

Vol 60 No 2 Summer 2025

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



HANSEATIC SPIRIT outward bound in the Crosby Channel, 31st May 2025. (Adrian Sweeney)

Mersey Log

Summer Issue 2025

Editor: Adrian Sweeney

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

Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2024/2025

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Acting Hon. Secretary: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Treasurer: John Williams

Committee Member: Stan McFerran, Peter Purland

Editorial

Branch members will be aware that this issue of Mersey Log is my final one as editor. During this time, my second spell as editor, there have been many Branch members who have helped and contributed to each issue such as the late Dave Crolley, who was an enthusiastic supporter of our journal until his passing in 2024, Philip Parker, David Poignton, Geoff Holmes, John Luxton, Simon Smith. My sincere thanks to you all and indeed to everyone else who has contributed photos and articles over the years.

The good news is that although I am stepping down it is not the end of Mersey Log. Happily branch member Simon Smith has agreed to take over as editor from the next issue which will be Volume 60 No. 3. Mersey Log has been informing and hopefully entertaining Branch members for over 60 years and I am sure Simon will guide it well through the next stages of its development.

Simon will take up the Mersey Log reins officially at the Branch AGM on Tuesday 8th July but in the meantime, so that members can send him photos and articles for the next issue his e mail address is;
siimonsmith80@btinternet.com

Branch News

March 2025

For our March meeting we welcomed our old friend Jim Charnock of Manchester Branch and we were treated to an evening of unforgettable nostalgia. Jim's show consisted of the slides of the late Peter Wynne who in the 1960's possessed a Dock Pass for Liverpool and Birkenhead Docks and he used it to photographically record what was to be the end of an era as far as ships, Companies and the docks themselves were concerned - the pre-containerisation era. We were treated to some classic ships from some classic shipping lines such as Cunard, Palm Line, Harrisons, Clan Line, Blue Funnel, Federal, Elder Dempster, Ellermans to name just a few - and the number of classic steam tugs on show was a sheer delight! Many thanks Jim and we hope there are more to come.

April 2025

Our April meeting saw the welcome return of John Hooley from Macclesfield. John continued his excellent series of slideshows featuring railway steamers with a few associated ships as well. The presentation covered the east coast of the UK from Scrabster down to Felixstowe with interesting

vintage views of the early Scottish ro/ro rail ferries which predated the bridges as well as the vehicle ferries across the Tay and Forth and vessels operated by Associated Humber Lines. We also wandered a little off course to look at classic Northern Lighthouse Board vessels and there was an excellent vintage colour photo of the ill-fated Irish Sea steamer PRINCESS VICTORIA. Once again, another very enjoyable evening and we look forward to welcoming John back again next year!

May 2025

For our May meeting we welcomed one of our own members, Philip Parker who looked back on a cruise he did between 22nd May 2015 to 28th May 2015 on board Cunard's QUEEN VICTORIA. This cruise was from Southampton to Liverpool and back and was part of the meeting of the 'Three Queens' in the Mersey to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Cunard Line. Philip presented to us many photographs firstly of ships seen at Southampton, at St. Peter Port and on the way north to Liverpool but the highlight were the superb photos taken of the meeting of QUEEN MARY 2, QUEEN ELIZABETH and QUEEN VICTORIA as they all celebrated this momentous occasion on the Mersey. The photos, together with an informative and entertaining commentary, made it a great evening for those members present.

June 2025

For our June meeting North Wales Branch member Stan Tedford gave us a wonderful presentation entitled 'Memories of Cunard Group Ships' and was given from the perspective of a former Cunard Line Engineering Officer. Stan had joined Cunard in 1967 and his second ship was QUEEN MARY. We were treated to some wonderful photographs of voyages to Las Palmas, Gibraltar, Cherbourg, New York to name just a few with plenty of ships of the era to enjoy. Stan also worked on QUEEN ELIZABETH (it was interesting to hear him compare the two ships) and also FRANCONIA ex IVERNIA. Once again we were taken to far away and exotic ports such as Nassau, Curacao, Bermuda Port Everglades and more. Thank you Stan for a marvelous evening and we hope to see you back at the Branch sooner rather than later.

