

RISE AND DECLINE: DOVER AND DEAL
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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*Part II*¹

GROWTH POINTS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY DOVER

EVIDENCE suggests that nearly all the economic and social indices of Deal were reversed in the case of Dover. As a defensive centre and cross-Channel port the town assumed a growing importance in the eighteenth century. Indeed, a 1721 Atlas specifically pinpointed its castle and the packet boats for France.² Well before the nineteenth century the Calais and Ostend passages had assumed a major significance in the life and well-being of Dover, and, in 1805, it was claimed that, 'the money spent by passengers is the chief support of the town',³ as against 1811, 'in time of peace this town is a great thoroughfare for persons passing to and from France'.⁴

Any analysis of the size of nineteenth-century Dover is complicated by the fact that the parish boundary changes in the town have been so intricate that comparable population statistics are difficult to assemble. Various series of figures can be quoted according to the divisions included in the estimates, but in very broad terms the population of Dover increased from 7,709 in 1801 to 41,794 inhabitants in 1901.⁵ Behind this increase of numbers lay the important functions of Dover as a garrison town, a seaport, a seaside resort, and the principal station on the passage to the Continent, as well as the great works carried on by the state at Dover, from the building of the Admiralty Pier to the completion of the Admiralty Harbour.⁶

Accompanying the growth of numbers was an extension of the residential built-up areas. Building booms in nineteenth-century Dover arose from the construction of new residences and lodging-houses on the margin of Dover Bay, as well as in many other parts of the town.⁷

¹ *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiv (1969), 107-37.

² 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.

³ David Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce, Manufactures, Fisheries and Navigation* (1805), Appendix IV.

⁴ Henry Moore, *A New and Comprehensive System of Universal Geography* (c. 1811), 47.

⁵ John Bavington Jones, *Annals of Dover*, 2nd ed., Dover, 1938, 461.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 461.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 460.

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Some of the building highlights were:

Marine Parade, Liverpool Terrace, with the houses under the East Cliff, started in 1817.

Guilford and Clarence Lawns begun shortly afterwards.

Esplanade, 1833.

Waterloo Crescent, 1834.

Camden Crescent, 1840.⁸

The more extensive building projects frequently caught the attention of the national press; for instance, *The Times* reported, March 1844:

‘We understand that the Earl of Guilford, the noble proprietor of the Frith Farm, near the Castle, is about to apply to Parliament for a private act to enable him to let a portion of the valley on lease for building purposes; and that plans for the erection of splendid terraces, said to be equal in design and magnitude to any in the kingdom, have been prepared, and also for detached villas; altogether nearly 1,500 residences are contemplated to be formed on this delightful spot . . . It will prove a good speculation.’⁹

Extensions of the settlement area represented business for the building trades, numerically represented in Dover as follows in 1874:

Dover Building Trades, 1874.¹⁰

Builders	32
Plumbers	14
Carpenters	12
Cabinet Makers	8
Painters	8
Paper Hangers	5
Bricklayers	4
Brickmakers	4

Various contemporary references suggest that Dover was quite a pleasant place to live in during the nineteenth century. William Cobbett seemed to think so when he wrote in 1823:

‘The town of Dover is like other seaport towns; but really, much more clean, and with less blackguard people in it than I ever observed in any seaport before. It is a most picturesque place, to be sure . . . I got into Dover rather late. It was dusk when I was going down the street . . . I happened to look up, and was quite astonished to perceive cows grazing upon a spot apparently 50’ above the tops of the houses . . . I went up to the same spot, the next day, myself; and you actually look down upon the houses, as you look out of a window, upon people in the street.’¹¹

One of the local guide-book compilers of the 1820s made great play

⁸ Mackenzie Walcott, *A Guide to the Coast of Kent* (1859), 40–1.

⁹ *The Times*, 26th March, 1844, 6f.

¹⁰ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1243–52.

¹¹ G. D. H. and Margaret Cole, *Rural Rides*, by William Cobbett (1930), i, 226–7.

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of the seaside attractions of Dover as a health and holiday resort when he noted that:

‘Had its original founders anticipated, that it would one day become a favourite resort of the invalid, they could not have selected, within a compass of many miles, a better shelter from the northern blast than the lofty castle hill. The heights to the west, and Shakespeare’s Cliff . . . afford a cover from the wind . . . and a most beautiful and shaded valley opens to the north west. A vast expanse of sea spreads before the town, enlivening the prospect from the balconies and windows . . . but the sea bathing is, perhaps, one of the greatest attractions.’¹²

The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser reported an instance in May, 1841, of the increased value of property in the town:

‘Last week, the house, No. 29 Marine Parade, the property of the late General Horsford, was offered for sale by public auction at the Shakespeare Hotel. After some spirited bidding it fetched £1,780. These premises were erected about 20 years ago for about £1,200.’¹³

In many nineteenth-century towns rapid growth of numbers produced overcrowding and pressures on the environment, but of Dover on the occasion of the 1861 Census, *The South Eastern Gazette* reported that,

‘One of the results of the census here is worth remarking, especially at a time when the general crowding of dwelling houses by the labouring population is engaging the attention of the public. The inmates of the several parishes constituting the Borough of Dover average the following numbers:

	<i>No. to Each House</i>
St. Mary	A fraction under 6
St. James	A fraction over 6
Hougham	About 5½
Charlton	— do —
Buckland	A fraction over 4.’ ¹⁴

Finally, a Meeting of the British Association at Dover in 1899 had set before them in a *Handbook to Dover* the many attractions of the town as a place of residence: sanitary improvements; electric tramways; sea-bathing facilities; the fact that as a garrison town and large military centre, it ‘contains many retired military and professional men’; walks on the Piers; enormous advantages ‘in the way of education by the well known [Dover] College . . . and from the modern High School for Girls’; ‘some of the finest modern hotel accommodation on the Coast’; the beautiful Connaught Park; sea fishing; hunting, golf; tennis clubs; and new athletic grounds for football and cricket matches.¹⁵

Dover was a town of many economic activities, and fleeting refer-

¹² W. Batcheller, *A New History of Dover, to which is added a New Dover Guide*, Dover, 1828, 348-9.

