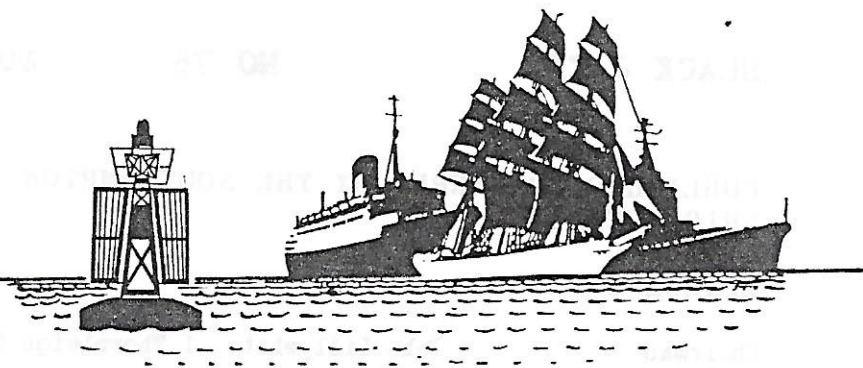


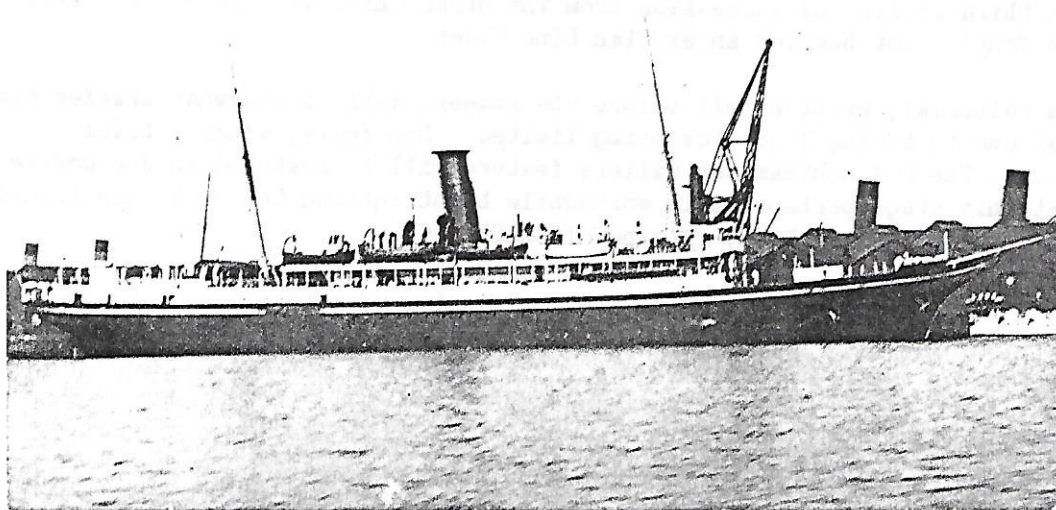
BLACK JACK

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

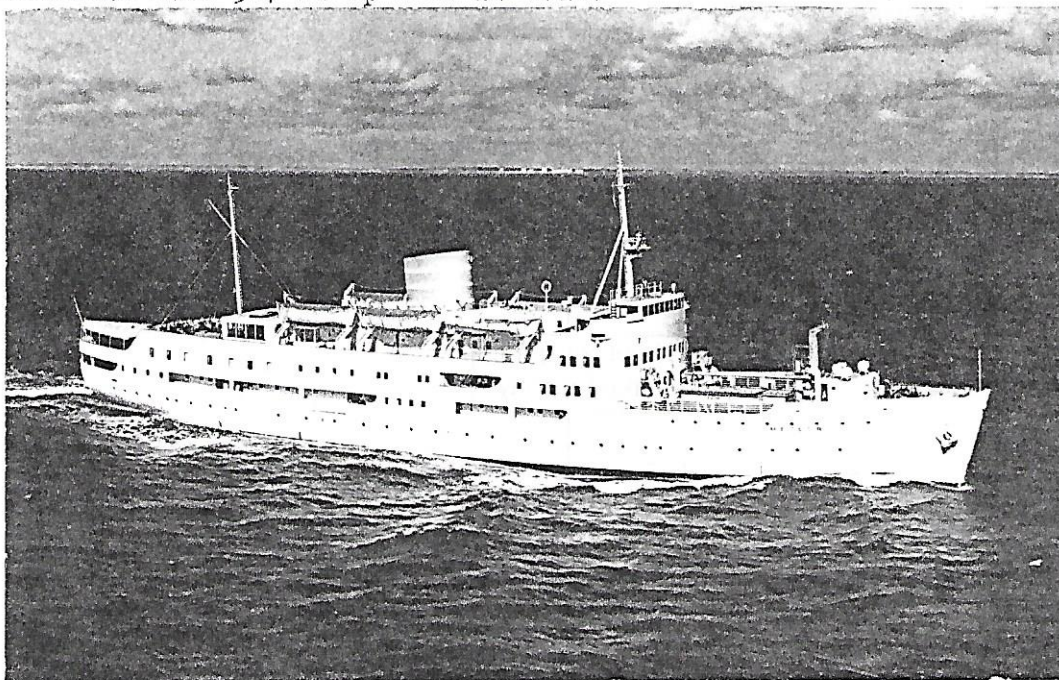


AUTUMN 1990

No. 76



Top: The Meteor was built for the Hamburg Amerika Line in 1904 for tourist passenger traffic. She was driven by triple expansion engines to twin screws. Measurements were 367 ft bp x 44 ft beam.



