

Black Jack

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY
www.sotonwss.org.uk



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Summer 2023



The Queen Elizabeth in Graving Dock. Southampton

Following on from the previous Black Jack we are continuing the theme on dry-docks with a feature on the opening of the King George V Graving Dock at the Millbrook end of the new Docks Extension. In this view from an old postcard we see the **Queen Elizabeth** of 1940 in the KGV.

Black Jack – Summer 2023 No.207

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***Black Jack is the quarterly magazine of the
Southampton Branch of the World Ship Society.***

Branch Meetings

Venue:

St James Road Methodist Church

St James Road

Shirley

Southampton, SO15 5HE

All meetings commence at 19.30 and the meeting room is to be vacated by 21.30. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month.

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2023 Branch Meeting Programme

June 13th

Video Evening

July 11th

Mini-talks - Geest Bananas Adrian Tennet
other mini talksTBA

Mon July 17th

Annual Branch Solent Cruise
see below for details

August 8th

London Docks

Ian Wells

September 12th

TBC

October 10th

Italy part two

David Oldham

November 14th

AGM and Photo Competition

December 12th

Cruising Again

Bill Mayes

The 2023 Southampton Branch Solent Cruise will take place on Monday 17th July, 11.15 to 18.15 from Town Quay – price £25. Please book via our Treasurer Andrew - address on left. Cheques payable to WSS Southampton Branch.

All contributions to BJ, by post, email, memory stick or CD are most welcome. Any article with a connection to The Solent area would be much appreciated. The Editor could reproduce magazine or newspaper articles but preference is given to articles ‘by the branch – for the branch’.

Would members please ensure that any changes to their postal and/or email addresses are notified to the Branch as soon as possible.

Andrew's Note Book

Some new or infrequent callers to Southampton Docks by Andrew McAlpine

Welcome to the latest notebook from the port of Southampton; here are some updates on the most noticeable comings and goings and other news from around the port.

Cruise News:

On 23rd April AIDA Cruises first Excellence-Class ship **AIDAnova** made her first visit. She was initially due to make her first call in 2022 but this was cancelled.

Right: **AIDAnova** (built 2018) seen arriving on her maiden visit.



Above:: **Le Commandant Charcot** seen sailing following her brief maiden visit.

Container News:

On 1st April the 3500teu **Maersk Acadia** made her maiden visit. Delivered in December 2022 the new the Acadia is first of a new class of ten eco-friendly boxships built in China for Maersk Line. Designed with a high reefer capacity the class will be deployed on US-Latin America reefer trade.

Right: **Maersk Acadia** arriving with Svitzer tug escort.



Making a one-off special visit to Southampton on 14th April was the luxury Polar Exploration vessel **Le Commandant Charcot**. Operated by the French cruise line Ponant she was making her way to the North Pole for her latest cruise season. She was due to stay in port for the day but due to issues caused by the ongoing industrial disputes in France she arrived at 0830 and sailed just two hour later for Brest.



Above: **Koga Trader** (built 2018 as **Beluga Revolution**)

Right: **Global Success** (built 2013) alongside the scrap berth.

until next time stay safe
and happy ship spotting

Andrew

all photos by Andrew McAlpine



KING GEORGE V GRAVING DOCK OPENING

by David Hornsby

Ninety Years Ago, on Wednesday 26th July 1933, HM King George V and Queen Mary sailed into the new dock on the Royal Yacht *Victoria & Albert* to officially declare open the new dry-dock.

