

# **Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy**

## **Appendix 1: Theme 2c Harbours & Ports – Folkestone as a Cross Channel Port**

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## **(2c) Folkestone as a Cross Channel Port**

### **1. Summary**

Folkestone contains valuable heritage assets that relate to its status as a cross channel port. Historically, Folkestone has played an important role in international trade possibly going back as far as the Iron Age. It has also boasted a rich fishing heritage for many centuries and has acted as a port to support this industry as well as for continued international trade. The town's status as an important cross channel port was not established until later in the nineteenth century when the formal harbour was finally constructed and the railway arrived in the District. The assets that relate to this heritage highlight an important chapter in the town's history that saw Folkestone becoming a popular port for passenger and goods traffic crossing the channel to the continent. Folkestone Harbour is therefore significant in reconnecting people to the rich maritime heritage of the town as well as to its status as a prominent cross channel port. The harbour itself has played essential roles during a number of important historical events that include wartime, the arrival of the railway and the commencement of cross channel travel. This heritage has become integral to the local character of Folkestone and is now the subject of extensive regeneration and development work that hopes to revitalise many of these valuable assets.

### **2. Introduction**

#### ***Early Folkestone Harbour***

Most of the development to the Folkestone Harbour has occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to enable the use of the port as a cross channel link to Boulogne via a ferry service. Whilst these ferry services are no longer running, cross channel links are now provided from Folkestone by the Channel Tunnel which arrives in France at Calais. Folkestone has acted as an important port for international trade as well as for a rich fishing industry for many centuries, going as far back as the Iron Age. This long history as a popular port has established a distinctive local identity and gives considerable weight to the heritage assets relating to this past that continue to illustrate the strong local character. They highlight the rich maritime heritage here that was later significantly affected by the arrival of the railway in Folkestone in 1843, allowing for the commencement of cross channel travel to the continent.

The East Wear Bay site at East Cliff in Folkestone has been of considerable interest for some years for its archaeological remains of a Roman Villa and an earlier Iron Age production settlement. Formal excavations of the site have taken place at various times since 1924 and it has more recently been the subject of the *A Town Unearthed: Folkestone Before 1500* community archaeology project which has uncovered much more detail about the site. The *East Wear Bay Archaeological Project* that is led by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust has continued beyond the *A Town Unearthed* programme to carry on archaeological investigation of this site for the long-term which is particularly important due to the site being so vulnerable to clifftop erosion. Evidence from these projects suggests that the East Wear Bay site was a major coastal trading post dating back to as early as the second century BC. From around 50 BC it appears that Folkestone was one of the main points of contact between Britain and the Roman Empire.

A thriving fishing industry in Folkestone dates to the twelfth century, and the town further rose in prominence when in 1313 it received a Charter establishing it as a corporate limb to the Dover Cinque Port. This suggests that international trade and a fishing industry were continuing to prosper at Folkestone and the town had remained as an important port along the southern coast of Britain. Fishermen would have pulled up their boats close to the mouth of the Pent Stream that still flows into what is now the inner harbour. However, early on there began to be problems with Folkestone as a port as there were consistent difficulties with landing larger boats and ships in the port's shallow waters. Constant movement of the shingle beaches by natural action made Folkestone port a dangerous place to land, and boats were often damaged during storms.

Later on, this problem would resurface and there were continued difficulties with the use of Folkestone port, particularly because of the absence of a stone harbour before the nineteenth century. Land to the south side of the harbour that was designed by renowned engineer Thomas Telford between 1809 and 1820 was a shingle spit, and in heavy weather the harbour entrance would easily become choked at which time men would be required to remove the accumulated material using horse-drawn carts. The Pent Stream also emptied out into the harbour which would often cause the basin to fill with a continuous load of silt. By the time the railway arrived from London in 1843 the harbour had fallen into disrepair and was badly silted. Whilst there was still a local fishing industry and Folkestone was becoming a popular seaside resort, the port has waned in prominence compared with its neighbour port at Dover.

The Folkestone Harbour rose in prominence and popularity when it commenced its cross-channel ferry services to Boulogne in 1843. During its heyday, Folkestone Harbour saw high volumes of passenger and goods traffic crossing to the continent. Passengers and goods traffic were able to travel from London to Folkestone, and then onto a connection from Folkestone Junction (later Folkestone East) station to the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line that ran directly onto the Folkestone Harbour via a viaduct and swing bridge. This service became the first international rail-sea-rail service between London and Paris and quickly became very popular.

Cross channel services would run from Folkestone until 2000 when the final ferry would leave the port. During its years of operation Folkestone Harbour faced difficulties with the viability of the port due to old issues with becoming silted and impassable as well as from competition with other larger ports such as Dover and Ramsgate. There were periods of decline for the port and its popularity has varied throughout its operation. The Folkestone Harbour now remains closed to cross channel traffic after ferry services ceased in 2000 and the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line was officially closed in 2014. Parts of the harbour are designated and since 2004 it has been the subject of extensive redevelopment. It remains an important collection of heritage assets that illustrate Folkestone's role as a popular cross channel port.

### ***The Folkestone Harbour from 1807***

1807 is a landmark year in the history of the formal Folkestone Harbour and its role as a cross channel port. Plans to create a formal harbour at Folkestone date to as far back as the 1540s when Henry VIII had begun to make plans to use Folkestone as a

port of embarkation for supplies and troops during warfare with France. However, upon further investigation it was decided that Dover was a more appropriate location and the plans for the Folkestone harbour were abandoned. Wooden structures and jetties were being used by local fisherman in the absence of a stone harbour which were often prone to damage during bad weather. Folkestone's coast was often battered by bad storms and further damage to the port and boats was caused by the encroaching shingle that continued to make the port difficult to use. Folkestone retained a small fishing community over the centuries but the need for a formal harbour was becoming increasingly apparent.

