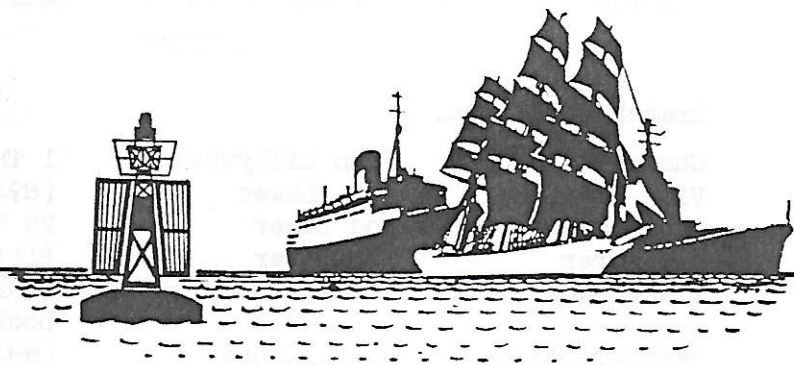


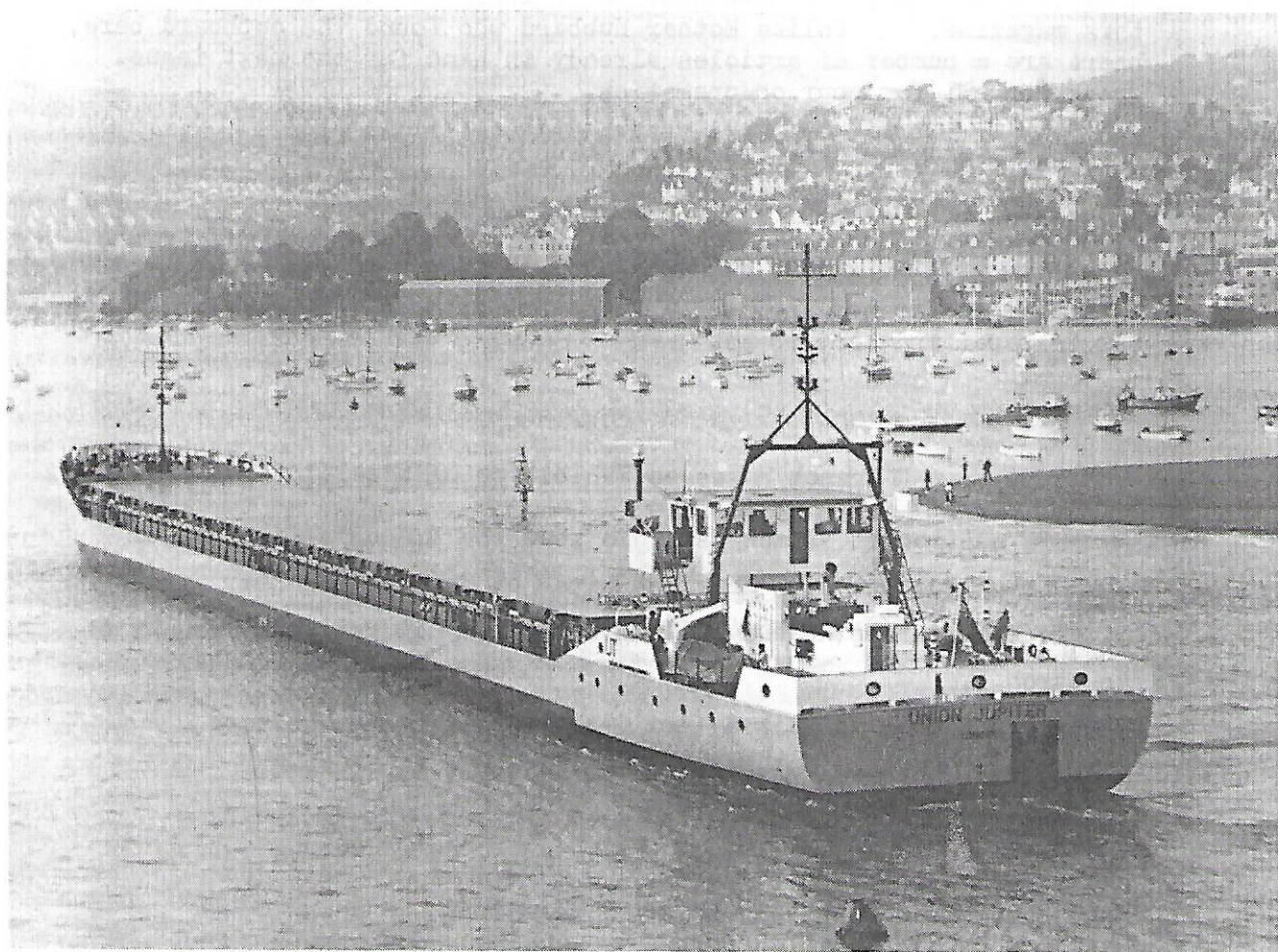
BLACK JACK

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY



SPRING 1992

NO. 81



Cover Photo: UNION JUPITER entering Teignmouth 16th September 1990

(C.Cheetham/Union Transport)

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UNION TRANSPORT

Company history & fleet list

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH OF THE WORLD SHIP
SOCIETY

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Editorial

An Editor can only produce a magazine if sufficient material is provided by the members. My thanks therefore go out to all members, named and unnamed, who have sent in articles for the production of this magazine. Unlike Mother Hubbard who found the cupboard bare, there are a number of articles already in hand for the next issue. Thank you all for your co-operation.

A special word of thanks to David Hornsby for compiling an index to illustrations and articles produced in the 4th series of "Black Jack" Nos. 61-80.

It may be a good idea to have a page of "Letters to the Editor" so that you can express your thoughts on any subject. Please put pen to paper and send to me.

Branch Makes an Exhibition of H'self!

As this edition of "Black Jack" is read the Branch's first major exhibition "Southampton and its Ships" at Eastleigh's near little High Street Museum will have closed; it ran from January 4 to March 7.

It has been much acclaimed, not least by the Museum Service themselves who have suggested we do it every two years!

The exhibition has been visited from far and wide including the West Country and Kent much as a result of the excellent publicity given us by the shipping magazines.

A cross section of members loaned a considerable amount of material so we were able to display models, original paintings, drawings, photos, memorabilia, brochures and leaflets. Thanks to all who loaned or helped in any way.

A special thanks must go to Mike Lindsay who masterminded the whole thing, and to the staff of Eastleigh Museum for their help and enthusiasm.

N.V.R.

UNION TRANSPORT GROUP PLC

by DAVID HORNSBY

Brief History of the Company and its coasters frequently seen in the Port

Although a relatively young Company in ship-owning terms, Union Transport has a high-profile in UK short sea shipping, particularly in the use of specialist low air-draught coasters to the near continent. The Company is headed by executive chairman Max Heinimann, a Swiss-national who utilises his intimate knowledge of European coastal and inland trades to ensure that the Company is at the forefront of low air-draught coaster design.

