

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY - FIRTH OF FORTH NEWSLETTER



2021- NO. 4 AUTUMN
(From 1st Sept. to 30th November)



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BRANCH MEETINGS

The Branch had a late 'summer' lunch at the end of September at the Inchcolm Inn, South Queensferry. It was well attended and we enjoyed, not just the food, but the chance to meet again in person.

A visit to the Cine and Video Club to view the new ventilation system will be undertaken with the intention of starting physical meetings in January. It very much depends, of course, on the situation at that time but the proposed programme is:

1. 17th January: Iain Quinn - Sailing down the Clyde on Queen Mary II in the 1960's
2. 21st February: Tom Carreyette – 'Cargo to the East Med'
3. 21st March: Douglas Yuill - SCOTTISH COASTERS Part II
4. 18th April: Paul Stratthdee - 'Caronia - the story of the Green Goddess'. This date is Easter Monday and I am aware that not everybody can attend (change?).

I suggest a brief EGM at the start of the January meeting to elect a committee and set Branch fees.

There is still time to order a WSS Calendar for 2022 – cost £7

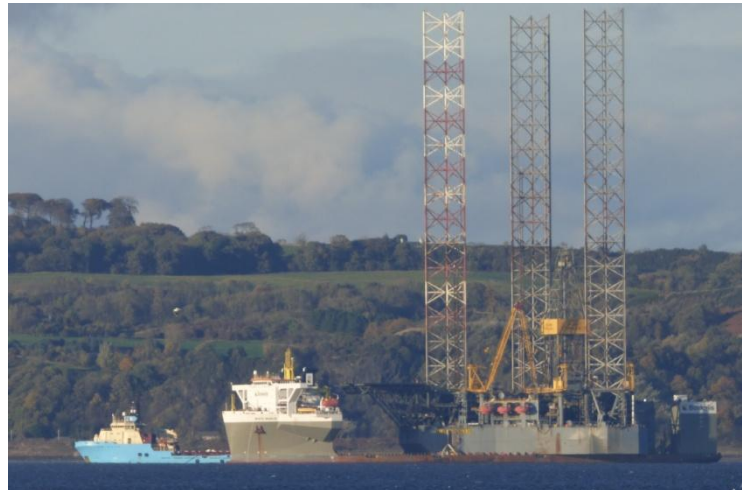
NEWS

One of the interesting movements in October was the move of the rig ROMAN GORILLA VII from Dundee to be loaded on to the heavy load carrier White Marlin [IMO 9670224] 51,065 gt, 72,148 dwt, built 2015. The wait included an abortive journey of the rig a week prior to her finally loading – see track below left: AIS Track of Maersk Handler along with Corringham Craigleith, Inchcolm and Peterel from the 22nd when leaving Dundee through lunch time on

the 23rd when they had reversed course heading back into the North Sea.



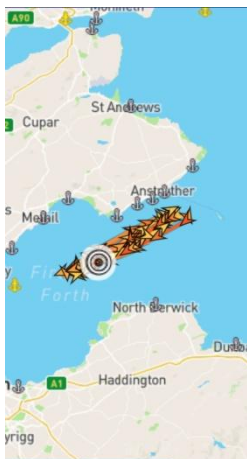
(White Marlin seen off Burntisland 29th September and 24th October).
Finally by 23.36 Maersk Handler and the rig were anchored off the Bell Rock with the other tugs returning to their bases.
Below right: White Marlin 30th October



Above: the Rig with name VALARIS GORILLA VII and Maersk Handler on bow of White Marlin 30th October prior to sailing for New Zealand where is contracted by Bassoe Offshore from Valaris to OMV New Zealand to drill side track wells from the existing Maui B Natural Gas Platform at the end of this year / early next with a 400 day contract with a possible extension.

Also of interest were the tracks of the AHT's IEVOLI BLUE & NICOBAR from the 20th October to the 9th November when they appeared to follow a figure of eight route for several weeks between Methil and Anstruther towing Wagenborg's Barge 9 with the wind turbine supports for the Seagreen development off Fife/Angus which were brought by COSCO SHIPPING's Heavy Lift Ship ZHI YUAN KOU from China. (See map below)

The Seagreen Offshore Wind Farm, located 27km off the coast of Angus, represents a £3bn joint venture between TotalEnergies and SSE Renewables. What is of significance is that the Port of Blyth has been selected by renewables giant Seaway 7 as the location for its cable base for Scotland's biggest wind farm. Does this have implications for Forth Ports plans for Leith revealed in May for a future £40 million investment plan to create a Leith Renewables Hub using reclaimed land to the east of the lock?



