

Black Jack

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



Issue No: 193

Winter 2019-20

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



*In seeking an appropriate picture for the Winter edition your editor came across this superb photo in his collection. Admittedly showing her entering a snowy Tilbury Docks **Arcadia** was a very familiar liner in Southampton – some will remember when in April 1970 the WSS AGM was held on board her in Southampton courtesy of Jim Davis a P&O Director and still today a WSS Vice-President. The photo although undated I would suggest was taken in the late 1950s - she was completed in 1954 - note the nine Thames spritsail barges at anchor in the background and that she still has her mainmast which was removed much later in 1969/70.
photo Nigel Robinson collection*

Black Jack – Winter 2019-20 No.193

Editorial team

Nigel Robinson, Michael Page & Andrew McAlpine.
Website – Neil Richardson

Black Jack is the quarterly magazine of the Southampton Branch of the World Ship Society.

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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Colin Drayson - but see note opposite

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Next Meeting

December 10th **Bert Moody Collection Miscellany**
Paul Gosling

2020 Branch Meeting Programme

- January 14th **Rod Baker Home & Abroad**
Neil Richardson
- February 11th **Cable Ships of Southampton**
Barry Peck
- March 10th **Medway Queen History**
Chris Bancroft
- April 14th **Cornish Ports & Harbours Pt 6**
Krispen Atkinson
- May 12th **Every Picture tells a Story**
Richard Jolliffe
- June 9th **Ten Days on the Bosphorus**
David Hornsby
- July 14th **Members Mini-Talks**
Colin Drayson & Richard Jolliffe
- August 11th **London Docks in the 1970s**
Ian Wells
- September 8th **British India Line part 2** Trevor Cox
- October 13th **WSS AGM 2020 Rendsburg**
Phil Simons
- November 10th **Southampton Branch AGM & Digital Photo Competition**
- December 8th **John Havers Tribute** Neil Richardson

Plus Annual Branch Cruise - to be confirmed

Subscriptions 2020

November's Marine News carried details of next year's figures. The basic subscription is £26 (**please pay by mid-December – late payments will be £30**) to receive Marine News digitally. If you want a paper copy of Marine News, the charge for that is now £55, so the total subscription for that is £81 unless you are a life member. (Life members continue to receive a free copy of the digital version of Marine News). 2 of our members have opted for the warship magazine in the past: figures for that are £10 (digital) or £14.50 (paper copy). Again there is no branch subscription for 2020.

If you have any queries, please contact Treasurer Andrew Hogg.

New Branch Secretary – since the AGM David Oldham has agreed to be our new Branch Secretary – he will take up the post in April 2020. Contact details in next BlackJack.

All contributions to *BJ*, by post, email, memory stick or CD are most welcome. Any article with a connection to The Solent area would be much appreciated. The Editor 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.

Andrew's Note Book

Some new or infrequent callers to Southampton Docks by Andrew McAlpine

Welcome to the latest notebook from the port of Southampton, here are some updates on the comings and goings and other news from around the port.



Seen arriving on 15th September is the vehicle carrier **Tirranna**. Built by DSME in 2009, she is in the new Wallenius Wilhelmsen livery, which is being rolled out across the fleet.

left: **Tirranna** 71,673GRT seen passing Calshot

At the start of November we had visits from two new cruise ships. The first was from **Norwegian Encore**, the final Breakaway-Plus class ship for Norwegian Cruise Lines. She had arrived from Bremerhaven and after a delay due to the weather sailed late the same day for New York en-route to her winter home of Miami where she was named on 21st November.



above: **Norwegian Encore** 169,145grt alongside 101 berth



The second new cruise ship in November was **MSC Grandiosa**, which arrived early on 12th November. Built in Saint Nazaire. **MSC Grandiosa** is the first Meraviglia-plus class ship. Originally due to stay in port overnight her stay was extended by three days due to bad weather in the Bay of Biscay and she finally sailed for her homeport of Barcelona on 13th November.

left: **MSC Grandiosa** 181,541GRT arriving 12th November



In the last notebook along with a photo of the new hybrid tug **Adventure I** mentioned how the sale of Kotug Smit to Boluda had been completed. Since then the tugs in the port have received the Boluda logo on the funnel, so fittingly here is **Adventure** seen this month sporting her new funnel logo.