Merseyside Maritime News

February 2025

New Berth at Liverpool

A new £2m berth has opened at the Port of Liverpool, boosting the port's cargo handling operations. The new deep water bulk berth is the first to be opened at the port in 40 years and is located at Peel Ports Group's Alexandra Complex. It represents an investment of £2 million by Peel Ports as part of its ongoing development of that complex. A deep water bulk berth allows large cargo vessels to dock within a port and this one welcomed its inaugural vessel – ANDESBORG – on Friday, February 28.

It will accommodate vessels up to large 'handymax' sizes. Combined with the existing N3 Alex berth, the new addition will increase the vessel handling capacity of both the Alexandra Complex and the Port of Liverpool as a whole. The 534,000 sq. ft. complex also saw a £28m warehouse developed recently. Phill Hall, Mersey Port director at Peel Ports Group, said: *"This is a significant moment for the Port of Liverpool. The addition of the new deep water bulk berth will not only allow us to accommodate larger vessels, it will also improve the port's overall ability to manage bulk cargo, providing more efficient cargo operations and helping us to keep supply chains moving. Not only does this project show our dedication to investing in infrastructure, when combined with our modern storage facilities the new berth ensures we can handle a diverse range of commodities and support customers with their needs."*

On 22nd February the Chinese-built anchor-handling tug ANTEOS arrived at Liverpool from Rotterdam with the Norwegian-registered barge GREENBARGE 4. The Dutch-flagged tug handed over the tow to Boluda tugs and the barge was temporarily berthed in Alexandra Branch No. 3 before being moved across to Cammell Laird by local tugs.



ANTEOS IN THE Mersey 22nd February 2025 (Simon Smith)

March 2025

UK Appoints Cammell Laird Shipyard to Assess Future Market for OW Vessels

The Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult, in partnership with the National Shipbuilding Office and the Crown Estate, have appointed Cammell Laird shipyard to carry out a detailed analysis of the future market opportunity for U.K. built ships in offshore wind. The work will help develop knowledge of how the U.K. can provide vessel manufacturing to support offshore wind, delivering jobs and economic investment to communities around the country. With over 850GW of offshore wind capacity expected to be installed globally by 2050, there is a need for major growth in the production of Service Operation Vessels (SOVs) to support this expansion. SOVs are designed to provide efficient servicing and maintenance of offshore wind farms by, in effect, becoming mobile offshore operations & maintenance bases. They are a crucial part of supporting the growth of offshore wind. Analysis carried out by ORE Catapult shows that hundreds of these ships are likely to be in operation around the world in the years to come, with an associated global market of nearly \$45.3 billion between now and 2050.

"This work will help us to better understand what needs done to make this a reality, and outline ways in which industry and government can work together to develop a successful and joined up approach to UK shipbuilding for offshore wind," said Lauren Hadnum, Clean Maritime Manager at ORE Catapult.

"APCL Cammell Laird is delighted to have been selected to lead the UK SOV Manufacturing Business Case Development study. This project represents a significant step forward in strengthening the UK's position in offshore renewable vessel manufacturing. As one of the UK's largest and most established shipbuilders, we are committed to delivering a robust, evidence-based business case that will shape the future of sustainable shipbuilding and reinforce the UK's role in the global offshore wind supply chain. We look forward to working closely with ORE Catapult, The Crown Estate, and the National Shipbuilding Office to drive this vital initiative forward," added Linton Roberts, APCL Group Chief Technology Officer.

CLdN completes multimillion-pound investment in Liverpool terminal

CLdN has announced the completion of its multimillion-pound investment in its Brocklebank terminal at the Port of Liverpool. The infrastructure upgrades at the terminal have improved the use of space and will enhance the flow of cargo movements. A new gate set-up and terminal operating system will provide an improved customer experience for dropping off and picking up cargo.

These investments, including the widening of a RoRo linkspan, are unlocking **CLdN's** plans to increase capacity on its Liverpool-Dublin route. The enhancements to the quayside will facilitate the use of the terminal by larger, more environmentally friendly ships. **CLdN** currently operates 17 return sailings a week between Liverpool and Dublin, providing an essential link for freight between Great Britain and Ireland as well as transshipment connections from Spain. The investment has created several new opportunities for careers at the terminal and **CLdN** is also working with a local college to establish technical apprenticeships.

