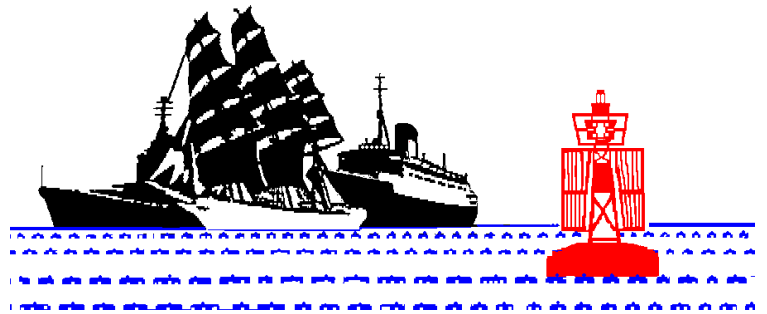


Black Jack

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY
www.sotonwss.org.uk



Issue No: 173

Winter 2014

A Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all our Readers



On 2nd November, the second of the Royal Caribbean giants to call this year, the brand new **Quantum of the Seas** (168,666g/2014), visited Southampton when it came into port and spent time at 104 berth. Her sister ship, **Anthem of the Seas**, will be based in Southampton next year.

Photo: David Trevor Jones

Black Jack – Winter 2014 No.173

Editorial team

Mick Lindsay, Nigel Robinson and Editorial Assistant Michael Page. Website – Neil Richardson

Black Jack is the quarterly newsletter for the Southampton Branch of the World Ship Society.
Four editions available for £5 inclusive of postage.

Branch Meetings

Venue:

St James Road Methodist Church

St James Road

Shirley

Southampton SO15 5HE

All meetings commence at 19.30 and the meeting room is to be vacated by 21.30. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month.

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LATE NOTE: our last meeting of 2014 on December 9th will now be **Return to New Zealand** by David Hornsby

2015 Branch Meeting Programme

- January 13th **Trip Down Under in 2013**
Jimmy Poole
- February 10th **2013's Travels – Bill Mayes**
- March 10th **Passing the Point**
Bernard McCall
- April 14th **Cornish Shipping No.2**
Krispen Atkinson
- May 12th **Thames Shipping in the 1960s and 1970s – Stuart Emery**
- June 9th **WSS AGM**
Rotterdam in 1995 – Monty Beckett
- July 14th **On the Thames in the 50s and 60s – Part 2 – Mick Lindsay**
- August 11th **Southampton Branch Digital Photo Image Competition**
- September 8th **Selim San – Aliaga 1985 Onwards – Roland Whaite**
- October 13th **Between the Wars–Southampton Shipping – Bert Moody**
- November 10th **Southampton Branch AGM + Mini-talk**
- December 8th **School, University & Workers' Cruise Ships – David Hornsby**

Plus the Annual Branch Cruise on Saturday 13th June, 11am–6pm departing from Ocean Village

Thank you ...

In addition to the slides, collectables and financial bequest from the Estate of John Havers, the Branch Committee would also like to acknowledge and thank the following for items donated to the Branch:

John Dancy (slides)

Douglas Gates (magazines)

Robin Oke – now deceased – (slides and books)

Estate of Robin Hume (deck plans and books)

All contributions to *BJ*, by post, email, floppy disk or CD are most welcome. Any article with a connection to The Solent area would be much appreciated. The *BJ* Editors could reproduce magazine or newspaper articles but preference is given to articles 'by the branch – for the branch'.

Would members please ensure that any changes to their postal and/or email addresses are notified to the Branch as soon as possible.

Monty's Andy's Notebook

A round-up of new or infrequent recent callers to Southampton Docks by Andy McAlpine

Farewell and thank you . . .

After many years faithfully recording the arrivals at the port, Monty Beckett has "hung up his pen" and now moved to Suffolk to be nearer his family. No doubt we will see Monty from time to time as he visits his old haunts, but in the meantime we thank him for all his efforts and wish he and Beryl all the very best as they settle into their new home.

. . . and Welcome

We now extend a warm welcome to Andy McAlpine, who stood out as the obvious candidate and has kindly agreed to provide a quarterly column on new and unusual callers at the port.