¹³ *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 1st May, 1841, 8c.

¹⁴ *The South Eastern Gazette*, 21st May, 1861, 4e.

¹⁵ (Ed.) S. Evans and F. Bennett-Goldney, *British Association Handbook to Dover*, Dover, 1899, Advertisement.

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ences during the nineteenth century tell of the essentials of the town's multifunctional economy.

1851, the year of the Great Exhibition:

'Shipbuilding, ropemaking, sailmaking, papermaking, corn grinding, etc. . . . The supply of shipping . . . A considerable foreign intercourse . . . The seat of a large post office establishment . . . The packet establishments for Calais and Ostend . . . The grand pilot station of the Cinque Ports, with 56 pilots attached to it . . . As a port Dover imports a good deal of coal, and it has also some fishing . . . The Custom House, built in 1806, does much business in passing baggage.'¹⁶

1879:

'The trade of Dover, apart from that connected with the mail and packet service to the Continent, consists mainly of ship-building, rope and sail making and the supply of ships' stores; eggs, fruit, and other rural produce are also imported from France, and the fishery and coasting trades are in a thriving condition.'¹⁷

1891:

'As a seaside resort Dover has considerable attraction and is visited by a large number of tourists and holidaymakers: but its chief importance will always consist in its facilities for the conduct of an immense shipping trade, and these facilities have been greatly extended in recent years by the improvement effected in the harbour. Very large sums of money have been expended in this matter. . . . The greatest activity prevails in the shipping here, and there is a constant stream of traffic across the Channel to Calais and other French ports, and also eastwards to Ostend . . . When we enquire into the commercial undertakings of Dover, we find that there is not only an extensive coasting and fishing trade, . . . but also an immense import business in eggs, fruit, and other produce from French and other Continental ports. Among local industries those of shipbuilding, rope and sail-making, papermaking, brewing and fishing are particularly prominent, but a great variety of general trades find adequate representation in the town, and there is an immense activity in those branches of business which involve the supplying of ships' stores of all kinds . . . The visitor who makes a tour of the principal streets of modern Dover will not fail to be impressed with the large number of fine shops and warehouses that will come before his notice.'¹⁸

Nineteenth-century Dover was an important wholesale, distributing and retail shopping centre in the county. Specialist wholesale distributors operated outwards, some of them over a twenty-mile radius. The wholesale activity of Dover in 1874 amounted to six firms—three in grocery, one in confectionery, and two in boots and shoes.¹⁹ There were seventy-six such firms in the whole of Kent, of which Canterbury

¹⁶ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 299.

¹⁷ (Ed.) J. R. Somers Vine, *The Municipal Corporations Companion, Diary, Directory, and Year Book of Statistics for 1879* (1879), 131.

¹⁸ *Industrial Great Britain, Part II, A Commercial Review of Leading Firms Selected from Important Towns of Many Counties* (1891), 147.

¹⁹ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1665–1839.

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and Maidstone, the regional centres respectively of East and West Kent, each had fifteen wholesale concerns.²⁰ As a leading centre of wholesale business in the 1870s, therefore, Dover took third place after Maidstone and Canterbury, but even more specific to the needs of Dover people and to visitors from outside were the retail establishments of the town. Over the years from 1847 to 1874, for instance, the shopping facilities of the town expanded as follows:

The Shopping Facilities of Dover, 1847²¹ and 1874²²

<i>Type of Retail Outlet</i>	<i>1847</i>	<i>1874</i>
Bakers	40	45
Butchers	23	31
Pork Butchers	4	11
Boot- and Shoemakers	52	58
Chemists	12	15
Coal Merchants and Dealers	17	28
Confectioners	16	18
Dairymen/Cowkeepers	6	12
Fishmongers	6	13
Grocers and Tea Dealers	37	39
Bazaars and/or Fancy Repositories	6	11
Hosiers and Glovers	3	5
Hairdressers and Perfumers	12	14
Linen Drapers	22	22
Milliners and Dressmakers	24	42
Poulterers	5	5
Tailors	30	35
Tobacconists	5	19
Watchmakers	11	11
Wine and Spirit Merchants	3	14

Insurance societies were well represented in most towns of any size, but the strengthening of the insurance interest in the business life of Dover came about because the various shipping and merchandise trades and business concerns came to look to insurance companies to carry some of the inevitable risks in their business. Solicitors, tradesmen and private individuals acted as agents to the various insurance companies. The thirty-nine agents representing thirty-four companies in 1851,²³ grew to sixty-one agents serving forty-seven companies by 1874.²⁴

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1665–1839.

²¹ Samuel Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the County of Kent*, ii, Sheffield, 1847, 406–18.

²² *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1243–52.

²³ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 300–5.

²⁴ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1238, 1243–52.

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Dover, also in common with many other towns of nineteenth-century Kent, functioned as a market town. In the 1830s the market days were Wednesdays and Saturdays.