left: **Adventure** built 2014 seen 12th November

We have seen calls from a new series of CMA CGM box ships the last two months. **CMA CGM Argentina** and **CMA CGM Panama** both 15,052TEU have been deployed on the FAL1 service. These smaller ships have been temporarily deployed to cover for larger vessels that are undergoing scrubber fitting.



above: **CMA CGM Panama** 172,000grt seen arriving 12th November

Hot off the press

From January 2020 the North Europe-NCSA Ecuador service (ECUBEX) operated by Maersk Line will transfer from Portsmouth to Southampton. The current 2,500TEU geared ships will be replaced by 8 x 3,000TEU Maersk Bali type ships calling every Thursday with the first vessel due around 21st January.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas - until next time - Andrew
all photos Andrew McAlpine



Two Welsh-owned coasters from less well-known Northam shipbuilders**The AFON TOWY**

One little known shipbuilder on the Itchen was Dibles (1918) Limited, which operated from the Belvidere Shipyard in Northam. The company appears to have been the successor to J. Dible & Sons, which between 1888-1912 built a couple of small sailing vessels and about 10 non-propelled barges/pontoons. After the Great War, between 1919-22, the new Dibles company built several barges, four small coasters and later a tug in 1927. The **AFON TOWY** appears to be the second of four sisters and the one with the shortest life.



Launched on 25th September 1919 as Yard number 112, **AFON TOWY** was completed in December 1919 for Afon S.S. Co. Ltd, managed by William Coombs and Sons of New Dock, Llanely, ownership transferred in 1928 to Afon Lleili SS Co Ltd under the same management.

684 gross tonnage 183.4' loa 178' bp x 29' beam and 11.3' depth, with a maximum draft of 12'8".

Single screw steamer with 82 rhp (registered horsepower) triple expansion engine by MacColl & Pollock Ltd.

In August 1941, carrying a coal cargo from Blythe to Queenborough on the Thames, she was part of a 39-ship southbound Convoy 559 supported by naval warships and trawlers. The convoy was caught in very heavy weather and on 6th August, eight ships grounded on Haisbro Sands off the Norfolk coast, the most serious being **AFON TOWY** and HM trawler **AGATE**. Despite 162 seamen being rescued from the grounded vessels by trawlers and the Cromer and Gorleston lifeboats, 37 men were lost, including 9 from the collier and 19 from the trawler. The names of the lost crew from **AFON TOWY** are included on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill in London.

The apparent sisters, all with the same hull dimensions were the 641 gross **LORIENT** (yn 109) completed in April 1919 for Monroe Shg Co Ltd of Cardiff (manager Morgan & Cadogan) with a 1891-built 76 rhp steam engine by J Penn & Sons, London. In 1920 renamed **WOOLACOMBE** for Devon Shipping Ltd, London (mgr. B C Ridd), later Gracechurch Transport Ltd, then Richard Longstaff's **SOUTHMINSTER** from 1925 and Antwerp-owned **MONS** from 1926, eventually broken up in 1951. The third was 683 tons gross 850 dwt **AVANVILLE** (yn 115) completed in August 1920 for Westville Shipping Co Ltd, Cardiff (Allin Leyshon & Co), from 1922 managed by J S Monks of Liverpool and broken up at Preston in 1958. The final sister was a new **LORIENT** (yn 116) completed in June 1921 for Cambo Shipping Co Ltd, Cardiff (Morgan & Cadogan Ltd). She was 685 tons gross and 900 dwt with 75 rhp J Samuel White triple expansion machinery. In 1922 she was sold to Portuguese-owners in Lisbon and renamed **COSTEIRO**, eventually being converted to a motorship in 1957 before being wrecked off Vigo in March 1963.

The second steam coaster is AFON GWILI

Another Company that is even more strongly associated with shipbuilding on the River Itchen, until about 1975, is Camper & Nicholson's Ltd, which in December 1912 took over the Northam yard and facilities of J. G. Fay & Sons (founded 1871). Camper's are best remembered for yachts and luxury motor cruisers, but in 1918/9 they also launched two 100ft non-propelled Boom Defence vessels (**BD 45 & BD 46**), others being built locally by Day Summers (4) and Thornycroft (2), and in 1920 delivered two steam coasters, the **AFON GWILI** and the smaller 435 gross ton **SOJOURNER** for Robinson, Brown & Co of Newcastle.

