

the comfortable lounge to view the magnificent arching spines of the old station and the re-furbished splendour of the Southern Railway's Memorial from the Second World War.

By chance we met a couple of cruise passengers from Michigan, USA, returning to the ship after walking into Dover. We were anxious to know their impressions of the town. Yes, they thought it was a nice little town to visit. They had walked past the Grand Shaft and wanted to go in but it was closed. Yes, they realised they should have seen the castle, but there was

so little time. They had been given some leaflets about Dover about an hour before disembarking but hadn't read them carefully. They'd enjoyed their visit, had lunch at Dickens Corner, bought some very good greetings cards from The Gift Box in Bench Street, one in particular for a Golden Wedding. They thought that all the people were very friendly. So we left them to resume their cruise and returned to our coach.

Back to St. Mary's Hall for tea and thank you speeches to all who had contributed to this superlatively successful day.

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## *The Official Opening of the Cruise Terminal*

More than 200 guests attended the official opening of the Cruise Terminal on 20th June 1996. Dover Harbour Board Chairman, John Maltby announced that already 108 cruise liners had booked for 1997, making Dover the busiest cruise line port in the UK.

The Cunard *Royal Viking Sun* was in port for the opening and guests had a tour of the vessel and lunch on board, before it

departed for a fourteen-day Norwegian cruise.

Guests were greeted by Jonathan Sloggett, Managing Director of Dover Harbour Board and the opening was performed by Peter Ward Chairman and Chief Executive of Cunard. He unveiled a wall plaque set between two photographs, one of the Golden Arrow and the other of *The Royal Viking Sun*.

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## *The Grand Shaft* — — — — — TERRY SUTTON

One of Dover's best known tourist attractions, the Grand Shaft, is open again following restoration. The perpendicular shaft through the cliffs, linking Snargate Street with the Western Heights, is open every afternoon (except Mondays) between two and five.

The re-opening ceremony was performed by Brigadier David Godsall, Deputy Constable of Dover Castle, when a kilted nineteenth cent. re-enactment group, the 42nd Highlanders, mounted guard and gave a demonstration of musketry. firing.

The shaft was built during the threat of a Napoleonic invasion and the triple stair-

way down through the cliff was designed to provide a surprise route by which British troops could emerge from their Western Heights barracks to swoop on any French bridgehead, cutting off hopes of reinforcements. It was all a complete waste of money because no invasion came.

But the three spiral staircases, each of 140 steps, leading to another fifty-nine steps in the open air, for many years provided a route for garrison troops as they headed for the fleshpots of Snargate Street and the rest of Dover. How they managed to climb back afterwards leaves a lot to the imagination! It's quite a climb!