

RISE AND DECLINE: DOVER AND DEAL
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY¹

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INTRODUCTION

THIS article, in two parts, sets out to show the kind of historical picture of the development of two towns that can be built up from historical sources that are readily accessible and easy to handle, but it does not pretend to offer a complete history of Dover and Deal in the nineteenth century nor does it cover by any means all the topics and events which might be considered relevant.

The nineteenth century is fairly rich in documentary and topographical sources bearing on local history. Those put to use in this analysis include contemporary guides and topographies, directories, census returns, Select Committee parliamentary evidence, letters and diaries, and newspapers both Kentish and national. There is in this list a heavy concentration on secondary and printed sources which on account of their modern English are simple to work from.

In this article I have attempted to give a practical, modern and relevant approach to the study of local urban history. Towns were as much living communities in the nineteenth century as they are today, as places where people, rich and poor, live, work, sleep, eat, travel and enjoy themselves. The description 'antiquarian' is justly attached to much of the urban history writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where we find a chronology of buildings, institutions and remarkable events, most of it medieval, and arranged and organized haphazardly. Dover and Deal were communities rather than places and they consisted of people and not just buildings in the nineteenth century. Concern with people individually or in the mass, and irrespective of rank or wealth, establishes the main feature of economic and social history which is to trace the story of the activities and well-being of men and women in the street at time intervals in the past, and it is perhaps one of the pleasures of the modern historian to be able to know more about a place and its community from the records that survive than a contemporary living at the time knew of his own locality.

¹ I express my grateful thanks to Professor T. C. Barker, Professor of Economic and Social History at the University of Kent, for his valuable comments and suggestions for improving the original manuscript.

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It is relevant to this article to stress that towns historically have never existed and prospered in a vacuum. Nineteenth-century Dover and Deal were part of a much wider political, social and economic environment, their evolution aiding and being influenced by developments in the county, in the nation, or even from overseas. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this observation had particular relevance to Dover's long-established function as a cross-Channel link on the routes between London and Paris or London and Brussels. Commercial contacts between Dover and the Continent expanded appreciably during the nineteenth century. Dover both as a port and town was as much influenced by happenings on the Continent as by events and policies in London.

Two press comments within a decade of one another illustrate very well the effects of continental influences, the first occurring in June 1861 when the *South Eastern Gazette* observed of the Cobden Treaty and Dover:

'The recent treaty between France and England seems to have created a considerable amount of extra business. The number of commercial travellers visiting Dover on transit to and from the continent is stated never to have been so large as at the present time. The international treaty does not, consequently, appear to be a dead letter.'²

The somewhat different effects of the Franco-Prussian War were reported in July 1870 in the same newspaper thus:

'From the unusually heavy freights of our continental steamers since the declaration of war, it would appear that our countrymen in France are in a hurry to return home.'³

Much of the history of Dover and Deal is explicable in terms of their geographical position: Dover forming the nearest point to the Continent and Deal standing as the port immediately serving the famous international shipping route known as the Downs, that stretch of water situated between the North and South Forelands.

The national background to the economic and social development of Dover and Deal in the nineteenth century was one of change. There were many well-known and notable advances which to some extent were reflected in the history of these, as of other towns, in this period: for instance, parliamentary and local government reform; rapid population growth and marked urbanization; developments in piped water, piped gas, improved drainage and sanitation and, at the end of the century, the early days of electricity supply; an expansion of private and voluntary education at all levels; more advanced tech-

² The *South Eastern Gazette*, 18th June, 1861, 4f.

³ *Ibid.*, 18th July, 1870, 5a.

niques in harbour construction; far-reaching advances in communications, in fast coaching, trams and omnibuses as additions to urban transport and in railways, steam shipping, and not least the telegraph. These advances do not exhaust the possible list, but among them improvements in transport were decisive in strengthening Dover's position as a cross-Channel port. Thus, one tremendously significant development of the first half of the nineteenth century came in the 1820s when steamships began to ply to and from Dover.⁴ Subsequently, coach/steamer communication was replaced by railway/steamer communication, and any contemporary living through this period would have marvelled at the great advances in transport which had occurred. Mackenzie Walcott, in *A Guide to the Coast of Kent* (1859) observed that:

'By the South Eastern Railway, the journey from London is a mere matter of two hours—swift steamers connect with the trains.'⁵

Walcott also wrote of another great advance in the submarine telegraph, the first line of electric cable being laid down between London and Cap Gris Nez in August 1850.⁶ By 1874, Dover was famous as a 'great telegraph station', the Submarine Telegraph Company's steamer, the *Lady Carmichael*, standing ready at hand to repair any of their cables in the Charnel or North Sea.⁷

The importance and general functions of these two towns as they appear in *The Municipal Corporations Companion, Diary, Directory, and Year Book of Statistics for 1879* were as follows:

DOVER—A parliamentary and municipal borough, market town, and poor law union of 23 parishes; a seaport and steam packet station, the Royal Mail Route to the Continent proceeding via Dover and Calais and Dover and Ostend and by virtue of being the nearest landing place from the Continent, having, therefore, from the earliest period been a place of some importance on this account; a terminal station of the South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways, and one of the Cinque Ports.⁸

DEAL —A municipal borough of East Kent, included in the parliamentary representation of Sandwich; market town; parish; seaport; pilot and coastguard station; member of the Cinque Port of Sandwich . . . The terminal station of a branch line on the South Eastern Railway.⁹

⁴ Mackenzie Walcott, *A Guide to the Coast of Kent* (1859), 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁷ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1235.

⁸ (Ed.) J. R. Somers Vine, *The Municipal Corporations Companion, Diary, Directory, and Year Book of Statistics for 1879* (1879), 130.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

Until the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885,¹⁰ Dover in common with the Parliamentary Boroughs of Canterbury, Rochester and Maidstone,¹¹ returned two Members to Parliament, but in each of these towns, under that Act, the parliamentary representation was reduced to one member,¹² when for the first time seats were allotted on a basis of population, the medieval idea of the representation of communities being abandoned.¹³ The 1832 Reform Act united Walmer to Deal, and these places, in conjunction with Sandwich, returned Members to the House of Commons.¹⁴ Deal was annexed to the Cinque Ports soon after the Conquest.¹⁵ Like Canterbury, Sandwich, Rochester, Faversham, Tenterden, Maidstone and Gravesend, Deal and Dover at the beginning of the nineteenth century stood among the old-established towns which were municipal boroughs; that is, they had been granted a charter by the Crown giving them special privileges, and their chief burgess was known by the title of mayor.¹⁶ Deal, after strenuous opposition from Sandwich,¹⁷ was incorporated by Charter in 1699 by William III with a mayor, 12 jurats and a council of 24, the jurats acting as magistrates separate from the county justices.¹⁸ The Corporation of Deal in 1879 consisted of a mayor, 6 aldermen and 18 councillors, and the borough, which embraced Upper and Lower Deal, Walmer, Sholden and Great and Little Mongeham, had a commission of the peace, with quarter sessions, and the Corporation also was the urban sanitary authority.¹⁹ Parishes with a population of more than 5,000 became sanitary authorities under the Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875.²⁰ Municipal government in Dover in 1879 existed in a corporation composed of a mayor, 6 aldermen and 18 councillors, who represented three wards—Castle, Town and Pier²¹—and the Corporation, as in Deal, acted as the urban sanitary authority.²²

The following officers were employed by the two Corporations, and were paid salaries or fees:

¹⁰ 48 and 49 Vict. c 23.

¹¹ Frank W. Jessup, *Kent History Illustrated*, Maidstone, 1966, 62.

¹² *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), 201.

¹³ Jessup, *op. cit.*, 62.

¹⁴ Somers Vine, *op. cit.*, 120.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁶ Jessup, *op. cit.*, 61.

¹⁷ Edward Wedlake Brayley, *The Beauties of England and Wales; or Delineations Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive*, viii: Kent (1808), 1019.

¹⁸ Somers Vine, *op. cit.*, 120.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

²⁰ Jessup, *op. cit.*, 59.

²¹ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1235, and *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

²² Somers Vine, *op. cit.*, 131.

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<i>Officer</i>	<i>Dover</i> ²³	<i>Deal</i> ²⁴
Town Clerk	£580 p.a.	£320 + fees
The Borough Treasurer	100	30
The Medical Officer of Health	182	40
The Borough Surveyor	300	60
Inspector of Nuisances	104	35
Chief Constable.. .. .	200	100 + house

The Town Clerk of Dover was also Clerk to the Urban Sanitary Authority,²⁵ and likewise the Town Clerk of Deal, the latter acting in addition as Clerk to the Port Sanitary Authority, Coroner, and Clerk to the Borough, Cinque Ports and County Magistrates.²⁶ The salaries paid to local government officers were much higher in Dover than Deal, but other statistics for 1879 also establish that, of the two, Dover was a much larger authority to work for.

<i>To 31st August, 1877</i>	<i>Dover</i> ²⁷	<i>Deal</i> ²⁸
Municipal Borough Area	1,262 acres	1,124 acres
Population 1871	28,500	8,004
No. of Burgesses on Roll	3,811	1,475
Inhabited Houses, 1871	4,444	1,727
Rateable Value of Municipal Borough ..	£179,775	£25,193
Total Income of do.	£9,242	£1,442
Rateable Value of Urban Sanitary District	£120,745	£25,292
Total Income of do.	£24,182	£7,314
Loans Outstanding of do.	£56,904	£14,610

The two Corporations were also the policing and licensing authorities for their respective areas.