‘On the latter the principal market is held, when the neighbouring country, from an extent of many miles, pours in a bountiful supply. The butter market is held under the Museum, and the butchers’ shambles are close adjoining.’²⁵

The fish market was rebuilt in 1831.²⁶ The markets continued to be well supplied in the 1850s, and every year there was a fair which started on 23rd November and lasted over three days.²⁷

The inauguration of important works for improving Dover harbour had a long history extending back to the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and James I.²⁸ Henry spent £63,000 on a pier at Dover.²⁹ The nineteenth century was notable for many advances in the science of harbour construction and civil engineering generally. During 1844 the entrance to Dover harbour was deepened, and the outer harbour was enlarged to the extent of 7½ acres.³⁰ In 1847, a new set of works was undertaken for the formation of a harbour of refuge, intended to enclose no less than 520 acres, and the Admiralty Pier, which formed its western arm was thrown out to nearly half a mile from the shore, these tremendous works getting under way in 1848.³¹ The Admiralty Pier cost £1m. to complete,³² described in 1891 as:

‘presenting a massive and immovable granite barrier to the Channel waves, and forming a grand example of the triumph of engineering skill and science over natural difficulties of no insignificant order.’³³

Dover harbour in the mid-1890s could receive vessels of 1,000 tons burden,³⁴ which was a doubling of the 500 tons burden given in 1874.³⁵ Ships and the tonnages they carried were getting larger all the time, facts which called for wider entrances and deeper anchorages. An entire book could be devoted to the history of Dover harbour, and the best indication of the scope of this topic is seen perhaps in listing the

²⁵ W. Batcheller, *The New Dover Guide, including a Concise Sketch of the Ancient and Modern History of the Town and Castle, Dover*, 1838, 137.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁷ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 299–300.

²⁸ *The Municipal Corporations Companion*, *op. cit.*, 130.

²⁹ A. T. Walmisley, ‘The Harbour and Port of Dover’, *British Association Handbook to Dover*, *op. cit.*, 47.

³⁰ *The Municipal Corporations Companion*, *op. cit.*, 130.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

³² *Kelly’s Directory of Kent* (1895), 201.

³³ *Industrial Great Britain* (1891), *op. cit.*, 147.

³⁴ *Kelly’s Directory of Kent* (1895), 201.

³⁵ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1235.

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years when Acts of Parliament were passed bearing directly on Dover harbour starting in the days of Queen Elizabeth I:

1581	1700	1786	1873
1589	1703	1794	1882
1593	1718	1828	1891
1597	1723	1836	and 1898 ³⁶
1601	1724	1848	
1603	1738	1861	
1662	1758	1871	

The legislative side alone gives twenty-five Acts in the space of 310 years, or an average of one Act roughly every 12½ years, quite excluding many intervening surveys, reports, and other documents.

Even though from 1815 to 1914 there was peace in the English Channel,

‘the long peace was nevertheless an armed and often apprehensive peace—there were several scares of Anglo-French war and possible invasion—fleets and coastal fortifications grew in their rival strengths and until the formation of the *Entente Cordiale* in 1904 the British and French peoples looked on one another as potential enemies, each quick to take offence and see sinister intentions in the other.’³⁷

Although actual war never came about, the lingering suspicions concerning France maintained the garrison function of Dover. Old people living in the town today, possessing memories reaching back through half a century, have vivid recollections of the position of Dover during two World Wars. The effects of the First World War on the town of Dover have been chronicled by J. B. Firth’s *Dover and the Great War*, but almost an exact parallel must have existed during the French and Napoleonic Wars, when the casualties to the population were much higher even than in World War I. The magnitude of the campaigns was such that the fighting forces in 1811 employed about 1m. people, against a total population for England and Wales of 10·1m.³⁸ It is curious to reflect why economic historians have so far hardly begun to consider the direct effects of the Napoleonic Wars. Dover was very much at the centre of war operations, of which there were constant references in the contemporary press. In January, 1806, *The Times* reported the presence of French privateers near Dover:

‘Dover, January 17. The enemy’s privateers, constantly at low water, infest our coast, and so daring are they, that two of them came to anchor abreast of our harbour on Tuesday evening. The Sea-fencibles went to the batteries, but were prevented going to the guns by the sentinels, who alleged that no person should touch

³⁶ Walmisley, *op. cit.*, 52.

³⁷ J. A. Williamson, *The English Channel: A History* (1959), 323.

³⁸ B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (C.U.P., 1962), 6.

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the guns, without an order from Lord FORBES, the Commanding General, who was at Canterbury.³⁹

Troop movements and embarkations became familiar everyday occurrences during these years. *The Kentish Gazette*, for instance, reported at the end of March, 1815, that,

‘Active preparations are making to augment the British force in the Netherlands. The 2nd battalion of the 95th (Rifle) Regiment, has been embarked at Dover, and with two other regiments the 23rd and 51st has sailed for Ostend.’⁴⁰

The coming, presence, and going of the military sometimes created social problems in the town. *The Times* during January, 1808, reported an affray between a party of militia stationed in the town; ‘at a well known house at the foot of the Castle Hill . . . between a party of the Shropshire and a party of the Surrey regiment of militia, between whom there appears to be a considerable degree of animosity’, which resulted in one of the Surrey militia being carried off to hospital ‘so much beaten that his life is dispaired of’.⁴¹ Following this incident a guard was stationed to prevent persons from resorting to the house in question.⁴²

An obvious aspect of the Wars was the heavy fortification of Dover, and the considerable expenditure which that involved. At least £50,000 were spent on the national defences of Dover as a military station, miners, mechanics and labourers being employed to cast up additional mounds and ramparts and to excavate the chalk rock for casemates and mines.⁴³ Within the castle itself extensive barracks were excavated in the solid rock, providing a garrison for 3,000 to 4,000 men.⁴⁴ William Cobbett, on his visit to the town in 1823, was highly critical of the defence works which had been undertaken:

‘*Rural Rides*, Wednesday, Sept. 3. Evening. I went to see, with my own eyes, something of the sorts of means that had been made use of to squander away countless millions of money. Here is a hill containing probably a couple of square miles or more, hollowed like a honey-comb. Here are line upon line, trench upon trench, cavern upon cavern, bomb-proof upon bomb-proof . . . The question that every man of sense asks, is: What reason had you to suppose that the *French would ever come to this hill* to attack it, while the rest of the country was so much more easy to assail? . . . This is, perhaps, the only set of fortifications in the World ever formed for mere *hiding* . . . holes made in a hill, to hide Englishmen from Frenchmen . . . More brick and stone have been buried in this hill than would go to build a neat new cottage for every labouring man in the counties of Kent and of Sussex.’⁴⁵

³⁹ *The Times*, 20th January, 1806, 3d.