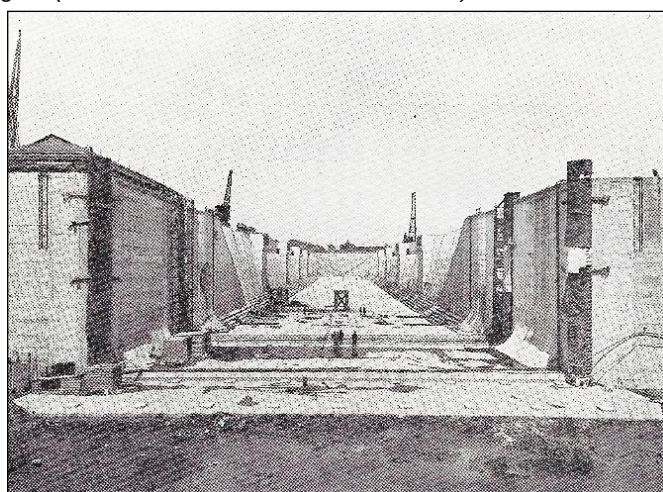
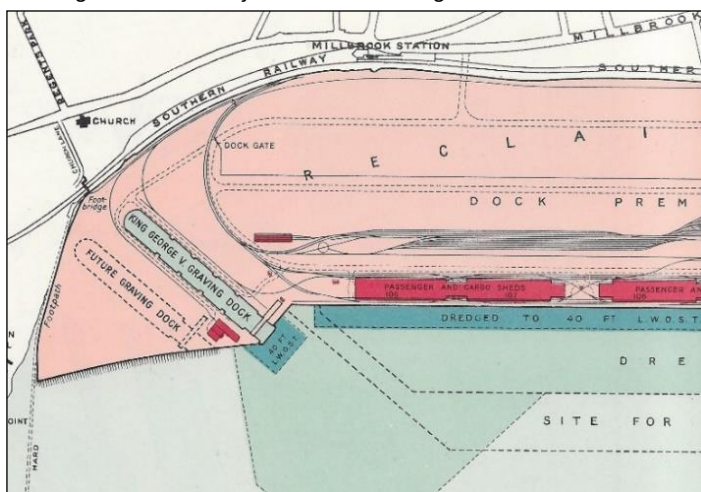
Located at the western end of Southern Railway's "New Dock Extension", work had commenced on building the World's largest graving dock in June 1931, to replace the existing Floating Dock moored at 50 berth. Construction was completed in April 1933, just 22 months after work had started. The new dry-dock had an overall length of 1,200 feet and a length of 1,141 feet at keel block level, with an entrance width of 135 feet, a coping level width of 165 feet and a depth of 47 feet over cill level. Construction work included the excavation of 2 million tons of earth with installation of about 750,000 tons of concrete for the walls and the 25-ft thick dock floor.



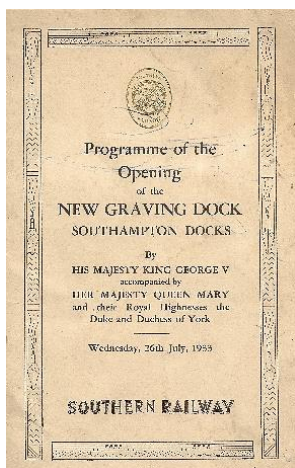
Above: The new graving dock under construction – note railway tracks and locomotive

Below left: Western end of original Southern Railway dock extension scheme, showing location of KGV Dock, possible 800ft second graving dock and mid-channel jetty never constructed

Below right: Dock just before flooding and installation of caisson gate (from Mowlem & Nuttall advertisement)



Ship access to the dry-dock and new quays was along a new 600 feet wide channel running 2 miles from the existing Ocean Dock turning area. The Docks Extension scheme also included provision for another parallel 800 ft dry-dock on the Redbridge side of the pump-house and for a future 4,500 feet long, 400 ft wide jetty parallel to berths 102-8 and 600 feet off the new quay. Neither of these future plans were eventually built.



A special train at 9.25am from Platform 11 at Waterloo brought red and blue badge guests directly to a platform constructed adjoining the graving dock. Only the lucky red badges were invited to luncheon on ***Berengaria*** berthed in the Ocean Dock, before departing at 4.20pm on a special train arriving 6pm at Waterloo. Others arriving by car were allocated parking in 44 berth shed (alongside ***Berengaria***) from where special trains ran to and from the dry-dock platform, in the new 102 berth shed with a special Southern Railway boat from 103 berth to the ceremony or in Millbrook Station Goods Yard from where there was pedestrian access over a footbridge to the Dock.

Events had started as early as 9.30am with music from *The Docks and Marine Club Band*, followed by *The Royal Air Force Band*, community singing and massed choirs.

The Royal party arrived in the Royal Yacht from Cowes at 11.40am, severing a red, white and blue ribbon stretched across the dock entrance, "to the accompaniment of thunderous cheers from the thousands of spectators lining the sides of the dock" in five grandstands. Their Majesties, accompanied by the Duke and Duchess of York, disembarked at noon being received by the Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor, the Lord Bishop of Winchester, the Commander in Chief Portsmouth, other officials and a guard of honour from the Hampshire Regiment.