Commenting on the investment Florent Maes, Chief Executive Officer of **CLdN**, said:

*"This upgrade to our Liverpool terminal is part of a wave of major investments by **CLdN** in our UK port infrastructure. The investment will provide tangible benefits to customers, create opportunities for skilled jobs in Liverpool and further reduce the carbon intensity of our operations by allowing larger ships to be deployed on the Liverpool-Dublin route."*

Glencar Appointed to Construct New Manufacturing HQ in Birkenhead Docks Redevelopment

Peel Ports Group has awarded the construction contract for a new warehouse at Birkenhead Docks as part of an ongoing collaboration with the wood-based panels specialist Finsa UK. Construction of the 156,000 square foot quayside facility at the UK's second largest port operator's new terminal Grandidges Quay at the port will begin later this year. The port operator has awarded the contract for the design and build of the contemporary logistics space and two-story office to construction firm Glencar, and it will become the specialist wood manufacturer's new UK HQ.

The project will facilitate the next stage of business growth for Finsa UK – Finsa Group's subsidiary in the UK - keeping all the existing jobs in the area as well as generating many indirect jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for local young people. The project also incorporates an extensive service yard and parking facilities to support its operational needs.

Andrew Martin, Group Property Development Director at Peel Ports, commented: *"Finsa UK has been a valued customer of Peel Ports for more than three decades, and we are delighted to see the next phase of their growth come to life with this transformative project at Grandidges Quay. We are excited to be collaborating once again with Glencar, whose expertise and commitment to excellence make them the ideal partner to deliver this high-specification logistics facility."*

Tom Kearsley, Operations Director at Glencar, commented: *"This project represents an exciting opportunity to contribute to the transformative Wirral Waters regeneration scheme while showcasing our commitment to sustainability, innovation, and community investment. We are thrilled to be working with Peel Ports again and look forward to delivering a facility that supports Finsa UK's growth while leaving a lasting legacy in Birkenhead that extends far beyond construction."*

Raquel Carrillo, Managing Director at Finsa UK, added:

"For more than 30 years, Birkenhead Port has been a key part of Finsa UK's story. Our new headquarters represents an exciting new chapter in our future. We look forward to working closely with both teams to achieve this vision and to continue supporting and contributing to the growth of Birkenhead and its community."

On 14th March Dutch tug, the 2009-built DUTCH POWER, sailed from Cammell Laird with the GREENBARGE 4 for Govan. Aboard the barge were sections for the type 26 frigate HMS BIRMINGHAM which is being built by Bae Systems at Govan. The tow arrived at Govan on March 17th.



DUTCH POWER in the Mersey on the 14th March 2025. (Simon Smith)

April 2025



SVITZER TRIDENT towing KERNE to dry dock, 28th April 2025 (Editor)

New Vessels for Western Ferries

Western Ferries announced on Friday, 25 April that Cammell Laird and Co. has been successful in its bid to build the two new vehicle and passenger vessels for its Gourock to Dunoon Route. Construction is due to start shortly with both vessels due to be delivered to the Firth of Clyde in Autumn 2026.

This announcement builds on the successful relationship established in 2013, when APCL Cammell Laird designed, built, and delivered the SOUND OF SEIL and SOUND OF SOAY, which are said to have been stalwarts of the Western Ferries' fleet ever since.

These new vessels represent a '*significant investment*' in the Company's future and the communities it serves. *"APCL Cammell Laird was selected as the preferred bidder due to the strength of its proposal, demonstrating exceptional value in cost, expertise, and the quality of its shipbuilding facilities. Their bid was immensely strong on all fronts, and with their heritage of maritime excellence, we are confident that they will deliver vessels of the highest quality, on time and on budget."*

May 2025

CLdN to increase capacity on Liverpool-Dublin route by 25%



On 9 May **CLdN** announced a 25% capacity increase on its Liverpool – Dublin service. The increase will be achieved through the deployment of larger vessels* with a higher cargo capacity than those currently serving the route. The change to higher capacity vessels will also provide environmental benefits as the use of these larger ships will reduce customers' CO2 emissions per tonne of transported cargo by up to 50%. The new, scalable schedule comprises 24 return sailings per week and will operate

between **CLdN**'s recently refurbished Brocklebank Dock terminal in the Port of Liverpool and the Port of Dublin. The service plays an essential role in transporting freight between Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, with **CLdN** carrying more than 200.000 freight units on the route every year.

