

# Dover's new Cruise Terminal nears completion

JOHN GERRARD gives the Society the latest information on the development of the Harbour Board's plans for the Cruise Terminal at the Western Docks.

THE MAIN CONTRACTORS for the Terminal are the Canterbury-based firm of Wiltshiers who have recently been taken over by the Dutch firm of Ballast Nedam and they are confidently aiming to hand over the project in mid-April.

Given the appalling state of the roof structure left behind by British Rail after years of neglect, the contractors have done wonders to restore the steel and glazing in the terminal area near to the old war memorial to their present pristine condition. However, further expensive restoration work remains to be completed in the rest of the station area which will be used as a covered car park for cruise

customers and it is hoped that much of the high cost of this work will be covered by Government grants.

The first informal cruise ship call is scheduled to take place on 19 April when the Fred Olsen Line *Black Prince* makes one of her regular visits and the first major call will be the arrival of the Festival Lines *Balero* on 23/24 May.

The grand formal opening is likely to take place on 20 June, when the Cunard Line *Royal Viking Sun*, recently voted the world's finest cruise ship, makes a six-hour stopover.

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Following some aggressive marketing by John Turgoose and the Board's cruise team, ninety-four calls are expected so far this year and over eighty are booked for 1997.

The following cruise lines are now booked and some of them have made Dover their permanent base:

- Fred Olsen Lines
- Cunard Line
- Holland America Line
- Norwegian Cruise Line
- Royal Cruise Line
- Princess Cruise Line
- Costa Cruise Line
- CTC Cruise Line
- Festival Cruises
- Hapag Lloyd.

The largest ship expected this year is the 44,000 grt *Royal Princess*, which carries 1250 passengers and has a length of 235 metres.

Not content with resting on their laurels, the cruise team is off to the Sea Trade Cruise conference at Miami in March to attract yet more business to Dover and they are after some very big fish indeed!

A great advantage Dover will enjoy, in comparison with other U.K. cruise ports, is that local residents will be afforded good close-up views of the ships from the nearby Prince of Wales Pier.

On some days this year there will be as many as four cruise ships in the port and in these circumstances it will be necessary to use the existing terminal at the Eastern Docks. Details of arrival times will be placed on our seafront information boards.

All of this has to be good news for Dover. It is hoped that a substantial proportion of the cruise visitors will come into the town and enjoy its many tourist attractions. The Chamber of Commerce is currently working with the District Council and others to develop this potential.

JOHN GERRARD

## Cruise Liner Reception Group

TERRY SUTTON

THERE HAS BEEN intense activity amongst tourist groups and local traders to ensure that there will be a warm welcome for passengers arriving on cruise liners at the new terminal.

The Cruise Ship Welcome Group was set up by the White Cliffs Country Tourism Association (WCCTA)) and has members drawn from all tour companies, taxi firms, town centre management and Dover Harbour Board. Ken Wraight represents the Dover Society and the chairman of the group is James Overton, tourism manager for Dover District Council.

The group has prepared an excellent brochure showing the many attractions of the district. Brochures will be placed on the cruise liners before they reach Dover.

There has been difficulty in providing funding for this brochure, costing in the region of £5000-£6000 for 40,000 copies. Having failed to find a sponsor nationally, attempts to get funding have now switched to local companies. Initially this cost is being funded by loans from members who want to make sure Dover benefits from the visits of cruise liners.

The group is also considering other ways of attracting passengers. One idea is to produce a video, to be kept on the ships, highlighting the many attractions in and around the town. Another plan is to produce good class posters about Dover, which can be displayed at the terminal, where Dover Harbour Board has offered wall space. However, at present, with lack