 1938–9.¹¹⁴

Several voluntary health groups started in the early 1930s: the St John's Ambulance Brigade (the Harwich and District Division of which was registered in September 1931),¹¹⁵ the Harwich and District Nursing Association (founded in 1933 as a successor to the Borough Nurse Fund)¹¹⁶ and the Harwich and District Ambulance Association (formed in 1934).¹¹⁷ The Parkeston and Harwich (GER, later LNER) Ambulance Division and the British Red Cross Society, which provided a new motor ambulance for the borough in 1933, continued to operate.¹¹⁸

After the closure in 1926 of the Salvation Army Naval and Military Home in Church Street, Harwich, there were no nursing and convalescent homes until the late 1930s.¹¹⁹ Ramsey Lodge opened in Dovercourt as the holiday home of Mutual Sanitaria of Billericay in 1936,¹²⁰ and the Premier Nursing Home in Fronks Road, Dovercourt, offered maternity, medical, surgical and general care from late 1938.¹²¹

EDUCATION

Public elementary- and secondary-level education was administered through the Harwich school education committee. The single exception was the Harwich County High School at Main Road, Dovercourt, which was administered by the Essex County Council education committee and provided for boys and girls between the ages of eight and 17 (the younger pupils were taught at The Towers, Dovercourt, from 1920).¹²² Under the provisions of the Education Act (1918) some children were eligible to remain at school beyond the age of 14. The Harwich school education committee sought to have these 'higher classes' recognised in 1920 and five years later it was reported that 64% of boys at Central School had continued in education, with 10% remaining after reaching the age of 15.¹²³

The standard of education was frequently a cause for concern locally. In 1925 Esplanade School in Harwich was described by Councillor George Washington as ‘one of the worst schools I’ve ever seen in my life’.¹²⁴ It was proposed to close the infants’ department at the school in 1928, with the children attending Bathside Infants’ School, Harwich, but the measure was abandoned after a public outcry and the submission of a petition of 538 signatures to the Board of Education.¹²⁵ In 1930 the Harwich school education committee considered the general school reports ‘rotten’ and a subcommittee was appointed to meet the headmaster of Harwich County High School to make further enquiries.¹²⁶

Private schools were prominent in Dovercourt given its resort location and continued residential expansion. For example, Mabel and Winifred Main ran a private school for girls in Upper Dovercourt from c.1929; it was superseded by the Cliffdene School for Girls and Kindergarten, started by Winifred alone in Dovercourt in 1936.¹²⁷ Boys’ schools included Dovercourt College, established in the mid 1930s, and St Michael’s School which was started c.1929 but appeared to have closed by the mid 1930s.¹²⁸ The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (also known as the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco), who took over from the Dominican sisters at the convent at Orwell Terrace in 1932, opened a school for juniors in the same year and accepted senior pupils the following year.¹²⁹ The majority of churches in Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston continued to run Sunday Schools.

There was a variety of educational provision for adults. The Harwich school education committee was offering instruction for adults in woodwork, needlework, shorthand, French, bookkeeping and ‘Commercial Science’ in 1924 and by the 1930s these classes were run by the education committee of Essex County Council.¹³⁰ From 1933 the Harwich and district branch of the Workers’ Educational Association was running classes.¹³¹ The Dovercourt School of Shorthand and Typewriting and the Dovercourt Commercial School were examples of institutions offering professional training in the 1930s.¹³² Dancing classes also proved popular such as those run by Gwynedd Watling and Mrs A. B. and Ida Kettle in 1934.¹³³

RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Church of England remained the main religious denomination, with St Nicholas' church in Harwich and All Saints' and St Augustine's churches in Dovercourt the primary places of worship. St Paul's mission church served Parkeston.¹³⁴ Revd Canon Thomas Grey Collier (d. 1933), vicar of Dovercourt since 1880, retired in 1923.¹³⁵ Following the incumbency of Revd Viner G. Ballance, vicar until 1935, membership of All Saints' and St Augustine's churches increased to a peak of 1,311 in 1929, before gradually declining so that in 1939 it stood at 1,133.¹³⁶ Dovercourt's annual church fête was a significant social event in the 1920s; however, by 1931 Revd Ballance deemed that any event on such a scale was unnecessary, presumably on the grounds that the church was financially stable.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, by 1938 the financial position was noted as 'really serious' given the drop in collections at St Augustine's church.¹³⁸ On occasion the nature and location of worship changed. Revivalist meetings were staged at both All Saints' and St Augustine's churches in 1927; in 1937 a service was held in the Empire cinema in Dovercourt, and two years later several services were celebrated at Warner's Dovercourt Bay Holiday Camp.¹³⁹ In St Nicholas parish the church was actively engaged in the community: a club for older girls was established in 1919 while a Harwich branch of the Mothers' Union was formed in 1929 and the church also ran a Church Lads' Brigade and a Women's Meeting.¹⁴⁰ The church had its own Guild of Bellringers.¹⁴¹

Among the topics sometimes covered in sermons were events of local and national interest. For example, Revd Ballance preached in 1923 that tennis should not be played on Sundays to avoid a 'Continental Sunday, where the whole of the streets were a din of unholy noise' and subsequently both Dovercourt churches raised petitions in support of the vicar.¹⁴² In 1931 the same vicar advised that politics should be kept out of the 'Church of God' in a sermon at St Augustine's church.¹⁴³ However, this attitude had not prevented a meeting to protest at religious persecution in Russia being held in the church hall the previous year under the auspices of the Christian Protest Movement.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes community involvement was more direct. The local branch of the League of Nations' Union included a significant number of local clergymen, including Revd Father Bernard Clay of the Catholic church and Nonconformist ministers on its first committee in 1928.¹⁴⁵ The following year a meeting to form a local branch of the National Playing Fields Association was organised by Harwich's vicar, Revd Horace B. Reiss, but the group itself was not established until the mid 1930s.¹⁴⁶

Harwich and Dovercourt remained a stronghold for Nonconformity through active engagement in the community. For example, the Nonconformist churches tried to appeal to young people by holding an 'experimental' service at the Electric Palace in Harwich in 1929.¹⁴⁷ Other joint ventures by the Free Churches of the borough included a Week of United Prayer in January 1936 and in the same month an 'impressive' joint service was held at Dovercourt Congregational church in memory of the late George V.¹⁴⁸ The same church was particularly active in engaging with young people: for example, through its 'Rally Sunday' events of the mid 1930s and its social club formed jointly with Toc H in 1939 to keep 'lads of School leaving age from parading the Streets and from being drawn into darts clubs and similar activities held on licensed premises'.¹⁴⁹

The Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches maintained their presence until in 1932 they amalgamated to form the United Reformed Church; the Primitive Methodist Central church in Main Road, Dovercourt, closed four years later.¹⁵⁰ The Strict and Particular Baptists continued to meet but the congregation was reported to be 'so few' in 1932 and there were apparently only seven or eight members in 1937.¹⁵¹ The Salvation Army was particularly prominent through its social work as well as its religious role, holding its first annual field day in 1927.¹⁵²

There were also two non-denominational mission halls in Dovercourt: the Dovercourt Mission Hall was renamed the Kingsway Hall in 1932 while the Tollgate Mission Hall in Main Road, Upper Dovercourt, operated from c.1933.¹⁵³ Other new places of non-denominational worship in Dovercourt were the Manor Road Mission, which opened in 1931,¹⁵⁴ a new gospel hall in Grafton Road, which apparently opened the following year,¹⁵⁵ and a meeting room in Ashley Road built in 1935 for the Dovercourt Free Church.¹⁵⁶ In Harwich a section of the old Ordnance buildings was converted into the Fountain Mission Hall in 1933 for the Harwich Welsh Mission, which formerly met in West Street, Harwich.¹⁵⁷

The Catholic church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel acquired a new organ in 1932 and was extensively renovated in 1938.¹⁵⁸ Revd Father Alfred W. Clements was priest for 15 years up to 1923; he was succeeded by Revd Father Clay, who served for the remainder of the interwar period.¹⁵⁹

¹ *HDS*, 7 Nov. 1936, 18, 25 Sept. 1937.

² ERO, SALE/A287; HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 26 Mar. 1925; *HDS*, 2 May, 6 June 1925, 12 Mar. 1938.