Bottom: In 1955 the third ship of the company to be named Meteor was delivered to the Bergen SS Company by Aalborg Werft, Denmark in 1955. She had accommodation for 90 First and 110 Second class passengers. See page 3.

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH OF THE WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

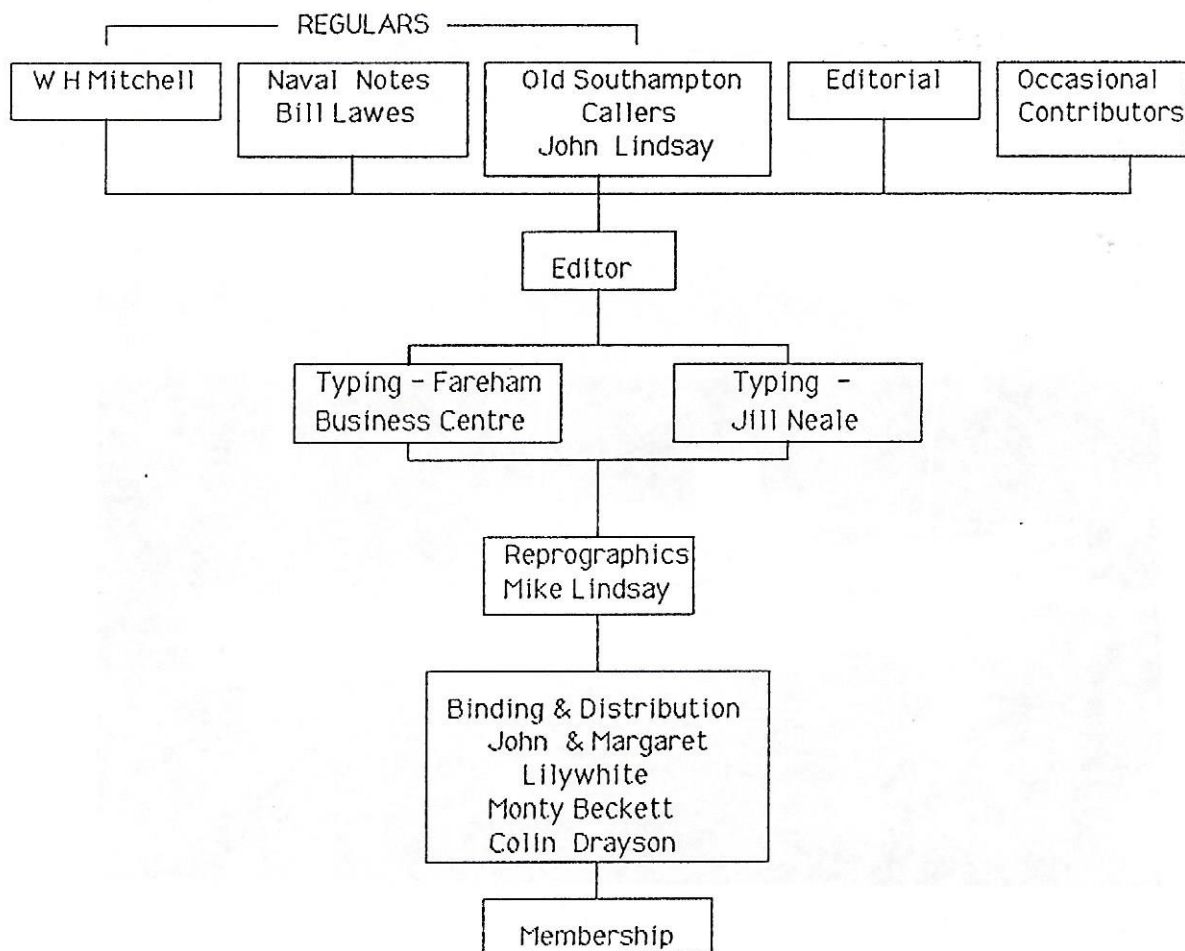
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Reprographics	Mike Lindsay	(694558)

Congratulations to Tony Thompson for his promotion to the top police job on the Isle of Wight. Even though this branch may be losing him to the Island Branch, he will be ensured of a good welcome, as he is no stranger to them. Just third in line of succession from The Great Chief at Winchester: Well Done Tony! - not bad for an ex-Clan Line Cadet.

This editorial, written well before the summer, will be somewhat briefer than usual due to typing logistics being limited. Hopefully, after a brief absence, The Old Southampton Callers feature will be restored in due course. So at this stage perhaps it is worthwhile highlighting the back-room brigade than ensure the smooth (?) running of BLACK JACK..