In 1804, the Earl of Radnor petitioned Parliament for the construction of a stone harbour at Folkestone. Finally, in 1807 an Act of Parliament was passed that granted permission for the newly inaugurated Folkestone Harbour Company to build a pier and harbour to serve the Folkestone port and to provide anchorage for warships during the Napoleonic Wars. The renowned engineer Thomas Telford was appointed to complete the work which then began in 1809. Initial plans were considered to be too expensive and so a team including Thomas Telford was formed and a new design was drawn up including a western, southern and eastern pier. Construction began at the site of the existing shingle spit where material was continuously washed eastward along the southern coast. The walls of the harbour were built from local sandstone with an infill of crushed stone; the western pier was the first structure to be completed in 1810 followed by the southern and eastern piers that were completed by 1820. The harbour was now enclosed by the 700 foot east pier and the 950 foot west and south pier, leaving an entrance that was 120 feet wide between the ends of the east and south pier. These structures can still be seen today and remain *in situ*. The East Pier and Lighthouse at the end of the Harbour Outer Pier are Grade II Listed Buildings.

The new harbour initially brought a small increase in trade to Folkestone as well as attracting new residents, but the problems with silt deposits continued and made the operation of the harbour very costly. The Folkestone Harbour Company invested heavily in the harbour and removing the silt but with little success, and by 1842 the company was declared bankrupt and the harbour was put up for sale. It was then purchased by the South Eastern Railway Company (SER) for £18,000. SER at the time were constructing their line from London to Dover that would reach Folkestone in 1843. They now aimed to promote their interests in its own harbour at Folkestone and were keen to launch cross channel ferry services at the earliest opportunity.

The arrival of the railway in Folkestone in 1843 saw the town grow as a substantially popular seaside resort. It quickly became one of the most fashionable coastal towns during the Edwardian and Victorian periods and offered increasingly popular seaside pleasure gardens, amusements and amenities. A number of the Edwardian and Victorian buildings from the heydays of Folkestone as a fashionable seaside resort still survive today and primarily constitute the Leas area. These include the Leas Pavilion, Bandstand, a number of hotels and the Lower Leas Coastal Garden.

To begin with, the line between Folkestone Junction (later Folkestone East) station and the Folkestone Harbour only carried freight traffic as the first swing bridge was not constructed until 1847 and a passenger station was not available at the harbour until later in 1849. SER were also unable to run its own passenger ferry service to

the continent and so in 1843 services had to be sub-chartered from the New Commercial Steam Packet Company. The first ferry boat service to cross the channel from Folkestone to Boulogne embarked on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1843 in the steamer 'City of Boulogne'. Local transport was offered between the mainline station and the harbour, and the launch proved to be a popular event that was viewed by crowds of people congregating on the south pier. Later that same day two further ferry services used the Folkestone port; the Sir William Wallace carrying 75 passengers and the Emerald which arrived in Folkestone with 142 passengers.

The chartered steam vessels from the New Commercial Steam Packet Company proved to be unsatisfactory and so the SER directors formed the South Eastern and Continental Steam Packet Company and ordered eight new vessels to operate their Folkestone to Boulogne ferry service. This continued until 1853 when SER were granted permission by Parliament to operate its own steamers. These early crossings from Folkestone to Boulogne crossed the channel in 1 hour and 45 minutes, and once the railway had reached Boulogne in 1848 the total journey time between London and Paris was initially 12 hours and 30 minutes. This would continue to shorten as methods of transport improved, and the Folkestone cross channel port rose in popularity.

As mentioned above, passenger traffic to the Folkestone Harbour was not initially available via the Branch Line from the Folkestone mainline and only freight traffic operated until 1847. The first swing bridge that connected the viaduct to the reclaimed land as well as to the first sections of the station and warehouse were completed in 1847. The Folkestone Harbour station was then completed and open to passengers in 1849 and became the first international rail-sea-rail service between London and Paris. At this time the first section of the Harbour Arm had also been laid but it would be completed later in 1904. Passenger traffic using the cross-channel port then began to increase as its popularity grew, although there was constant pressure from its competition at the Dover port. Statistics show that in 1854 a total of 31,594 passengers crossed from Folkestone to Boulogne whereas 12,132 passengers crossed from the neighbouring port at Dover to Calais. The Calais link was initially unpopular as the railway links to Paris were long and complicated. It was not until 1867 that a direct line from Calais to Boulogne was opened which gave much more efficient access from Calais to Paris, the line being 4 miles shorter than from Boulogne and so the popularity of the Dover to Calais route surpassed Folkestone to Boulogne.

The introduction of larger steamers had brought up old problems with the Folkestone Harbour relating to the continuous silting of the area. This had meant that ferry services from Folkestone were subject to tidal conditions and made crossings unreliable as well as infrequent. In order to counter this problem, a new low water pier was constructed in 1861 although the south pier was still preferred as this new pier was some distance from the Harbour station.

Reduced services continued through the Franco Prussian War of 1870-71 but this was quickly followed by a substantial peak in passenger traffic that resulted in the line at the harbour being extended towards the new pier after 1876. The new pier was lengthened between 1881 and 1883 which ultimately meant an end to services from the old south pier. Boulogne was also making improvements to its port that

meant a more efficient service, particularly for increased trade. By 1884 the journey time between London and Boulogne was reduced to 8 hours and then in 1886 a proper timetabled service from Folkestone was introduced putting an end to the unreliable services reliant on tidal conditions. By 1891 the journey time between London and Boulogne had again decreased to 7 hours and 30 minutes.

Continued modifications were made to the Folkestone Harbour in order to cope with the volumes of passenger and goods traffic. In 1893 the original swing bridge was replaced by a second structure that would last for a further 37 years until the harbour station had to be extended again. In 1930 the swing bridge was removed and replaced with the present structure that is now a Grade II Listed Building. The new pier (now the Harbour Arm) was extended and widened between 1897 and 1904 when it was finally completed, and the Folkestone Harbour was now as we know it today. In the same year, the French Ambassador opened the again extended station which now included further facilities such as cloakrooms, customs halls, a ticket office and refreshment amenities.

