

Plans for DOVER DISCOVERY CENTRE

report from Terry Sutton

DOVER DISCOVERY CENTRE, constructed from the shell of the closed down White Cliffs Experience, is gradually taking shape with the overall project scheduled by completion this time next year. Dover District Council handed the complete property, not including Dover Museum, over to Kent County Council, saving district council tax payers £100,000 a year.

Julie Flanagan has been appointed manager of the new Discovery Centre. The completion of the centre will be in four phases, providing a learning and leisure centre for the Dover district. The first phase, already completed, was the opening of the UK on-line Information and Communications Technology (ICT) computer centre linked as the hub to six satellite outstations in Dover, Deal, Whitfield, Tower Hamlets, St. Radigund's and Elvington. Another early completion is a pre-school nursery for children aged 3-5 and an art studio.

The second phase, scheduled for completion around Easter, is the move of the Adult Education Centre from

Westmount, Folkestone Road so that students can start the summer term at the new location. The third phase, in the summer months, is the switch of the public library from Maison Dieu House to the Discovery Centre. Also moving there will be the junior library from Maison Dieu Gardens and the depot for the mobile library. A new facility will be a dedicated youth library geared towards teenagers.

The official opening for the library complex is set for September 6th, but that could be rolled back. At that stage the cafe-restaurant, with 60 covers, should be open. Kent County Council is putting the cafe management out to franchise.

The final exciting stage of the enterprise will be the opening of the former Time and Tide theatre, in the tower block, as a community theatre, with seating for an audience of around 120. In charge of the project is Roger Gabriel, a former pupil and then a teacher at Dover Grammar School for Boys.



EDITOR'S NOTE. View of the new White Cliffs Experience and the Museum, featured in Newsletter 10, May 1991. At the time Leo Wright commented, 'how happy we would be if the banks and shops could be re-located, thus making possible a piazza and stepped garden and opening up the side view of what is arguably the best building in Dover'. What a great idea. Could it still be done?