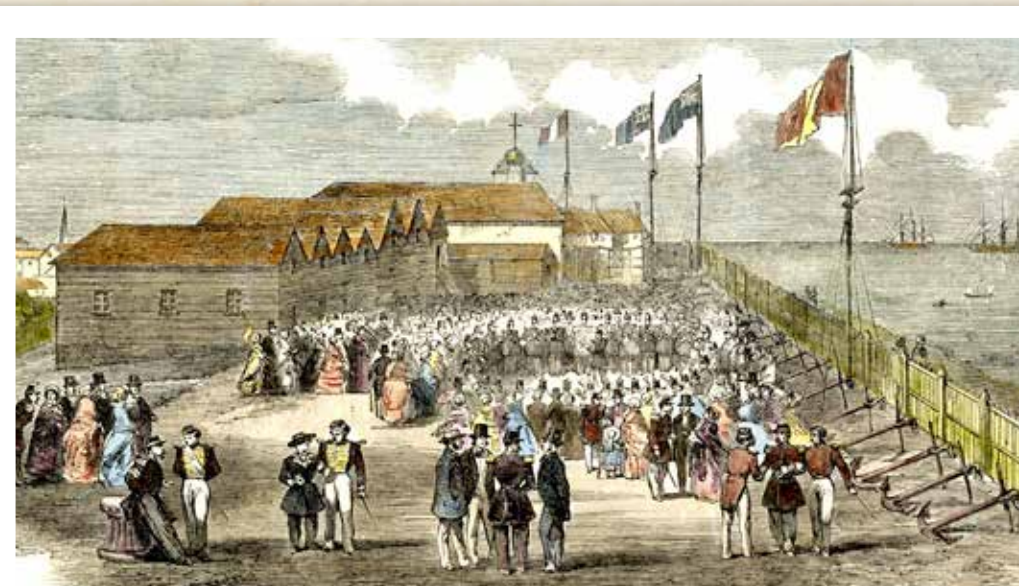


THE NAVAL YARD

Origins

The origins of the yard lie in the mid-17th century when naval vessels anchored offshore needed supporting services. There was no permanent yard but there were storehouses in the town. John Culmer was appointed as the first navy agent. He took charge of the boats that came ashore and his duties included checking ships' books to ensure that the names and number of people corresponded with those on board, so that their pay could be worked out. He was also responsible for victualling, selling old vessels and providing water for the fleet. In 1668, Balthasar St Michel, the brother-in-law of Samuel Pepys, was the next navy agent.

A later navy agent, Thomas Warren, was an experienced civilian navy clerk who was first employed in 1696. He made the case for building a naval yard. As a result of his lobbying, in August 1702, the Navy Board, which was responsible for dockyards, leased an area from the Archbishop of Canterbury, from what is today Victoria Road to the seafront and from South Road to Deal Castle. Among the buildings erected in the fenced yard were a storehouse, three boathouses and an office for the storekeeper and clerks. Warren became the first storekeeper for the yard and was also Deal town mayor.



Credit: Dover Museum d09877

The band of the 3rd French Regiment of French Infantry playing to an audience in the Naval Yard in July 1854, before their departure to the Baltic.

Boatbuilding

The yard provided employment for boatmen and boat builders, and for the maritime trades of chandlery, rope and sail making. The Navy Board often requested the yard to order boats from Deal builders that could be used at sea on naval vessels. Navy transport ships would stop in the Downs on their way between the major fleet dockyards at Chatham and Portsmouth, and load or tow these boats for delivery to their destinations along with other cargo.



d02162

One of the Deal galley boats. Its flat bottom made it ideal for carrying stores.

Orders could also come from individual ships' captains or to support military expeditions. Admiral Skeffington Lutwidge, commander-in-chief at The Downs during the early part of the French Revolutionary Wars, made an urgent order for flat-bottomed galley boats to be used for carrying stores. Boat builders in Deal and Dover had to make 15 boats in three weeks.

The original flat-bottomed design was then extended, with more vessels intended to carry 40 men with a carronade or howitzer (short-barrelled guns) mounted at the front, for a bombardment on Boulogne in August 1801, planned by Horatio Nelson. In 1809, the yard was ordered to have all the flat-bottomed boats ready for another expedition to Walcheren in Holland.

Hired armed vessels

In wartime, both smugglers and French privateers were very active in the channel. The Admiralty hired ships from private owners to deal with them. The owners had to supply the guns and stores, and find the master and crew, but they were usually commanded by a naval lieutenant. John Iggulden of Deal was a typical owner. The Admiralty hired six vessels from him between 1803 and 1813. Hiring boats could be a profitable business; the *Speculator*, a lugger of 93 tons with 10 guns and 33 crew was hired for £2874 over 10 years, then a substantial sum.

