

Working for Dover

THE WHITE CLIFFS EXPERIENCE

1

Kim Norton, Education Officer

To be employed doing a job which one really enjoys is quite a rarity nowadays. I am one of those very fortunate people who have that pleasure.

For the past six months, since leaving teaching in a primary school classroom, I have been employed as Education Officer for the White Cliffs Experience. As a Dover girl born and bred it is wonderful to be involved in something which is playing a central part in the development of Dover.

My job is to help teachers to get the most from their school visit to the White Cliffs Experience. This is many-faceted – providing background information on what is available, providing talks and handling sessions with artifacts, running teachers' courses and familiarisation sessions and developing new resources in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum. My job is made so much easier by the staff of the White Cliffs Experience who are all extremely helpful to me and who go out of their way to make sure that schools have everything they require. No two days are the same and as the number of schools visiting the centre continues to grow my job is developing and growing all the time.

It is also a fundamental part of the policy of the White Cliffs Experience to provide extra services to schools from the Dover District Council area. These, so far, have included the Roman festival where 250 local school children and their teachers came dressed in Roman costume for a fun-filled day of Roman activities, including drilling in Latin and sandal making. A marvellous way of making history really come alive for children. A creative writing competition on the theme Images of Dover attracted a large number of very high quality entries which are now on display in the education room for visiting schools to see and in creative writing workshops in the Museum as part of the Dover Festival.

The White Cliffs Experience with its concentration on the Romans and on World War II not only provides a unique and exciting learning experience for schools which is directly in line with the dictates of the History aspect of the National Curriculum but also provides opportunities for the study of other National Curriculum areas: English, Art, Geography, Design and Technology and French as a Foreign Language. New resources, such as a French pack for English primary school children to practice their French, are being developed to supplement study of these areas of the curriculum.

The White Cliffs Experience is becoming a focal point for many activities in Dover and is responsible for bringing many people to the town. In its first year over 250,000 people visited the centre, many of these coming to Dover for the first time. Being involved with this is both exciting and challenging and I feel very privileged to be playing my small part.

THE WHITE CLIFFS EXPERIENCE

2

Jean Luckhurst, Secretary

How am I working for Dover? Well, really the same as all the other staff at The White Cliffs Experience. In a nutshell, we're working to attract thousands of people to see the Historium. Hopefully these visitors will also go to other attractions in the area and spend their money in the shops, thus encouraging more shops to open which will create employment and entice shoppers from other towns to spend yet more money, and so on.

To be perfectly honest, when you tell people you're a secretary their eyes often glaze over at the thought of the boredom of such a job. I've had several secretarial positions in varying types of organisations and each has been completely different. Yes, you still type and write shorthand, but the content varies.

At The White Cliffs Experience the secretary is a Jack-of-all-trades. I open the post, answer the phone, make the coffee, answer the phone, ring for the lift for a handicapped visitor, answer the phone – simultaneously. And type letters, reports, take minutes, arrange meetings, order stationery, do the filing, water the plants (usually too late). In other words, the usual things a secretary does. I've also helped in the Bistro when we were short staffed; been called to the Shop to keep an eye on little fingers when we were inundated with French schoolchildren; and handed the pen to the Princess Royal to sign the Visitor's Book. The telephone is a major part of the job. It rings constantly and calls are varied:- "What time do you open?"; "Can I make a booking?"; "Have you any vacancies?"; "Are there any places left on the Calais ferry?"; "Parlez vous français?"; "I'd like to book a children's party"; "Do you sell fossils?"; "What's on at the cinema today?"; etc. Some calls take only a minute; some as long as half-an-hour. So it is an advantage to be able to balance the phone between your shoulder and your ear so that the typing doesn't stop for too long. You also needs remarkable patience and tact. But calls are really worthwhile when you can persuade a sceptic that a visit to The White Cliffs Experience will be the highlight of his holiday and, maybe, of his life.

The Admin. office is shared with the Marketing Department and often looks quite amazing. A mailout may be happening entailing 2000 envelopes being filled and stamped; Sid Seagull might be preening his feathers as he gets ready to make a personal appearance at a children's party in the Bistro; Romans might be girding their loins prior to taking part in the Roman Festival; the Marketing Manager might be talking to a television crew before they do some filming; or she might be holding a meeting with members of the Council to discuss future events.

126 The photo copier and fax machine are also in this office, as are the coffee machine and stationery cupboard. Sometimes there seems to be a hundred people in our room. Visitors waiting in the Reception area of the office to see the Centre Manager often look quite bemused.

We have a good team at The White Cliffs Experience, the secret of which is that we all respect the value of each other's jobs. We get on well – at work and socially. We're always very busy but do have time to laugh too.

Next time you are visiting the Centre, when you come out of the World War II Street you will pass the office: do pop your head in and say "Hello" Δ

The Society's A.G.M. 1992

Margaret Robson

Before the Chairman officially opened the meeting, a letter was read from our president, the Countess of Guildford, who wrote of her great regard for the Society and its aims, her enjoyment of the Newsletter and her sad regrets that illness all too often intruded into her life, rendering her less active in fulfilling commitments dear to her. The letter was warmly received and it was unanimously agreed that a tribute should be sent to her.

Mr. Jack Woolford then opened the meeting, regretting the absence of Mr. Peter Johnson, due to ill-health. The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced the guest speakers, Lord Rees, David Shaw M.P. and John Moir of Dover District Council. He announced, with pleasure, the appointment of three new vice-presidents, Philomena Kennedy, Christine Waterman and Martin Wright. The recent edition of the Newsletter was praised for its content and appearance. Two resignations were noted with regret; of Lin Clackett (fortunately only temporary) and Adrian Galley, who was forced by circumstances to relinquish his post as Chairman of the Planning Committee, a job he had performed with great commitment and diplomacy. Both were thanked for their services on behalf of the Society.

The Chairman reported that, for the second time, the Society had had to call in the Ombudsman over the Ministry of Defence's evasion of planning regulations. On each occasion the Society had sought the help of Dover's M.P., in the first case Lord Rees and in the second, David Shaw: both had responded magnificently.

It had been agreed that John Peverley's address on the Western Heights should be published in booklet form sometime in the future, with a possible launching ceremony at W. H. Smith's with the author present.

John Owen was complimented on his successful projects; the replanting of Lousyberry Wood and the restoration of Lydden Pond, both of which had won awards, from the Civic Trust, British Telecom and Shell BP.

The Chairman expressed the Society's pleasure in presenting Awards in October 1991 to Paul Koralek, Architect of the White Cliffs Experience; to Ivor Heal and the Museum Staff; to Dover District Council for the restoration of two shops in Cannon Street; to