Police Statistics to 29th September, 1878

<i>Dover</i> ²⁹	<i>Deal</i> ³⁰
1 Head Constable at £200 p.a.	1 do. at £100 p.a. + house
6 Sergeants at 31/10d per week	1 do. at 27/- per week
24 Constables at 22/7d to 27/- per week	6 do. at 22/6d per week
Cost of the Force, £2,632	Cost of the Force, £648.
52 convictions for drunkenness	13 do.

²³ *Ibid.*, 131.²⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.²⁵ *Ibid.*, 131.²⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.²⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.²⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.²⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.³⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

For the same period licences were granted to 193 public houses, 16 beer houses, and 3 refreshment houses in Dover,³¹ as against 73 public houses, 14 beer houses and 1 refreshment house in Deal.³²

PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS,
EDUCATION AND POOR LAW

1. *Gas Supply*

Water and gas works were in the hands of Joint-Stock Companies in Deal in the 1870s.³³ The nineteenth century was notable for the development of various urban public utility services. The first Act for paving and lighting the town of Dover was passed in 1778,³⁴ and for Deal in 1790.³⁵ The preamble to the 1778 Dover Act stated that Dover was then 'very ill paved, and not sufficiently cleansed, lighted and watched', and that the streets and lanes, owing to 'annoyances and encroachments therein, are incommodious and dangerous'.³⁶ Gas lighting itself was a tremendous innovation, and in 1822 the Dover Gas Act created the Gas Light Company, prior to which the streets had been lighted with oil lamps; the preamble to this Act stating that it would be an improvement to light the thoroughfares with 'inflammable air', obtainable from coal, and conducted to the street lamps and homes by means of 'tubes'.³⁷ The Act gave the company power to raise £9,000 capital in £50 shares, and to break up the streets to lay pipes,³⁸ *The New Dover Guide* noting in 1838 that gas lighting had become general in the town.³⁹ The company obtained additional powers in 1860 to increase their capital and to erect new works.⁴⁰ Gasworks in Deal were started in 1832. Situated in Cannon Street, they originated in a small establishment erected as a private undertaking by Mr. John Bryan, who afterwards sold the plant to a joint-stock company of shareholders.⁴¹ The gasometer in 1847 held 9,000 cubic feet of gas, which was supplied to private consumers at the rate of 9s. for 1,000 cubic feet.⁴² The demand for gas soon outgrew the supply

³¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

³² *Ibid.*, 121.

³³ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁴ Walcott, *op. cit.*, 40.

³⁵ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1022.

³⁶ John Bavington Jones, *Annals of Dover*, 2nd ed., Dover, 1938, 272.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 275-6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 276.

³⁹ *The New Dover Guide, including a Concise Sketch of the Ancient and Modern History of the Town and Castle*, Dover, 1838, 38.

⁴⁰ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

⁴¹ John Laker, *History of Deal*, 2nd ed., Deal, 1921, 375; Samuel Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the County of Kent*, ii, Sheffield, 1847, 365; *The New Hand Book to the Downs Neighbourhood; being a Complete Guide to Deal, Walmer, Sandwich and the Surrounding Villages*, Deal, 1870s, 61.

⁴² Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 355.

as good lighting ceased to be regarded as a luxury, so that in 1851 larger works had to be provided.⁴³ An Act of Parliament in 1865 incorporated the company, the supply of gas being extended to Upper Deal, the Barracks and Lower and Upper Walmer, necessitating laying down new and larger mains.⁴⁴ Under the provisions of the Act a considerable capital was raised, the interest on which was limited to £10 per cent.⁴⁵ By the 1870s the charge for gas had been reduced to 5s. 10d. per 1,000 cubic feet and it was noted, 'the company is in very good repute in the neighbourhood, and its shares usually command a respectable premium when sold by auction'.⁴⁶

2. Sewerage

A more efficient sewerage of Dover dated from 1855, when the Sewage Pumping Station, outfall and main sewers were constructed.⁴⁷ The town's sewage was discharged into the sea, which was common practice among seaside towns, to the westward of the Admiralty Pier, through a 33-in. diameter cast-iron outfall sewer, 1,225 ft. from the shore, which outfall, costing £7,500, replaced in 1885 the original outfall of 30-in. diameter extending only 250 ft. from the shore.⁴⁸ Although it was obviously economical to conduct sewage disposal into the sea, and although over time the discharge was effected at greater distances from the shore, a *Times* leader of August 1864 could only condemn the practice, on the grounds that,

'It appears strangely unreasonable to pour into the sea all the filthy sewage of a town . . . to be churned in the waves in which the visitors bathe. If we were not accustomed to it, it could not be but disgusting to see the sewage at low water pouring over the very sands over which, perhaps, we bathe at the next high water. Besides, those long dirty tubes which crawl over the sands . . . like vast unclean centipedes, are an essentially nauseous spectacle, and when the wind sets on the shore the sea breeze is often anything but salubrious.'⁴⁹

Apart from Hastings and Brighton,⁵⁰ Margate was another coastal resort much complained of in these matters in the *Lancet*, in *The Times*, and in the *Thanet Guardian*, and *Margate and Ramsgate Record* of the mid-1860s.⁵¹

⁴³ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, op. cit., 61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁷ H. E. Stilgoe, 'Drainage', in (Ed.) S. Evans and F. Bennett-Goldney, *British Association Handbook to Dover*, Dover, 1899, 121.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁹ *The Times*, 6th August, 1864, 8ef.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6th August, 1864, 8ef.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 21st September, 1866, 6f; the *Thanet Guardian*, and *Margate and Ramsgate Record*, 9th June, 1866, 2cd and 3d.

3. *Piped Water*

The piped water supply of nineteenth-century Dover was provided by the town council.⁵² In 1854 the Dover Waterworks were completed, the Mayor, William Henry Payn, celebrating the event by giving a banquet in the reservoir.⁵³ The water came from two wells in the chalk, about 220 ft. deep, into the works on Castle Hill, having two single-cylinder condensing beam-engines, and the one reservoir with a capacity of 500,000 gallons.⁵⁴ The initial works cost about £35,000.⁵⁵ In 1872 an additional reservoir, having a capacity of 1,000,000 gallons, was constructed for £8,500.⁵⁶ 1882 saw the erection of an engine-house, with a third engine and pump, and a third well was sunk, these improvements costing £9,000.⁵⁷ The new 90 h.p. engine could pump about 72,000 gallons of water per hour.⁵⁸ Between 1854 and 1899 the total capital expenditure on Dover's water-supply, including the cost of mains, absorbed about £60,000.⁵⁹ From 1870 a constant supply of water was maintained, the total quantity produced from the works increasing from 320,991,629 gallons in 1894, to 394,473,613 gallons in 1898.⁶⁰ A low water rate produced about £4,000 p.a. in the later 1890s,⁶¹ *The Times* reporting in 1900 that,

'The water is supplied at the rate of 10s. p.a. per house of £20 rateable value, and so in proportion. This is said to be the lowest water rate in the kingdom.'⁶²

The water in 1895 was described as being 'remarkably pure and free from all traces of organic impurity'.⁶³

For many generations Deal was dependent upon pumps and wells for water.⁶⁴ An Act of Parliament of 1699 gave power to supply Deal with water from the North Stream, a 'mill' being erected for pumping the water, and wooden pipes were laid down to convey the water to the town, Water Street taking its name from these old ventures.⁶⁵ Even earlier in 1689 a licence for 99 years had been granted to Edward Burdett and William Ryder to construct a reservoir in 'New' Deal, but after a well was sunk the plan to supply the town with water did

⁵² *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

⁵³ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 348.

⁵⁴ H. E. Stilgoe, 'Borough of Dover Water Supply', *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, 72-3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶² *The Times*, 4th January, 1900, 6f.

⁶³ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

⁶⁴ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁶⁵ *Laker*, *op. cit.*, 375.

not materialize.⁶⁶ Between 1699 and 1836 the better class of houses were supplied with water brought from the North Stream, conveyed in a primitive method by wooden pipes made of logs of wood, bored through, a mill and suitable machinery securing the supply.⁶⁷ A boon that was long overdue resulted from an Act of Parliament of 1836 for supplying the town with water, whereby a company was formed and waterworks started.⁶⁸ The works were constructed on high ground about two miles from the market place⁶⁹ and at the back of Walmer;⁷⁰ at such an elevation, we are told in 1847, 'that the water rises to the tops of the highest houses', and 'the inhabitants have now an abundant supply of this precious fluid distributed all over the town by means of several miles of piping'.⁷¹ The majority of the inhabitants in the Downs, as also the ships being provisioned off Deal, had hitherto been dependent upon wells for their supply of water. To meet these needs a great number of public wells had been sunk, but the water they had provided was often brackish, the wells being nearly all affected by the tide, rising and falling with the flow and ebb.⁷² The water supplied by the Deal Waterworks in the 1870s came from a boring made through a chalk stratum, and a reservoir, capable of holding 200,000 gallons kept filled by means of steam power.⁷³ The Company's £5 shares were then at a premium in the market,⁷⁴ even though the works came in for some moderate criticism; for instance,

Its only drawback is in having the tank uncovered . . . The Company's charge is moderate, and the water may be drawn for about 2 hours on most days of the week during the summer months, but in winter, only on four days in the week. We have yet to get wisdom into the heads of the Directors of Water Companies, before they will make the supply of water constant. The public had better pay a higher price and increase the profits of the shareholders than have their water stand in leaden cisterns or become impure in the confined neighbourhood of most urban dwellings.⁷⁵

4. *Electricity Supply and Trams*

If Dover, in the course of the nineteenth century, secured a more constant supply of pure water than did Deal, the 1890s were also memorable in Dover's history for witnessing the introduction of electricity into the town. Electricity works, the property of the Dover

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁶⁷ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁶⁸ Laker, *op. cit.*, 375.

