

WESTERN HEIGHTS OPEN WEEKEND

The Western Heights Preservation Society

The Western Heights Preservation Society (WHPS) will once more be welcoming visitors to the White Cliffs Countryside Project's (WCCP) Western Heights Open Day in Dover. Special openings of the Drop Redoubt and Grand Shaft on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th June 2006 will appeal to all and cater for the casual visitor as well as the specialist wanting to find out more about Dover's Western Heights. On the Sunday additional activities for all the family will include stalls and activities for children, demonstrations of traditional craft and re-enactments, all on the site of the former Grand Shaft Barracks. Refreshments will also be available on the Sunday, including hot food and drinks. The main activities will take place from 11am and the last admission to the Drop Redoubt and Grand Shaft will be at 4pm. The Society will also have on sale a number of publications and information sheets on the Western Heights.

For the last three years the WHPS has provided access to this wonderful fortification and offered views inside a fortress normally closed to the public. No booking will be required and visitors will be free to explore the Redoubt at their own pace with marshals on hand to offer guidance throughout the fort. Health and Safety considerations will not permit every part of the site to be open but much will be and the weekend will provide an excellent opportunity to get an idea of the scale of this large fortress. Plenty of opportunity will be available for historians, archaeologists, architects and all visitors interested in fortifications or any of the historical periods covered by the Heights to explore and indeed photograph the Redoubt and Grand Shaft. This may well be the only time this year that the Drop Redoubt will be open on such a scale.

Everyone wishing to visit the Drop Redoubt is reminded that this is a historic building that is being opened especially for this event. All walkways will be made safe but sensible clothing, and particularly suitable footwear is required. Due to a number of steps within the Drop Redoubt access for wheelchair users and for pushchairs is sadly not possible. Both are however more than welcome at the site of the Grand Shaft Barracks on the Sunday where a number of activities will be taking place.

Entry to the Drop Redoubt will cost £3 for adults and £1 for accompanied children and all proceeds will go towards the work of the WHPS.

In addition to this excellent opportunity to visit the Redoubt, the Grand Shaft triple helix spiral staircase will also be open free of charge to all, though donations are appreciated. The Shaft is made up of three sets of spiral steps, one above the other, linking the sea front with the site of the former barracks. The opportunity to see this spectacular piece of 19th century architecture must not be missed. It was once described as 'such a union of elegance and convenience [that it] might have reflected credit even upon the genius of Sir Christopher Wren'.

The Western Heights are just off the A20 on the western side of Dover overlooking the Western Docks. Turn off at the first roundabout and drive up South Military Road, the Drop Redoubt is at the top of the hill and parking is available on Military Road at St. Martin's Battery or North Entrance.

People interested in attending are advised to keep an eye on the WHPS website, www.dover-western-heights.org where any additional details will be released, or contact the White Cliffs Countryside Project on 01304 241806.