

Vol 57 No 3 Summer 2022

# ***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 – August excepted- at the Seafarers' Centre, Cambridge Road, Crosby, L22 1RQ**



**HMS DAUNTLESS, the 2nd ship of the Type 45 Daring Class Destroyers, launched at Govan January 2007. Arrived at Cammell Laird May 2020 from Portsmouth to be the 1st of the Daring Class to have new Generators fitted as part of the Power Improvement Project Seen leaving Birkenhead 14 June 2022 under tow of VB SANDON and assisted by VB PHOENIX and VB BELGIE. Was towed as far as the Bar and then moved away under her own power. (David Pointon)**

# ***Mersey Log***

Summer Issue 2022

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## **Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2021/2022**

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 With Dave Crolley**

For our April 2022 meeting we were pleased to welcome once again John Hooley from Macclesfield who gave us another fantastic presentation North towards Scottish Waters continuing the Railway Steamers theme. This time he showed all manner of Steamers ranging from the Bristol Channel, South Wales, around the Lake District, over to Ireland and eventually visiting Scottish ports at Stranraer and on the River Clyde. As usual with John, he showed us examples of 1960's steam trains that once visited many of these ports during that era. A really interesting and entertaining evening John, thank you very much and we hope to see you again next year.

For our May 2022 meeting our own branch member Adrian Sweeney gave us a most interesting presentation entitled 'Annoying Greta, a Smokey presentation'. This referred to the activist Greta Thunberg who obviously wouldn't like smoky funnels emitting lots of black smoke. Adrian showed us lots of these examples from the early 1900's to present day on the subject of Ferries, Cargo Ships, Coasters, Liners, Warships, Paddle Steamers and Tugs, most of the vessels we all recognised. The research in finding all these most fascinating ships must have taken a lot of time and effort so we thank you very much Adrian for your excellent presentation.

Our June 2022 meeting was brilliant, it was decided that we would reshoot a programme called 50 Years of Merseyside Shipping (1948 to 98) that a few of our members produced in 1998. We realised that many of our current members wouldn't have seen this presentation before so it was received with great enthusiasm and interest. The show started by showing shipping in the South Docks and proceeded up through the Pier Head areas and continuing through the Central Docks up into the Gladstone Dock area. After the interlude we crossed over to the Wirral side of the river to look all around Birkenhead Docks, then the Cammell Laird Shipyard and Tranmere Oil Terminal. To finish off we then took a look at the Royal Seaforth Dock which had been opened in 1971. A very good evening was had by all and great thanks must go to the members who produced this excellent programme.

# Mersey Maritime News

## April 2022

It was noted on April 18 that Irish Navy vessel LÉ Jame Joyce (P62) arrived on the Mersey for a formal visit. She is a Samuel Beckett-class offshore patrol vessel (OPV) which was built by Babcock Marine Appledore for the Irish Naval Service. She was commissioned in mid 2015 .

### Carmet Shipyard Takeover

Bromborough-based Carmet Marine's Shipyard has been acquired by the Marine Specialised Technology Group. The company secured the site during the second half of last year and has started on a £1million refurbishment programme covering the entire 6.5-acre site with total refurbishment of the existing 80m main and 50m secondary boat building halls, brand-new offices, new car parking facilities and the erection of additional composite and fabrication facilities.

The new facilities boast 25T overhead travelling gantry cranes, a 90m 700 tonne slipway that launches directly into the River and a 100T WISE Amphibious Boat Travel Hoist which provides additional boat launch and recovery facilities and access onto the hard standing areas.

The company has a long-term plan for further investment which will see the facilities expanded and enhanced even further to create a centre of excellence in the North West for small craft design, manufacture and service.

The shipyard was originally founded in 1974 by McTay Marine and produced 119 vessels before going into liquidation in 2015 and subsequently being taken over by local tug operator Carmet Marine.

Marine Specialised Technology is one of the world's leading manufacturers and maintainers of high-speed boats for global defence and security markets and the new facilities will allow the company to significantly expand its operations including the ability manufacture much larger craft than current facilities permit.