Welcome to the first of my notes from the port of Southampton. To be honest, I have not had time to decide what format the future Notebook will take, but for the time being at least I will try to highlight any new or infrequent callers to the port.

Recently the port has played host to two of the world's largest cruise ships, both owned by Royal Caribbean International (RCI).

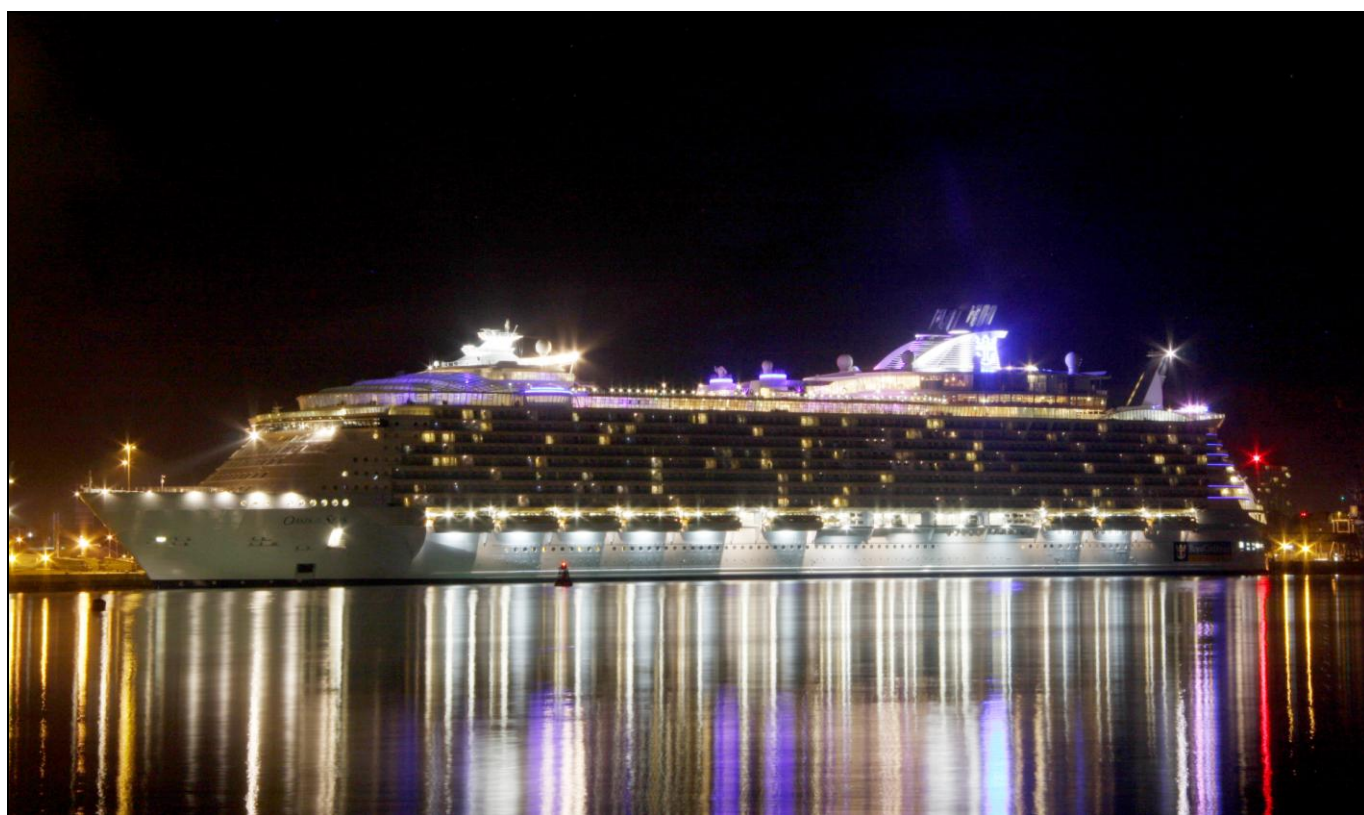
On 15th October ***Oasis of the Seas*** arrived. Officially it was her second call as she had previously anchored in The Solent during her inaugural trans-Atlantic crossing in 2009.

Once again she called in to Southampton while on a return passage to her home port of Fort Lauderdale after a refit at the Keppel Verholme Shipyard in Rotterdam that included replacing one of the ship's engines.