Formed in 1945 as shipbrokers and freight forwarders, Union Transport (London) Ltd first became shipowners in 1973, when the 299 grt CLAUD JURGENS was acquired from German owners and renamed UNION STAR. This acquisition was soon followed in 1974 by three further 1960's built coasters, the 350 grt UNION VENUS, and managed on behalf of Broadland Properties Ltd, a pair of Belgian-built sisterships renamed UNION MOON and UNION SUN.

In 1975, the TIMRIX was acquired by Jencar Ltd from J.R.Rix & Sons Ltd of Hull being managed by the Company and renamed UNION CRYSTAL. Unfortunately, on the 16th November 1977 when bound from Kilroot on Belfast Lough to Poole with a rock salt cargo, the coaster capsized and sank 12 miles north of Cape Cornwall after developing a heavy list and being abandoned during a storm, only the master surviving from the crew of six.

All these vessels either remained under, or were transferred to the Singapore flag, as with their German masters, they were able to continue trading to the Rhine hinterland and other inland waterways, without being penalised by additional pilotage costs.

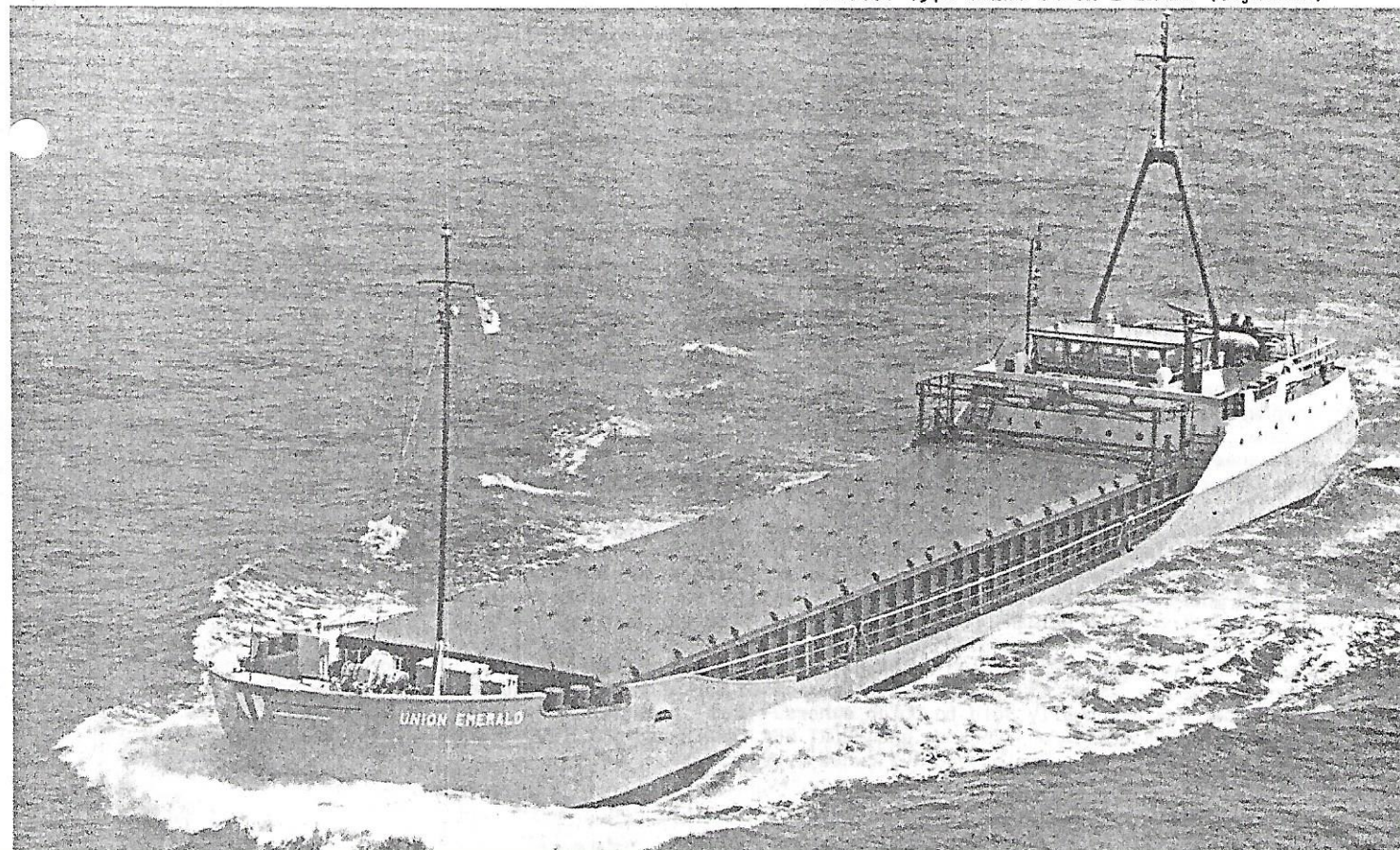
The former Norddeutscher Lloyd coaster NORDER PIEP was purchased as the GRIEND from another German owner in the summer of 1977, being renamed UNION MERCURY and continuing to fly the Panamanian flag.

In an ambitious expansion, the Company's first newbuildings were ordered in 1976 from a small Dutch yard at Dreumel (on the Waal, 40 miles east of Rotterdam), whilst two sisterships were built at Grave (on the Maas, 15 miles further east, close to the German border) to be managed on behalf of The West Wales Steamship Co Ltd and Sugar Maritime. All four 1,000dwt low air-draught coasters were delivered during 1977 and subsequently a further sistership renamed UNION EMERALD was managed for Decus Shipping under the Panamanian flag, following its purchase from Poseidon Scheeps of Delfzyl.

These newbuildings were initially placed under the Singapore flag, but by 1979/80 they were transferred to the Irish flag, thereby combining the benefit of an EEC member country with the use of experienced German masters to navigate the Rhine and other inland waterways. All subsequent newbuildings were registered under the Irish flag, apart from Bromley Shipping vessels which are British registered.

The initial two coasters were sold in 1977 and 1979 for further trading, the UNION STAR becoming the KAVA SOUND owned by Wm Dennison and registered at Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands, remaining in that ownership until converted to a restaurant ship in 1989.