### ***Folkestone Harbour during World War I***

The Folkestone Harbour played an important role during the First World War between 1914 and 1918. Passenger services were closed in November of 1915 and would not reopen again until March of 1919. However, the ferry services continued to operate and transported predominantly troops and Red Cross workers to and from France and the Frontline. The first wounded soldiers travelling back to Britain arrived in August of 1914, shortly after the Battle of Mons. A few months later, Folkestone Harbour played an important role in the evacuation of large numbers of Belgium soldiers. Folkestone was well placed for the evacuation of the wounded as the nearby Kent & Canterbury Hospital was served by the Elham Valley Railway Line whilst other soldiers were transferred to the Shorncliffe Camp and other convalescent homes in Sandgate. It has been estimated that between 1914 and 1919, 9.7 million British and Allied troops used the cross-channel crossing at Folkestone Harbour in addition to approximately 850,000 Red Cross workers. A further 120,000 refugees landed from Europe and Folkestone Harbour was also the preferred route through which post from the Western Front was delivered.

During the First World War, Folkestone Harbour saw around 10,500 ship and 7000 train movements for military purposes in addition to 8000 commercial ships and 8500 trains handled by SER. A massive amount of freight also passed through the port on its way to the Western Front. In 1915 the 'Mole Café' that served a free buffet to soldiers, sailors and Red Cross members was set up. It was run by volunteers, the most well-known among these being Margaret Ann Jeffery and Florence Augusta Jeffery. The sisters were later awarded the Order of the British Empire, the Queen Elizabeth Medal (Belgium) and the Medal of Gratitude (France) for their services during the war. Visitor books that were kept at the cafe were signed by over 43,500 people and can now be viewed in the Folkestone Library and the Maidstone Archives. This again demonstrates the sheer volume of people that used the Folkestone Harbour during the First World War and the important role that it played throughout these years as a cross channel port.

### **Folkestone Harbour after 1919**

Passenger services were re-established at Folkestone Harbour in 1919 and ferry services to Boulogne continued. In 1923 South Eastern Railway (SER) and London, Chatham & Dover Railway (LCDR) became constituents of Southern Rail (SR) and so Folkestone Harbour was now under new ownership. Ferry services between Folkestone and Boulogne were predominantly operated by the twin turbine steamers *Biarritz* and the *Maid of Orleans*. Passenger traffic was closed again during the Second World War between 1939 and 1945 and was not reopened until later in 1945 due to Dover still being in use by the military at this time. Folkestone Harbour again played an important wartime role primarily in the evacuation of troops. Two major evacuations that the harbour was involved in were *Operation Pied Piper* which involved the evacuation of Britain's cities at the start of the war in 1939, and the Dunkirk evacuations in 1940. It has been estimated that over a 9 day period during the Dunkirk evacuations, 35,000 troops and 9000 refugees were landed at Folkestone Harbour and 64 trains left the station to move people on.

Passenger services to Ostend were re-established at Folkestone in 1945 and then to Boulogne and Calais in 1946. However, passenger and freight traffic would now gradually decline as the limitations of Folkestone Harbour were again becoming more apparent. In particular, the restricted water depth of Folkestone Harbour was becoming an issue and also a reason for little investment for the future. In 1955 no-passport day excursions were reinstated which saw an increase in day-trippers that were served by 3 steamers; the *Isle of Thanet*, *Canterbury* and *Maid of Orleans*. Multiple cross channel routes were now in use and had experienced a massive growth in roll-on-roll-off vehicle traffic. The ports of Dover, Calais and Boulogne all had link-spans that connected shore to ship and made embarkation far more efficient. Folkestone Harbour was now struggling as it had no link-span and was in need of investment. Cars had to be craned onto a ferry which was far slower and less efficient than its neighbouring port Dover, who in 1966 had opened its third link-span of a double-decker design allowing for far more efficient loading and embarkation. Freight vehicles were also increasing in size and weight and were looking for ferries that could accommodate their new needs.

An investment of £9 million undoubtedly saved the harbour as it resulted in the construction of its own link-span which was operational by 1972. The Boulogne service was reinstated to a daily service with services to Calais as well as twice-nightly freight crossings to Ostend for the first time in the harbour's history. New vehicle ferries, the *Hengist* and *Horsa*, were provided and in the first month alone in 1972 Folkestone Harbour handled 75,000 passengers, 4151 cars, 51 coaches and 397 freight vehicles. Dover had remained the main car ferry link to Boulogne, but with Sealink now focusing the bulk of the traffic towards Calais, Folkestone again became the primary port to Boulogne.

In 1980 the long history of Channel packet boats at Folkestone was ended with the final passenger steamer, *Caesarea*, completing the last crossing between Folkestone and Boulogne. Vehicle ferries were now the primary mode of transport and continued on through the 1980s. In 1984 all Folkestone to Calais crossings were transferred to Dover and the nightly Ostend freight sailings also followed in 1985. From 1985 onwards Folkestone provided crossings to Boulogne only.



1984 saw the privatisation of Sealink UK Ltd when it was purchased by Sea Containers Ltd. The new Sealink British Ferries were confident of a prosperous future and under this new management the traffic records for the Folkestone to Boulogne crossing were broken. The threat of the Channel Tunnel was now looming, but this burst in traffic seemed promising. Later in 1990 Sealink British Ferries was sold by Sea Containers to Stena Line of Sweden, but the company's ownership of the Folkestone Harbour was excluded. The continued competition from the Dover to Calais link brought an end to the Folkestone to Boulogne route when in 1991 Stena Line announced its closure. A further lifeline however was given to Folkestone Harbour when Sea Containers purchased Hoverspeed in 1987 and subsequent investments in the high speed Seacat catamarans meant that a high speed Seacat service between Folkestone and Boulogne was established in 1992. This became immensely popular for day-trippers and the continuation of the service relied heavily on these short excursions as well as cross channel duty free shoppers.

