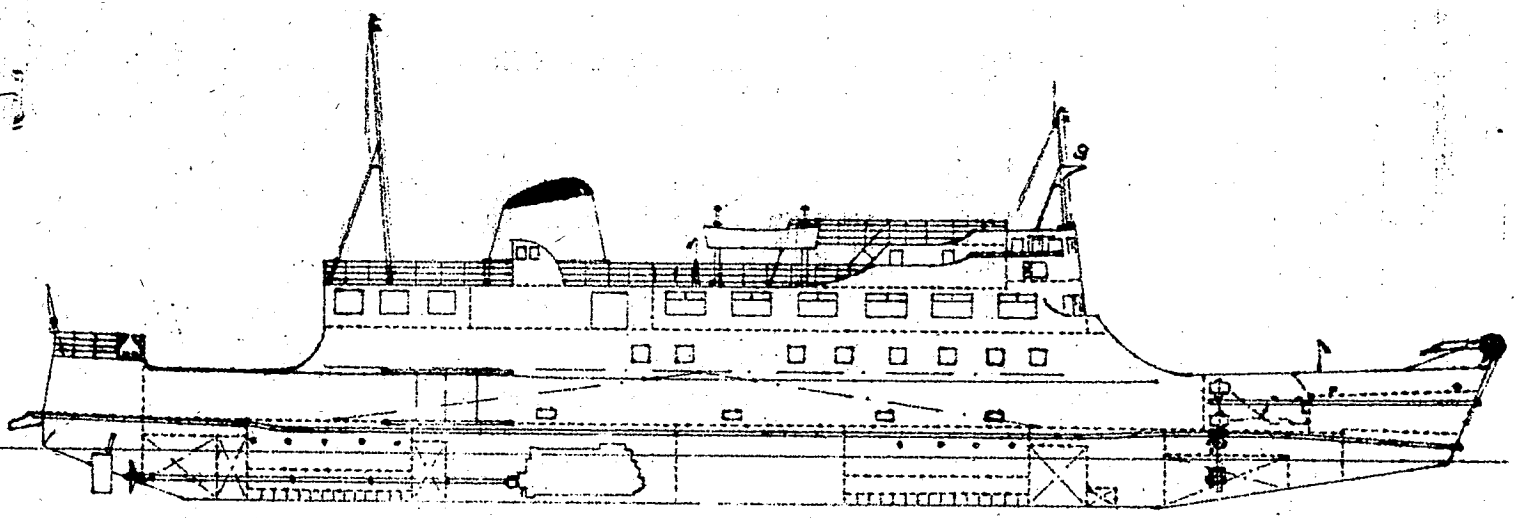
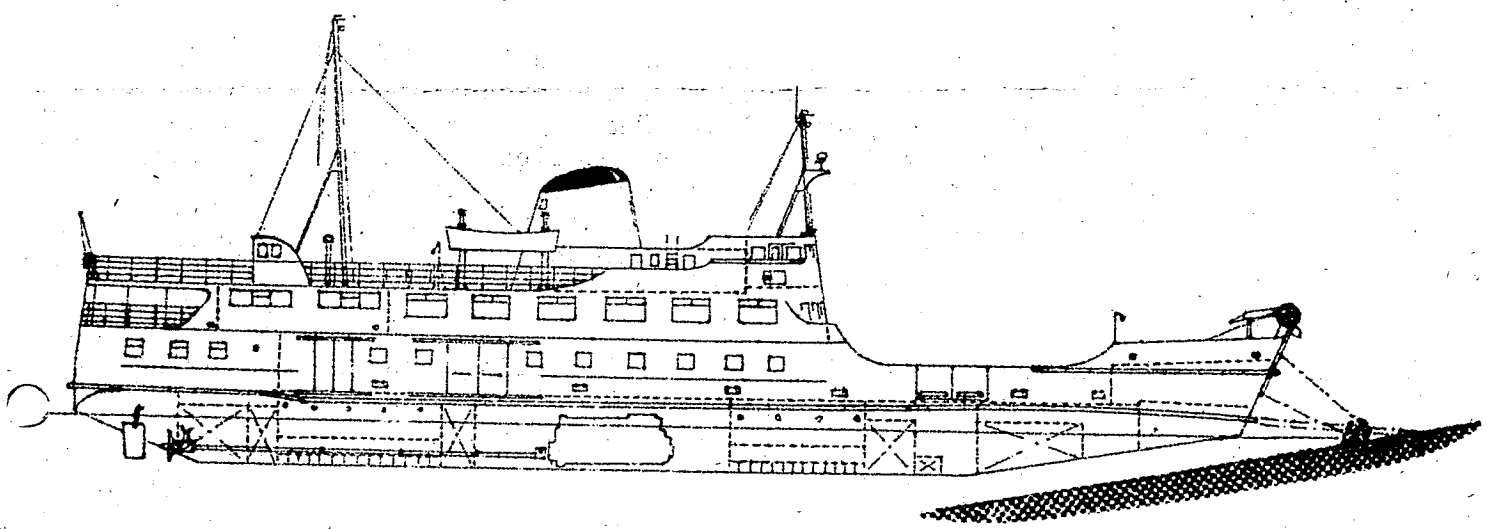
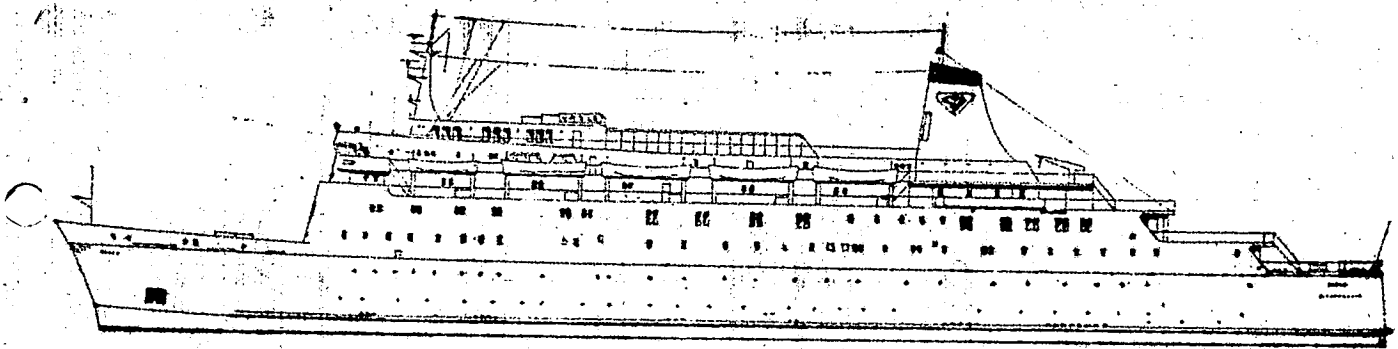