Philip Hilbert, MST's sales director, said: *"We secured these new premises at just the right time as we embark on several major contracts for our flagship "HPB" High-Speed Patrol Boat range which have been, up until now, limited to a maximum 19m in length due to launching and logistical restrictions.*

*The new larger facilities with its direct access to water now enables us to not only manufacture more craft at any one time but also to manufacture significantly larger vessels and we already have a 23m design being worked on as I speak".*

## May 2022

### Mersey Ferries

On Wed 11 May the Mersey Ferries Terminal at Liverpool was officially renamed the 'Liverpool Gerry Marsden Ferry Terminal'. A plaque was unveiled by Gerry's widow Pauline accompanied by her family and Metro Mayor Mr. Steve Rotheram.

Sailings were suspended on Thurs 5 May after the 0840 sailing ex Woodside due to operational reasons. This was because SNOWDROP was due to take the first Manchester Ship Canal cruise of the season. These now only go to Latchford Locks and back to Woodside or Liverpool. She departed Liverpool at 1000. Meanwhile ROYAL IRIS which had been in the Liverpool Dock system undergoing maintenance came out on to the river at just after 1000 and took up the Mersey River cruise timetable shortly afterwards.

On Wed 11 May the Mersey Ferries Terminal at Liverpool was officially renamed the 'Liverpool Gerry Marsden Ferry Terminal'. A plaque was unveiled by Gerry's widow Pauline accompanied by her family and Metro Mayor Mr. Steve Rotheram.

Mersey Ferry services were suspended on Wed 18 May due to a tug colliding with the Mersey Ferries Terminal Landing Stage at Liverpool in the early hours of 18 May. This caused the local 'fire and rescue' craft, berthed as usual on the landward side of the Stage, to turn over. Investigations were

immediately put in hand as to the cause of the accident and the damage sustained to the Stage...and presumably to the rescue craft!  
Commuter services resumed at 1700 ex Liverpool.

## June 2022

The photo below shows Carmet's new workboat, CT BARNSTON in advanced stage of construction in Netherlands; she is being built by Groeneveldt, at Hendrik ido Ambacht for service on the Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal.



On Sun 12 June Carmet's new tug CT UPTON arrived on the Mersey from Newport in South Wales. She is the former SMS tug TRUEMAN. Photo below courtesy of Andy Mahon.





**ROLLDOCK SUN on the Mersey 20 June 2022 (David Pointon)**

ROLLDOCK SUN arrived at Seaforth on 20 June 2022 - IMO 9393981 - Netherlands flag - delivering £45m Hydrogen Furnace from Thailand for installation at the Essar Refinery at Stanlow. It will be taken along the Manchester Ship Canal by barge as apparently ROLLDOCK SUN is too big for the Canal.

## **ACL and the Falklands Conflict 1982**

### **Philp Parker**

The 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1982 will remain in the memory with many Merchant Navy personnel following the sinking of the Atlantic Conveyor in the Falkland Islands conflict. The Atlantic Container Line fleet of second-generation (G2) vessels introduced in the late 1960's and early 1970's were found to be very fuel hungry and as such with Ro/Ro cargoes volumes very low in the late 1970's they were essentially container ships.

ATLANTIC CONVEYOR was taken out of service in July 1981 sailing to North West Canada Dock, Liverpool for potential lay-up pending disposal, sister vessel ATLANTIC CAUSEWAY remained in service. In the spring of 1982, the British Government requisitioned merchant vessels to be part of a Royal Navy task force sailing to the Falkland Islands. Included were ATLANTIC CONVEYOR and ATLANTIC CAUSEWAY (owned by Cunard and operated by Atlantic Container Line (ACL), which was partly owned by Cunard at the time as well). Both vessels had been converted into aircraft carriers and the forward deck sections became landing platforms for helicopters and Harrier fighters.