Commenting on the increased capacity, Gary Walker, Chief Operating Officer of **CLdN**'s shipping operations said: *"This capacity increase shows the benefits that **CLdN**'s fleet capabilities can bring to customers. Not only are we able to increase the space available for cargo, but we are also enabling further reductions in the environmental footprint of each journey. The capacity increase is a direct benefit of the recently completed expansion and refurbishment of our Liverpool terminal. We now have more than 900 trailer bays as well as enhanced drop-off and pick-up facilities for our customers."*

It was announced during May that the old P&O Terminal at Gladstone Dock was to be redeveloped into a cement import facility by **Medcem**. It will cost £35m and completion is anticipated by mid 2026.

The call of cruise ship REGAL PRINCESS to the Cruise Liner Terminal, Liverpool on Sun 25 May was cancelled due to strong winds. The vessel attempted to berth but it was too rough for the gig boats to put the mooring lines on to the dolphins. Two hours after arriving on the Mersey she turned about and sailed instead for Belfast where she arrived in the early hours on 26 May.

The call of QUEEN ANNE to Liverpool on Mon 26 May to celebrate the 185th anniversary of **Cunard Line**, did go ahead but her arrival time was delayed due to strong winds and rough seas. She arrived at 1745 instead of 1200 as originally scheduled. She remained in Liverpool overnight and most of the following day, departing at 2345 on Tues 27 May.

The Celebration of Cunard Line's 175th Anniversary at Liverpool.

Cunard was founded in 1840, with Sir Samuel Cunard's mail steamship RMS Britannia beginning a transatlantic service to Halifax and Boston from Liverpool.

The Three Queens at Liverpool 24th – 26th May 2015. by Philip Parker. (All photos by the author unless otherwise stated)

Some four years earlier in 2011 during an exchange of e mails between Cunard Line and Liverpool Cruise Terminal with a suggestion to have three vessels on Merseyside over the Whitsuntide holiday weekend to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Cunard Line's association with the Port of Liverpool. Having consulted initially with the Harbour Master at the Port Authority and in due course the Liverpool Pilots the idea was taken further over a period of years with every local Merseyside authority in consultation, Wirral, Sefton and Liverpool councils.

With what was expected to be more than one million people on both sides of the river. Merseyside Police, Fire, Ambulance, Royal Navy and the Coast Guard were all consulted to ensure it was an "event to remember"

Inward approaching Liverpool at the Mersey Bar with Pilots boarding Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria.



QUEEN ELIZABETH about to pass the wreck of the Henderson Line vessel PEGU which was launched 14th December 1920, inbound from Glasgow for Liverpool then Rangoon in heavy seas and rain. With buoy lights extinguished on 24th December 1939 following the start of WW2, she grounded and later refloated but struck the revetment and broke in two. All 103 passengers were safely evacuated by the New Brighton lifeboat and transferred to the Pilot Boats. Years later, on 27th March 1987 the Alexandra Towing's Motor Tug WALLASEY lost her steering gear and drifted onto the wreck site striking her mast and demolishing same.



A close-up view of the PEGU wreck from 1939, visible at low water, Monday 25th May 2015 1117.



From on board QUEEN VICTORIA some 400m astern of QUEEN ELIZABETH with QUEEN MARY 2 about to join the inward procession approaching Royal Seaforth & Gladstone docks.



QUEEN MARY 2 now heading inward passing the Container Cranes of Seaforth.



The Pilots led by Captain Chris Booker utilising their pilotage, river/bridge simulator at their headquarters at Woodside, Birkenhead. This simulated the tides, wind speeds for the planned manoeuvres based on expected conditions for Monday 25th when three Cunard Line vessels would be alongside in the River Mersey at Pier Head having arrived facing south before a 180 degree turn about. To ensure all the vessels would be close to Liverpool each would be allocated two Liverpool River Pilots some of which would join their vessel in advance of any unseen weather conditions.

