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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 Liverpool Seafarers' Centre, 20 Crosby Road South, Crosby, L22 1RQ



The Clyde Marine Services tug CMS THUNDERER heading up river on a blustery June 28th 2025 (Simon Smith)

Mersey Log

Autumn Issue 2025

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Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2025/2026

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Secretary: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Treasurer: John Williams

Committee Members: Stan McFerran, Peter Purland, Simon Smith

Editorial

Many thanks to Adrian for his efforts in the production of the Mersey Log over the years. A tough act to follow but I look forward to keeping society members informed on shipping matters on our river and in local ports. Whilst my first memories of the Mersey go back to childhood on account of my father's roots the river has only been local to me since 2018. Any contributions would be welcome and particularly those with a historical context.

Branch News

July, August and September 2025

Unfortunately major roadworks restricted access to the Seafarers Centre resulting in the cancellation of the meetings planned for July, August and September.

October 2025

The Merseyside Branch held its delayed AGM on Tuesday 14th October. The current committee were all willing to serve for another year and we were pleased to welcome long standing member Simon Smith who has taken over the editor's chair on the Branch Magazine Mersey Log. The committee now is made up of John

Luxton - Chairman, Adrian Sweeney - Secretary, John Williams - Treasurer. Other committee members are Simon Smith (editor), Stan McFerran, Peter Purland. After the business of the AGM, which was very well attended, members enjoyed a show put on by Jim Charnock called "Slides from the Les Hodder Collection."

November 2025

For our November 2026 Meeting, the Branch welcomed back Keith Hick, who on this occasion gave us an excellent presentation entitled "The Panama Canal - an Engineering Marvel."

In a talk well illustrated with photographs, maps, charts, plans and graphs, Keith explained the canal in its historical context of why it was built and how it was built, historical alternatives proposed at the time, its vital contribution, with the Suez Canal, to world trade and how future development and threats are being actioned. Keith explained that much of the research for his talk was done by Keith Timmington, who was present at the Meeting.

Merseyside Maritime News

AWARD FOR LIVERPOOL SEAFARERS CENTRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Liverpool Seafarers Centre Chief Executive Officer John Wilson received the British Empire Medal in May in recognition for services to seafarers' welfare. Already recognized as one of the best centres worldwide John's aspirations for the future include twenty four hour access and satellite drop-in centres at other nearby ports.

LIVERPOOL SEAFARERS CENTRE NAMED IN UK BEST PLACES TO WORK

Emphasizing the success of the centre was certification in the UK Best Places To Work in the "Charity and Not For Profit" and "Retail, Hospitality and Leisure" sectors by Great Place To Work. The recognition is based on feedback from staff and volunteers.

PEEL PORTS ANNOUNCE TEN MILLION POUND UPGRADE FOR BIRKENHEAD DOCKS

Peel Ports Group announces £10m upgrade for Birkenhead Docks to 'significantly expand' its cargo-handling capacity.

Although the Wirral Waters scheme has seen significant non-maritime development including residential and office space, Birkenhead remains a critical part of the River Mersey's commercial port operations.

Operated by Peel Ports subsidiary, [Peel Ports Logistics](#), what is called Birkenhead Port will see major expansion of its cargo-handling capacity in the next few years and people living in Liverpool Waters will continue to enjoy the sight of ships coming and going. Peel Ports Group will create an extra 460,000 sq ft of cargo capacity at Birkenhead Docks in a £10m upgrade of the facility.

The image shows East float Terminal at Birkenhead will look following £10m upgrade.



This terminal will serve markets across the UK and overseas. The upgraded facility will handle a diverse range of freight, including bulk, steel, timber, containerised cargo, heavy lift, project cargo, and renewables and offshore equipment.

A dedicated container handling and devanning operation, offering both indoor and outdoor storage, is already in place. Operations will be supported by a dedicated on-site logistics division, providing a complete service offering from vessel chartering right through to final delivery by road. Investment in new plant and machinery for the terminal is also well under way – including the installation of a new Liebherr 180 crane. Development opportunities are being explored across the site, including the potential for two cement silos with a total capacity of 14,000 metric tonnes.

