

Strange Cargoes

Sandwich Haven and the town Quay have a long and varied history of events with notable periods of quiet. This is because of the Port's shifting circumstances. The silting up of the Wantsum Channel changed the nature of the town's quays from a leading international trader to a domestic port and recently, as commercial trade has disappeared, to a marina for visitors and pleasure boats. Richborough Port was first built by the Romans and has always been associated with Sandwich.

Environmental and man made changes mean that the river frontage we see today is unrecognisable.

We know that there were town gates and private quays along the shore with a few alleys between for public access.

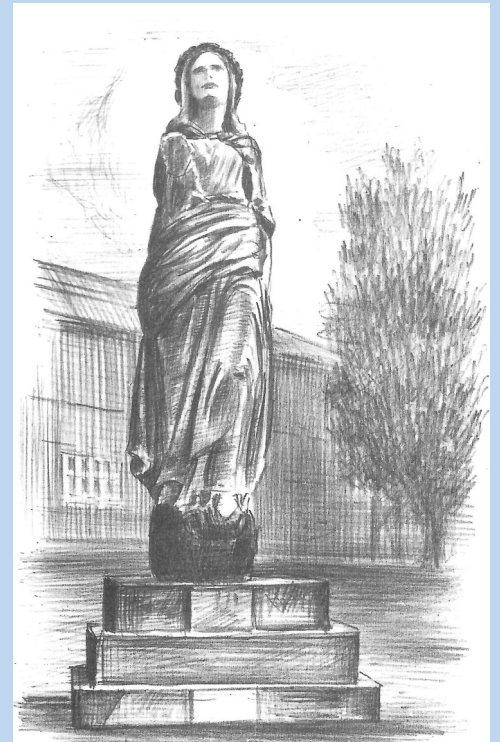
We also know that there were cranes and public weigh beams on the Quay.



The Sandwich Auncel, the weight used as part of a public weigh beam from the reign of Edward III

We would like to thank the following for their help in preparing this exhibition:

Hank, Mary and Ray in the Sandwich Archives
Captain Colin Carr, Sandwich Harbourmaster
Colin Varrell for information on Richborough Port
Nostalgic Sandwich



The figurehead from The Saxon Queen which stood on the Quay for many years



Harwich has a 17th century dockyard treadmill crane.

In this exhibition there are a number important events that we could have covered such as Cnut and his brutal treatment of Sandwich residents, the visit of Richard I, the first Roll on Roll off ferry or the importing of Orimulsion as fuel for Richborough power station. We chose the following six events that most captured our imagination.

The Cargo Timeline

This timeline shows some of the many events which have occurred at the harbour over the years. Those listed in green are included in the exhibition.

- 43 The Romans first land at Richborough (Rutupiae)
- 602 The settlement expands around the harbour
- 664 St Wilfred lands “*happily and pleasantly*” at Sandwich Haven
- 1016 Sandwich is recognised as the most important port in England
- 1164 Thomas Becket takes a boat to France, landing at Boulogne
- 1170 Becket returns to be met by the poor of Sandwich
- 1194 Richard I lands at Sandwich and travels to Canterbury
- 1255 Henry III’s elephant arrives from Wissant in France
- 1572 Queen Elizabeth I visits Sandwich to inspect the silting up of the river
- 1603 The *Speedwell* moors in the Haven while a dispute is settled
- 1634 The *Good Ship Hercules* departs for America
- 1757 The first drawbridge was built at the Barbican gate
- 1892 The current iron swing bridge is installed
- 1902 Last barge built at Felton’s shipyard
- 1917 Richborough Port becomes a train ferry port
- 1918 Richborough Port becomes the main area to receive salvage from the battlefields of Europe
- 1944 Works starts on building components of Mulberry Harbour
- 1977 Tolls discontinued on the swing bridge
- 1975 ESSO stops delivering fuel to Esso wharf by boat
- 2107 The P22 Gunboat arrives at the Quay

Sandwich Quays from Pearson’s wharf to the bridge in an 1833 map by Ford



Becket; that “turbulent priest”

Henry II appointed his chancellor, Thomas Becket, as Archbishop of Canterbury hoping to align Church thinking with his own. To the King's surprise Becket took the Church's side resulting in his appearance before the King in 1164.

