

ALL ABOUT

The Dutch Raid on the River Medway and Upnor Castle



The story of the battle
plus castle trail quizzes
and challenges

Featuring
the diary of
Samuel Squeaks



Eek! Eek!

that's 'hello' in rat language by the way. My name is Samuel Squeaks, I'm a rat and I was living at Upnor Castle in 1667 when the Dutch ships sailed up the river Medway and attacked the English ships here at the castle.

I always like to keep a diary so to help explain to you what it was actually like on that scary day. I have put some pages from my diary in this booklet, the first one is just here. I hope you like reading them.



4 June 1667



Hello! Squeaks here. Samuel Squeaks. Yes I do - what did you expect? I'm a rat, aren't I? I do like it here.

You see where there are people you have rubbish: and where there's rubbish, there's rats. It's just like home. Well, London is where I belong really. Needed to make a quick exit a couple of years ago. People and rats dying of the plague - no space to get them all in the ground. Bodies everywhere! That was enough for me. Jumped on a ship and cleared out. Just as well I did. The

next year, the whole place went up in smoke! It's nice here though. Quieter. London was changing. Ships in, ships out. You could hardly see the Thames for traffic. So much fuss over fancy food and that. I stuck my nose in a coffee cup once: tasted like mud. On toast. You can keep it! Looks to me like everyone on your river is having a holiday - the warships are empty, the sailors have gone home. No one seems to be working. Mind you, they say that's because there's no money. Just as well nothing ever happens here, isn't it?

England and Holland at war

In the late 1600s the English and the Dutch went to war. A lot.

Hungry for trade and money and power, they fought great sea battles over the control of the oceans. The English kept their ships on the River Medway, between Rochester Bridge and the sea. Nearby, the Chatham Dockyard was where the ships were repaired. With Upnor Castle opposite and a great chain stretched across the water at Gillingham to block the way, the English thought their ships were safe. They were wrong.





The Dutch are coming

In 1667, some Dutch commanders realised that if they could force their way up the River Medway, they could do enormous damage to the English Navy.

They set out across the North Sea on 4 June. For a long time, the English refused to believe what was happening. The king, Charles II, was sure that the Dutch were just trying to scare him into making peace. Everything changed once the Dutch arrived at Sheerness and captured the fort there. But what could be done? The warships were empty. The castle had no gunpowder. The sailors had not been paid. So the English raised their chain across the river Medway and hoped for the best.

10 June 1667

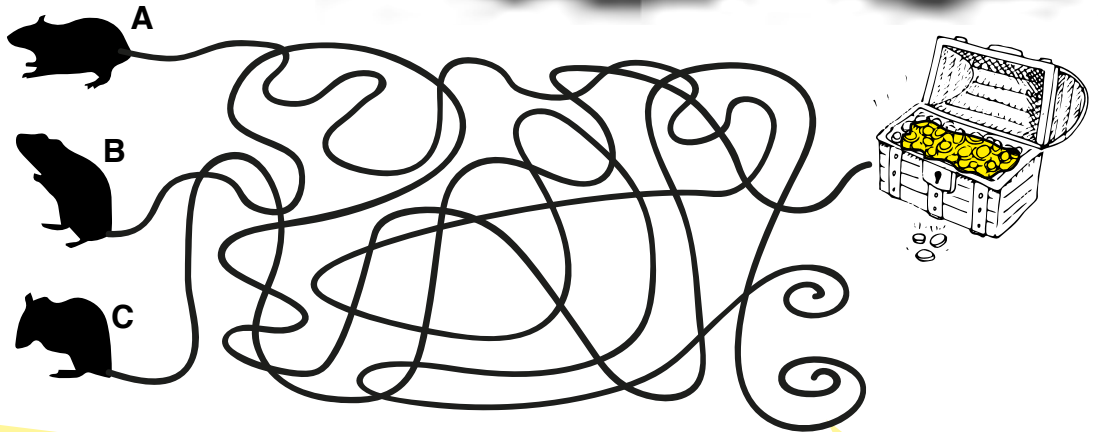
Squeaks again. Scary stuff now! The things people are saying! There's going to be trouble, I'm sure. I had my face in the bins the other day and I could hear them talking in the kitchen. Seems like you people can't get on with each other.

