

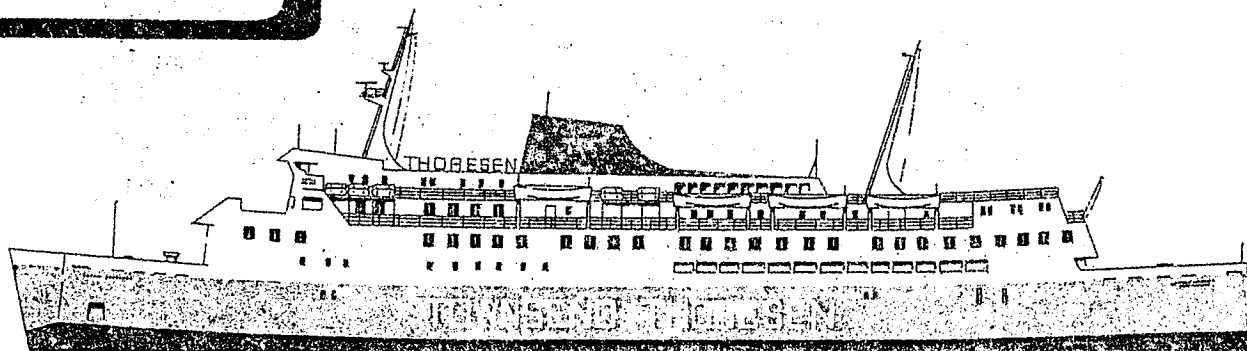
BLACK

JACK

W.S.S.
SOUTHAMPTON

Nº 14

Spring 1975



Southampton's newest ferry VIKING VENTURER

At 6000 gross tons VIKING VENTURER is the largest vessel ever built for Townsend Thoresen. She arrived from her builders on 17 January this year, and following storing and berthing trials she left on her maiden voyage to Le Havre on 22 January.

She was built by Aalborg Waerft A/S, Aalborg, Denmark as their yard number 203, being launched on 1 June 1974. Her overall length is 128.72 metres (422 ft) and she has a service speed of 21 knots. She is fully stabilised.

Accommodation is provided for 1200 passengers and 275 cars. She has cabins for some 300 passengers and as she has been designed for overnight and longer crossings many of the cabins have private facilities.

Passenger amenities include spacious lounges, bars, a duty free supermarket, perfume and gift centre, newspaper and magazine shop and a bank.

VIKING VENTURER is the first of a series of four vessels being built at Aalborg Waerft, the next to enter service being the VIKING VALIANT, which is due to begin operating on the new Felixstowe - Zeebrugge service in the Spring.

This year Townsend Thoresen will be involved in five routes across the Channel:- Dover - Calais, Dover - Zeebrugge, Felixstowe - Zeebrugge, Southampton - Le Havre, Southampton - Cherbourg; also they will be running on the new service from Cairnryan (near Stranraer) to Larne, Northern Ireland.

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Published Quarterly by the Southampton Branch of the World Ship Society

Membership of the World Ship Society is £4.00 per year, which includes Southampton Branch membership, the quarterly issues of 'Black Jack' together with the Society's monthly magazine 'Marine News'

'Black Jack' is available on its own at 40p (including postage) for four issues

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Chairman: John Havers Vice Chairman: M J Moloney
 Hon Branch Secretary: C L Auckland, 2 Bassett Meadow, Southampton
 Hon Branch Treasurer: Roy Henderson, 14 Winchester Road, Shirley,
 Southampton, SO1 5RH
 Joint Magazine Editors: Nigel V Robinson, Flat 1, Surrey Court, 104
 Richmond Road, Southampton, SO1 3FS
 and David T Hornsby
 Publicity Officer: W H Mitchell
 Outings and Visits Secretary: David T Hornsby
 Projectionist: Brian A Hill

We have now settled in at our commodious and comfortable accommodation at the University. The only problem seems to be for those members who like to extend the meeting over a pint at a nearby local, as all the locals in hailing distance of the University seem to get too packed for comfort. However investigations continue.

On 15 February a dozen members of the Branch visited the RIO CORRIENTES, an Argentinian general cargo ship of the ELMA Line, which was carrying a number of merchant navy cadets. As the guide could only speak Spanish, we were very glad to have Muriel Arnold among our number, who did a great job as interpreter. After a thorough inspection, from bridge to engine room, we passed on to the CERVIA, an ex-London steam tug now run by the Medway Maritime Museum.

The Annual Quiz, this time a four-way affair with the London, South Coast and Isle of Wight Branches, will be held in Brighton on Saturday, 4 October. The Isle of Wight Branch have suggested hiring a mini-bus between us. Would any member who cares to come along and support the Branch, or even take part in the team, please contact me. This is always a light-hearted affair, more a social occasion than a contest, well supported by other Branches.