Just before sunset on May 25, 1982, ATLANTIC CONVEYOR was struck by an Argentinean Exocet missile, hitting her amidships. The evacuation of the vessel took about fifteen minutes and most of the survivors were picked up by Royal Navy helicopters and other task force vessels. Several men lost their lives including the Master and veteran of the North Atlantic, Captain Ian North, along with five other Cunard Staff: Bosun John Dobson, PO II Engineer James Hughes, PO II Engineer Ernest Vickers, PO I Engineer Frank Foulkes and Assistant Steward David Hawkins. Six Royal Navy personnel on board were also lost. All twenty Harriers on board had been airborne or managed to take off in time, but the Sea King, Wessex and Chinook helicopters on the internal roll-on roll-off decks were lost.

The 40th anniversary in 2022 was commemorated in Liverpool with a short service at the Merchant Navy Monument at the Pier Head with a wreath laying on the river Mersey in memory of Atlantic Conveyor's loss.



## **Cammell Laird Have a Busy First Half of 2022**

Merseyside shipyard Cammell Laird has enjoyed a busy start to 2022 with a range of vessels coming into Birkenhead for upgrades and a visit from the Prime Minister.

In March, the yard also hosted a national event that saw Prime Minister Boris Johnson visit to unveil the Government's refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy, a rolling 30-year programme of new vessels with contracts worth billions of pounds.

Ro-Ro passenger ship HEBRIDES of Caledonian MacBrayne departed No 6 dry dock on Wednesday, March 21, following an extensive overhaul and repair programme. This included the replacement of its sewage treatment plant, and the replacement of its fast rescue boat davits.

STENA ADVENTURER, a ROPAX ship owned by Stena Line, has returned to Cammell Laird for a large package of repair and overhaul works, which included the application of a new paint system.

She is one of two vessels, which operates on Stena Line's Holyhead-Dublin route and makes two crossings per day. The ship has a maximum capacity of 1,500 passengers and 500 cars.

LM CONSTRUCTOR, a working barge, arrived in No 5 dry dock on Friday, March 25, for five-year survey works. Built in the Netherlands in 1983, she is a general-purpose vessel suitable for a wide range of inshore projects. Belgian tug ZEEBRUGGE, departed at the beginning of April following a 16-day docking period for repair and overhaul works.

In January, Commissioners of Irish Lights vessel GRANUAILE docked at Cammell Laird. The multifunctional vessel, which services offshore buoys and is used for search and rescue missions, underwent general dry docking works for maintenance and repair including painting.

SVITZER MILGARTH also docked in January for general dry dock works including port and starboard aquamaster shaft seal removal, and general inspections. The third CalMac vessel of the season, MV Clansman arrived in No 6 dry dock in January also, for an extensive programme of overhaul and repair works.

All this is in addition to the ongoing work on two Daring Class Destroyers and various RFA vessels including the ex FORT AUSTIN and FORT ROSALIE now part of the Egyptian Navy.

## **A TALE OF TWO CANALS** **by John Harrison (Mid-Essex Branch)**

I've recently reconnected with a schoolfriend who now spends his time between Canada and Mexico. We were both shipspotters in our youth in Warrington but he was not as serious as me in this respect but he did not have a "ringside seat" by living in a house directly across the road from the Manchester Ship Canal (We lived in Fairfield Road, Stockton Heath, one of the two roads alongside the canal as it passed through Warrington). This friend sent me links to two websites relating to the Welland Canal which connects Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. One was a link to the Wikipedia entry for the Welland Canal. We will come to the other one in due course.

It is interesting to make comparisons between the Manchester Ship Canal and the Welland Canal. The Manchester Ship Canal was completed in 1894. Construction of the present Welland Canal (there have been previous smaller canals) commenced in 1913, but because of the First World War was not finished until 1932, but dredging to its planned depth was not completed until 1935. The construction of the current Welland Canal would have been planned a few years after the completion of the Manchester Ship Canal.

