

DOVER'S NEW MUSEUM

"The museum would henceforth be open every Monday to all classes gratuitously. This arrangement began on Boxing Day and 2500 people attended in 5 days. They did no damage and the hall was so crowded that not all could sign the visitors' book."

Dover Telegraph December 1837

Dover Museum is one of the oldest Museums in Kent. It began life as a private museum founded as part of the "Dover Museum Philosophical Institute" which was founded in 1836.

The quotation above is a report of the museum's first public open day. I have always considered that it might have erred a little on the generous side until our new museum, relocated close to the original site, opened its doors on Good Friday.

Just over a week later over 10,000 people had visited the museum and our own visitors book was equally full of names and many favourable comments.

The new museum consists of three floors. On the ground floor is a small archaeology gallery which traces the story of Dover from the Stone Age to the Saxon period, and in which can be found many objects on loan from the British Museum and Dover Archaeological Group.

The middle floor is entirely devoted to temporary exhibitions, and will be changed every 6-8 weeks. The first exhibition, "Dover and Its People", a photographic exhibition sponsored by South East Arts and Kent County Council, as well as ourselves, has been very well received. It will continue until 11th May when it will be replaced by a large exhibition of pictures from our own collection. In the summer, an exhibition on Noel Coward's life in St. Margaret's will be mounted with local art exhibitions, a pottery exhibition and a children's art exhibition to follow in the winter.

On the top floor the story of Dover continues with displays including six models showing the development of the town between 1450 and the 1990s. The latter includes the as yet to be built Sea Cat berths and the route of the A20. Dover Harbour Board generously funded part of the cost of these exhibits. Original artefacts, a Victorian room setting, figures and graphics have been used to trace the town's development from 1066 to 1945.

The new displays have been prepared in between other work (such as last year's Dunkirk Exhibition and the opening of the Victorian Museum in Deal) over the last two years. The research work for the panels and selection of subjects and objects has been shared between our three Curatorial staff, myself, Jon Iveson and Mark Frost. We have also had very considerable assistance from many others including Ivan Green, John Guy, the British Museum, Alan Goodearl, Mark Smith, Philomena Kennedy, Mary Dixon, Alex Summers, the Dover Archaeological Group, Alec Hasenson, the Museums and Galleries Commission and Dover Harbour Board, the Kent County Archives and the staff of Dover Library to whom we offer our grateful thanks.

The design of the cases and layout of objects and selection of model makers has been carried out to a very high standard by Ivor Heal Design Company, a firm which has been responsible amongst many projects for most of the recent temporary exhibitions at the Royal Academy. Ivor Heal, the chief designer, was originally Head of Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum before going freelance. 129

Until 1st May the museum is free to all Dover District Council residents. Normal admission charges are 95p for adults and 50p for children and senior citizens. For only £2.00 you can buy a season ticket which will allow you free entry throughout the year, or you can join the Friends of Dover Museum which will not only allow you free admission to the museum but also to the Old Town Gaol, Timeball Tower, Victoriana Museum and Grand Shaft. (£5.00 per annum). Lectures, trips and social events are also a part of the Friends' Calendar of Events.

We look forward to seeing you all in the near future!

CHRISTINE WATERMAN
Curator, Dover Museum.

Footnote: The Museum was originally sited in the Guildhall in Market Square moving to its present site in 1848. *Ed*

Saving the Western Heights — *Past and Future*

presented by JOHN PEVERLEY, Doverian and Borough Architect, Poole, Dorset.

Mr Peverley's talk was mainly concerned with the measures taken to preserve the fortifications on the Western Heights over the past thirty years. By using a projector with dual slides Mr Peverley was able to show us simultaneously photographs of many important sites as they appear today and as they appeared about twentyfive years ago.

Born in Dover in 1933 Mr Peverley belonged to family of Trinity House Pilots. He lived in Folkestone Road and after leaving the Boys' Grammar School studied architecture in Canterbury. As a boy he became interested in the Western Heights Fortifications and later produced a monograph on the fortifications for an architectural journal.

The construction of the fortifications on a full scale started at the beginning of the 19th century when Napoleon first planned to invade England. The building of an enormous and complex system of dry moats with heavily armed bastions and caponiers continued until peace came in 1815.