The Maritime Preservation Society at Portsmouth has meetings at the City Museum, Portsmouth at 7.30pm on the following dates:-

- 19 Feb. Talk by W O B Majer on the Mary Rose project
- 19 March BBC2 film - the Steamboat Society's rally at Beaulieu during the summer
- 23 April Film of the Whitbread Around the World Yacht Race

Membership of the above Society is £1 per annum, payable to the Secretary, Trevor Hughes, 37 Warblington Street, Old Portsmouth.

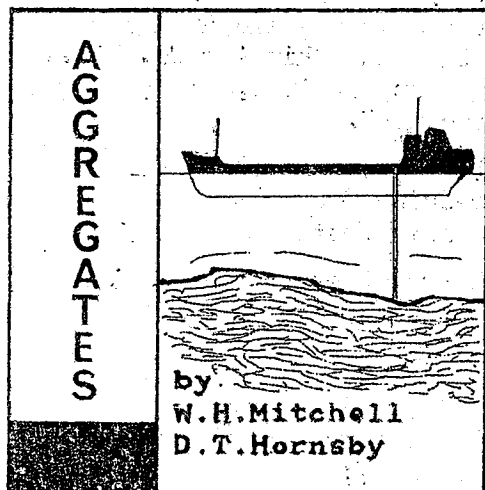
We welcome the following new members to the Branch:- Mr Beckett of Woolston, Mr Joseph of Atherley, Mr Preston of Marchwood, Mr Sell of Broadstone, Mr Titheridge of Hythe, Mr Andrews of Hill Lane, Mr Ogden of Southbourne, and the Gwynne family of Poole.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- Tues 8 April A Stansbridge - "In Foreign Waters"
- Tues 13 May Manchester Branch Tape-Slide Talk
- Tues 10 June Vicker's Films plus BTDB 'Five Welcomes in Wales'
- Tues 8 July Southampton & the Far East with Col. Gabriel

PART THREE

NORMANDIE DREDGING & SHIPPING CO. LTD..



This independent company was originally formed by the present managing-director during 1968, becoming Normandie Dredging Co. Ltd. in 1970, a taking its present title during February 1972.

Although the headquarters of the Company are situated at Southampton, their vessels are only rarely seen in the port, as dredging is normally undertaken for several other South coast companies who have their own screening plants, including Westminster Gravels and Francis Parker. Discharge ports are normally Newhaven, Littlehampton and Portsmouth with

aggregates dredged from the Solent Banks, the Pot and Horsetail Banks off Southsea, and from Chichester Bar.

For five weeks during 1970, the Company was involved in the initial scheme to pump sand onto Bournemouth beach, the first of its type in British waters. Bournemouth Corporation chartered the 5000 dwt. tons trailer suction dredger TRANSMUNDUM II (69/2961 gross) from Taylor Woodrow International Ltd., which transported sand from the Pot Bank to close offshore, from where the $3\frac{1}{2}$ foot draught NORMANDIE with its suction pipe reversed blew the sand ashore.

Embarking on a new venture, the Company has recently had two of their vessels modified at a cost of £100,000 to carry raw industrial effluent on behalf of Pfizer Chemicals and Du Pont. The chemical waste, which was formally pumped directly into Cork Harbour, will now be transported 15 miles offshore to a specially selected dumping area.

FLEET LIST

- NORMANDIE** 306 gross, 650 dwt; 193'oa x 30'; oil engines, twin screw; completed 1944 at Lowestoft as a landing craft; subsequent history not known, but.....
1968 acquired from Dutch owners by Mr. J.N. Callaghan;
8/1971 sold to Dredgers (C.I.) Ltd and renamed D.C.I. PERELLE q.v.;
- SEASTONE** 861 gross, 1262 dwt; 204' x 32'; oil engine;
completed 4/1907 by Fleming & Ferguson Ltd., Paisley as Thames Conservancy Hopper No. 7;
see under Westminster Gravels;
8/1971 bareboat chartered by the Company;
- HUMBER LEE** 616 gross, dwt; 183' x 38'; oil engine;
completed 5/1959 by Goole S.B. & R. Co. Ltd., as CALCIUM for Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd..
1965 sold to Shamrock Shg. Co. Ltd., Larne (registered at Dublin) renamed CLONLEE;
1972 acquired by the Company;
1973 widened, converted to sand suction dredger and renamed;
1973 transferred to Lee Shipping Ltd., remaining as managers;
10/1974 laid up at Hull, pending conversion 2-3/1975 ;
- SOLENT LEE** 753 gross, 1111 dwt; 204' x 31'; oil engine;
completed 1/1959 by Drypool Eng. & DD Co. Ltd., as coastal tanker OARSMAN for C. Rowbotham & Sons Ltd..
4/1973 acquired and 7-12/1973 converted by builders to sand suction dredger and renamed; transferred to Lee Shipping Ltd (as above);
12/1974 arrived at builders for further conversion to effluent tanker.

WESTMINSTER GRAVELS LTD.

Although only coming into existence on 30th September 1967, the origins of the Company in local waters can be traced back over 50 years, through the shipping and dredging fleets of the Foremost Dredging Co. Ltd., and James Contracting and Shipping Co. Ltd.. The latter company was acquired by the Westminster Dredging Group in 1954, the aggregate dredging activity being formed into a separate company during 1967.