THE BLACK JACK TRAIL

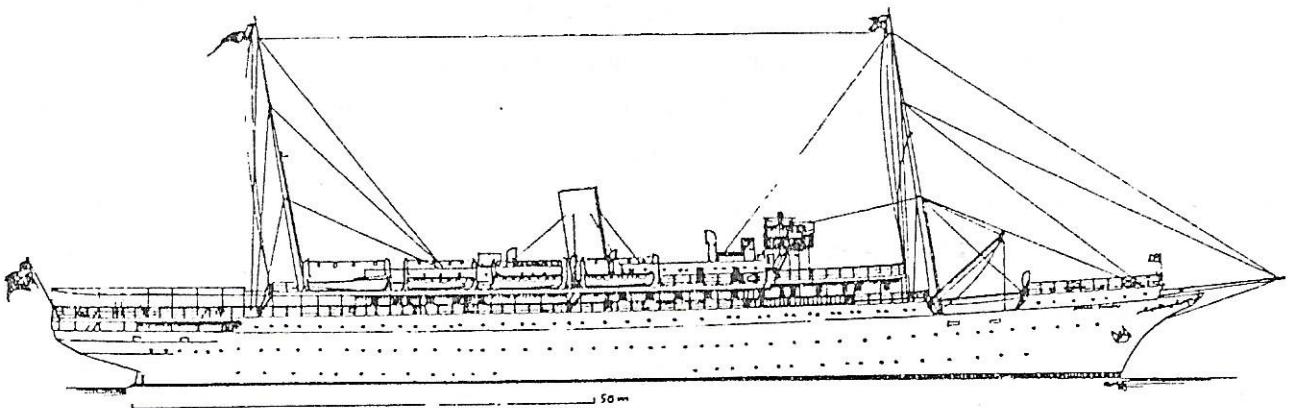


THE "STELLA POLARIS"

by W.H. Mitchell

The Stella Polaris (Pole Star) was ordered by Bergenske Dampskibsselskab (Bergen SS Company) of Norway during the 1920s when the effects of war inflation was causing deflation of the Norwegian currency. However, as the condition was that she was to be paid for in instalments, the bulk of these did not fall due until the Krona had reached its old par.

The builders were Gotaberken, Gothenburg, and the Bergen company looked to them for construction to be of the highest class. Designed, solely for long cruises, she was to replace the old cruising yacht Meteor, which had been built in 1904 and was purchased by the company in 1921. So, in 1927, came the Stella Polaris, with twin screws driven by diesel engines of 4,000 bhp to give 15 knots. She measured 390 ft x 51 ft in breadth to give a tonnage of 5,105 gross and was to carry only 200 passengers in roomy cabins and spacious public rooms. Her hull form was slender and elegant, reflecting a turn of the century yacht design and a more beautiful ship was scarcely to be seen. She became one of the world's best known cruising vessels and was, indeed, the last clipper-bowed cruise ship.



In April 1940 there came the occupation of Norway by German forces and the Stella Polaris was taken over to serve as a hotel for U-boat crews on leave. When war ended she had, fortunately, suffered no structural damage. For some months she worked as a troop transport between Norway and Scotland and was then sent back to her builders where an extensive refit and modernisation totalled half as much again as her original cost.

Her postwar debut was made in June 1946, cruising from New York and New Orleans. Her usual programme was to cruise in Northern Waters during summer months and the West Indies and South America in winter. In 1947 she sailed up the Thames and berthed at the New Fresh Wharf at London Bridge for the first time, acquiring much publicity. Her first postwar visit to Southampton was from a Mediterranean cruise in September 1950. In 1951 she made a world cruise and that same year, then 24 years old, the Stella Polaris was sold. At the time of her disposal the Norwegian Shipping Act of 1949, restricting the hours of labour was adding to

The Stella Polaris continued:

the difficulties of running the ship without loss, for when in European waters she had to employ almost as many crew as she could carry passengers. Her purchaser was Einar A Hansen of Malmo and she raised the Swedish flag under Rederi A/B Clipper, formed in 1951, a name surely inspired by her clipper bow and graceful lines.

So she continued cruising, some of her North Cape cruises beginning at Harwich and to the Mediterranean from Southampton. In a refit, new cabins, air-conditioned with temperature controls and, most with private bath, were fitted. One cruise leaflet mentions a cruise membership limited to 150. In 1969 the Stella Polaris ended her cruising career and was sold to Japanese buyers. She left for Osaka in November, there to be used as an hotel ship.

...

In the year that Bergen SS Company sold the Stella Polaris they also had their centenary celebrations. Founded in 1851 by Michael Krohn, it was to link the Norwegian ports of Bergen, Christiansand and Stavanger with Hamburg. Its long title soon became known in England as the Bergen SS Company. The first ship, Bergen, was a paddle steamer of 476 tons which worked on the Norway-Germany service and it was not until 1890 that a service to England began. Regarded as very important, it was commenced on 31 May of that year by the 965-ton Mercur, which accommodated 40 passengers. The voyage to Newcastle took 33 hours. In 1893 Swan, Hunter & Co., delivered the Venus for the company and in 1896 came the Sunderland-built Vega.

Seventeen ships, almost half of the fleet were lost in the Great War. The service between Bergen and Newcastle was maintained after the war by the 2,635 ton Jupiter of 1916 and the 2,519 ton Leda of 1920, but in 1931 came the second Venus, to carry 217 (1st) passengers and 248 (2nd), heralding a new era of the crossing. There were also cargo services to Britain, the Continent, Canada and South America.

The Bergen SS Company was also a pioneer of cruising, dating back to 1880 and in 1921 acquired the German Meteor, 3,718 gt, built by Blohm & Voss in 1904 for the Hamburg America Line and which cruised under the British flag.

The Meteor was taken over as a hospital ship by German forces and on 9 March 1945 was sunk by air attack in Pillau harbour.

From a fleet of 51 ships in 1939, 29 remained in 1945.

The Bergen-Newcastle service resumed in 1946 with the Jupiter and the Astrea, a ship of 3,190 tons built by Chrichton-Vulcan A.B., Abo, Finland in 1941. In May 1948 the Venus, sunk by air attack at Hamburg on 20 March 1945 but salvaged and rebuilt, joined the service. Later that year she began a winter service from Southampton to Madeira and Tenerife. By 1951 the Bergen Line owned 36 ships: in 1988 it was as follows:

Astrea ro-ro	1,599 gt	Built 1979
Canis ro-ro	1,996 gt	1980
Cometa ro-ro	1,996 gt	1981
Pollux tank	18,862 gt	1973

...