Nº 17

**Winter 1975-76**





TITANIC - another look at an  
unforgettable ship

by D F Hutchings

Part 1 - Building and Departure

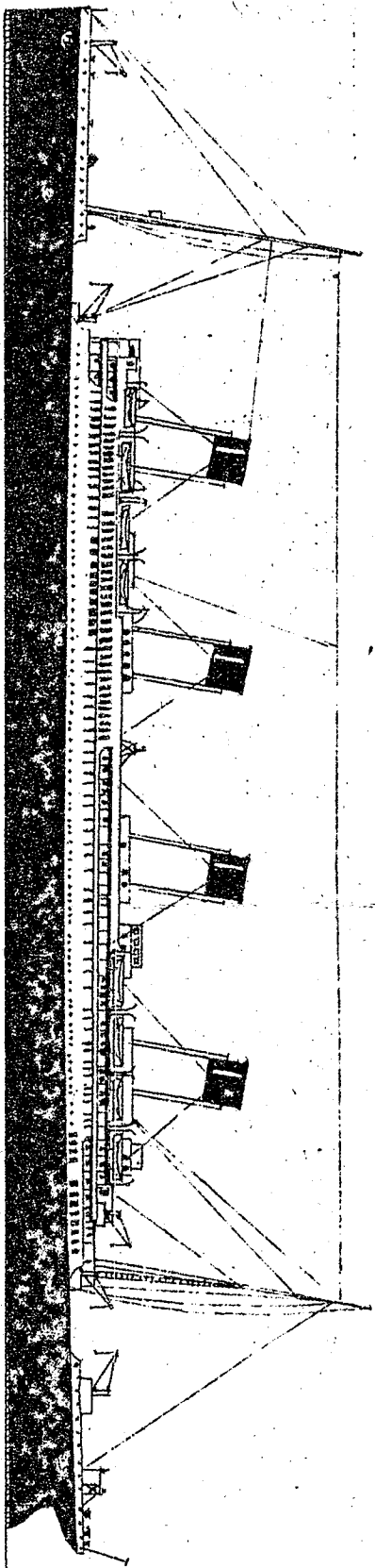
Bigger than her sister-ship, Olympic, by 1000 tons at the time of her completion, the Titanic at 46 328 tons was the largest vessel in the world. Had she survived however, she would have only retained that distinction for a year when the first of Albert Ballin's giant trio of Hamburg-America liners, the Imperator of 52 000 tons, made her appearance in June 1913.

The Titanic was built alongside the Olympic at the Queens Island, Belfast, shipyard of Harland and Wolff; their keels being laid respectively on 31 March 1909 and 16 December 1908. A specially constructed twin slip served by an overhead static gantry was used for their construction. The Olympic was the first to be launched and this was done successfully on 20 October 1910, her hull at launch, as in building, being painted white. The Titanic followed her down the slip on 31 March 1911, her hull painted the black of her future livery. The party of special guests that came to see the Titanic launched, crossed from Fleetwood in the cross-channel ferry Duke of Argyll. They then returned to Liverpool, in the afternoon, on board the Olympic as she was leaving the shipyard for her trials. The Olympics maiden voyage, from Southampton on June 14, was amidst great publicity, a contrast to the Titanic's departure ten months later.

Whilst the Titanic was fitting out, the Olympic returned to Belfast after sustaining damage inflicted during a collision with HMS Hawke off Cowes on 20 September 1911. A brief resume of this event would not be amiss as the cause of the collision has a bearing on a similar occurrence that befell the Titanic, as will be seen later.

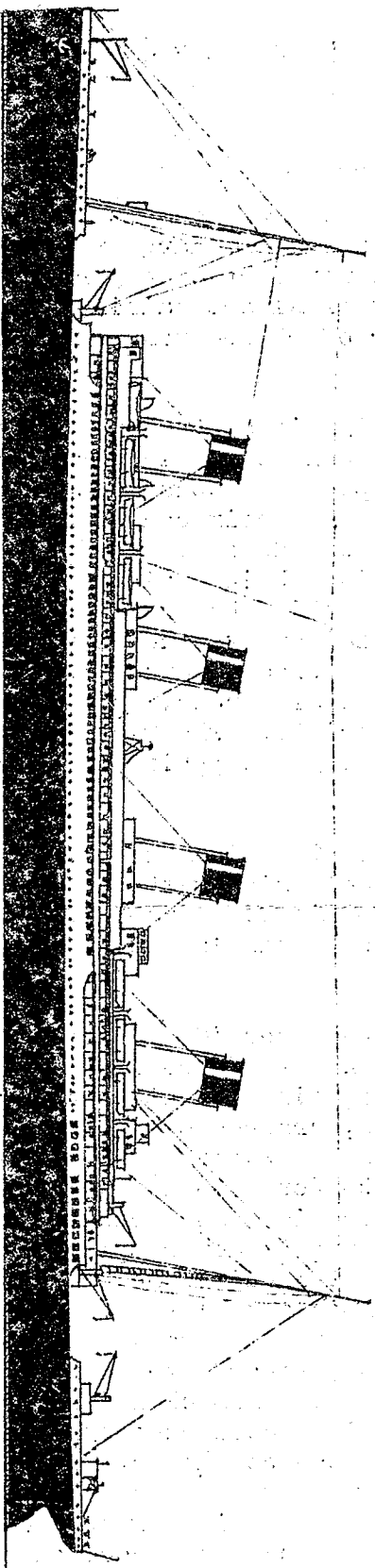
The Olympic had nearly completed the reversed 'S' manoeuvre to bring her from Calshot Spit to an eastward heading off Cowes when the Hawke (7 300 tons, 4th Division Home Fleet under Captain W Blunt), coming from the direction of the Needles to Portsmouth, crashed 8 ft. into the Olympic's starboard side beneath the mainmast. The Hawke's bow was badly damaged and it was necessary for her to be towed to Portsmouth. Although Olympic had a 40 foot gash open to the water in her side, she remained stable and steamed into Osborne Bay, later returning to Southampton after disembarking her passengers. At the ensuing Court of Inquiry the White Star Line claimed that the water flow caused by the Olympic's hull (an occurrence now known as the 'canal' or shallow water effect) caused the Hawke being only two cables away from her, to be drawn uncontrllably towards the liner, this sensation being confirmed by the warship's officers. This claim was refuted by the subsequent Court of Appeal even after its acceptance by the Inquiry and the blame was attached to the liner, under the command of Captain Edward C Smith, for negligent navigation. That Captain Smith was not unjustly dismissed is a tribute to the White Star Line's faith both in him and his skill and to their claim which was later substantiated by tank model experiments in Germany.