Oasis of the Seas sailed from Southampton at midnight 15th October.

On the 29th November the other new visitor to Southampton, RCI's ***Quantum of the Seas***, arrived from Hamburg. Constructed by the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, she is billed as the most technologically advanced cruise ship in the world.

She stayed in Southampton until 2nd November when she sailed that evening for New York where her official naming ceremony was held.



Oasis of the Seas in a splendid night shot taken from Marchwood

Andy McAlpine

Stuart E Beck 1903–2000

by Nigel V Robinson

Stuart Edgar Beck is closely associated with this area, but also with the World Ship Society as we shall see.

He was born in Richmond, Surrey, in the summer of 1903. His father, Edgar Drewett Beck (born High Wycombe, Bucks), was a Master Mariner and his mother was formerly Edith Fanny Stuart (born Manchester, Lancs), so it is clear from where his names originated. The 1911 census shows him with his parents at his maternal grandparents' house in Barnes, London.

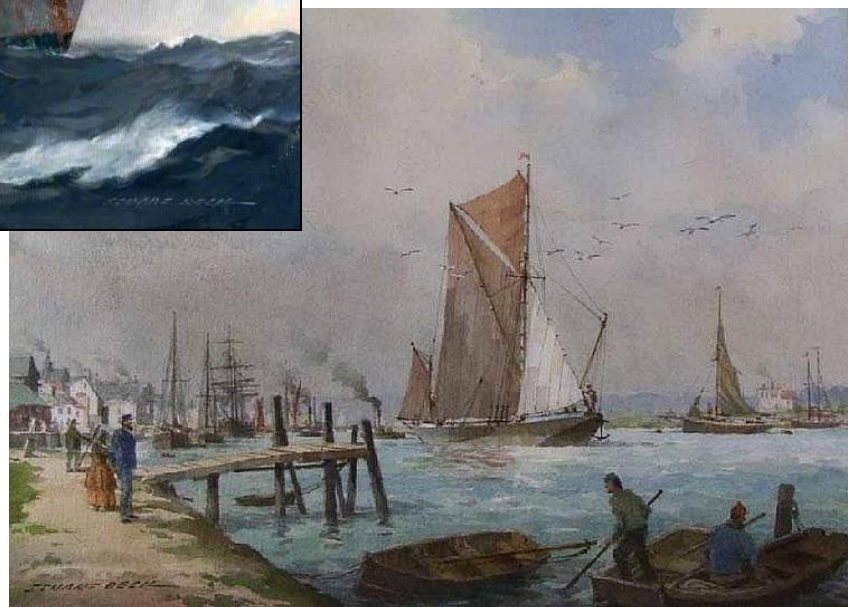
He himself was married to Jane G R Jones in Dartford, Kent, late in 1926, but we know that he spent at least half of his long life living and working in Lymington. Stuart and Jane had two children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He recalled doing his first painting, aged just six, on a boat to New Zealand captained by his father and he once took a trip to the Arctic because he wanted to paint some big waves.

He worked for many distinguished patrons including the Sultan of Oman; Prince Edward owns one of his works, commissioned as a birthday present. Stuart Beck has seascapes permanently on display at the RNLI Museum in Poole and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. He also did illustrations for the Boys Own Paper in the 1960s and produced a number of books, including "Ships Boats and Craft", first issued in 1939. The author has a copy of the 1942 reprint. He was, as to be expected, a very worthy member of the Royal Society of Marine Artists.

He also spent at least 40 years tutoring. It began when, as a commercial artist, he was working in the design offices of Vickers at Hurn Airport, Bournemouth, and he began teaching painting to various groups, eventually running a class in Lymington from which he only retired in 1999, aged 96.

As an artist and illustrator, Stuart ranks with the best, but to the WSS he is rather more special. It was back in 1949 that he was asked to produce a logo for the then fledgling World Ship Society and so the now familiar "three ships" design appeared; it was first used on the December 1949 edition of Marine News, distinguished by Stuart's tiny initials S E B. and featuring a liner, obviously based on Cunard's *Caronia*, a full rigged ship and a battleship, HMS *Vanguard*? *Caronia* and *Vanguard* were, of course, very new at the time.