⁶⁹ Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 355.

⁷⁰ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁷¹ Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 355.

⁷² Laker, *op. cit.*, 375.

⁷³ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

Electricity Supply Company Limited, were erected in 1894, current being first publicly supplied in April 1895.⁷⁶ Of the progress made by electricity by 1899 it could be claimed, that 'the principal streets are lighted by electricity, and the illumination of the Sea Front during the season is unsurpassed by any other watering-place'.⁷⁷ Street widening made it possible to introduce tramways, with electricity as the motive power, and at a cost of £28,000 the Dover tramways were constructed and equipped in 1897.⁷⁸ The Electric Light and Power Works supplied in 1899 a 500-volt direct current for the trams,⁷⁹ the Corporation tramway network extending over 3½ miles.⁸⁰ The tramcars were observed to be a great success, offering 'a minimum of inconvenience with a maximum of advantage', the fares being 1d. only for any distance each way.⁸¹

5. *Dover Municipal Ownership*

The Times reported in January 1899 as follows on public municipal ownership by Dover Corporation:

'The Dover Corporation, who already own the local waterworks, electric tramways, bathing establishments and machines, at their meeting yesterday had before them a proposal to purchase the local gas and electric light undertakings. This proposal was adjourned for further particulars.'⁸²

The success of Dover's municipal trading again caught the eye of *The Times* a year later in January 1900:

'At a Meeting of the Dover Corporation yesterday, it was stated that the Municipal Waterworks had yielded a profit of £3,500 on the year. This, together with a profit of over £2,000 on the municipal electric trams, is equal to a reduction of 1s. in the £ on the town's rates.'⁸³

6. *Other Public Improvements*

The Corporation of Dover was no less active in other spheres of public improvement towards the end of the nineteenth century. The provision of pleasure and recreation grounds was begun as early as the 1880s.⁸⁴ In July, 1883, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught opened the Connaught Public Park, occupying 22½ acres, on the north side of the town, commanding a fine view of the Channel, leased from

⁷⁶ W. H. Pendlebury, 'The Electric Light and Power Works', *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, 75.

⁷⁷ *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, advertisement.

⁷⁸ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 293.

⁷⁹ Pendlebury, *op. cit.*, 77.

⁸⁰ *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, advertisement.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, advertisements.

⁸² *The Times*, 11th January, 1899, 5b.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4th January, 1900, 6b.

⁸⁴ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 293.

the War Department by the Corporation for 90 years.⁸⁵ The Danes Recreation Ground for cricket and football was opened in 1891.⁸⁶ The 1890s witnessed some memorable sea-front improvements, designed to add to the attractions of Dover as a seaside resort, particularly in 1894 when the Dover Harbour Board made over a portion of the Marine Parade to the Corporation, who then widened the public carriage road, and extended the tarred paving seaward so as to form a promenade 28 ft. wide.⁸⁷ The Promenade Pier, the property of a company, costing £24,000, was opened on 22nd May, 1893. It was 900 ft. in length from the Esplanade to the head, the general width being 30 ft. and at the head 100 ft., the structure consisting of cast iron piles, firmly screwed into the chalk, upon which, firmly braced together, the deck of the promenade had been laid.⁸⁸ It was advertised of Dover's sea front in 1899:

'The Corporation have lately taken over the Sea Bathing rights on the foreshore, and also the establishment on the Marine Parade where salt and fresh hot and cold water baths of all sorts can be obtained; there are also two large tepid salt-water swimming baths. The proper arrangement of these has greatly enhanced the attractions of the Borough.'⁸⁹

To meet further the wishes of people who displayed a preference for establishment bathing over that from bathing machines, Turkish Baths were added in 1900,⁹⁰ and in the interest of personal cleanliness, the Corporation ran 'hot and cold water Baths for the working class population', adjoining the Town Hall,⁹¹ which building was also opened in July, 1883, by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught.⁹² In addition to a new Town Hall costing about £18,000,⁹³ the Dover Municipal Buildings were completed in 1894.⁹⁴

7. *Doctors and Hospitals*

Preventive medicine particularly on the hospital side was another advancement enjoyed by Dover towards the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the presence of hospitals and the existence of large numbers of doctors in the nineteenth century cannot be taken by themselves to represent simply a great saving of lives or reduction

⁸⁵ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 203; Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 203.

⁸⁶ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 293.

⁸⁷ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁸⁹ *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, advertisement.

⁹⁰ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 294.

⁹¹ *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, advertisement.

⁹² *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 202.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁹⁴ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 348.

of infection at least up to the 1870s. Two medical authorities, Doctors McKeown and Brown, have suggested that before 1850 the medical contribution to population growth was small, compared to a better diet and environmental improvements, particularly in respect of the clothes people were wearing and the houses they were living in. Even in mid-century Florence Nightingale felt compelled to remind people that the first duty of a hospital was to do the sick no harm.

The numerical strength of the medical profession within Dover and Deal and Walmer increased during the period. The number of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries in Dover in 1792 was 6, and in Deal and Walmer 5, compared to 16 in Canterbury, 9 in Maidstone, 6 in Margate, and 5 each in Ramsgate and Faversham.⁹⁵ Doctors appear to have been attracted in considerable strength to seaside resorts, and the numbers under the heading 'Physic' in Dover rose to 9 in 1828,⁹⁶ and to 14 by 1838.⁹⁷ Deal and Walmer had 11 physicians and surgeons in 1851, giving a ratio to the resident population of 1 : 880.⁹⁸ In Dover between 1851 and 1874 not only did the number of physicians and surgeons go up from 13 to 19 but their ratio to the resident population improved from 1 : 1,160 to 1 : 820.⁹⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century the town of Dover possessed two hospitals, the first of which grew out of an earlier dispensary,¹⁰⁰ and the second of which the Corporation had an interest in. In the mid-1890s Dover Hospital contained 33 beds, and there was a yearly average of 4,885 out-patients and 200 in-patients.¹⁰¹ Dover Corporation established in 1871 the Dover Infectious Diseases Hospital, as an Isolation Hospital for the treatment of persons suffering or recovering from infectious diseases.¹⁰² By 1895 it contained 64 beds,¹⁰³ and was said to possess 'all the equipment requisite for such an institution'.¹⁰⁴ It seems to have been effective in limiting the spread of epidemics.¹⁰⁵

Deal Dispensary, originating from a legacy of £500, supplied the wants of the deserving poor who were not in receipt of poor relief.¹⁰⁶ Students of nineteenth-century demography, more particularly in

⁹⁵ *The Kentish Companion for the Year of Our Lord, 1792*, Canterbury, 1792, 164-5.

⁹⁶ W. Batcheller, *A New History of Dover, to which is added a New Dover Guide*, Dover, 1828, 352.

⁹⁷ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 139.

⁹⁸ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 293-6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 300-5; and (1874), ii, 1243-52.

¹⁰⁰ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 203.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰⁴ M. K. Robinson, 'Dover as a Health Resort', *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, 66.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 62.

expanding towns, need to be conscious more of the quality of medical skill, rather than of its quantity as indicated by numbers of doctors or hospital beds. The difficulty of measuring medical improvement was admitted in Dover in the 1890s in the observation that,

'the full extent to which preventive medical science has limited the bounds of infectious maladies and the amount of human life saved can never be ascertained.'¹⁰⁷

But add the effects of pure water, proper drainage and sewage disposal, which did much to improve the general environment of the town, it could be boasted at the turn of the century,

'Our soil is uncontaminated. The cesspools and accumulations of filth still to be found in many towns in close proximity to dwelling houses built on sewage sodden foundations are here practically non-existent . . . In addition, the inhabitants enjoy that inestimable boon, a supply of water, derived from works belonging to the ratepayers, constant in supply and constant in its purity . . . It will thus be noticed that all the most important and fundamental conditions on which the general health of the community depends, are amply fulfilled in Dover, and that the residents, by giving ordinary attention to the cleanliness of their houses, and exercising proper superintendence over the gas-pipes, water-pipes and drains, within the curtilage of their homes, may secure the healthiness of their residences for themselves in ordinary conditions.'¹⁰⁸

8. Education

It was noted of the role of education in the highly developed position of Dover at the close of the nineteenth century that the town possessed

'educational and benevolent institutions that reflect credit upon the intellectual and philanthropic advancement of the townpeople';¹⁰⁹

and that Dover,

'must now be considered to be well provided with educational facilities . . . The schools at present flourishing . . . are eminently fitted to meet the requirements of the town and neighbourhood. Foremost among them must be placed Dover College.'¹¹⁰

This College, which opened in 1871,¹¹¹ was educating by 1899 over 200 pupils, 50 of whom were at the Junior School.¹¹² Seventeen years after the opening of Dover College the High School for Girls was built, and by 1899 was educating about 100 girls.¹¹³ In the sphere of technical education, the Municipal School of Art, Science and Technology,

¹⁰⁷ Robinson, *op. cit.*, 66.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

¹⁰⁹ *Industrial Great Britain, Part II, A Commercial Review of Leading Firms Selected from Important Towns of Many Countries* (1891), 147.