³ ERO, D/B 4 M1/1, 22 July, 14 Oct. 1937, 26 Jan. 1938; *HDS*, 6 Mar., 3 Apr. 1937, 29 Jan., 7 May, 20 Aug. 1938; above, Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston, 1815–1914, Soc. Hist., Soc. structure, Prominent families and individuals.

⁴ *HDS*, 2 Sept. 1939.

⁵ *Ibid.* 28 Jan. 1933; below, this sect., Social welfare, poor relief.

⁶ ERO, D/B 4 M1/1, 9 Nov. 1936; HTC, mins, 9 Nov. 1935; *HDS*, 2 Nov. 1912, 5, 12 Feb. 1938.

⁷ HTC, mins, 9 Nov. 1923, 10 Nov. 1924, 9 Nov. 1931, 9 Nov. 1932, 9 Nov. 1933, 9 Nov. 1934; *HDS*, 5 Nov. 1921.

⁸ *HDS*, 2, 9 Oct. 1926.

⁹ *Ibid.* 8 Nov. 1924, 26 Oct. 1929, 10 Mar. 1934.

¹⁰ *Daily Mail*, 5 Apr. 1926, *HDS*, 10 Apr. 1926, 30 Oct. 1937; J. Elliott, 'The unemployed the tunnel and the taxpayer' (1925, 2nd edn) (copy in ERO, Acc. C1032, Box 7); W. Cooper, 'The tunnel hoax' (1980) (copy in ERO, LIB/E/HARW72).

¹¹ *HDS*, 16 Feb., 22 June 1935.

¹² Above, this article, Intro., Settlement and development.

¹³ Above, this article, Econ. Hist., Trade and commerce, Retailing, occupations and trades; below, this article, Local Govt and Politics, The local council.

¹⁴ *HDS*, 7 May 1921.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 9, 23, 30 Aug. 1919, 14 July 1928.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 12 Aug. 1922, 18 Aug. 1934.

¹⁷ HTC, pleasure grounds and amusements cttee mins, 26 Sept. 1923; amusements and publicity cttee mins, 23 Jan., 6 Mar. 1924.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* amusements and publicity cttee mins, 24 Apr. 1931; *HDS*, 23 May 1931.

¹⁹ HTC, pleasure grounds cttee mins, 14 Sept. 1936; *HDS*, 6 Sept. 1930.

²⁰ *HDS*, 25 July, 8 Aug. 1931.

²¹ HS, 476; *HDS*, 22 May 1926.

²² HS, 244, 392, programme for opening of band pavilion; HTC, mins, 9 May 1929, 14 Apr. 1932; amusements and publicity cttee mins, 22 Apr. 1929, 5 Feb. 1932, 1 June 1934; *HDS*, 20 Aug. 1921, 13, 20 July 1929, 9, 16, 23 July 1932.

²³ *HDS*, 8 Oct., 5 Nov. 1921, 3 Feb. 1934.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 19 Oct. 1935; above, Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston, 1815–1914, Soc. Hist., Soc. and cultural activities, Soc. activities, Assembly balls and concerts, fn. 58.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 7, 14 June 1924.

²⁶ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/484; *HDS*, 29 Jan. 1927; above, Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston, 1815–1914, Soc. Hist., Soc. and cultural life, Soc. activities, Public Hall, theatre and cinema.

²⁷ *HDS*, 7 Jan. 1928.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 8, 15 Mar. 1930.

²⁹ Ibid. 27 Sept. 1930.

³⁰ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/1238, /1263, /1289, /1347, /1369; HS, 116, programme for opening of cinema; *HDS*, 21, 28 May, 4 June 1938.

³¹ *HDS*, 12 Aug. 1922, 15 Dec. 1923, 19 Jan. 1924.

³² Ibid. 28 Aug. 1926.

³³ Ibid. 19 (special supplement), 26 Aug., 30 Sept. 1933.

³⁴ Ibid. 11 Aug. 1934, 28 Aug. 1937, 6 Aug. 1938.

³⁵ Ibid. 30 June 1934, 20 Aug. 1938.

³⁶ Ibid. 2 May 1925, 21 Aug. 1926, 7 Aug. 1937, 28 May, 4, 11 June 1938.

³⁷ Ibid. 3 Oct. 1936.

³⁸ Ibid. 7 Nov. 1925, 12 Nov. 1927.