My mind is filled with lots of useless information. This includes the dimensions of the largest ships that could use the Manchester Ship Canal, though when I checked this out I discovered my memory was not completely accurate. The locks from Latchford onwards (Latchford Locks are just to the east

of Warrington) are 600 ft x 65 ft 6 in. Wikipedia says the maximum length of ships allowed to use the canal is restricted to 530 ft, presumably to minimise the risk of ships overshooting the locks and damaging the gates. When I looked at Wikipedia it reported the maximum width of ships regularly allowed was restricted to 53 ft 6 in, but I concluded this must be a typo and corrected it to 63 ft 6 in. Between 1968 and 1971 Manchester Liners took delivery of four new container ships, MANCHESTER CHALLENGE/COURAGE/CONCORDE/CRUSADE which Roy Fenton accurately described as "Ship Canal-max" vessels. These were 529 ft 9 in in length and 63 ft 8 in in beam. In researching this article I discovered an incident which perhaps suggests this "going to the max" was not very wise. On 16 March 1969 MANCHESTER COURAGE collided with the gates at Irlam Locks, resulting in not only significant damage to the gates but also preventing navigation in the upper reaches of the canal for nearly eight weeks, a sort of precursor to the EVER GIVEN incident. The total cost of this event was put at over £1 million, the equivalent of over £14 million in today's money. An interesting report of the story can be found on [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/ever-given-suez-manchester-canal-20289893](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/ever-given-suez-manchester-canal-20289893).

The Wikipedia entry for the Welland Canal gives the maximum dimensions of ships that can use the canal as 740 ft length and 78 ft beam – the dimensions of the locks are given as 766 ft x 80 ft. Inevitably ships get larger as time goes by. We probably think that the large container ships and cruiseships that now sail our oceans are as big as they can possibly get, but I predict ships will get larger. The Welland Canal was built to accommodate larger ships than the Manchester Ship Canal as it was conceived a few years later. There is, however, one strange anomaly. The maximum draft of vessel allowed on the Welland Canal is 26 ft 5 in. In contrast the Manchester Ship Canal is 28 ft deep (30 ft as far as Stanlow). I cannot account for this anomaly – maybe geological issues apply. It would seem to rather restrict the size of the ships than can use the canal.

And the other link my friend sent me. In my childhood I recall seeing a film taken from the front of a train "travelling from London to Brighton in four minutes" – in fact it was a film travelling from London to Brighton at normal pace speeded up. The video can be watched on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtiWQkWOv0o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtiWQkWOv0o). The second link my friend sent me was a similar video showing a speeded-up transition of the Welland Canal in 2.42 minutes. This can be found on [www.facebook.com/dave.elliott.545402/videos/10165011466545204](http://www.facebook.com/dave.elliott.545402/videos/10165011466545204) and is well worth a watch.

There are a couple of other Welland Canal videos worth watching. One is a collision between two general cargo ships, the Antigua and Barbuda registered ALANIS (9611/10) operated by Ranbow Reederei, Germany and the Canadian registered FLORENCE SPIRIT (8,935/04) of McKeil Marine, on 12 June 2020 – see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRvY0SR-Pr4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRvY0SR-Pr4). How two ships which are supposed to pass port to port manage to collide on their starboard sides is beyond me. The other is a collision between the laker, WINDOC (18,531/59) owned by Transatlantic Bulk Carriers, Canada and a lifting bridge. A combination of prescription drugs and alcohol caused the bridge operator to lower the bridge before she had passed through. The ship caught fire and was declared a constructive total loss but was subsequently cut down to become a barge. Video of this incident can be found on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2Wn2RDzsvg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2Wn2RDzsvg). Fortunately, nobody was killed or seriously injured on either occasion, though the navigating office on WINDOC had to literally hit the deck to avoid being decapitated when the bridge hit her.

## **Daniel Adamson – The Lord Stalbridge Cruise – 16 April, 2022**

### **With John Luxton**

Why the "Lord Stalbridge Cruise"?

This special cruise named "The Lord Stalbridge" honoured Richard de Aquila Grosvenor, 1st Baron Stalbridge. This was the second cruise of the DANIEL ADAMSON's 2022 season. Lord Stalbridge was



director and later chairman of the London and North Western Railway Company owners of the Port of Garston. Stalbridge gave his name to the third and final dock constructed at the port and performed the opening ceremony of "his" dock in 1907. Lord Stalbridge also gave his name to the DANIEL ADAMSON's former fleet mate LORD STALBRIDGE constructed in Dublin in 1909 for the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company. The Shropshire Union being initially being leased by the London and North Western Railway before it eventually acquired the business.