Two of Stuart Beck's fine watercolours –

Above: The weather ship **Admiral Beaufort** sending a radio sonde balloon aloft

Right: Sailing barge on the Lymington River



Photo: Mike Rose, Bladerunner Shipping Ltd

ABP's floating crane **Canute** is at Pound's yard at Tipner, making her a very visible landmark alongside the M275.

Canute was towed to Portsmouth with the help of Blade Runner Shipping and is reportedly in the area to help hoist vessels and pontoons out of the harbour to the yard to be scrapped.

Steve New, of Tipner Regeneration Company, the developer for land near the site, said: 'It's certainly interesting to look at. Everybody that has lived in Portsmouth for the last 10 years is probably aware there is usually something exciting that sits there.'

Preserved WW2 Coastal Craft (Part 2)

by Bill Lawes

MGB 81

MGB 81 was a Motor Gun Boat designed and built by British Power Boats at Hythe to their standard "chine hull" design. She was constructed with a double-diagonal mahogany side but triple-diagonal bottom.

MGB 81 was laid down 16th December 1941 and launched 26th June 1942. She was powered by three Packard petrol engines that produced about 3600 HP. On trials she reached 38 knots. One problem with the early vessels was that to reduce weight the engines were un-silenced therefore noise from them could be detected at a considerable distance. To overcome this problem, BPB designed a system by which the exhaust could be expelled under water near the vessel's stern. This not only silenced the engines but also increased their efficiency. One unfortunate side effect was that the exhaust gases caused cavitation on the boats rudders that had an effect on their steering.

MGB 81 displaced 47 tons and her overall length was 71¾ ft. Her crew usually consisted of 12 (2 officers plus 10 ratings with differing duties). These vessels were initially armed with 1 2pdr gun forward, and twin 20mm aft, and two pairs of .303in machine guns.

MGB 81 was commissioned on 11th July 1942 then went to Weymouth for the "work up" course. By August she had joined the 8th MGB Flotilla at Dartmouth. During the next month she was in action off Guernsey. Her next area of operations was based at Felixstowe, from where, in September 1942, she was in action off the Hook of Holland. Several other actions occurred in that area, and one of them, in February 1943, resulted in **MTB 81**'s engine room being damaged by a shell hit. While she was being repaired the flotilla returned to Dartmouth, but in June 1943 she was damaged in collision with another MGB and had to be repaired by British Power Boats at Poole. Unfortunately she was there again in September following damage sustained when she was fired on by the shore batteries at Cap la Hague.

Also in September 1943, she was renumbered **MTB 416**. It had been realised during many actions that although the MGBs were to offer protection to MTBs, very frequently they were also in a position to fire torpedoes. It was therefore considered advantageous to fit a pair of 18in torpedo tubes to the craft and re-class them as MTB.

Not all boats had the torpedo tubes fitted, so it is not known for certain if **MGB 81/ MTB 416** was equipped with them. The flotilla was renamed 1st MTB Flotilla, for a short time based at Ramsgate, but by October 1943 it was back at Dartmouth.

In April 1944 she received damage from E-boats during an action in Lyme Bay. Repaired again at Poole, she was ready for action during the Normandy landings. While there she was involved in an attack on a German convoy off Cherbourg during the night on 23/24th June. More action occurred on 18/19th July when German R-boats were located off Cap d'Antifer. **MGB 416** obtained hits on these craft, but also needed further repairs as a result of the action.

In September 1944 the boat's flotilla relocated to Lowestoft, but no record of action was recorded till 14th February 1945 off Ostend. By 27th April 1945 **MGB 416** was paid off at Poole as it was clear that the European War would soon be ending. She was only three years old, but had experienced a very hectic time, so was placed in reserve.

Although she seemed to have received a lot of damage from her actions against the German Channel convoys, those vessels also suffered. Many of those ships were constructed from steel, whereas, the MGBs and MTBs were all of wooden construction. Also quite a lot of damage was caused within the German convoys because at night it was very easy for them to end up firing at their own ships.

MTB 416 was scheduled for "disposal" on 2nd October 1945. Later she was sold for private use. Actual details are not recorded. The next information was in 1958 when the vessel was arrested by Customs at Shoreham due to her being used in smuggling operations; it sounds a bit like Nicholas Montserrat's "The Boat that Died of Shame". Fortunately **MTB 416** did not die. She was taken over by a sailing school at Gosport for use as an accommodation ship and renamed **Jolly Roger**. Later in 1964 she became a houseboat at Hardway called **Cresta**.