Today, the Company, which is based at Southampton, is jointly owned by Holland-America Line who took a 50% interest in 1971, and by Westminster Dredging Group Ltd., itself a wholly owned holding company within the multi-national Bos Kalis Westminster Group N.V..

Dredging is mainly carried out off the East Coast for discharge at many ports on the near Continent, although occasional calls are made by vessels to their 'Home Port'.

FLEET LIST

- SEASTONE** 861 gross, 1262 dwt; 204' loa x 32'; oil engine, 9 knots; completed 4/1907 by Fleming & Ferguson Ltd., Paisley as Thames Conservancy Hopper No.7; later renamed Port of London Hopper No.7; 1952 acquired by Foremost Dredging Co. Ltd. (R.E.V. James Ltd.) and renamed James No.46; 1960 re-engined from T3cyl to motor vessel; 1961 converted to sand dredger and renamed; 1966 transferred to James Contracting & Shg Co. Ltd. (Westminster Dredging Grp) 1968 transferred to Westminster Gravels Ltd., and at present on bareboat charter to Normandie Dredging & Shipping Co. Ltd. q.v..
- ROCKSTONE** 842 gross, 1099 dwt; 204' loa x 32'; oil engine, 9 knots; completed 5/1907 by Fleming & Ferguson Ltd., Paisley as Thames Conservancy Hopper No.8; later renamed Port of London Hopper No.8; 1952 acquired by Foremost Dredging Co. Ltd. (R.E.V. James Ltd.) and renamed James No.47; 1964 re-engined from T3cyl, converted to sand dredger and renamed; 1966 transferred to James Contracting & Shg Co. Ltd. (Westminster Dredging Grp) 1968 transferred to Westminster Gravels Ltd.;
- WIGHTSTONE** 1313 gross, 1700 dwt; 235' loa x 36'; oil engine, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ knots; completed 7/1950 by S.P. Austin & Son Ltd., Sunderland as Brent Knoll a coastal collier for the Central Electricity Generating Board; 1961 to D. Arnold being renamed Brentford; 1961 acquired by Foremost Dredging Co. Ltd. (R.E.V. James Ltd.), re-engined, converted to sand dredger and renamed; 1966 transferred to James Contracting & Shg Co. Ltd. (Westminster Dredging Grp) 1968 transferred to Westminster Gravels Ltd.;
- BANKSTONE** 1357 gross, 2034 dwt; 235' loa x 36'; oil engine, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ knots; completed 10/1949 by Wm. Pickersgill & Son, Sunderland as Poole Island, a coastal collier for British Electricity Authority; 1959 to Blue Circle Shg. Co. Ltd. (Ass. Portland Cement Mftrs) renamed Hydracrete; 1963 to A.S. Arnold; 1963 acquired by James Contracting & Shg Co. Ltd. (R.E.V. James Ltd.), re-engined, converted to sand dredger and renamed; 1966 managers became Westminster Dredging Group; 1968 transferred to Westminster Gravels Ltd.;
- NORSTONE** 1868 gross, 2805 dwt; 276' loa x 45'; oil engine, 9 knots; completed 1964 by Astano S.A., Ferrol, Spain as Konsul Retzlaff for Dr. E. Retzlaff, West Germany; 1970 acquired by Westminster Gravels Ltd.; 1971 converted to self-discharging sand dredger and renamed; 1974 sold to purchasers based in Bahamas;
- DEEPSTONE** 5487 gross, 8820 dwt; 351' loa x 66'; completed 1972 by IHC Smit, Kinderdyk as self-discharging trailer suction dredger, but immediately transferred to Westminster Dredging Co. Ltd., with back charter to the Company;

DREDGERS (C.I.) LTD..

The Company was formed by Capt. G. Ison during 1971 to dredge sand and gravel on behalf of other aggregate dredging licence holders in the Solent area. Sand and gravel from the Solent Banks and other banks off the Isle of Wight are discharged at Newport and Southampton, for subsequent cleaning and screening by the licence-holders at their own plants. At Southampton, discharge is normally made on the River Itchen at the new Bakers Wharf, immediately downstream of Camper & Nicholsons Northam Yard, although prior to this berth coming into operation in April 1974, regular shipments were made to Willments Yard on the opposite bank of the River.

D. C. I. PERELLE 306 gross, 650 dwt; 193' loa x 30'; twin screw oil engines, 9 knots. completed 1944 at Lowestoft as a landing craft; subsequent history not known, but.... 1968 acquired from Dutch owners by Mr. J.N. Callaghan; 1970 transferred to Normandie Dredging Co. Ltd.; 8/1971 acquired and renamed

ACER 554 gross, 780 dwt; 191' loa x 31'; oil engine, 12 knots; completed 3/1956 by Gebr. Bodewes Schps 'Gruno', Foxhol as CLIPPER for A.C. Hoff of Rotterdam (conventional coaster) 1968 became COMMODORE CLIPPER of Commodore Shipping Co. Ltd.; 1972 to Sycamore Transporters Ltd (mgr Freight Express Ltd) and renamed; 1973 to J.M. Hutchings of Hayling Island, and chartered to the Company; 28/7/1973 sank about 3 miles off Calais after capsizing in rough seas Dunkirk-Littlehampton;

Prior to the formation of the Company, Capt. Ison was a director of WILSON & ISON SHIPPING CO. LTD..