The Lord Stalbridge Cruise commenced from the Lighthouse Berth at Ellesmere Port on the Manchester Ship Canal. The berth, named from the still extant Lighthouse that guided vessels into the Shropshire Union Canal from the river Mersey at this location. Construction of the Manchester Ship Canal rendered the Lighthouse redundant as it cut off direct access from the Mersey. However, this historic lighthouse survives, the site is now home to The Fire Brigades Union who have offices on site and permitted DANIEL ADAMSON passengers to use their car park. The National Waterways Museum Car Park used for DANIEL ADAMSON cruises in the past being unavailable due to the 2022 Easter Boat Gathering. DANIEL ADAMSON had commenced her 2022 Cruising Season the previous day when she sailed with a full complement of passengers from Canning Dock to Ellesmere Port. Prior to the scheduled departure from Ellesmere Port at 0930 there was activity on the Manchester Ship Canal to be observed.

Cement Carrier CEMSOL passed down the canal heading for Eastham Locks around at 0829 followed at 0855 by James Fisher's CLYDE FISHER assisted by Carmet tugs MSC VICTORY on the bow and MSC VIKING on the stern. Tanker ALENA MERCAN then moved up the canal from Ellesmere Port Docks to Stanlow Oil Dock where she was observed later in the cruise.

DANIEL ADAMSON departed around 0930 and headed down stream towards Eastham Locks – as we approached the locks CLYDE FISHER was already running down to river level. Engines stopped DANIEL ADAMSON drifted slowly down towards the locks.

After waiting for CLYDE FISHER to exit Eastham Lock DANIEL ADAMSON entered, being secured at 1028. Vessels observed at Eastham included four Carmet Tugs MSC VOLANT, MSC VICEROY, MSC VICTORY and MSC VIKING, the latter two tugs having brought CLYDE FISHER down the canal. Also present at Eastham was the shabby MSC48 barge and Carmet's work vessel CT VECTOR.

At Eastham Locks, the Manchester Ship Canal pilot disembarked to be replaced by three Mersey River pilots. The Mersey pilots would remain with the DANIEL ADAMSON until our return to Eastham. Ropes let go at 1043 and off down the Mersey we headed passing the remains of the Eastham Ferry terminal closed in 1929.

Passing the former McTay Ship Yard, now another part of the Carmet business, Njord Offshore support vessel NJORD ALPHA could be viewed sat on the slipway as a speed boat passed on the port side. Arklow Shipping's ARKLOW FUTURE was noted heading upstream, she turned and proceeded to berth at Mersey Wharf which is the river wall facility at Bromborough created to replace the enclosed Bromborough Docks closed in 1986. DANIEL ADAMSON started to turn towards the Garston Channel at 1122.

Approaching from the mouth of the river at this time was the large oil tanker ATINA accompanied by Svitzer tugs. After turning out of Eastham Channel and across the River Mersey DANIEL ADAMSON headed off down the Garston Channel. On Riverside Drive a minor road traffic drama was observed involving a Keepings' coach. Keepings is a coach operator from Mountain Ash, Wales. Other Keepings vehicles were observed on Riverside Drive in the vicinity of the Britannia Public House. However, one particularly long 6-wheel vehicle was stuck at the bottom of the approach to the new coach parking area which created a year or so ago on the site of a previous car park. Observing through binoculars

the rear end of the 6-wheel vehicle had grounded which had necessitated the attendance of two police cars and a recovery truck. A technician was observed examining the twin back wheels. The cruise continued down Garston Channel and DANIEL ADAMSON attracted the gaze of people walking the Otterspool Promenade including those in a larger group around the "Sitting Bull" sculpture at the south end of the promenade. We continued past the Grassendale and Cressington Esplanades which serve one of Liverpool's oldest gated communities which date back to the 1850s, then on to enter the Port of Garston by the sole remaining river entrance. When DANIEL ADAMSON arrived in the Stalbridge Dock an announcement informed passengers that due to tidal constraints we would not proceed into Old Dock or North Dock. There were only two vessels present in ABP Garston. The Norwegian cargo ship FRI BERGEN and visible at the far end of North Dock the former Mersey Ferry ROYAL DAFFODIL (ex OVERCHURCH) which is still the process of undergoing conversion into a floating hospitality venue and has renamed DAFFODIL.

