

Travel brings **Pawn** back to an apocryphal place and event in his family lore. X is dragged along for the ride. Much hiking transpires, in gale force winds. Children die, seemingly by the dozens, and the audience applauds. Ovarions lead to encores, dogs are tired, and drinks are consumed. A busy day, all around.

"Obtuse enough to be cryptic or cryptic enough to be obtuse?" These are the **Pawn's** true muttered musings on the above introduction. But every word is true. Off to Dover on the train at the crack of 10 am., to retrace the near drowning of **Pawn's** five year old father-to-be on a family outing (back in 1928). Pulled out to sea from Dover's stony shore by an undertow yet returned to the bosom of his family to thrive, without ever again entering a body of water larger or deeper than a bathtub.



Arrive in Dover with the fantasy of a side trip by bus to Canterbury, innocent pilgrims that we are. Takes a half hour to even find the Tourist Information stand and are directly merrily off for a wee hike to Dover Castle.



"O, you'll be there on foot before the bus would even arrive," we're assured by a sadist somehow (terms of her probation?) assigned to help visitors. Battling high winds, a map like something from *The Da Vinci Code*, steep and treacherous steps, and my incessant whining [Pawn: and Wheezing] we scale the heights of the mountain, ready to defeat the German invasion, or at least find the restaurant.

This is a massive fortress, one of the first structures is a lighthouse built by the Romans,



and added to and improved over the millennia until it became a pivotal coastal base in World War II to spot and destroy German ships and planes. There are cannon, trebuchet (siege engines), anti-aircraft guns, narrow slit windows in towers for archers, moats: the state of military art over the centuries. Tourists were staggering like drunks from site to sight along the cliff edges, buffeted by winds that would have ruffled Winston Churchill. I envied those tottering about with canes; at least they had more stability than I enjoyed.

We made our retreat without a tour of the tunnels used in WWII to the disgust and amazement of the guard at a gate and made our way - wind mysteriously *again* in our faces - back to the town centre and thence to the Promenade. We pass a sculpture of two swimmers on granite blocks



on the shoreline - the point at which the Channel swimmers traditionally take the plunge for France; as the Rick Steves' guidebook in our flat said, "Allow nine hours". -X


Dover was dramatic and wonderful, and very very **very** windy. You cannot even understand this wind, and its effect, unless you were to experience it. After clamouring up to Dover Castle and its fortifications and instalments, we descended back down to the beach. I was determined to go as far as possible out on the sea wall so as to get some good shots of the cliffs:



I cannot even begin to describe how lashing the wind was. I have spent enough time sailing the Great Lakes to say that the wind was easily 20 knots, gusting to 30 or more. It was unbelievable enough to try to walk along the jetty, but to then try to take a photograph with a 400mm lens? Forget it. That any of them came out at all is truly amazing to me.

After three and a half hours of walking around in these conditions we are toast, and were quite glad to get back to the train station. Our train back to London was delayed, and with

travel conditions we were late enough that we were glad that our evening show was so close to Charing Cross Station. We quite literally walked out of the station, around a corner, and into the New Players Theatre/Bar/Restaurant. Dinner was nice enough, and then into the show: *Tiger Lillies - The Songs of Shockheaded Peter & Other Gory Verses*. How to explain the Tiger Lillies?

 They are a post-modern Burlesque Cabaret act heavily inspired by the Berlin cabarets of the years between the wars. The subject matter of this show are cautionary tales and songs sung to children to encourage them to behave properly:

[Fidgety Philip](#)

[Snip Snip](#)

[The Story of Augustus Who Would Not Have Any Soup](#)

And many more. Here are some videos of their performances:

[Bully Boys](#)

[The Dreadful Story of Harriet and the Matches](#)

What a wonderful way this was for us to relax from the rigours (or rigour-mortise) of the day. I picked up the live CD of this show. Back home again, and to update all of our photos, blogs, etc.Â BTW, Due to memory card restrictions, many of the JPEGs you see are low res.Â Full sized raw format images are available if you are interested.

As always, the entire photblog is available online [here](#).

Ta!