

Attractions	39%	Churches	29%
Train	25%	Shops	16%
Taxi	9.6%	Bus	5.1%
Car Hire	0.5%	Maps	0.6%
Change	0.2%	Phone	0.4%

Armed with the conclusions from the 1996 campaign, the Cruise Welcome Group is now planning for next year. We shall be continuing to the best of our ability to distribute the "Dover first port of call" leaflet on to the ships (via handling agents or shipping companies), and there are plans to issue leaflets about Dover and its attractions in other languages such as

Russian and Italian (a requirement identified during the season). We shall be looking at ways of benefiting Deal and Sandwich.

In addition various new initiatives have arisen, for example a new bus tour operation in Dover for the summer season, and an offer by Dover College to arrange tours and tea. The Cruise Welcome Group is always open to new ideas and suggestions, and anyone with a constructive point of view to offer is always welcome to join the meetings. If you are interested, please contact the Dover Town Centre Manager's office (Tel. 225231) for details of the next meeting.

The Coming of the Cruise Terminal:

A SURVEY of LOCAL BUSINESSES

MERRIL LILLEY

A SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT in a fortnight in October by six members of the Dover Society. The members of the team were Merrill Lilley, Jack Woolford, Terry Sutton, John Owen, Leo Wright and Marjorie Wright.

For this survey the team visited shops and other businesses from Bench Street to the Town Hall. In most cases it was possible to interview respondents on the spot. Where this was not possible the questionnaires were left to be collected at a later date or to be posted on.

The questionnaire stated that

"The Dover Society is conducting this survey to find out if the town has benefited from the opening of the Cruise Terminal in 1996"

and went on to ask eight other questions. We wanted to find out how many businesses felt that they had benefited from the opening of the terminal, how much they

had benefited, whether they had advance notice of the dates of cruise ship visits, and whether they had gained custom from passengers, or crew, or both. Lastly we asked respondents if they had any suggestions or ideas which might help businesses in Dover derive more benefit from cruise ship visits in the future.

These are the results of the SURVEY.

100 businesses answered the questionnaire. 2 failed to return the survey sheet. 3 others were never available when we called. (We have not included betting shops, estate agents, furniture stores, pubs or butchers, as initial questioning indicated that none of these had benefited from the opening of the terminal).

32 To the first question - Has your business benefited? 15 answered No and 85 Yes

To the second question -How much has your business benefited ?

Of the 85 who said Yes -

40 said "very little" or "marginally".

25 said about 10%

20 said 20% or more

Most shops had had advance notice of the dates of the cruise ship visits.

Only a few knew whether or not the ship was making a port of call.

Some shops gained more custom from passengers, some gained more custom from crew, some benefited from both passengers and crew.

Looking at the the two groups of respondents who said they had 10% or 20% or more gain in custom (45 shops) it was seen that they included shops selling flowers, shoes, clothes, cards, jewellery, electrical goods, CDs and cassettes and cameras and films. They also included chemists, dry cleaners, taxi firms, charity shops (crew), hairdressers, gift shops, eating places and foreign exchange agencies.

As the survey moved away from the Market Square towards the Town Hall there were more replies of "No" or " very little". Some traders thought that few passengers walked that far.

One of the main findings of the survey was that many shops thought that they gained more custom from the crew than from the passengers.

42 replies out of 85 indicated that the ships' crews had contributed more than the passengers to an increase in custom. Crew members are more likely to eat ashore, patronising restaurants which serve foreign food (Indian, Italian) and fast food outlets. They also buy clothes, shoes, toiletries, small electrical goods and darts! They may get dry cleaning done and have a haircut.

It was not expected that passengers would eat a lot ashore (as cruise ships are notorious for providing day-long refresh-

ment). Nevertheless it was shown that those who spend a day ashore do frequent tea shops and cafes!

Passengers are looking for souvenir shops and gift shops but may have other requirements too.

On some port-of-call days Australians and Canadians were buying dress and embroidery materials.

HOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES

One of our members, Adeline Reidy, of No.1 Castle Street Guest House, helped by conducting a quick survey of 10 guest houses where booking had increased due to the opening of the cruise terminal.

Of the 10 respondents eight said they had benefited by 10%, one said 20% and one said 30%. Of the 10, five had bookings from passengers only and five had bookings from both passengers and crew, but mainly with most from passengers. The increased bookings occurred in the following ways:

- (a) passengers staying in Dover before their cruise
- (b) passengers staying in Dover after their cruise
- (c) visitors meeting passengers from the ships
- (d) visitors delivering passengers to the ships
- (e) visitors meeting friends on a port-of-call stop and
- (f) crew staying in Dover before joining a ship.

IDEAS and SUGGESTIONS for the FUTURE

Lastly, 32 of the respondents gave their own suggestions and ideas for the future. Some of these were fairly short replies, but several completely filled the back sheet of the questionnaire with their comments. I have tried to summarise all their suggestions under the following headings.

WELCOMING THE PASSENGERS

It was suggested that "welcomers" need to be organised to promote a coordinated message about the sights, attractions and retail outlets in Dover. Much more can be made of the historic interest of the town

and the many different attractions on offer. All these should be advertised, with up-to-date information on opening times, as these vary through the season. These include the Castle, the Roman Painted House, the White Cliffs Experience, Dover Museum, Dover Town Gaol, the Grand Shaft, the Western Heights, the Langdon Cliffs Picnic area and Crabble Corn Mill. Some people suggested town tours should be offered.

It was thought that a quality "welcome pack" would be a good idea. If this could not be placed on ships, it could be handed to passengers as they boarded the shuttle buses at the Cruise Terminal, or when they alighted from the shuttle buses in the Market Square. Shops could have their own supply of these packs to hand to passengers who had not obtained one earlier.

ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

To attract passengers to the town people thought there should be information available at the Cruise Terminal. Free advertising space should be available there.

It has been suggested that the next leaflet or booklet produced by the Cruise Welcome Committee might include advertisements from shops in the town who wished to contribute to the publication. Again, if this could not be placed on the cruise ships, it could be handed to passengers as they disembarked, or, perhaps, included with the "welcome pack".

Some shops might be willing to offer discount vouchers to passengers. Another suggestion was for a service guarantee scheme, which has already been proposed by retailers, to be organised via the various shipping companies who use the port of Dover.

There should be good maps of the town included with any pack.

The possibility of producing advertisements and information in different languages should be explored.

There was a suggestion that the tourist office information centre be relocated in the town centre.

TRANSPORT

Various suggestions were put forward. There was a general feeling that some kind of circular tour of attractions would be a good idea. Some people suggested free transport, to be subsidised by local traders. However this year most tour companies provided free shuttle buses into the town for passengers and crew.

FOREIGN CURRENCY

This was one of the main topics of discussion..

It was thought that shops should be encouraged to accept foreign currencies, especially American dollars.

There is a real problem of passengers being unable to change money on Sundays and on Saturday afternoons, when the banks are closed.

SUNDAY OPENING

There are only a few Sundays when ships are in port, making ports of call. It was suggested that, as these occasions are so few, there should be a concerted effort to persuade local shops to open on these days. The ships should be informed and there should be maximum publicity for the shops which do open.

PLANNING

Several respondents thought that there should be opportunity for local businesses to discuss problems and exchange ideas on all the issues mentioned above. One thought that this was crucial on the matter of Sunday opening. One suggested that the Chamber of Commerce should be involved.

THE FUTURE

Building on the experiences of 1996, the Cruise Welcome Committee will have several months to plan for next season. We hope the results of this survey will be of some help. Obviously there is plenty to discuss in terms of advertising, publicity, transport and foreign currency exchange.

Meanwhile, in the words of one of the survey respondents -

PUSH DOVER - DON'T RUN IT DOWN!