

Dover Castle Chronicles

Read
All
About
It!



**Friends
of
Dover
Castle
News**

Summer 2026

Well, I'm still here as Editor and Publisher and this has been thanks to you, the readers, who gave us such positive feedback, I had no option but to stay on and continue producing our regular newsletters, which I must admit, I do enjoy. The more research you do about Dover Castle, the more you learn about it. This edition we catch up on what has been going on since the previous bumper Spring Edition. By the time you read this we will have held our first Open Days of the Season, supported Dover Castle with their Annual WW2 Event, which traditionally is their biggest event of the year, and have news about our plans to Celebrate our 40th Anniversary.

Some readers have mentioned that they would like to be on an email subscription list so that they receive a copy of our newsletter as soon as it is published.

Please email me at chairman@dover-castle-friends.org to request email copies and consent to save your email details and send our Newsletters and other communications.



It has been 40 years since we were formed and it is a credit to all those involved in running our association that we are still very active and thriving. We were one of the first Friends organisations set up after English Heritage formed in 1983 and we were practically the only association who kept going during Covid. From the firing of the Anti-aircraft Gun at Admiralty Lookout, the benches outside the Great Tower, the mobility scooters, the defibrillator, the Muskets in the Dover Castle Under Siege attraction and of course the fantastic Constables Kitchen Garden there is evidence all around the Castle site of our support to the Castle and enhancing the Visitor Experience.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

**SUNDAY
26th APRIL**



**10 am until
4 pm**

Constables Kitchen Garden

Take away
some plants
or produce
(donations)



Learn about
NO DIG !
See parts of
the Castle not
normally open

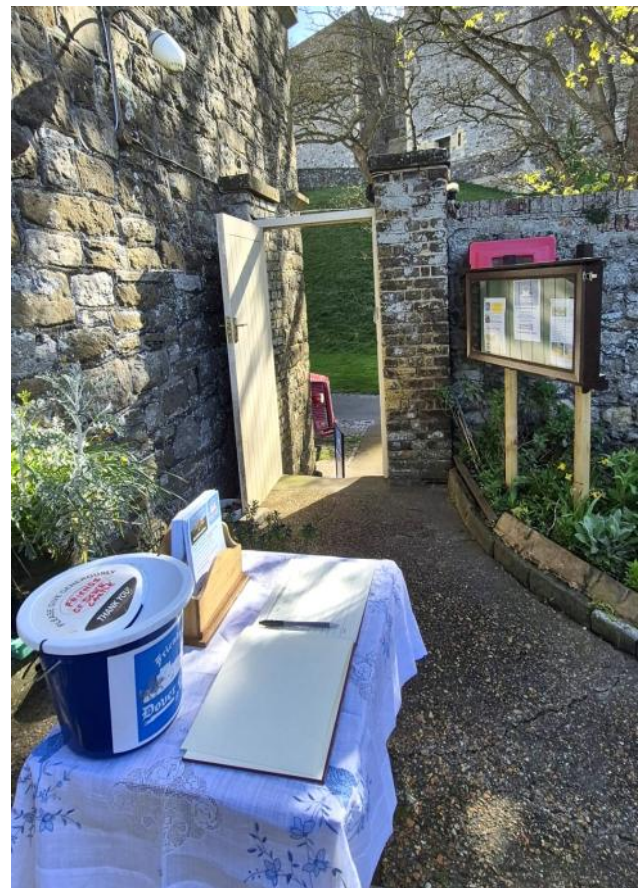
Grand Open Day

- See our wonderful Kitchen Garden
- See inside Treasurers Tower - only open when we are!
- Find out about the Friends of Dover Castle
- **WE ARE RECRUITING** - we need volunteers and committee members - great opportunities to get even more out of visiting the Castle.
- Free Entry provided you already have admission to the Castle

www.dover-castle-friends.org

OPEN DAY SUCCESS

We held our Grand Open Day on 26th April 2026 with over 80 visitors attending and we also raised over £50 in donations.





