



# THE WHITE CLIFFS EXPERIENCE

Opening by H.R.H. The Princess Royal  
1st May 1991



*photo: Department of Tourism & Marketing D.D.C.*

It was cold but luckily fine when we assembled in the Market Square to await the arrival of the Princess Royal and we were surprisingly but delightfully entertained by the Ermine Street Guard, which turned out to be a cohort of the Roman XX Legion (from Chester), splendidly arrayed in helmets and breastplates, swords and spears, shields and animal skins, horns and helmets, preceded by a standard bearer and marshalled by a monumentally stentorian commander. They marched and counter-marched, charged and counter-charged with swords, then spears and finally with shields overhead (in phalanx fashion) before breaking ranks to form a guard of honour for the Princess.

The Princess, who was royally punctual, was greeted by a felicitous address of welcome by Cllr Paul Watkins, Chairman of the District Council, who briefly explained the four-year conception and realisation of the White Cliffs Experience as a partial answer to the Channel Tunnel's challenge to Dover's port-based economy. Cllr Watkins then assured Her Royal Highness that although lunch would be served, £1 per head would be contributed to her "Save the Children Fund" and that further donations would be solicited as guests left the Town Hall.

I myself was honoured to be presented and briefly to discuss with Princess Anne the extent of the contribution the White Cliffs Experience might make to Dover's economic problems. To my observation that it could only be partial Her Royal Highness emphasised that many people—including she herself—would continue to prefer the ferry experience: which I endorsed. I briefly outlined the Dover Society's cooperative-but-critical relationship with Dover District Council and instanced the cleaning of the river and the re-planting of Lousyberry Wood as examples of our positive contribution to the future of the town.

Civic occasions are opportunities for making contacts and I was fortunate to be able to suggest to one of our Vice-Presidents, Lord Rees, our former MP, that he might usefully address out next AGM in April 1992 on his recollections of Dover. I got a provisional acceptance. Vice-President Ivan Green suggest that we should erect bird boxes on the trees in Connaught Park and Ian Gill, former Dover Borough Town Clerk (who accepted a rebuke for inflicting Burlington House on Dover and a compliment on his rescue of part of the Roman Fort from Borough Council pneumatic drills in 1971) undertook to provide them. John Clayton, Director of Planning and Technical Services, described current developments of the projected Riverside Walk Fund, which the Dover Society is supporting, and Peter Sherred and Ron Dryden of the Chamber of Commerce welcomed our undertaking to help in furthering their development plans.

As we talked in the Stone Hall a combined schools orchestra played with astonishing verve and precision in neighbouring Connaught Hall. Altogether it was my happiest civic occasion in forty-one years as a Dovorian-by-adoption.

JACK WOOLFORD

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As Members were advised on page 97 of Newsletter No. 9, The Society is prepared to supply Cardix Binders for the A5 Newsletter for £3.50 each, providing a minimum of 50 orders are received. To date orders number exactly 20. Unless 50 are ordered at one time it will not be possible to provide binders of the specification proposed, i.e. blocked in gold on the spine with 'Dover Society Newsletter' at the price quoted and indeed, it may not be possible to have them gold blocked.

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