¹¹⁰ A. H. Atkinson, 'Educational Facilities', *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, 78.

¹¹¹ *The Times*, 5th October, 1871, 5d.

¹¹² Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 78-9.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 79.

established in 1870,¹¹⁴ was taken over by Dover Corporation in 1892, and offered its students: 'a knowledge that will be serviceable to them in their daily work, present or prospective'.¹¹⁵ The subjects studied covered wood-carving, needlework, cookery, dressmaking, book-keeping, hygiene, shipbuilding, shorthand, etc., and between 1877 and 1899 some 3,192 art and science students passed through the school.¹¹⁶

The elementary schools of nineteenth-century Dover and Deal were attached to the various parishes and denominations, while Sunday Schools played no small part in the overall development of popular education. The number of children attending Church and Chapel Sunday Schools in Dover in 1838 was 1,289.¹¹⁷ By 1899 elementary education in eight schools in the town was being granted to over 6,000 pupils.¹¹⁸ The Deal Charity School was founded on the resolution of a public meeting held at the Town Hall on 12th April, 1792, to accommodate 25 boys and 25 girls who were to be nominated as vacancies arose by subscribers of one guinea annually.¹¹⁹ The first master, William Child, was appointed in May at a salary of 50 guineas, out of which he had to provide a mistress (his wife), a school room, coals and materials,¹²⁰ and, to assist the finances of the school, an annual charity sermon was preached at the Parish Church and St. George's Chapel every summer.¹²¹ The use of special sermons in financial support of various charities was quite commonplace in the nineteenth century.¹²² Among the various denominational schools in Deal the Wesleyans opened schools for boys, girls, and infants in 1865.¹²³ A somewhat unique charity school, the Deal Nautical School, founded in 1834 under the superintendence of nine naval officers, trained boys for the sea until some time in the late 1850s, and some 250 of the 353 pupils admitted to it in the first seventeen years of its existence entered upon a seafaring career.¹²⁴ In Dover at the close of the nineteenth century Army Schools educated the children of soldiers quartered in the town.¹²⁵

In both towns there were a number of private schools of all grades,

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹⁷ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 58-64.

¹¹⁸ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 81.

¹¹⁹ Laker, *op. cit.*, 343.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹²² The Royal Sea Bathing Hospital at Margate for example benefited from church sermons in London, Thanet and elsewhere.

¹²³ Laker, *op. cit.*, 344; *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 72.

¹²⁴ Laker, *op. cit.*, 344.

¹²⁵ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 81.

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including boarding schools which became a characteristic institution of most seaside towns. The private preparatory school was a coastal institution throughout the century.¹²⁶ The private schools in Dover in 1899 were said to have 'an excellent reputation in their various spheres'.¹²⁷ Among 11 boarding and preparatory schools in Deal in the 1870s Alfred House Academy received special mention:

'The salubrity of the air, facilities for bathing, and the general healthiness, render the neighbourhood well suited for the establishment of schools to which the young may be brought from inland and more confined situations. We might refer to several gentlemen of eminence in their respective positions who have been educated here, but we refrain. The premises have recently been rendered much more convenient for the purpose, by an extensive enlargement of the house . . . A large play-ground is attached to the premises; a cricket ground . . . is also provided . . . Several of the pupils have of late years gone up for the University Middle Class Examinations, or have passed with honours and distinctions.'¹²⁸

9. Poor Law

Apart from a great variety of private charitable provision, covering soup distribution to the poor, schooling, almshouses, etc., the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act reformed the national poor law by instituting unions of parishes, and by cutting down on outdoor relief. Control of the union workhouses passed to Boards of Guardians who pursued the less eligibility principle, that conditions inside the workhouse should not be superior to the worst conditions outside. The Dover Poor Law Union was formed in 1835, and the workhouse at Buckland opened in the spring of 1836.¹²⁹ It was built in the form of a quadrangle, with the Board Room for meetings and the Master's offices in front over the entrance, containing a small hospital against the opposite wall, the rest of the square being occupied by ward rooms and dormitories.¹³⁰ Subsequent enlargements occurred in 1837, 1849, 1871, 1877, and 1903.¹³¹ The Dover Union in 1874 comprised 25 parishes and the Workhouse gave employment to a Governor, a Matron, a schoolmaster and mistress, Chaplain, a surgeon and a clerk.¹³² As early as 1851 the buildings could accommodate 275 inmates.¹³³ For the year ending 25th March, 1878, the amount received from poor rates totalled £26,100 in a total income of £27,041, with total expenditure running at £25,971.¹³⁴

¹²⁶ J. A. Williamson, *The English Channel: A History* (1959), 327.

¹²⁷ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 81.

¹²⁸ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 71.

¹²⁹ Bavington Jones, *op. cit.*, 462.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 462.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 462.

¹³² *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1236, 1238.

¹³³ *Ibid.* (1851), 300.

¹³⁴ *The Municipal Corporations Companion*, *op. cit.*, 131.

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The causes of nineteenth-century poverty were many and complicated. Sometimes personal poverty could be attributed to specific causes, either within or beyond the control of the individual, yet equally a man or his family might be poor through two or more factors operating collectively. Several specific causes of poverty can be identified, among them, unemployment, under-employment, the downturn of the trade cycle, age, sickness, large families, low earnings, rising food prices brought on by poor harvests up to the 1870s; but also the fact of whether a town was booming or declining could itself make a tremendous difference to the levels of local well-being measured by such indices as employment opportunities or wages received.

It is central to the remainder of this article to examine some economic functional trends in Dover and Deal in the nineteenth century, and the thesis to be analysed can be stated quite simply that *while the economy of Dover expanded throughout the period, that of Deal appears to have become relatively depressed after the Napoleonic Wars*. Both places must have been almost of equal importance in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, assuming the observations of a gentleman touring through the whole island of Great Britain in 1762 to be reasonably accurate:

DEAL —‘Near it is the famous Road for Shipping, so well known all over the trading world by the Name of the Downs, and where almost all Ships which arrive from foreign Ports for London, or go from London to foreign Ports, and pass the Channel, generally stop; the Homeward-bound, to dispatch Letters, send their Merchants and Owners the good News of their Arrival, and set their Passengers on Shore; and the Outward-bound, to take in fresh Provisions, to receive their last Orders, Letters and Farewells, from Owners and Friends, etc. . . . The town of Deal is very much improved of late Years; to which the great Resort of Seamen from the Ships in the Downs has not a little contributed. The great conveniency of landing here has been of infinite Benefit to the Place, so that it is large and populous, divided into the upper and lower Towns, adorned with many fair Buildings. . . . Having a continual Resort of People . . . Deal is the most flourishing Place upon this Coast; enjoys a very considerable Portion of Trade and has, for the present, eclipsed Sandwich, the (Cinque) Port to which it is a Member.’¹³⁵

DOVER—‘The Piers which form the Haven, or large Basin, are costly and great Works . . . Several Acts have passed to repair and restore the same . . . Dover is one of the Cinque Ports, and . . . here most of the Business of these Ports in general is done, and the Courts are kept . . . The Packets

¹³⁵ By a Gentleman, *A Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies*, 6th Ed., 1762, i, 166-9.

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for France go off here, in time of Peace, as also those for Ostend, with the Mails for Flanders; and all those Ships which carry Freights from New York to Holland and from Virginia to Holland, come generally hither, and unlade their Goods, enter them with the Custom-house Officers, pay the Duties, then enter them again by Certificate, re-load them, and draw back the Duty by Debenture, and so they go away for Holland.¹³⁶

Economic life was, of course, a great deal less sophisticated in the mid-eighteenth century compared to the end of the nineteenth century, and whereas, after 1815, Deal languished and was forced to adjust its economy, Dover flourished and built on the earlier foundations to its economy, more especially in connection with its defensive functions, and as a port for passengers and mails to and from London and the Continent.

Part I

DEPRESSION AND ADJUSTMENT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEAL

Deal as it is known today is predominantly a seaboard town, although in John Leland's time it was no more than a small 'Fisher village, half a myle fro the shore of the sea',¹³⁷ the fishermen then occupying that part which became known subsequently as Upper Deal.¹³⁸ Pritchard's *History of Deal* (1864) attributed the origin of the town on the beach which is properly called Lower Deal, to the settlement of seafaring people on its sea margin consequent on the increase of trade and commerce in Elizabethan times.¹³⁹ Lower Deal lying much nearer the sea expanded rapidly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, more particularly after 1700, many of its inhabitants finding employment in 'maritime occupations, or in providing supplies of food, and necessities for the shipping that anchor in the Downs'.¹⁴⁰ Deal may also be said to have risen in importance as a port and as a naval centre with the decline of Sandwich.¹⁴¹ William Camden noted of the ancient town of Sandwich that 'it is a Town of trade and repute . . . it is pretty populous; though the haven (by reason of the sands heap'd in . . .) has not depth enough to carry ships of the larger sort'.¹⁴² Deal's growing

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 169-70, 172-3.