Hundreds and hundreds of ships are on their way to teach you a lesson. It's not just London that is after some of that fancy stuff from around the world - they like it in Amsterdam too. The Dutch are coming, that's what they said. Coming to burn and kill and sink and steal.

There's worse: everyone at the Dockyard says the Dutch have already landed - at Sheerness fort. Those guns won't keep anyone safe without soldiers to load and shoot them. They saw the ships and ran - knocked the captain flat in the rush!

Had to clear out at that point in the conversation - cat appeared and nearly got me. Doesn't look good though. I think I'll keep my head down for a bit. Stick around Chatham. They've built a chain across the river. That will stop the Dutch, won't it?

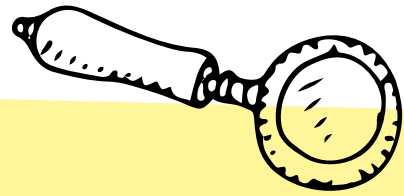
Which tail leads to the treasure?



If you like following trails and answering questions, look over the page!

TRAIL





T

THE WAY IN

1.

Walk up towards the castle. Go to the top of the steps that face the entrance. This is the back door – but it's the only way in if you're a friend. Enemies keep out!

Draw a line to join the type of defence with the way it works and put a tick in the box for the ones that are still here.

A strong door studded with nails

to kill you

Wooden spikes up high

to keep out cannonballs

A drawbridge

to shoot you

Guns

to lock out soldiers

Thick stone walls

so you fall in the ditch

How the castle has changed - now we let everyone in!

Go into the gatehouse and find some stairs. When you get to the top, have a look at this again.



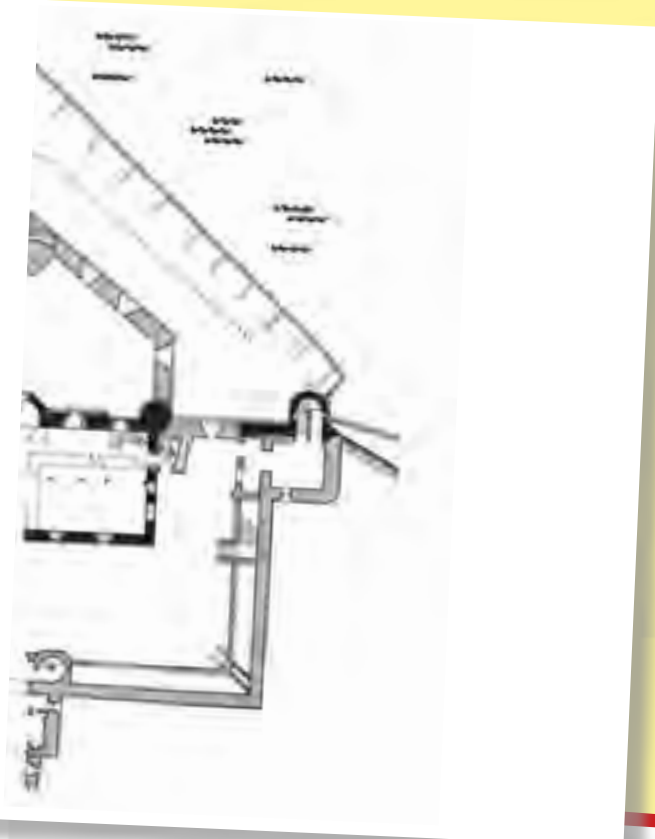
THE GATEHOUSE

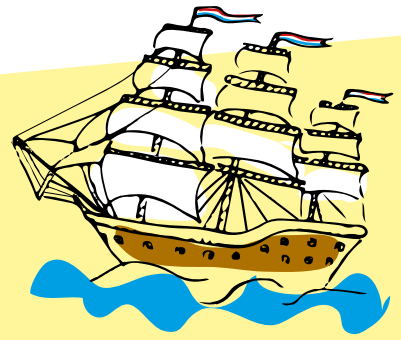
2.

The castle looked pretty much like this during the Dutch Raid in 1667 – just full of men and guns!