When you visit our Kitchen Garden you also gain access to Treasurers Tower - a 13th Century Tower of the Outer Curtain Walls. This is only open to visitors during our Open Days and was the main place for monetary transactions and the keeping of records. It was linked to the main Constables Tower by a private walkway. Important documents were kept here until the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) when a scoundrel



named Levenste burned all the documents and records in annoyance at being overlooked for the post of Lieutenant of Dover Castle - a certain John Moynings was given the position.



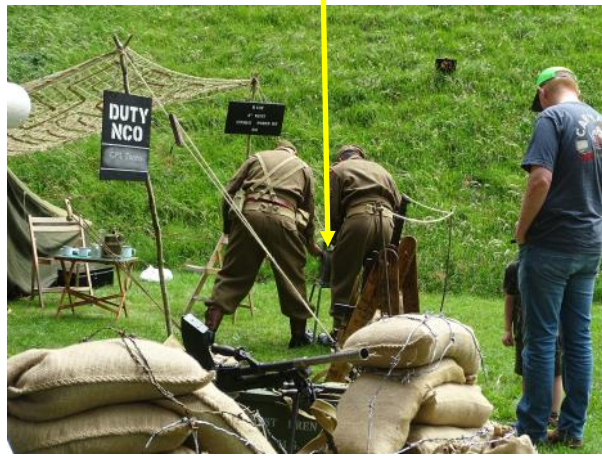
Treasurers Tower has been referred to by many names in the 800 years it has been in existence, such as Clopton Tower but it's use has been fairly consistent, probably because of it being sited adjacent to the main entrance to the Castle. Today, you can see evidence of upper floors, a double gated entry system and several arrow slits indicating this building was protected by numerous archers - which as we know did not come cheap. Although it no longer commands pomp and majesty and suffers from weeds burying into it's fabric, it is easy to imagine the hustle and bustle of a medieval day, collecting money, making payments, recording and filing. As mentioned previously, it is only ever open to visitors during our Open Days so this is another way we are able to enhance the visitor experience here at the Castle.



ENGLISH HERITAGE WW2 WEEKEND June 2026

This year was a first for us as we were permitted to have our own display amongst other exhibitors. We erected authentic period tents and had a plethora of weaponry and artefacts on display including an original Air Raid Siren which we fired up at regular intervals during the weekend. We were also actually listed as Exhibitors on the EH website and Event Information sheets.

AIR RAID SIREN



Events organiser, Lydia Alexander. Had us ideally placed opposite the entrance to our Constables Kitchen Garden.



We had a very Land Girl theme in the Kitchen Garden and we welcomed over a hundred visitors during the weekend — many taking home some Castle grown plants and herbs.

WW2 WEEKEND continued



I think this vintage car - a Citroen Traction Avant often favoured as "Staff Cars" forms a most iconic image with our fantastic Castle in the background. As part of WW2 Weekend there were several wartime vehicles on display and Palace Green had a full itinerary of exhibitions and re-enactments, including the vintage motor-bikes in the images below. Both are over 80 years - a 1939 BSA WM20 regarded as the most successful military bike ever and the other a 1938 Ariel Red Hunter. The riders performed a few tricks for the enthralled audience. Our Officer issued countless permits which proved very popular with children and adults alike.



PERMIT - DC1941 No. 10820

TO ENTER - Garrison Camp at Dover Castle / Dover Coastal Restricted area.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF -

AVAILABLE ON - Day of issue only UNLESS
WITHDRAWN OR EXTENDED BY ENDORSEMENT

ISSUED AT - Dover Castle, Home Guard HQ

ON BEHALF OF - The said Garrison Camp HQ
BY *[Signature]* BY ORDER OF THE
COMMANDANT