⁴⁰ *The Kentish Gazette*, 28th March, 1815.

⁴¹ *The Times*, 2nd January, 1808, 3b.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2nd January, 1808, 3b.

⁴³ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 111-12; also 115-16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

⁴⁵ G. D. H. and Margaret Cole, *op. cit.*, 227-8.

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After 1815, the military presence remained entrenched in the town of Dover, and the fortifications continued to receive comment, but in more peaceful times the castle also functioned as a tourist attraction, *The New Dover Guide* of 1838 advising visitors:

'The views from the castle walls are truly romantic . . . People are allowed to walk in the castle or on the heights. In the castle there are generally persons in attendance to offer their assistance as conductors, but they are not allowed to show the underground walks, etc., without an order from the Commandant, Applications, Ordnance Office, Archcliff-fort, Mondays and Fridays, before 11 a.m.'⁴⁶

Dover Castle in the mid-1870s contained a garrison of about 1,000 men, and occupied about 35 acres of ground.⁴⁷ Additional defences were provided by the Castle Battery, Fort Burgoyne to the north, and heavy gun-batteries on the cliffs to the west and also on the Western Heights.⁴⁸ It was claimed of the military strength of Dover, in 1891, that, 'the fortifications are strong, and rank among the principal landward defences of the southern coast'.⁴⁹

The history of Dover makes it abundantly clear that the town has played a notable role in the military and political history of the country and has on several occasions been host to distinguished visitors, including British and foreign royalty. *The Times* in November, 1819, reported the presentation of the freedom of the Borough on the Duke and Duchess of Clarence,⁵⁰ while in July, 1844, the town welcomed 'the arrival of their Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Macklenburgh . . . who came in Her Majesty's packet Princess Alice from Calais, in the short space of 1½ hours', to be received by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, Colonel Rice Jones, the Commandant of the garrison, Captain Mercer, the Superintendent of the Packets, and others in authority, as well as 'a guard of honour from the 68th Regiment, the brass band of which struck up the national anthem'.⁵¹ The Royal party proceeded to the Ship Hotel, and at half past four proceeded to the terminus of the South-Eastern Railway and departed for London by train.⁵²

In examining the trading activities of the port of Dover there are statistics giving the number and tonnage of shipping registered at, or entering or leaving the port. One hundred and twenty-six vessels were registered as belonging to Dover in 1851—of those, ninety-one exceeded 50 tons and thirty-five were under 50 tons, and the total tonnage was

⁴⁶ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 112, 114.

⁴⁷ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1236.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1236.

⁴⁹ *Industrial Great Britain* (1891), *op. cit.*, 146.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 9th November, 1819, 2d.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6th July, 1844, 5a.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 6th July, 1844, 5a.

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6,007 tons.⁵³ It is important to remember that large numbers of small vessels were busily occupied in the coasting trade of nineteenth-century Britain, or on the short distance sea-routes across to France, Holland or Belgium.

Michael Cullen Cotton, who was collector of the Customs at Dover when he was called to give evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on the South Eastern Railway Bill, in March, 1836, informed the members of the Committee:

'Dover is not a port of much trade; it is principally a port of passengers and passengers' baggage.'⁵⁴

He then produced:

A Memorandum of the Number of Cases of Merchandise,
Number of Passengers, Carriages, Horses, and Packages
of Passengers Landed at or Shipped from the Port of
Dover during 1835.⁵⁵

5,700 Cases of Merchandise consisting of silk manufactures,
embroidery, French fancy goods, toys, books, etc. Imported.

1,200 Carriages landed or embarked.

850 Horses, ditto.

15,000 Passengers arrived bring with them —
15,000 leaving —

41,420 Packages of Baggage.

The evidence of this witness also showed that 9,178 cwt. of wool had been exported in 1835, and that the foreign trade, exclusive of packets and passage vessels, was conducted by:

4 French Vessels (30, 28, 20 and 16 tons) making about 200
voyages from Calais with French clocks, china,
toys, etc., and eggs.

and

2 British Vessels —The Sophia, 32 tons, and the Sylph, 28 tons,
to Nieuport with wool, 20 voyages, returning
with eggs, butter, etc.⁵⁶

Commercial trading with France which brought in dairy produce, etc., can certainly be traced back to the beginning of the century, to *The Times* noting in May, 1802, the sale of 'French Turkeys, very large . . . at Dover for 3/- or 6/-, chickens and eggs, of the same produce, . . . in proportion'.⁵⁷

Foreign commodity trading in and out was, however, secondary to coastal trading in and out, and the entries coastwise of 573 vessels and 43,715 tons in 1851 were far in excess of the departures coastwise

⁵³ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 299.

⁵⁴ Michael Cullen Cotton, Collector of the Customs at Dover, 25th March, 1836, in evidence to the House of Commons Committee on the South-Eastern Railway Bill, House of Lords Record Office, Committee Office Evidence, 1836, Volume 36.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 7th May, 1802, 3a.

