

Leafing through Lloyds

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Most days there is always something to be learned about Dover port, docks and shipping by leafing through Lloyd's List. For instance on one day, Tuesday 5th March, there were eight articles relating to Dover.

One article dealt with the upgrading of the ferry terminal, describing the £7m reclamation project at the Eastern Docks, likely to begin this summer. The seven-acre development will double the available accommodation for freight parking spaces and one aim is to attract more unaccompanied freight.

The article explained that, in the meantime, a satellite truck stop has been set up at the Western Docks to provide more space for accompanied freight. It also mentions plans for a truck and coach interchange on nine acres of Harbour Board land at the White Cliffs Business Park, which could be ready later this year.

There is also a major project to concentrate all public car parking in one area at the Eastern Docks entrance, increasing available spaces from 500 to 800.

Another article, of interest to Dorvians and visitors, told of the success of the De Bradelei Wharf development which, increasingly, is attracting customers from a wide area, including visitors from across the Channel. The article states that trading has already reached the level projected for two years hence. As a result, said Bill Fawcus, Dover Harbour Board's general manager (property), plans are being submitted to double the size of the complex, with an aim to open the second phase by November 1997 and to anticipate further development in 1998.

A special report dealt with all the ferry traffic through the port and discussed the effect of the Channel Tunnel and the forthcoming merger of P&O and Stena lines.

Other articles described the increase of fruit imports through Dover, the trade in sea dredged aggregates and road stone entering the port and the changing

image of Dover in the eyes of the public as diversification grows.

As might be expected, one article dealt with the cruise market success, quoting various statistics. In 1996 the port handled 98 cruise calls, cruise passengers totalling 99,562. In 1997 there are about 120 calls booked, though the figure may creep up, said John Turgoose, Dover's general manager (shipping). Already, he said, 100 calls have been booked for 1998, with 1996 customers booking again for 1997 and 1998. The article goes on to quote Jonathan Sloggett, Dover Harbour Board Managing Director, as saying that he believed more traffic could be attracted if the terminal was expanded and that the Harbour Board was thinking about further development. Interesting facts emerge in relation to the success of the terminal; the growth of the north-European cruise market; the geographical situation of Dover, particularly for cruises to the Baltic and Scandinavia and easy access to Gatwick Airport. Ironically, the article points out, Dover gets a spin-off from the Channel Tunnel by the fact that growing numbers of Europeans travel via the tunnel to join cruises at Dover.

Three cruise ships now use Dover as a home port. Fred Olsen's *Black Prince* and *Black Watch* are this year joined by Saga's new acquisition, the *Saga Rose*, making its first call in May 1997. Regular callers include the *Norwegian Crown* (NCL), the *Royal Princess* (Princess Cruises) and the *Crystal Harmony* (Crystal Cruises), the largest ship to berth at the terminal.

The article ends with the comment that cruise-related spending in the town has proved much higher than anticipated.