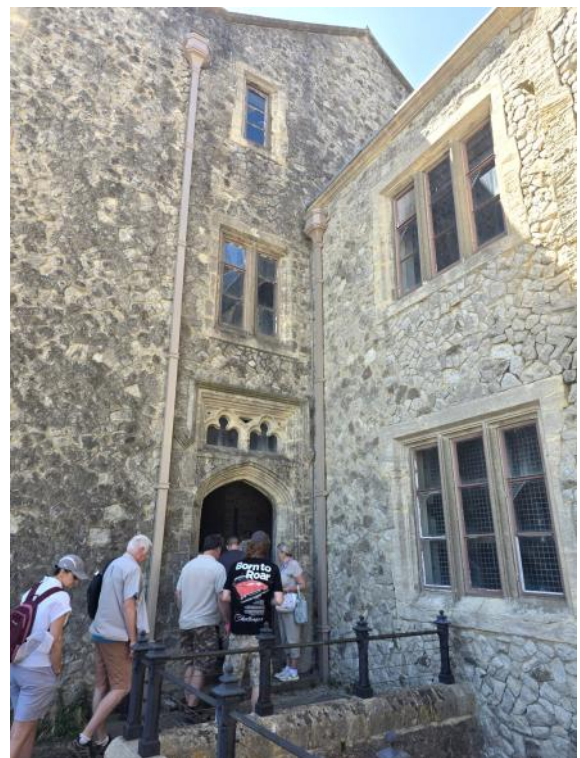
THIS PERMIT DOES NOT ADMIT TO ANY CLOSED PART OR
BUILDING WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION.
THIS PERMIT MUST BE SUPPORTED BY AN IDENTITY CARD.



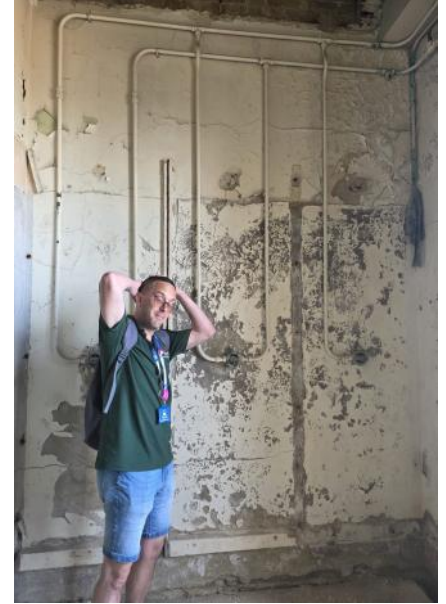
A model replica Hawker Hurricane - always popular with visitors

FRIENDS' TOURS - WE REALLY DO GO TO PLACES NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

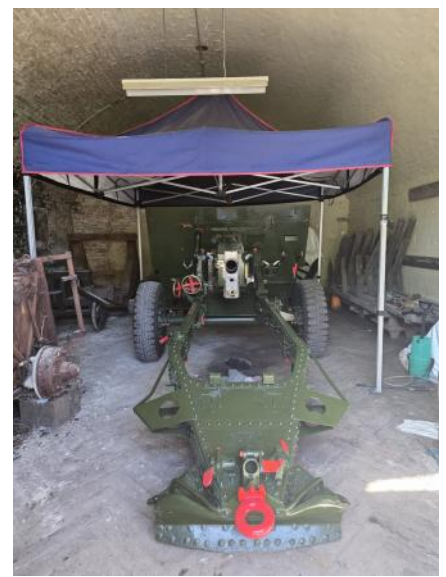
In June, members were treated to a special Tour "Behind Locked Doors" which took in the Officers New Barracks and other places. Brilliantly led by Len Howell, the Tour took in many places not often visited and certainly not by the general public.



The Officers New Barracks is a fascinating building and it is such a shame it is in a bad state of repair and not being used. It would take a vast amount of money to restore it and bring it into use, but until then it can remain a popular venue in our Special Tours Itinerary. Built between 1856 and 1858, it contained first class accommodation for 45 Officers, housed in two wings.



The building, forever named the Officers New Barracks, has been largely left vacant since the Army moved out of Dover Castle Garrison in the late 1950's. The East Wing was used by HM Immigration in the 1980's for conducting interviews and there have been occasional training and similar events held inside the building from time to time but at present it is vacant other than used for storage. Wandering through the impressive Victorian building it is easy to imagine the life of an Officer stationed here at Dover Castle. Tour Guide, Len, was very knowledgeable and gave a very interesting and informative talk.