The Olympic returned to Belfast for repairs that took about six weeks. Photographs taken at the time show the sisters together; the Titanic almost complete but lacking the plating-in of the forward part of the Promenade Deck which would later be the main external distinguishing feature between the two ships. So at this time the vessels looked almost identical except for a few other points. The Titanic was alone again after the Olympic sailed to resume her allotted role; but not for long, for in February 1912 the latter was back in dry-dock for a new propeller after a blade had been dropped



SCALE  
100 Feet 200 300

TITANIC.



SCALE  
100 Feet 200 300

OLYMPIC.

DRAWINGS BY DAVID HUTCHINGS AUG 1975

during a voyage. This turned out to be their last meeting.

Fitting out of the Titanic was soon completed and tugs of the Alexandra Towing Co. of Liverpool (perhaps the same Wallasey, Alexandra, Hornby and Hurculaneum that assisted the Olympic) accompanied her into Belfast Lough at 6 am on 1 April, from where she steamed into the Irish Sea for trials and compass adjustment. Trials completed, she returned to Belfast at six in the evening. She later left Belfast for the last time and headed south arriving in the Solent via, I believe, the Needles on the 3 April. At midnight she was safely moored in the White Star Dock which had been built especially for the two giants.

During the following week many people came to look at her towering above the quayside or even to look over her. Norman Wilkinson, the late marine artist, knew Captain Smith and was shown over the ship which greatly impressed him. His painting 'Entrance to Plymouth Harbour', commissioned by Lord Pirrie of Harland and Wolff, hung in her Smoking Room (a 'twin' painting, 'Entrance to New York Harbour', hung in the Olympic) and he was later to paint Titanic with all flags flying at Southampton.

Due to the continuing coal strike which was at the time besetting the country the Titanic bunkered from the Oceanic (White Star) and New York (American Line) and both vessels were subsequently laid up; even so she sailed without full bunkers. Some of the appropriated coal must have been damp as it smouldered from spontaneous combustion throughout the voyage.

Board of Trade Officials had the starboard lifeboats lowered and were satisfied that the vessel fully concurred to current safety at sea regulations. With preparations for her maiden voyage completed, the liner waited at Berth 46 in the White Star Dock (now Ocean Dock) for her appointed time of departure. She was, luckily as it turned out, not fully booked for this trip, but her passenger list included Harland and Wolff's naval architect and workmen, Owner's representatives, emigrants and artists, business and professional people and a more than average share of millionaires. Her crew was a mixed bunch, some being transferred from the New York and others from the Oceanic (both steamship lines belonged to the vast International Mercantile Marine of J P Morgan), these vessels being immobile as previously mentioned. Many crew members came from Southampton itself, a town that would grieve in a few days time more than any other.

Visitors, including the Chairman of the Line's family (Bruce Ismay was making the trip before his impending retirement from White Star) were ushered ashore from whence they waved and called last minute messages from the quayside. A group of stokers arriving late were refused permission to board via the last gangway and were left on the dockside when the liner sailed. At mid-day, April 10, without the exhilarating maiden voyage fuss that surrounded the Olympic, busy tugs with smoke puffing from their 'cafe au lait' funnels eased the liner out into the main channel and then, with all three screws turning at once, she got underway and steamed ahead.

All three screws at once! The narrow channel wasn't enough for the sudden surge that followed and the New York strained at her manila hawsers. The after ropes finally gave and the stern swung out towards the larger ship. Olympic and Hawke again! Collision mats were rigged, Captain Smith (transferred to the Titanic for this voyage) cut engines, tugs busied themselves and a collision was narrowly avoided. Titanic glided gracefully on and then got underway once more. The Teutonic showed signs of movement but thankfully remained at her berth as the Titanic passed by; she passed sightseeing vessels including the paddlers Bournemouth Queen and Monarch and throbbed away from the docks towards Netley, Calshot and the Solent. Her bow pointed towards the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes and then a turn to port brought her on to an eastward bearing. A tug, laying in wait for an incoming liner,



In previous issues of "Black Jack", we have looked at several fleets of coastal tankers which are to be frequently seen in the Solent area. In this issue we look at the fleet and history of another prominent Company whose colours are regularly seen at Fawley Jetty, and which were formally frequently seen at the old Regent Wharf adjoining the Woolston floating bridges.....

CHRISTOPHER  
ROWBOTHAM  
& SONS LTD.  
by D. T. Hornsby

Born in 1851, Christopher Rowbotham first became a ships master in 1871, subsequently marrying the daughter of a wealthy ships-rigger and in 1879 becoming part-owner of the new wooden ketch PRINCESS (1879/100gross). This vessel remained in the fleet until 1916 - as the last remaining sailing vessel - and was followed by several other sailing ships. But, in 1899 the first steamer was acquired CHEVIOT ('91/258g), being followed by HELMSMAN (03/458g) as the first steamer built to the order of the Company.

The founders two sons were taken into partnership during 1908, and later that year the Company moved to new offices in E03. However, a major setback occurred only three years later when the founder died. Over the following years the fleet declined until in 1925 a dry cargo vessel was acquired and converted into the first tanker in the fleet. Unfortunately, this tanker was soon lost, but 1931 saw delivery of the first purpose built tanker for the Company TILLERMAN (31/230dwt), which was also the first motorship, and only four years later the last dry cargo vessel WHEELSMAN (20/1394g) was sold.

In addition to ship-owning and marine insurance, the Company also managed a number of vessels during and after WW2. At the start of hostilities, three tugs were managed for Overseas Towage & Salvage Co. Ltd., whilst for a short period from 1946 the NICKLEBY (45/306g) was managed for Swiss owners who had removed the 'Empire' prefix after acquiring the tanker from the MOWT. The largest group of managed vessels comprised over 50 coasters, Chant and coastal tankers, and coastal and estuary tugs for the Ministry of War Transport. Following the end of the War, management of several ships continued for a number of years on behalf of the Ministry of Transport until the last two tugs were sold to foreign buyers in 1962.

