

34 the shell of an immovable chest of drawers, my cot, a folded blanket for me to lie on and a sheet to cover me. Everything else was out, even the carpet and curtains. My cot was placed close up to the window and the sash fully opened. Years later my parents told me they complied with Dr. Kent's instructions with considerable misgiving and in their

hearts prepared themselves for an infant's funeral. However, Dr. Kent was right and knew what he was doing and though I have a depression in my chest that I understand was caused by the illness, his uncanny ability to cope with the situation enabled me to live through more than eight most astounding decades.

LOUIS XVIII IN DOVER, 1813

by Terry Sutton

Dover has witnessed many intriguing episodes in international events but none more so than in 1813 when Louis XVIII waited in our town to return to his homeland of France to take back the throne.

In April of that year the Allied powers had forced Napoleon out of France for a while, and they wanted to re-establish the monarchy in that revolutionary country. European monarchs would then sleep easier in their beds. Louis, 59, fat and suffering from gout, had lived in exile in England for 21 years and great preparations were made in Dover to speed his progress through our port to his native country.

The military lined Dover's streets from Buckland to the harbour and a British fleet was in the bay to pay its respects.

Towards evening on 23rd April 1813 the Prince Regent, later to become George IV, and the Duke of Clarence entered the town with a great entourage of noblemen. A little later in the evening, Louis arrived. He was accompanied by a train of French princes and royal dukes who received a great welcome as they processed down London Road. Guns on the ramparts of Dover Castle fired in salute while Doverians who lined the streets added to the joyous welcome.

The influx of visitors to that evening was so great that beds in the town could not be had for love nor money. The Prince Regent and his brother the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV) passed the night in Mr Fector's house on Customs House Quay while Louis slept on board the royal yacht which was moored in the basin, now the

Granville Dock.

On the following day the departure of Louis was a great spectacle. Ranks of soldiers enclosed the whole harbour, while yachts and small boats, flying the flags of many nations, ringed the harbour mouth. The Prince Regent and his suite took up their position on the North Pier head (now lost somewhere in the concrete of the international hoverport) while once again the guns roared out from Dover Castle.

A fair wind and fine weather carried Louis and his party to Calais in less than three hours after passing the pier head at Dover. He was greeted with delight by many in Paris but it was soon to end in tears. Eleven months later, Napoleon landed in the south of France and within 20 days was back in Paris.

Louis was not waiting around to receive him. Without even telling his ministers, he slipped away in March 1815 to Belgium. On the way one of his suitcases was stolen and he seemed more upset about the loss of his slippers than losing the throne of France.

Napoleon took to the battlefield again against his old adversaries at Waterloo. During the fighting the British lost some 15,000, killed or wounded, the Prussians 6,000 and the French 25,000. Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to St. Helena where he later died.

Louis was recalled to France, where he died nine years later. The monarchy, although restored, had not much longer to survive. A new emperor, Napoleon III, was waiting in the wings.