In 1999 the duty-free abolition came into effect and passenger figures dropped dramatically along with the financial viability of the service. In 2000 Sea Containers closed the Folkestone to Boulogne cross channel link and for the first time in its history, the harbour no longer acted as a cross channel port. Heavy competition from other neighbouring ports and the construction of the Channel Tunnel ultimately ended the cross-channel ferry services in Folkestone. However, the harbour and many of the associated buildings relating to the ports function as a cross channel port still survive and have continued to contribute to a unique local character. In 2004 the Folkestone Harbour was sold and is now owned by the newly inaugurated Folkestone Harbour Company. An extensive programme of redevelopment is now underway in the hopes of regenerating the area whilst incorporating and enhancing its important maritime heritage.

### ***The Folkestone Harbour Development and Folkestone Seafront Project***

In 2004 the current Folkestone Harbour Company purchased the Folkestone Harbour from previous owners Sea Containers, and then acquired further land on the Folkestone seafront in 2007. By 2004 much of the harbour's infrastructure had deteriorated to a point where it was no longer safe to use or economically viable. The last ferry service had left the port in 2000 and the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line had been out of use for a similar length of time being officially closed in 2014. Following the new ownership, a renewed vision for the Folkestone Harbour led to ambitious plans to redevelop the area and intensive consultation was subsequently undertaken. In 2015 the Folkestone Seafront Development Project received Outline Planning Permission from the District Council and regeneration work on the Harbour Arm had already made significant progress. Extensive regeneration work is now planned for the wider area that will incorporate features of the maritime heritage and highlight Folkestone Harbour's history as a popular cross channel port.

### ***Folkestone Harbour Arm***

The Folkestone Harbour Arm has historically been equipped as an industrial site for the handling of exports and imports as well as acting as the terminus for the cross-channel ferry services. By the time that the Folkestone Harbour Company took ownership of the harbour area in 2004, little maintenance work had been carried out for a number of decades and so the harbour's infrastructure had deteriorated to a point where it could no longer serve an economic purpose. Ambitions to rejuvenate

the harbour and wider seafront area according to plans conceived by world renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell are now looking at regenerating the area whilst also incorporating the valuable heritage assets that contribute to the distinctive local maritime character. Renovation of the Folkestone Harbour Arm, costing around £3.5 million, has been an important first step in this regeneration work and has put Folkestone seafront on the map as an upcoming area. Significantly, the development of the Folkestone Harbour and seafront will also link to other important areas that are seeing extensive regeneration work currently in Folkestone, most notably the Creative Quarter. All of these projects are promoting the positive regeneration of areas and their heritage to create better places to live, work and visit which is raising the profile of Folkestone as a cultural and tourism attraction.

With regards to the Folkestone Harbour Arm specifically; intensive work to restore extensive deterioration of the harbour's stonework, wooden enclosures and canopy ironworks has taken place. The restoration work has been done sympathetically so as to highlight the valuable heritage assets here and the harbours past as a popular cross channel port. The Harbour Arm still supports the local working fishing industry and has become a prominent example of regeneration within Folkestone and the wider District. Various small, independent businesses are now accommodated along the pier, and these include food, drink and entertainment amenities. The majority of the produce provided on the Harbour Arm is locally sourced to support local industries such as fish from the trawlers in the adjoining harbour, vegetables from local farms and bread from local bakeries. The 'Mole Café' has also be reinstated which constitutes an important part of the harbour's history during the First World War. Seasonal events are planned on the Harbour Arm and it is hoped that an onsite bakery, brewery and regular farmer's market can be established in the future.

As the Harbour Arm no longer serves an industrial function, the site has been made accessible to the general public. It was officially opened in late 2015 and then completed its first summer season in 2016 which proved to be a popular attraction for both local residents and visitors to the area. The Harbour Arm has a growing reputation as a cultural hub as well as a popular visitor attraction that will play an important role in the wider regeneration of the area. The derelict harbour railway station remains fenced-off to visitors and is under the responsibility of the Network Rail. It is hoped that in the future restoration work may again make this area accessible so that visitors are able to appreciate the heritage here relating to the railway and operation of the Folkestone Harbour. The swing bridge and viaduct are a Grade II Listed Building and so are afforded statutory protection. It is hoped that they can be incorporated into the development of the harbour area providing an access route for visitors whilst also allowing visitors to directly experience this heritage asset and reconnecting them to the harbours past as a popular cross channel port. The Folkestone Harbour Company have also agreed to preserve the Harbour Master's House, platform canopies, signal box and 'Bullion Room' in the development of the harbour area which will further allow for the representation of the harbours important cross channel and maritime heritage.

### ***The Folkestone Seafront Development***

As mentioned previously, the current Folkestone Harbour Company purchased the Folkestone Harbour in 2004 and then acquired further land along the seafront in 2007. Outline Planning Permission has been given for the development and

regeneration of the harbour as well as seafront area in Folkestone and work is now actively underway.

The Folkestone Seafront project aims to build on extensive regeneration work that is already taking place within Folkestone including the Creative Quarter, the Folkestone Triennial public art exhibition and Mark Sargeant's Rocksalt restaurant. The development looks to create a high-quality environment in a unique coastal setting that will make the harbour area of Folkestone more attractive to both visitors and residents whilst also benefitting the local economy. The seafront quarter that is planned will provide a selection of leisure amenities including new restaurants, shopping facilities, public spaces and recreational amenities in addition to new housing. A number of significant regeneration projects are currently underway in Folkestone town and have already attracted national and international attention. Folkestone's high-speed links to London as well as to the continent make it an important coastal town and one that is adapting and going through transitional developments that aim to make it a more attractive and vibrant place to live, work and visit.

Decades of decline along the seafront are now being reversed, and regeneration projects are changing the area into a vibrant and attractive place. Regeneration projects that have either been completed or are still active include the emergence of the Creative Quarter in the old town which is providing a new community and creative outlet, restoration work on the Folkestone Harbour Arm including the Lighthouse which is a Grade II Listed Building as well as other buildings, and infrastructure along the seafront area such as the Smokehouse and Rocksalt restaurant.