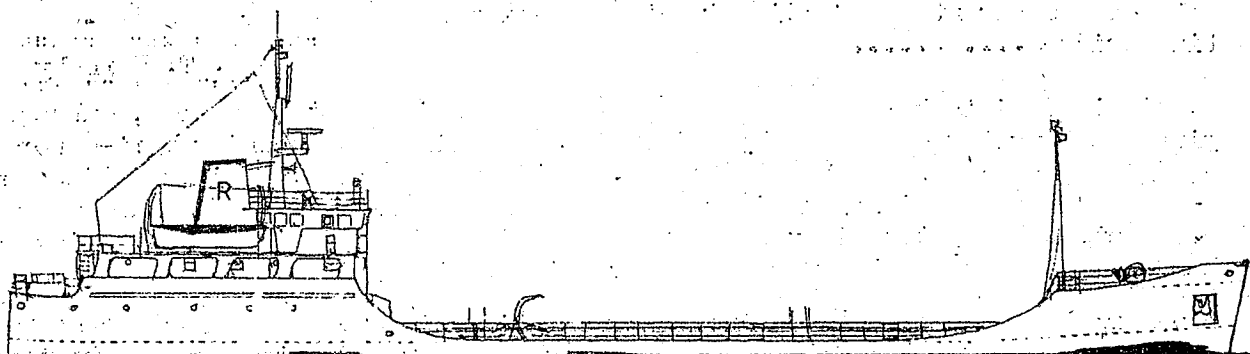
Although the Company had not lost any of its five vessels during the War, an early start was made on expanding the fleet by purchasing several secondhand tankers. The first post-war built tanker QUARTERMAN was delivered in 1953, to be followed six years later by the first of five successful 1000 tonners. Deliveries of new tonnage continued during the 1960's, with vessels gradually getting larger and larger.

A major change took place in 1970, when the whole of the share capital in this expanding Company was acquired by the Ingram Corporation of New Orleans, an American concern founded in 1857, now specialising in bulk transportation by water, including large tug and large units up to 33,000 tons dwt.. Subsequently, a new funnel colour scheme was introduced and 1972 saw the delivery of the largest tankers to date. The first of the chemical tankers was introduced the following year, whilst 1974 saw the formation of a Bermuda registered subsidiary to own two newly ordered vessels.

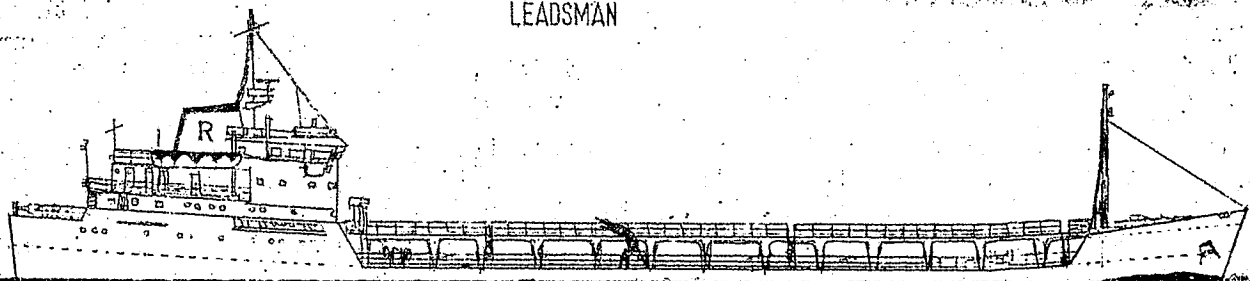
Post-War Fleet List

- TILLERMAN completed 10/1931 by N.V. Industriele Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam, Holland (yd no 503); 220 grt, 230 dwt; 120'oa x 22' x 8' draught; 235bhp 4cyl Humboldt-Deutzmotoren oil engine, 7 knots; c. 1962 sold for breaking-up;
- RUDDERMAN completed 3/1934 by N.V. Ind Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam, Holland; (yd no 523); 290 grt, 360 dwt; 138'oa x 23' x 9'; 4cyl Humboldt-Deutzmotoren oil engine replaced in 1958 by 360bhp 5cyl Crossley Bros., 7½ knots; 13/7/1967 arrived breakers - T.W.Ward Ltd., Preston;
- WHEELSMAN completed 1/1936 by N.V. Ind Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam, Holland; (yd no 558); 287 grt, 355 dwt; 138'oa x 23' x 9'; 350bhp 6cyl Humboldt-Deutz oil engine, 8 knots; 5/4/1965 arrived Belgian breakers;
- STEEERSMAN completed 8/1938 by N.V. Ind Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam, Holland; (yd no 561); 338 grt, 414 dwt; 152'oa x 24' x 9'; 350bhp 6cyl Humboldt-Deutz oil engine, 8½ knots; c.8/1968 arrived Belgian breakers-Scrapingco S.A., Antwerp;

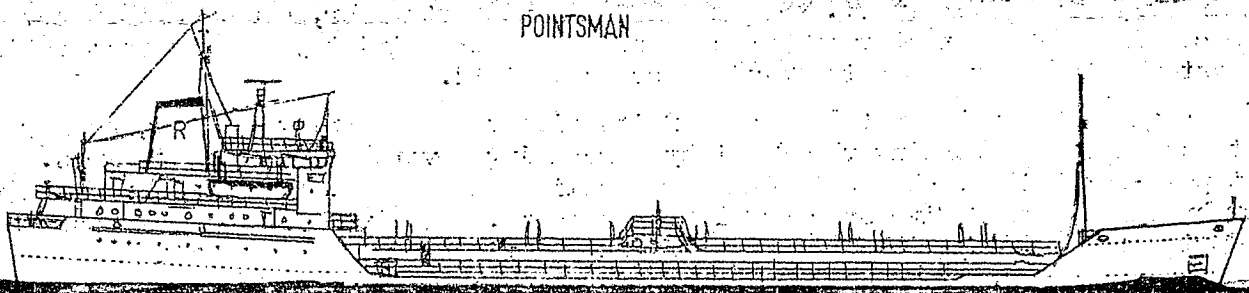
ROWBOTHAM TANKERS — some of the present fleet



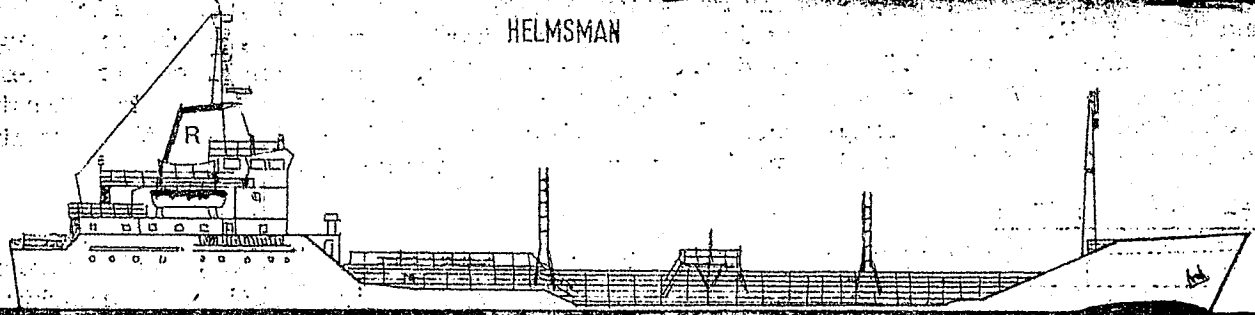
LEADSMAN



POINTSMAN



HELMSMAN



ASTRAMAN



**GUIDESMAN** completed 8/1938 by N.V. Ind Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam, Holland; (yd no 571); 233 grt, 271 dwt; 119'oa x 23' x 9'; 4cyl Humboldt-Deutzmotoren oil engine replaced 2/1960 by 300bhp 4cyl Crossley Bros, 8 kts; 1964, renamed GUIDESMAN II on naming of new tanker of same name; 6/1/1965 arrived breakers - P. & W. MacLennan, Bo'ness;