See Black Jack No.69 winter 1988-89 p.10-11.

old southampton callers



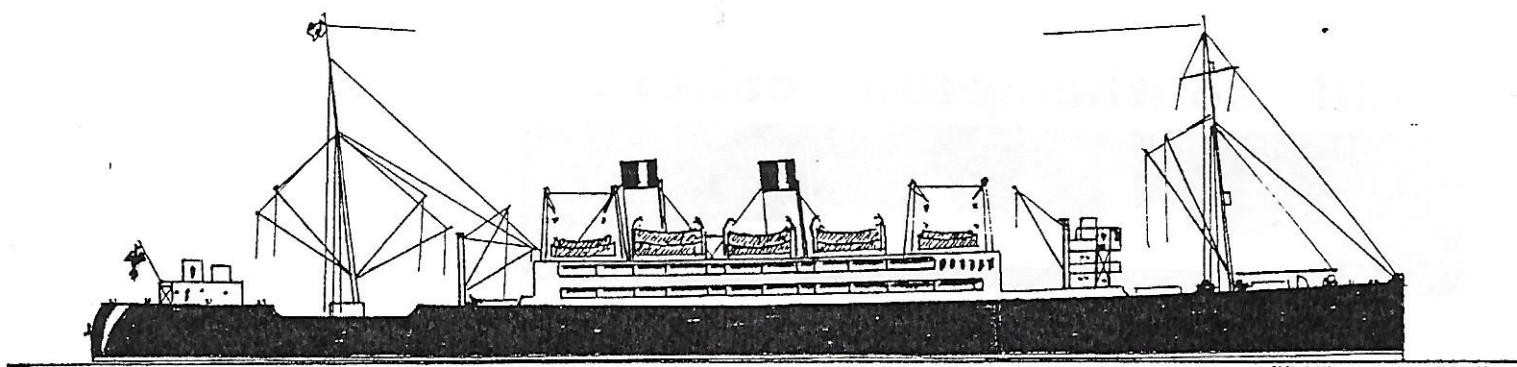
By: John S Lindsay

The Canadian Pacific MELITIA (1914-50)

The MELITIA was originally laid down at Barclay Curle & Co's Glasgow yard in 1914 to the order of the Hamburg American Lines' North Atlantic port organisation. She was eventually launched on 21 April 1917 and towed to Harland & Wolff's Belfast yard to be finished under the Liner Requisition Scheme. She was completed on 12 January 1918 for the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services Ltd who had negotiated for her purchase after the launching of her sister ship MINNEDOSA, which was completed later on 21 November 1918.

Her principal particulars were 13,967 grt, 546' loa, 520 lbp x 67' 2" x 41' 9". Her triple screws were propelled by the Harland & Wolff combination of two sets of triple expansion, four cylinder steam engines which turned the outer screws. Exhaust from both steam reciprocating engines powered a low pressure turbine coupled to the centre shaft. The cylinder dimensions of the engines were: HP 26 1/2"; IP 41 1/2" and two LP of 47"; with a stroke of 51". Steam was supplied by five double-ended boilers with thirty coal-fired furnaces which gave a steam pressure of 215 psi which developed 11,000 HP. The steam generation plant was also built by Harland & Wolff and consumed 170 tons of coal per day. The MELITIA's hull was built in steel with three decks and an economy deck with a well deck aft. She had two short funnels, a foremast, and four samson posts, and her sister ship had the same arrangement. On the fore and after part of the boat deck were two sets of Babcock & Wilcox Patent davits, which in theory were to hoist out sets of banked lifeboats. Those of you who remember the old ARUNDEL and WINDSOR CASTLE's before alterations, may recall seeing this type aft of the fourth funnel.

Later in 1925, the CPR pair were fitted with super-heaters to the boilers, a mainmast was fitted and the lower promenade deck extended and the well deck filled in thus improving their profile. The funnels were also heightened. The alterations increased the tonnage of the MELITIA to 15,183 and that of the the MINNEDOSA to 15,183 and that of the MINNEDOSA to 15,186.



MELITA - C.P.R. (1917-50)

JOHN S. LINDSAY

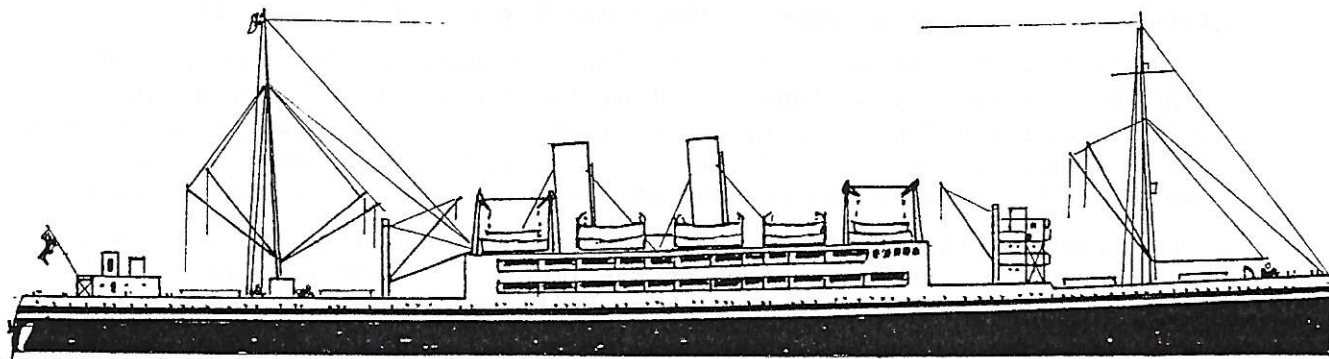
On 25 January 1918 the MELITIA made her maiden voyage to Canada from Liverpool under the requisition as a transport and before her release she made one or two trips to India. In May 1921 she was placed on the Antwerp - Southampton - Quebec - Montreal service. She had a large cargo capacity and a revolutionary approach to passenger service first applied to the MISSANABIE.