¹³⁷ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1019. John Leland (1506-52) became in 1533 the Royal Antiquary and his *Itinerary*, describing a journey through England and Wales, has been of great value to subsequent generations of scholars.

¹³⁸ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1019.

¹³⁹ John Lewis Roget, *Sketches of Deal, Walmer and Sandwich* (1911), 19; Stephen Pritchard, *The History of Deal, and Its Neighbourhood*, Deal (1864).

¹⁴⁰ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1020.

¹⁴¹ Roget, *op. cit.*, 19-20.

¹⁴² William Camden, *Britannia: or a Chorographical Description of Great Britain and Ireland Together with the Adjacent Islands*, Edmund Gibson's 2nd Ed., 1722, i, 245-6. William Camden (1561-1623), an English antiquary, remains famous for his *Britannia*, a survey of the British Isles written in Latin.

importance as a port standing aside the Downs received much contemporary comment in the early eighteenth century: in 1713, for instance, 'a place very much frequented by such as belong to Shipping—near it is the Downs, a Chief Station, both for Men of War and Merchant Men';¹⁴³ or in 1721, "'Tis now become pretty considerable by furnishing Necessaries to our Men of War when they lie in the Downs, which are betwixt it and Godwin-Sands, and the usual Place where our Men of War ride'.¹⁴⁴ Mr. Chalklin has recently shown in his study of seventeenth-century Kent that Deal was the only new town of any size to emerge in the county between 1600 and 1700, expanding steadily owing to the importance of the Downs as a naval station, many of the inhabitants being pilots or seamen or being engaged in cordage and sailmaking and/or providing services for shipping, and numbering over 1,000 people by the time it was granted corporate status in 1699.¹⁴⁵ It is quite clear then that the foundations of Deal's pre-Napoleonic importance were firmly laid by the early eighteenth century.

One of its main economic activities existed in 'foying', which was common also to the ports of Thanet and Dover, and which in its widest sense embraced several maritime activities, notably servicing and provisioning passing ships, going off to vessels in distress with anchors and chains, and/or rescuing crews and wrecks, particularly from the Goodwin Sands. Boats known as hovellers or luggers were kept ready at Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Deal and Dover to render assistance to distressed vessels in the Downs and, while one might perhaps easily overstate the importance of this particular function to the local economy in terms of numbers or capital employed, it was nevertheless an economic function that gave significance to Kent, and was moreover of importance to the national economy measured by lives and the value of vessels or cargoes saved.¹⁴⁶ The commercial expansion of the eighteenth and

¹⁴³ *British Curiosities in Nature and Art* (1713), 27.

¹⁴⁴ Mr. Senex, *A New General Atlas containing a Geographical and Historical Account of all the Empires, Kingdoms and Other Dominions of the World* (1721), 201.

¹⁴⁵ C. W. Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent: A Social and Economic History* (1965), 30.

¹⁴⁶ A study of the commercial gains and losses from vessels being respectively saved or wrecked could be attempted by using particularly the numerous reports of such episodes in the local newspapers, to take but a random example. The *Kentish Post, or Canterbury News Letter*, 24th–27th December, 1729, 1, advertised the 'Public Sale at Deal, 2nd January next, 1717 Bars of Swedish Iron, containing about 31 Tons, saved out of the Ship Catharine . . . bound from Stockholm to Opporto, and stranded upon the Goodwin Sands.' In December, 1787, the East Indiaman Mars was driven on shore off Margate 'laden with tea, and just arrived from China' and although 140 chests of tea were saved 'the loss of the East India Company . . . amounts to between £30,000 and £40,000', the *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser*, 18th December, 1787, 4. As a consequence of the crew of the Margate Lord Nelson lugsail boat rescuing during the night of 12th January, 1803, some 127 of the crew of the Hindustan East Indiaman, 'the Honourable East India Company handsomely rewarded the Nelson's crew with a donation of 500 guineas', *New Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs Guide, or an*

subsequent centuries, both in the tonnage and value of coastwise and overseas shipping passing in either direction, underlined the importance of Kentish 'foying'; and, as an indication of the fact that the coast of Kent bore witness to one of the greatest shipping routes of the world, the *South Eastern Gazette* estimated that 2,395,854 tons of shipping passed by Margate in both directions in 1843.¹⁴⁷ It was no idle boast, therefore, to conclude of Deal in 1891, that 'its boatmen and mariners have long enjoyed a well earned reputation for their skill'.¹⁴⁸

Ships on coming into the Downs invariably took on extra stores there, especially if they had to wait for fair winds or for convoy and, among the articles most in request by such ships were fresh flour and fresh bread which were conveyed to them by the local boatmen.¹⁴⁹ It was probably with a view to assisting this trade that a small company was formed in 1787 to supply flour to the public at reasonable prices, headed by Thomas Oakley, brewer, banker and shipping agent of the town.¹⁵⁰ In a century much dominated by war¹⁵¹ the presence of the navy was additional to the provisioning requisites of commercial shipping and both demands made for brisk business, the opportunities for which outsiders were quick to seize upon. Thus, from Margate, Francis Cobb, who branched out from brewing into banking and shipping in the 1780s,¹⁵² also in the second half of the eighteenth century sent much of the beer brewed in Margate round to Deal for the fleet resulting from which he eventually bought a second brewery at Deal to accommodate this market more efficiently.¹⁵³ The Napoleonic War days in particular brought prosperity to this family concern by reason simply of the large consumption of beer by the sailors of the fleet,¹⁵⁴ and the Cobbs emerged as contract brewers for the navy operating

¹⁴⁷ *The South Eastern Gazette*, 8th March, 1853, 5cd.

¹⁴⁸ *Industrial Great Britain, Part II, op. cit.*, 47-8.

¹⁴⁹ Laker, *op. cit.*, 293.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁵¹ Roughly 88 years in the period 1680-1815 were taken up with warfare.

¹⁵² L. S. Pressnell, *Country Banking in the Industrial Revolution*, Oxford, 1956, 50; or R. S. Sayers, *Lloyds Bank in the History of English Banking*, Oxford, 1957, 2.

¹⁵³ P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830*, Cambridge, 1959, 199; also G. E. Clarke, *the Isle of Thanet Gazette*, 18th April, 1957.

¹⁵⁴ 'Messrs. Cobb & Co's Brewery at Margate', *The Licensed Victuallers' Gazette and Hotel Courier*, 4th December, 1875, 395.

Historical Epitome of the Ancient and Present State of the Isle of Thanet (6th Ed., Margate, 1816), 18-19. John Smeaton, one of the early harbour engineers, calculated in 1790 that Ramsgate Harbour had saved property to the value of between £3m. and £4m., or that some 8,000-9,000 lives had been saved, John Smeaton, *An Historical Report on Ramsgate Harbour: written by Order of and Addressed to the Trustees* (1791), 85. Between 1840 and 1844 twenty vessels were lost off Margate, including The Westminster valued at £100,000, and the Larkins at £95,000, the *South Eastern Gazette*, 8th March, 1853, 5cd.

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both from Deal and Margate.¹⁵⁵ A further indication of the economic significance of Deal in the eighteenth century can be found in the decisions of mercantile concerns including Lloyds and foreign governments to place resident agents in the town. *The Kentish Companion* for 1773 and 1777, for instance, listed George Hudson as Agent to the East India Company and Thomas Oakley, Jun., as Agent to the Dutch Admiralty.¹⁵⁶

The Golden Age of Deal's history coincided with the French and Napoleonic Wars between 1793 and 1815. During these years fleet after fleet was fitted up, and many of these fleets assembled in the Downs, and also when the town was full of naval and military officers lodgings had to be found for them.¹⁵⁷ In these conditions the boatmen drove a busy trade, because not only had the men of the Royal Navy to be provisioned, but in addition the boatmen had to attend to the wants of the fleets of merchantmen, often 200 sail and more, which lay in the Downs waiting for convoy,¹⁵⁸ resulting from which the demand for foodstuffs and other commodities became very great in Deal, 'so great that it was computed that during these years it was greater than that in all other East Kent towns put together'.¹⁵⁹ No doubt this was an exaggeration of the situation, even though the market overflowed, and it was no unusual sight to see the street blocked with market carts.¹⁶⁰ This acceleration of demand over the expanding but normal demand for provisions in the eighteenth century must have influenced the development of market gardening in the locality about Deal and Sandwich, the expansion of which is hinted at quite early on.¹⁶¹

The Naval Yard in Deal, which had been for many years the depot for anchors, cables and such like naval stores,¹⁶² was inevitably very active during the Napoleonic Wars, and since the Downs formed so important a naval station at this time, it was thought to be essential that there should exist means of transmitting quickly news of the enemy to the Admiralty in London as well as despatching orders to Deal, and so in 1795-6 a telegraph was constructed between the two

¹⁵⁵ Mathias, *op. cit.*, 28, who also notes *ibid.*, 322, that the scale of enterprise in brewing was in the last resort limited by the extent of the local marketing area which could be exploited and once the business had expanded to this limit, further increase was largely dependent upon the growth in size of the local community or some innovation in local transport, the absence of which often meant that profits accrued faster than they could be invested with advantage in the business, tempting the brewer and his family to set up another brewery at a distance as did Cobb of Margate at Deal.