The unique maritime heritage of Folkestone is being incorporated and enhanced as part of these projects which will allow for current and future generations to reconnect to this important maritime history. Significant to the heritage of Folkestone as a cross channel port are various structures on the Folkestone Harbour that are either Listed Buildings or are being preserved by the Folkestone Harbour Company and regenerated as part of the new development work. These include the Harbour Masters House, signal box, platform canopies and 'Bullion Room' which will be enhanced to provide a heritage experience of the Folkestone Harbour. It is recognised that the Folkestone Harbour holds a rich and varied history of the maritime heritage of Folkestone and their inclusion in these new developments is a positive example of heritage regeneration.

### **3. Description of the Heritage Assets**

There are a number of heritage assets that illustrate Folkestone's role as a previously prominent and popular cross channel port. Some of these assets relate directly to the ports function as a cross channel port and others will be mentioned as they contribute to the overall function of the Folkestone Harbour. The majority of these are undesignated and are affected by the extensive redevelopment of the Folkestone Harbour and seafront area. It is therefore uncertain in some cases how various assets will be affected and whether they will be preserved and enhanced as part of the development for current and future generations. The Folkestone Harbour Company has recognised the rich and varied heritage at the Folkestone Harbour and so has agreed to preserve a number of undesignated assets as part of the

development. There are also designated assets that will be explored here and are afforded statutory protection.

### ***Folkestone Harbour Ferry Services***

The Sealink Ferry booking office building is currently extant at the Folkestone Harbour and is currently used as an office and café. Recently parts of the building have also been used as a venue for the Folkestone's Fishing History and Heritage Museum. The building is not designated but does highlight the cross-channel services that were once provided from Folkestone Harbour. The condition of the building has deteriorated since falling out of use as the ferry booking office and permission has now been granted for its demolition.

The site of the goods yard is currently used as a car park, but the land will be used for residences as part of the harbour and seafront development.

### ***Folkestone Harbour***

The Folkestone Harbour is integral to the town's identity as a prominent coastal town that has seen a flourishing fishing industry and continued international trade. The arrival of the railway in 1843 contributed to the town's rise in popularity as a seaside resort and then also as a prominent cross channel port. The Folkestone Harbour Branch Line that was opened to passenger traffic in 1849 meant that Folkestone became the first town to offer an international rail-sea-rail service to the continent and a popular cross channel service followed for some years.

Throughout the history of Folkestone as a cross channel port, competition from neighbouring ports such as Dover have heavily impacted the success of the Folkestone continental crossings, and with the construction of the Channel Tunnel ferry services from Folkestone ultimately came to an end. There are however a number of remaining structures at Folkestone Harbour that attests to the rich heritage of Folkestone as a cross channel port. The majority of these are undesignated and have fallen into various states of disrepair since the closure of ferry and railway services at the Folkestone Harbour. Those that are designated are afforded statutory protection and some other assets have been identified as valuable by the Folkestone Harbour Company and will be preserved as part of the Folkestone Seafront development. There are significant opportunities for the interpretation and enhancement of these maritime heritage assets as part of the extensive regeneration work that has now started in the area. It is hoped that the preservation of various heritage assets on the Folkestone Harbour will create a 'heritage square' and reconnect the area and people that live and visit here to the rich maritime heritage of the Folkestone port.

- The **Folkestone Harbour Arm** is extant and is being actively regenerated as a cultural and tourism attraction. A number of small, independent businesses providing food, drink and entertainment amenities are now accommodated along the pier and completed their first full summer season in 2016. Extensive restoration work has been done to the stonework, wooden enclosures and canopy ironworks as they had deteriorated over decades of neglect. The Harbour Arm is no longer an industrial site and so is accessible to the public and continues to support the local fishing industry.

The Folkestone Harbour Arm is not a designated structure but has been sympathetically restored and largely remains as it was when it was completed in 1904. Restoration work is still ongoing at the site and its popularity as an attraction for residents as well as visitors continues to grow. It will form an important part of the Folkestone Seafront development.

- The **Lighthouse at the end of the Folkestone Harbour Outer Pier** is a **Grade II Listed Building**. It was constructed between 1897 and 1904 as part of the extension to the outer pier at Folkestone Harbour. As the port grew in popularity a pier was built between 1861 and 1863 in a south eastern direction extending from the horn. It was later damaged in a storm during 1877 and had to be rebuilt and also extended into deeper water between 1881 and 1883 in order to cater for larger vessels. Plans of the pier in 1882 show an elaborate lighthouse at the south eastern end but in 1897 the pier was again extended to incorporate tracks for moving cranes. The earlier lighthouse was replaced by the current lighthouse that has now been designated.

The lighthouse is constructed from granite blocks in a tapered cylindrical tower that comprises two-storeys with a deep moulded plinth and cornice rising above that is incorporated into the raised south wall of the pier. The lantern is centrally placed and made of glazed metal in a cylindrical shape. There are inscriptions relating to the piers construction to the west of the lighthouse that read "*This pier was commenced by the South Eastern Railway Company on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1897 and completed by the South East and Chatham Railway Company on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1904. Coode, Son and Matthews Engineers. William Rigby Contractors.*" An adjoining panel also reads "*Stone laid by Paul Gambon on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1904.*"

It has been restored as part of the Harbour Arm regeneration project and is now used as a champagne bar.

The lighthouse was designated as a Grade II Listed Building due to the quality of design and craftsmanship exhibited and compares well to other examples of late nineteenth century lighthouses. It remains as a beacon of the harbour and highlights the rich maritime heritage of the Folkestone Harbour and the cross-channel services that previously ran from here.