AFON GWILI was originally laid down as **WAR NIDD**, a World War One standard C4 coaster. She was launched in 1919, but not completed until January 1920, being delivered as Yard number 281 to Afon SS Co, managed by William Coombs & Sons of New Dock at Llanelly. At that time, the Company owned three other vessels, the Dundee-built **AFON DULAIS** (1919/987g), Dutch-built **AFON LLIEDI** (1904/1,015g) and the Southampton-built **AFON TOWY** (1919/684g) – see previous page. In 1928 ownership of **AFON GWILI** was transferred to Afon Lliedi S S Co, of Llanelly, one of two ships then managed by Mrs Coombs, still trading as W Coombs & Sons of Llanelly.



The tonnages of **AFON GWILI** were 874 gross and 1,170 deadweight. She had an overall length of 204'8" (198' bp) with a beam of 30'6" and a depth of 12'6", with the maximum draft of 13'11". Powered by a triple expansion steam engine built by Shields E & DD Co at North Shields on the Tyne, the machinery produced 129 nhp (nominal horsepower) with cylinders 16", 27" and 44" x 30" diameter.

She seems to have traded without incident, mainly carrying coal to Ireland or as one of the "Llyn Ships" that loaded stone in North Wales from the Nant Gwrtheyrn Quarry jetty (eventually closed in the 1960's). In June 1944, she sailed from The Solent to France, where she joined Normandy Invasion Convoy FTC.12, which then sailed from Seine Bay to the Thames (Southend).

In November 1955, she had her one and only name change, was when she was sold to the Hull-based Holderness S S Co and renamed **HOLDERVINE** (right).

Under this name, she continued operating until 31st March 1960 – by then 40 years old – when she was handed over at Dordrecht for breaking by Dutch breakers at Rotterdam.

The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich hold 63 plans of the ship and other documents.



More on *Isla de Luzon* built as *Woolston* by Oswald Mordaunt & Co

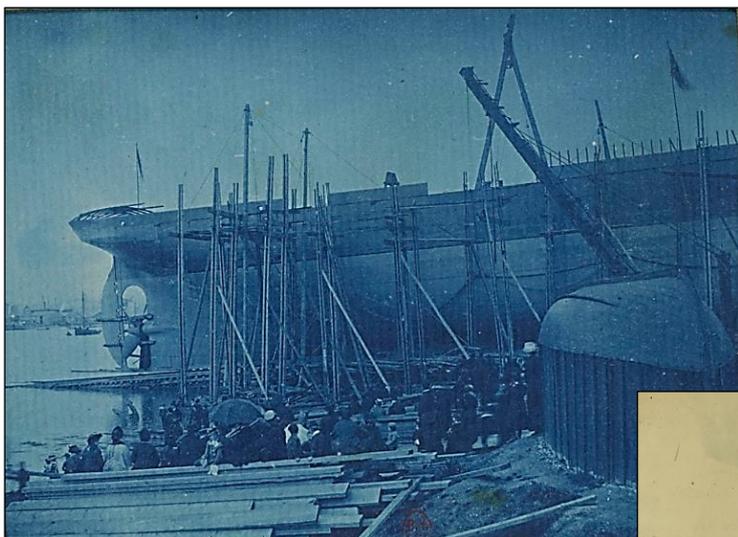
In BJ No 158 Spring 2011 A G K (Alan) Leonard wrote a piece about five speculatively built ships completed by Oswald Mordaunt & Co.

One of those vessels was ***Woolston*** launched at Woolston on Saturday 6th May 1882. She soon found a buyer in Compania General de Tabacos de Filipines of Barcelona and became their ***Isla de Luzon***. She later passed to the Compania Transatlantica. Alan also stated that she led a “seemingly uneventful” life until about 1910.

Your editor was contacted during the summer by Christine Simm, a professional librarian in Scotland, who is researching all the ships broken up by P & W MacLellan at Bo’ness on the Firth of Forth and had picked up the BJ article whilst surfing the web.

It appears that *Isla de Luzon* had very varied career sailing mainly between Spain and Manila carrying general cargo, passengers. She is also recorded as visiting Liverpool on a number of occasions and also the Caribbean including Cuba. In addition she carried troops and armaments at various times. Sadly she met her end by fire in the Mediterranean homeward bound between Port Said and Genoa in February 1910. She was beached at San Francisco de Messina; all crew and passengers and some cargo were saved. Eventually after inspection in dry-dock at Barcelona she was deemed not worth repairing and sold for breaking up at Bo’ness arriving there in March 1911. So we now know a little more about a Woolston-built ship that travelled very extensively for ship of a mere 4256 tons.