It has a special shape because of the job it had to do. The plan below is what the castle looks like if you are a bird. I have cut it in half! Can you fix it by drawing the missing section?

Put a **X** where you are standing (look for the circular stairs where you came up).





2A.

Now imagine you are the captain of the castle in 1667. The Dutch are coming!

Position your big guns and draw them on the plan that you have drawn in question 2.

3. THE BASTION

Go down the stairs and into the main building. Here there is a display all about the Dutch Raid. They forgot to put me in though! Have a look then go down the stairs at the front before you read on.

This is where it all happened. Can you imagine? Boats burning, guns booming, men shouting, smoke, fire and mud. You can see two cannons rescued from 1667 shipwrecks.

How many cannons do you think were here in 1667
(look for a clue)?

Do you know how to fire them? Put the steps below in order by numbering them 1 to 8.

Pour some loose gunpowder into the priming hole

Aim and stand back

Clean the barrel

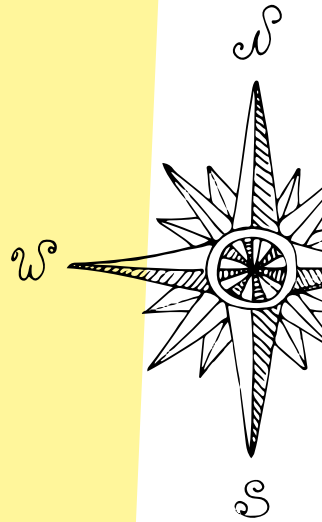
Touch the priming hole with a burning rope

Stab a hole in the powder bag through the priming hole

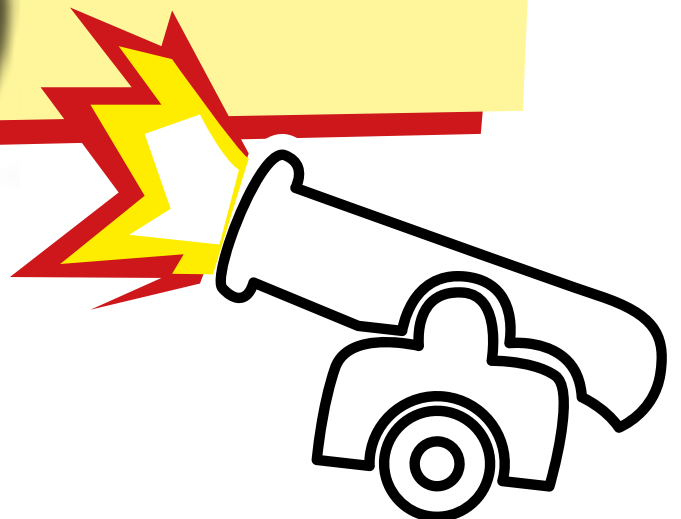
Remove any hot material from the barrel

Load the cannonball

Push a bag of powder down the barrel



BOOM!



An answer sheet is available at reception if you want to check how well you did.



12 June 1667

I couldn't resist. I hitched a ride out to this chain. I'd been listening. They were running gunpowder out to the guns at either end - I think they had an idea that they'd trap the Dutch and blow them out the water! That I wanted to see! So I hid between the barrels and took a boat out to a little place called Gillingham.

There was the chain - like a giant black snake in the water. Near the far bank was a huge English ship. In the middle of the river I saw soldiers. One of them turned quickly and touched his face. Then he lay down suddenly in the bottom of the boat. At the same moment, I heard a crack - a sharp crack - then lots more. The Dutch!

They were on fire. Really. They came down the Medway in ships full of flames. Two sailed straight for the chain where the big ship lay on the other side. I could taste the smoke as it spread upstream, over the river and that chain. I didn't even see it break. But I know they got to the big ship because I heard them cheering.



Fireships

King Charles put the Duke of Albemarle in charge of England's defence plan. He promised money but no one believed him.

