

Vol 58 No 3 Autumn 2023

Mersey Log

***Journal of the Merseyside Branch
World Ship Society***

The Merseyside Branch of the World Ship Society meets on the second Tuesday of each month – January excepted- at the Seafarers' Centre, Cambridge Road, Crosby, L22 1RQ



The new Svitzer tug SVITZER ELIZABETH, which arrived on the Mersey at 0900 on the 19th June 2023. She has been built at the Uzmar Shipyard in Turkey. Dave Crolley has captured her in west Sandon Dock, Liverpool

Mersey Log

Autumn Issue 2023

Editor: Adrian Sweeney

E Mail: a.j.sweeney@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 07887482024

Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2023/2024

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Secretary: Dave Crolley

Hon.Treasurer: John Williams

Outside Visits Secretary: Dave Crolley

Committee Members: Geoff Holmes, Stan McFerran.

Branch News

June 2023

For our June 2023 our own Branch Chairman John Luxton gave us a very informative presentation about the Tavistock Canal in Devon, this was No.5 in his Maritime Infrastructure series of talks. John's talk started at Tavistock and he took us along the canal which ended up at the Port of Morwellham on the River Tamar. John has a vast knowledge of this area so he was able to point out places of interest using images, old and new maps, plaques and signs also describing the many bridges that cross the canal. After the interval John showed us several historic hips that have been associated with the area over the years. In his vote of thanks Adrian Sweeney said John had spent a lot of time and effort researching for this presentation. Many thanks again John and we hope to see you again next year.

July 2023

Tuesday 11th July 2023 brought our Branch AGM hosted by our current Chairman John Luxton. The current Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were all elected to stand for another season as were two other existing committee members. After the interval we all enjoyed a fun Maritime Quiz compiled by John Luxton which was enjoyed by all. The joint winners were Adrian Sweeney and John Williams, second was Norman West and third was Peter Purland. Thank you to everyone that attended, it was a great meeting.

September 2023

For our new season on Tuesday 12th September 2023 we welcomed Malcolm McRonald, Vice Chairman of the Friends of the Ferries Across the Mersey and Chairman of the Coastal Cruising Association who gave us two magnificent presentations. The first was entitled 'What a difference a funnel makes'. Malcolm showed us images of various vessels starting with 5 funnels working down to 1 funnel and eventually none at all. Malcolm's images and explanations were of great interest and he even showed us vessels some of us had never seen before. After the interval Malcolm gave us a brief presentation on recent Fred Olsen Cruise Ships. Thank you very much Malcolm for a great evening's entertainment and we hope to see you again very soon.

North West Ship Show 2023

The North West Ship Show was held again this year sponsored by the WSS Merseyside Branch. This event took place on Saturday 23rd September 2023 at the Old Christ Church at Waterloo, Liverpool. Again it was a very successful event and was attended by over 127 members of the public plus 25 stallholders taking up 61 tables. Exhibitors included booksellers, maritime artists, boat clubs and small scale model sellers, postcards and photographs sellers and organisations such as the RNLI was also in attendance. Once again the Catering stall was very busy and well organised by Dot Gibbons, daughter Lindsey and grand daughter Chelsea. Many thanks go to our Committee who spent a lot of time and effort into making this event so successful. Below is a photograph showing the wonderful church building and the typical layout of the tables on the day, photo by Dave Crolley.



Merseyside Maritime News

June 2023

On Tuesday 20 June and Wednesday 21 June Paddle Steamer WAVERLEY visited Liverpool for the first time in five years. She sailed both days to Llandudno and along the Anglesey coast. All sailings were sold out and apart from first thing on the 20 June, the weather for these excursions was superb.

July 2023

The former Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel FORT ROSALIE, which since sold to the Egyptian Navy last year and renamed ABU SIMBEL has languished in the West Float at Birkenhead, finally departed the River Mersey on Thursday 6th July and began her passage to Egypt.