- The **East Pier** at Folkestone Harbour is also a **Grade II Listed Building** and constitutes a valuable heritage asset relating to the harbour and its operation as a port. It was originally designed by Thomas Telford in 1829 and was built later that year by the Commissioners of Jetties of Folkestone though the original design by Telford was never completed. Plans for a stone harbour at Folkestone had been produced before the Act was finally passed by Parliament in 1807 for the construction of a formal harbour at Folkestone. However, there were initially insufficient funds to build the harbour despite a loan from the Exchequer in 1818 of £10,000. The plans produced by Thomas Telford in 1829 divided the harbour into a tidal harbour and a wet dock and scouring basin that would be accessed by a lock with harbour walls of Kentish ragstone placed at an angle. Telford had proposed using a masonry lining on

to sheeting piles to the piers in order to prevent shingle moving through the drystone construction.

The Folkestone Harbour Company was unable to afford the work to construct the pier and so it was completed by the Commissioners of Jetties of Folkestone who were able to raise the funds from duties on coal. The eastern pier followed the line shown in Telford's plan in order to provide a coastal defence, but the outer masonry was never built.

The pier is attached to the eastern end of the Folkestone Harbour and runs diagonally to the south-west leaving a narrow harbour entrance. It is constructed from blocks of Kentish ragstone that are laid diagonally without any mortar. The southern end has been encased in concrete, probably after the storm in 1877 which caused some damage to the pier. The pier is 360 feet long and is approximately 12 feet high at low tide. It has largely survived as it was when it was first constructed in 1829 with the exception of concrete additions following the storms of 1877.

The pier has been designated due to its considerable architectural qualities and being of comparable date to other listed examples. It was designed by a distinguished engineer, Thomas Telford, and has been built following his plans although the additional outer masonry was never added. It has also remained largely unaltered since 1829 and so constitutes a valuable example of this type of structure. It remains as an important heritage asset as part of the Folkestone Harbour and relating to the port as a popular cross channel embarkation point.

### ***Folkestone Harbour Branch Line***

There are a number of heritage assets that relate to the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line and Folkestone Harbour railway station that have played an important role in the Folkestone Harbour's function as a cross channel port.

- Platforms and canopies have been restored as part of the harbour development with the 'down' track still in place.
- Signal box remains at the north end of the platform in excellent condition with all equipment also remaining.
- Small remnant of SER station building at the north end of the 'down' platform.
- The **Viaduct and Swing Bridge** are extant and are designated as a **Grade II Listed Building**. When the Folkestone Harbour was sold to the South Eastern Railway Company in 1843 the plan was for Folkestone to rival Dover as a cross channel port for steam packets to France. In order to facilitate this, a new railway line that connected to the Folkestone mainline was built and extended to the harbour which now became home to much railway infrastructure. By January 1844 the railway viaduct was built and carried the railway at the lower end of the Branch Line into the harbour. The swing bridge was added and completed by 1847 which allowed trains to cross onto the

southern harbour arm. The viaduct was designed by the Chief Engineer of the line William Cubitt.

The railway line was initially used for freight traffic until the harbour station was completed in 1849 and then the Branch Line was opened to passenger traffic. This established the first international rail-sea-rail service between London and Paris and quickly became a popular cross channel crossing.

The original swing bridge was replaced in 1893 to allow for heavier trains to cross to the harbour. This lasted for 37 years and was again replaced in 1930 with the structure that survives today. This bridge was designed by Southern Railway Chief Engineer George Ellson OBE MICE and continued to play an important role at the Folkestone Harbour until the National Rail commenced the process of officially closing the line in 2009.

The viaduct consists of 13 segmentally-headed red brick arches which cross approximately two thirds of the harbour (2 are hidden by jetty access ramps); the swing bridge spans the remaining distance to the south. The swing bridge is constructed from steel and comprises 3 main longitudinal girders. It sits on a brick base with stone quoins that are original to the 1893 bridge. The extant swing bridge was swung by an electric capstan with hand operated lifting and locking mechanisms.

The structures have been designated due to their architectural interest as part of integral railway infrastructure that facilitated the international rail-sea-rail cross channel services. The viaduct is also a particularly unusual design and these two structures further contribute to a group of assets that comprise the Folkestone Harbour; namely the East Pier and Lighthouse at the end of the Outer Pier. Together these assets highlight architectural and engineering achievements that allowed for a prominent and popular cross channel service to the continent. The two structures have been incorporated into the Folkestone Harbour and Seafront development and form a linear park for cycling and walking.

#### **4. Statement of Significance**

The Folkestone Harbour has valuable heritage assets that relate to and illustrate its history as a prominent cross channel port. These assets can also attest to other major historical events that the harbour has played an important role in such as the movement of troops and other wartime personnel during the First and Second World Wars as well as the arrival of the railway in Folkestone that led to the establishment of the first international rail-sea-rail service to the continent. The Folkestone Harbour heritage assets collectively represent a distinctive local character of Folkestone as a coastal town that over the centuries has been used for international trade, supported a strong local fishing industry and also provided links to the continent since 1843. The harbour and seafront area is now under extensive development in the hopes of rejuvenating a part of Folkestone that has been in relative decline for some years, and this includes its heritage assets. Important regeneration work is already underway, such as the Creative Quarter and Harbour Arm development, and the value of the heritage assets in enhancing these newly planned environments has

been recognised by bodies involved. Overall, the heritage assets relating to the Folkestone harbour and its historic role as a cross channel port constitute **moderate to considerable** significance as they are integral to the local character and are also important examples of architectural and engineering work that ultimately provided the first international rail-sea-rail service.

### ***Evidential Value***

The heritage assets relating to Folkestone Harbour and its past role as a cross channel port are largely extant and so there is little potential for any further evidence through archaeological or historical research. The history of Folkestone Harbour is well documented and compared with other assets explored in this strategy it does not have a substantial time depth and so cannot provide further evidence for earlier human activity at Folkestone. The harbour has only been out of use for a fairly short time; the last ferry service leaving Folkestone Harbour in 2000 and the Branch Line being officially closed in 2014. However, the assets have fallen into states of disrepair and there is hope that they will be regenerated as part of new developments currently underway at the Folkestone Harbour and seafront. They still provide valuable evidence for an important chapter in Folkestone's history as a coastal town, namely the arrival of the railway that then led to the first rail-sea-rail service to the continent. Cross channel services are still provided from Folkestone via the Channel Tunnel, and the assets at the Folkestone Harbour represent an important collection of structures that provide evidence for a prominent cross channel ferry service as well as being integral to the local character.

