

# The Cruise Welcome Group

Report by MERRIL LILLEY

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The Cruise Welcome Group has held two meetings since our last *Newsletter*. One was at the Cruise Terminal in August, where the group was given a guided tour by Keith Southey of Dover Harbour Board. The second was on 31st October at the IMPACT offices.

The Committee, made up of representatives of many local businesses and interests, has grown in stature since its inception and those who attended the meetings are getting a very positive feeling that it will be a valuable force in future planning for the reception, welcome and comfort of cruise passengers who visit the town.

On 31st October, James Overton of Dover District Council Tourism Department, who had chaired the meetings for the first year, handed over the chairmanship to Kevin Gubbins, the new Dover

Town Centre Management Co-ordinator. Mr Gubbins is installed in new offices at 7 Castle Street and future meetings may be held there.

At each meeting new ideas are introduced and discussed in detail. At the end of the first year it was felt much had been learned and that Dover could draw on the experiences of the first season when planning for the second. Inevitably mistakes had been made and time spent fruitlessly in the first year. Now the committee members are more aware of

the issues involved and thus more able to deal with them...

One of the main areas for discussion deals with the different approaches needed by the two different types of cruise ship calls. Some ships are embarking and disembarking passengers whilst others are using Dover, with its cruise terminal, as a port of call. The former are in the majority. From these, it seems likely, hotels, guest houses and taxi firms benefit most. It is the latter, the 'port of call' days, which most benefit the town and are thus of crucial concern to the shops and businesses in Dover which cater for the needs and interests of the passengers.

At the last meeting discussion included welcome strategies at the port, foreign currency exchange, Sunday opening and arrangements for taxi rank provision.

Several people put forward promotional ideas. One was to offer tours and cream teas at Dover College, the representative from Holts Battlefield Tours has put together a package tour of White Cliffs Countryside which he would like to offer to cruise ship excursion organisers. Ideas for

a future brochure to promote Dover were also discussed.

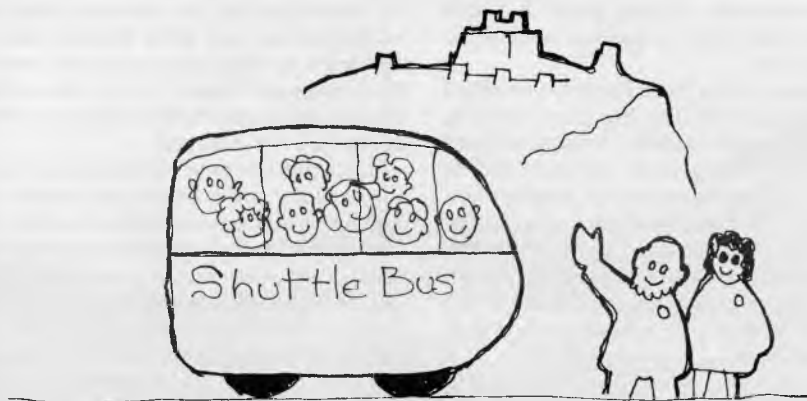
Next summer there will be a open top bus tour running from 27th May until September, run by Guide Friday Tours, which operates in many European cities. The bus route will include the Cruise Terminal on 'port of call days'.

The route will be:

Market Square  
Western Heights  
Cruise Terminal \*  
Sea Front, Wellington Dock  
Eastern Docks  
Langdon Cliffs  
Dover Castle  
Market Square

Tickets, at £5.50, will; be valid all day and passengers can get on/off at any point. There will be a taped commentary en route.

The Cruise Welcome Committee will now have a lot of planning to do. In 1997 there are (so far) 120 cruise ships booked, with fifteen of these on 'port of call days'.



The cartoons on this page and an 34 and 36 are by Col. Dick Bolton who, as many will remember, recently gave us a most interesting talk on BRICKS!