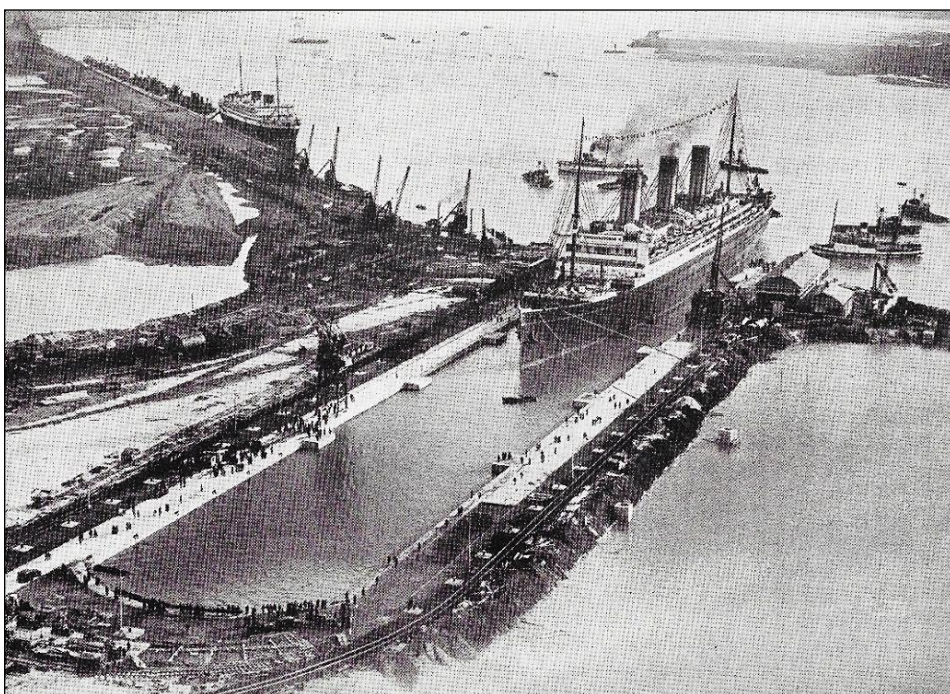
After a 3-minute speech from the Southern Railway chairman, promptly at 12.18pm the King declared the Graving Dock open and at 12.21pm the Queen christened the Dock with a cup containing Empire Wine. The Chairman then presented about 40 guests to the King, included directors and senior engineers of the Railway, the joint main contractors John Mowlem and Edward Nuttall, also contractors McAlpine (quay walls) and James Dredging.

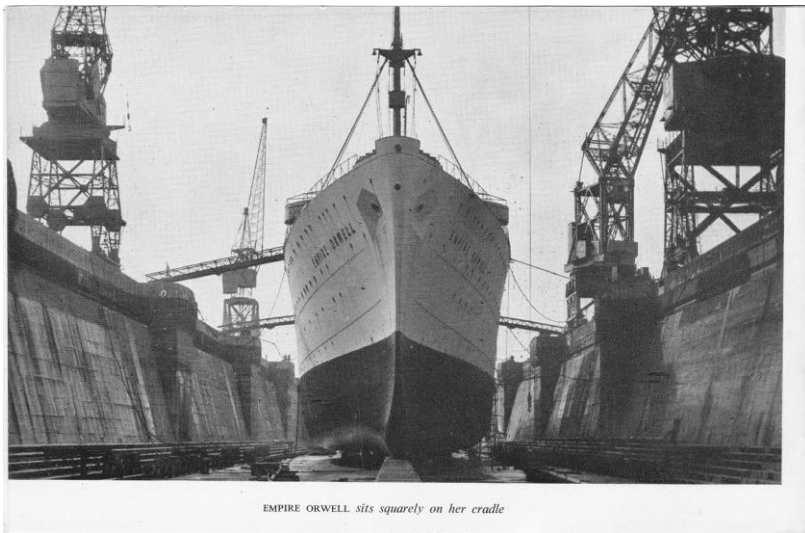


THE KING GEORGE V GRAVING DOCK—SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS. OFFICIAL OPENING BY HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V JULY 26th 1933.

