

MOTE'S BULWARK

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Photo: circa 1974

Mote's Bulwark was one of three artillery fortifications begun in March 1539. It is situated part way up the cliff below the west ditch of the castle. Because of its position it is often referred to as Moats Bulwark. The early documents refer to it as "the turf bulwark under Dover Castle" or "The Bulwerck under the Castell dyke" but it becomes Mote's Bulwark because of its second captain Stephen Mote.

The early structure appears on plans at the British Museum. The earliest of these (BM Cott MS Aug I ii 84) is described by the History of the King's Works as dating from 1541 and shows a planked rectangular bulwark on a chalk platform. This bulwark appears to be earth, revetted on its inner side with timber. Piercing this earth and timber structure are six gun loops with guns mounted. Behind the bulwark is what is described by the

"History of the Kings Works" as "a long timber building almost completely decayed". It seems unlikely that in the year or so since its completion it could have decayed to such an extent, and this interpretation is probably incorrect. The drawing probably shows the structure under construction. What is shown is an arcaded lean-to building against the cliff, with the left hand arch outside the bulwark and the remaining eight within.

Another drawing in the British Museum (BM Cott Aug I I 26) is firmly dated to 1541. This is the plan of proposed work on the harbour by Richard Cavendish, John Bartlett, John a Borough and Anthony Auchar. On this drawing Mote's Bulwark is shown as an elaborate building on a chalk platform and with two semi-circular bastions to the seaward side. There is a further semi-circular enclosure

22 on the western side of the bulwark which may be a bastion looking towards the town. The walls of these bastions are pierced by gun loops and a timber structure is sited behind, probably against the cliff. This timber structure is probably that which appears on BM Cott MS Aug I ii 84 discussed above. It seems likely that this bastioned fort was intended to be additional to the timber building but to replace the earth and timber gun positions with a permanent stone or brick structure. Whether these proposed new fortifications were ever built is unknown but unlikely. In 1568 the storehouse was in need of repair.

Between 1624 and 1625 a sum of £1,048.17s.0d. was spent on repairs to Dover Castle, Moat's Bulwark and Archcliffe Bulwarks.

In 1652 a Dutch fleet anchored off Dover and the guns of the castle and Moat's Bulwark fired on it but lacked sufficient range to reach the fleet.

In 1661 the garrison of Moat's Bulwark is listed as being, a Captain, a Lieutenant, a Master-Gunner and twelve gunners. This was apparently a reduction in the complement as the Mayor and citizens of Dover signed a petition against reductions in the garrison of the castle, from which the gunners at Moat's Bulwark were drawn.

The pay lists for 1682 show that a complement of "A captain, lieutenant, four gunners and porters" were paid a total of £72.16.3d (although the gross is listed as £79.1.8d) and that £1.10s was allowed for coal.

An undated plan of the bulwark in the Historic Plans Room at English Heritage shows a new battery. This structure appears for the first time on the 1737 map of Dover. The plan is stamped with the Board of Ordnance mark and shows a series of terraces into the cliff with a paved area to the left and slightly in advance of these. This paved area is marked "Old Platform" but bears no resemblance to the early drawings discussed above. Behind

the platform is a structure marked "Master Gunner's House" and on the left is another structure marked "Guard Room and Storehouse". In advance of the guardhouse is an enclosure with what appear to be four steps down to a gate guarded by an embrasure overlooking the path up to the battery. The new battery is set below and west of the old. It is semi-circular in form and has eight embrasures for guns. A zig-zag of steps links the two and what seems to be a magazine is built on the new battery against the buttress of the old. In 1740 the Board of Ordnance considered that the new magazine should hold five and a half barrels of gunpowder.

In 1780 Lt. Page produced an abstract of estimates relating to the defence of the town. Included in these estimates was £1,200 for "Repair of Moat's Bulwark, as arranged by Master-General." It is possible that at least some of the money went towards the construction of Guilford battery below and to the east of Moat's Bulwark as this new battery appears on the 1784 "Survey of the Environs of Dover" (PRO MR 1345) marked as "Moat's Bulwark". North's Townshend's and Amherst's batteries which appear marked on the same map were accounted for separately in 1779 and together cost £2,100. The title Guilford's Battery may well have been given to this new work when Lord North, then Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, became the second Earl of Guilford in 1790.

In January 1793 an inspection of Dover's defences was carried out. With the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars imminent, repairs to the Castle, Moat's Bulwark and Archcliffe Fort were recommended. These repairs were carried out in February 1793.

Guilford Shaft was built to link Moat's Bulwark with the Castle on the cliffs above. It was begun in 1793 and in February 1795 was still under construction, as a report from Lieutenant Bruyeres describes the arrangements for

sinking a third shaft between the castle and Moat's Bulwark. This is because the Shaft is in fact four shafts linked by inclined tunnels. The Reverend John Lyon writing in 1813 states that;

"Near the edge of the cliff, and not far from the end of the wall, a shaft has been sunk, one hundred and ninety feet deep, to form a communication with Moat's Bulwark, which was built at the foot of the cliff, by Henry the Eighth. In this shaft there are circular stairs; and when the Prince of Wales visited the Castle, in the year 1798 he was conducted down it, as the nearest way to the town."

In 1847 a report on the defences of Dover written by Colonel Tylden lists three 18 pounder guns mounted in Moat's Bulwark but notes that its' fire was masked by some houses which had recently been built in front of it. A further report in 1851

lists its armament as being three 32 pounders mounted en barbette, with three more mounted on traversing carriages in Guilford Battery.

The Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers Works Committee report on the revision of the armaments at Dover in May 1886 makes no mention of Moat's Bulwark and recommends that the six 8 inch (65 cwt.) smooth bore guns of Guilford Battery be removed, although these were still listed as being mounted in 1892 with the remark that these are for ornament only.

In 1907 both Guilford Battery and Moats Bulwark are shown on the Ordnance Survey map as disused.

During the second World War the connecting passages of Guilford Passage were lined with corrugated steel and were probably extended.

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