Paddle Steamer WAVERLEY at the Isle of Man Steam Packet berth at Liverpool with SNOWDROP on commuter duties, early morning, Wednesday 21 June 2023. (Adrian Sweeney)

On the 31 July STENA HIBERNIA, which had been under refit at Cammell Laird, departed the Mersey and resumed her normal service between Heysham and Belfast.

August 2023

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's freight vessel ARROW entered Cammell Laird's wet basin on 1 Aug at the start of her refit. She entered dry dock the next day.

On the 2 Aug STENA SCOTIA, which normally operates with STENA HIBERNIA between Heysham and Belfast entered dry dock at Cammell Laird for refit. She departed on the morning tide on Sat 12 Aug and resumed her service from Heysham.

It was noted on 34 Aug that SEATRUCK PENNANT, laying over in Liverpool Docks, had been sold to Jordanian interests and had been renamed UR. She has operated for much of her life on Seatruck's Liverpool to Dublin service.



**Above is Cunard's QUEEN VICTORIA berthed on the Liverpool Cruise Terminal on Saturday 3rd June. The purpose of the visit was to allow the Captain, Officers and guests to attend a Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration service of Remembrance at St Nicholas Church.
(Photo by Dave Crolley)**

Following on from her cruises being cancelled during June and July because of the two broken swing bridges on the River Weaver, sadly DANIEL ADAMSON, stuck at Sutton Weaver, was unable to operate her River Weaver cruises on the 7/8 August as the bridges were still inoperable. However the vessel was able to operate her scheduled cruise on 5 August between Sutton Weaver and the Royal Albert Dock in Liverpool and the return sailing the following day as she had been turned by the tugs VIXEN and VITAL of Carmet Towing at Sutton Weaver so she was able to exit the Weaver into the Manchester Ship Canal.

Arrivals and Departures at Liverpool

Peel Ports have, at last, done an arrivals and departure board for the Port of Liverpool, years after promising they would provide one...
It can be accessed at:

: https://www.peelports.com/marine/our-ports/liverpool/vessel-arrivals-and-departures-board?fbclid=IwAR2HwS_dHCHmnF90Vp_ISZQfh-P3-bvRLCg6QotzsvNGnvt2mlb9i4MvdY



UR, ex SEATRUCK PENNANT, at Liverpool 6 Aug 2023. (Dave Crolley)

P&O Axe Liverpool – Dublin Service

On Tues 22 Aug P&O Ferries issued the following statement about their Liverpool to Dublin Ro-Pax Service:

"Earlier this year, the owner of our Liverpool site, Peel Ports, informed us that our current berth would no longer be available to us after the end of 2023.

"In recent weeks and months we have pursued every possible option to maintain our service on our Liverpool-Dublin route. This has included extensive negotiations and discussions with Peel, and exhaustive consideration of other options available to us.

"I am sorry that while this work has been carried out we have been unable to provide updates on the future of the Liverpool-Dublin service.

"Unfortunately, despite our utmost efforts to find a viable solution, no suitable alternative has been offered or found that would enable us to maintain the current service into 2024. It is with great regret that I must therefore announce that we intend to close the Liverpool-Dublin service towards the end of this year.

"It is a great disappointment that we have not found a viable way forward and I am deeply sorry for the impact this will have on colleagues who will be affected by this unwelcome news.

"We are now beginning a consultation process with our employees affected by the intended closure of this service. We will offer support to affected colleagues to find alternative employment within our business, or where that is not possible, help to find employment elsewhere.

"We have met with all affected colleagues earlier today to update on this announcement and answer questions.

"We have worked to ensure that where possible our customers affected by the intended closure of the Liverpool-Dublin route can access alternative services with other operators.

"P&O Ferries is dedicated to offering a reliable and efficient service with exceptional service to our customers on our extensive network of routes in the seas around the UK. We remain fully committed to serving customers on our Irish Sea crossing between our ports in Larne and Cairnryan, where we recently celebrated our 50th year of operations, and on our network around the UK.

"Our intention is that NORBAY and NORBANK, which currently serve the Liverpool-Dublin route, will be redeployed elsewhere on our route network in the coming months.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the employees, crew members, and partners who have contributed to the success of the Liverpool-Dublin route over the years. Their dedication and professionalism have been instrumental in serving our customers and maintaining our high standards of service."



