

At the port, where the naval authorities had given up using the harbour, a number of big warships remained to be broken up but, with a worldwide drop in the demand for steel, little demolition of ships was in progress.

When the miners' strike began, a brigade of British army infantry was hastily brought home from the occupied Rhine to be stationed in Dover, such was the fear of a Communist-led rebellion. But by the summer that danger appeared to have passed and the troops were sent to Ireland, where there was plenty of trouble and the imposition of martial law.

In December, a historic settlement was reached, Ireland was to receive

independence with 26 southern counties to become the Republic of Ireland while the other six counties in the north remained in the UK.

There was no definite progress in 1921 in the provision of a 1914-18 war memorial in Dover, but at St Margaret's in July, on top of the cliffs, the Dover Patrol memorial was unveiled by the Prince of Wales.

Another bright spot in 1921 was the glorious weather. It proved to be a magnificent summer, resulting in a big boost of visitors to south coast resorts, including Dover, despite a drought in some parts of the country.

The Dover Lathams

— Derek Leach —

Based upon a Dover Express article in the Joe Harman archive

The story of the Dover Lathams begins modestly with the arrival in Dover in 1664 of Samuel Latham from Lewes in Sussex. Nothing is known of why he settled in Dover or how he earned his living. Perhaps it was business connected with the sea, preparing the way for the first well known member of the family, John Latham, born about 1720.

John Latham developed a large business as a merchant, shipping agent and ship owner, becoming wealthy in the process. A freeman by birth (his father having acquired it) he was elected to the Common Council and a Jurat/Magistrate. John was also mayor in 1767, 1779 and 1788. During this period England was fighting France, Spain and America. John

helped organise the local volunteer militia and was involved in construction of four gun batteries each with 28 guns to protect the town and harbour: North's Battery, Guilford Battery, Amherst Battery and Townsend Battery.

Dover's first Paving Act in 1778 was during his mayoralty and as Mayor he was Chairman of the Paving Commissioners responsible for enforcing the Act, being responsible for streets, paths and passages, paving, cleaning, lighting and watching (policing). He was also appointed Commissioner of the Court of Requests in 1784 to enforce the recovery of small debts. Turnpike roads appeared during his mayoralties including the new road to Folkestone

(current Folkestone Road). As Mayor he was also the town's sole representative on the Harbour Board (or Commissioners as they were then known) involved in attempts to enlarge, deepen and improve the approach to the harbour. He was appointed Treasurer of the Harbour in 1773 until his death in 1800.

His son, Samuel Latham, together with Edward Rice and Captain Larkins, established the Dover Union Bank in Union Street, which he managed for 50 years. Union Wharf was owned by his family. It was a very popular and prosperous local bank. Shipping and other interests continued, although affected by the commercial stagnation and depression following the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The introduction of steam ships from 1821 also meant sailing ships were devalued. Samuel died in 1834.

Samuel's two sons, Henshaw and Samuel, overcame these problems. Henshaw managed the bank and became mayor at 31 in 1814. After Waterloo he organised a local collection for the wounded and the widows of the battle. During the next 15 years he was mayor twice more. He, too, became Treasurer of the Harbour Commissioners, dining frequently at Walmer Castle with the Duke of Wellington (Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and automatically Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners). In 1836 he gave evidence and was closely questioned for almost two days by the Select Committee of the House of Commons looking into the management of the harbour.

Brother Samuel concentrated on the shipping interests. Both of them acted as consuls for several European countries including the issue of passports.

Lathams was the last private bank in Dover. Fector's Bank merged with the National Provincial Bank, the London and County Bank arrived in Dover becoming a strong rival. Lathams struggled and in 1846 Henshaw died suddenly. The bank closed and its debts consumed all the assets. Samuel lived for another 40 years in the Pier District, dying in 1886 and bringing the Lathams Dover 'dynasty' to an end.

This article is based on one entitled The Latham's of Dover and was published in the Dover Express of October 1906.

In 1993 Lorraine Sencicle published a book, still in print, entitled "Banking on Dover" which gives a more in depth account of the Latham family.

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