Becket fled to France from Sandwich. He was under the protection of Louis VII. A diplomatic solution was negotiated by the Pope and Becket returned once again through Sandwich.



This is an image of an alabaster altar front from somewhere in England dated the second half of the 15th Century. It shows Becket returning from his exile in France and landing at Sandwich. A Cinque Port cog, the boat of the time, can clearly be seen with its furling sail and crow's nest.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Becket returned in 1170. In June of that year he had excommunicated three Bishops for crowning the young King Henry at York. Henry II was angry and uttered the words, “*Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?*” Four knights took this as a Royal Command and on December 29th, after an overnight stay at Saltwood Castle, they murdered Thomas at Canterbury Cathedral.

Becket's murder as depicted in a medieval wall painting in St Peters ad Vincula church in Oxfordshire and clearly shows the fatal blow to his head.

When Becket was exiled many of his sympathisers also left. Some went to the court of William II of Sicily. A letter exists thanking William for his hospitality towards them.

William II was to become Henry II's father-in-law as he married Henry's daughter, Joan. She also left from Sandwich to join William.

The mosaic of Becket on the right is thought to be the earliest known representation of the Saint. It is part of the sumptuous decoration at The Cathedral of Monreale near Palermo. He is clearly named as

“Scs Thomas Cantur”.



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The Elephant in the Tower

Henry III had already started a menagerie in the Tower of London. This was with the gift of 3 leopards (lions?) from the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II. Giving exotic animals as presents was common amongst royalty. 'The rulers of Egypt gifted an Elephant to King Louis IX of France who then presented the Elephant to Henry III. As Henry received the gift in France he was then required to pay the transport costs of £9 6s . It travelled to Sandwich from Wissant in 1255. It disembarked at Sandwich and then walked to London. There is a story that en route it was attacked by an enraged bull which the Elephant killed in minutes.



The Elephant in the Tower, one of a series of sculptures by Kendra Haste to commemorate the Royal Menagerie



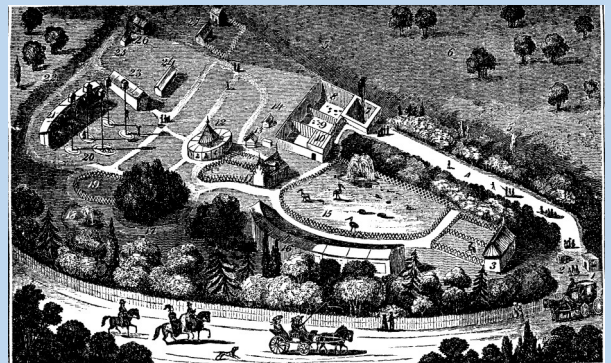
This is Mathew Paris' drawing of the Elephant. The man, drawn to show the size of the elephant, is thought to be Henry de Flor, master of the beast. Paris says the beast was "ponderous and robust, and indeed was a prodigious and monstrous animal. It used its trunk to obtain food and drink, and had small eyes in the upper part of its head".

The Royal Menagerie in the Tower was a popular attraction. In James II's reign admission cost "three half-pence or the supply of a cat or dog to be fed to the lions". In 1830 the decision was made to move the animals to a new site in Regent's Park; now London Zoo.

Conditions in the tower had declined and various accidents occurred, in 1830 the decision was made to move the animals to Regent's Park; now London Zoo.

Was this decision influenced by the founding of the (R)SPCA in 1824 or was it just a coincidence?