There was no First Class, but instead excellent and moderately priced Cabin Class accommodation for some 490, also she carried some 1,300 Third Class passengers. With the fall off in the Atlantic passenger trade the MELITIA was kept in commission and found useful employment in cruising while her sister had long periods of lay-up in the Clyde. In September 1934 she was at last forced to lay-up but in April 1935 both were sold to Ricuperi Metallici Turin, to be broken up but again resold to the Italian Government, the MELITIA being renamed LIGURIA and her sister PIEMONTE. They were placed under the management of the Italia Line and used as troopships for the Abyssinian War. Their careers ended during World War II when in January 1941 MELITIA was set on fire by air attack and was scuttled at Tobruk where she remained until 1950 when she was salvaged and towed to Savona on 19 August to be broken up. As a point of interest when she left Greenock in 1935 she was towed to Genoa by the Smit's tug ZWARTE ZEE.

The MINNEDOSA (PIEMONTE) was badly damaged by a torpedo attack off Sicily in 1942 and laid up in Messina. Later on 15 August 1943, she was hit by several bombs during an Allied air-raid on Messina and capsized. She was later raised in 1949 and on 24 July that year was towed to Spezia to be broken up.

So ended two fairly long and interesting careers during which both liners helped to bring about a break from the traditional First class luxury travel and sow the seeds of the modern one-class travel.

Their livery in the early post-war era was buff funnels with black tops, white superstructure, brown lifeboats, black hulls, green boot-topping with white line and buff masts. Following September 1925, the funnels were all buff, the lifeboats white and the white dividing lines above the boot-topping was raised to be a riband just below the main deck level and had the effect of improving their appearance. Many of our older readers may remember when they docked at the itchen berths of the C.P.R.



MELITA (After alterations)

J.S. LINDSAY

A BATTLE for business between operators of high-speed, cross-Solent passenger ferries was launched with the start of a new hovercatamaran service between Cowes and Southampton.

Cowes Express, which says it is the first Island-based company to operate on the route since the 1820s, is unleashing its "Supercat" - a 280-seat vessel with aircraft-style seating capable of speeds up to 50 knots.

The Norwegian-built Sant Agata is a "surface effect ship" - a hybrid with twin hulls assisted by an air cushion similar to a hovercraft.

With two water jet propulsion engines, the £4m. craft is said to have outstanding manoeuvrability, and to be able to operate in all weathers between Thetis Wharf, Cowes, and Southampton Town Quay.

Cowes Express's single vessel is

Supercat tackles Solent route

lined up against Red Funnel's high-speed hydrofoils, whose 20-minute crossing time the firm intends to match.

But Cowes Express aims not only to attract travellers away from the hydrofoils, but from Red Funnel's slower, conventional vehicle-carrying ferries.

The new firm says its fares are based on an average for Solent ferry crossings, but they work out just above the passenger fare on Red Funnel's car ferries and undercut the hydrofoil fares.

In addition, Cowes Express hopes to win new business by offering a service which begins earlier and finishes later than its rivals.

Daily operations will start at 5.40 a.m. from Cowes and finish from Southampton at 12.15 a.m. Working and playing on the other

side of Solent - and getting home at night - is now a reality for both Islanders and mainland residents, says the company.

With a bus service link to British Rail at Southampton, Cowes Express is proclaiming a journey time between Cowes and London of one hour, 43 minutes.

Chairman of Cowes Express, David Lakeman (50) - who also owns a Cowes ship repair yard - stressed that all 40 company personnel were Island residents.

He disclosed that an order had been placed for a £4.7m. sister ship to the Sant Agata which should be delivered towards the end of this year.