The original idea for housing the Officers of Dover Castle Garrison, was the build of an exclusive residential crescent, which became known as Victoria Park, just a stone's throw from the Castle entrance. This crescent even had it's own Gatehouse, which is still there, Following a review, the Military decided to accommodate the Officers within Castle Grounds as they deemed there was enough separation from lower rank and file soldiers.

After a good meander around and inside the ONB, the Tour went to look inside rarely opened casemates forming the Northern bastions of the Castle walls. One Casemate houses the famous 25 pounder gun which is traditionally fired on Remembrance Sunday and at other times, such as Special Royal Birthdays and Anniversaries, Arrival and Departure of some Cruise Ships,

The tour took in some other of the casemates, including one which housed an old Castle Forge. The Castle was used as a Military base and Garrison so not only did soldiers live here, the army just got on with normal day to day things , such as maintenance and engineering duties. Naturally, many casemates and older empty buildings were used for storage. One casemate was considered for accommodating the newly formed Friends of Dover Castle in 1986 but it was extremely damp and an inspection revealed severe water ingress and so that idea was dropped. Many casemates are used to store machinery and equipment and are used by maintenance teams.

It was interesting to see what was going on behind those "locked doors" !

Look out for other Special Tours -

CONFEDERATION of the CINQUE PORTS

On Friday 26th June I attended the Conque Ports Grand Reception held at The Maison Dieu, Dover, which was attended by some of the Cinque Ports Mayors and dignitaries of the Cinque Ports Confederation.



It was a really warm evening so they did not keep their outfits on for too long.

It is not recorded when the Cinque Ports was actually founded but believed to be before William the Conqueror arrived in Hastings in 1066, probably in the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066). The Cinque Ports were originally five ports- Dover, Sandwich, Hythe, New Romney and Hastings — tasked with providing ships and men for national defence in the days before the Royal Navy existed. In return, they received special privileges from the Crown, including tax exemptions. The main ports were later joined by the Ancient Towns of Winchelsea and Rye, and several additional members called 'Limbs'. At one point, there were thought to be some 40 ports and towns in the confederation. There are now 7 limbs- Tenterden, Lydd, Folkestone, Deal, Faversham, Margate, and Ramsgate.

Today, the Confederation of the Cinque Ports plays a largely ceremonial but important role in promoting heritage, education, tourism and environmental stewardship.

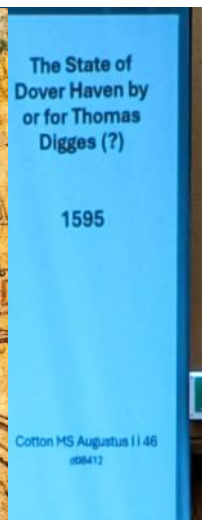
On Saturday 27th June, I attended the special academic conference, again in the Maison Dieu, where there were guest speakers and talks on related subjects, such as Dover Harbour, the Cinque Ports, Dover's Social and Heraldic History and the Naval Brewhouse in Dover. I was particularly interested in the talk by James Lloyd "The Runaway Armorial of the Constable of Dover"



significant documents listing the Constables of Dover Castle including their arms. This was added to by Sir Edward Dering in 1630. James spoke about how some compilers of records created fictitious entries to improve their own family history. Dering was guilty of this in relation to the Dering Rolls which listed 324 Knights and Dering erased the entry of Nicholas de Crioll and replaced this with a made up ancestor of his own- Richard Fitz Dering. The Dering Rolls is thought to be the oldest roll of arms and was produced in Dover between 1270 and 1280 and Dering acquired it in 1638 whilst Lieutenant of Dover Castle. It is widely thought that this may not have been the only fabrication to enhance family trees during the lifetime of the Castle. There was also an

interesting talk on the creation of Dover Harbour during medieval times and the works undertaken by prominent engineers and in particular Thomas Digges (1546-1595).