In 1984 she was towed to the River Hamble, where in 1988 she was bought by Guy Webster who wanted to restore her to her wartime appearance. In 1998 Philip Clabburn bought her and had her moved to Marchwood where the British Military Powerboat Trust had been established so that the reconstruction work could proceed.

She was fitted with three 1000hp turbocharged diesel engines, as these were considered to be more economical to run than equivalent petrol engines. Her estimated top speed is 45 knots.

Since 2009, as **MGB 78**, she has been operated by the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust.

One final comment. **MGB 78** is painted in one of the standard WW2 MTB/MGB camouflage schemes. This was used because these vessels usually operated at night-time. During these actions they were often illuminated by "starshells" from overhead. The paint scheme was designed so that an overall shade of grey would cover the vessel. The upper parts would be grey, but where shadows formed, lighter colours would be used to reduce the shadow formed on those parts of the vessel. It was a successful scheme.

It is very fortunate that one of these important and locally produced vessels has been preserved.



MTB 81 at Caen in June 2014 for the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

FLEET LIST - Update

by David Hornsby

INDEPENDENT SHIPPING (BJ 159–Summer 2011)

Following the Black Jack article, the Dudman Group and its subsidiaries continued to expand, opening new depots at Lowestoft in Suffolk, Garston on Merseyside and during October 2012, at Montrose in Scotland. In 2012, the turnover of the Group was over £30 million and the workforce had increased to 140 employees.

However, all was not well. The parent Dudman Group was placed in Administration on 11 January 2013 following an application by HM Revenue and Customs. Some PAYE payments for 2010/11 were overdue and despite nine out of 12 agreed monthly late payments being made, £30,000 penalties were imposed by HMRC, although these were later overturned on appeal, when the Company showed that their income had been significantly affected by nine customer failures and their bankers' actions. The Company premises at Dibles Wharf in Southampton was reportedly sold by Agents at the end of January 2013 and the Company moved from Administration to creditors' voluntary Liquidation on 12 August 2013.



Independent Shipping was a creditor, as their cargoes were sourced from the Parent. This resulted in the company vessels ceasing trading and being tied-up in January 2013, reportedly arrested by the Admiralty Marshall for non-payment of fuel, crews and other charges. Although the Parent was in Administration, some of the subsidiaries are reported to be continuing trading and in both November and December 2013, five chartered vessels discharged cargoes of stone or marine aggregates at the two Shoreham wharves.

FLEET CHANGES

SHOREHAM	detained at Santander since 13/1/2013; ceased AIS transmissions mid-December 2013 and reported to have been broken up shortly afterwards by Recuperaciones Siderurgicas Y, Santander
INDEPENDENT	detained at Shoreham since 8/1/2013, with unpaid crew still aboard; press report on 7 February 2014 indicated ship now sold and crew paid by purchasers. 14 May 2014 left Shoreham in tow of tug Barracuda for Van Heyghen Recycling at Ghent
CEMENTINA	detained at Howdendyke (Humber), arriving 5 April 2013 at Ghent, eventually moving to Van Heyghen Recycling yard on 6 September.
THAMES	detained at Shoreham, then sailed under own power to Van Heyghen Recycling at Ghent, arriving 7/4/2013; Reported resold to Draga Praia Mar SA, Cape Verde, in November 2013, but did not leave Ghent until 31 July 2014; currently back in service
TORRENT	detained at Rye since 13/1/2013 with crew aboard (see arrest and bridge photos below); February 2014 reported sold to Exe Shipping Ltd, Exeter, and renamed EEMS DELTA

St Helen again!

Wightlink has recently announced that due to an almost 15 per cent drop in the number of people using the Lymington to Yarmouth service over the past four years, one of the "Wight" class will be moved to the Portsmouth to Fishbourne service and replace **St Helen**, now the oldest of the "Saints". Since her unfortunate accident in July when part of her starboard mezzanine deck collapsed, **St Helen** has been operating with the mezzanine decks out of use, thus reducing route capacity. See also BJ 172 Autumn 2014 page 7.