In happier times, NORBAY off New Brighton, 21st July 2022. (Adrian Sweeney)

Stena Line Interested in Liverpool – Dublin Service

Stena Line issued the following statement on the 30 Aug in relation to P&O pulling out of their Liverpool – Dublin service:

"Following confirmation of market changes in the Dublin-Liverpool corridor, Stena Line can confirm that it will be registering an interest in re-establishing a Dublin-Birkenhead service. Stena Line

already operates services at both ports and believes that the addition of a new Dublin-Birkenhead service to its Irish Sea route portfolio would complement its existing Belfast to Birkenhead and Dublin to Holyhead operations. Stena Line understands that Dublin Port will now initiate a selection process to identify a potential new operator for the Dublin-UK corridor and Stena Line can confirm that it will be participating fully in this process."

September 2023

The UK's first Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance (MROS) ship RFA PROTEUS sailed from Birkenhead Saturday 16th September 2023 following conversion work. The vessel was purchased for £70 Million from Topaz Marine, a subsidiary of P&O Maritime and arrived at Cammell Laird for conversion to her new role in January. The MoD had promised she would be "*operational in Summer 2023*" but crew generation and safety certification issues are understood to have delayed her exit from the shipyard until now. After sea trials, PROTEUS headed to the south coast before she is formally named at a ceremony to be held in London during October.



PROTEUS in the Mersey, 16th September 2023. (Dave Crolley)



Above is AMBIENCE berthed at the Liverpool Cruise Terminal on Thurs 8 June 2023.

AMBIENCE is a cruise ship operated by Ambassador Cruise Line. The vessel was delivered to Princess Cruises in 1991 by the Fincantieri shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy as REGAL PRINCESS, sailing on their North American routes. After 2000 she was deployed on the company's Australian routes, then later in the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. In 2007 REGAL PRINCESS was transferred to P&O Cruises Australia, underwent major refurbishment, and was renamed PACIFIC DAWN, operating from Australia to South Pacific destinations. Her renaming coincided with P&O's 75th anniversary in Australia. It was intended that the ship would be retired in 2020, sold to Cruise & Maritime Voyages (CMV) and renamed AMY JOHNSON, but CMV had financial difficulties and went into administration in 2020, affected by the 2020 Covid pandemic. Later in 2020 PACIFIC DAWN was sold to Ocean Builders Central, and renamed SATOSHI. They intended her to become a floating residence in the Gulf of Panama; however, after failing to obtain insurance for the proposed operation, she was resold in 2021 for operation by Ambassador Cruise Line, entering service as AMBIENCE in 2022. (Photo and information courtesy of Dave Crolley)

New Spain-British Isles service

Samskip and Boluda Lines have jointly launch a shortsea container service connecting Santander, Dublin and Liverpool. Launched on 30th September, the joint service provides a new weekly Spain-Ireland-UK shortsea option for unitised cargoes that is claimed to highly cost-competitive against road-ferry alternatives, while at the same time offering greater reliability and substantially reducing CO2 emissions per tonne mile.

Based on Saturday departures from Santander by the 803 TEU nominal capacity vessel LUCIA B, the new service offers a 3-day transit time to Dublin port, with calls at Liverpool's Royal Seaforth Container Terminal, due two days after, before the ship's southbound voyage to Spain. With door-to-door and quay-to-quay services available, cargoes can move in owners' extensive range of containers - including 45ft high cubes, reefers and flatracks - or in shippers' own equipment.

In northern Spain, the focal point for operations will be Boluda Maritime Terminals Santander, which is highly competitive against other local ports. Opened by Boluda in April 2023, after terminal investments approaching €40m, the facility offers capacity to handle over 110,000 TEU a year.

In addition to adding value through logistics expertise and local knowledge, Samskip and Boluda Lines are maximising Santander's operational, sustainability and market penetration potential by simultaneously launching block train rail services to/from Madrid and Seville. Cross-docking services are also being offered at Santander.