NIMROD 378 gross, 510 dwt; 162' loa x 27'; oil engine, 9 knots; completed 12/1948 by Scheeps. 'Westerbroek', Westerbroek as coaster D. Schothorst & W. Schuitema of Groningen, later under management of Carebeka N.V.; 1971 acquired by the Company; 1973 sold to Wilson Marine Ltd., Newport, Isle-of-Wight; 1973 to Forumcastle Ltd., Westcliffe-on-Sea (mgr Tower Shg Ltd.)

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DULCINEA MARINE LTD..

Mr. C. A. Brindle, a hovercraft consultant and the former chief executive of Seaspeed Hovercraft, formed the Company about 1968 to operate harbour clearance and aggregate dredging vessels generally in the United Kingdom. At the time of her recent sale, the SIR CEDRIC was employed in connection with sea-bed repairs at 202 berth, although prior to this, she had been used as a conventional sand sucker in the central South Coast area, on charter to dredging licence holders. Today, the Company charters vessels to meet its aggregate dredging requirements.

SIR CEDRIC 313 gross, 350 dwt; 149' loa x 22'; oil engine, 8 knots; completed 1943 by R. Dunston Ltd., Thorne as EMPIRE TOWNSMAN (severn collier type); 1947 renamed ROSELYNE by W.D. Tamlyn of Plymouth; 1953 renamed LANTYAN by Dale Sand & Gravel Co., and converted to a sand dredger; 1964 renamed PEN ARUN by P.E. Penfold Ltd (part of the Amey Group); 8/1972 acquired by the Company, subsequently about 2/1974 being renamed and registered at Guernsey; 1/1975 sold to Roselyne Shipping Co. Ltd., Golant, Fowey, Cornwall at present not renamed;

After some 50 years of trading,
a local Company disappears from
the shipping scene.....

ISLAND TRANSPORT CO. LTD..

If you have crossed the River Medina on the 'floating bridge' from East to West Cowes, you cannot have failed to notice one of the green-hulled lighters lying at the adjoining wharf on the western bank.

But on Thursday 19th December 1974, the long established service operated by this Company from Cowes to the Town Quay, Southampton ended, when the transport side of the business, a subsidiary of J. Samuel White & Co. Ltd., was taken over by the Vectis Shipping Co Ltd., itself a subsidiary of the Red Funnel Group.

The Company commenced trading about 1922, with regular services to both Southampton and Portsmouth, carrying steelwork and equipment for the shipbuilding side of the parent Company, in addition to general cargo. After the Second World War, the service to Portsmouth was discontinued, and following the decision by the parent Company to cease shipbuilding in 1965, the service to Southampton became used only for general cargo.

Amongst the interesting vessels owned by the Company was the dumb-barge BURSLEDON which was originally part of a 150' open-hatch vessel reconstructed at East Cowes in 1920/1, the other part becoming the PAN (91 tons gross) of Vectis Shipping; a sister vessel was not reconstructed until 1933/4 at Newport, then becoming the HOLT (82 reg. tons) and the BUCKHOLT (67 reg. tons) both in the ownership of Vectis Shipping.

FLEET LIST

ARRETON	121 tons gross; 103'oa (98'bp) x 20'; oil engine, twin screw; built 1916 by W. Dobson & Co., Newcastle-on-Tyne as the sectional landing craft X11; transported to the Dardanelles campaign and subsequently towed back to Southampton by an unknown local tug; 1920 sold to Smith Mossi & Co.; 1922 registered at Cowes; ? converted to a motor lighter; 1949/50 rebuilt - only original frames remaining; 12/1974 laid up;
BRIGHSTONE ex Eliza Holt	84 tons gross; 75'bp x 17'; oil engine; built 1914 at Amsterdam; 1923 registered at Cowes; late 1950's transferred to parent Company and converted to barge;
BURSLEDON	91 reg. tons; 77'bp x 16'; non-propelled dumb-barge; built 1919 by J. Samuel White & Co. at East Cowes; 1920 reconstructed (see above) 1956 to H.B. Jolliffe Ltd., Cowes; later the same year to Vectis Shipping Co Ltd. 9/1974 to A. & N. Vogel Ltd., London;
DEBOURNE	104 tons gross; 99'bp x 17'; oil engine; built 1925 by N.V. Verschure & Co., Amsterdam as the AMSTERDAM; 1937 registered at Cowes; 195? to Dredging, Towing and Salvage Co., Portsmouth;
CALBOURNE	103 tons gross; 95'oa x 19'; oil engine; built 1952 by J. Samuel White & Co Ltd., Cowes; 27/1/1975 to Tom Edgell of Edgell Wharf Services Ltd., Woolston;
SHALFLEET	103 tons gross; 96'oa x 19'; oil engine; built 1962 by J. Samuel White and Co Ltd., Cowes;