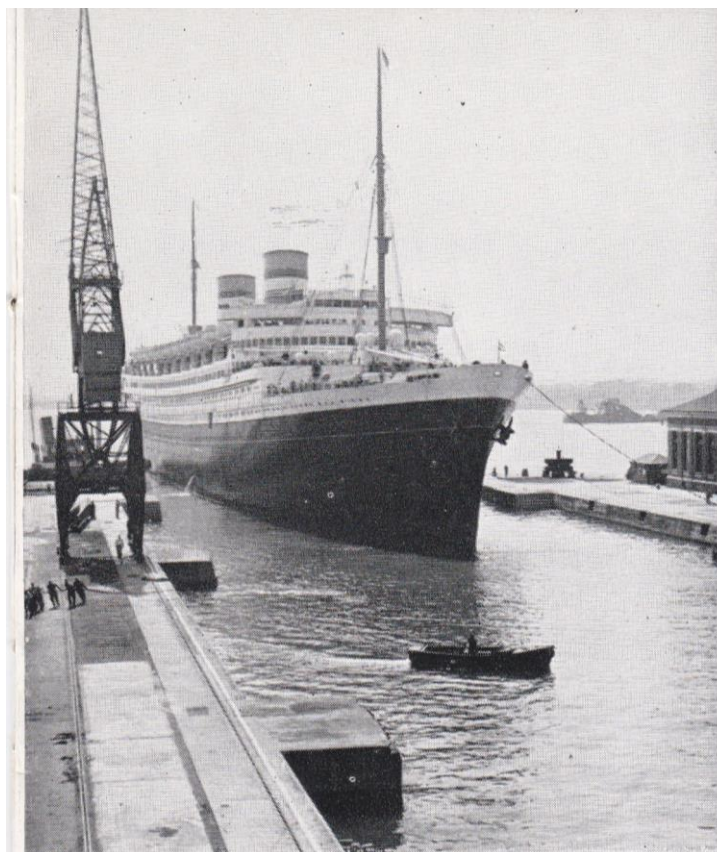
A short service followed conducted by the Lord Bishop and then the Royal party embarked on ***Victoria & Albert*** at 12.39 to head back to Cowes, little more than an hour after arriving.

Right:
Docking of ***Majestic*** in the King George V Graving Dock on 19th January 1934 with construction works still taking place at the Western end of the Docks Extension
(Southern Railway programme and images from Authors' collection)

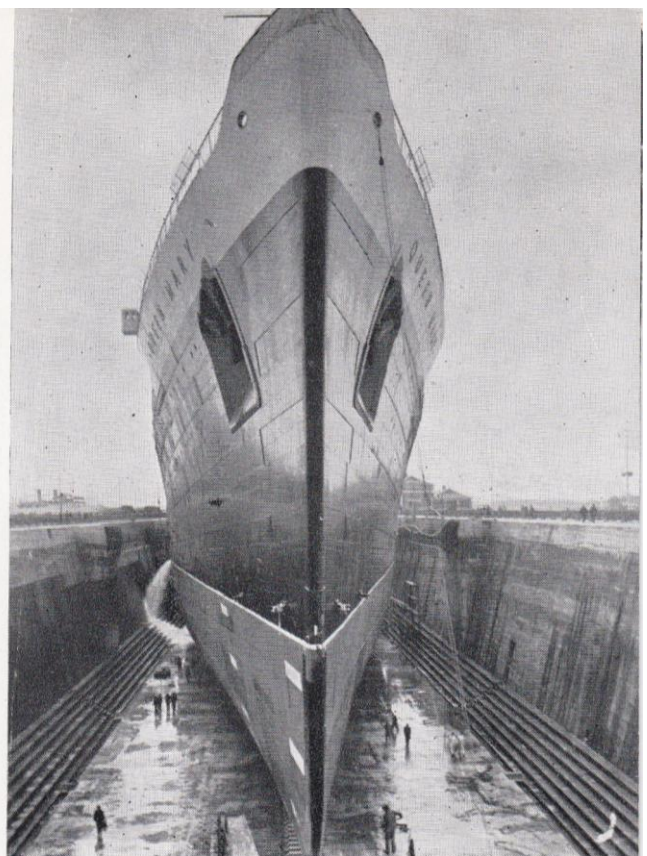




More pictures of ships in the King George V Graving Dock



NIEUW AMSTERDAM entering the Dock



QUEEN MARY 'High and Dry'



On the 21 June 1975 I joined a company called Gardline Shipping Limited of Lowestoft who were engaging in survey work, mainly for oil companies, but occasionally for Government Departments.

I lived in Northolt in west London at the time and was sent down to Plymouth on the Saturday afternoon to await the arrival of the vessel. I stayed in a rundown hotel near the Hoe and had to share a room with an AB (I was joining as Second Officer). Sunday was a beautiful day so after picking up the newspapers we went and sat on the Hoe. During the late morning I was watching a vessel come into Plymouth and said to the AB that I would like to work on a ship like that, he peered over his paper and said "I will in the morning" it was the "Charterer" arriving!

