

## The Cinque Ports

Prior to the Norman Conquest, King Edward the Confessor had contracted the five most important Channel ports of that day to provide ships and men “for the service of the monarch” and although this was frequently as a “cross-Channel ferry service”, it was not exclusively so. Under the Norman kings this became the essential means of keeping the two halves of their realm together, but after the loss of Normandy in 1205, their ships (the fore-runners of the Royal Navy) suddenly became England’s first line of defence against the French.

Today the Cinque Ports have only a ceremonial role, but a base for the Lord Warden of the Ports is still provided at Walmer Castle and new Lords Warden are always installed at Dover.

Every Member of the Confederation, together with their Limbs, is situated in Kent or Sussex, apart from Brightlingsea which, as a Limb of Sandwich, uniquely lies in Essex.