¹⁵⁶ Laker, *op. cit.*, 293-4.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁶¹ For instance, Nathaniel Spencer, *The Complete English Traveller* (1772).

¹⁶¹.

¹⁶² Pritchard, *op. cit.*, 204.

places.¹⁶³ The Admiralty in 1813 even went so far as to contemplate removing from Dover the making of biscuits, since almost every tide vessels left Dover Harbour with victualling stores for the men of war in the Downs but with strong winds could not round the South Foreland, or were liable to be taken by French privateers running out from Calais, Dunkirk and other cross Channel ports.¹⁶⁴

Indicative of the general prosperity and bustle which reigned during the Napoleonic Wars was an increase of over 35 per cent. in the population of Deal within the decade 1801 to 1811, and it is even suggested that, at 7,351 in 1811, the population had begun to decline, which means that 'it is probable that in intermediate years it had been even greater'.¹⁶⁵ Certainly the housing of this increase of population caused an extension of the town, which included building on land which had previously existed as market gardens.¹⁶⁶

Deal was seen in the 1800s as 'a very considerable maritime town . . . always more flourishing in times of war than of peace . . . a general place of rendezvous for shipping, not only of merchant vessels, but also of men of war':¹⁶⁷ and 'between 300-400 sail are sometimes at anchor in the Downs at one time; on these occasions the town is particularly full, and the bustle and traffic are both very great'.¹⁶⁸ It was further observed that the constant influx of people, and the necessity of providing regular supplies of ships' stores and provisions render 'this a most eligible spot for traders',¹⁶⁹ while another contemporary source noted that 'the resort of seafaring people and others connected with the shipping, and also of summer visitors makes a brisk circulation of money'.¹⁷⁰

The last of the prosperous years from the commercial point of view coincided with the Napoleonic Wars, the end of which took L. Fussell on *A Journey round the Coast of Kent . . . made During a Summer Excursion*, whereupon he observed:

'Deal is a seaport without an harbour; but the Downs between the shore and the Goodwin Sands affording a secure road for ships, the town is usually crowded with a succession of visitors and persons

¹⁶³ Laker, *op. cit.*, 297—it was the invention of the Rev. Lord George Murray, afterwards Bishop of St. David's, and consisted of a series of semaphores by means of which the news was signalled from one station to the next, the semaphores being placed at Betteshanger, Barham Downs, Shottenden, Beacon Hill, Callum Hill, Gadshill, Swanscombe, Shooter's Hill, New Cross, West Square, and the Admiralty, *ibid.*, 297.

¹⁶⁴ Pritchard, *op. cit.*, 205.

¹⁶⁵ Laker, *op. cit.*, 296-7.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁶⁷ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1018.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1020, 1022.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1018-19.

¹⁷⁰ David Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce, Manufactures, Fisheries, and Navigation* (1805), iv, Appendix IV.

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engaged in maritime affairs: passengers also being usually landed here, letters brought on shore, provisions taken in, and vessels, both outward and homeward bound, commonly waiting for orders and instructions . . . The custom house, naval storehouse, and hospital,¹⁷¹ afford convincing proofs of its flourishing condition and increasing opulence. The pilots stationed here are esteemed remarkably skilful, bold, and active; and the assistance afforded by them to vessels in distress, whether belonging to the royal navy or private traders, entitles them to be marked amongst the most useful and effective classes of British sailors. The appearance of the Downs, when enlivened by the arrival of a large fleet, is extremely interesting, and exhibits a noble proof of the naval strength and commercial importance of the country.

'As the inhabitants of Deal may be considered almost amphibious, and the attention of those who visit the coast will be principally directed to its fine beach and the shipping, the buildings of the town, and the distribution of the streets, must not be too fastidiously criticized. If they appear dirty and narrow in those parts to which the greatest traffic occasions the greatest resort, some allowance must be made for the low and level shore on which the houses were originally erected, and for the meanness of the buildings themselves, constructed at a period when, in all probability, there was but little expectation that Deal would ever arrive at its present degree of opulence and importance.

'Deal affords a complete contrast to Sandwich. On visiting the latter, a stranger, as he wanders solitary through the town, in which "the pavement dreads the turf's encroaching green", and scarcely a human being is visible even at noon-day, will be induced to ask, Where are the inhabitants? But as soon as he arrives at Deal, he is surrounded by so great a throng as to obstruct his passage along the streets, and is tempted to exclaim, Where can such a multitude find habitations?'¹⁷²

Within a few decades these comments about Sandwich were to be applied to Deal, the gist of whose decline was summed up as follows by a guidebook looking back from the standpoint of the 1870s:

'Deal was most prosperous during the Continental War, when the Downs was crowded with shipping awaiting a convoy, to protect them in their commercial engagements . . . At that time many of the inhabitants grew rich upon legal spoils; a large contraband trade was carried on¹⁷³ . . . Whatever might have been the sudden increase

¹⁷¹ A hospital for sick and wounded seamen was founded at Deal in Commonwealth times, and its history appears to have been intermittent but by the 1790s two hospitals were in existence—The Royal Naval Hospital and the General Military Hospital, Laker, *op. cit.*, 190, 203, 303–4.

¹⁷² L. Fussell, *A Journey round the Coast of Kent; containing Remarks on the Principal Objects . . . being Original Notes made During a Summer Excursion* (1818), 138–9.

¹⁷³ Not all the trading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Deal and Dover was above board, so to speak, and for this reason the economic historian should consider the extent to which not only smuggling but even the illicit export of gold coins were practised. This subject is too detailed and complicated to treat at length here and this footnote serves to demonstrate that it has not been overlooked. To the contrary, I think that smuggling was an activity of significant importance and deserves serious study, particularly since Governments for the

of wealth by these means, the restoration of peace brought its calamitous reverses, and property that had been purchased at an excessive cost, changed hands at a merely nominal price. The inhabitants fell into a kind of social and commercial collapse, and years passed away before any great effort was made to adapt the town to the advancing civilization and social demands of the age. About a quarter of a century since, the narrow streets began to disappear. The North and South Esplanades were formed where houses once stood, the back doors of which had opened out to the beach and fostered the smuggling propensities of the people resident along the shore. For this first step in the way of improvement, Deal is indebted to the wisdom, foresight and ability of Captain E. Boys, R.N. His aim was to raise the character of the town, and convert it into a favourite watering-place and residence for persons of good position and comfortable means, and so to counter-act the influences that had brought it into unnatural decay. In his efforts he found himself too often obstructed by persons afraid to venture the penny in order to bring back the pound. Reactionary influences set in . . . and a new period of indifference stayed the general improvement which otherwise would over this have made Deal one of the most attractive watering-places upon the south-eastern coast.¹⁷⁴

More recently John Laker in his *History of Deal* has shown that 'years of great adversity'¹⁷⁵ followed the Napoleonic Wars,

'which ended the long years of naval and military activity at Deal. With the close of the war a new era was ushered in. The years of prosperity were followed by a period of stagnation and decay. The boatmen, already impoverished by loss of occupation, were further harassed by severer measures against smuggling. Bankruptcies became common

¹⁷⁴ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Laker, *op. cit.*, 375.

financing of the prolonged and costly wars of the eighteenth century had resort to raising customs and excise duties on a whole range of imported products. Ralph Davis, 'The Rise of Protection in England, 1669-1786', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, xix, no. 2 (August, 1966), 306-17. In economic terms there had to be incentives to smuggle which were present and increasing as and when successive governments imposed higher taxes on teas, wines, spirits, tobacco, snuff, lace, silks, etc. It was for this reason only that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emerged as the peak era of illicit trading, and well explains the fact that while fighting a major enemy abroad the government during the French and Napoleonic Wars was compelled to do battle with smugglers to protect its own fiscal revenues. What must have been the minimum of smuggling has to be gleaned from masses of details surviving in customs and excise records, legal proceedings and from newspaper reports. Suffice it to state that the following references add up to a considerable activity in this respect: Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1020; Laker, *op. cit.*, devotes the whole of Chapter 18 to 'Smuggling' in Deal, 353-70; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, ii, August, 1732, 925, and iii, September, 1733, 492, and liv, August, 1784, 632; William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present*, iii (1898), 16; the *Kentish Gazette*, 8th-11th June, 1768, or 11th-15th June, 1768; *The Times*, 17th October, 1806, 11th March, 1807, 3b, 29th May, 1820, 3c, and 30th May, 1820, 3b; the *Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 3rd January, 1835, 8; and John Whyman, 'Kent Coast Smuggling in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Thanet Panorama: A Modern Guide to the Island* (Isle of Thanet Geographical Association, 1966), 29-30.