THE END OF AN ERA

In October 1971 the ESSO GLASGOW arrived at the breakers in Bilbao. She was the last Esso owned T2 type - one of a class of tanker built in great numbers for the special needs of war, which went on to dominate a generation of tanker trade in peacetime. Stemming from an original Esso design, they pioneered techniques which have had a lasting effect on ships and shipbuilding.....

The boom in shipping which immediately followed World War 1 soon turned to the depression of the 'twenties and 'thirties. In the late 'thirties there came a realisation, with the steadily deteriorating political situation, that the existing American fleet, mainly vessels of 1918-1920 vintage, many of which had been laid up for years, was hardly a basis for the maintenance and strengthening of trade, should there be another world conflict.

Through the Merchant Shipping Act of 1936 the United States Maritime Commission was formed, its basic

aim being the construction of 500 new ships at the rate of fifty per year for ten years. Commercial companies who, fortunately, had maintained their United States coastwise fleets with modern tonnage, were approached and an agreement reached whereby they would build and operate fast modern tankers with built-in 'National Defence' features, such as ammunition chambers, gun emplacements and high-powered machinery giving at least $16\frac{1}{2}$ knots. The additional construction costs were paid for by the Maritime Commission. Under the terms of the agreement the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, contracted with the Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Company of Chester, Pennsylvania, for such a vessel, of Standard Oil design, but with defence features added.

Early in 1938 contracts were placed for twelve tankers, seven being Standard Oil vessels. Twin-screw ships, their geared steam-turbines developed 13,500 h p, dimensions were 533 feet overall length with a beam of 75 feet. Gross tonnage approximated 11,330 and deadweight was 18,300 tons.

The need for more merchant ships, far in excess of the 500-ship programme of the late 'thirties had already been acknowledged and in early 1941 another bulk programme of ships was added, along with vast new emergency shipyards in which to build them. In the March the Lend/Lease Act provided for transfer of materials, equipment and merchant ships to Britain. Later a further extensive programme of another 300 vessels was ordered and in this programme the need for tankships was recognised with orders for seventy-two - these to be of a standard commercial design, but with turbo-electric drive - this was the genesis of the famous T2 tanker. The design chosen was that of the ships already building for the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey at Sun Shipbuilding.

The T2 tankers were of raked stem, cruiser stern, three-island type. They had dimensions of $523\frac{1}{2}$ feet overall length, 503 feet between perpendiculars, a moulded beam of 68 feet and a loaded draft of 30 feet $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Designed tonnages were 10,448 gross, 6,150 nett, 16,613 deadweight and 21,880 displacement. Turbo-electric propulsion was chosen for these ships due to the scarcity of machine tools necessary for additional manufacture of gears - the nation's entire capacity being already allocated for Navy and high-speed cargo-ship contracts. The steam turbines of the T2's provided power for an electric generator connected to an electric motor, this driving the shaft. Some of the tankers had machinery rated at a nominal 6,000 shp and giving $14\frac{1}{2}$ - 15 knots. Other similar vessels had machinery rated at 10,000 shp to give 16 knots.

At the end of 1941 the United States was at war with Japan and Germany and German U-boats were committed to unrestricted warfare, being quickly despatched to the U S eastern seaboard where they prowled the New England/Nova Scotia coasts, assembly areas of eastbound convoys, Allied shipping losses became severe. The total losses for the first half of 1942 was in the region of some six million deadweight tons. Larger U-boats cruised to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean from whence an unending procession of tankers from the Gulf ports

and Venezuelan oil-fields became rich prizes for these marauding submarines, sometimes operating so close inshore that their burning victims could be plainly seen from land. It was against this background that the American shipbuilding industry had to meet wave after wave of expansion and in this, hundreds more T2 tankers - and other types of ships - were ordered. By the end of the war some 7,000 ships had been ordered and constructed under Maritime Commission jurisdiction.

A substantial proportion of these vessels were built in new yards, by workers many of whom had never even seen a ship before. To build the tankers three new emergency yards laid down for Liberty ship hulls had to be converted to tanker construction, the Sun yard being the only old-established one to participate in the programme. The other three yards chosen for the construction of the emergency tankers were the Alabama Drydock & Shipbuilding Co., the Kaiser Company at Portland, Oregon, and the Marinship Corporation of Sausalito, California.