Photo: 1976-built UNION EMERALD (Skyfotos)



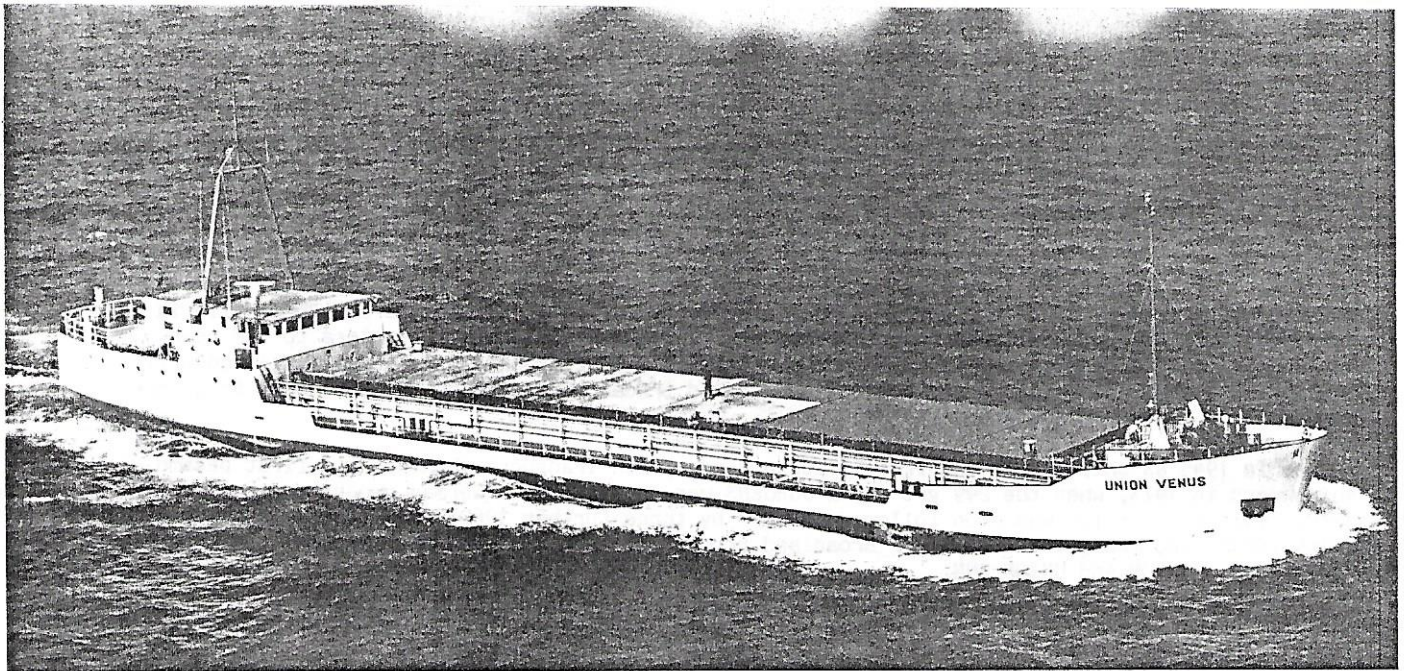


Photo: 1981-built UNION VENUS

The rapid expansion of the fleet did not diminish, as in 1980/1 the Company commenced management for Sagitta Shipping of two larger 1,500dwt low air-draught vessels were delivered from West German builders at Lauenburg (on the River Elbe, 25 miles upstream from Hamburg), followed during 1981 by a series of four single box hold 1,400dwt vessels from the Danish yard at Ringkøbing (on the North Sea coast, north of Esbjerg), one being managed for Legget Freightways.

Only 10 days after being handed over, the last of the Danish-built group, the UNION STAR was disasterously lost on the 19th December 1981, during her maiden, delivery voyage from Ymuiden in Holland to Arklow with a fertilizer cargo. In atrocious force 9-10 weather, which had already claimed two coasters off the South Coast and another in the Irish Sea, the vessel suffered an engine room failure about 9 miles east of the Wolf Rock Lighthouse. Onboard were a crew of five and three female relatives of the master, four of whom were taken off by the Penlee lifeboat SOLOMON BROWNE before the coaster capsized and ran aground, however the lifeboat too was lost and there were no survivors from either vessel. Unjustified press comment on undermanning resulted in substantial libel payments, which were donated by Union Transport to the Trust Fund established for the bereaved families.

During 1983, the Company took over management of the RIVER HERALD (77/870g) for the Panamanian owner, controlled by The West Wales Steamship Co Ltd.

The size of newbuildings in the fleet continued to increase, the next group being a series of six 2,300dwt low air-draught sisterships, delivered during 1985 and 1986 from four yards in the prolific Dutch 'Conoship' consortium, each vessel having 6.4m air draught and two holds strengthened for 25 tonnes steel coils.

About this time, 1985, the Company offices moved from Deptford Bridge in south-east London to Bromley in Kent, whilst some three years later the Company name was changed to Union Transport Group Plc.

Early in 1987, directors of Union Transport promoted the formation of Bromley Shipping Plc to enable investors to take advantage of tax benefits under the Business Expansion Scheme (BES). Although such investment schemes have been successful in Germany and Scandinavia, particularly the Norwegian K/S schemes, there was more limited success in the UK, with participation mainly from small investors. It was initially intended that low air-draught coasters would be acquired on the open market, but no suitable vessels could be purchased and therefore three Union Transport vessels were initially sold to the new Company, followed by two further vessels in 1988.

The five Dutch-built sisters were sold in 1989 to Libra Shipping BV of Rotterdam, under the St. Vincent flag, whilst the older UNION MERCURY went to the same manager in 1990. Also for a few months during 1989, the Company time-chartered the Norwegian UNION CUPID (77/1600g) ex Cupid-89, ex Helge Folmer-87.

Early in 1989, a series of even larger 3,200dwt low air-draught coasters with hydraulic retractable wheelhouses were ordered by Union Transport (three) and Bromley (one with two options) from Cochrane Shipbuilders Ltd at Selby, two vessels subsequently being sub-contracted to Richard Dunston Ltd at Hessle. These two-hold vessels were designed with a 6.5m air draught to give access to the whole Rhine and beneath Paris bridges, whilst the beam was determined by the Albert Canal above Antwerp, although limited water draught on that waterway would prevent the full deadweight being carried.

Unfortunately, the first two vessels encountered hatch seal problems leading to cargoes being damaged by sea-water ingress. Following negotiations with the builder and the supplier MacGregor-Navire, modifications were made to BROMLEY PEARL and trials were carried out, whilst the delivered UNION JUPITER and the completed UNION MERCURY were laid up in the Humber ports, together with the sub-contracted UNION SATURN upon which 4/5 weeks work remained outstanding.

The orders for UNION MERCURY and UNION SATURN were subsequently cancelled, the former being bareboat chartered and renamed LESLEY JANE C by Cowes-based Carisbrooke Shipping with a purchase option, whilst the latter was eventually sold to Dutch owners. Three near sisterships were ordered from the same builders, SUPERIORITY for Everards and SHORT SEA TRADER and NORTH SEA TRADER for the BES company Short Sea Europe, which is promoted and 10% owned by Everards.

Contract work accounts for some 70-80% of Union Transport shipping capacity, the remainder being weather and crop dependent short term charters. Despite some European inland routes being periodically affected by low water levels, there are now over 400 low air draught coasters competing for business in these specialist trades.

