

# The Western Heights Preservation Society

## Report from Chris Taft, Publicity Secretary

### Western Heights Open Weekend

Over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday the 3rd and 4th June the Western Heights Preservation Society (WHPS) welcomed almost 1000 visitors to the Drop Redoubt as part of the Western Heights Open Weekend. Visitors flocked to an exciting packed weekend of events at the Heights organised jointly by the WHPS and the White Cliffs Countryside Project (WCCP). Visitors were able to see re-enactment groups and watch a number of activities across the site of the former Grand Shaft Barracks, as well as visit the famous Grand Shaft for themselves.



1st Foot Guards defending the Redoubt

Once more those who attended enjoyed their day and the whole event was a great success. This was again thanks to the hard work and dedication put in by the WHPS and WCCP and the year's worth of effort that went into clearing further parts of the Drop Redoubt to enhance the experience for visitors.

The weekend was capped by an informative and enjoyable illustrated talk on the big cross channel guns around Dover, delivered by Philip Magrath of the Royal Artillery Museum at Fort Nelson.

This year's venue was the theatre in the Discovery Centre in the Market Square.

### Publicity and Promotions

The last issue of *The Dover Society Newsletter* reported on the funding secured for computer presentation equipment. This equipment was not only used for its intended purpose of delivering a talk to a group of around 50 in Sittingbourne but was additionally used during the Open Weekend talk and throughout the Open Days to show a series of images of the Heights, projected inside the main magazine at the Drop Redoubt. Further talks are planned for later in the year for other societies and the WHPS would welcome hearing from groups interested in booking the talk for their own society.

The Publicity and Promotions committee helped to push publicity for this year's Open Weekend further than previously with releases getting out there earlier and to more groups than ever before.

### Work Days

The increasing band of devotees who turn up at the monthly work days at the Heights have this year achieved some quite spectacular results. Visitors at the Open Days would have seen the results of some of their labours with the massive clearance of bricks on top of the Redoubt to reveal parts of the fort that have lain buried for many years. Without the work of the dedicated team of volunteers the open days would never be possible.

There will always be much to do at the Heights for any work party and the group

responsible for managing these days within the WHPS are currently planning the next areas to be targeted. More equipment has been purchased to help further this work and it is through funds raised at Open Days and through membership that it has been possible to buy this equipment.

Extra volunteers are always welcome so anyone wishing to become involved should look at the website

[www.dover-western-heights.org](http://www.dover-western-heights.org) for details of dates of forthcoming work days.

### Getting Involved

The WHPS is keen for people to become involved at all levels with all sorts of work and would welcome hearing from anyone who wishes to help. The Society is at present especially keen to recruit more people to assist on administrative level, most especially helping to work on developing the Society. Every year at one of the open days visitors express how much they enjoy the day and the opportunity to see parts of the site not normally open, and every time they express the wish to see it open more often. Opening just once a year

takes up an incredible amount of the time of the core of dedicated volunteers and to open more often and do even more will require more people.

There is a great deal to be done. Much has been achieved but much more can be with more support. Other plans are in the pipeline but can only be realised with more help. The WHPS is very grateful to all its members and will always welcome hearing from others who can and will help. If you feel you can help at any level please get in touch with the Society through the website at:

[www.dover-western-heights.org](http://www.dover-western-heights.org)

or write to:

WHPS, Pox 366, DEAL, Kent CT14 9XY



*1st Foot Guards on parade, Western Heights*

## *The Execution of William Turmaine*

by Derek Leach

*“from the Joe Harman archive”*

**W**illiam Turmaine was hung at Dover on 8th March 1813. He was born at Westgate, Canterbury in 1781, the sixth of eight children, and became a shoemaker. On 22nd March 1808 he was arrested for stealing 100lbs of butter, the property of Robert Wood, a Margate grocer. He was committed to Dover Gaol and was tried at the General Sessions on 6th June in the same year. Having been found guilty, he

was sentenced to seven years transportation. However, a search of census records in Australia did not show a William Turmaine and it would seem that he was not transported, particularly as his third daughter was baptised just two months before he was executed in 1813!

William appears again amongst prisoners committed to Dover Gaol on 31st December 1812 charged with “Feloniously