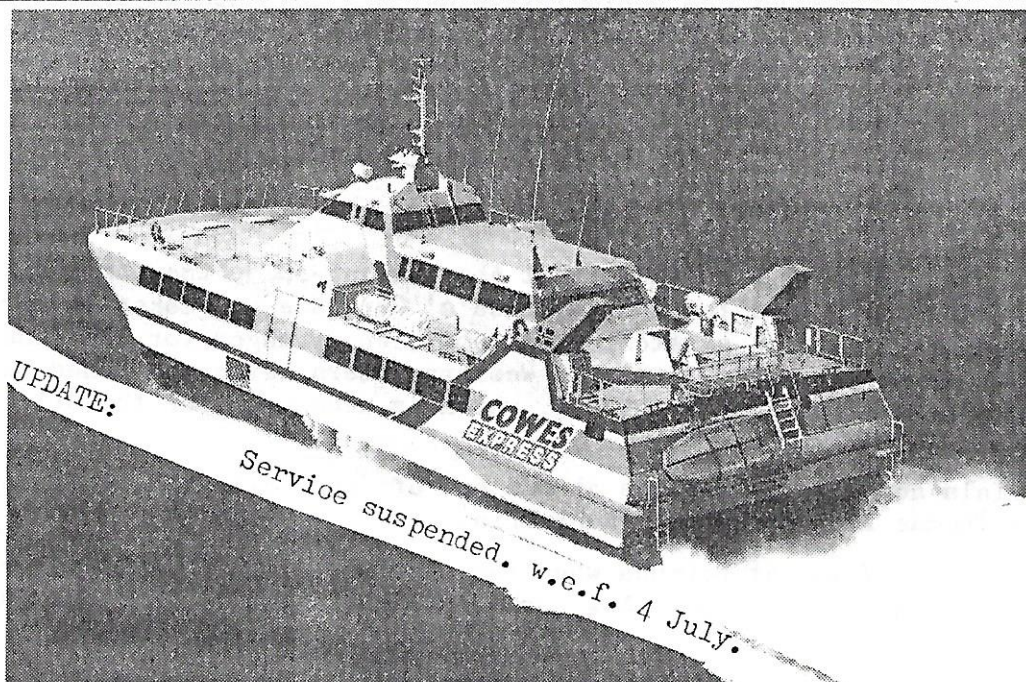
This would open the possibility of establishing a Cowes-Portsmouth high-speed ferry link. In the longer term, the firm had plans for a Portsmouth-Caen service

with craft of the same type.

Plans are also in the pipeline, pending modifications required by the Civil Aviation Authority, to open up an existing first class lounge on the Sant Agata, providing an additional 40 seats for which a supplement would be charged.

Mr. Lakeman conceded that until the delivery of a second "Supercat," his new service would be on a knife-edge - operating a busy schedule with one craft. In case of mechanical problems, a back-up has been arranged with Island-based passenger ship owner, Mark Rayment.

"I am confident we have facilities available to us to minimise inconvenience from any breakdown. We will be able to get all passengers back home," said Mr. Lakeman.



● SANT AGATA - The Supercat goes through her paces

The Yachting Year

SOUTHAMPTON, 1914.

by W.H. Mitchell

I recently came across two very old and very dog-eared copies of 'The Yachtsman' dated 9th October 1913 and 4th June 1914.

'The Yachtsman', 24 pages, came out weekly. Price One penny.

I am not a yachting type but, on browsing through the magazines, I found myself imagining the Southampton scene in those early years of the century.

Scanning the advertisements, one of the first things I noticed was the number of yacht brokers in Southampton. Most of those advertising were situated in the lower end of the High Street, the business part of the town in those years. Francis T. Pearce worked at No.80, Lory's were at No.72, as was A.H. Reid. A.E. Cole and E.J. Bakker had offices at No.63 and H.P. Blake was at No.70

These names mean little, but some of the local yachtbuilders of those days can be remembered. White Brothers on the Itchen, Summers & Payne (telephone 118), who had their yard where Britannia Road joins Marine Parade at Northam; Dixon Bros & Hutchinson Ltd., whose engineering works were at Woolston and Henry J. Beazley had his Ferry Yard on the Itchen. J.I. Thornycroft & Co.Ltd., were just entering their second decade also at Woolston. A little way off, Luke & Company had premises on the Hamble River.

If you wanted a yachting outfit, or merely a yachting cap, then Miller & Sons were undoubtedly for you. At 72 High Street Markham & Prance, consulting engineers would listen to your troubles, whilst Wm U. Kirk & Sons of The Parade Studios, Cowes, would photograph your yacht under sail or steam, to order. And engine-wise, Parsons Motor Co.Ltd., adjacent to the Town Quay, built and repaired engines.

For the nervous an eye-catcher was H.H. Read of Falmouth's advertisement of a Floating Norfolk Jacket which said:

Impossible to sink fully dressed
wearing top-boots and oilskins.

G.F.H. Parsons, Engr.-Lieut., RN., H.M.S. Seal, writes
Dear Sir, I tried one of your jackets in Falmouth Harbour and found that it was impossible to sink with it on, wearing oilskins (trousers and coat) and long leather sea boots. I think that the jackets are ideal things for anyone who has any boat work to do, as they are easy to wear and very different from the cumbersome lifebelts - April 1910.
Send for illustrated price list.

In the June issue it was stated that the fitting-out of the Shamrock IV, the British challenger for the 'America's' Cup race had taken longer than expected and that sail-stretching had now been arranged for 3rd June in the Solent, the proposed trials in Western waters being abandoned owing to lack of time before dismantling, which is necessary for the Atlantic voyage.

The trials actually took place at the end of June, closely watched by guests in Sir Thomas Lipton's steam yacht Erin.

The Shamrock IV was at Bermuda when the crew heard the news that war had broken out and she sailed to New York where she was laid up until 1920

when she raced for the 'America's' Cup but was beaten by the American defending yacht Resolute. Shamrock IV won two races against the American yacht's three. The Resolute was built for a New York Club syndicate.

Sir Thomas Lipton, who founded the great chain of Lipton grocery stores in Britain, was born in Glasgow of Irish parentage and as well as practicing great generosity to the poor, devoted a fortune to yacht racing, particularly in attempts to recover the 'America's' cup for Britain. His yachting career began when he was 50 years of age when he purchased the steam yacht Aegusa, which became Erin. Five Shamrock racing yachts were built for him but he never succeeded in recovering the cup.

They were:

1899	Shamrock I (Built by Wm Fife)	beaten by Columbia
1901	Shamrock II (G.L.Watson)	beaten by Columbia
1903	Shamrock III (Wm Fife)	beaten by Reliance
1920	Shamrock IV (Camper & Nicholson)	beaten by Resolute
1930	Shamrock V (Camper & Nicholson)	beaten by Enterprise.