UNION TRANSPORT GROUP PLC FLEET LIST (current vessels marked with *)

Hull colours	Light grey with white upperworks; red UT below bridge.
Funnel colour	Red
UNION STAR	Built 1962 by Schiff H.Rancke, Hamburg, FRG (yard 190)
ex Claus Jurgens-73 (FRG)	299g 482d 50.810a x 8.2bm x 2.6 drt; lengthened 1964;
ex Gisela Bartels-66 (FRG)	1977 renamed KAVA SOUND (Br); 1989 converted to restaurant ship;
UNION VENUS	Built 1963 by Martin Jansen, Leer, FRG (yard 51)
ex Oemberg-74 (FRG)	350g 569d 51.0 x 7.5 x 2.8m; lengthened 1967/8;
ex Hanna Jacobs-70 (FRG)	1979 r UNI (Singapore flag); 1981 r MARI 1 (Panamanian);
UNION MOON	Built 1967 by Fulton Marine, Ruisbroek, Belgium
ex Spica-74 (Belgian)	1984 r SPICA 1 (Panamanian); 1985 broken up in Denmark;
UNION SUN	Built 1967 as above
ex Andre-74 (Belgian)	1984 r SANMAR (Pa); 87 r PATMARIE (St Vincent); 89 r ILEN (SV); 436g 701d 52.7 x 8.2 x 3.0; 10 knots;
UNION CRYSTAL	Built 1965 by Martin Jansen, Leer, FRG
ex Timrix-75 (Br)	499g 986d 59.1 x 9.9 x 3.5; 11 kts;
ex Majo-72 (FRG)	16/11/1977 total loss;
UNION MERCURY	Built 1963 by Schiff Unterweser, Bremerhaven, FRG (yard 440)
ex Griend-77 (Pa)	451g 675d 49.6 x 8.8 x 3.1; 10 kts;
ex Norder Piep-73 (FRG)	1990 r CORMORANT (SV);
UNION JUPITER	Built 1977 by Van Rossums, Dreumel (yard 816); 1987 to Bromley Shipping;
UNION SATURN	Built 1977 as above (yard 817); 1987 to Bromley Shipping;
UNION GEM	Built 1977 by Scheeps Grave, Grave (yard 65); 1989 r SKUA (SV)
UNION PEARL	Built 1977 as above (yard 66); 1987 to Bromley Shipping; 697g 1010d 60.0 x 9.5 x 3.2; 10 kts;
* UNION ARROW	Built 1980 by J G Hitzler Schiff, Lauenburg, FRG (yard 765)
* UNION DIAMOND	Built 1980 as above (yard 766) 980g 1580d 70.0 x 11.3 x 3.6; 11 kts;
* UNION MARS	Built 1981 by A/S Nordsovaerftet, Ringkobing, Denmark (yard 146)
* UNION VENUS	Built 1981 as above (yard 147)
* UNION PLUTO	Built 1981 as above (yard 151)
UNION STAR	Built 1981 as above (yard 152); sank 19/12/1981; 935g 1395/1448d 70.1 x 11.3 x 3.4; 11 kts;
UNION EMERALD	Built 1976 by Van Rossums Scheeps, Dreumel, Holland (yard 815)
ex Elan-82	729g 1180d otherwise as UNION JUPITER; 1988 to Bromley Shipping;
* UNION MOON	Built 1985 by Bodewes 'Volharding', Foxhol, Holland (yard 289)
* UNION TITAN	Built 1986 as above (yard 290)
* UNION SUN	Built 1985 by Tille, Kootstertille (yard 247)
* UNION NEPTUNE	Built 1985 as above (yard 248)
UNION TOPAZ	Built 1985 by Barkmeijer, Stroobos (yard 233); 1988 to Bromley Shipping;
UNION SAPPHIRE	Built 1986 by Bijlsma, Wartena (yard 633); 1990 to Bromley Shipping; 1543g 2376d 87.7 x 11.1 x 3.9; 10 kts;
* UNION JUPITER	Built 1990 by Cochrane, Selby (yard 163)
UNION SATURN	Built 1991 by Dunston, Hessle (yard 992) [sub-contract from Cochrane (yard 165)]; 1991 r TIMA SATURN;
UNION MERCURY	Built 1990 by Cochrane, Selby (yard 166); 1991 r LESLEY JANE C. 2230g 3274d 99.7 x 12.6 x 4.3; 11.2 kts

BROMLEY SHIPPING PLC FLEET LIST

UNION SATURN	Built 1977, acquired 1987 (see above); 1989 r OSPREY (SV)
UNION PEARL	Built 1977, acquired 1987 (see above); 1989 r PETREL (SV)
UNION JUPITER	Built 1977, acquired 1987 (see above); 1989 r PRION (SV)
UNION EMERALD	Built 1976, acquired 1988 (see above); 1989 r SKIMMER (SV)
* UNION TOPAZ/BROMLEY TOPAZ	Built 1985, acquired 1988 as UNION TOPAZ (see above); renamed 1990
* BROMLEY SAPPHIRE	Built 1986, acquired 1990 (see above); ex Union Sapphire 90
* BROMLEY PEARL	Built 1990 by Dunston, Hessle [sub-contract from Cochrane (yard 164)] sister of UNION JUPITER above

S.S. MONTEREY - ONE OF THE MARINERS

Bert Moody

A regular caller at Southampton during the past few months has been the cruise ship MONTEREY covering a programme of nine cruises from the port between December 1991 and April 1992. The MONTEREY is now owned by Compania Naviera Panocean S.A. of Panama, a subsidiary of Mediterranean Shipping Company, and is now being operated by Star Lauro of Italy with mainly an Italian crew. She has a gross tonnage 14,799, and for her size is very nicely fitted out providing accommodation for 639 passengers. She still retains her original turbine engines.

The MONTEREY started life many years ago as a cargo vessel being completed in 1952 by Bethlehem SparrowsPoint yard, Maryland as the FREE STATE MARINER, one of a group of 35 turbine driven vessels of the Mariner (C4-S-1A) class built for the U.S. Maritime Administration with a gross tonnage of 9,215. All were given the nicknames of various American states. Seven shipyards were given the job of each building five vessels.

Of the 35 ships, five were allocated to the U.S. Navy in 1955/6 - one of these the EMPIRE STATE MARINER became OBSERVATION ISLAND being converted to a missile range instrumentation ship, and in August 1959 the first ship launch of a Polaris missile was fired from her. One other vessel, the CORNHUSKER MARINER, went aground at Pusan during a typhoon on 7th July 1953 and became a total loss, being sold in 1954 to Japan for scrap.

During 1955 and 1956 the other 29 ships were disposed of to various American Shipping Companies - United States Lines taking 9, American President Lines 8, Pacific Far East 7 and States S.S. Company 2. Matson Navigation acquired two and these were converted by Williamette Iron & Steel Corporation at Portland in 1956 to passenger/cargo vessels with accommodation for 360 passengers for service between the U.S.A. and New Zealand/Australia. The FREE STATE MARINER becoming MONTEREY and the PINE TREE STATE MARINER becoming MARIPOSA. A third vessel, BADGER MARINER, was acquired by Arnold Bernstein and was also fitted out as a passenger ship being renamed ATLANTIC.