It was a little disappointing not to be able to sail up to the DAFFODIL for a closer look, but "compensation" occurred later in the cruise with an extension up the Manchester Ship Canal to Stanlow.

As DANIEL ADAMSON retraced her route the errant coach, noted earlier, had been moved and was now with the other Keepings' Coaches on Riverside Drive though the recovery truck and police cars had moved to the coach park.

At Tranmere Oil Terminal the Svitzer tugs were in the final stages of berthing the oil tanker ATTINA. We entered Eastham Channel around 1339 and headed towards the locks. The site of the former Job's Ferry landing marked by sandstone steps and the remains of a quay wall could be seen north of Eastham. This ancient Mersey ferry route dating back to the 1300s.

By the time DANIEL ADAMSON passed Eastham Ferry on the return the area around the Eastham Ferry Hotel and The Tap public house were very busy with plenty of "gongoozlers" observing our passage back to Eastham Locks. Around this time Carmet's work boat VIXEN passed outbound from the Manchester Ship Canal well loaded with cargo. DANIEL ADAMSON was secure in Eastham Lock at 1339. Reaching the canal level took about 13 minutes. Whilst in the lock the three Mersey pilots left the vessel and the Manchester Ship Canal pilot joined. DANIEL ADAMSON then headed off up the canal but did not stop at Ellesmere Port proceeding to Stanlow where tankers ALYNA MERCAN and FURE FLAYDEN were observed in Stanlow Oil Dock whilst SLOMAN HERAKLES was berthed on the canal. DANIEL ADAMSON turned at the entrance to the Stanlow Oil Dock around 1438 and headed back to Ellesmere Port where she was made fast at 1508. All in all, the trip was highly satisfying and undertaken in perfect weather conditions – an excellent day out.

If you have not sailed on the DANIEL ADAMSON yet you really must make the effort to do so if you possibly can.

## **Canada RoRo Express Line**

### **The somewhat unlucky CARELine**

**By Philip Parker**

The CARELine (Canada RoRo Express Line) vessels were often seen in the Port of Liverpool during the late 1970's and early 1980's operating on the North Atlantic trade routes familiar to the ACL G1 & G2's. CARELine was formed fifty years ago in 1972 by CGT (France) Swedish-America Line (SAL) and Wallenius Lines both of Sweden operating with four ConRo vessels, all original partners from when the ACL consortium was formed in 1967.

CGT vessels, MONT LAURIER IMO 7208194 and MONT LOUIS IMO 7228534, SAL vessel, MONT ROYAL IMO 7208209 & Wallenius Lines MONTMORENCY IMO 7227126, operating at an economical 17knots with a container lift of 432 TEU, 76 RoRo units and 110 automobiles, the 4210 gross tons ice class vessels were built by Wartsila, Turku, Finland during 1972. The service initially operated from Gothenburg, Bremerhaven, Rotterdam, and Le Havre and concentrated on the Canadian port of Montreal. MONT LAURIER was 300 miles NW of the Azores on January 13th 1973 when cargo broke loose in a storm when the ship rolled 30 degrees. Fire broke out gutting the ship. The 22 crew took to rafts, and one capsized, with the loss of six lives. The ship was eventually taken in tow and declared a constructive total loss. The underwriters sold it to Lauritzen Group who instructed Wartsila, Turku rebuild and lengthen the ship. She re-entered service in December 1973 as LEENA DAN. Lauritzen chartered the ship to Union Steamships of New Zealand as Union Sydney from 1974 to 1977. In 1979 LEENA DAN became NOPAL DANA when sold to an offshoot of DFDS A/S of Copenhagen. She served several owners until 1986 when she became SEABOARD TRADER for Bayside Marine Trading Inc of Panama (Seaboard Marine of Miami). Several modifications were made, her weather deck was widened to carry more containers, and her bridge wings extended correspondingly. She was sold for the last time in 2013, renamed VEGAS and delivered to Alang, India for scrap May 14, 2013.