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among the tradesmen, and it was only by the energy and far-sighted policy of a little band of townsmen, who were convinced of Deal's possibilities as a watering-place, that the town was saved from complete ruin.¹⁷⁶

He argues that many circumstances contributed to this. First and foremost, the large fleets which had assembled year after year in the Downs were disbanded or stationed elsewhere, causing distress among the boatmen who had acted as pilots to these ships or had followed a thriving trade in supplying their wants.¹⁷⁷ The men fell back upon their ancient sideline of smuggling, and endeavoured to eke out a scanty livelihood by this means,¹⁷⁸ but the Government did everything to repress the activity which anyhow declined in the mid-nineteenth century with the coming of Free Trade. The need for pilots remained, however, of which there were 61 in 1847,¹⁷⁹ down to 53 by 1874,¹⁸⁰ but even this function became restricted so far as Deal was concerned. After the Fellowship of Cinque Ports' Pilots came to an end in 1853, supervision being transferred to the Trinity House, London, a commencement was made in transferring the Deal pilots to Dover, a process which continued despite protests from Deal.¹⁸¹ Sixty-six pilots were stationed in Dover by 1874,¹⁸² rising to 90 by 1895.¹⁸³ The activities of pilot and boatman were always risky and losses at sea brought human tragedy to whole families, as on the night of 1st August, 1864, when the lugger *Fawn*, manned by four Deal boatmen, was run down by a steamer near the Downs, and all hands in a moment perished, leaving behind families and twelve orphans deprived of every means of support.¹⁸⁴ The Mayor of Deal, William Matson Cavell, in a letter to the Editor of *The Times*, appealing to the public for subscriptions, pointed to the gloom which had been thrown on the town by this tragic incident, concerning seamen, 'whose valuable services are so well known all over the world'.¹⁸⁵ Following this appeal, subscriptions poured in from individuals all over the country, and were acknowledged by the Mayor in several issues of *The Times* during the months of August, September, and October, 1864.¹⁸⁶

As a customs port Deal suffered yet another blow in October, 1881,

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 340.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 375-6.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹⁷⁹ Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 368-9.

¹⁸⁰ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1228-31.

¹⁸¹ Laker, *op. cit.*, 405.

¹⁸² *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1243-52.

¹⁸³ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), *op. cit.*, 201.

¹⁸⁴ *The Times*, 22nd August, 1864, 10c.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 22nd August, 1864, 10c.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 27th August, 1864, 12a; 30th August, 1864, 8d; 3rd September, 1864, 9d; 10th September, 1864, 12a; 19th September, 1864, 9a; 24th September, 1864, 12c; 22nd October, 1864, 7b.

when the Port of Deal was degraded to a Creek, its landing privileges being withdrawn.¹⁸⁷ Laker shows that,

'This led to a protest by the Town Council, but it is probable that everybody realized that the measure was inevitable. Deal's days as a port were ended. The introduction of steam and the failure to construct a harbour in the Downs had ended them.'¹⁸⁸

In 1879 it was observed of the town's economy that, 'there is little or no trade, the population being chiefly employed as boatmen, pilots and fishermen'.¹⁸⁹ Many aspects of the old function of 'foying' declined during the nineteenth century, as and when larger vessels were less liable to drag on their chains and anchors, and could carry more in the way of provisions.

The problems of conducting a merchandise trade without a harbour, and with the facility merely of a beach, preoccupied much of the evidence submitted to the House of Commons Select Committee on Railway Bills: the South-Eastern Branch to Deal and Extension of the South-Eastern Canterbury, Ramsgate and Margate Railway Bill, sitting in July, 1845. The then Mayor of Deal, Cornford Kingsmill, spoke of frequent inconvenience for a fortnight or three weeks at times when the hoys from London could not come on shore in bad weather to land their goods and, in consequence, were forced back to Ramsgate:

'It is of very great consequence to the tradesmen at times—I have often known waggons obliged to be sent to Ramsgate to fetch their goods from there.'¹⁹⁰

Mr. Stephen Pritchard, having retired from business after nearly twenty years as a chemist in the town, told how he had been the owner of two hoys but,

'unfortunately we had them wrecked in coming to land their goods in order to accommodate the tradesmen . . . When we get our coals it is a very frequent thing for our colliers to be wrecked—I have seen three ashore wrecked at one time . . . We have been accustomed to consider Ramsgate Harbour as a place we can depend upon.'¹⁹¹

Mr. James Bates, coach and posting master at Deal, also referred to

'the great difficulty in beaching vessels, and the expense in unloading the vessels . . . the labourers leave every other employment—There must be great despatch used in unloading the vessels and consequently

¹⁸⁷ Laker, *op. cit.*, 405.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 405.

¹⁸⁹ *The Municipal Corporations Companion, op. cit.*, 121.

¹⁹⁰ Cornford Kingsmill, Mayor of Deal, 12th July, 1845, in evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Railway Bills; South Eastern Branch to Deal and Extension of the South Eastern Canterbury, Ramsgate and Margate Railway Bill, House of Lords Record Office, Committee Office Evidence, 1845, Volume 77.

¹⁹¹ Stephen Pritchard, Retired Deal Chemist, 12th July, 1845, in evidence to *op. cit.*

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much heavier pay for the labourers. We pay upon the average 10s. a ton more for coals at Deal than they do at Dover.¹⁹²

Similar evidence was presented to the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the South-Eastern Railway, Deal Extension Bill, which sat in August, 1845.

Then speculators, too, who had laid out money in the hope that Deal would become an important naval and military centre encountered disappointment.¹⁹³ They gambled on the fact that during the Napoleonic Wars the numerous embarkations, reported constantly in the national and provincial press, had attracted great numbers of people to the town, and this in turn had provided a rich harvest for the tradesmen.¹⁹⁴ In 1808 Deal had housed a Naval Storehouse, a Royal Military and Naval Hospital and extensive Barracks for cavalry and infantry.¹⁹⁵ The Naval Yard, which was run down after the Napoleonic Wars, came to an end in the Autumn of 1864 when the Lords of the Admiralty sold by auction the whole of their property in Deal.¹⁹⁶ By the 1830s tradesmen found their trade dwindling or ruined, and bankruptcies became common.¹⁹⁷ The numerical representation of some trades declined quite markedly as between 1847¹⁹⁸ and 1874,¹⁹⁹ the number of bakers going down from 27 to 16, beer retailers from 30 to 15, hair-dressers from 6 to 5, milliners from 9 to 5, toy dealers from 5 to nothing, and so on.

Wives, families and other relatives of officers, both naval and military, who had settled in Deal during the Napoleonic Wars decided gradually to leave the town.²⁰⁰ Even the two minor industries of the place, boat-building and rope-making, fell into comparative decay.²⁰¹ In 1847 there were six boat-builders,²⁰² reduced to four by 1874.²⁰³ At the latter date there were two sail-makers, a mast- and block-maker and one rope-maker still in operation.²⁰⁴ By the 1870s boat-building existed only on a small scale, and according to the port and navigation statistics for 1877, the quantity of boat-building in Deal amounted to seven sailing vessels, gross tonnage 453.²⁰⁵

¹⁹² James Bates, Coach and Posting Master at Deal, 12th July, 1845, in evidence to *op. cit.*

¹⁹³ Laker, *op. cit.*, 376.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹⁹⁵ Brayley, *op. cit.*, 1021-22.

¹⁹⁶ Pritchard, *op. cit.*, 207; or, Roget, *op. cit.*, 27.

¹⁹⁷ Laker, *op. cit.*, 376.

¹⁹⁸ Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 364-70.

¹⁹⁹ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1228-31.

²⁰⁰ Laker, *op. cit.*, 376.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 376.

²⁰² Bagshaw, *op. cit.*, 364.

²⁰³ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1228-31.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1228-31.

²⁰⁵ *The Municipal Corporations Companion*, *op. cit.*, 121.

The population figures of the town and the accounts of the Pavement Commissioners bore eloquent testimony to this general post-Napoleonic collapse in Deal's economy. In 1801 Deal had a population greater than that of either Margate, Ramsgate, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells together, Gravesend and Folkestone. A century later Deal was much surpassed in population by all of these towns, with the exception of Gravesend.²⁰⁶ In the decade 1801 to 1811 the population of Deal rose sharply from 5,420 to 7,351 inhabitants; it received a sharp setback in the next decade, up to 1821, slipping back to 6,811. Not until after 1851 did the population of Deal rise above the total for 1811, so that by 1861 there were 7,531 people living in the town. The population thereafter climbed slowly to 8,891 by 1891, rising more sharply in the 1890s to 10,581 by 1901.²⁰⁷ The receipts of the Pavement Commissioners reached high water mark in 1815 when they amounted to over £1,584.²⁰⁸ They then declined almost uniformly, and in 1826 amounted to little more than half this amount at £848.²⁰⁹

Many of the leading inhabitants looked to the Government to come to the rescue, advocating that Deal should become an important naval centre, and a few unsuccessful efforts were indeed made by the Admiralty to improve the Naval Yard, but by 1834 it was made clear to the townsfolk that they must assume responsibility for arresting the decay of their town.²¹⁰ Captain Edward Boys, R.N., addressed an open letter to the inhabitants of Deal suggesting that they develop the town as a seaside resort.²¹¹ Deal had already been fashionable as a resort in the later eighteenth century, when the town too was more important as a port of call in the Downs for shipping *en route* to and leaving London. As early as May, 1754, the *Kentish Post* had advertised:

'At DEAL in Kent is the Original NEW-INVENTED MACHINE for Bathing in the Sea . . . The Machine during the last Season met with general Approbation; and, in order to make it still more useful, the Proprietors have this Season provided an additional Machine. All Gentlemen and Ladies who are desirous of making use of this Machine, are to apply to Mr. John Dixon, at the East India Arms in Deal, from whom they may hear of good Lodgings in the Neighbourhood, pleasantly situated, on reasonable Terms. *N.B.* A proper Woman is provided to attend the Ladies if required.'²¹²

Charles Seymour wrote in 1776 of 'an Apartment towards the Sea', which had been modernized and was 'intended for the accommodation

²⁰⁶ George S. Minchin, Table of Population in Ed.: W. Page, *The Victoria History of the County of Kent* (1932), iii, 356-70.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 356-70.