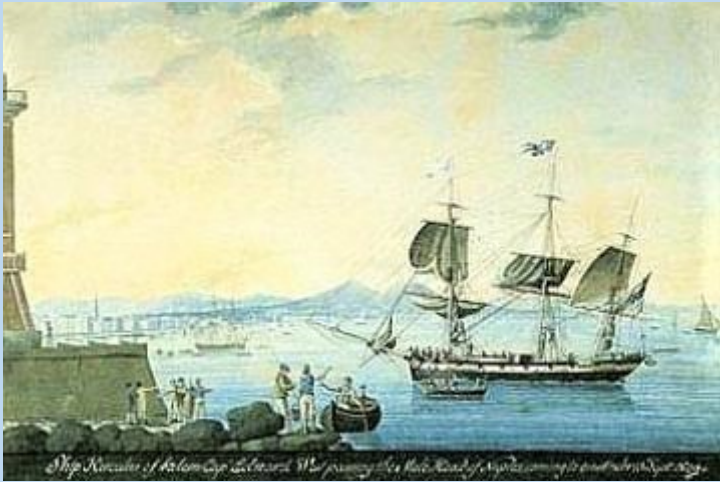
The Elephant died in 1258, three years after he arrived in Sandwich. Some say the cause was too much red wine which he was given "to keep out the cold". He was buried near the chapel on Tower Green but his bones were later interred and given to the Sacrist of Westminster Abbey.



A panoramic view of the Zoo in 1828

Pilgrim's Progress

In the early 1600s many pilgrims fled religious persecution to start a new life in America. The families had to have a certificate from a minister. No journey was without its problems. In 1603 there is a record of *The Speedwell* sailing the Wantsum Channel and an argument developing. The ship anchored in Sandwich Haven and the argument was resolved by the pilgrims praying together in St Peter's Church before proceeding to Plymouth and the New World.



One ship that left Sandwich was *The Hercules* taking pilgrims from the town and other parts of Kent.

The History of Sandwich by William Boys refers to :

A list or register of all such persons as embarked themselves in the good ship called the "Hercules of Sandwich" of the burthen of 200 tons, John Witherley the master and therein transported from Sandwich to the plantation called "New England" in America; with the certificates from the ministers where they last dwelt of the conversion, and conformity to the orders and discipline of the church, and that they had taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.

The first entry in the list, on the right, is Nathaniel Tilden. Later in March 1636 his daughters, Mary and Sarah had a double wedding. Mary married Thomas Lapham and Sarah married George Sutton, both of whom had come from England on the *Hercules* as Nathaniel's servants.

Could this be the first recorded shipboard romance?