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of 259 vessels and 13,469 tons.⁵⁸ Coastal trading to and from Dover was almost certainly booming, and mariners derived considerable employment from conveying the exports and imports of the locality. As the residential and visiting populations grew in numbers and expanded in wealth, so goods were shipped in ever-increasing quantities into the town. As in other nearby ports, such as Margate or Ramsgate, the goods arriving in the harbour were greater in volume and certainly more varied than those leaving the port. Coal shipped coastwise from the north-east was a most prominent incoming cargo, and arrived at Dover seasonally between April and the end of October. Winter coal supplies were laid in during the summer months. Another witness before the 1836 Commons Select Committee, John Buffs Reynolds, a Dover coal merchant, calculated that between 20,000 and 25,000 tons *per annum* arrived in the port, of which three-quarters was consumed in the town, the remaining quarter being sent to neighbouring towns and the countryside.⁵⁹ By the early 1870s Dover's coal imports had risen to about 35,000 tons annually.⁶⁰

Building materials, especially timbers and slate, and provisions and shop-goods from London were other important imports. Statements of traffic submitted to the 1836 Committee showed that seven sailing vessels carried goods by water between London and Dover, making 416 voyages *per annum* involving 11,232 tons, added to which one steamer also made 104 voyages, involving 4,160 tons, making in all 15,392 tons.⁶¹ According to the estimates of the Collector of Customs at Dover, eight coasters operated between Dover and London in 1835 and made 244 voyages, bringing from London groceries, linen drapery, etc.; and shipping to London corn, paper, and some foreign goods,⁶² which traffic would give each vessel an annual average of 30½ voyages.

The sort of traffic into and out of Dover already well established before 1840 grew still further in volume during succeeding decades. The total tonnage entered and cleared increased by almost four-fold in the period of general economic expansion between 1851 and 1877, then increased by a further 20 per cent. in the short space of eight years, 1877–1885, and by 1893 the total tonnage entered and cleared had more than doubled the figure of 1877. The increase over the forty-two years between 1851 and 1893 was eight-fold, while the increase in the number of vessels entered and cleared over the same period was slightly under

⁵⁸ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 299.

⁵⁹ John Buffs Reynolds, Dover Coal Merchant, 25th March, 1836, before the House of Commons Committee on the South-Eastern Railway Bill, 1836, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1236.

⁶¹ James Sebastian Yeates, Secretary of the proposed Company, 14th April, 1836, before the House of Commons Committee on the South-Eastern Railway Bill, 1836, *op. cit.*

⁶² Michael Cullen Cotton, *op. cit.*

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2½ times, which demonstrates clearly that the tonnage of late-nineteenth century commercial ships was on the increase.⁶³

Behind all this shipping and commercial activity were the more prominent businesses of the town: in 1874 for instance,

The Oil Seed Crushing Company Ltd.;

John Lukey & Sons, *Importers and Bonders of Wines and Spirits,*
also of Folkestone;

Charles Nicholls, *Manure and Cattle Food Agent;*

Charles Ashdown, *Paper Maker,* Buckland Mills;

William E. Atkins & Son, *Boot Manufacturers and Importers of*
French Boots;

Court & Co., *Importers of Wines and Spirits;*

Henry Crundall, *Coal Merchant and Shipowner,*

etc.⁶⁴ Many of the merchants, wholesalers, retailers, shippers and agents occupied extensive premises at this time, having been in business at least since 1851, and having built up business connections not only in Dover and the surrounding area, but also in London and other towns, and even overseas.

Transport and distribution also played an important part in the daily life of the town, goods arriving in the harbour, as well as goods destined for outward shipment, having need of transport distributors. These distributors fell into three main categories in the middle of the nineteenth century:

- (i) Coaches and Vans, of which there were twelve in 1851⁶⁵ and thirteen in 1874,⁶⁶ operating to and from Canterbury, Deal, Sandwich, Ramsgate, Eastry, Folkestone, Hythe, Lydd, Romney, Nonington, Elham, etc., and in 1851 even to the Strood station of the North Kent Railway.⁶⁷
- (ii) Carriers by Railway of which there were three in 1851⁶⁸ and seven in 1874,⁶⁹ including Pickford & Co. at both dates.
- (iii) Water Conveyance, covering everything from small coasters and hoys to the Ostend and Calais mail steam packets.

Existing alongside and serving the shipping interests were the marine businesses of various kinds, incorporating in 1874:

⁶³ Taken from more detailed statistics in a Whyman MS., *Some Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Dover in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 51-3.

⁶⁴ *The Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1874), ii, 1243-52.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (1851), 306.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1240.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (1851), 306.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (1851), 306.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1240.

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10 Master Mariners
 14 Marine Store Dealers
 2 Sailmakers

Prebble & Sons, Ships' Smiths

Verey & Large, Marine and Mechanical Engineers, etc.⁷⁰

The fishermen about the Port of Dover supplied in the 1870s the fish requirements of thirteen fishmongers in the town and one fried fish shop, which belonged to Alfred Demond, 117 Snargate Street.⁷¹

Early nineteenth-century Dover stood at the end of one of the most famous of the old coaching routes, yet to argue that roads were driven out of existence on account of the railways is simply not true. Long distance coaches on routes affected by railway competition, such as London to Dover, were forced off the roads, but there still remained a considerable volume of short distance coach, omnibus and commercial road traffic, much of it feeding to and from railways and harbours, and making heavy demands on horses, etc.