To-day of these twenty nine ships, only four remain - United States Lines' PIONEER MUSE (ex Nutmeg Mariner) became a total loss on 8th October 1961 when she went aground on Kita Daito Jima, 21 have been broken up in Taiwan, three by Spanish breakers. CRACKER STATE MARINER, which in 1955 became PRESIDENT COOLIDGE and in 1974 EXPORT DEFENDER was returned to the U.S.M.C. in 1978 and then reverted to her original name. In the current Lloyd's Register she is shown as being owned by the U.S. Department of Transport. The other three remaining ships are those converted to passenger ships. In 1971 the ATLANTIC was renamed UNIVERSE CAMPUS, and in 1976 UNIVERSE and she still retains her turbine engines. The MARIPOSA in 1983 was sold to the Chinese and was renamed JIN JIANG, being then fitted with diesel engines, and has been operating between China and Hong Kong.

In 1971 the MONTEREY was acquired by Pacific Far East Lines and was used for cruising until 1978, when she was laid up until 1987, when acquired by Aloha Pacific Cruises. She was completely gutted and refitted by Wartsila in Finland and it was then that her passenger accommodation was increased to 639. She went into service in 1988 on inter-island cruising out of Hawaii, unfortunately the high cost of the refit caused the Aloha Pacific Cruises to go bankrupt, and she was then taken over by her present owners. Forty years old in 1992 - it would seem that she is likely to be around for a few more years yet.

SCANNING THE SOLENT

This article has been written to give an insight to the use of marine radio in the Solent area as some people have recently expressed an interest in the subject.

Not so many years ago, when a cruising pilot vessel would be on station at the Nab Tower, people using radio to listen to shipping used the short wave bands. The Trinity House frequency of 1662 kHz was quite popular as it was used for pilotage information. The short wave bands still support marine radiotelephony and radiotelegraphy traffic, but it is used for longer range traffic rather than for local use. Short range traffic is now dominated by VHF (Very High Frequency), FM (Frequency Modulation) Radiotelephony. The use of VHF has increased dramatically in recent years with a range a little further than "line of sight" ie range is normally dependant on the height of the aerials of the stations concerned. VHF has lent itself to the current trend of traffic control and also for safety, the closure of HMCG visual lookouts around the UK illustrates this point.

Initially there were 28 international VHF radio channels 1 to 28. Because of the increase in traffic it was necessary to insert a further 28 international channels 60 to 88, plus about 100 private or domestic channels in the same slot in the radio spectrum. This has been possible because of the reduced cost of new technology that had become available.

The reduction of costs with modern technology has also benefitted the aircraft and shipping enthusiast as radio receiving equipment of relatively good performance with some compromises can now be obtained fairly cheaply, and its use can often be as common as the use of binoculars. At first the receivers, or "scanners" as they have become known (because they search or scan several VHF channels in turn), used quartz crystals as the frequency or channel determining element, ie one crystal per channel of reception, but these days synthesised radios have become the norm and frequency or channel information can be electronically determined, stored and altered usually by means of a keypad.

Both international channels and private channels use what is known as Simplex and Duplex, they refer to the use of one frequency for both stations or the use of two frequencies, a different frequency for each station respectively. When scanning, two channels would have to be selected to be able to hear both sides of the conversation for a duplex channel providing both stations are within range. Each method has its variations but generally simplex is used for ship to ship and duplex is always used for ship to shore communication. Port operations services use both types.

With numerous ferry services two busy ports and numerous marinas, VHF traffic in the Solent area can be very busy especially in the summer months. Also, due to weather conditions and other circumstances, it is not unusual to have enhanced propagation conditions more noticeable in the summer months that causes near continental stations to be heard with equal strength as local stations. Because of the limited number of channels available the same channels are used again and again around the coasts ie Southampton, Avonmouth, Milford Haven, Le Havre, Boulogne, London and Dunkerque all use the same channel. Le Havre port is usually the first to come through and cause the most problems. For further information the reference publication for this subject is the Admiralty List Of Radio Signals Vol 6 Part 1, however a general interpretation for the local area now follows. It is very difficult to separate rules/procedures and communications within a port organisation, however I hope that overall emphasis is on communications.

Port of Southampton

The type and size of shipping, together with financial and political circumstances, has dictated how the port operations has evolved. There have been changes over the years that has brought the port control and pilotage services together at 37 berth VTS Centre.

Firstly, the port control functions previously had stations in the docks and at Calshot, these were merged with the construction in the early seventies of the building at 37 berth. Using the callsign of SPR (Southampton Port Radio) the new station used mostly VHF radio with visual signals at the base of the radio tower. The station used radar information from 25 ft scanners located at Calshot and at Hythe with a microwave radio links to send the information back 37 berth. It is possible to process and digitise this information so that it can be manipulated by a computer to obtain speed direction and to add symbols, ie buoys and reference lines for assisting vessels by radio. For VHF radio, aerials were mounted on Dock House and connected by landline for transmission and the VHF receiving station was built at Titchfield and linked by radio. The radar information was displayed on six Decca 16" CRT displays, these have since been replaced with daylight viewing screens. The visual signals have long since disappeared and the station is now known as Southampton VTS Centre (Vessel Traffic Services). To cater for this area the two main radar sites are still used and navigational advice can be given from the information they provide. For those vessels not complying on VHF the port operates a patrol launch (SP), more especially to clear a path through leisure craft for large vessels but is normally used for pilotage and other duties such as the checking of navigational aids.

The pilotage services has evolved from having a cruising cutter at the Nab Tower pilot station, ie THV Brook and Penda and large launches at the Needles station, then to fast launches operating from Ryde Pier and from Totland Pier with pilotage controlled by VHF radio from Ryde Pier with remote aerial sites at the eastern and western ends of the IOW all managed by Trinity House.

These days Trinity House is no longer the operator, this having been taken over by ABP and the service combined at berth 37 with Southampton VTS. The rules for pilotage have also changed as have some of the boarding stations. The Needles station is now only used occasionally by special arrangement, ie the Queen Elizabeth 2, but normally the pilot station at the East Lepe area is used for ships coming to/from the west and pilot boarding stations at the Nab and N.Sturbridge for vessels to/from the east. Pilotage in the area between the Ports and E.Lepe is now compulsory for vessels over 61m in length and there is also a size limitation for vessels using the Sturbridge station.