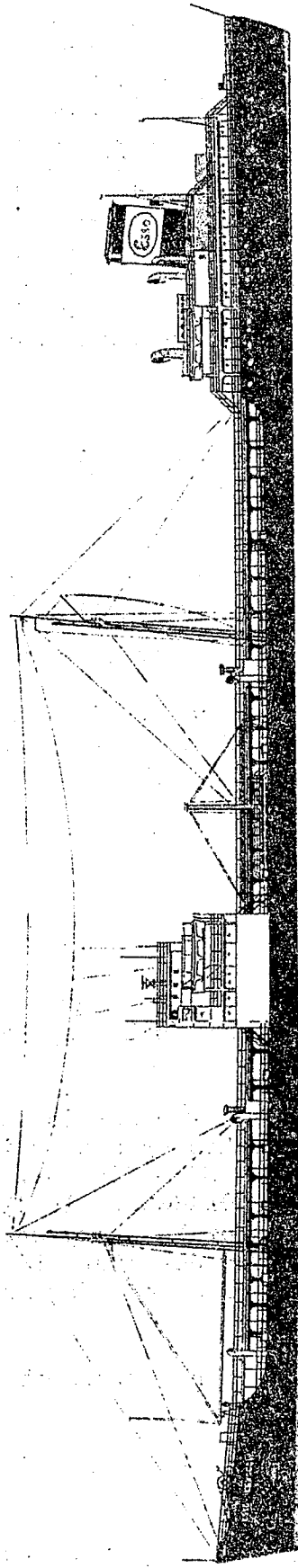
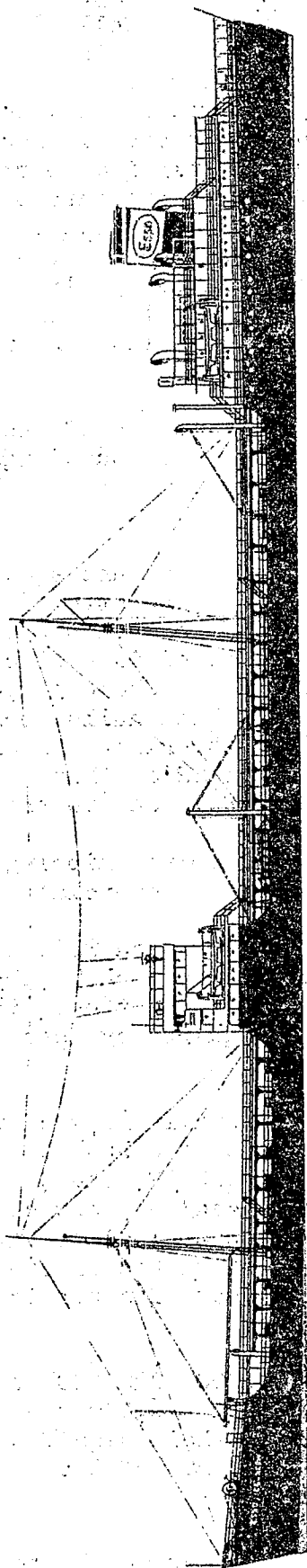
As might be expected, when the emergency yards turned from building the relatively simple Liberty ships to the more complicated tankers, speed of production was, at first, quite slow. This is exemplified by the effort of the Marinship yard. The first tanker keel was laid when most components were not in the yard and the final designs had not even been completed! The yard took 205 days to complete its first tanker and by their seventh the time had risen to 248 days. Thereafter, building times decreased to an average of 70-80 days, and in June 1945 they established a world building record for a tanker of this size, when the HUNTINGTON HILLS was launched only twenty-eight days after keel-laying and spent only five more days fitting-out before sailing on trials.

From twenty-two T2's by the end of 1942, rising to a total of 525 by 1945, the yards poured forth a series of vessels at unprecedented speed, forming the world's greatest tanker fleet and ensuring the vital supplies of fuel and oil products on which the successful prosecution of the war in all theatres depended.

A large proportion of the American wartime tonnage was of welded construction rather than riveted. One reason for this was that initially, with the majority of workers unskilled, they could be trained to weld without shipbuilding knowledge. Welding was still comparatively untried on large ships and a completely unknown factor was the result of the imposition on welded joints of wartime stresses and strains. Nevertheless, with tankers needed in a hurry and three of the four yards involved being emergency ones, welding enabled large sections to be prefabricated. Complete bow sections, deckhouses, cofferdam units with pumps and piping already installed, and the like, were lifted on to the ways and ships grew visibly in a matter of hours. On this point an amusing story is told of the lady invited to launch a ship (albeit a Liberty ship) and who arrived on the launching platform to be confronted by the usual bottle of champagne - but no ship. Seeking an explanation, she was advised to start swinging the bottle immediately, since not only the bow, but indeed the whole ship would arrive at any moment!

Automatic welding machines were introduced to speed production, although later the use of these on tankers' main hull-strength longitudinals was forbidden, to the occurrence of a number of ship fractures. Although the encroachment by females on the male bastion of welding was considered unwise, it did actually prove to be a success. So much so that at one time some 31 per cent. of the building force was female labour, many of them welders. Not only did they work on small sub-assemblies, but they were to be found on even the largest sections - and on the ships themselves - working at great heights and with high efficiency.