Seb Gardiner, managing director of Peel Ports Logistics, said: “This investment reflects our commitment to bringing the Eastfloat Terminal back to life – we are both restoring its heritage and transforming it into a vibrant, modern logistics hub. “The Mersey region is firmly at the heart of UK trade, and restoring Eastfloat will allow us to keep meeting the demands of the most complex and challenging cargo movements.”

(Liverpool Business News, 03 November 2025)

FORMER P&O BERTH FOR CEMENT TERMINAL

The Turkish cement company Medcem have established a partnership with Peel Ports to build a deep water terminal on the site of the former P&O Ferries berth at Gladstone Dock. Construction began on the £35 million investment in May 2025 and is due for completion within twelve months. The four large silos with a combined storage capacity of 45,000 tonnes were evident by September. These will accommodate cement and supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs). The latter include fly ash and granulated blast furnace slag which are key components in the production of low-carbon cement.

WAVERLEY MERSEY SAILINGS 2025

Paddle steamer **WAVERLEY's** annual visit to the North West was scheduled for the end of May. She was due to arrive at Seacombe from Llandudno on the evening of May 29th but the wind and sea conditions on the Mersey approaches resulted in her having to anchor off Llandudno and delay her arrival on the Mersey until the following morning. Thankfully the weather did not interrupt the three sold out cruises from Seacombe and Liverpool to Llandudno.



WAVERLEY heads for Llandudno on 31st May 2025 (Editor)

FIRST TIME CRUISE CALLERS

Sporting the distinctive “whale tail” shaped funnel associated with Carnival cruise ships the **CARNIVAL MIRACLE** made a maiden call at Liverpool on June 25th. The 2,680 berth vessel arrived from Belfast and sailed the same day for Dun Laoghaire. Having spent some time at the Navantia Shipyard in Cadiz the ship is performing a number of European cruises before returning to Florida in November.



CARNIVAL MIRACLE at Liverpool Cruise Terminal June 25th 2025 (Editor)

Making her first call at Liverpool on July 11th was the cruise ship *ILMA*. The 242 metre vessel was delivered to her owners by Chantiers d'Atlantique SA at St. Nazaire on 12th July 2024.



ILMA approaching Liverpool Cruise Terminal July 11th 2025 (Editor)

ILMA, meaning water in Maltese has a gross tonnage of 47,435 and accommodates 456 passengers in 224 suites. She arrived from Holyhead and sailed for Greenock.

Her yacht like appearance is reflected in her cruises being marketed under the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection luxury brand. A sister ship, **LUMINARA** was delivered to the company in June this year.

Other first time callers at Pier Head included **VIKING VELA** (28th March), **NORWEGIAN PRIMA** (8th May) and **SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR** (17th June).



SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR at Liverpool Cruise Terminal 30th June 2025 (Editor)

FAREWELL TO A REGULAR CALLER

The self-discharging bulk carrier **YEOMAN BANK** has been a familiar sight on the Mersey bringing aggregates from Glensanda. She sailed from Liverpool for a final time on July 29th and after completing two further voyages from Glensanda to Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbuttel she headed for the Turkish breaking yard at Aliaga where she was beached on 11th September. The vessel's longevity is partly explained by the fact that her kiel was laid down in 1974 but she was not delivered until 1982. Built by Eleusis Shipyards she first operated for Ropner Shipping Co. of

Hartlepool as **SALMONPOOL**. Following a sale to Fernley & Eger the conversion to a self-discharging vessel took place during 1991 when she took her final name and operated for Foster Yeoman. As **YEOMAN BANK** the vessel made 195 calls at Seaforth with some seven million tons of granite aggregate.