Peacetime

By 1813, an expansion of the yard was planned and the land was bought outright. However, with the coming of peace in 1814 the expansion was abandoned.

The gradual introduction of steam tugs meant that ships waited less often in The Downs for favourable weather. The Navy Board was abolished in 1832 but the navy continued to use the yard until 1863, when the Admiralty decided to close it and send the stores to Chatham.



d30800

The Navy Yard around 1860, shortly before it closed in 1863. In the foreground are the boat and spar houses, and the large buildings behind were the cable and chain stores. The gates of the yard are on the right. The Timeball Tower can be seen in the distance. This image was taken by WH Franklin, a well-known photographer in Deal.



Credit: Colin Verrall

Victoria Road in about 1910. The Baptist Church on the right was designed by J Wills, Esq. of Derby and built by Messrs. Cottew and Trollope. It opened in 1881 and accommodated 600 worshippers.

The yard site became the first large-scale Victorian development in Deal. The Timeball Tower was excluded from the development in order to maintain the electric telegraph signal from Greenwich Observatory.



Credit: Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

A section of the Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1871-2 and published in 1877. The area was known as Victoria Town and had been the site of the Naval Yard.

Victoria Road and other buildings

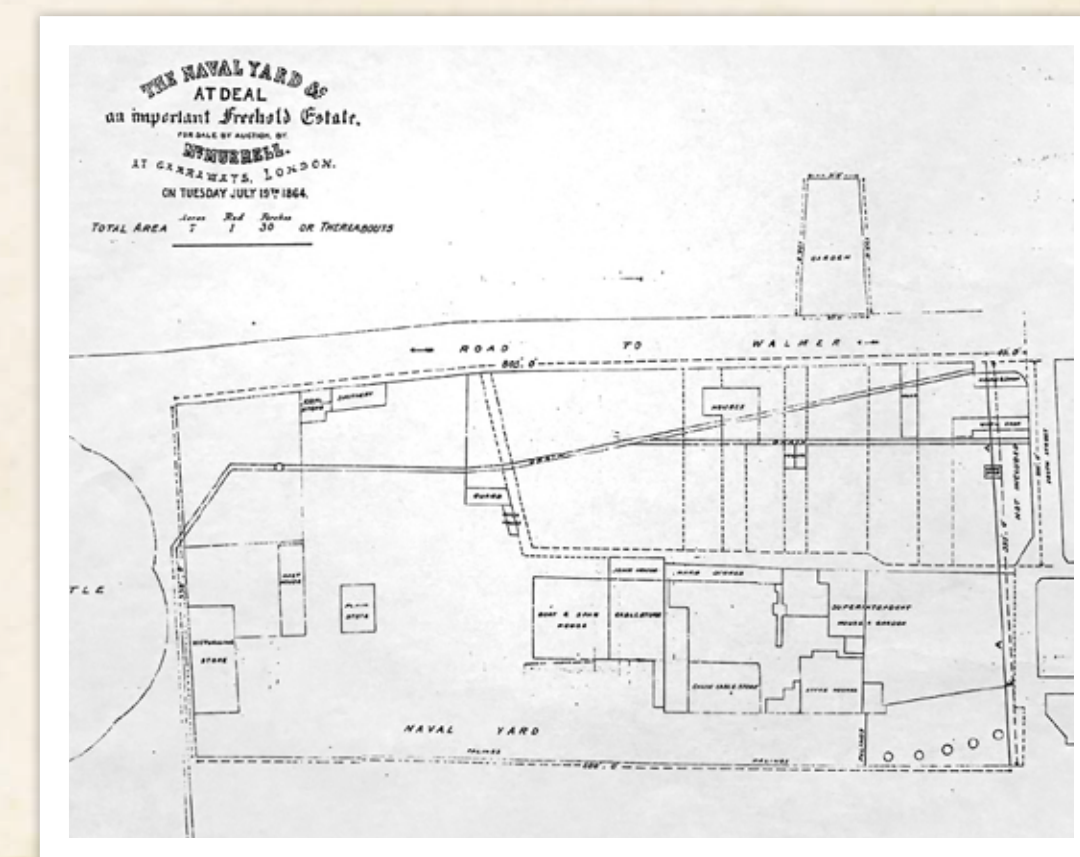
The houses on the west side of Victoria Road were mainly built in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Originally called Prospect Place, this was a high-class residential area. Comfort Kingsmill, Mayor of Deal nine times between 1816 and 1848, lived here.



d0882

An engraving of Prospect Place around 1827.

Prospect House stands on Wellington Road, near where Victoria Road becomes the High Street. This was the home of the prolific boatbuilder Thomas Hayward (junior). The Haywards made many of the famous Deal luggers.



Credit: Deal Museum

A plan of the layout of buildings at the Naval Yard, produced as part of the auction sale of the yard, held on 19th July 1864.

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