The welding process also enabled prefabrication to be carried out at sites away from the building yards. Again, this is exemplified by Marinship for, until they became fully operational, steel for their first ships was



TOP: A standard T2 tanker in Esso colours, typical of many in the post-war fleet

BOTTOM: ESSO: GLASGOW (ex WAUHATCHIE) of 1944 shown following her reconstruction in 1957 when she was cut in three and a new midship section inserted to enable her to carry different grades of fuel oil on coastal duties.

drawings by Nigel V Robinson

nautical notebook

by Dock Head Correspondent

Following our 'stop-press' item in the last issue of 'Black Jack', and the previous 'fleet list' on the Southern Tanker & Bunkering Co. Ltd., it was announced just before we went to press that the local bunkering fleet is being taken over by Bowker & King Ltd., although the CLYDESTAN (68/499g) ex Kai-73 and the recently acquired BRUCESTAN (64/518g) ex Thorbjorn-74 are not included. The tankers are to be renamed as follows:-

Easternstan (57/372dwt)	to be renamed BAGSHOT
Northernstan (-/105g) BOTLEY
Southernstan (56/447dwt) BURSLEDON
Westernstan (47/355dwt) BROOK
Parkstan (25/57dwt) BOSHAM

Every quarter seems to see a liner withdrawal, and this has not been an exception. The axe has this time fallen upon the school cruiseship NEVISA (56/20160) which after little warning sailed for Taiwan breakers without even returning to the U.K.. The ELLINIS (32/18564) of the Chandris Group did not suffer the same fate, but is being laid-up at 101 berth for 2½ months due to poor bookings for an Australian voyage. The sole visitor of note in what is always a quiet quarter for passenger movements, was the Swedish-America liner KUNGSHOLM (66/26678) which called on a Christmas cruise.

Ferry news.....the 6387 gross ton VIKING VENTURER made her maiden arrival as reported in detail on the cover.....the freight ferry ILKKA (72/1586) was chartered by Normandy Ferries following her charter to Thoresen.....United Baltic's ro-ro ferry BALTIC VALLEANT (70/2125) returned to the Bilbao route on charter to MacAndrews when PATRICIA (67/8897) went for annual overhaul.....the SF PANTHER (65/4468) had a 5-week £300,000 refit, including the fitting of stabilisers, and conversion to burn heavy fuel oil.....will we or will we not see the T-T Lines ferry MARY POPPINS (62/3529) operating from 49 berth to St. Maló from the end of May, that is the question!!

The four ACL first series vessels, ATLANTIC SPAN, SONG, STAR & SAGA are to be lengthened to increase their container capacity by 200 20' units. At the container berths, the only unusual visitor during the quarter was the SLIGO (71/787) from Helsingborg, a return visit having spent a few days at Husbands Yard during February 1974.

Military equipment from Cyprus brought visits by the French ro-ro vessels MONZA (72/499) and MULSASSE (74/1592) to RCT Marchwood and the 201 berth linkspan, the latter berth also being used by another Wallon vehicle carrier the ARNAGE (74/1592) from Le Havre.

Following in the footsteps of SAINT COLMAN (63/917) which called in November, two other coasters called to lead straddle-carriers at 110 berth, these being the Cypriot flag TEGELER PLATE (66/382) and the Dutch SHIPMAIR V (70/1597) ex Gaelic-74, respectively for discharge at Hamburg, Antwerp and Barcelona.

The new Post Office cable depot at 203 berth is now in operation, and the first of the two new cable-ships C.S. MONARCH was launched on 12 February at Robb Caledon, Dundee. At 109 berth, cable was loaded by Cable & Wireless's SENTINEL (46/8541) and CABLE ENTERPRISE (64/4358) in addition to several regular callers.

The South American Conference Service is mainly using 105-108 berths, although the ELMA chartered KAREATHOS (55/5879) ex Cap Frio-71 used 41 berth to load before departing to Le Havre, returning to 41 berth and then having to return to 101 berth for engine repairs. New callers on the service have all worn ELMA funnel colours, these being RIO TEUGO (73/9059), RIO CINCEL (73/9059), RIO CARCARANA (62/8482) and the cadet training ship RIO CORRIENTES (63/8482) which was visited by branch members.

With two large vessels arriving with grain at the start of the quarter, the FERNGROVE (65/13458) of Fernley & Eger, and the Liberian flag CAPE PALMAS (60/10649) ex.....

ex Anna Brodin-69, few coasters were to be seen, in contrast with recent months.