On the Monday morning I joined the "Charterer" renamed "Gardline Seeker (5351923/GBR/1955/477)" in Plymouth to do my first stint in survey work. We were working for the Institute of Geophysical Studies in Edinburgh to find the chalk barrier in the south-western English Channel. We sailed on Wednesday morning to start the work. It was a flat calm day and I puked my guts up as I had been used to somewhat larger vessels, had I done the right thing to change companies?

As Second mate I was on the 12 to 4 watch and had no idea as to how to get the vessel to stop on a position as required. Fortunately, the surveyor on watch with me was ex-RN and knew what to do, the Captain was in his cabin nursing a bottle of Irish whisky, he was from Northern Ireland! When the vessel was in position, a gravity corer was sent over the side to get a sample of the seabed. This was obtained by dropping a barrel, with a plastic tube insert, to retain the sample, this was then hauled back aboard, and the plastic liner removed. Geologists then cut open the sample to see what was in it.

Our remit was to obtain 500 samples within 6 weeks, we got 726!! Each weekend we either came into Plymouth on Saturday and sailed on Tuesday or came in Sunday and sailed on Wednesday, this was due to the scientists and geologists needing time off (civil servants!!) also we had to stock up on Mars bars for them.

That summer was a good summer for weather; only one week when the weather was a bit blowy and the Captain had his wife over from Belfast, so she saw more of Plymouth than she thought she was going to.

When this job was completed, and we sailed from Plymouth to Barry in South Wales to work for the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC). As Second Officer I had to plot the courses between the two ports, never having done this before it presented a bit of a challenge. I drew the courses on the charts and presented them to the Captain. His first question was "How far off the coast were the courses" when I told him 5 miles his reply was "We will never see it, do them again 2 miles off"

In Barry we loaded depth-charges to take to Stornoway to work with a NERC vessel Challenger. She was to lay the depth-charges and we were to tow a seismic cable at very slow speed. One Saturday morning we had set up all the equipment off Rockall and the Challenger was due to set off the charges when a call came over the radio from HMS Tiger, she was working with a nuclear sub and requested we did not set off the depth-charges, you could imagine the headlines "Survey vessel sinks nuclear sub in North Atlantic". The problem arose due to lack of communication between NERC and the Royal Navy, nothing unusual there, both thought that the others exercise had been cancelled. We worked out of Stornoway for that job, only going into port twice. From there, we went to Lowestoft arriving 13-Aug-75 where I finished my first voyage on a survey ship.

The "Charterer" was renamed "Gardline Seeker" apparently due to some Dutch Charterers getting confused with the Charterer chartering the "Charterer"

The name Gardline is an anagram of the bosses George Darling surname name with an "e" stuck on the end, thankfully he did that as none of the master's fancied calling on the radio something like Darling Seeker for a link call!!

A – Z of Sail

by Michael Page

For the letter “H” I have chosen the HALF MOON

This replica of the **Half Moon** is a full scale reproduction of the Dutch ship of exploration that sailed to North America in 1609 by Henry Hudson. This ship is authentic in appearance but constructed of modern materials and techniques. The hull is strip planked with West System Epoxy. Much of the top side planking is epoxy encapsulated woods. Frames and beams are laminated wood, and the rigging is synthetic material.

In the original vessel, Hudson sailed from Amsterdam north to Novaya Zemlya at 71 degrees latitude in the Barents Sea. From there he sailed westward by way of the Faroe Islands, eventually exploring the North American coastline as far south as Virginia. He entered the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, and explored the Hudson River as far North as Albany. He returned to England and the **Half Moon** eventually returned to Netherlands. She is thought to have ended her life somewhere in Indonesia a few years later. Hudson lasted no longer being cast adrift with 9 loyal crew members in a ship's boat by the mutineering crew of this 1610-1611 voyage to the bay in Canada that now bears his name.

The original **Half Moon** was owned by the Dutch East India Co and sailed by Henry Hudson. Hudson sailed north in April 1609 when blocked by ice. He disregarded explicit orders and sailed across the Atlantic to search for the North West Passage. He sailed up the Hudson River as far as Albany, thus giving the Dutch claim to this area stopping in England on the way back, he and all other Englishmen were detained and forbidden to serve the Dutch, Hudson nevertheless kept searching for North West passage.



*Various views of **Half Moon***