³⁹ Ibid. 8 Nov. 1919, 18 Nov. 1922.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 5 Nov. 1932; 16 Nov. 1935, 14 Nov. 1936.

⁴¹ Ibid. 28 May 1927, 26 May 1928.

⁴² HS, 414; HTC, 242/WC 50; *HDS*, 11 May 1935.

⁴³ HS, 81, 352, 412; HTC, 155/23, 242/WC 51; *HDS*, 15, 29 May, 5 June 1937.

⁴⁴ *HDS*, 7 May 1938.

⁴⁵ TNA, RAIL 227/33, 9 Jan. 1920; *HDS*, 25 Sept., 2 Oct. 1920, 19, 26 Nov. 1921.

⁴⁶ A full list of the football teams is available, with references, from the VCH Essex office.

⁴⁷ *HDS*, 17 July 1920.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 19 July, 2, 30 Aug. 1930.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 4 July 1925.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 30 Oct. 1926, 30 Apr. 1927.

⁵¹ Ibid. 10 Oct. 1925.

⁵² Ibid. 11 July 1925; above, this sect., Soc. and cultural life, Seaside activities and entertainment.

⁵³ Ibid. 14 Apr. 1934, 9 Apr. 1938.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 26 Sept., 3, 17 Oct. 1936.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 5 June 1920, 23 July 1921, 28 July 1923.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 25 Sept. 1920, 27 Aug. 1921, 4 Sept. 1926, 8 Sept. 1928.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 1 Apr. 1939.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 14 Nov. 1925, 5 Mar. 1938.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 20 Dec. 1919, 17, 24 Jan., 26 June 1920, 9, 16, 23 Dec. 1933, 13 Jan.–17 Feb., 3–31 Mar., 21, 28 Apr., 19 May 1934.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 17, 24 Dec. 1938.

⁶¹ Ibid. 17 July 1920, 26 Aug. 1922.

⁶² HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 23 Nov. 1922.

⁶³ Ibid. mins, 12 Apr. 1923; general purposes cttee mins, 1, 15 Mar. 1923; pleasure grounds and amusements cttee mins, 14 June 1923; *HDS*, 23, 30 June, 14 July 1923.

⁶⁴ *HDS*, 5, 12 July, 1 Nov. 1924.