When long distance coaching was at its zenith in the 1830s, it was an extensive business. Twelve different stage coaches in 1828 operated on the London to Dover run, not to mention coaches and caravans 'to the Neighbouring Towns and Watering Places', notably to Margate and Ramsgate, to Folkestone and Hythe, to Ashford and Maidstone, to Canterbury, to Sandwich, to Eythorne, to Deal, to Hastings with a through communication to Brighton, and 'Fly Chariots, Donkey Chaises, etc., are in constant attendance for short excursions, in the town and neighbourhood; and pleasure boats for excursions on the water'.⁷²

A decade later the position remained much the same according to *The New Dover Guide* of 1838, except for one new development:

'THE RED ROVER COACH, during the summer season, to meet the London Packets at Herne Bay Pier, from Rutley's Office near the Custom House at half-past seven.'⁷³

Increasing water competition from London was a steady threat to London-Dover coaching, long before the South-Eastern Railway reached Dover in 1844. It was reckoned that the average number of passengers *per annum* travelling by steamboats between London and Dover in the mid-1830s was 12,480; cf.:

London and Calais	8,718
London and Ostend	1,260
London and Boulogne	5,997
London and Margate or Ramsgate	75,400 ⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1243-52.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1243-52 and 1245.

⁷² Batcheller (1828), *op. cit.*, 354-6.

⁷³ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 137-9.

⁷⁴ James Sebastian Yeates, *op. cit.*

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These numbers were lost passengers to the coaches at the same time as there was a diversion of traffic from the Dover Road to the coach-steamer route by way of Herne Bay. *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser* reported in September, 1841, on:

“Those fast and well appointed steamers, the Red Rover and City of Canterbury, are daily crowded with passengers, many of whom land at the Bay and proceed by coach to Dover and other parts of the Coast. This mode of transit, from avoiding the passage round the Forelands, has become the most frequented route from London to Dover.”⁷⁶

What the steamboats to Herne Bay could offer passengers was comfort, the opportunity to stretch one's legs, and variety of scenery passing down the Thames. This alternative route to the Dover Road, in short, broke the monotony of a long coach journey but, on the other hand, the traffic to and from the Kent holiday resorts and the Continent was increasing, and there was no shortage of coach passengers passing the whole length by road between London and Dover in the mid-1830s.

Mr. John Swainson, who was Clerk of the Stage-Coach Duty Office called to give evidence from the Stamp Office, in 1836, to the House of Commons Select Committee on the South-Eastern Railway Bill, testified that thirteen coaches were licensed by the Commissioners of Stamps to operate between London and Dover, completing 94 journeys per week, added to which seven coaches between Canterbury and Dover also made 70 weekly journeys.⁷⁶ None of these coaches were omnibuses, and they were nearly all four-horse coaches.⁷⁷ In all forty-nine coaches ran along the road at some point from London through Rochester and Canterbury.⁷⁸ Additional to public coaches was the volume of private carriage traffic, of which it was calculated that twenty-four passengers passed each way daily between London and Dover in eight private carriages.⁷⁹

Some private carriages found their way across the sea to the Continent and the following is a contemporary description dating from 1828 of the bustle and interest occasioned by the Continental traffic:

“The constant intercourse with the continent is another never failing source of amusement to the visitor at this place. Since the establishment of steam packets, the time of their arrival and departure may generally be estimated within a few minutes. As it draws near, hundreds are seen bending their way toward the harbour to witness from the platform on the piers, or from the several quays, the bustling

⁷⁶ *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 4th September, 1841, 8c.

⁷⁶ John Swainson, Clerk of the Stage Coach Duty Office from the Stamp Office, 22nd March, 1836, before the House of Commons Committee on the South-Eastern Railway Bill, 1836, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ James Sebastian Yeates, *op. cit.*

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scene that is to come. . . . Horses, suspended from the gigantic cranes, are reluctantly swung from or to the vessel, while their heads, hung down, and their extended limbs, betray their terror . . . Heavy carriages, nicely poised, are removed in a similar manner. Passengers are seen . . . and foreigners pass in review, in every variety of costume.'⁸⁰

Dover's function as a cross-Channel port could be classified as ancient by the opening of the nineteenth century. It is one of those activities about which, like Dover harbour, an entire book could be written. Certainly it is well documented, and a recent contribution to this topic is Rixon Bucknall's *Boat Trains and Channel Packets: The English Short Sea Routes*, which appeared in 1957. *The Times* observed in 1822 that:

'in the reign of Richard II the fare from Dover to Calais for a single passenger, was settled at 6d in summer time and 1/- in winter. According to the value of money then and now, the fare was much dearer than at present.'⁸¹

Bishop Pococke on his travels through England during the 1750s was in Dover in mid-September, 1754, and recorded in his account of his journeys, that 'the great support of this place is the passage to France'.⁸² Dover in 1776 was the station of six packet boats:

'In time of peace they go twice a week from hence to Calais and Ostend, and in time of war to Flushing, in Zealand. The common fare of a passenger is 10s. 6d. Besides these Government vessels Messrs. MINET, FECTOR and Son have several bye-boats, equally neat and convenient, with skilful Masters, and able Seamen, ready on any emergency to carry over Persons of Distinction and Opulence. This House has always supported its credit and reputation at home and abroad, and maintains a correspondence with all parts of Europe.'⁸³

Here was a firm with a long and varied history, John Minet, Fector & Co. appearing as Dover bankers in 1828.⁸⁴ By that time the passage vessels to and from Dover consisted of two Post Office Mail Steam Packets, two 'under the direction of the general post office who have an agent resident in the town'; several steam and other vessels, belonging to private companies or individuals; and two French packets—'all fitted up in an elegant and costly manner; and some of them are daily leaving, and entering the harbour'.⁸⁵

The facilities offered by steam navigation represented a great improvement in cross-Channel communication, linked by railways from the 1840s onwards. The traffic increased substantially in the peaceful and expansive days of the nineteenth century. By 1851, the Government

⁸⁰ Batcheller (1828), *op. cit.*, 349-50.

⁸¹ *The Times*, 19th October, 1822, 2a.

⁸² (Ed.) James Joel Cartwright, *The Travels through England of Dr. Richard Pococke, During 1750, 1751, and Later Years*, Camden Society, ii (1889), 93.

