

Before sunset the battle was over. As a result of this engagement the French king annexed some of Edward's castles in Aquitaine and so began the Hundred Years War.

Edward, angry at the situation now forced upon him, demanded an explanation, to which the men of the Cinque Ports reminded him that he, the King, was sworn to see them righted according to the laws, customs and franchise which he and his ancestors had granted. And so this small body of men lived a charmed life in outlawry from the time of the Danelaw until the Battle of Agincourt. English seamen, right up to the time of Drake and Hawkins, were noted for their nautical genius, which came from a life, barefoot in all weathers, with neither compass, chart or rudder and only one square sail. Their tubby boats, not like Viking long boats, could rocket out of the

blue and vanish in a pall of smoke. When it came to dodging the currents of the deadly Goodwins, your Kentish cog could turn on a cockleshell.

After 500 years a-roving, the Cinque Ports were, one by one, locked in their harbours by the movements of the Channel tide, their only acknowledged master. Their final burst of glory came in the reign of Henry IV when a Henry Pay from Faversham ('Arripay' as the Spaniards called him) captured a French squadron and roped in no less than 120 ships, laden with iron, salt and wine! But such deeds were already anachronisms, for the ports of Southampton, Plymouth and Bristol could each send greater tonnage to the wars than all the Cinque Ports together.

Footnote: David Grant's first book 'Waes', set in the Cinque Ports, was published by Allen & Unwin in 1968.

ROYAL SECRET REVEALED AT DOVER

contributed by Terry Sutton

THE visit to Dover by Queen Elizabeth I in the autumn of 1573 is well documented. But not so well known is her second visit to Dover in August 1601 when, two years before her death, for the first time in history the term 'Great Britain' was heard. Queen Elizabeth I, then 67, travelled in some secrecy to Dover in 1601 for the sole purpose of trying to persuade Henry IV, King of France, to cross the Channel to talk about the balance of power in Europe. For 42 years she had ruled the kingdom and won respect throughout Europe as a ruler. Age was beginning to tell on her physical powers but she was determined to reshape the map of Europe. And she knew her views were shared by the king of France. But, to her annoyance, she failed to persuade Henry to cross the Channel from Calais to Dover. He, in turn, suggested she board a ship and meet him in Calais. It was not to be and she wrote him, in her own hand, regretting that because of their royal positions neither could be seen to meet in the others' lands. She added that there was something of importance she wished to reveal but dare

not commit the subject to paper. Of course this captured Henry's curiosity and he sent over, in secret, his minister Rosney (afterwards the Duc de Sully) who was swiftly unmasked on arrival at Dover, arrested and taken before Elizabeth at Dover Castle. She was not too annoyed at his secrecy and drawing him aside, out of the earshot of others, explained her proposals for keeping a counter balance to Austria by forming the Low Countries into an independent republic.

Rosney, in his memoirs, recalled that Elizabeth spoke about the future of linking England and Scotland. For the first time she revealed she wanted to make James VI of Scotland her heir. "One day the King of Scotland will become the King of Great Britain," predicted the great Queen during her meeting with the French minister in Dover Castle. And so it came to pass. It was only on her deathbed, suffering from blood poisoning, that Elizabeth revealed to her ministers the decision about which she had secretly told the French minister in the ancient walls of Dover Castle.