-
- ⁶⁵ TNA, BT 31/20243/117994, return of final winding-up meeting, 26 June 1925; HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 23 Oct., 6, 20 Nov., 4, 18 Dec. 1924; *HDS*, 28 Feb., 21 Mar. 1925.
- ⁶⁶ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 22 Mar. 1928.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 9 Mar., 29 June 1939.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 29 Sept. 1921; Harwich sch. educ. cttee mins, 26 Sept. 1921.
- ⁶⁹ ERO, D/J 109/1/3, 24 July 1928; 109/1/4, 30 May 1938.
- ⁷⁰ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 10 July 1930; *HDS*, 26 Jan. 1929.
- ⁷¹ HTC, mins, 12 July, 11 Oct. 1934; *HDS*, 6 June 1936.
- ⁷² HTC, mins, 13 Aug. 1936; pleasure grounds cttee mins, 7 Aug., 7 Dec. 1936; *HDS*, 21 Jan. 1939.
- ⁷³ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 25 Mar. 1937.
- ⁷⁴ ERO, D/B 4 M1/1, 13 Apr. 1939; D/B 4 M2/1/1, 23 Aug. 1939; HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 9 Mar., 29 June 1939.
- ⁷⁵ G.H. Bonner, *Star in the East Lodge No. 650: Harwich 1855–1955 One Hundred Years of Masonic Work* ([1955?]), 8; *HDS*, 2, 16 June 1928.
- ⁷⁶ Bonner, *Star in the East Lodge No. 650*, 3; <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/lane/record.php?ID=6213> (accessed 29 Apr. 2024).
- ⁷⁷ <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/lane/record.php?ID=6618> (accessed 1 May 2024).
- ⁷⁸ *HDS*, 3 Dec. 1921, 26 Aug. 1922, 27 Aug. 1927, 19 Jan. 1929.
- ⁷⁹ TNA, RAIL 227/33, 30 Sept. 1920, 6 Jan. 1921; ERO, D/RT Pb1/815; *HDS*, 15 Feb. 1919.
- ⁸⁰ e.g. *HDS*, 11 Dec. 1920, 3 Mar., 10 Nov. 1923.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.* 21, 28 Aug. 1920; 12 Feb. 1921.
- ⁸² *Ibid.* 24 June 1922, 9 Feb. 1924.
- ⁸³ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/520, /780; *HDS*, 6 Sept. 1924, 26 Feb. 1927, 24 May 1930.
- ⁸⁴ *HDS*, 24 May 1919, 21 Nov. 1925.
- ⁸⁵ HTC, general purposes committee mins, 22 Sept. 1938; *HDS*, 25 Feb. 1939.
- ⁸⁶ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/715; HTC, amusements and publicity cttee mins, 30 May 1929; *HDS*, 8, 22 Nov. 1924, 28 Mar. 1925, 1 Oct. 1927, 10 Aug. 1929; *Marine Models including The Model Yachtsman*, 6, 3 (1933), 66 (copy in HTC, 441).
- ⁸⁷ *HDS*, 9 Jan. 1926, 19 May 1934.
- ⁸⁸ Old Hervicensian Association mins, 19 Sept. 1925 (copy in HS, 476); *HDS*, 26 Sept. 1925.
- ⁸⁹ *HDS*, 23 Oct. 1937.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 15 Sept., 6 Oct. 1928.
- ⁹¹ ERO, D/Z 115/1, 24 Apr. 1929, 11 June 1931; *HDS*, 5 May 1928, 21 Nov. 1931.
- ⁹² *HDS*, 26 Jan., 2 Feb. 1935.
- ⁹³ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 18 Jan., 1 Mar. 1934; *HDS*, 16 Dec. 1933, 20, 27 Jan. 1934; above, Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston, 1815–1914, Soc. Hist., Soc. and cultural life, Seaside resort and bathing.
- ⁹⁴ *HDS*, 11, 18, 25 Jan., 1, 8 Feb. 1936; H. Allen, ‘Mill House libr.’, *Highlight*, no. 140, Summer 2005, pp. 11–12.
- ⁹⁵ ERO, D/P 174/25/41, /49–50, /55.

⁹⁶ *HDS*, 23 June, 7 July 1934.

⁹⁷ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 20 Oct. 1927.

⁹⁸ ERO, D/P 170/25/14.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* Acc. C1404, parochial char. acct bk.

¹⁰⁰ *HDS*, 3, 10 Dec. 1921, 16 Dec. 1922, 15 Dec. 1923.

¹⁰¹ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 17 Dec. 1925; Harwich sch. educ. cttee mins, 30 Nov. 1926, 28 Feb. 1928; *HDS*, 16 Jan. 1926.

¹⁰² HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 7 Jan. 1932; *HDS*, 3, 10 Dec. 1932.

¹⁰³ *HDS*, 22 Mar. 1930.

¹⁰⁴ HTC, Voluntary Boot Association cttee mins, 1 Dec. 1930; *HDS*, 29 Nov. 1930.

¹⁰⁵ *HDS*, 29 Dec. 1934.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 28 Feb. 1931.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 1 Feb. 1936.

¹⁰⁸ HTC, mins, 9 July 1925; *HDS*, 16 May 1925.

¹⁰⁹ *HDS*, 12 Nov. 1932.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 22 Apr. 1922, 7 Nov. 1925.

¹¹¹ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/500, /828; C. Strachan, *The Hist. of the Sick and Wounded in Harwich* (2004), 27 (copy in HTC, 357); *HDS*, 9 July 1932.

¹¹² HTC, Harwich maternity and child welfare cttee mins, 6 July 1920.

¹¹³ ERO, D/RT M1/13, 'Annual rep. of the medical officer of health for 1930' [TRDC] (1931), 11; HTC, Harwich maternity and child welfare cttee mins, 5 July 1927, 28 Feb. 1928; Harwich sch. educ. cttee mins, 26 June 1928.

¹¹⁴ ERO, D/B 4 M1/1, 12 May 1938; HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 21 Apr., 16 June, 28 Nov. 1938; *HDS*, 2 July 1938.

¹¹⁵ ERO, Acc. A12600, Box 3, copy letter, 29 Sept. 1931; HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 25 July 1931; *HDS*, 26 Sept. 1931.