As is often the case, 101 berth was used by a number of vessels taking shelter from Channel gales, or calling for repair. The former group included the 4000 ton disp. BARGE NO. 406 (registered at San Francisco) towed by the American tugs GULF FLEET NO. 8 and THERIOT OFFSHORE 3, falling into the latter category was the Polish bulk carrier ZAGLĘBIE MIEDZIOWE (71/16028) (Szczecin-Savona) and the Panamanian owned/Greek flag HELIOS (57/4365) ex Kongsholm-63 (Uddevalle-Dublin), whilst in the Ocean Dock two other Greek-flag vessels called for repairs, the Liberian owned KEHREA (61/14982) ex Windsor Carrier-73, ex Scandia Clipper-72 (Antwerp-New Orleans) and the Panamanian owned EURYTION (60/8632) ex Mathura-72 of Brocklebanks (Hamburg/London-New York/Far East); together with the Glasgow-built Panamanian registered ARGO DIGGER (57/604) - ex sludge vessel?

The three regularly used dry-docks stay empty for long periods, but vessels docked during the quarter included the Ocean Group's vehicle carrier CLEARWAY (70/1160), the Canadian tug IRVING BIRCH (67/827) and the newly completed Sunderland-built bulk carrier NAIAD (75/39024) showing the same Livanos funnel colours as did her sister THETIS. As the final typing is taking place, the Liberian-flag car-carrier NEPAL VERDE (72/10182) is due into 6 drydock following her lengthening, at Rijeka. // ex Joana-73

The Town Quay has again seen a variety of callers including the Spanish IAGO SAN MAURICIO (67/1639) for repairs (Montrose-Canaries), the Panamanian ALEXIS TAF (57/499) ex Soskua-74, ex Stena Wood-70, ex Royal Wood-72 (Seaham-Caronte) letting in water, and the British coasters VIRGILIA (70/1437) and GOMBA PROGRESS (57/1328) ex Dorset Queen-74, ex Dorsetbrook-73. Also with cargo were the Dutch livestock-carrier LIMOUSIN EXPRESS (59/648) ex Noranim II-73, ex Athene-73, the vintage ex-Swedish BORNO (15/255) ex Mars-56 now registered at Georgetown, Guyana, the Antilles-flag FAIRLOAD (74/1318) and the British fishery research ship CLIONE (61/495). Several foreign tankers called including the Dutch STELLA ANTARES (62/1517dwt), ELIZABETH BROERE (67/594) and MARE ALTUM (64/500). Of particular interest was the former Scottish ferry ST. OLA II (51/750) ex St. Ola-74 being refitted for North Sea oilfield work, and about to be renamed AQUA STAR by Aquatronics International Ltd. of Bermuda.

Cargo callers at the Eastern Docks have included the Panamanian owned/Greek flag EFTYCHIA (67/11891) ex Silvercape-72 (Silver Lane) loading for Havana, the Hansa heavy-lift ship KYBFELS (67/9427) loading a military helicopter, the Israeli reefers ETROG (64/7693) and BANANACORE (65/8246) respectively discharging fruit from Haifa and loading cars for Ashdod, and the West German reefer BRUNSHAUSEN (68/4623) loading cars for Central America. At 34 berth, the German coaster ARE FRIESECKE (59/500) ex Xerxes-63 was 'accommodated', whilst the regular Algerian National Line service to Algiers was maintained by the German JORK (71/1000).

In addition to many regular French reefers, bananas brought several interesting callers to the Port including the Belgian FRUBEL AFRICA (67/5154) in Fabre colours, the Italian MARE SOMALO (63/5170) this time in Sitram colours, and in Salen colours the Norwegian GOLAR TRYG (65/4241), the German MORILLO (71/9697) and Chichester Shg Lines ORANGE (72/9746). The Danish DRAGOR MAERSK (61/4722) reappeared immediately prior to her sale, whilst the GEESTCAPE (66/7679) arrived on charter to Martin & Cie who are purchasing the reefer at the end of the charter. Two interesting coastal tankers called to bunker banana reefers, these being the Finnish MINI (65/497) ex Finnmini-71, ex Pinocchio-69 and the Gravesend-registered NEW START (59/345) ex Onward Progress-75 now owned by E.W. Tankers & Co. Ltd.

At Husbands Yard, in addition to numerous British Rail winter refits, and work on several A.R.C. Marine sand dredgers and Esso coastal tankers, unexpected callers have included the British coaster LONDONER (68/1051) ex Mare Jada-73 arriving from Belfast, The Portslade (55/1937) and FIRLE (58/948) of Stephenson Clarke, and the Danish coasters GERDA BRES (69/400) ex Lagan-74, ex Gerda Bres-72 and MERC POLARIS (72/490) which was towed in and subsequently towed from Netley by the Danish tug SIGYN (57/268) ex Neptun-66.

The Medway Maritime Museum's steam tug CERVIA (46/233) ex Empire Raymond-47 was visited by members at 30 berth before she collected a former floating-bridge from Kemps Yard, the tow later sinking off the Owers Bank. River wharf visitors have included the Singapore flag GABBRO (72/1399), SEA THAMES (73/499) and SEA MAAS (74/499) all at Dibles, the Belgian HENRI (64/467) ex Roland L-70 at Redbridge, the Cypriot DIVINA (58/499) ex Zodiac Melonie-74, ex Claus-74 at Eling and the German FALKENSTEIN (63/424) at Drivers.