

140 DOVER in 1823

I don't know how many people these days read William Cobbett's "Rural Rides". They make entertaining reading in several ways and include much of local interest. Of Dover itself he wrote, in September 1823 :

"The town of Dover is like other sea-port towns; but really much more clean, with less blackguard people in it than I ever observed in any sea-port town before. It is a most picturesque place, to be sure. On one side of it rises, upon the top of a very steep hill, the old Castle, with all its fortifications. On the other side of it there is another chalk-hill, the side of which is pretty nearly perpendicular, and rises up from sixty to an hundred feet higher than the tops of the houses, which stand pretty nearly close to the foot of the hill.

I got into Dover tather late. It was dusk when I was going down the street towards the quay. I happened to look up, and was quite astonished to perceive cows grazing upon a spot apparently fifty feet above the tops of the houses, and measuring horizontally not, perhaps, more than ten or twenty feet from a line which would have formed a continuation into the air. 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."

So, Cobbett would not be surprised to see the Dexter cattle grazing on the Western Heights today. English Heritage has successfully put the clock back.

Cobbett was less kind about Deal:

"Deal is a villanous place. It is full of filthy-looking people. Great desolation of abomination has been going on here; tremendous barracks, partly pulled down and partly tumbling down. Every thing seemed upon the parish. I was glad to hurry along through it."

LEO WRIGHT

Membership News

Membership £4 per person per year (1st April - 31st March)

Current Membership as at 1st April: 306.

The Dover Society entered its fourth year on 1st April, 1991 with 297 members. In 1990-91 we lost 15 members and gained 39. In the coming year we would like to increase our membership substantially and, with this end in view, ask for your help.

Can *you* introduce one new member in 1991?

The annual subscription has been raised to £4, a necessary move in view of rising costs