| Certificates. | Masters of Families. | Children. | Servants. |
|--|---|-----------|------------|
| From Mr J ^o Gee vicar of Tenterden, 26 Feb. 1634. | Nathan ^l . Tilden of Tenterden yeoman and Lydia his wife. | Seven | Seven |
| and Freegift Stace jurat, 4 mar. 1634. | Joan ^e Allen of Tenterden and Constance his wife. | Four. | |
| Mr J ^o Gre, 1 ^o mar. 1634. J ^o Aulin may ^r or, and Freegift Stace jurat, 4 mar. 1634. | Rob. Brook of Maidstone mercer and Ann his wife. | Seven. | |
| Samuel Marthol may ^r of Maidstone, Tho. Surianok jurat, Edw. Duke and Rob. Barrell millers, 14 mar. 1634. | Tho. Heyward of Aylesford taylor and Selamiah his wife. | Five. | |
| Will ^o Colepeper, Caleb Buncks, Edw. Duke, Hen. Crippe, Franc. Froisese cler. 14 mar. 1634. | Will ^o Witherell of Maidstone schoolmaster and Mary his wife. | Three. | One. |
| Sim. Marthol may ^r of Maidstone, Tho. Sarinneck, Edw. Duke and Rob. Barrell, cl. 14 mar. 1634. | Funnet of Ashford hemp-dreffer. | | |
| Edw. Chute, Edm. Hayes vicar of Ashford, Elias Wood parson of Hinzhill, 4th mar. 1634. | Tho. Boney and Hen. Swell of Sandwich shoemakers. | | |
| Mr Tho. Warren rector of St Peter in Sandwich, 14th mar. 1634. | Will ^o Hatch of Sandwich merchant and Jane his wife. | Five. | Six. |
| Mr Tho. Gardener vicar of St Mary's Sandwich, 17th mar. 1634. | Sam. Hinkley of Tenterden and Sarah his wife. | Four. | |
| Mr J ^o Gee vicar of Tenterden, J ^o Aulin may ^r , Freegift Stace jurat, 18th mar. 1634. | M ^o se Cole of Sandwich carpenter and Joan his wife. | Two. | A servant. |
| Mr Tho. Warren rector of St Peter Sandwich, 14th mar. 1634. | Tho. Champion of Ashford. | | |
| Edm. Hayes vicar of Ashford, 21th mar. 1634. | Tho. Belboech of Sandwich. | Six. | Three. |
| Edm. Hayes vicar, 12th mar. 1634. | J ^o Lewis of Tenterden and Sarah his wife. | One. | |
| Tho. Warren, rector of St Peter Sandwich, 13th mar. 1634. Tho. Harman vicar of Hedcorn, 6 mar. 1634. | Parrel Harris of Bow London, taylor. | | |
| J ^o Gee vicar of Tenterden, 22 Feb. 1634. J ^o Aulin may ^r and Freegift Stace jurat, 18 mar. 1634. | James Sayers of Northbourn taylor. | | |
| J ^o Leech vicar of Bow London, 19th mar. 1634. | Confort Starre of Ashford chisgrom. | Three. | Three. |
| Edw. Nicholls vicar of Northbourn, 2d Feb. 1634. | J ^o Rootes of Great Chart. | | |
| Edm. Hayes vicar of Ashford, 21 mar. 1634. | Em. Muson of Eastwell wid. | | |
| J ^o Honeywood, Tho. Graftrey, justices. Rob. Gosham curate of Great Chart, 20 mar. 1634. | Marg ^o wife of Will ^o Johnes late of Sandwich, now of New England, painter. | | |
| Will ^o Sandford rector of Eastwell, 16 mar. 1634. | J ^o Beth of the said parish taylor. | | |
| Mr Tho. Gardiner vicar of St Mary's Sandwich, 26 mar. 1634. | Tho. Bridgen of Faversham husbandman and his wife. | Two. | |
| Tho. Jackson minister of St George's Canterbury, ult. Feb. 1634. | | | |
| J ^o Philim minister of Faversham, 5th mar. 1634. J ^o Kewler may ^r , and Will ^o Tardon jurat. | | | |

The page from Boy's History of Sandwich listing the Hercules pilgrims



The town of Sandwich in Massachusetts is one of several settlements called Sandwich in the USA and is the one associated with our town. It was founded in 1639 but it seems the founding fathers came from Sussex, not Kent, on a boat called the *Abigail*. The town's arms are similar to ours but with the English lion replaced with an eagle. The motto translates as, "After so many shipwrecks, a haven", a reminder of the days when Sandwich had just that.

Ladies who Salvage



The Women's Land Army was a misnomer as it encouraged women to work in a wide range of jobs, not just on the land, helping to keep the Country going. In 1917 there was an appeal for women to enrol. They were paid 18 shillings a week rising to 20 shillings after they passed an efficiency test. The work was often heavy and messy; a demonstration of equality.

There were 700 to 800 women at Richborough Port working alongside military personnel. Special trains ran every day from Margate, Ramsgate and Deal to take them to work and back. They wore a mix of military boots and gaiters, high waisted trousers and their own clothes. The picture shows that hats seem to be almost obligatory and no smoking was essential as this was a danger zone handling the detritus of war.



At the end of the war there was a huge amount of salvage. Much of it was returned to Richborough Port in cross-channel barges where, ironically, it had originally left from. The salvage dump was 233 acres in size with sidings for 500 railway wagons.

