

# 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 8 — Dover (England)



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**DOVER**, a seaport and municipal and parliamentary borough of Kent, England, one of the Cinque Ports, 76 m. E.S.E. of London by the South-Eastern & Chatham railway. Pop. (1891) 33,503; (1901) 41,794. It is situated at the mouth of a small stream, the Dour, whose valley here breaches the high chalk cliffs which fringe the coast on either hand. It is an exceptionally healthy locality, and the steep shore and open downs make it an agreeable summer resort. The better residential quarters lie along the seaboard and on the higher ground, notably on a western spur of the Castle Hill. The dominant object of the place is the castle, on the east height, 375 ft. above sea-level, between which and the batteries on the western heights lies the old town. The castle occupies a space of 35 acres. Within its precincts are a Roman *pharos* or lighthouse, still exhibiting the Roman masonry; the ancient fortress church (St Mary in Castro); some remains of the Saxon fort; and the massive keep and subsidiary defences (such as the Constable's, Avranche's, and other towers) of the Norman building. The church, substantially unaltered, forms an almost unique Christian relic. It has been called Roman, but is later. It is cruciform in shape, and the walls are built mainly of flint, but jambs and arches are formed of Roman bricks. At the end of the 12th century it was remodelled and given an Early English character. In the beginning of the 18th century it was dismantled and turned into a storehouse; and so continued until 1863, when, having been restored by Sir G. G. Scott, it

was again opened for divine service, and is now the chapel of the castle garrison.

The view from the castle keep includes on a clear day the line of cliffs from Folkestone to Ramsgate on the one side, and from Boulogne to Gravelines on the other side of the strait. The cliffs are honeycombed in all directions with military works. They are covered by modern works on the north side known as Fort Burgoyne, and additional works extend eastwards towards St Margaret's Bay. The western heights, where is the foundation of another Roman lighthouse, form a further circuit of fortifications. They are still more elevated than the castle. A military shaft, locally known as the Corkscrew Staircase, affords communication between the barracks and the town. Remains were discovered here in 1854 of a round church of the Templars (Holy Sepulchre), 32 ft. in diameter; the church, doubtless, in which King John made his submission to the Papal Nuncio in 1213. Archcliffe Fort lies to the south-west of old Dover. There may further be mentioned the remnant of the Saxon collegiate church of the canons of St Martin, and the parish church of St Mary the Virgin. This last was rebuilt and enlarged in 1843–1844, but preserves the three bays of the Saxon church, with its western narthex, on which was superimposed the Norman tower, which presents its rich front to the street. The rest of the church is mainly Norman and Early English. A later Norman church stands under the Castle Hill, but its parochial status was transferred to the modern church of St James.

The remains of the splendid foundation of St Martin's priory, of the 12th century, include the great gate, the house refectory, with campanile, and the spacious strangers' refectory, now incorporated in Dover College. The college of St Martin for twenty-two secular canons, which had been established in the castle in 696, was removed into the town in the beginning of the 8th century, and in 1139 became a Benedictine priory under the jurisdiction of that at Canterbury, to which see the lands are still attached. The interior of the refectory is very fine. In High Street may be seen the noble hall and truncated fabric of the Maison Dieu founded by Hubert de Burgh in the 13th century for the reception of pilgrims of all nations. From the time of Henry VIII. to 1830 it was used as a crown victualling office, but was subsequently purchased by the corporation and adapted as a town hall. The new town hall adjoining the old hall of the Maison Dieu was opened in 1883. The museum (1849) contains an interesting collection of local antiquities and a natural history collection.

Among various charitable institutions are the National Sailors' Home and the Gordon Boys' and Victoria Seaside Orphanages. Besides the church of St James, mentioned above, other modern churches are those of Holy Trinity and Christ church, and further up the valley there are the parish churches of Charlton (originally Norman) and Buckland (Early English). Among educational establishments is Dover College, occupying the site and remaining buildings of St Martin's priory, with additional modern buildings. It was

instituted in 1871, and educates about 220 boys. There is a separate junior school.

Dover is the only one of the Cinque Ports which is still a great port. It is one of the principal ports for passenger communications across the Channel, steamers connecting it with Calais and Ostend. The Admiralty pier was begun in 1847 and practically completed to a length of about 2000 ft. in 1871. In 1888 the gates of Wellington dock were widened to admit a larger type of Channel steamers; new coal stores were erected on the Northampton quay; the slipway was lengthened 40 ft., and widened for the reception of vessels up to 800 tons. In 1891 it was resolved to construct a new commercial harbour at an estimated cost of about £700,000. Begun in 1893, the works included the construction of an east pier (“Prince of Wales’s Pier”), running parallel to the general direction of the Admiralty pier and in conjunction with it enclosing an area of sheltered water amounting to seventy-five acres. This pier was completed in 1902. A railway line connected with the South-Eastern and Chatham system runs to its head, and in July 1903 it was brought into use for the embarkation of passengers by transatlantic liners. In 1896 and subsequent years funds were voted by parliament for the construction of an artificial harbour for naval purposes, having an area of 610 acres, of which 322 acres were to have a depth of not less than 30 ft. at low water. The scheme comprised three enclosing breakwaters—on the west an extension of the Admiralty pier in a south-easterly direction for a length of 2000 ft.; on the south an