The system of port communications revolves around designated reporting points, ie a VHF radio position report should be made when passing certain navigational marks laid down in the rules for the port. Some of these marks are also used for timings for tugs and co-ordination of movements/passing of large vessels. Once a vessel has entered the area between the Nab and Needles VHF CH12 will monitored and be used to pass the vessels draft, last port of call and an ETA will be given for either the relevant pilot station, the Hook buoy for tankers and NW Netley for docks traffic or other point depending on the circumstances at the time. CH14 is available for use on a secondary basis, CH9 being used for pilotage. For radar advice the duplex CH20 is often used, CH18 & 22 being available but seldom used. For vessels using the services of tugs CH74 and 71 are used, if both channels are occupied then CH8 or CH10 is a common choice. Because of the necessity to work more than one channel at a time and although most ships are fitted with two bridge VHF sets the pilot will often use a handheld radio for convenience when working tugs and also because it can be fitted with channels purely for local use for use with the berthing officer, VTS and the pilot service. There are other services in the port area. Firstly, there is the Esso Marine Terminal at Fawley which uses mainly CH19 a duplex channel for berthing arrangements for tankers and details of hose connections etc and for communicating future arrivals/departures to the

Port of Southampton cont'd

standby tugs. They also have secondary simplex channels in common with the port operations. As with BPJ Hamble, a berthing master with a handheld radio will supervise the positioning and mooring of vessels when close to the berth. For communicating with local agents there are channels CH44, 46 & 48 and in the past have been known as tanker channels, and are in the private channel sector of the band allocation and they are used as duplex channels.

The RCT base at Marchwood generally uses the simplex CH73 for berthing arrangements at the facility other channels being available as required.

To avoid excessive traffic on busy internationally allocated frequencies nearly every operator in the port will have its own private or domestic channel for local use. Each dredging company, tug company, bunkering company, ship agency, including VTS and pilot service has a domestic channel the latter two using CH29 as simplex and CH38 as duplex respectively the others are too numerous to list here.

Port of Portsmouth

The commercial movements in Portsmouth have increased in recent years about as much as the naval movements have declined also the size of commercial vessels has steadily increased. Furthermore, all vessels proceeding from the east to Southampton have to pass through Portsmouth Harbour jurisdiction. Large vessels or gas tankers will liaise with QHM when passing through the area. The use of Spithead anchorages, including the deep draft C (Charlie) anchorage, also comes under the jurisdiction of QHM.

Before continental ferry traffic arrived naval and commercial movements were co-ordinated on different channels but today all movements are co-ordinated by QHM Portsmouth (Queens Harbour Master) on CH11. The commercial port at Portsmouth uses CH9 and CH14 for pilotage and ETAs' but this is not port control as such. For commercial vessels a pilot will board in the vicinity of the Warner Buoy and if tugs are required tugs will use an appropriate ship to ship channel as decided, typically CH10 or CH74. In common with Southampton tug operators, the Butchers Tugs fleet in Portsmouth has domestic channels for contact with operators office and between tugs.

The Lloyds signal station at Port Gilkicker is usually works on CH14, ascertaining the identities of passing ships and sometimes will liaise between naval and commercial vessels.

Naval movements within the port will use CH13 for working tugs but once the berth is left CH11 is used so that communication can be maintained with commercial traffic. Pilotage for naval dockyard is supplied by the Naval Authorities and for visiting naval ships will board in the Spithead area. The port auxiliary craft use CH73 for the movements of barges etc. The navy has its own communications facilities for the port area including radiotelegraphy, telephony and radiotelex on totally separate frequency bands not compatible with casual listening on a scanning radio.

SUMMARY OF USEFUL INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS

SAFETY:	COWES:	PORTSMOUTH:	SOUTHAMPTON:
CH16 156.8 Mhz	CH69 156.475Mhz	CH10 156.5 Mhz	CH09 156.45 Mhz
CH67 156.375Mhz		CH11 156.55 Mhz	CH12 156.6 Mhz
CH0 156.00 Mhz		CH13 156.65 Mhz	CH14 156.7 Mhz
		CH14 156.7 Mhz	CH19 156.95/161.55 Mhz
		CH73 156.675Mhz	CH20 157.00/161.60 Mhz
			CH71 156.575 Mhz
			CH74 156.725 Mhz

Safety

The HMCG now has a network of VHF stations giving coverage around the coast, the Solent is no exception. Before this network was established the BT coast station, at Niton on the IOW, would monitor CH16 for safety, urgency and distress traffic, Niton Radio still has facilities for CH16 but the MRSC station at Lee-on-Solent has taken over this short range function and has remotely controlled aeriels at Boniface Down & Needles on the IOW, Selsey and Newhaven including VHF direction finding aeriels at Boniface, Selsey and Newhaven. The HMCG generally use CH67 for exchanging traffic and sending weather bulletins and CH0 for communication with lifeboats rescue helicopters etc. The station at Lee also has very limited short wave facilities.

Niton Radio is part of a network of stations using 2.182Mhz for safety over a much greater range than the Solent area.

Leisure Craft

Normally small boats, ie leisure craft, will use what channels are available to them, however CH16 is used for calling and working channels are often chosen at random until a unoccupied channel is found ie CH6, CH8, CH10 or CH72, CH77 etc. Some marinas may not listen on the calling channel CH16 but will listen on CH37 which has become known as CH M or the marina channel. Some marinas will have another working channel ie for Hythe CH80, Hamble CH68 etc.

Yacht and power boat race controls can also be found on VHF during the summer months usually on an appropriate simplex or ship to ship channel or on CH M2.

Public Correspondence

Niton radio on the IOW has numerous channels for radiotelephone calls that can be connected to the international telephone network and covers the Solent area. As more and more Cellnet/Vodafone cells come into use many coastal trading vessels ie tugs, dredgers, coasters and yachts are being fitted with these portable telephones. Mast aeriels being commonly available and generally speaking are about one quarter the size of a VHF marine band aerial. Neither of these systems can be considered private but it is not the purpose of this article to encourage the interception of such traffic hence frequency details have not been included. As mentioned before, Niton Radio has facilities for longer distance communications ie telex and telephone calls sometimes known as link calls. The use of these or comparable services to contact agents and port authorities can be made prior to VHF range and can be mandatory for tankers. What is known as an tanker check list must be sent via the agent or direct to the port authority confirming that the vessel has no defects prior to entering a port.

Port of Cowes

Commercial vessels using Cowes report their movements on a general broadcast principal on CH69 to advise other vessels of their movement, although there is a harbour office no actual port control takes place. The Cowes pilot will use either CH9 or CH69 for pilotage duties.

Commercial vessels will also report directly to VTS on leaving Cowes, as strictly speaking they are entering the port of Southampton.