⁸³ Charles Seymour, *A New Topographical, Historical, and Commercial Survey of the Cities, Towns, and Villages, of the County of Kent*, Canterbury, 1776, 321.

⁸⁴ Batcheller (1828), *op. cit.*, 351.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 352-3.

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packet establishment consisted of seven steamers, under the control of a commander in the Navy.⁸⁶ In the mid-1870s the foreign service was performed by the boats of the Belgian Royal Mail Service and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company.⁸⁷ This arrangement remained unchanged in the 1890s.⁸⁸ Both the South-Eastern and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Companies ran their lines down to the pier, 'so that passengers are brought close alongside the mail steamers for the Continent, and every arrangement for the convenience of the thousands of travellers who use this route is very complete and satisfactory'.⁸⁹ It was proudly claimed of Dover as a cross-Channel port in 1891:

'the principal point of arrival and departure for travellers between England and the Continent . . . The mail and packet service to Calais (22m.) and to Ostend (68m.) is most important, and may be said to contribute in a principal degree to the business activity of the town'.⁹⁰

As Dover catered both for Continental travellers and resident seaside holiday makers, this dual function meant that money was spent in the town to the material benefit of inns, hotels, porters, boatmen, shopkeepers, etc. The great bulk of this expenditure was seasonal, and the busy period came in the summer months. The economic importance of what is termed 'the season' was well understood by nineteenth-century contemporaries. Against Dover's resident population of 11,468 by the 1821 Census, including the divisions of Charlton and Hougham, it was reckoned of the 1820s that, 'including the garrison, the numerous visitors, and the passengers who are often remaining in the town, the number must frequently amount to upwards of 14,000 or 16,000'.⁹¹

The quite dramatic alteration that overcame the appearance of the town even shortly after the commencement of 'the season' was described graphically in *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, at the end of May, 1835:

'Within the last fortnight, many of our Marine Residences have been let, and several respectable families have arrived for the season. These, with the numerous occasional visitors, and a host of daily continental passengers, begin to change the rather sombre appearance which the town had assumed within the last month. . . . 60 steamboats enter or leave the harbour weekly, on their passage to France, Belgium, London or the Isle of Thanet; and 20 stage coaches or public conveyances, and 2 superior steam vessels (The Hero and the Dover Castle) carry on a daily intercourse with the Metropolis, and all the towns on the coast, from Margate to Brighton'⁹².

⁸⁶ *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* (1851), 299.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (1874), ii, 1235.

⁸⁸ *Kelly's Directory of Kent* (1895), 201.

⁸⁹ *Industrial Great Britain* (1891), *op. cit.*, 146.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹¹ Batcheller (1828), *op. cit.*, 348.

⁹² *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 30th May, 1835, 8.

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The early origins of Dover as a seaside resort extended back into the eighteenth century, and certainly back to 1768 when the following advertisement appeared in *The Kentish Gazette*:

'CORNELIUS JONES, near the Rope Walk, Dover, Begs leave to inform the Public that he has lately provided a MACHINE upon the same Plan as those at MARGATE.'⁹³

By the 1820s many elegant lodging-houses and private dwellings had been erected, and Dover could offer to the holidaymaker fourteen principal inns; baths and bathing-machines; 'Musical Evening Promenades and other fashionable amusements, such as are usual at other watering places'; opportunities for local land and water excursions; a theatre, erected in 1790; three circulating libraries, that of William Batcheller, erected in 1826 as the King's Arms Library, containing over 5,000 volumes, and a shop and assembly room 'where promenades are held during the summer'.⁹⁴ The bathing facilities were stated to be as follows in *The New Dover Guide*, 1838:

"Three new and commodious hot, cold, and shower baths, comprising every accommodation for the invalid, or healthy, are erected on the parade; and machines are in constant readiness for sea bathing. A handsome room is attached to each of these baths, where the visitor may sit and enjoy an extended view of the ocean, while numerous vessels are continually enlivening the prospect. The preference given to the bathing at Dover, is on account of the clearness of the water, and the convenience of its shore."⁹⁵

The local newspapers usually reported the progress of each season, and we can follow that of 1842 through the issues of *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*:

23 July 1842.

"The influx of visitors to this fashionable marine resort is now very great; nearly all the houses on the Waterloo Crescent, Marine Parade, etc. are engaged. The steamers from London, Ramsgate and the Continent, are thronged with passengers, and the fineness of the weather bids fair to rival former seasons."⁹⁶

13 August 1842.

"The long continued fine weather has caused a great influx of visitors at Dover during the week. The London steamers "Royal Adelaide" and "Isle of Thanet", have averaged nearly 100 passengers each voyage, while the coaches from Herne Bay and Ramsgate have been daily filled . . . But few residences in the town now display that ominous announcement "to let".⁹⁷

⁹³ *The Kentish Gazette*, 15th–18th June, 1768.

⁹⁴ Batcheller (1828), *op. cit.*, 340–2, 351–2, 356.

⁹⁵ Batcheller (1838), *op. cit.*, 137.

⁹⁶ *The Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, 23rd July, 1842, 8b.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13th August, 1842, 8a.