²⁰⁸ Laker, *op. cit.*, 376.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 376.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 376.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 376.

²¹² *The Kentish Post*, 11th-15th May, 1754, 1; and 18th-22nd May, 1754, 1.

of the Rt. Hon. Francis, Marquis of Carmathen . . . during the bathing season'.²¹³ In those early days Deal thrived as a watering place and was the subject of a report in the *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser*, in June, 1825, which noted that,

'Many improvements are going on at Deal and Walmer where lodgings have at this early period of the season become scarce . . . From the high price of land in its immediate vicinity (some has sold at £200 per acre) and the preparations that are making for building, we have no doubt it will ere long rank high in the estimation of the public.'²¹⁴

It seems, therefore, that immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, the buoyancy of Deal as a watering-place had the effect of masking its commercial decay, but not for long, because, by the 1840s, Deal was a poor relation to the Thanet resorts, and there were distinct signs of economic depression which even the Duke of Wellington's associations with Walmer Castle, as the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, could not overcome.

The 1830s produced the proposal to construct a wooden pier at Deal, the want of a harbour having always militated against the commercial progress of the town.²¹⁵ Many schemes for the construction of a harbour were produced from time to time, and in 1838 a company was formed to build a wooden pier or jetty as a substitute for a harbour, an Act of Parliament sanctioning the formation of a Deal Pier Company having an authorized capital of £21,000.²¹⁶ The famous harbour engineer, Sir John Rennie, was commissioned to design a pier, 445 ft. in length and, at a cost of £12,000, piling was completed to a length of 250 ft., following which a further sum of £8,500 was then raised by an issue of £5 shares, but after that nothing more was done to complete the structure; and 'year by year parts of it succumbed to the violence of the winter gales', until in 1857 a sudden south-easterly gale brought the whole structure down.²¹⁷

In June, 1841, the *Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser* reported the failure and auction of the Royal Adelaide Baths, in Deal, erected in 1836 as a baths and library at a cost of over £3,000, having never returned 1s. in the shape of profit, and now publicly auctioned for the small sum of £1,000, including the furniture, fixtures, books and machines.²¹⁸ An article on 'The Sea Side Resorts of the Londoners', which appeared in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* in

²¹³ Charles Seymour, *A New Topographical, Historical and Commercial Survey of the Cities, Towns, and Villages, of the County of Kent*, Canterbury, 1776, 282.

²¹⁴ The *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser*, 21st June, 1825, 3a.

²¹⁵ Laker, *op. cit.*, 378; other references above, 112 ff.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 378.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 378-9.

²¹⁸ The *Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 12th June, 1841, 8c.

November, 1853, claimed categorically that Deal was not a bathing place.²¹⁹

Contemporaries argued about the reasons behind Deal's failure to maintain itself as a first-rate watering-place. Witnesses who appeared before the Select Committees of the House of Commons and the House of Lords on the South-Eastern Railway Deal Extension Bill, in 1845, argued the case that Deal was frequented to a certain extent, but its facilities had not yet been fully developed in consequence of the difficulty of getting to the place; for instance, this was the line taken by the Mayor of Deal, Cornford Kingsmill.²²⁰ Mr. Stephen Pritchard slated Herne Bay as,

'in our estimation so low that we put it almost out of notice . . . there is no harbour at Herne Bay but merely a pier which may last only a short time—now the worms are cutting it to pieces by wholesale;'

yet admitted of the hope to make Deal something of a bathing place, 'We have been trying to give the Town a lift if we could from time to time'.²²¹ One witness on being cross-examined as to whether Deal was a place where grass was growing in the streets stated that he did not know anything about the suggestion.²²²

On 1st July, 1847, railway communication was opened with London, Ramsgate and Margate from Deal as a terminal point on the South-Eastern Railway,²²³ but discussion of the relative failure of Deal as a watering-place continued into the 1850s. A letter to the Editor of the *Deal, Walmer and Sandwich Telegram* in 1859, for instance, pointed out:

'I am not a native of your town, but I have been in it for long enough to observe that it is half a century behind most watering-places. While its near neighbours, Dover and Ramsgate, can boast of their Artificial Harbours, and Margate of its Piers, and also of the numerous Lodging Houses, from their elegant and commodious terraces . . . down to the humble cottage where the shopman or artisan may enjoy his annual holiday. To such attractions as these Deal has no pretence . . . With the exception of three gingerbread castles and an irregular range of antiquated buildings, Deal Sea frontage is as innocent of the crime of improvement as when Julius Caesar landed nineteen centuries ago.

²¹⁹ 'The Sea Side Resorts of the Londoners', *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 12th November, 1853, 307.

²²⁰ Cornford Kingsmill, Mayor of Deal, 12th July, 1845, in evidence to The House of Commons Select Committee on Railway Bills: South-Eastern Branch to Deal, etc., *op. cit.*, and 2nd August, 1845, before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the South-Eastern Railway Deal Extension Bill, House of Lords Record Office, Lords Evidence, 1845, Volume 13.

²²¹ Stephen Pritchard, retired Deal chemist, 12th July, 1845, in evidence to the Commons Committee, *op. cit.*

²²² Harry Easland, Ramsgate Coach Proprietor, 12th July, 1845, before *ibid.*

²²³ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 12, 63.

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'Now, Sir, these things need not be . . . Why not form a Company for the erection of an Iron Pier . . . you would soon find it necessary to alter and increase the number of Lodging Houses; trade in general would flourish . . . and be the making of the town.'²²⁴

The old pier, as shown already, had been swept away by the sea two years previously, and all the schemes for constructing a harbour had failed,²²⁵ but this suggestion of constructing a new pier was taken seriously and above all by Mr. Edward Hayward, the first proprietor and publisher of the *Deal and Walmer Telegram*, who was 'indefatigable in advocating a new scheme both in the columns of his newspaper and among the townsfolk privately'.²²⁶ An Act of Parliament, 27th September, 1861, incorporated the Deal and Walmer Pier Company Limited, to construct an iron pier 1,000 ft. long, the contract for which was given to Messrs. R. Laidlaw & Son of Glasgow,²²⁷ at £11,000.²²⁸ The first pile was driven on 8th April, 1863, and the ceremonial opening took place on 14th July, 1864,²²⁹ the entire structure being completed by the following November,²³⁰ but

'the new venture, however, did not turn out to be the success that had been anticipated, and in 1866 the Pier Company was wound up. As a large sum of money was still due to the contractors (Messrs. Laidlaw & Son) the pier eventually passed into their hands.'²³¹

By the mid-1870s it was landing excursionists from steam-boats and housed a refreshment saloon.²³² 1874 saw the provision of hot and cold baths at the Pierhead; 'the water (pumped up by steam) at so great a distance from the shore renders it pure and clear'.²³³ It was claimed at this time that 'internal improvements have been going on by gradual yet very perceptible steps, and the visitor who has been about a series of years, finds the place materially changed in aspect';²³⁴ yet despite these and other improvements, Deal remained second-rate as a watering-place, offering to visitors in 1874 one bathing-machine owner, a baths proprietor, two circulating libraries, 53 lodging houses,²³⁵ and some new Assembly Rooms erected for £2,700 in 1864.²³⁶

In concluding this section on 'Depression and Adjustment in

²²⁴ *The Deal, Walmer and Sandwich Telegram*, 6th April, 1859, 4a.

²²⁵ Laker, *op. cit.*, 400; and above, 112 ff.

²²⁶ Laker, *op. cit.*, 400; *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 26.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 400.

²²⁸ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 26.

²²⁹ Laker, *op. cit.*, 400.

²³⁰ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 27.

²³¹ Laker, *op. cit.*, 400-1.

²³² *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 27.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

²³⁵ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), *op. cit.*, ii, 1228-31.

²³⁶ *The New Handbook to the Downs Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, 30.

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Nineteenth-Century Deal', the well-being of many ordinary people living and working in the town must have been affected by the long-run secular decline in its fortunes, which probably accounts for a soup-kitchen being set up by some benevolent individuals in 1850:

'to obtain voluntary donations and superintend the distribution of soup to the poor during the inclement seasons of the year, and thereby mitigate the sufferings of the distressed, particularly of women and children.'²³⁷

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²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.