

UPPER WALMER

WELCOME TO WALMER – THE FORTRESS AGAINST THE SEA

Welcome to Walmer - a little place with a big and colourful history of invasions, smuggling, fishing, trading with visiting ships, guarding England's most vulnerable shoreline and home to England's most famous soldier - the Duke of Wellington. Walmer's name is said to be derived from 'Vallum Mare' a corruption of the Latin 'Quasi Vallum Maris' or Fortress Against the Sea.

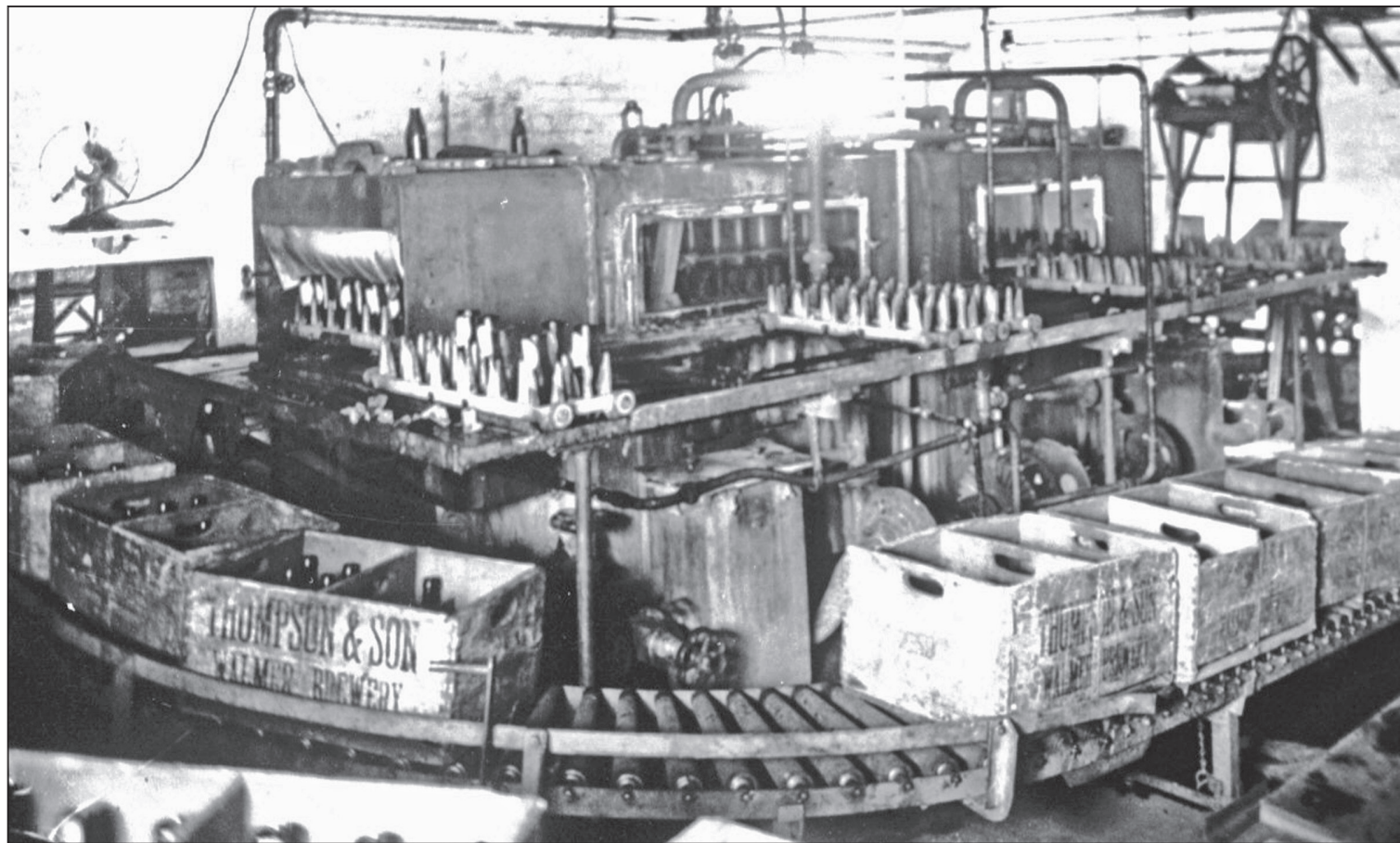
You are standing in the original village of Walmer which today is usually referred to as Upper Walmer and which first grew up around a manor house (Walmer Court), its farm and Parish Church in the early 12th century. Cottages for workers and tradesmen soon followed and by Victorian times the small agricultural community had become a thriving village with a school, shops, inns, a large brewery and a convent with a chapel.

The original Walmer Court would have been built of timber, then replaced with a moated stone building with views towards the sea by Hugh d'Auberville, who died in 1139. The ruins of the stone house are visible from the churchyard and are listed as an Ancient Monument.

The brewery had the most significant impact on the area. In 1816 Edmund Thompson acquired the existing brewery which continued to operate as Thompson & Sons for over 150 years.

An old bell - once housed in the belfry at the brewery - can be seen in the last remaining public house in the village, The Thompson Bell on the Dover Road.

The railway station in Walmer opened in June 1881 with a direct line to London. This was much later than the neighbouring station in Deal which had train services to London from 1847.



Thompson & Sons Brewery



Upper Walmer, Dover Road.

DEFENCE

Walmer Castle, built in 1539 by King Henry VIII, was one of three built to defend this part of the coast. Since 1708 it has been the official home of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The Duke of Wellington, as Lord Warden lived at the Castle and it has a collection of his memorabilia. The formal gardens were first laid out in the 1790's by William Pitt the Younger when he was Lord Warden.



Walmer Aerodrome/RAF Walmer

In 1665 a company of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot was established in Walmer. In 1861 the barracks became home to the Royal Marines. On September 22nd 1989 eleven Royal Marine musicians were murdered by IRA terrorists. Reorganisation of Britain's defence forces resulted in the barracks being closed in 1996 when the Royal Marines School of Music moved to Portsmouth, however many of the original buildings can still be seen if you follow the Royal Marines Heritage Trail around Lower Walmer.

Walmer Aerodrome/RAF Walmer was opened during WWI south of the Castle to defend the free flow of shipping in the English Channel and to protect local towns. There is now a Commemorative Stand on the site of the Aerodrome which gives the full history of its use in two World Wars.

RELIGION

The original Parish Church (Church of St. Mary the Blessed Virgin) with its rough flint walls, single aisle, nave and chancel is in Church Street and was built circa 1120. The church was probably built as a private chapel by the d'Auberville family, who arrived at the time of the Norman Conquest. Duke William granted the manor of Walmer to William d'Auberville son of his loyal companion Roger. This church was used regularly by the Duke of Wellington for worship when he was living at Walmer Castle.

A new, larger St. Mary's Church was started in 1887 in the Victorian Gothic style overlooking Walmer Castle on St. Clare Road and was completed in 1893 without its intended spire.

Fleeing from persecution in Poland and Germany, nuns from the Roman Catholic Convent of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary moved to Walmer in 1875 and occupied Roselands, an estate of seven acres with a large 18th century Georgian house on the eastern side of Dover Road. They built the Victorian Gothic Church of the Sacred Heart situated almost opposite this information board. The Church was designed by the Pugin company in 1881, built in 1890 and the tower added in 1897. The convent, an enclosed order, left Walmer in 1971 and the land was used for housing.



St Mary's Church, Walmer



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Further information from Dover Visitor Information Centre 01304 201066 or Dover Museum 01304 201066

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