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10 September 1842

'Never was Dover more full of company than it has been this season, and yet no exertions have been made to render it attractive by amusements . . . Ramsgate, Margate, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells have their regattas and their amusements. We trust that efforts will be made to put Dover upon a par with the other places to which we have alluded.'⁹⁸

This warning shows how competitive seaside resorts were even before railways were widely established. Railway communication from London introduced a new element into seaside life in the day excursion and the day tripper. In May, 1870, *The South Eastern Gazette* reported on the Dover Chamber of Commerce deputation to the general managers of the two lines of railway, 'to press upon them the necessity for a reduction in the fares between London and Dover during the summer season, and to ask for additional trains'.⁹⁹ A decade prior to that *The City Press* had advertised the following London to Dover excursion fares:

Sunday Excursions, leaving London at 8.30 a.m., at REDUCED FARES, 4/-, 6/6d, 10/- for the season from the 6th of May.¹⁰⁰

Saturday to Monday at the Seaside, South Eastern Railway, from London Bridge at 2.30 p.m. returning on Sunday evening or Monday morning, fares there and back, 10/-, 15/-, 20/-.¹⁰¹

Little came of the attempts by the Lord's Day Observance Society and others to have Sunday excursions put down, and to the contrary they were encouraged by the National Sunday League, which had been formed in 1855, and in the 1860s by Cardinal Manning.¹⁰²

The London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company advertised as follows in *The Times* during August, 1864:

Steam Yacht/Railway Excursions Round the Sea Coast every Sunday, starting from the Blackfriars Bridge and Victoria Stations of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, at 7.30 a.m. arriving Ramsgate 10.30 a.m. The London, Chatham and Dover Company's Steam Yacht Ordine starts (wind and weather permitting) the coast trip to Dover at 10.45 a.m. Return from Dover at 5 p.m. for the return train from Ramsgate at 6.45 p.m. Passengers not wishing to return to Ramsgate by the boat can return by the London, Chatham and Dover Company's trains from Dover Harbour Station at 6.15 or 7.00 p.m.

Fares including the steamboat:—
 2nd Class 6/6d
 1st Class 10/-

Children under 12 half fare.

No. of Passengers by the Steamer limited to 300.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10th September, 1842, 8a.

⁹⁹ *The South Eastern Gazette*, 30th May, 1870, 4f.

¹⁰⁰ *The City Press*, 5th May, 1860, 1; 12th May, 1860, 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 12th May, 1860, 1; 19th May, 1860, 1.

¹⁰² J. A. R. Pimlott, *The Englishman's Holiday: A Social History* (1947), 163.

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Also: Monthly Family Tickets issued by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway from Victoria and Blackfriars Bridge to Calais, Ramsgate, Margate, Herne Bay, Broadstairs, Canterbury and Dover.

Cheap Saturday to Monday Return Tickets to all the above places except Calais.

Weekly Tickets to Calais by the 3 p.m. train every Saturday.¹⁰³

Day excursions, etc., to Dover took many different forms from many different places. Some were sponsored and organized, as and when Dover in July, 1870, 'was visited by some 750 persons from the vicinity of Rochester, Chatham and Rainham . . . arranged by the Chatham Sunday School Union'.¹⁰⁴

CONCLUSION

The objectives behind this analysis have been twofold: firstly, to consider the history of Dover and Deal as living communities where 'it's the people that count'; and secondly, to portray the multi-functional nature of the economies of these two places, and to give some indication of the fortunes of the various economic activities which existed at different points of time.

We have considered Dover as a municipal, parliamentary and sanitary authority; as a market town; seaport; trading port; garrison town; fishing port; coaching and railway terminus; Channel packet station; business centre; holiday resort and place of residence. Some, among those functions, were also represented in Deal's economy. We have studied the economic activities of passenger communication; of acting as host to Continental and overseas passengers and eminent visitors; of coastal and foreign trading and illicit smuggling; of piloting and rendering assistance to vessels in distress; of local distribution, wholesaling, retailing, manufacturing, banking and insurance agenting.

We have noted how Dover and Deal standing more or less on a par with each other in the eighteenth century thereafter deviated one from the other in their subsequent economic growth: Deal suffering from relative economic decline after the Napoleonic Wars, whereas the economic position of Dover progressed from strength to strength. We have noted also some important developments and improvements associated with the two towns and their functions and amenities in the nineteenth century; particularly in respect of harbour improvements, pilotage, mailing services, the telegraph, the railway, the steamship, the extension of public utility services to include piped water and gas, sewerage, electricity and tramways, the provisions made for parks and pleasure grounds, medicine and hospitals, Poor Law, charities, education, sea-front improvements, and in Dover an extension of municipal

¹⁰³ *The Times*, 2nd August, 1864, 4b.

¹⁰⁴ *The South Eastern Gazette*, 4th July, 1870, 5a.

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ownership. If some developments have been left untouched, such as savings banks, clubs and institutions, this has been the inevitable consequence of lack of space.

By 1900 the door was already open to some of the advances which have reached forward to dominate men's lives in the twentieth century, but improvement was not always beneficial, as a letter to *The Times*, on the disfigurement of Dover by 1900, pointed out, resulting from one of the great developments of the later nineteenth century, viz.: mass consumer advertising:

'Few Englishmen can have eyes so blind and souls so dull as to contemplate without an emotion of pleasure and of pride the noble panorama of the bay of Dover . . . For some years past the delight has been qualified, by the intrusion of a colossal disfigurement. One of the American food companies has got someone to erect, high upon the cliffs, two monster boards on which the name of their product is painted in letters that dominate and degrade the whole prospect.

Richardson Evans, Hon. Secretary,
Society for Checking the Abuses
of Public Advertising.¹⁰⁶

The nineteenth century ended and the twentieth century opened with Quaker Oats over the white cliffs of Dover in 1900.¹⁰⁶ Another letter of protest to *The Times* commented:

'We ought perhaps to regard with a resentful sense of gratitude the feat of this remote Chicago firm in demonstrating to what lengths the instinct of vulgar competition can go in affronting the public eye.'¹⁰⁷

Dover Corporation eventually took steps to remove the giant sign, and all eight tons of it were taken down.¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁵ *The Times*, 19th October, 1900, 5f.

¹⁰⁶ Graham Norton, 'The Victorians, Part II: The Unlicensed Age of Advertising', *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 4th February, 1968, 20.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.