**CHARTSMAN** completed 2/1944 by Rowhedge Iron Works Co. Ltd., nr Colchester (yd no 629) as EMPIRE BOXER for Ministry of War Transport; 340 grt, 421 dwt; 152'oa x 24' x 9'; 395bhp 4 cyl British Auxiliaries oil engine, 9 knots; 1946 acquired and renamed; 1966 sold to Coastal Prospecting Ltd (mgrs Ashmead(Padstow)Ltd) and renamed BAYMEAD; 1967 converted to sand suction dredger increasing beam to 30'; 1970 sold to T.J.Bowen and P.D.Caines, Southampton; 6/1974 sold to Tom Holden, Bitterne Manor for scrapping;

**HELMSMAN** completed 1/1937 by N.V. de Groot & Van Vliet, Slikkerveer, Holland; (yd no 212) as OBOR for N.V.Tankrederij OBO, Rotterdam; 531 grt, 836 dwt; 176'oa x 26' x 12'; 8cyl Humboldt-Deutz oil engine replaced 4/1962 by 600bhp 8cyl Drypool Brons, 9 knots; 1937 sold to Harker(Coasters)Ltd being renamed BEDALE H; 1948 acquired and renamed; 1962 deepened by 4' increasing dwt from 580 tons; 04/1970 arrived Belgian breakers;

**BRIDGEMAN** completed 1939 by N.V. Ind Maats 'de Noord', Alblasserdam (yd no 575) as TRIPP for Skibs A/S Tripp (mgrs Osw. Aamodt), Oslo; 369 grt, 504 dwt; 154'oa x 26' x 10'; 7cyl Humboldt-Deutz replaced 1960 by 375bhp 5cyl Crossley Bros, 8½ knots; 1950 acquired and renamed; 1969 sold to Marine Disposals Ltd., London being renamed MARINE SEAWAY; 1973 to Effluent Services Ltd, Macclesfield; still in service;

**LEADSMAN** completed 7/1944 by Henry Scarr Ltd., Hessle (yd no ) as CHANT 11 for Ministry of War Transport (mgrs Bulk Oil S.S. Co.Ltd.); 396 grt, 450 dwt; 148'oa x 27' x 10'; 4cyl Crossley Bros oil engine, 7 knots; 1946 sold to Societe Nord Africaine d'Armement Morocco renamed PINARD; 1951 acquired and renamed; 1965 sold to S.Bezzia & Sons Ltd, London and registered at Malta; 1968 renamed UADDAN; still in register;

**QUARTERMAN** completed 9/1953 by Clelands (Successors) Ltd., Wallsend-on-Tyne (yd no 183); 470 grt, 584 dwt; 179'oa x 28' x 10'; 450bhp 5cyl British Polar oil engine; 9½ knots; 1970 sold to Ioannis Daifas renamed MEGALOCHARI II being registered at Piraeus, Greece; still in register;

**POINTS MAN** completed 4/1934 by Blythswood S.B. Co. Ltd., Glasgow (yd no 36) as BASSETHOUND; 1174 grt, dwt; 233'oa x 35' x 15'; triple exp, 10 knots; 1956 acquired from Hadley Shg Co Ltd and renamed; c.1968 sold for breaking-up;

**OARSMAN** completed 1/1958 by Drypool Eng. & Drydock Co. Ltd., Hull (yd no 11); 778 grt, 1111 dwt; 204'oa x 31' x 13'; 875bhp 8cyl Crossley Bros oil engine, 10 knots; 4/1973 sold to Normandie Dredging & Shg Co Ltd, So'ton renamed SOLENT LEE; 7-12/1973 converted by bldrs to sand suction dredger and transfered to Lee Shg Ltd; 12/1974 converted by bldrs for effluent disposal at Cork, Eire;

Present Fleet List

**ANCHORMAN** completed 1/1962 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Hull (yd no 4); 795 grt, 1191 dwt; 203'oa x 31' x 13'; 900bhp 12cyl Drypool Brons, 10 knots;

**TILLERMAN** completed 1/1963 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Hull (yd no 5); 807grt, 1191dwt; as Anchorman;

**GUIDESMAN** completed 11/1964 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Hull (yd no 12); 799grt, 1191 dwt; 203'oa x 31' x 13'; 950bhp 12cyl Drypool Brons, 10 knots;

**CHARTSMAN** completed 5/1967 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Hull (yd no 21); 787grt, 1191dwt; as Guidesman;

**WHEELSMAN** completed 5/1967 by Clelands (Successors) Ltd, Wallsend-on-Tyne (yd no 293); 2897grt, 4648dwt; 323'oa x 47' x 20'; 2380bhp 9cyl Ruston & Hornsby, 12½ kt;

- LEADSMAN completed 10/1968 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Hull (yd no 23);  
843grt, 1493dwt; 205'oa x 33' x 14'; 1120bhp 12cyl Drypool Brons, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  knots;  
18/7/1974 collaged with Sluiskil Bridge on Ghent/Terneuzen Canal, demolishing  
foremast and bridgefront;
- RUDDERMAN completed 11/1968 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd, Selby (yd no 1519);  
1592grt, 3004dwt; 274'oa x 41' x 17'; 1530bhp 16cyl Drypool Brons, 12 kts;
- POINTSMAN completed 9/1970 by Goole SB & Repair Co Ltd (yd no 568);  
2886grt, 4694dwt; 326'oa x 47' x 20'; 2460bhp 9cyl English Electric, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  kts;
- STEERSMAN completed 12/1970 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd, Selby (yd no 1533);  
1567grt, 2979dwt; 274'oa x 41' x 17'; 1860bhp 16cyl Appingedammer, 12 knots;
- HELMSMAN completed 4/1972 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd, Selby (yd no 1540);  
3705grt, 6264dwt; 341'oa x 49' x 23'; 3520bhp 16cyl Eng. Electric, 13 knots;
- BRIDGEMAN completed 6/1972 by Hall Russell & Co Ltd, Aberdeen (yd no 955);  
3701grt, 6310dwt; 340'oa x 49' x 23'; 3520bhp 16cyl Eng. Electric, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  knots;
- \* ASTRAMAN completed 3/1973 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd, Selby (yd no 1543);  
1599grt, 3202dwt; 287'oa x 45' x 18'; 3520bhp 2x8cyl Ruston Paxman, 14 knots;
- QUARTERMAN completed 6/1973 by R. Dunston (Hessle) Ltd, Hessle (yd no 891);  
1226grt, 2083dwt; 239'oa x 36' x 16'; 1460bhp 8cyl Ruston Paxman, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  knots;
- + POLARISMAN completed 8/1973 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd, Selby (yd no 1544);  
1597grt, 3202dwt; as Astraman;
- + ORIONMAN completed 9/1975 by Hall Russell & Co Ltd, Aberdeen (yd no 964);  
3495grt, 6087dwt; 340'oa x 49' x 19'; 3520bhp 8cyl Dorman, 13 knots;