CHAN.	TRANSMITTER FREQUENCY MHz		CHAN.	TRANSMITTER FREQUENCY MHz		CHAN.	TRANSMITTER FREQUENCY MHz	
	SHIP	SHORE		SHIP	SHORE		SHIP	SHORE
1 60	156.025	160.625	11 70	156.525		21 80	157.025	161.625
	156.050	160.650		156.550			157.050	161.650
2 61	156.075	160.675	12 72	156.600		22 81	157.075	161.675
	156.100	160.700		156.625			157.100	161.700
3 62	156.125	160.725	13 73	156.650		23 82	157.125	161.725
	156.150	160.750		156.675			157.150	161.750
4 63	156.175	160.775	14 74	156.700		24 83	157.175	161.775
	156.200	160.800		156.725			157.200	161.800
5 64	156.225	160.825	15 75	156.750	156.7875	25 84	157.225	161.825
	156.250	160.850		156.800	156.8375		157.250	161.850
6 65	156.275	160.875	16 76	156.8125	156.850	26 85	157.275	161.875
	156.300	160.900		156.850			157.300	161.900
7 66	156.325	160.925	17 77	156.875		27 86	157.325	161.925
	156.350	160.950		156.900	161.500		157.350	161.950
8 67	156.375	160.975	18 78	156.925	161.525	28 87	157.375	161.975
	156.400	161.000		156.950	161.550		157.400	162.000
9 68	156.425	161.025	19 79	156.975	161.575	28 88	157.425	162.025
	156.450	161.050		157.000	161.600			
10 69	156.475	161.075						
	156.500	161.100						

Table of International VHF Frequencies In Megahertz

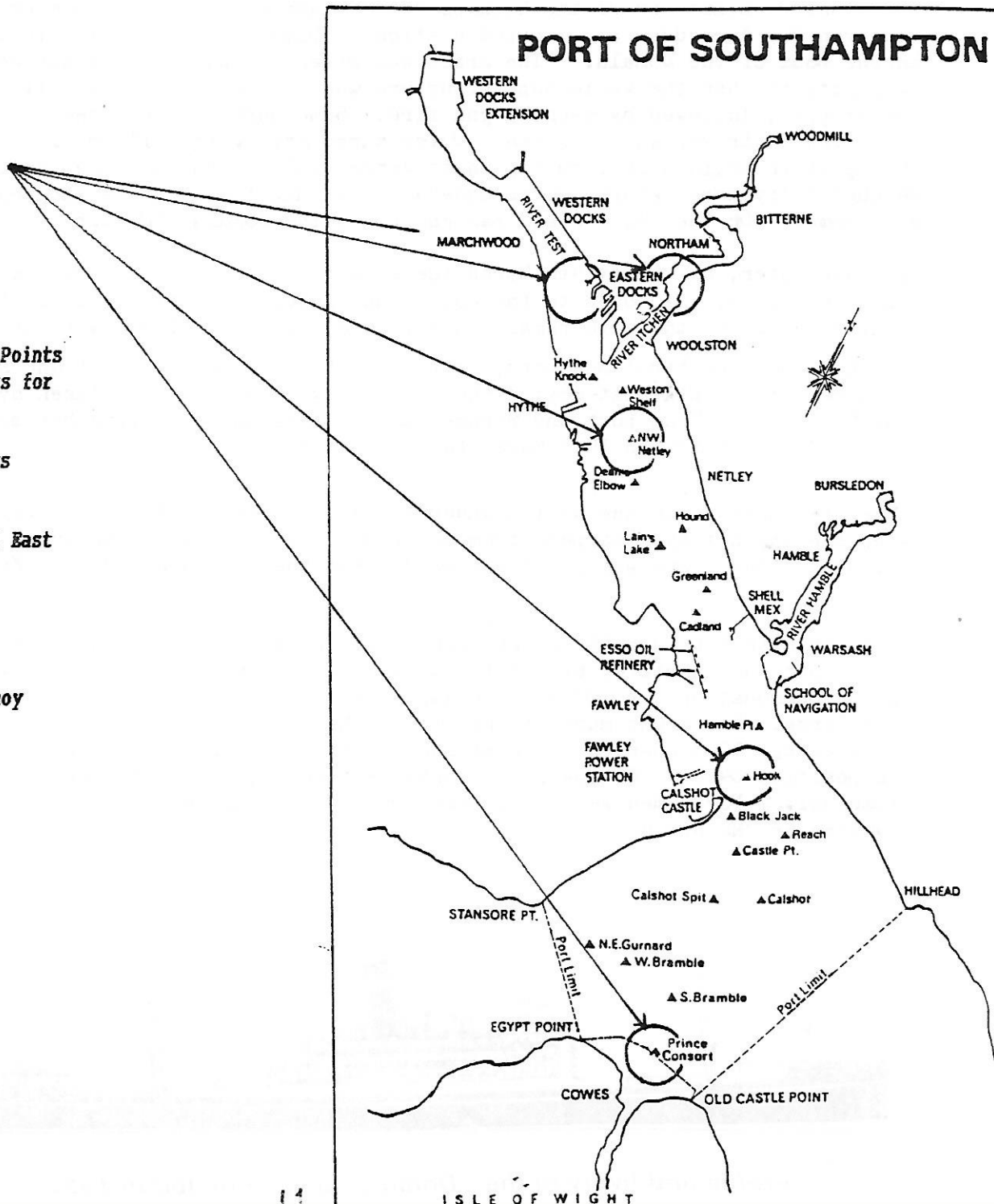
Reporting Points:

Typical Reporting Points outside Port Limits for Southampton

Eastwards:
N. Sturbridge/Ports
Nab Tower

(For North Channel East Bramble Buoy)

Westwards:
East Lepe Buoy
Yarmouth Roads
Needles Fairway Buoy



by W.H.Mitchell

The British India passenger/cargo ship Domala held the doubtful honour of a place in history by being the first merchant vessel ever to suffer attack from the air.

Her owners, the British India S.N. Company Ltd began rebuilding their fleet when World War One ended with the construction of a large number of 'M' class passenger/cargo steamers. However, after a number had been completed it was decided that two should be constructed with oil engines. One vessel, already launched Magvana was renamed Domala in 1921, the first to be powered with diesel engines and was followed by the Dumana, ex Melma in 1923. Twin screw 12 knot ships, they were put on the United Kingdom - Calcutta service.

