

Cruising Out of Dover

"DOVER WILL BECOME THE GREATEST PORT OF CALL IN THE WORLD"

A report by Keith Southey of Dover Harbour Board

"Dover will become the greatest port of call in the world and nothing can interfere with it on account of its geographical position as it lies in the centre of the highway between the east and the west."

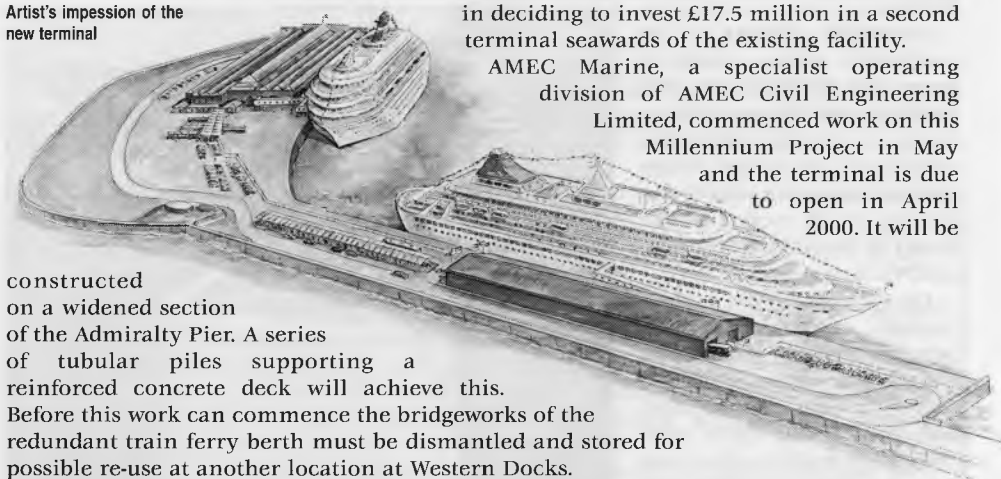
- Not my words, but those of Albert Ballin, Director General of the Hamburg-America Line, at a meeting with Dover Harbour Board in 1904. In those days Dover was on the transatlantic cruising map as a main embarkation point.

Although few would argue with the second half on the quotation, the first half gives us something to which we can aspire, although Mr. Ballin did add one very important rider - "...when all the works in contemplation by the Harbour Board have been carried out..."

I wonder what the management of the port had in mind when that meeting took place almost 100 years ago.

Certainly the renovation and conversion of the Western Docks railway station into a cruise liner terminal has equipped the port with a facility envied and admired the world over. In April of this year the Board took a bold step in deciding to invest £17.5 million in a second terminal seawards of the existing facility.

Artist's impression of the new terminal



constructed on a widened section of the Admiralty Pier. A series of tubular piles supporting a reinforced concrete deck will achieve this. Before this work can commence the bridgeworks of the redundant train ferry berth must be dismantled and stored for possible re-use at another location at Western Docks.

AMEC will design and construct the terminal building, which will offer a first floor lounge seating 1,200 passengers. Beneath the lounge will be 2,000 square metres of baggage handling space.

While it is hoped that the architects will come up with a design pleasing to the eye, an important element will be the capability of the building to withstand the extreme adverse weather conditions, which, as we all know, occasionally affect the site.

Let us hope that Dover Harbour Board is steering a course which meets with Albert Ballin's vision for the port.

AMEC Marine, a specialist operating division of AMEC Civil Engineering Limited, commenced work on this Millennium Project in May and the terminal is due to open in April 2000. It will be