#### Newbuildings

- + CENTAURMAN for delivery about 1/1976 by Hall Russell & Co Ltd, Aberdeen (yd no 969);  
1700grt, 4000dwt; 290'oa x 48' x 20'; 3600bhp Mirrlees oil engine;
- \* VEGAMAN sister of above for delivery about 4/1976 (yd no 970);

#### INGRAM OCEAN CARRIERS LTD., Bermuda.

The Company will manage following two newbuildings on behalf of above subsidiary of the Parent Company.

- \* STELLAMAN for delivery about 1/1976 by Drypool E & DD Co Ltd, Selby (yd no 1560);  
1599grt, 2460dwt; 243'bp x 44' x 17'; 2680bhp Allen oil engine, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$  knots;
- \* MARSMAN sister of the above for delivery about 6/1976 (yd no 1561);

Tankers indicated \* are also Chemical Tankers;

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

DTH 11/75

#### RECENT SOLENT CALLERS

Vessels calling in the Solent during the past three months have included the steam tanker TEXACO COPENHAGEN (1971. 125424g. 253300d) for repairs and stores early in September. Bound from Antwerp for Kuwait she left the Solent anchorage on 10 September.

Another tanker to call was the FINNANGER (1975. 24267g) a motor tanker recently completed for Westfal-Larsen & Co, Norway. This vessel was launched on 29 November 1974 by Kaldnes M V (Yd No 202), at Tonsberg. She was on a voyage from Slagen to Gibraltar when she put in to the Solent for repairs - since the completion of that voyage she has been laid-up.

A Russian vessel putting in for engine repairs was the mv KRASNOGRAD (1961. 9382g) on the 3 October.

A number of ships called to load (military?) stores for the Persian Gulf area; they included the Kuwait flag AL MUBARAKIAH (1974. 15920g) bound Antwerp for Kuwait; the Iranian AYRA ROOZ (1975. 8408g) Liverpool-Persian Gulf, and on the same itinerary the Panamanian MARIA OLDENDORFF (1969. 9332g) and her sister CAROLINE OLDENDORFF (1969. 9328g).

OPERATION SAIL 1976

by Richard de Kerbrech

Readers may like to know that 4 July next year sees the Bi-centenary of the United States' Declaration of Independence. We on this

side of the Atlantic may feel little enthusiasm from our point of view to share in the celebrations, being as it was against this country that the Revolution was directed; "No taxation without representation" and so forth. However that was a long time ago and by now the wound must have healed.

The reason for this short article is to bring to the notice of readers (especially Onedin Line addicts) that one of the Bi-centennial attractions is Operation Sail 1976, designated OPSAIL '76.

This event is not a U S Government project but is sponsored by a non-profit organisation of business and civic leaders in co-operation with the Sail Training Association of London (owners of the training schooners Sir Winston Churchill and Malcolm Miller).

OP SAIL hopes to bring together in the United States 25 - 30 of the few tall-masted sailing ships left in the world, to participate in Bi-centennial observances in New York and other American cities. In bringing together these training ships, and hundreds of marine cadets from many nations, OP SAIL is furthering the legendary brotherhood of the sea and culturing international goodwill on a practical person-to-person programme.

The present arrangements are for the ships to assemble in Europe and race to Bermuda, thence to Newport, Rhode Island and eventually rendezvousing at Sandy Hook to be joined there by the smaller ships. The culmination will be a review line which is expected to stretch the full length of a 19 mile parade route between the Verrazano and George Washington bridges (a distance equivalent to that between the Spithead forts and the Royal Pier at Southampton).

One of the vantage points of the event will be the lower level of the Verrazano-Narrows bridge, (the longest single span suspension bridge in the world), which it is hoped will be used for a 'peoples grandstand', after being closed to traffic, for 10 000 disadvantaged children and their parents from the cities of New York and New Jersey.

At present it is known that 13 'tall ships' will definitely be attending. These include such well known vessels as the Sagres of Portugal, the Esmaralda from Chile, the Gorch Fock from Germany, the Danmark from Denmark (often featured in the Onedin Line) and the Nippon Maru all the way from Japan. The parade marshall will be the U S Coast Guard's Eagle. It is hoped that the Soviet Union, which possesses five tall-rigged ships will also be represented.

One of the people involved in the organisation is the projects General Manager Frank O Braynard, who previously had organised the smaller Operation Sail 1964 in connection with the New York World's Fair. Mr Braynard is a well known maritime historian, having spent some 30 years in this field. He is the author of 11 books mostly on passenger liners and famous ships in general.

For those among us less blessed financially to be present for the shindig on the other side of the 'pond', the events leading up to the Bi-centennial sail will begin over this side at Plymouth on 2 May 1976, with the first leg of a trans-Atlantic race sponsored by the Sail Training Association.

## FERRIES IN THE NEWS - - - - -

Following the disgraceful episode in the summer concerning the Mary Poppins, Southampton's fortunes in the ferry trade have taken a downturn. Apart from the news that Townsend Thoresen are to commence a Portsmouth - Cherbourg service next June, we have had the sudden withdrawal of Southern Ferries' EAGLE and SF PANTHER.

EAGLE was completed in May 1971 by Dubigeon-Normandie for the service to Lisbon and Tangier, on which she made her maiden voyage on 22 May 1971. She has been a rather unfortunate ship, being dogged by ill-fortune in her brief career in Southampton; she has had trouble with her machinery right from the start, trouble that ended only after a complete overhaul of the engines around Easter 1974. She has also managed to find any heavy weather that has been around during her travels and on one occasion arrived back with her bridge windows smashed and damaged vehicles on the car deck. Last winter she was laid up due to lack of bookings and then suddenly in October she was sold to Nouvelle Cie de Paquebots, of Marseilles. After making her last arrival at Southampton on 17 October she sailed for Falmouth, but not before the everpresent unions had had a word or two to say on the subject, much to inconvenience of her faithful final voyage passengers! Under her new owners she is to carry the name AZUR.

