

Lydden Spout Rifle Range & Musketry Camp

by JON IVESON

THE RIFLE RANGE AT LYDDEN SPOUT near Dover was constructed as a temporary measure in 1914. The range was rebuilt as a permanent structure commencing on 28th August 1926 and being completed on 26th March 1927 at a total cost of £1112 (the original estimated cost had been £1190). The land on which it and the camp were built was held on a twenty-one year lease commencing on 29th September 1923.

In 1926 a musketry camp was built for the use of twelve officers and three hundred other ranks. This was commenced on 13th July 1926 and completed at a total cost of £1660 (estimated originally at £1650) on 31st March 1927. The camp was extended in May 1927 at a cost of £2080, which included a sum of £500 for improvements to the Old Folkestone Road. This extension to the camp permitted the occupation of twenty-four officers and six hundred and thirty other ranks. It was intended for the use of Territorial troops on summer camps.

The range comprised butts with thirty-two targets and a stop butt behind. An eighteen-inch light railway connected the butts to a target store and workshop about a hundred yards away down the slope to the North. This building was constructed from corrugated iron on a wooden frame. Firing points were positioned at one-hundred yard intervals from 100 yards to 600 yards. The two firing points at two and three hundred yards were provided with revetted trenches for shelter.

To provide mess rooms, kitchens and

offices the old Coastguard Station was converted to include an officers mess accommodating twenty four, a sergeants mess accommodating thirty and quarters for a caretaker. Sleeping areas for both officers and men were to be under canvas. Concrete bases for oval dining tents and a NAAFI canvas institute were installed along with ablution

sheds, shower baths and latrines in the field between the firing points and the cliff edge.

Water was pumped from a freshwater pond behind a shingle bank on the beach to two tanks on brick towers on the cliff edge. From these a two inch main connected to the various showers and ablutions, and to header tanks in the old Coastguard Station. A catchment area to the southwest collected rainwater for the foul water drainage from the mess block, which was then collected in a cesspit to the east near the Old Folkestone Road. Lighting was provided by oil lamps.

The whole site was surrounded by a wire fence and a zig zag path led down to the beach.

Despite the alterations made to the landscape by the new A20 much of the site can still be seen today.



Society Badges

The wearing of a Society Badge reminds the general public (who really do have eyes to see) that the Society is a viable and energetic non-political voice for Dover. The beautiful little enamelled Lapel or Brooch Badges are to Philomena Kennedy's original design, in black on a white ground, surrounded by a gold line defining the shape of the badge and are available from the Treasurer, in either type, for £2 post free.

Just contact the Treasurer, Mike Weston at 71 Castle Avenue or phone him on 202059 (with a cheque or P.O. if possible) and he will very quickly ensure that a badge is in your hands.