*Nb. Unfortunately, I was not an invited dignitary but had to book and pay for my place at these events but it was good to be able to meet and chat with likeminded people and also spread the word about **The Friends of Dover Castle**.*





**Dover Castle at the time of
the Siege 1216**

The above is a widely accepted view of how Dover Castle looked at the time of the Siege in October 1216. The outerworks, where local townsfolk lived, would have been easily overcome by Prince Louis of France's troops who then attacked and undermined the Norfolk Towers but were repelled by Hubert de Burgh and his Knights. Having lost the Battle for Dover Castle in 1216, Prince Louis assembled a large fleet in May 1217, which was supposed to bring supplies, reinforcements of men and weaponry including ready made Trebuchets. There were some 80 vessels sailing towards Dover with hundreds of men including over 100 Knights. The English fleet numbered perhaps 40 ships and was commanded by Hubert de Burgh and they quickly captured the French commanders Robert de Courtenay and Eustace the Monk. De Courtenay was ransomed but Eustace, who had previously worked for King John and had become a pirate, was executed there and then. Only about 9 French ships survived and most of the French sailors and soldiers were killed or drowned and the Battle of Sandwich, as it became known, was a resounding English Victory and Prince Louis gave up any hope of becoming King of England but was allowed to return to France and became King Louis VIII in 1223.

On the subject of Dover Castle Under Siege, we have previously reported that we donated 2 authentic replica musket guns, well we have now provided the means to display them within the Siege Exhibition at the Castle. This has enabled the Castle to display the guns, safe in the knowledge they cannot be handled and potentially damaged by visitors. A great example of how the friends of Dover Castle are able to support Dover Castle. Our donation of the Muskets and the Cabinet was about £3000. We are only too happy to help and this will enhance the visitor experience at the fantastic Castle Under Siege attraction



**GUNS & CABINET Donated by the
Friends of Dover Castle**

THE PALMERSTON FORTS SOCIETY held an exciting Weekend Trip to Dover where they took in Fort Burgoyne, Drop Redoubt and the Western Heights, the White Cliffs (Wanstone Battery and Fan Bay) and of course Dover Castle. Paul Wells, who organised the trip on behalf of the PFS, contacted me about them making a donation to a project we were running at the Castle and I suggested the Great Tower Corner Turrets Project we had put forward which was currently being considered by Becky and her team. The PFS raised £300 in donations for this project which will help towards the overall costs which may rise due to curatorial requirements and scarcity of the right wood for the flooring. This has now been paid to Dover Castle to put towards the Turrets Project.

Thank you Paul Wells and PFS

OTHER SPECIAL TOURS The Following Tours have been confirmed :-

BEHIND the SCENES at PWRR & QR MUSEUM Sunday 2nd August 2026 at 10.00 am - Tickets on Eventbrite - Museum



This is a very interesting tour where we are shown items not normally on display. Book early as these are always popular.

STONE HUT CURATORS Thursday 20th August 2026 at 11 am book on Eventbrite - meet at the Stone Hut (Inside tour)



The Stone Hut contains all the artefacts and archives of the Southern Region and the curators are part of a team which looks after the whole English Heritage Collection - from regular cleaning and maintenance to in depth restoration work. Here at Dover, they have some interesting pieces from the Cold War as well as a huge Roman collection of pots and coins. This interesting tour is well worth a visit.



(Inside tour, some stairs- restrictions on photography)

DUMPY Sunday 11th October 2026 at 2pm Book on Eventbrite - meet tbc



This popular tour takes you into the depths of the Regional Seat of Government number 12 South East as part of the Cold War defences if there was ever a nuclear war, certain members of staff of Navy, Army, AirForce together with local essential staff, such as Police, Security, Medical, Fire & Rescue, were kept **"at a moment's notice"** to leave their homes and take up residence in Dumpy. This tour takes you to the Top Secret levels from where communities would be governed and operated

and the Human Race would survive! *(Not suitable for wheelchairs- You go down to lowest operational level of the Castle - Inside Tour but attendees must be able to climb 80 steps in case lift fails- some restrictions on photography)*



Only go underground on an organised tour



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We had booked a tour of HUDSONS PASSAGE & EAST DEMI BASTION but these have had to be cancelled due to so called underground explorers breaking in to the Eastern

Outer Works regularly and there has been considerable damage. Why don't these mindless people join the Friends and come on our tours. - we have experienced and knowledgeable guides who do not make things up as they go along. Please do not support these wanton vandals and if you have any information please advise the managers at Dover Castle or the Police. Each break in costs literally thousands - with safety surveys, making safe and repairs and remember these are scheduled monuments and each break in has to be paid for by Members or by donations which could be better spent elsewhere. This tour has always been really popular with our members who will now miss out.