He asked for block ships to close up the river. They were sunk in the wrong place. He gave orders to move the flagship, the Royal Charles, to safety. His orders were lost in the confusion. All this time the Dutch were getting closer. By 12 June they had reached Gillingham. With fireships blazing, the leading Dutch ships bore down on the chain, and it broke. The great prize of the Royal Charles was captured where it lay waiting just upstream. The Dutch leader, de Ruyter, now joined his fleet and together they pressed on towards Upnor Castle.



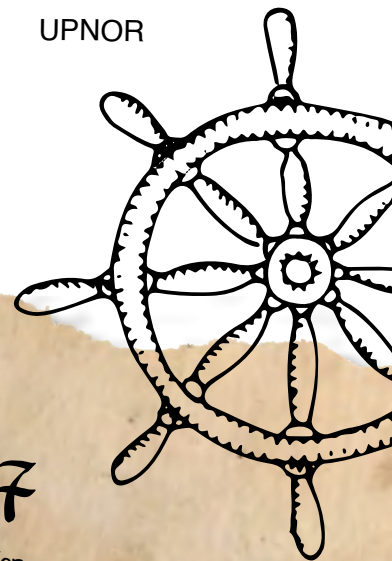
In 1665, just before the Dutch Raid, I lived in London. At that time in London us rats weren't very popular... this cartoon explains why.



WORDSEARCH

V	J	I	R	B	A	T	T	L	E	G	D	K	H	O
M	X	R	E	L	T	S	A	C	N	H	R	C	X	D
X	E	U	D	Z	D	H	E	I	D	W	T	O	P	Z
R	N	C	W	J	Z	N	G	V	H	U	A	L	P	I
H	W	N	O	E	S	G	Q	O	D	K	X	Q	A	E
W	N	H	P	G	I	A	G	I	U	P	N	O	R	O
T	I	B	N	R	C	C	M	B	Q	C	I	X	P	W
Y	A	K	U	L	M	V	D	U	Y	S	O	J	F	E
Q	H	F	G	E	Q	K	P	L	E	U	M	A	O	F
J	C	D	D	D	I	F	N	T	J	L	Q	N	H	L
L	S	W	S	O	K	O	Y	O	T	J	M	K	E	A
V	A	Y	N	I	Y	Y	Q	C	N	Q	C	S	I	M
Y	Y	P	M	O	U	T	W	Z	B	N	M	J	W	E
Q	K	Z	Y	W	S	J	E	I	X	Z	A	V	W	S
A	X	T	O	Y	J	T	J	E	D	P	T	C	N	P

BATTLE
CANNON
CASTLE
CHAIN
DUTCH
FLAMES
GUNPOWDER
MEDWAY
RIGGING
ROPE
SAMUEL
UPNOR



Rebuilding the Navy

In desperation, the English sank their own ships into the mud to prevent them being stolen.

The Dutch burnt them instead. Then, after heavy fighting, within sight of the Chatham Dockyard, they withdrew on 15 June. Back home, they scrapped the Royal Charles, first carefully removing the coat of arms from the stern. It is still on show in Amsterdam today. The English were determined that 1667 should never happen again. The navy now asked the government for plenty of money. The dockyards began a building programme that was to see English ships multiply into a powerful force that reached around the world.