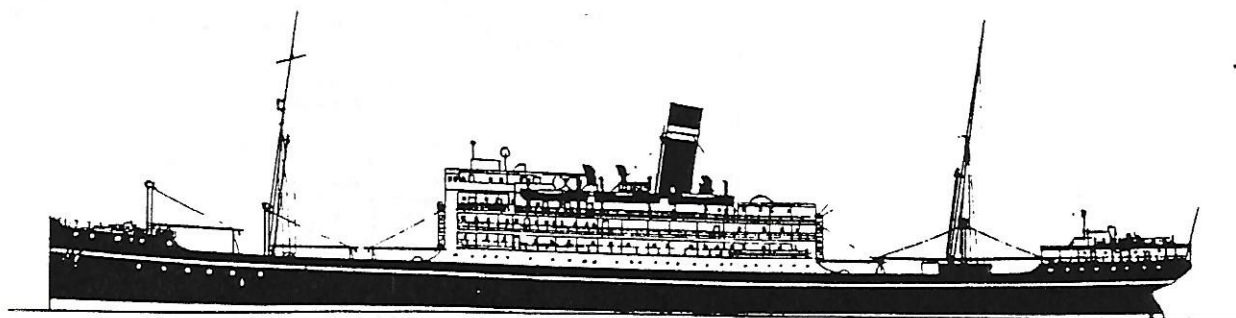
It was early in 1940 when the incident occurred. The Domala was on a voyage from Antwerp to Southampton carrying a number of Indian seamen off German ships for repatriation. On 2nd March at 5 a.m. she was some 30 miles east of St.Catherines Point, Isle of Wight when an aircraft was seen in the light of a waning moon, but as the aircraft had lights it was considered as friendly. But within a minute or so the Heinkel 111 of Kampfgeschwader (Bomber Squadron 26) turned low and dropped a stick of bombs, one exploding in the Engine Room of the Domala. The order was given to abandon ship and get the boats away but, by then, the whole superstructure was ablaze and another stick of bombs was dropped, followed by machine-gun fire. Some survivors had been picked up by a British destroyer whilst a small Dutch cargo ship Jonge Willem, 1,632 gt and built in Holland in 1939 for Maats Jonge Willem Middlandsche, Holland, rescued fifty more before coming under vicious machine-gun fire and nearly hit by a bomb. Of the 291 crew and passengers on the Domala, 108 were reported missing.

Two days later, on Monday 4th March the Domala, still on fire, the midships a burnt-out mess, was moved to the Solent and beached off the mouth of the Lymington River, there to remain in a flooded condition for a week or so.

By this time the First Sea Lord, Mr W Churchill had decided that she should be repaired in the plainest way for the toughest work and she was taken over by the Ministry of Transport and renamed Empire Attendant, leaving her mooring place off Lymington on 19th March for Southampton.

After reconstruction she sailed under M O W T orders until 15th July 1942 when she was hit by a torpedo from the submarine U.582 and sank in position 23.84N 21.54W. She was in convoy OS 33 from the United Kingdom to Freetown.

Her sistership Dumana (8,427 gt) was completed in March 1923 and when war broke out was chartered by the Air Ministry. She was equipped with workshops and accommodation for 500 men and worked as a base ship for the Royal Air Force. She spent much of her time in Mediterranean ports until 24 December 1943 when, at 8.30 pm she was torpedoed by submarine U.515 in position 04.27N 06.58W on a coastal voyage from Port Etienne to Takoradi. Forty men were lost, the remainder being rescued by the destroyer HMS Arran.



Profile and livery of the "Domala" as completed in 1920.

The *Domala* had a gross tonnage of 8,441, net 5,125, and a deadweight capacity of 10,400 tons, for she and the other "M"s were quite big cargo carriers. She was 450ft. long, registered, with a beam of 58.3 and depth of 32.9ft. and her overall length was 464ft. There were two overall decks with fo'c'sle, bridge and poop above, eight watertight bulkheads and six holds and hatchways. A cellular double bottom between the peak tanks was used for oil fuel forward and fresh water aft, with other fresh water tanks between the tunnels.

SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

Extracts from The Shipbuilding & Shipping Record 1913

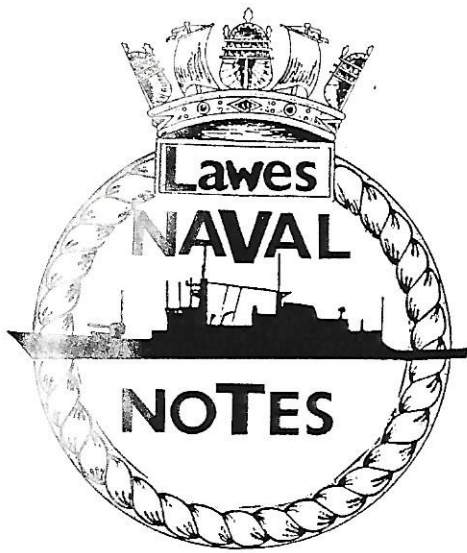
Passenger liners are in their heyday, coming from the yards in numbers.....

the Hapag liner *Imperator* (51,961 gt) launched by the Kaiser at the Vulkan Yard, Hamburg on 23 May 1912 was to leave on her maiden voyage on 24 May 1913 (in the event her maiden voyage Cuxhaven to New York began 10 June 1913).

The weekly launching and completion tables in April 1913 show that on 22 March, the *Empress of Russia* (16,810 gt), built by Fairfield for Canadian Pacific was on trials and on the same date the *Alsatian* (18,481 gt) built by Wm Beardmore for the Allan Line and the *Andania* (13,405 gt) by Scotts Sb & Eng Company for the Cunard Line, were launched.

Other notable passenger liners in the April 1913 tables include the *Vaterland*, launched by Blohm & Voss on 3 April, the *Aquitania* (45,647 gt) launched by John Brown for Cunard on 21 April, the *Calgarian* (17,515 gt) by Fairfield for Allan Line on 19 April and *Bergensfjord* (11,015 gt) launched by Caird on 8 April for Norge America Line.

Lloyds Register of Shipping returns for April 1913 show that at the end of March 1913 there were 563 vessels of well over 2 million tons under construction in British yards..... and at the same time 444 ships of about 1¼ million tons were being built abroad.



There have not been many Naval movements through Southampton recently, but we have seen several interesting auxiliary vessels.

The first of these was U.S.S. GRAPPLE a salvage ship. She entered service in 1986 having been built by Peterson at Sturgeon Bay. Her full load displacement is listed as 2,880 tonnes and 4,200 h.p. diesels give her a speed of 13.5 knots.

She is also fitted with a 500 h.p. bow thruster. When acting as a salvage vessel she can operate divers and she is fitted with a decompression chamber.

A 150 tonne lift can be achieved over the bow or stern. For ocean towage the Grapple has a 54 ton bollard pull, but for beach extraction work she can produce a 360 ton pull. Up to 25% of the crew of about 100 can be women. There were some female crew members on board during her stay in Southampton.

The Port's King George V Dock was used for two R.M.A.S. vessels. Both must have been dwarfed in such an enormous structure. R.M.A.S. THROSK an armament stores carrier entered the dock for an inspection following her charter to Christian Salvensen in the South Atlantic where she was used to transport scrap metal from South Georgia to Motevideo. Throsk is now up for sale so ironically she may become scrap metal herself. She was built by Cleland Ship Builders at Wallsend and originally entered service in 1977. She has a full load displacement of 2193 tons and is fitted with two 5 ton cranes and can carry 760 tons of cargo in her holds.

The second vessel to use the Dry Dock was the Trawler Northella of 1238 gross tons and built in 1973. She was originally chartered from J. Marr & Sons of Hull in 1982 for minesweeping duties during the Falklands War. In October 1983 she was chartered again to act as a Submarine Escort in Scottish waters, for this duty her hull was painted orange. In 1985 she moved to the south coast to be used as a Navigational Training Ship. As such she is often seen in the Portsmouth area. In 1989 her hull was repainted grey.