I know some underground adventurers say that they are not vandals as all they do is go into places which are open and they do not damage anything and only photograph and video places. BUT they do often remove barriers and obstacles to enable them to access the underground tunnels. At the Castle, they break down fences and iron gates and of course when they leave the places are open to opportunists and wanton vandals.

LET'S STOP THESE VANDALS !



Another great example of collaboration between us and English Heritage has been the acquisition of this original print of a painting of the Sussex Yeomanry firing guns at Dover Castle. The Sussex Yeomanry Association had contacted Dover Castle offering the print but the Castle had nowhere to display it, so they asked us if we would be interested. I liaised with Sally Parker who put me in contact with David Paget of the Association and we were able to take delivery of the artwork recently, on 26th June. It will be on display in our offices - basically just replacing a painting we already have on the main wall as you enter our office accommodation. We aim to be opening our offices quite regularly through the summer so that members and visitors can enjoy the picture, as well as other displays.

The Sussex Yeomanry was formed in 1794 due to the threat of invasion by Napoleon and has served continuously through Boer Wars, WW1 and WW2. The regiment was disbanded in 1999 but the lineage has been maintained and exists today as 2 Sussex

Yeomanry Troop, 579 Field Squadron (EOD), part of the 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (Explosives Ordnance Disposal-EOD) (Volunteers)



The photo on the left is the Yeomanry soldiers firing a Gun Salute at Dover Castle - David Paget is a retired Major and remembers being in charge of such salutes here. He is a Trustee of the Sussex Yeomanry Museum Trust which looks after the artefacts of the Sussex Yeomanry Association and they have a display at the Newhaven Fort Museum.

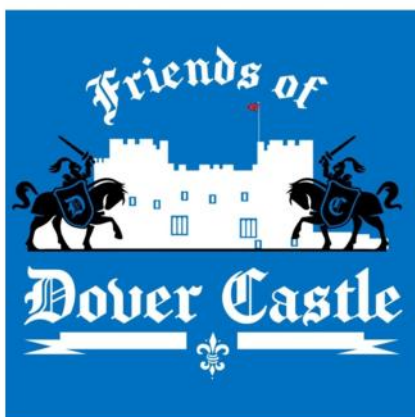
We only get to fire a single 25 pounder now - so this salute of 4 such guns must have been very impressive as well as quite deafening.

I have published our flyer to what would have been an amazing event but which we had to cancel. I have left it in this Edition as we really need your help. Please let us know what sort of Event you think would be fitting of our 40th Anniversary.

1986

-

2026



RUBY EVENT

40 th Anniversary Celebration



Special Garden
Party

1st August 2026

CANCELLED

TICKET ONLY EVENT ONLY £10 per person

MEMBERS can book on EVENTBRITE

Also open to English Heritage Staff and Volunteers -
tickets available from Becky Smith, General Manager,
Dover Castle.



CONSTABLES TOWER

4 pm - 7 pm

www.dover-castle-friends.org

chairman@dover-castle-friends.org

IMPORTANT : This was to have been one of our most ambitious events yet and fitting of the occasion of our 40th Anniversary. Several dignitaries, The Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, The High Sheriff of Kent, The Town Mayor of Dover and a senior Trustee of English Heritage had accepted our invitations and we were anticipating about one hundred members and guests attending. Unfortunately, take up was far from that number and our committee and Trustees had to make the hard decision to cancel this event in order to safeguard charity funds. So that we can best plan a rescheduled Anniversary Event, I would be grateful if you could let me know why you were not going to attend this event. It may have been as simple as the cost, or that you were away but I'd like to know, honestly, why you were not going to attend, so that we can do better at getting it right next time.

Please email me at chairman@dover-castle-friends.org all views are welcome and your views will remain confidential but I will use them to frame how we go forward. Also, if you have ideas on how we could best celebrate our 40 years, please let me know. Many thanks for your continued support, Graham Hutchison - Chairman and Editor.