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Dover's Caves and Tunnels

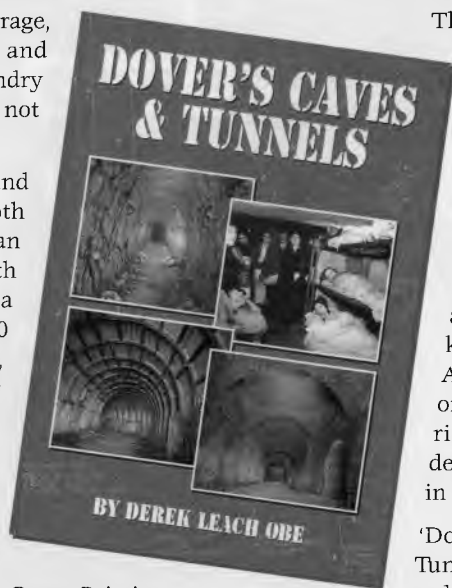
by Derek Leach

Having researched the development of the town and streets of Dover in his 'Streets of Dover', Derek Leach's latest local history book explores Dover's underground heritage.

The Dover area is riddled with caves and tunnels constructed over many centuries, often for military purposes but also for civilian use as storage, dwellings, shelters and industry such as a foundry and mushroom growing - not to mention smuggling!

Dover's caves, tunnels and underground works, both old and new, played an important part in both world wars. In such a strategic position only 20 miles from the continent, Dover has been under threat of attack for centuries, but always from the sea. The 20th century saw a completely new threat from the air. The first bomb to be dropped on Great Britain fell in Dover on Christmas Eve 1914. The existing protection on all sides was made obsolete by bombs and shells. During the Second World War, Dover's population was closer to the front line than anywhere else in Britain. Nowhere else could civilians see German troops on the French coast with long range guns able to bombard Dover. By going underground people could be safe from attack.

Times and needs change. What was once a sophisticated defence system becomes obsolete and disused. Excavations so laboriously made are abandoned and forgotten with nature soon covering all trace, but underground they still exist, deteriorating and potentially dangerous to those who might explore them.



This book attempts to describe most of the caves, tunnels and underground works in the Dover area, their uses and people's memories of them. Those at Dover Castle are now a major tourist attraction; others are known only to a few. All are part and parcel of Dover's incredible, rich heritage and deserve to be honoured in this humble way.

'Dover's Caves and Tunnels' has 120 pages and is packed with 150 illustrations. It is on sale

now at £12.99 from W H Smith and the Museum in Dover and in Deal at Tyler's.

The book can be obtained on line from www.dover-books.co.uk

Signed copies are also available from Derek Leach. Tel: 01304 823926

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