SF PANTHER (ex PETER PAN '73) carried on for a short while with her sailings to San Sebastian, but it was not long before she too was withdrawn. Her last Southampton arrival was on 14 November and the original intention was for her to replace the LION (†967. 3333g) on the Aberdeen to Lerwick run, however as the new link-span up there will not be ready until 1977 it has been arranged for SF PANTHER to take up a charter in Danish waters. (A drawing and further details of SF PANTHER appeared in B J No 9, Winter 1973-74)

COWES CASTLE & NORRIS CASTLE ..... details of rebuilding

In the last issue of 'Black Jack' we made brief mention of the fact that the COWES & NORRIS CASTLES of Red Funnel were to be lengthened and converted to drive-through ships. We posed the question of what they would look like after rebuilding - comparison of the two drawings of COWES CASTLE on the cover provides the answer; if anything it appears that they will have a much more balanced profile than hitherto.

The conversion, being carried out by Boele's SW & M F, at Bolnes, Holland, consists basically of inserting a 30 foot section into the existing hull and providing an opening at the stern for drive-through operations using the existing bow ramp and a new stern door. To secure adequate headroom on the main (vehicle) deck the superstructure is being raised by 4 feet to give a clearance of about 16 feet; additional car space is provided by hinged decks alongside the engineroom casing. Car capacity will be increased by 30-35 up to 75. The existing forward lounge remains and a new saloon is added aft on the promenade deck. Passenger capacity will remain about the same at 900.

The converted vessels will call at both West Cowes (side-loading) and East Cowes (bow-loading over the present ramp) but at the Royal Pier they will load over the stern. A special locating pin on the stern plating will assist berthing at a new pontoon which is being installed. The embarkation of passengers will take place at promenade deck level, the covered gangways being repositioned accordingly.

The original main engines (2 x 8 cyl Crossley diesels) are retained, but in addition a special, partly retractable, bow thruster is installed on the starboard bow. With this type the propeller can be raised clear of the water but not completely within the hull.

On the exterior, the most noticeable features are the repositioning of the funnel further aft, the re-stepping of the mainmast right aft on the boat deck, the new profile at the stern and the now straight line of bulwarks forward.

COWES CASTLE is at Bolnes at present due back December; NORRIS CASTLE is due at Bolnes in January 1976.

# nautical notebook

by Dock Head Correspondent

Due to the lack of space in the Autumn 'Nautical Notebook' several items of interest were omitted including...a 'rest & recreation call by the U.S. training vessel BAY STATE (43/12069) ex Empire State IV-73, ex Henry Gibbins, ex Biloxi-43...repair calls by the U.S. containership SEA-LAND VENTURE (70/24773) ex SL 180-73, launched as S.T.Alexander and again by Elder Dempsters SHONGA (73/9239)....a July queue at RCT Marchwood when the Mitchell fleet called within days-JOHN MITCHELL (58/384), PATRICIA MITCHELL (38/226), MAY MITCHELL (50/372) and HARRY MITCHELL (53/385)-all with previous names- also London & Rochesters IGNITION (67/199) and the managed SUBRO VIKING (62/296) ex Thuroklint-73.

The begining of the September-November quarter saw the return to 6 drydock of the Belgian dredger LESSE (56/1520) and a visit by the branch to WIMPEY SEALAB (58/3914) ex Elizabeth Bowater-72.

The major item of passenger news was not the final departures before breaking up of S.A. ORANJE and NORTHERN STAR, but the sudden news that the new cruise career of EAGLE had been cancelled and that the vessel had been sold to French buyers to operate cruises from Toulon. Only a few days later, another shock hit the Port when Southern Ferries announced that their other ferry service from Soton to San Sebastian was also to cease, and that SF PANTHER would be chartered out prior to opening between Aberdeen and Lerwick. The two ferries left for Falmouth on 31/10 and 16/11 respectively, after which EAGLE is to be renamed AZUR. Other passenger vessel news....the new Russian GRUZIYA (75/16631) is due to call fortnightly between 9 Jan and 14 May on cruises from Zeebrugge to Canary Islands.... the 10 cruise programme by ATLAS due to start on 19 Dec. now looks in some doubt....the £17m conversion DAPHNE (55/11683) ex Akrotiri Express-74, ex Port Sydney-72 is scheduled to make the first of three cruise calls on 19 May....Thoresens as well as Brittany Ferries are to operate from Portsmouth....VIKING VALIANT is expected to join VIKING VENTURER for next summer.... at Poole, Truckline Ferries have ordered two new ferry ferries costing £10m.

Only one vessel has loaded containers for West Africa - the West German GRETHE REITH (71/5583) - not surprisingly to discharge at Freetown as the Company has 10 chartered ships still waiting to discharge at Apapa/Lagos. Other container berth users included the West German HUSUM (74/499) and WIKING (73/999), and the Guernsey coaster BANDICK (61/248) ex Christine-74.

At 110 berth, the German MIA (70/499) ex Dynacontainer I-72 and TEGLER PLATE loaded straddle carriers, whilst at 109 berth a maiden call was made by the French cableship VERCOURS (73/5886), the Danish ANDREAS BOYE (62/300) loaded cable for Greece, and discharging from Greenwich were London & Rochesters IGNITION and their manages GLAS ISLAND (35/211) ex Lady Stella-55, the latter having earlier loaded scrap at Pollock & Brown on the Itchen. Following June calls at P & B by London & Rochesters LIBATION (69/198) and KIPTION (68/198), this quarter also saw DICTION (63/189), FUNCTION (63/212), Shaws FRETHERNE (50/351)-4 previous names- and the German COURIER (66/299).

To complete one of L & R's busiest periods, coasters discharging at Dibles Wharf included QUIESCENCE (59/868), JUBILENCE (75/480), EMINENCE (69/999), SENTENCE (74/992), HALCIENCE (70/434), INSISTENCE (75/475) and PERTINENCE (58/868) the latter twos 17 coal cargoes being from the now closed Cowes Power Station, and in addition ELOQUENCE (69/380) is also now due! All other coal discharge at Dibles has been from British vessels, including Usbornes PORTMARNOCK (62/888) ex Shevrell-73, ex Wirral Coast-72, Klondykes WESTONDYKE (71/696), Metcalf MARY M (58/1097) ex Yewforest-74, Stephenson Clarkes LANCING (58/1765) and COWDRAY (59/1748) and Griffins FARRINGAY (44/461) ex Empire Farringay-46 (the last British 'Empire F' type).