The first of the quartet to leave the CARE fleet, it was also the last to operate commercially

**MONT ROYAL in service for CARELine as delivered.**



Both MONT ROYAL & MONTMORENCY were lengthened in 1978 by an additional 83 feet increasing container capacity both on and under deck by adding two cellular 40 foot hatches and were renamed ATLANTIC PREMIER and ATLANTIC PRELUDE both in ACL colours when the Canadian port of Halifax Nova Scotia was added to the service in addition to regular calls at Liverpool' Seaforth Dock.

**The lengthened ATLANTIC PREMIER outward from Seaforth overleaf.**



During rationalisation in the early 1980's the French vessels were deemed inadequate and the brand CARELine was integrated within ACL with the addition of two "new builds" ATLANTIC PROSPER laid down as STENA PROSPER IMO 7528609 with Captain Ian North as Master on her delivery and maiden voyage to Montreal and ATLANTIC PROJECT laid down as STENA PROJECT IMO 7568623 both built by Hyundai, Ulsan and delivered in 1978 under UK flag and Cunard Management.

**ATLANTIC PROJECT alongside the old S3 ramp.(also alongside ACT 2 and a Johnson Line vessel.)**



ATLANTIC PROJECT survived a fire on board during a storm between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland on the night of 15<sup>th</sup> February 1982 in the same storm that sank the oil rig Ocean Ranger with a loss of 83 persons and the MEKHANIK TARASOV with a loss of 30 persons, the vessels crew managed to extinguish the fire and thankfully Atlantic Project docked the following day in Halifax.

Returning to Stena in 1982 ATLANTIC PROJECT was renamed MERZARIO HISPANIA 1983 with further names STENA HISPANIA 1984, KOTKA VIOLET 1985, STENA BRITANNICA and finally BORE

BRITANNICA in 1988. On March 14th 1991 she collided with DRONING MARGRETHE II in fog, punching a hole in that ship's side. One of its crew was lost before the vessel could be beached off Rodbyhavn, Denmark. In 1996 she was chartered to Finnlines as FINNFOREST and served without incident until it arrived at the breakers in Alang September 3, 2011.

**Both vessels were later fitted with sponsons to improve stability, images overleaf, note the container hatches now removed to allow for Ro/Ro cargo on the upper deck, accessed via the centre ramp in the below picture: photos from Chief Officer Jesper Klingsell.**





The St. Lawrence service was discontinued in 1982 when both "Stena" vessels returned to Stena Line as STENA IONIA (PROSPER) later chartered to Finnliness as FINNBIRCH on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006 while on a voyage from Helsinki, Finland to Aarhus, Denmark that she was caught in a severe storm and capsized in 5-meter waves in the vicinity of the Swedish Gotland/Oland islands. Two persons perished and helicopters rescued the 12 survivors.

Some Merseyside members may recall meeting Captain Jesper Klingsell on board ATLANTIC COMPASS during a vessel visit at Seaforth April 2009, Jesper prior to joining ACL was Chief Officer on board FINNBIRCH prior to 2006 and when home on leave he assisted in helping the rescued former colleagues close to his island home at the local hospital.

ATLANTIC PREMIER was reassigned and renamed INCOTRANS PREMIER later ATLANTIC PREMIER becoming Brostrom's Bore Line of Singapore and named ATLANTIC STAR (but not within ACL). Later operated with a side door for paper/timber products and was renamed CANADA MARITIME under C.P Ships management.

**Below; Canada Maritime ex Atlantic Premier alongside S6 berth Seaforth.**



ATLANTIC PRELUDE became INCOTRANS PRELUDE 1984/5 and reverted back to ATLANTIC PRELUDE before sale to Greek interests later becoming VALIANT, LEVANT FORTUNE and finally ARION on February 11th 2005 when she ran aground NW of Chios in the Aegean Sea. All 20 persons aboard were evacuated, and the wreck was abandoned. On September 22 TSAVLIRIS SALVAGE refloated the wreck and towed it to Aliaga, Turkey for scrap.