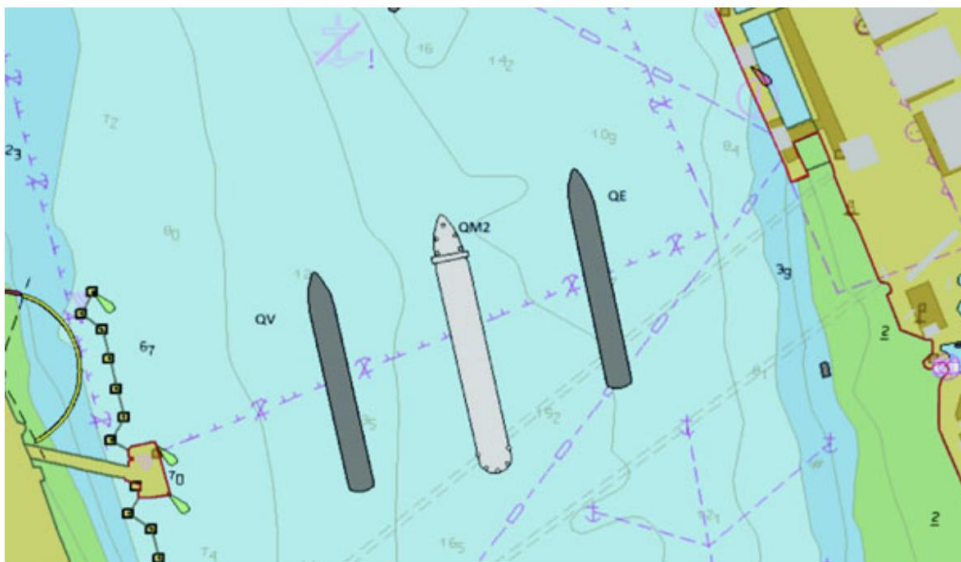
Pilot, Chris Booker boarded QUEEN MARY 2 at Greenock, following a transatlantic cruise, James Smart boarding QUEEN ELIZABETH in Kirkwall, Orkney Islands at the end of a Baltic cruise, Simon Wood boarding QUEEN VICTORIA at St. Peter Port in Guernsey on Saturday 23rd QUEEN VICTORIA having departed from Southampton the previous evening.

Each of the vessels had two pilots with the addition pilots boarding at the Mersey Bar. (Jamie Curry QM2, Andy Wentel QE & Paul Stephenson QV)

Having arrived early morning on the previous day on Sunday 24th QM2, departed late morning outward to await her sister vessels on Monday 25th at the mouth of the River Mersey close to C20 buoy with all three vessels following in a single line with a flotilla of tugs and small craft heading inward with many thousands of spectators on both sides of the river from New Brighton, Formby & Crosby for the mid river arrival at 12.48.

When in position soon after, the swing to starboard rate of turn at 1 degree per minute and when in position at 13.51 creating an arrowhead formation with just 130 metres between each vessel in position to salute the Cunard Building and await the Red Arrows fly past.

Copy of Pilots simulator image mid river.



Soon after QUEEN MARY 2 headed outward to continue her cruise, embarking on a ten-day journey from Liverpool to New York, via Halifax Nova Scotia and Boston, the route corresponded to the first Britannia voyage on 4th July 1840.

QUEEN MARY 2 (far left) just visible as Queen Elizabeth is making fast alongside Liverpool Cruise Terminal.



QUEEN ELIZBETH following to moor alongside the Cruise Terminal with QUEEN VICTORIA anchoring mid river with Mersey Ferry SNOWDROP taking passengers ashore, some of those attending the memorial service at St. Nicholas Church when flowers were laid on the memorial to those lost on board Cunard's ATLANTIC CONVEYOR and other vessels lost during the Falklands conflict. (25th May 1982)



The days event itself was an amazing sight with many people staying on both sides of the river until late in the evening watching the fire display in mid-river.
QUEEN ELIZABETH departed soon after the firework display heading for Southampton at the end of its Baltic Sea Northern Europe 16-day Cruise.



QUEEN VICTORIA berthed alongside the cruise terminal where she remained until 1700 on Tuesday 26th, pictured below outside Number 8 Princes Parade.



On departure at 1700 hours another packed Pier Head to see the last of the three Queens to depart for Southampton, with a ticker tape send off, QUEEN VICTORIA slipped her moorings as she drifted into mid-river with her bows to the north.

With perfect weather conditions the Master and Pilots agreed to complete a 360-degree mid river turn on the rising tide at 18.22 (7.3m) before sailing out and returning to Southampton.





Heading towards the Mersey Bar, Pilot launch PETREL coming alongside to collect the two Liverpool Pilots.

