

Ports

The importance of ports

Ports play an important role in the economics of the coast and provide a crucial link between land and sea transport. They also have an important social function, through the provision of jobs both directly and indirectly.



The Port of Dover is a good example of how important ports are to coastal districts.

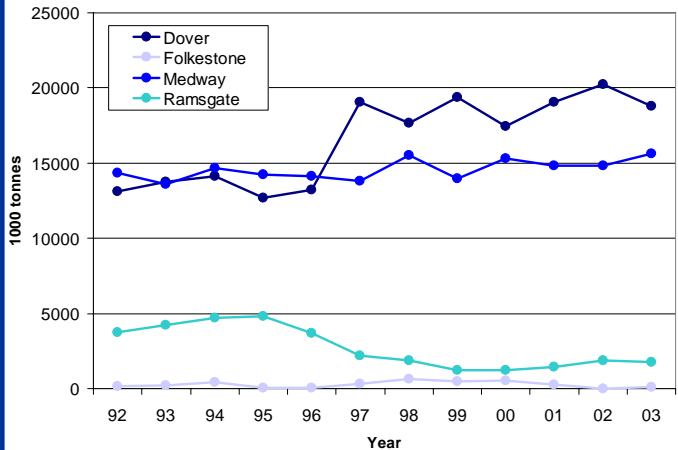
The total value of import and export freight passing through the Port of Dover is estimated to be between £42 and £50 billion per annum. The Port contributes

around £195 million to the South East region's economy through visitor expenditure and income generated by port employees and related activities. At a local level, it is estimated that £58 million (30%) of this spend occurs in Dover, with a further £136 million spent in the rest of Kent.

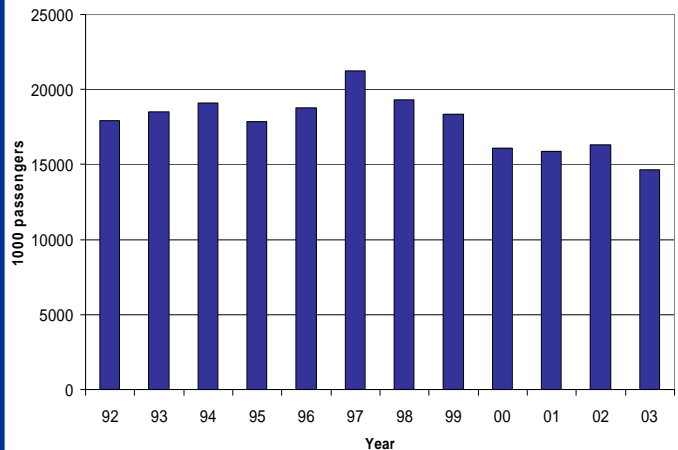
The Port of Dover is estimated to support up to 24,000 people in employment in the south east, with 13,900 located with the Dover district and the remainder in the rest of Kent. The annual wage cost of around £117 million is estimated for all of the direct employers in port dependant businesses and £92 million (79%) of this is paid to employees living in the Dover district (Arup, 2001).

Port trends

Total UK port traffic has grown steadily at just under 2% per annum over the last twenty years. As can be seen from the graph below, both the Port of Dover and Medway Ports have seen a steady increase in freight traffic. However, the port at Folkestone did not share in this market trend, leading to its subsequent closure.



The Port of Dover dominates the Kent, and in fact the Northern Europe, market for passenger traffic. Over the past seven years there has been a decline in ferry passengers from Dover Port - this corresponds directly to the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1997, as demonstrated by the graph below.



Facts and figures

- Kent has four major ports: Port of London, Thamesport, Medway Ports and Port of Dover.
- UK port traffic has grown steadily at just under 2% per annum over the last twenty years.
- Between Medway Ports and the Port of Dover, 34.4 million tonnes of transport freight was handled in Kent in 2003.
- The Port of London covers 150km of coastline of the Greater Thames Estuary, with 18 of its terminals in Kent.
- Thamesport was the first port in the world to depend on driverless cranes for its container storage.
- Medway Ports handled over 880,000 tonnes of fresh produce through its ports in 2003.
- The Port of Dover handled 13.3 million passengers and 2 million HGVs in 2005.



Kent's Ports

Kent has many ports of varying sizes but its main commercial ports are Port of London, Thamesport, Medway Ports and Port of Dover.



© Dart Terminals London

Port of London

The Port of London encompasses the entire tidal Thames from Margate (in Kent) and Clacton-on-Sea (in Essex) to Teddington, covering some 150 km of coastline. The Port handles, through its 80 terminals, over 53 millions tonnes of cargo, carried in 12,500 commercial vessels. Providing over 35,300 full time equivalent jobs, it contributes more than £3.4 billion pa to London and the south east's economies. The Port of London is administered by the Port of London Authority, a public trust established in 1908. Within Kent, the Port of London operates through 18 terminals, located at Belverdere, Erith, Dartford, Greenhithe, Northfleet, Gravesend and Cliffe. These terminals deal with a variety of commodities, including aggregate, metals, containers, forest products, fuels and motor vehicles.



© Thamesport

Thamesport

Thamesport is a relatively new port, built at the turn of the nineties and is strategically positioned where the River Medway meets the Thames Estuary. The Port covers an area of 85 hectares and includes cargo and container operations. It is fully automated and has six post Panamax ship-to-shore cranes that can unload 1,000 containers in approximately 12 hours. Thamesport is owned by Hutchison Ports (HPUK) and, along with HPUK's Felixstowe (Suffolk) and Harwich Port (Essex), accounted for a turnover 3,318,000 twenty-foot equivalent units in 2004.



© Medway Ports

Medway Ports

Medway Ports has a dual role in the river, as owner of the Port of Sheerness and Chatham Docks and as the statutory harbour, pilotage and conservancy authority for a 27.2-mile stretch of the Medway and the Swale. The Port of Sheerness's biggest cargo is fresh produce, with over 880,000 tonnes going through the port in 2003. Its other cargoes include forest products (539,000 tonnes), vehicles (435,000 units) and general cargo (434,000 tonnes). At Chatham Docks Medway Ports takes on a landlord role. Chatham's cargo has traditionally concentrated on forest products, although this has now been expanded to include cement, scrap metal and steel imports providing, a total throughput in excess of 1 million tonnes per year. Together Sheerness and Chatham saw a total throughput of 3.36 million tonnes in 2003.



© Port of Dover

Port of Dover

The Port of Dover is the largest international passenger ferry port in Northern Europe (13.3 million passengers in 2005), accounting for 50% of all Cross Channel passenger traffic. It is the busiest freight port in the Northern Europe (2 million units in 2005). The Port also has two cruise liner terminals handling between 138,000 and 152,000 passengers per annum, second only to Southampton in the UK market. The Port employs directly over 6,000 people. The Port of Dover comprises of the Eastern Docks, Western Docks and the Marina (accommodating 10,000 visitor nights per annum). Between them, the two docks handle ferry, cruise, cargo (fresh produce), bulk and grain traffic.

Sources of information:

- www.portoflondon.co.uk
- www.thamesport.co.uk
- www.medwayports.com
- www.doverport.co.uk
- Port of Dover Value Assessment, Final Report 2001 (Arup)
- www.vliz.be/projects/SAIL/