MONT LOUIS operated on the CARE run until she was chartered out as BORE MOON in 1979, returning to the CGT/CGM fold in 1981 as MONT LOUIS, but was assigned to other routes. On August 25th 1984 on a voyage from Le Havre to Riga in Latvia, she sank 12 miles off Ostend, Belgium after colliding with OLAU BRITANNIA, a 14,981 gross tons passenger ferry. OLAU BRITANNIA whose bulbous bow penetrated MONT LOUIS's engine room and the ship broke in two on September 11th. Her cargo, which included open flat-rack containers containing cylinders of IMO class 7 uranium hexafluoride, which was later all recovered by October 4<sup>th</sup>. Several of the cylinders were found on beaches near De Haan.

The hull sections were raised on September 29th and towed to Zeebrugge where they were eventually broken up. Pieces of MONT LOUIS were later retrieved by Smit Tak of Holland. The rest of the wreck is situated at 51°20 and 2°57 E, a few miles of the pilot station the Wandelaar ( the waiting area for Zeebrugge & Antwerp ports).

Thanks to Mac Mackay of Halifax N.S. for some of his details of the ACL Canadian service.





Official French report following the collision:

*On 25 August 1984, the MONT LOUIS, transporting 30 drums of uranium hexafluoride, was northbound in the English Channel shipping lane, bound for Riga in Latvia. That day, mist came down, severely reducing visibility. A collision occurred off the coast of Ostend (Belgium) between the MONT LOUIS and the German ferry OLAU BRITANNIA. The bow of the OLAU BRITANNIA became deeply embedded, by over six metres, in the side of the MONT LOUIS. Water poured into the ship's engines. The crack was so wide that the MONT LOUIS was at risk of capsizing if the OLAU BRITANNIA were to be pulled away. Indeed, when the two hulls were separated, the MONT LOUIS began to list, tipped onto its side, and finally sank in waters 14 metres deep. This incident was a major concern as the ship was transporting a hazardous substance: uranium hexafluoride. This is an intermediate substance in the process of uranium enrichment. A month after the collision, all 30 drums of uranium hexafluoride had been recovered.*

*According to investigations and witness accounts, the French vessel was entirely responsible for the collision. The commanding officer and his first lieutenant were accused of having cut in front of the German vessel and having left their radar set to 3 miles rather than 6, which would have alerted them as to the danger earlier.*



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## Portsmouth

Dave Crolley recently attended the WSS AGM held at Portsmouth at the end of May 2022 which was a very successful occasion. Whilst there he spotted two vessels that both had Merseyside connections.

The first was what we remember as the old Clubship LANDFALL that spent many years here on Merseyside but unfortunately spent many years under water in Birkenhead Docks. Eventually it was rescued and moved to Portsmouth and received a complete refit and is now on show outdoors on the beach at Southsea as shown here in my photo. Here is her history:-

LCT 704 is the last surviving landing craft tank (LCT) in the UK. LCT 704 is an amphibious assault ship for landing tanks, other vehicles and troops on beachheads. Built in 1944 by Hawthorn Leslie and Company, Hebburn, the Mark 3 LCT 704 was part of the 17th LCT Flotilla during Operation Neptune in June 1944.

LCT 704 was decommissioned in 1947, and used by the Master Mariners' Club of Liverpool as their club ship Landfall. She served as a floating nightclub in the 60s and 70s and was acquired by the Warship Preservation Trust in the late 1990s. She was moored at Birkenhead for restoration but the

Trust went into liquidation and she later sank in the dock. The vessel was raised by the National Museum of the Royal Navy in October 2014 and transported by sea to Portsmouth for restoration.



The second vessel spotted was freight ferry RED KESTREL which was built on Merseyside at the Cammell Laird Shipyard for Red Funnel ferries seen here moored at Southampton, built 2019, yard number 1393.



# North West Ship Show 2022

Exhibitors, Traders & Societies  
Model Boats & Ships, Photographs, Post  
Cards, Artwork, Books,  
Collectables, Ephemera, Maritime  
Information

Refreshments Available

Saturday 24th  
September 2022

10.00am to 4.00 pm

Admission: £3.00

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Under 12s free

Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Waterloo,  
Liverpool L22 1RE

**Sponsored by WSS Merseyside  
Branch**

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