### ***Historical Value***

The heritage assets at Folkestone Harbour constitute an important collection of structures that illustrate an important history of cross channel services as well as the growth of the town as a coastal resort. They are integral to the local character and continue to tell the story of the rich maritime heritage here. The role that this heritage has played in various significant historical events is also evident, such as the transportation of wartime personnel during the First and Second World Wars. The arrival of the railway in Folkestone was also an important event for the town and would later allow for the operation of the first rail-sea-rail service to the continent. The survival of these valuable assets continues to allow people to reconnect to these stories and important histories. Extensive regeneration work is currently underway at the harbour and seafront and will look to incorporate a number of these assets into the newly planned environments due to the recognition of their significance to the local area and community. They will enable residents and visitors to connect to the important histories that have played out here as well as the rich maritime heritage of Folkestone.

### ***Aesthetic Value***

The majority of the structures from Folkestone's Harbour are extant and can still illustrate the recent history of the harbour as a cross channel port. Extensive regeneration work is underway and has already rejuvenated the Harbour Arm, including the lighthouse at the end of the outer pier which is a Grade II Listed Building and reflects the history of the pier as an industrial site for cross channel travel and movement of goods. The lighthouse remains in its original condition and is now used as a champagne bar as part of the food and drink amenities that are offered along the Harbour Arm. It remains as an aesthetic reminder of the history of



the pier and provides a sensory experience of the past. The swing bridge and viaduct are to be used for a new linear park leading to the harbour,

### ***Communal Value***

The heritage assets at the Folkestone Harbour are highly valued by the local community and a number of community groups are working to enhance and reinstate parts of the harbour and the services that it used to provide. The assets form an integral part of the local character and also represent an important collection of structures that invoke collective memory of the working cross channel port. Local groups are working to collect and catalogue living memories of the Folkestone cross channel port as it is a significant part of the local identity of Folkestone as a coastal town and the assets relating to this heritage, both physical and remembered are highly valued by its local community. A number of local people were involved or employed to work on the harbour, and others have shared memories of the working port having lived in the town for some time. The assets are therefore also significant for their nostalgic value as well as for their importance to the local community. It is hoped that the new development projects will again make many of these assets more accessible to the general public so that they can again be experienced in order to reconnect people to the rich maritime heritage of the Folkestone cross channel port.

## **5. Vulnerabilities**

Whilst the heritage assets explored in this theme have only fallen out of use within the last few decades, they are still vulnerable to a number of factors. As has been illustrated in the previous section, they are highly valued by the local community and are also significant in illustrating an important chapter in the history of the Folkestone Harbour as a cross channel port. They therefore constitute a valuable collection of heritage assets that are integral to the local character.

The last ferry service to leave the harbour was in 2000, and the process to officially close the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line began in 2009 and finally ended in 2014. Since cross channel and railway services have ceased to operate from the Folkestone Harbour, the structures relating to these functions have become increasingly vulnerable to deterioration through neglect and redundancy. A number of the assets have remained out of use and so have decayed to a point where they are no longer safe to use or economically viable. This is particularly relevant to the structural remains from the Folkestone Harbour Branch Line that remains *in situ* but is deteriorating due to neglect.

As an example, the signal box at the north end of the harbour station platform survives in good condition with all the original mechanisms still in place and will be retained as part of the Harbour development. This offers a valuable opportunity to incorporate a heritage asset *in situ* into the new development and provide a direct experience of the harbours history for visitors. However, other assets here have continued to fall into states of disrepair and may now consequently be lost as part of the development work. Though some have been reused, the deterioration of their condition has resulted in the loss of historical character and their overall value as a heritage asset relating to this theme.

Of the heritage assets highlighted in this paper, it is evident that a number of the assets are undesignated and so are not afforded that same statutory protection as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other types of designated sites. Whilst these assets have a high communal value and are also important to the distinctive local character, they remain vulnerable to neglect, degradation or complete loss. This is especially relevant now with the extensive development work that is now underway for this area. Local Lists can help in recognising undesignated sites as important heritage assets and they may then merit consideration in planning decision by Local Authority although this has yet to be considered for these assets. The Folkestone Harbour Company has undertaken extensive work to restore the station and provide a viable use for this in the overall development. It is recognised that these heritage assets have historical as well as communal value and are significant to the rich maritime heritage of Folkestone. Other assets, such as the Harbour Master's House, remain vulnerable particularly if development plans change as many are still undesignated and so will not receive statutory protection.

Climate change is also posing a threat to the Folkestone Harbour heritage as flood risk is a constant hazard. Historically Folkestone Harbour has experienced problems with becoming badly silted which would further add to problems with flooding if climate change continues to affect sea levels. Work is being done to provide coastal defences but as these assets are in a very vulnerable position on the seafront, they remain exposed to flooding risk and damage as a consequence.

The assets are further vulnerable due to a general lack of accessibility and overall isolation from other parts of the main town. The Folkestone Harbour Arm has recently been renovated and was opened to the general public in late 2015 due to it no longer being an industrial site for the first time in its history. Whilst this has proved popular with local people and visitors (80,000 people visited in 2015), the harbour and seafront site remains geographically isolated from the town centre as well as the Leas area. As part of the overall development, improvements in connectivity to the area has been improved through the regeneration of the Old High Street and Tontine Street and through new bus services.

As an area that is now being developed and regenerated, it is hoped that the newly planned environment will re-establish the seafront as the heart of Folkestone and attract new businesses, residents and visitors to the area.