YEOMAN BANK arriving at Liverpool from Glensanda 21st April 2024 (Editor)

PERUVIAN SAIL TRAINING SHIP CALLS AT LIVERPOOL

The Peruvian Navy sail training vessel **BAP UNION** arrived at Liverpool Cruise Terminal on 31st August for a five day visit. Built by SIMA at Callao the four-masted, steel-hulled barque arrived from Amsterdam and sailed for Dublin. The ship left Peru in May and after transiting the Panama Canal called at Jacksonville, London (West India Dock), Aberdeen, Esbjerg, Nordenhamn and Bremerhaven. After Dublin she called at Vigo, transited the Panama Canal and arrived back in Peru late October.



BAP UNION at Pier Head, Liverpool 1st September 2025 (John Luxton)

The **UNION** has an overall length of 379 feet including her bowsprit. She has a compliment of 250 officers and crew. Her name honors a Peruvian corvette that took part in the War Of The Pacific between 1879 and 1883.

GALEON ANDALUCIA AT CANNING DOCK

A full-sized replica of a 17th century Spanish Galleon the **GALEON ANDALUCIA** arrived in Canning Half Tide Dock Liverpool on 25th September from Penzance and sailed for Fishguard after an eleven day stay. Operated by Fundacion Nao Victoria the ship serves as a floating museum and represents the type of vessel used by the Spanish Crown for maritime and trade expeditions during the 16th to 18th centuries.

Construction of the **GALEON ANDALUCIA** at Punta Umbria, Huelva took seventeen months with a launch in November 2009. The ship was open to the public and attracted large crowds.



GALEON ANDALUCIA sailing from Canning Dock, Liverpool 7th October 2025 (John Luxton)

ANOTHER VLCC FOR TRANMERE

The last day of September saw the Tranmere terminal receive the first call by a VLCC this year. The 298,991 deadweight **EAGLE VENICE** arrived with a part cargo loaded in Texas via Mongstad. A part of the crude cargo was loaded at the Ingleside Terminal and added to by ship to ship transfer off Corpus Christi.

Following discharge and taking bunkers from **WHITCHAMPION** the 333 metre long tanker returned to Texas in ballast.



EAGLE VENICE approaching Tranmere from Houston 30th September 2025 (Editor)

BOLUDA DEPLOY ANOTHER TUG TO LIVERPOOL

Boluda added the tug **VB BENELUX** to their Liverpool fleet when she arrived on August 11th from the Thames via Immingham and Grangemouth. One of four sisters built for Nordane Shipping by the East Isle Shipyard on Prince Edward Island Canada she was delivered as **STEVNS BATTLE**R in 2010.

The quartet have all operated with Svitzer the **VB BENELUX** as SVITZER NARI during which time she operated on the Mersey. An ASD type tug her propulsion is supplied by two Caterpillar engines developing 4000kW and providing a bollard pull of 71 tons.



VB BENELUX heading upriver to assist the general cargo vessel **EKMEN** at Garston 8th November 2025 (Editor)

She replaces the **VB SERVICEMAN** that left for South Wales late July.



MAIDEN VOYAGE CALLS

Recent Mersey arrivals have included vessels on their maiden voyages. Typically the trades of oils from Papua and New Guinea and steel products from the Far East attract ships delivered to owners by shipyards in China, Japan and Korea.

The 39,545 ton deadweight bulk carrier NORSE ZEALAND was handed over to her owners Nissen Kaiun by Onomichi Dockyard in late July. She proceeded to load steel products at Busan and Gwangyang before heading for Liverpool via the Cape of Good Hope.



NORSE ZEALAND arriving at Liverpool 6th October 2025 (Editor)

Mersey Wharf at Bromborough received the coaster Maltese-registered BALSARE 1 on 10th October. The 5,500 deadweight general cargo vessel is one of four sisters being built by the Gisan Shipyard at Yalova, Turkey for Modisk Shipping. Launched in late March the vessel was handed over to her owners on 5th September and after bunkering in the Istanbul Anchorage she sailed for Alexandria where she

loaded iron and steel bundles for Bromborough. Her operators are South Killingholme-based Casper Chartering.



Powered by a 1,620 kw Yanmar main engine the vessel has a top speed of 11 knots. A cargo capacity of 7,300 cubic meters is achieved from a length of 95 meters, a beam of 15.20 meters and a depth of 6.8 metres.