In its June issue the magazine noted that the steam yacht Sayonara, owned by the American millionaire J.A. Drexel, returned to the Solent from the Mediterranean. In the 1930s she was frequently seen on her Hythe anchorage, opposite Dockhead.

The R.M.Y.C and B.M.B.C had organised a cruiser competition from Southampton across the Channel and back on 24th July.

Admiral Beatty's s.y. Sheelah has returned to the Solent from Cromarty to be refitted for a Russian cruise.

Summers & Payne have despatched to Glasgow, after running satisfactory trials, a smart 18'6" double-skin cedar motor pinnace built by them and engined with an Aster motor for Mr Coats new steel ketch now being finished off at Inglis' yard.

Zarefah, 279 tons (Mr E.Stean Price), having completed fitting-out, has left to adjust compasses, afterwards being joined by owner for the Whitsun holidays.

Hinemoa, 162-ton twin-screw auxiliary motor yacht (Mr H.Peech), has left for a cruise to the westward, and Fidra, R.Y.S., 129-ton aux.motor ketch (Mr Frank Chaplin), has also sailed.

The Cariad, R.Y.S., 153-ton ketch (Earl of Dunraven) has left cruising, as also has Emblem, 48-ton ketch Capt. A.G. Sullivan.

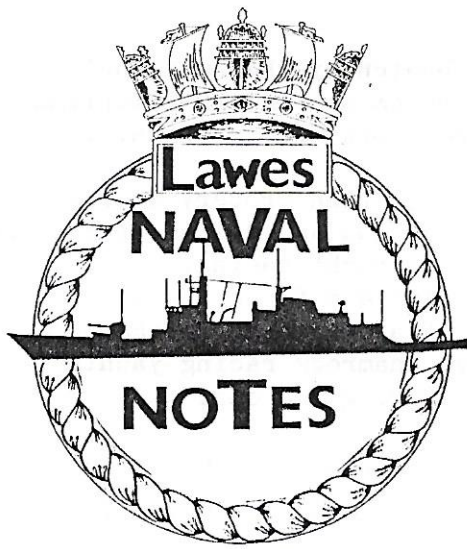
Amateur Photographers. Send your films to Martin, Chemist, Southampton
No waiting, returned next day. Any size, 1/- 12 exposures, 6d for 6.

Beneath the title on the front cover of this 4th June 1914 issue was the quotation:

'Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home.'

The Great War was just two months away.

...



Having lamented the shortage of Naval visitors to the Port in the previous "Black Jack", I'm pleased to note that the latest quarter has been slightly busier, with a mixture of new and more regular visitors.

Amongst the latter category was the American cable vessel USNS NEPTUNE who last called at the Port during the early part of 1989, and Winchester's adopted ship, the Type 21 frigate ALACRITY. Prior to her visit to Southampton, the ALACRITY had acted as escort to the "Little Ships" that returned to Dunkirk fifty years after the famous evacuation of the British Army, she also acted as guard ship for the anniversary of the defence of Calais. Last September, while serving as West Indies guardship, ALACRITY provided assistance for the island of Montserrat which had been devastated by Hurricane Hugo. In the Birthday Honours the ship's Captain and several other crew members were given awards for their work at that time.

The new arrivals were an influx of German Mine Counter Measures Vessels, DUREN, KONSTANZ, PADERBORN, ULM and WOLFSBURG, of the Type 351. These ships all entered service in 1958 or 1959, being the first German Naval vessels to be built since the end of World War II. Of wooden construction, they were originally built as minesweepers of the LINDAU class by Burmester at Bremen. In the early 1980's, 6 of the class, those who visited Southampton, plus SCHLESWIG, were converted to act as Drone Minesweeper Control Ship, or "Troika". In this role, each ship can remotely control 3 minesweeping drone vessels which operate ahead of their controlling vessel.

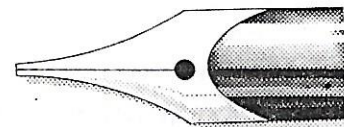
The Type 351 M.C.M. ships displace 488 tons, whereas the remotely controlled "Troika" vessels, all named SEEHUND (followed by a number from 1 to 18) displace 91 tons. Their diesel machinery, which is highly shock-protected, gives them a speed of 9 kts. They are equipped with solenoids for magnetic sweeping and 2 "Oropesa" sweeps for contact mines. They can carry a crew of 3, and were all built by MAK at Kiel in batches of three between 1980 and 1982, as their parent ships completed their conversions.

These German vessels were accompanied by the supply tender WERRA of 3000 tons, who has visited Southampton in the past.

It was quite an impressive sight as all of these vessels, in line ahead, entered Southampton Water in the early morning sunshine.

Below — The Royal Navy patrol vessels HMS Hunter (P284), Fencer (P283) and Dasher (P280) photographed on the canal from Zeebrugge to Brugge.





I would like to make reference to the article "QE2 - Summer Party - 1989" ("Black Jack", Summer 1990) which commented on my series of articles "By appointment to" published in previous editions of the magazine, concerning my trip to New York on QE2 in September 1988.

I was pleased that it was my articles (originally written as a private 'aide-memoire') inspired your correspondent to take a trip on the liner as a wedding anniversary treat, but I would like to highlight a few points.

Firstly, it was my first such trip and I was pleased that it was an actual transatlantic trip and not just a channel jaunt.