14 June 1667

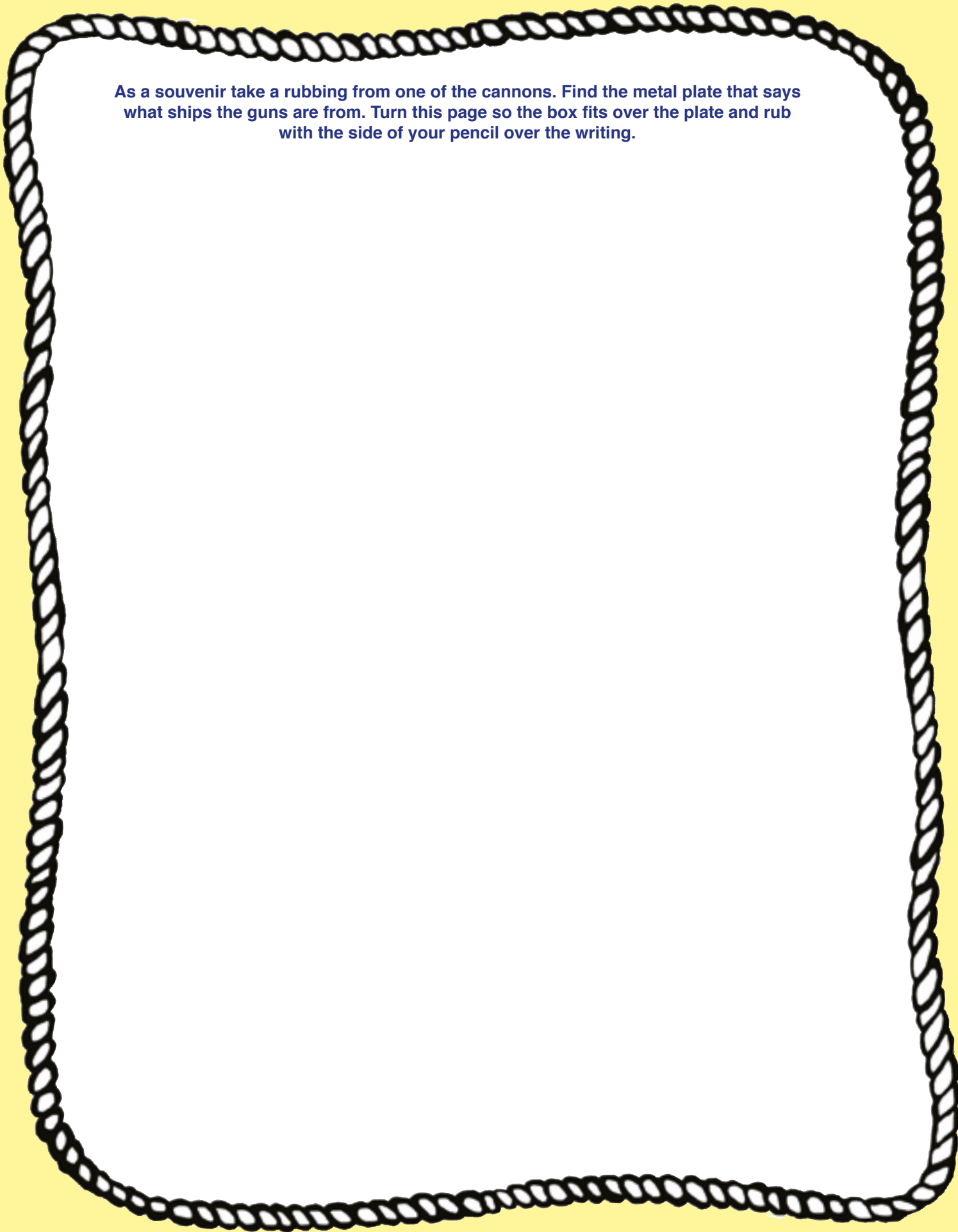
It's all over, they've gone. For a moment there I thought I wasn't going to make it. We rats are pretty tough, but you people can keep your wars. They're dangerous!

I reckoned that Upnor was the best place to be. A castle! That's got to be safe, hasn't it? I could see the tops of big ships sticking up out of the river. They sure weren't going anywhere. But the Dutch went right for them!

Boom! Our cannons banged away and jumped back. The men pulled, pushed, rammed and fired again. Boys dodged in between with bags of powder. In the end I got down behind a soldier who was lying on the floor, and hid. He didn't move much.

In the end it got quiet. And then dark. Next morning, I climbed up high as I could to have a look. The tide was out. Burnt ships were still smoking on the mud. A small boat floated past and it was empty. Across the river was a team of soldiers digging. In the distance I could just pick out the masts of the big ship as it made its way towards the sea.

As a souvenir take a rubbing from one of the cannons. Find the metal plate that says what ships the guns are from. Turn this page so the box fits over the plate and rub with the side of your pencil over the writing.



Upnor Castle
High Street, Upper Upnor, Rochester ME2 4XG
Phone: 01634 718742
visitmedway.org

G10457



Enjoy
Medway

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

This guide has been produced as part of Medway Council's 350th anniversary commemorations of the Battle of Medway, kindly supported through a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.