

VICTORIA TOWN

A seaside resort

Seaside resorts became popular around the end of the 18th century. The medicinal benefits of 'taking the waters' had been popular in spa towns, but this now extended to coastal locations. Deal began to establish itself as a seaside resort to compete with others in Kent, such as Margate and Ramsgate.

New developments on Deal's beachfront included hotels, the Royal Adelaide Baths, a reading room, promenades and other attractions for visitors. Bathing machines had already been installed in 1754. A theatre and assembly rooms were built in 1800, probably as much for the entertainment of the naval and military personnel and their families as for potential holiday makers.



Credit: Dover Museum 0025683

*Bathing machines and boat on beach, Deal.
A watercolour by J.L. Roget, dated 28 August 1895.*

In 1826, the annual Deal Regatta was set up to encourage visitors, and in 1834 the seafront was 'improved' by demolishing houses on the seaward side of Beach Street to build marine parades. The first pier in Deal was built to encourage tourism in 1838.



Credit: Dover Museum 002476

Deal became a popular holiday resort in the 19th century and remains a popular destination for visitors today. This photograph from around 1900 shows people thronging the promenade, waiting to hear the band play on the old bandstand that stood close to the Timeball Tower.

Residential developments

When the Naval Yard closed in 1863, the site between the seafront and Prospect Place was sold to the Conservative Land Society. It was developed as a residential estate, known as Victoria Town. Prospect Place became Victoria Road and the older houses on the west side lost their view of the sea as new, grand houses went up, some with four or five storeys. The new estate was the first large-scale Victorian development in Deal and the luxury villas were in the latest popular style. In 1865, plots varied in price from £72 for those facing Sondes Road to £196 for those fronting Victoria Parade (now the Prince of Wales Terrace).

Although many of the villas have been converted into flats, guesthouses and other amenities,

many have kept their original Victorian features, including decorative panels of picture tiles and pattern tiles on properties in Ranelagh Road and Victoria Road. These show the influence of the great Victorian designers and manufacturers such as William Morris and the Minton company.



Credit: Colin Varrall

Victoria Road looking north in the early 20th century. The new buildings of Victoria Town can be seen on the right.

Elements of ornate window-work can be seen on buildings along Sondes Road. The roads are also much wider than earlier streets in Deal, to cope with the increased traffic of horse-drawn carriages during the Victorian period.



Credit: Colin Varrall

The Prince of Wales Terrace, with a First World War tank outside, that was gifted to the people of Deal in August 1919, because of the huge amount of money that local people had raised for the war effort.

Other buildings

The Masonic Hall, on Sondes Road, is a striking brick and stone building, dated to 1910. It is known as The Lord Warden Lodge No.1096. The highlight of this building is its symbolic and ornate temple. It also holds a display of freemasonry memorabilia, which in Deal, can be traced back to a Royal Navy Lodge in 1764.

Prospect House stands on Wellington Road near where Victoria Road becomes the High Street. This was originally No 1 Lower Street and from about 1821 it was the home and workshop of the Hayward family of boatbuilders. In the 1860s, the Haywards had moved and the house was sold. By 1910, new buildings had been added to the High Street frontage. A well-known shop in the area was Franklin's photography shop.

The arrival of the railway

The railway arrived in Deal in 1847, and the town started to attract more visitors. This end of town became very fashionable in the later Victorian and Edwardian periods, and 'promenading' on the seafront was popular with both townspeople and visitors. The 1871 Bank Holiday Act accompanied a rise in disposable income for much of the population. This meant that more people could enjoy leisure time and Deal benefitted from this late Victorian growth in seaside holidays.

Deal was originally the terminus for the South Eastern Railway branch line, with trains running north to Sandwich, Minster and Ramsgate. It was not until 1881 that the line was extended southwards through Walmer and on to Dover. Following this extension, the corner plot of Deal Castle Road and the Prince of Wales Terrace was bought by the South Eastern Railway Company. In 1897, a luxury hotel called the South Eastern Hotel opened on the site. It had a lift and electric lights. To promote business, the railway company sold all-inclusive tickets for visitors to encourage them to use their trains. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1981 and redeveloped in 1990 as a block of private flats.

Suffragettes

Deal and Walmer took part in the campaign for women to get the vote. Open air meetings were held on the beach in 1908, where hundreds listened to Charlotte Despard, the Women's Freedom Leader, who had grown up in Ripple. A petition was handed to the town's MP at the South Eastern Hotel in 1917.

**Find this and more heritage panels at
www.towntrail.uk**


**Funded by
UK Government**



Text copyright Dover District Council.

Every effort has been made to ascertain who owns the images on this panel but please contact DDC if you are aware of any further information.