

POSTSCRIPT

The reciprocal visits to and from Calais Accueil have had a very pleasant and rewarding sequel.

The A.V.F., with some 600 voluntary centres in France, are now thinking European. Already into Germany, they are looking to introduce the good work of the Accueil into Britain, starting in Kent. We were asked to arrange a meeting with Dover District Council to explore ways and means.

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On 11 November Leo and Marjorie Wright entertained Madame Violette Picot, a national vice-president, and Madame Renée Vernusset, regional representative for Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and a meeting was arranged with John Moir, Chief Executive of D.D.C. We were able to give them some promising contacts, which they are already following up.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

During one week in October, it so happened that I had occasion to observe several visitors to the town in different situations, which constituted their first impressions of Dover.

Passing through Brook House car park, on my way to the Library, I saw three coaches unloading parties of tourists, on their way to the White Cliffs Experience. The sun was shining, the flowers blooming in recently-weeded beds, the paths were clear of litter, the ducks bobbing on the Dour, as the visitors crossed the footbridge and made their way to the pedestrian precinct. I think their first impressions were favourable.

At the Painted House, I encountered a couple who had just arrived by train for a day in Dover. Seeing a sign to the Painted House they had made that their first stop and were answering a tourist questionnaire, put to them by a helpful custodian. They had decided to visit Dover for the day to sight-see, because they had previously only passed through on their way to the ferry! Their welcome was a very friendly one.

As I stood near the desk at the Tourist Office outside the museum, I heard two Americans. They were booking bed and breakfast in Castle Street, a ferry crossing for the following day and enquiring about a three-day stay on their return from the continent. However, the assistant failed to help them with their last query. The banks had closed and they wanted to change some dollar travellers cheques. Surely, I thought afterwards, they could have been directed to the Bureau de Change on Townwall Street.

So far, so good. In all these situations the tourists seemed very happy. However, the following Saturday, when out walking, I saw some very tired-looking travellers, making their way along Snargate Street, after avoiding several hazards connected with the roadworks for the A20. There were at least 60 or 70 people, some with children, some elderly, some with suitcases, all WALKING from Western Docks to Dover town centre. Hardly a welcoming entrance to Dover for these visitors. Surely buses could be provided for them!

EDITOR