TUG NEWS

Oxcar, which had been up for sale since June 2020, departed Leith on the 22nd August for the Mersey and has been renamed CT Oxton by CARMET TUG CO LTD. This leaves three tugs based in Leith: Craigleith (2017), Fidra (1995) and Inchcolm (2020) pictured above going out to bring in the Norwegian Supply ship – see naval movements.

LEITH

Leith saw the Norwegian UTNE, Ro-Ro/Passenger Ship, [IMO 9740720] 1,160 gt 2,94 dwt, built 2015, home port STAVANGER arrive on the 19th November after a period in Rosyth due to issues with the lock gates at Leith. The Turkish built ferry can accommodate 195 passengers and 34 cars and is earmarked for the Mull (Oban – Craignure) route. The short list for names reflect

this and are: Loch Frisa, Glen Forsa and Torosay with voting closing at midnight on 19 December 2021. The cost of buying and upgrading is estimated at £9 million. (below left)

She was flanked by two ex Vos Standby Safety Vessels, Vos Defender and Vos Supporter, both 680 gt, built 1983 which are being scrapped by Dales Marine services. (below right)



Other interesting arrivals were Eems Dublin (IMO 9613642, NLD flag, 5198gt/12) on 19th September delivering a cargo of onshore wind turbines from the Danish port of Grenaa with 64 turbine parts which were unloaded in the Albert Dock Basin and transferred to a renewables storage yard at the port and Arklow Dawn (IMO 9504138, NLD, 6687gt/11) bringing wheat from Rostock – this is the largest wheat cargo to be unloaded at the Mills berth in recent years.

Imperial Dock Grain Elevator & Warehouse. The 15-bay, 5-storey concrete grain warehouse which has stood at edge of the Leith Docks since 1933/1934, originally designed by JD Easton and AH Roberts for the Leith Dock Commission, is in the process of being demolished. Built to stockpile grain, at one time Leith's main import, the building was extended at the back in the 1950s and again in the 1960s, and has been an integral part of the Leith and Edinburgh skyline ever since.

CRUISE SHIPS

September saw the final cruise ships for 2021: the recently commissioned (29th June 2021) CRYSTAL ENDEAVOR [IMO 9821873] 20,449 gt, CRYSTAL CRUISES LLC, built 2021, 25th September 2021 and VASCO da GAMA [IMO 8919245] 55,877 gt, MYSTIC OCEAN SA / V SHIPS MONACO SAM built 1993 as Statendam, renamed Pacific Eden (2015), current name 2019, off Newhaven 17th September 2021. Earlier the Seven Seas Splendor [IMO9437866] with 1829 passengers tendered on the 13th , however Sliver Spirit

failed to dock on the 23rd due to high winds and instead headed for Dundee.



Above: CRYSTAL ENDEAVOR and VASCO da GAMA

ROSYTH November saw the arrival of Boka Atlantis, seen leaving Aberdeen on the 16th September. She is well known in the Forth and has appeared in a number of liveries. Her current one is possibly the least interesting when compared to her earlier appearances, as Gulmar Atlantis in August 2012, Harkland Atlantis, February 2015, or Nor Atlantis in September 2017, all taken when she was in Leith. She also sailed as Iremis Atlantis 2012 – 13 with an attractive orangey red livery but sadly I do not have a photograph. (photographs run anti-clockwise by date).



HOUND POINT The rise in oil prices saw a number of loaded tankers anchored off Dunbar: Wonder Sirius from 14th October, Rumford from 24th October, Hovden Spirit from 13th November, all to the 25th November, Almi Star from 12th November to present and NS Concord from 18th October -18th November.



*HOVDEN SPIRIT [IMO 9596997] 57,244 gt, 105,276 dwt, built 2012 13th Nov;
WONDER SIRIUS [IMO 9285847] 62,806 gt, 115,340 dwt, built 2005 13th October*

NAVAL MOVEMENTS Following the Joint Warrior exercise Leith hosted the Portuguese frigate NRP Corte Real (F 332) Vasco da Gama class (seen departing 5th Oct) together with the Dutch HNLMS Van Amstel (F831) Karel Doorman class (2nd October) and



the Norwegian tanker HNoMS Maud (A 530) seen arriving 2nd October. The exercise involved 27 surface ships, three submarines,

eight maritime patrol aircraft and other air assets, from Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Turkey, the UK and United States, ran for two weeks off the coast of Scotland. Above right - the RFA Tiderace [IMO 9655547] 29,324 gt, 222,103 dwt, built 2018. 24th November heading for Crombie.

