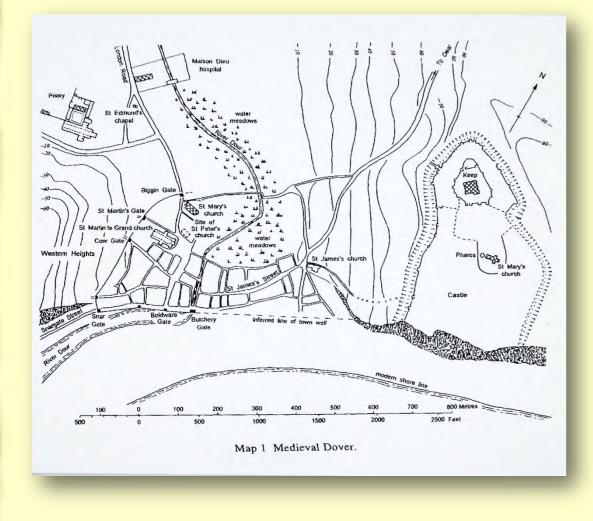
From Cradle to the Grave: living, working and dying in late medieval Dover Merchants and Mariners



After Edward III captured Calais in 1347, it became an English colony until 'lost' by Queen Mary I. This meant all the goods and services needed to maintain the garrison, town and surrounding countryside had to be shipped from England, primarily from Dover. Supplying live animals such as cattle, to feed the garrison, and horses, to provide mounts for the soldiers, were vital parts of this trade. Additionally, Dover merchants such as William Waren (1506) had his main house and lands in Dover, but also further property 'in the lordship of Marke and Eye within the marches of Calais'.



Dover mariners and merchants similarly took part in coastal trade, sailing to local southern ports including Sandwich and Rye, further west to Southampton and Dartmouth, along the eastern seaboard to Hull and Newcastle, and to London. One of the cargoes they shipped from Newcastle was coal, increasingly used for heating and cooking. Often such men were involved in overseas trade, especially to ports in France and the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands), but this trade might be disrupted during times of war or due to the presence of pirates in the English Channel.

Imports included spices, hops, figs and raisins, as well as wine, and English cloth was among the exports.

Living near to the central market square by St Martin-le-Grand church was useful, but wealthy merchants often also had several houses, gardens and land in other parts of the town. They owned storehouses, too, and Nicholas Fuller's storehouse was next to that of Nicholas Aldy but his will (1514) gives no further details. Although later, William Tiddeman's probate inventory (1589) shows that his goods were worth £65 in total, a comfortable sum for a mariner at that time.

Author: Keiron Hoyle. Image credits: (top) *Dover crane,* detail from KHLC copy of BL map; (centre) Map of Medieval Dover by Barry Corke; (foot) Fourteenth-century Common Seal of the Dover Barons.







