Automatic Data Processing ensures that a continuous record is made of all movements, thus if there is a maritime incident the data can be recalled at any time revealing a vessel's movements before, during and after the incident. This was demonstrated by bringing on to the screen a day in the previous week when a member of the group made a ferry trip. On fixing the time of departure and speeding up the data we were able to monitor the progress of the ferry from departure to arrival. We were spellbound.

This Control Centre, as with other regional centres, has access to many other services and facilities which it must coordinate, including aircraft, Helicopter Rescue Service, Fire Service and Auxiliary Coastguard Rescue Service. This last named service was brought to our notice when we found that one of the computer operators was none other than our own Dover Society member Maurice Palmer. In common with other volunteers he puts a few hours duty each week and was working on this day from 8am to 2pm to make up the full-time personnel shift to six. Well done, Maurice

## A DAY ASHORE

## A day as a Shuttle Bus Co-ordinator – MERRIL LILLEY

It is 8.30. am on Monday, 10th June. At the Cruise Terminal the SS MAASDAM of the Holland- America Line is disgorging its passengers. A fleet of coaches awaits to transport more than 800 of them on prebooked tours to London, Canterbury and other places in Kent. The ship carries 1200 passengers so that means that more than 300 of them will remain in Dover or make their own plans for the day ashore.

There are to be three shuttle buses operating all day between the quayside and the Market Square. The shipping line has appointed Aragon Tours as its agent and they, in turn, have found some local people (four of us) to act as shuttle bus coordinators. From 8.30 am until 5.30 pm there will always be one person at the dock and one in the Market Square. (We are operating our own rota system for this.)

8.40 am and the first shuttle bus is ready to leave. The first passengers to board are a couple who have booked a Hertz hire car in advance and want to know where to pick it up. The first bus fills

up with early risers and sets off for the town. We drop off the couple at the Hertz office and wish them a good day, then proceed to the Market Square to begin our task of aiding, directing, advising and answering questions. Every bus is busy and this continues non-stop until midday.

Where is the train station? Boots? Marks and Spencer? The local bus stop? A camera shop? An optician? The Post Office?

Which is the best way to get to the castle? How long will it take to walk there? Is the way steep? What is the entry fee? How long should one allow for the visit? How much to go by taxi? Is there a local bus?

Is there time to go to London and back by train? Should one go to Canterbury by train, bus or taxi? How much will it cost? How long will it take?

We can cope with most of this and after an hour or so the local taxi firms have realised what is happening and there are always one or two taxis stationed across the road outside Courts. It becomes easier as the morning progresses. Where is the museum, the White Cliffs Experience? Gift shops? Antique shops? A quaint pub? A good tea room? A cool beer? and many more.

We distribute leaflets for the Museum, WCE and Castle. The Town Gaol is closed on Mondays and so is the Roman Painted House, but we learn that the latter opens later in the day in response to demand.

By 10.30 am a few elderly passengers who have difficulty in walking are returning to the ship with souvenirs, postcards and drinks. One lady staggers under the weight of a case of Pepsi-Cola from KwikSave. They are in the minority.

At lunchtime the shuttles are busy again with passengers returning to the ship for lunch. Some have booked afternoon trips from the quayside at 1pm. One trip is on the railway to Tenterden. \*

The afternoon brings more inward passengers who have been on a morning trip and are now setting out to explore Dover. More leaflets, directions and suggestions and more questions to answer. A few ask about the town and its history. Most are content to wander through the shopping precinct.

From 3,30 to 5.30 the traffic is mainly from town to port and we take the opportunity to chat to some of the returning passengers.

"Dover is a great little town; the people are friendly". There is universal approval. All have enjoyed themselves. One lady expresses the opinion that America is all shopping malls. She could see those at home. The Americans liked quaint streets with small shops!!!

It is impossible to find out everyone's reactions. The diversity of experiences is so vast. One couple took a taxi to London, saw the changing of the guard and Buckingham Palace. Another couple took a taxi to Canterbury, saw the cathedral and then took a trip round the Kent coast, through Margate and Sandwich, then back to Dover Castle for the afternoon.

The majority of people visited the Castle, getting there by bus, by taxi and some by walking. They were all enthusiastic, loved the Keep, the view, the tunnels, the history!!. They thanked us for our directions and advice.

The lady who wanted the optician got her spectacles mended. The couple who rented a Hertz car got a parking ticket in Canterbury!

People who stayed in the town enjoyed walking around or sitting in the sunshine at various pubs or eating places which provided outside tables.

Almost everyone seemed to have bought something to take back with them. Apart from the inevitable postcards, films and souvenirs, I noticed pictures, shoes, make-up, shirts, drinks and embroidery materials.

All were unanimous in acclaiming the free shuttle buses which were great! They didn't get that provided at many of their stops. Many praised the organisation and some said it was the best they had experienced on the cruise.



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