## **6. Opportunities**

There are a number of important opportunities arising from the heritage explored in this theme particularly due to the current plans for development which will aim to incorporate a number of the assets. The Folkestone Harbour and seafront area has, until recent years, been in general decline for a number of years and many of the heritage assets in this theme had fallen into states of disrepair and redundancy. As part of the Harbour and Seafront Development, \$3.5 million has been spent on restoring the Harbour Arm with further investment being spent restoring the Harbour Station, viaduct and swing bridge. This investment has ensured that heritage assets are being reused for business and recreation. These illustrate how such investment provides valuable opportunities for positive heritage regeneration as part of the new development.

The Folkestone Harbour has a rich and varied maritime heritage that is clearly illustrated through its heritage assets. The planned development work at Folkestone Harbour and seafront aims to incorporate a number of the extant heritage assets in order to enhance the diversity of character and experience in this area. The development plans look to provide a high-quality environment to work, visit and live and it is recognised that incorporating the heritage assets into this will not only reconnect people to the rich maritime heritage here but also enhance the quality of the development. This will also present an important opportunity to re-establish the Folkestone seafront as the heart of the town and encourage increased tourism, revitalise local economy and attract new residents.

Important regeneration work is already underway in other areas nearby such as the Creative Quarter and Folkestone Townscape Heritage Initiative. Therefore, there are important opportunities for the development on the Folkestone Harbour and seafront to link in with these projects to create a more diverse and rich experience for people working, living and visiting here. In drawing in more visitors and residents, it will also benefit the heritage assets in raising their profile and increasing the number of people wanting to come and appreciate the rich maritime heritage here. Innovative means of heritage regeneration and interpretation are being researched by the Folkestone Harbour Company to create a unique heritage offering that will continue to attract visitors. This may also offer important opportunities for the long-term preservation of these assets as they will constitute important parts of the new environment here and remain as integral parts of the local character. There are already a number of local community groups working to preserve, enhance and promote this heritage and so their work may be realised if awareness and appreciation of the heritage here is improved by the development work. For example, the 'Mole Café' on the Harbour Arm makes reference to the café established by local women in World War I for servicemen and nurses from across the British Empire, before sailing across the Channel to the front line.

There will also be opportunities for improved accessibility to the heritage assets at Folkestone Harbour again as part of the regeneration work planned. The Folkestone Harbour area is currently in an isolated location set apart from the town centre and other popular parts of Folkestone such as the Leas. Particularly with the closure of the Leas Lift recently (January 2017), access to the harbour and seafront area needs to be improved so as to draw in more people who may currently be unaware of the valuable heritage relating to the historic Folkestone cross channel port. With regeneration work in areas close to the Folkestone Harbour such as the Creative Quarter, opportunities to link to these areas will provide a high-quality environment that can support and attract people back into this area. This may be in the way of new businesses, increased tourism or new residents. As part of the development, new infrastructure will be provided that will offer accessible routes to this area as well as linking up with other prominent areas such as the Leas and Old Town.

Plans to utilise the swing bridge and viaduct as a 'linier park' and an access route for pedestrians to access the Harbour Arm are underway. These assets are Grade II Listed Buildings and have significant historical, aesthetic and communal value. Their reuse will maintain the historical features of the structures and so provide a sensory experience for visitors and a direct way to reconnect with the history of Folkestone Harbour. This is an important opportunity for positive heritage regeneration and also

provides an authentic heritage experience that will enhance the newly developed site as well as its rich maritime heritage.

## **7. Current Activities**

There are a number of local community groups that are dedicated to the preservation, enhancement and promotion of the rich maritime heritage of Folkestone's Harbour and its historic cross channel port. As has already been explored, there is also extensive development work underway in the area which is aiming to regenerate and revitalise Folkestone's Harbour and seafront area.

The Pavement Pounders are a local community interest company that undertake a number of community projects to record and preserve the heritage of Folkestone as well as promoting the significant benefits that heritage can have on health and wellbeing. Between 2014 and 2016 the group worked with members of the local community to collect and record memories of Folkestone's maritime heritage which became known as the *Between the Storms* project. It is now a collection of audio, written and visual memories from local people of their experiences and memories of Folkestone's marine heritage that can be accessed online. This was an important project that has created a highly valuable resource of remembered and experienced heritage relating to Folkestone's busy cross channel port. Not only does this highlight the significant communal value that is placed on the heritage assets at Folkestone Harbour, but it is also an important way to engage with the local community and encourage communal involvement and pride in local heritage. This has significant benefits for the heritage as well as for the wider communal and social wellbeing. A number of the people that contributed to the project worked on the ferries or on the harbour and so it is a powerful resource that can reconnect people to this past.

The Folkestone Harbour Company was given Outline Planning Permission in 2015 for plans to redevelop the Folkestone seafront area. Restoration work has already taken place on the Folkestone Harbour Arm which now hosts a vibrant mixture of food, drink and entertainment amenities and is growing as a cultural and tourist attraction. This will be part of a larger regeneration of the harbour and seafront area which is also hoped to link in with other important regeneration work such as the Creative Quarter, Rocksalt restaurant and other Folkestone artwork projects. The project ultimately aims to create a thriving seafront quarter that builds upon the substantial regeneration of the wider area to establish a high environment in which to live, work and visit. A selection of public amenities will be provided as well as residential housing to build on the unique coastal setting whilst also incorporating the valuable maritime heritage on the harbour.

Whilst many of the heritage assets are undesignated, the Folkestone Harbour Company have stated that a number of these assets will be preserved as part of the development. The development will create opportunities for the long-term preservation of various heritage assets as they will remain as integral parts of the local character and landscape. Innovative ways to incorporate, interpret and promote the heritage are also being sought so that new and diverse experiences of the heritage can be had. The development work has attracted a great deal of national and international attention and hopes to re-establish the Folkestone seafront and the heart of the town. This will be an important step for the heritage here that will once again be accessible and experienced by visitors and residents alike.

## **8. Sources Used & Additional Information**

<http://www.folkestoneseafront.com/>

<http://www.pavementpounders.co.uk/>

<http://folkestonesheritage.co.uk/More.html>

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