Secondly, we did not of course (as will be seen in my series) experience "waterspouts or St. Elmo's Fire" as was incorrectly stated, somewhat facetiously, in the "Summer Party" article. The other natural occurrences described we did experience.

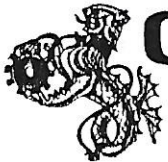
"Culture shock" on my part was indeed a misplaced interpretation of my feelings and the derided "choux swan" was indeed a culinary delight and not the "dollop of ice cream" as assumed in your contributor's view. I am sure that the Cunard chefs would be most unhappy to hear of this derogatory description.

At no point did I mention that I had attended a midnight buffet and can only guess at the character of those who attended such an event on the brief "Summer Party" 'binge', hoping to eat their way through the cost of their tickets. If your correspondent emulated the test in "A Night to Remember" by balancing a £1 coin on the after rail to test the vibration of the ship, then he would be in for a shock should his gold sovereign have disappeared over the stern!

I trust that the author of "QE2 - Summer Party 1989" will be more sympathetic to the views (his self-analysis of being "unnecessarily cynical and nit-picking" appears to be correct) of others and less scathing of the opinions of other people - in any such future article or review, thus rendering him less liable to ridicule the personal and hopefully honest views of those who contribute articles in good faith to "Black Jack."

David Hutchings.

Apart from this Dave, did you enjoy the article? Ed.



C. Lyon's Tailpiece

Brittany ferries has confirmed its order with a Finnish shipyard for a new super ferry to operate on the Portsmouth to Caen route.

The new 27,000 ton ship, which will have capacity for 2,120 passengers and more than 600 cars, should be delivered in spring 1992.

It is part of a two ship order with the Masa, formerly Wartsila Yard in Turku.

Second part of the order is for a more freight-orientated vessel which will operate under the Truck line banner from Poole to Cherbourg.

The two-ship order is worth some £130 million and the Portsmouth ship will be the largest on the Western Channel routes.

Both will comply with the latest safety specifications and reflect the current thinking on ro-ro ship design.

P&O announced it is to capitalise on the growing UK cruise market by basing a second ship in Southampton next year to operate alongside the popular CANBERRA.

The luxury liner SEA PRINCESS is scheduled to make 11 cruises out of Southampton in 1991 in a significant boost for the port's passenger trade.

She will operate in tandem with CANBERRA which has enjoyed a boom in her twilight years sailing mainly to the Mediterranean.

The 28,000 ton SEA PRINCESS, with space for more than 700 passengers, will increase P&O's cruise capacity in the UK market by some 40 per cent.

CANBERRA already makes 18 cruises a year from Southampton, and P&O's flagship ROYAL PRINCESS, sails out of Tilbury.

A spokesman for P&O Cruises told the Echo: "We would not have taken such a step unless we had sound evidence of the demand. The expansion in the business has been proved by the popularity of the CANBERRA."

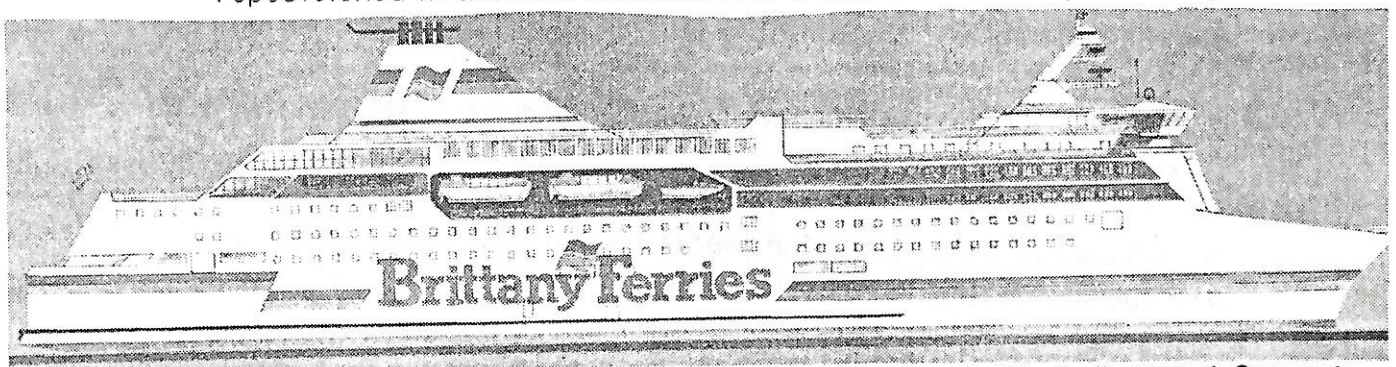
He added: "The growth CANBERRA has enjoyed is mirrored by the growth in the cruise industry. We believe we are the market leader in ex-UK cruising and we do not want to relinquish that position"

Southampton port manager Andrew Kent said "We strongly believe Southampton offers a level of service, facilities and communications which is un-matched in the UK."

"The return of SEA PRINCESS to operate alongside CANBERRA is further evidence that we are the leading cruise port in the UK."

SEA PRINCESS, previously marketed under the banner of P&O's American arm, Princess Voyages, last operated from Southampton in 1986 with a shorter programme of cruising alongside CANBERRA.

Next year's programme will be much bigger, with her season out of Southampton due to last between June and October before she is repositioned in the Mediterranean for a short stint of fly/cruising.



■ CRUISE NEWS - artist's impression of Brittany Ferries' luxurious super ship being built for the Portsmouth-Caen route.