On the opposite bank of the Itchen, timber has been discharged at Vancouver Wharf from the Swedish SAXEN (65/499) and the West German 499g coasters HOHEBURG, DROCHTERSEN ex Baltica-75, and EDUARD KAHLER (twice). At Eling a surge of timber ships arrived at the start of September, with three on berth together - the Singapore flag DIVINA (58/499) ex Zodiac Melonie-74, ex Claus-74, the German WILLIAM FLINT (66/299) ex Wesermarsch-69 and the Danish LONE BRES (62/499) ex Galway-74, ex Lone Bres-72, whilst others with timber cargoes were the German DETLEF SCHMIDT (63/500) and HEIMATLAND (61/500).

Back to larger vessels, the Hamburg based Deutsche Nah-Ost Linien service to Algiers, Oran, Annaba, Tunis, Tripoli, Benghazi and Tobruk started in mid-Sept, callers to date have been ex-German short-sea traders, the Liberian-flag MEDI-STAR (56/3969) ex Norburg-71, ex Tinnum-70, the Cypriot ALCOR (57/1839) and ALPHARD (57/3826), the Greek ALIOTH (56/1803) and EBFA (55/2465) ex Elsie Winck-66, and the Singapore owned SYRTE (54/4352) ex Nordfels-75 which was held up for several days by crew trouble. On the now established Algerian National Line service to Algiers, the CAROLINE SCHULTE returned twice, whilst 'new faces' were the Danish VERA BENTSEN (74/1600) also twice, the Swedish ro-ro BRAVIK (75/1599), the Cypriot POROS ISLAND (62/5355) ex Tunis-74 and more recently the Algerian TINHLINAN (70/2870) ex Holmia-74.

Renault car imports resulted in the reappearance of the German RAMSGATE (73/818), whilst NOSAC's export service to the U.S. saw the return of NOPAL ARGUS, NOPAL VERDE and NOPAL BRANCO and the new Liberian NOPAL LANE (75/12212) which is again now due. Ford Transits for Dahomey were loaded by Salens SNOW CRYSTAL, SNOW FLAKE and SNOW LAND whilst POLAR PARAGUAY is currently due to load.

Another 'Snow ship' SNOW DRIFT (73/11406) discharged bananas, and amongst the 19 reefers also discharging/loading were Laeisz's Panamanian-flag PIROL (67/4914), French Lines FORT SAINT-MARIE (69/8554), Pyffes DARLEN (64/4970) ex Polarstern-74, the Belgian POMONA (69/5824) and the Norwegian HIDLIFJORD (60/5788) and BYFJORD (66/5788).

Over two dozen coasters discharged grain in the quarter, but none called more than once, including the Belgian NICOLE (59/502) ex Solvanti-68 and the German HEIN VON BARGEN (62/998) ex Ilri-64 both from Bayonne, from Kiel the NORDSAGA (64/999) ex Inga Sabine-74 also West German, as was RUGIA (63/497) from Honfleur; from Flensburg the Panamanian SANTA MARIA (61/500) ex Marienstedt-73, ex Butjadingen-72; from Rotterdam ALBERT V (65/494) ex Breewijk-74 and from Chemt ATLANTIC (65/494) ex Breehees-74 both Dutch, as was NOORBEEK ex Winda-73 (70/1519) from Emden following a Kiel Canal collision; British coasters included GOMBA PROGRESS (57/1328) ex Dorset Queen-74, ex Dorsetbrook-73 and GOMBA ENTERPRISE (58/1326) ex Richmond Queen-74, ex Somerset Coast-59 together with WITTING, CARDA QUEEN and two each from Everard and Comben-Longstaff.

At one time CLAN ROSS, RAMSAY, ROBERTSON and RANALD were all laid up at either 101 or 20/1 berths....fruit was exported to Bordeaux by the Dutch SHEPMAIR II (68/1428) ex Cilarrun-74 and the Danish ANNE SOEBYE (63/499) ex Lankenauersand-72....irrigation pipes for Cuba were loaded onto the Somali-flag/Liberian owned TAI SHAN (58/964) ex Araluen-73 (Australind S.S.Co)....on the South America service, ELMA's RIO BELLEN (49/7143) and the J.Samuel White built RIO SANTIAGO (49/3263) ex Antartico-49....loading water for Gibraltar the new Indian tanker JAG PRIYA (75/20416g)....unfamiliar vessels discharging wine, the Swiss REIN (75/1599) and the Liberian-flag CKITI (74/2818)....in drydock the third Sunderland-built 'Panamax' bulk-carrier MELETE (75/38976), the trailer dredger MARINEX V (71/2825)....Panocans 'parcel tanker' POST ENDEAVOUR (74/25150d) spent a month in the Eastern Docks for tank coating....currently 'accommodated' at 22 berth the Bideford registered DESPATCH (31/200) ex Atlas-37....with heavy lifts outside the Floating Crane the German HEYE P (67/296), the Singapore-flag UNION STAR (62/299) ex Claus Jurgens-73, ex Gisela Bartels-66, and the Panamanian RAMBLAS (55/465) ex Albert V-74....discharging timber at the Town Quay, the Dutch EMPIRE (67/489) from Guyana, and the Russian MIKHAIL CHEREMNYKH (73/3184) from the Baltic....also at the Town Quay the Russian tug NEREY (??/388), the Comm. of Irish Lights GRANVAILE (70/2003) collecting a large buoy, the Glenlight Shg's WILKS (69/199) for repairs and Westminster Gravels trailer dredger DEEPSTONE (72/5484) loading additional equipment.

Tug news....following last quarters arrival of SEA BRISTOLIAN, more changes amongst the resident tug population....Alexandra's NORTH ISLE left for Gibraltar on 21 Sept being replaced by COBURG (1400hp) ex Alfred Lamey-70, whilst NORTH LOCH is shortly to return to Liverpool and will be replaced by SALTHOUSE (1400hp) ex B.C.Lamey-70....the ex-London Tugs VANQUISH (55/294) called between tows....the GROSBY (71/260) delivered at tow to Husband's Yard....at Portsmouth the FLYING WIZARD has been renamed TOWING WIZARD and is now believed owned by South Ocean Services.

Items of interest....Wimpeys G.W.74 (??/289) has been renamed WESSEX 74 by Wessex Diving Contractors of Totton and was recently at Willments Yard....the former Red Funnel hydrofoil SHEARWATER 2 has been sold to Offshore Workboats Ltd of London being renamed NORTH OWL....Island Transport/Vectis Shg's SHALFLEET has been sold to Spurn Shg Co Ltd, Immingham being renamed SPURN BANK....making 'rest & recreation' calls HMS SOVERIGN and HMS HERMIONE during the Boat Show, and later the Dutch HOLLAND, HERMELIJN, VOS and PANTER, more recently U.S. PAUL, DENEBOIA and the helicopter carrier GUADALCANAL.