isolated breakwater, 4200 ft. long, curving round shoreward at its eastern end to accord with the direction of the third breakwater; on the east, which runs out from the shore in a southerly direction for a length of 3320 ft. These three breakwaters, with a united length of rather more than  $1\frac{3}{4}$  m., are each built of massive concrete blocks in the form of a practically vertical wall founded on the solid chalk and rising to a quay level of 10 ft. above high water. Two entrances, one 800 ft. and the other 600 ft. in width, with a depth of about seven fathoms at low water, are situated at either end of the detached breakwater. The plan also included the reclamation of the foreshore at the foot of the cliffs, between the castle jetty and the root of the eastern breakwater, by means of a massive sea-wall. The construction of three powerful forts was undertaken in defence of the harbour, which was opened in 1909.

Besides the mail service and harbour trade, Dover has a trade in shipbuilding, timber, rope and sail making, and ships' stores. Dover is a suffragan bishopric in the diocese of Canterbury. The parliamentary borough returns one member. The town is governed by a mayor, six aldermen and eighteen councillors. Area, 2026 acres.

*History.*—Dover (*Dubris*) was one of the ports for continental traffic in Roman times. In the 4th century it was guarded by a fort lying down near the harbour, and forming part of the defences of the Saxon shore (*Litus Saxonicum*). As a Cinque Port, Dover (*Dofra*, *Dovorra*) had to contribute

twenty of the quota of ships furnished by those ports; in return for this service a charter of liberties was granted to the ports by Edward the Confessor, making the townsmen quit of shires and hundreds, with the right to be impleaded only at Shepway, and other privileges, which were confirmed by subsequent kings, with additions, down to James II. During the middle ages Dover Castle was an object of contention both in civil wars and foreign invasions, and was considered the key to England; the constable of the castle, who from the reign of John was appointed by the crown, was also warden of the Cinque Ports. The castle was successfully defended in 1216 against the French under the dauphin Louis by Hubert de Burgh, who was also the founder of the Maison Dieu established for the accommodation of pilgrims. The title of mayor as chief municipal officer first occurs about the middle of the 13th century, when the town was governed by a mayor and twelve jurats. The Cinque Ports were first represented in the parliament of 1265; Dover returned two members until 1885 when the number was reduced to one. In 1685 Charles II. confirmed to the inhabitants of Dover a fair beginning on the 11th of November, which had been held of old in the town, and granted two others on the 23rd and 24th of April and the 25th and 26th of September.

After the decay of Richborough harbour the passage from Dover to Whitsand, and later to Calais, became the accustomed route to France, and by a statute of 1465 no one might ship for Calais except at Dover. The guardians of the harbour were incorporated by James I. in 1607.

See S. P. H. Statham, *History of the Castle, Town and Port of Dover* (London, 1899); and *Dover Charters and other Documents* (London, 1902).