¹¹⁶ *HDS*, 25 Mar., 22, 29 Apr. 1933.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 30 June 1934.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 29 Apr. 1933.

¹¹⁹ HTC, general purposes cttee mins, 9 Sept. 1926.

¹²⁰ *HDS*, 19 Dec. 1936.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 8 Oct. 1938–28 Jan. 1939.

¹²² HS, 459; *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1922), 288.

¹²³ TNA, ED 97/98.

¹²⁴ *HDS*, 19 Dec. 1925.

¹²⁵ TNA, ED 21/28468, letters, 28 Feb., 16, 22, 27 Mar. 1928; HTC, Harwich sch. educ. cttee mins, 28 Feb. 1928; *HDS*, 10, 17, 31 Mar., 28 Apr., 2 June 1928.

¹²⁶ *HDS*, 31 Oct. 1931.

¹²⁷ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1929), 256; (1933), 264; (1937), 268; *HDS*, 14, 21, 28 Nov., 5 Dec. 1936.

- ¹²⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1929), 256; (1937), 268; *HDS*, 5 Sept., 24 Oct. 1936.
- ¹²⁹ *HDS*, 23 July, 27 Aug. 1932, 15, 22 Apr. 1933.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 4 Oct. 1924, 19 Sept. 1931.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.* 20 Apr. 1935.
- ¹³² *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1937), 268; *HDS*, 1 Oct. 1932, 1, 8, 15 Apr. 1933.
- ¹³³ *HDS*, 13 Jan. 1934, 11 Aug.–10 Nov. 1934.
- ¹³⁴ St Paul's church held its last service in 2014.
- ¹³⁵ *HDS*, 23 Dec. 1922, 27 Jan. 1923, 20 May 1933.
- ¹³⁶ ERO, D/P 174/29/7, 20 Apr. 1925, 2 Apr. 1929; 174/29/8, 11 Apr. 1939; *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1926), 66; *HDS*, 6 July, 12 Oct. 1935.
- ¹³⁷ *HDS*, 7 July 1928, 18 Apr. 1931.
- ¹³⁸ ERO, D/P 174/29/8, finance cttee mins, 21 Mar. 1938.
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 19 Mar. 1936, 4 Aug. 1937; *HDS*, 26 Feb. 1927.
- ¹⁴⁰ *HDS*, 8 Mar. 1919, 19 Oct. 1929.
- ¹⁴¹ ERO, Acc. A14192.
- ¹⁴² *HDS*, 19 May, 9 June 1923.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 31 Oct. 1931.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 12 July 1930.
- ¹⁴⁵ ERO, D/Z 115/1, 30 Apr. 1928.
- ¹⁴⁶ *HDS*, 28 Sept. 1929, 14 Nov. 1936.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 20 Apr. 1929.
- ¹⁴⁸ ERO, D/NC 49/2/3, 13 Dec. 1935; *HDS*, 1 Feb. 1936.
- ¹⁴⁹ ERO, D/NC 49/2/3, 27 Sept. 1934; 49/2/13, 22 July 1937, 27 June, 11 July 1939.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Acc. C1367, Box 9, Primitive Methodist trustees' mins, 27 Mar. 1936; *HDS*, 8 Oct. 1932, 25 July 1936.
- ¹⁵¹ Evangelical Libr., Strict Bapt. Historical Society records, Essex 6/5, 17 Jan. 1932, list of members, 1937.
- ¹⁵² *HDS*, 4 Aug. 1928.
- ¹⁵³ *Kelly's Dir Essex* (1933), 260; *HDS*, 28 May 1932.
- ¹⁵⁴ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/837; *HDS*, 28 Nov. 1931.
- ¹⁵⁵ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/849; *HDS*, 16 Apr. 1932.
- ¹⁵⁶ ERO, D/B 4 Pb13/1119; Cone, *Harwich & Dovercourt in the 20th Century*, 10.
- ¹⁵⁷ HTC, mins, 11 May 1933; general purposes cttee mins, 30 Mar. 1933; *HDS*, 27 May 1933.
- ¹⁵⁸ *HDS*, 29 Oct. 1932, 25 June 1938.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 15 Sept. 1923.