The women were involved with the unloading of wooden boxes and spent gun shells from the mass arrival of the barges. The salvage was unloaded onto rollers which stretched which stretched across the site, boxes would be pushed along these and the contents stripped down and sorted.



A Harbour leaves a Harbour

In 1944 the country was braced to launch the D Day landings as part of the Second World War. The challenge was to land a huge amount of supplies, including lorries and tanks. Beach landings on sand and the successful occupation of taking heavily defended ports was proving difficult. The solution was to build two prefabricated harbours to float across the Channel and reassemble them at two places in Normandy. Basically these were floating roadways on floating pontoons so that ships could unload their cargo at sea which could then be driven quickly to high, firm land.



The harbour was called *Mulberry*. Each component had a name. The roadways were called *Whales* and the pontoons were called *Beetles*. Six bridges were joined together to make a *Whale* which was 500 feet long. The Royal Engineers made these at Richborough Port. As the bridges were completed they were moved to the North end of the wharf where they were craned onto the floating *Beetles* to be towed to the *Overlord* assembly areas before crossing the Channel.

Secrecy was paramount so in April 1944 the Sandwich to Ramsgate road was closed to the public, even buses had the windows of the top deck windows blacked out, and a high concrete wall was built alongside the road.

Between February 1944 and D Day on June 5th, fifty units were made ready for service at Richborough Port to be used as part of Mulberry Harbour.



The Whales were protected from the sea by a concrete caisson called a Phoenix which made an artificial breakwater. Not all made it across the Channel. This is one was stranded at Littlestone beach, near Hythe, and can still be seen.

Fuel Matters



The Port of Sandwich received deliveries of fuel by boat well into the 1970s, probably from the ESSO Purfleet depot. This is the tanker *Stourgate* at sea off the Thanet coast. She would come up the Stour, through the swing bridge by the Barbican gate to the Esso wharf at Gazen Salts.

There was a place there for the tanker to turn round. The Fire Brigade carried out hosepipe drill at this point which kept the winding point dredged.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------|----------------|-----|---------------------|-----------|-------|------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|---------|--------------------------|--------|
| 85300 | Stourgate | Steel | 115 | 100A1 | Lon | GL | 1924 | AACP | Cell D | 8825'960t | FPT115 | APT264t | Oil Engines 2S.O.S.A | 7 # 3 |
| 147620 | Elec.Light | ss Lon No.1-28 | 88 | 10.29 | | N1,30 | 5mo | J.Pollock | Anglo-American | 85'2 19'1 | 6'6 | London | 2Cy.15'-16 1/2' | 24NEP |
| KQMF | Mchy.Aft | Oil Eng. | 44 | LLOYD'S | MCT. 28 | | | Sons & Co. Ld. | Oil Co. Ld. | Q22' | | British | NE19'8ftted4.24 | 6 # 10 |
| | | 1.Dk.(Std) | | Carrying Petroleum | in bulk | | | Faversham | (J.Hamilton, Mgr) | | | FR 9BH | J&CG Bolinders Co.Ld.Skm | |
| 85301 | Stourgate | | | Coasting Great Brit | and Irel | | | Lloyd | 'AA&CP' | | | | | |
| | | | | (Except West Coast, | Cork to P | | | entland Firth) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Above is the entry for *Stourgate* in Lloyds register of shipping. She was built at Pollocks yard on Faversham Creek and so would have been launched sideways. Pollocks were the importers of Bolinder engines and early manufacturer of concrete boats.



The fuel was kept in six large tanks at Gazen Salts. There is little to see now. They were delivered on trailers hauled by a Burrell traction engine. The tank has *Wingham Engineering Company* written on it. They also owned the traction engine.

This picture inscribed, "*a tight fit*", shows the first tanker being shoehorned into the alley that led to Gazen Salts. The building on the left is The Kings Arms. The Sandwich Model Laundry is now demolished. So one tank down and five to go!