## BATTLE OF DOVER

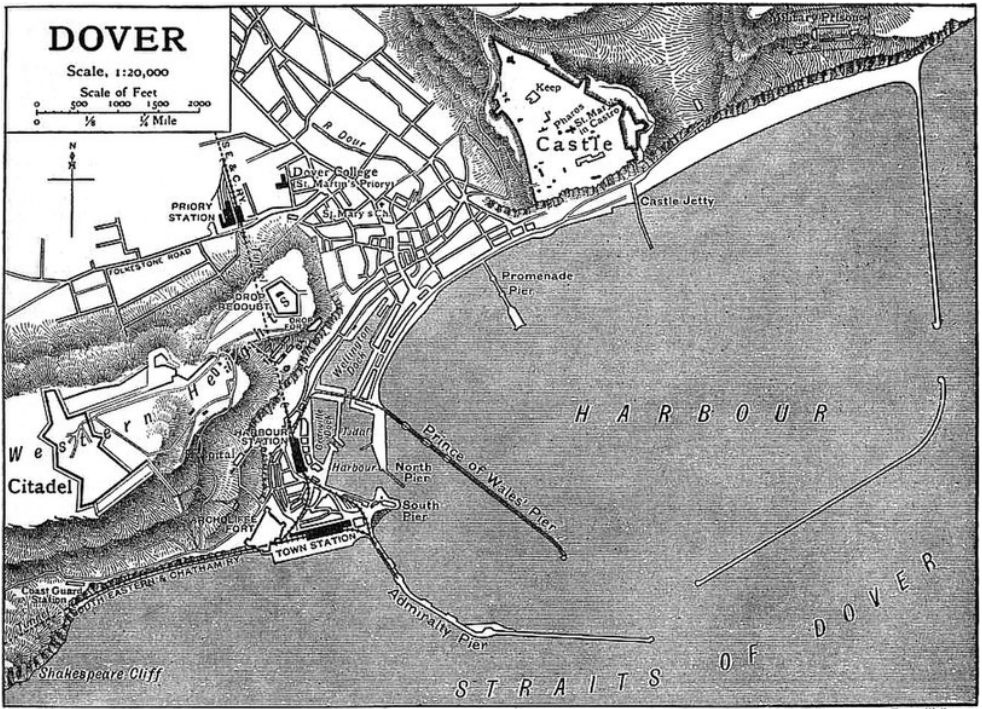
This famous and important naval victory was won off the town of Dover by the ships of the Cinque Ports on the 21st of August 1217, during the minority of King Henry III. The barons, who were in arms against his father King John, had called Louis, son of Philip Augustus, king of the French, to their aid. Having been recently defeated in Lincoln, they were hard pressed, and reinforcements were sent to them from Calais in a fleet commanded by a pirate and mercenary soldier called Eustace the Monk. His real name is uncertain, but according to the chronicle of Lanercost it was Matthew. He passed the Straits of Dover with a numerous flotilla laden with military machines and stores, and also carrying many knights and soldiers. The Monk's fleet was seen from Dover, where the regent, Hubert de Burgh, lay with a naval force of the Cinque Ports, said to have been very small. Sixteen vessels of large size for the time, and a number of smaller craft, is said to have been their total strength. But medieval estimates of numbers are never to be trusted, and the strength of the Cinque Port squadron was probably diminished to exalt the national glory. It put to sea, and by hugging the wind gained the weather gage of the French adventurer. Eustace is said to have been under the impression that they meant to attack Calais in his absence, and to have derided them because he had left the town well guarded. When they were to windward of his fleet the



Cinque Port ships bore down on the enemy. As they approached they threw unslaked lime in the air and the wind blew it in the faces of the French. This form of attack, and the flights of arrows discharged by the English (which flew with the wind), produced confusion in the crowded benches of the French vessels, which in most cases must have been little more than open boats. It is further said that in some cases at least the English vessels were "bearded," that is to say, strengthened by iron bands across the bows for ramming, and that they sank many of the French. The Monk was certainly defeated, and his fleet was entirely scattered, sunk or taken. His own vessel was captured. Eustace, who had concealed himself in the bilge, was dragged out. In answer to his appeals for quarter and promises to pay ransom, he was told by Richard, the bastard son of King John, that he was a traitor who would not be allowed to deceive more men. His head was struck off by Richard, and was sent round the ports on a pike. The Cinque Port seamen returned in triumph, towing their prizes, after throwing the common soldiers overboard, and taking the knights to ransom according to the custom of the age.

The political importance of the battle was very great, for it gave the death-blow to the cause of the barons who supported Louis, and it fixed Henry III. on the throne. But the defeat and death of the Monk was widely regarded as in a peculiar sense a victory over the powers of evil. The man became within a few years after his death the hero of many legends of piracy and necromancy. It was said that after

leaving the cloister he studied the black art in Toledo, which had a great reputation in the middle ages as a school of witchcraft. A French poem written seemingly within a generation after his death represents him as a wizard. In a prose narrative discovered and printed by M. Francisque Michel, it is said that he made his ship invisible by magic spells. A brother wizard in the English fleet, by name Stephen Crabbe, detected him while he was invisible to others. The bold and patriotic Crabbe contrived to board the bewitched flagship, and was seen apparently laying about him with an axe on the water—which the spectators took to be a proof either that he was mad, or that this was the devil in his shape. At last he struck off the head of Eustace, upon which the spell was broken, and the ship appeared. Crabbe was torn to pieces—presumably by the familiar spirits of the Monk—and the fragments were scattered over the water. Saint Bartholomew, whose feast is on the 21st of August, came to encourage the English by his presence and his voice.



Ascertainable fact concerning Eustace is less picturesque, but enough is known to show that he was an adventurous and unscrupulous scoundrel. In his youth he was a monk, and left the cloister to claim an inheritance from the count of Boulogne. Not having received satisfaction he became a freebooter on land and sea, and mercenary soldier. He is frequently mentioned in the Pipe, Patent and Close Rolls. For a time he served King John, but when the king made friends with the count of Boulogne, he fled abroad, and entered the service of the French prince Louis and his father Philip Augustus. Chroniclers lavish on him the titles of “archipirata,” “vir flagitiosissimus et nequissimus,” and poets made him an associate of the devil.

The evidence concerning Eustace is collected by Herren Wendelin Forster and Johann Trost, in their edition of the French poem “Wistasse le moine” (Halle, 1891). See for the battle Sir N. Harris Nicolas, *History of the Royal Navy* (London, 1847).



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