

The White Cliffs of Dover

Trascrizione

The White Cliffs of Dover form part of the coastline of England facing France. The cliffs are as high as 350 feet in some places. They have a striking appearance because the cliff face is made of chalk with streaks of black flint. Thousands of years ago, the whole area was under the sea. Lots of very small sea creatures died and over the years their bones and shells were pressed together and became chalk. They gradually rose up, becoming white cliffs. Erosion from the seawater keeps the cliffs white and where the sea cannot reach them, they are covered by vegetation.

The White Cliffs of Dover are often considered a symbol of England because they are the last sight that travelers see when they leave England, and the first thing they see when they arrive. In fact, at the point where they rise, England is only 21 miles from the French coast.

These cliffs were an important part of the defenses of Britain during both World Wars.

However, their importance goes much farther back in history. The White Cliffs of Dover stood tall through several invasion attempts, from Julius Caesar in 55 BC to Hitler's Nazis in 1940. Under the Romans, the Cliffs were used as the base for a lighthouse. In the Middle Ages, Dover Castle, nicknamed 'The Key to England' because of its strategic location, was built there. It is the largest castle in England. During the Napoleonic Wars, prisoners of the castle carved secret tunnels under the Cliffs, which Winston Churchill later used as his World War II headquarters.

The surrounding area is full of interesting wildlife. The Exmoor ponies are a natural lawnmower for the area as they roam around eating the grass and

thistles growing on the top of the cliffs. Many kinds of birds make nests and live on the cliff faces. Spending a day walking and having a picnic on the top of the cliffs can be quite relaxing. You can also take the opportunity to visit the South Foreland Lighthouse, the first electric-powered lighthouse in the world and the site of the first international radio transmission.

The White Cliffs of Dover have been mentioned in various literary works: Rudyard Kipling put them in a poem, William Shakespeare in a play and they were even in the James Bond film, Moonraker. A popular World War II patriotic song, *There'll be Bluebirds Over The White Cliffs of Dover*, sung by Vera Lynne, helped lift the spirits of the British, and so the cliffs became a symbol of peace.