BURNTISLAND Briggs Marine has taken possession of the Forth Engineer, a Damen FCS 2610, catamaran design featuring a Twin Axe bow, designed to carry up to 12 personnel plus crew, along with equipment and light cargo, at speeds of over 24 knots. This brings its wholly owned fleet to a total of 31 and allows Briggs Marine to extend its remit further into the renewable energies sector and offer another specialised service.

METHIL A wider variety of coasters are delivering timber to Methil from Varberg. In recent weeks these cargoes were brought by Widor (IMO 9528483, CYP flag, 2474gt/09), Tim (IMO: 943415, CYP, 2474gt/08), Kongsfjell (IMO 9115975, VCT, 2561gt/95) and regular caller Ida (IMO 8613358, CYP, 1616gt/86). At the Methil Enterprise Berth, project cargoes were delivered from Volgograd by Rusich 11 (IMO 9368259, RUS, 4970gt/08) and from Masan in South Korea by the curiously named Donald (IMO 9273791, LBR, 10899gt/06).

KIRKCALDY In the ten years since the reopening of Kirkcaldy Harbour, almost 900,000 tons of wheat have been brought by sea to the port – a remarkable coastal shipping success story and a lot of saved lorry miles! In order to secure future wheat imports by sea, a Freight Facilities Grant is being made available by Transport Scotland to expand facilities at the Hutchison Mill, including improvements that will enable larger coasters to access the harbour. This is important for Kirkcaldy because, currently, ships of up to 86m maximum length are able to turn in the inner basin, and small ships of this size are becoming increasingly scarce. For example, Gillie & Blair's Sea Ruby (IMO: 9006447, CYM, 1382gt/92) and Sea Kestrel (IMO 9006459, CYM, 1382gt/93) were regular visitors at Kirkcaldy but both of these coasters have recently been sold.

The improvement project will involve Carr's Flour Mills Ltd working with Forth Ports to make Kirkcaldy accessible to coasters of up to 3000 dwt (the new dimensional limits being 90m length, 14m beam, 5.2m draft). The larger vessels will enter forwards, not swing,

discharge then exit sternwards with tug assistance. Targe Towing is now part of Forth Ports and they will provide tugs with the necessary capability. It is hoped that the improvements will be in place by Spring 2022.

During September, October and November, the coasters bringing wheat to Hutchison Mill included Ilka (IMO 8504947, DEU, 1366gt/85) from Rostock and Vierow, Rebecca Hammann (IMO 9119634, DEU, 1595gt/95) from Vierow, Sea Kestrel (IMO 9006459, CYM, 1382gt/93) from Cowes, Runner (IMO 9137193, LBR, 1882gt/96) from Shoreham, Swedica Hav (IMO 8605478, BHS, 1616gt/86) from Tilbury, Baltica Hav (IMO 8415665, ATG, 1530gt/84) from Sheerness, Icelandica Hav (IMO 8128884, BHS, 1513gt/82) from Tilbury and Amadeus (IMO 9232498, VCT, 1435gt/84) from Dover.

INVERKEITHING The scrap berth at Inverkeithing saw ten arrivals during September, October and November. The Mia Sophie B (IMO 9113599, DEU, 1596gt/95) loaded scrap for Ghent on three occasions, Ida made the short journey from Methil to load scrap for Wismar, and the Nikar G (ATG, 2301gt/00) also loaded for the same German port. Also loading scrap for Germany, but for Hamburg, were the Sarah B (DEU, 1596gt/95) and Petra (PT, 2530gt/05), while Suna (ATG, 2889gt/94) loaded for Seville and Rix Plato (LBR, 2876gt/95) for Steenbank. The Petra returned to load more scrap for Seville. At Inverkeithing's East Ness berth, Tinto (NIS, 1739gt/74) called on three occasions with timber from Torangsvag; Ida also delivered timber to East Ness but from Wismar.

THE ROYAL NAVY AND PORT EDGAR AND GRANTON.

Bought by the Admiralty in 1916 as the site of a future Naval base, the pier at Port Edgar had been regularly used by the Royal Navy since the 1850s, being used for the Royal Naval guardships regularly stationed off Queensferry. From 1891 to 1906 – HMS CALEDONIA, a boy cadet training ship was moored off. The wounded of the Battle of Jutland were landed at Port Edgar for the Royal Naval Hospital at Butlaw, Queensferry, established in 1905. In 1917 the completed base was commissioned as HMS Columbine, a depot for Torpedo Boat Destroyers of the Grand

Fleet, complete with its own oil fuelling and repair facility. A total of 66 destroyers could be accommodated in the pens, including 'M', 'R' and 'V' and 'W' classes. HMS Columbine and the naval hospital at Butlaw were closed in 1938.

The harbour at Granton was a naval base during WW1. The base was employed in patrol work and minesweeping, and grew through the war to 300 ships. From 1915 Granton became a base for the fitting out and operation of "Q" Ships. The Granton boats were also responsible for the maintenance and operation of the permanent anti-submarine booms and for temporary, mobile nets that were deployed to protect the Grand Fleet when training in the lower part of the estuary.

In 1939, at the outbreak of the Second World War, Port Edgar was commissioned as HMS Lochinvar, a training establishment for the Royal Naval Patrol Service. In 1943 HMS Lochinvar relocated to Granton Harbour just a few miles along the coast. Port Edgar became the home to HMS Hopetoun, a Combined Operations training centre for British and Allied navies training for the D-Day landings in France.

After the war, HMS Hopetoun closed and in 1946 HMS Lochinvar returned to Port Edgar as the home to the Royal Navy minesweepers clearing the Firth of Forth and the eastern coast of Britain of its wartime minefields. In 1958 the Royal Navy Fishery Protection Squadron was moved to HMS Lochinvar. By 1960 the port became the Navy's only minesweeping training establishment. The Port Edgar base was closed in 1975.

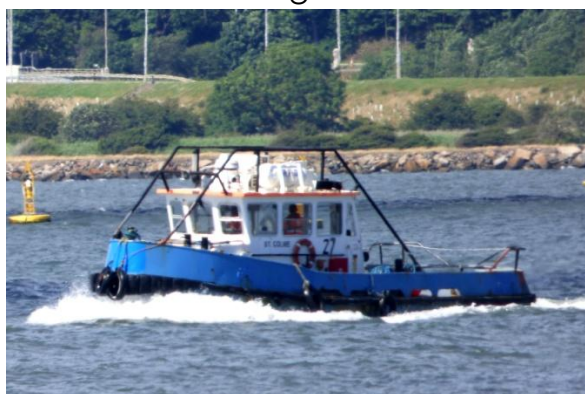
In 1978 Port Edgar was acquired by the former Lothian Regional Council which developed the site into a marina and sailing school. The marina was developed to offer 300 berths and as a watersports centre operated by Edinburgh Leisure, on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council. In 2014 the site was acquired by Port Edgar Holdings Ltd. and has since developed with restaurants and retail outlets. Further developments, funded by using a six-figure loan from HSBC UK, are to increase capacity and house larger yachts by dredging the disused part of the marina and reinstating the old navy pier. Once the revamped area is complete, the marina will be able to increase its mooring spaces

to 370. It will also be able to accommodate yachts over 100 feet - up from the current maximum length of 50ft.

It is also the base for Forth Logistics who operate a wide range of vessels including the ex Southampton Pilot Cutter St Martin and a number of line handling and mooring tugs which support operations at Braefoot Gas Terminal and at Babcocks Rosyth. They also support vessels moored out at the anchorages in the estuary.



Above: Briggs Marine's Forth Trojan seen dredging at the old naval pier and Wave Dancer of Forth Logistics returning from Braefoot Gas Terminal. Below: Forth Logistics' St Colme and Forth Tours Forth Princess.



For the ship spotter it is also an excellent venue for views of vessels entering and leaving Rosyth and traffic coming through the bridges for Crombie and Grangemouth. It is also a point of departure for excursion 'cream tea cruises' run by Forth Tours using the 1921 Forth Princess.

*Thanks to Alan Dowie for the details of cargo movements.
Comments, corrections and contributions are more than
welcome!*

*Editor and photographs © W IAIN H McGEACHY 30th November
2021*