Christine also discovered some pictures of ***Isla de Luzon*** mostly sourced via the internet and three are reproduced with acknowledgement to the original source and with thanks to Christine Simm for sending them to me. She also sent a very full twenty page account of the ship’s career both in English (and Spanish!) if anyone would like to read more.



left - ***Woolston*** about to be launched

below - ***Isla de Luzon*** in service

below left: ***Isla de Luzon*** at Barcelona around 1905



Bits and Pieces



Williams Shipping - the Southampton-based marine and logistics company are celebrating 125 years since their founding in 1894. In addition to various locations around Southampton they also have offices in Pembroke and Aberdeen.

Left: A familiar scene from yesteryear showing a number of Williams Shipping vessels at Town Quay



*right; The new aircraft carrier **HMS Prince of Wales** arriving at Portsmouth for the first time on Saturday 16th November.*

Photo Peter Anthony

The former VTS building at Dockhead, opened in July 1972, is to be demolished along with a dry-goods storage area at the south end of the QEII Terminal (38-9 berth) - as this is written work has already started on the latter.

Cruise Ship News

As the 2019 cruise season ends, many of the regular callers have sailed off to warmer waters for their winter seasons. **Independence of the Seas** has returned to the Caribbean and will not return in 2020 - instead she will be replaced by **Anthem of the Seas**.

Princess Cruises **Enchanted Princess** 143,700gt and fifth in the Royal Class is to be named in Southampton in June 2020. Her keel was laid on 14th February 2019 at the Fincantieri yard in Monfalcone.

Fincantieri has also now started work on Cunard's as yet un-named sister for **Queen Victoria** and **Queen Elizabeth** which is due to be delivered in 2022.

Cunard celebrated 100 years since they moved their New York express service from Liverpool to Southampton with a special transatlantic sailing of the **Queen Mary 2** which departed the port on 19th November - see also BJ 191 Summer 2019.

During October Fred. Olsen's **Braemar** became the largest ship ever to sail through the 6.4km-long Corinth Canal during a 25-night Greek Islands cruise – she will repeat this feat in April 2021.

WSS Leslie Sargent Quiz--2019

Held at the Royal Clarendon Hotel at Gravesend on Saturday 21st September 2019 the Quiz featured 5 Teams in the opening Round, with a pictorial funnel-poser, plus a 39 questions quiz, containing pictorial puzzles as well as written questions. The format continued with the 2 Winning teams from that session going forward to compete in the Final. In the final section, comprising once more of written questions and visual puzzles, the team representing Southampton Branch of the WSS, emerged the 2019 Winners of the Leslie Sargent Trophy. Most of the teams were a mixture of members from different Branches, as this has often happened in latter years, and our victorious team this year was represented by Colin Drayson and Mike Davies, with "guests" Chris Bancroft (IOW) and Jimmy Poole (Medway). So we are proud to be the present Holders of the Leslie Sargent Quiz Trophy.



Colin Drayson (WSS Southampton Branch Secretary)

The winning team! - Colin, Jimmy, Chris and Mike with the trophy.

Your editor is always pleased to receive any articles and/or pictures on the local scene that you may be able to submit. Particularly useful would be articles which are not date sensitive and so could be used at any time.

I am happy to receive items by any method – email to gillrobinson@freenetname.co.uk or nigelvrobinson@gmail.com on CD or memory stick, or hard copy at meetings or by post to 2 Glencarron Way, Bassett, Southampton, SO16 7EF.

A – Z of Sail

by Michael Page

For the letter “S” I have chosen the SEDOV

For the next tall ship I have chosen the mighty **Sedov** but she has had two different names when launched before she became **Sedov**, so maybe the old saying applies of third time lucky.

She was built in 1921 as the **Magdalene Vinnen** at the Friedr. Krupp yard at Germaniawerft, Keil, Germany. She had a professional crew of 70-plus, up to 120 cadets and maybe 50 guest trainees and was owned by the German Shipping company bringing Nitrate from Chile and grain from Australia from 1921 to 1936. She apparently did the grain trip to Sydney in 92 days. What a lovely sight she must have looked in full sail.. and she was built with an Auxillary engine to assist manoeuvring in and out of port.

In 1936 she was bought by Norddeutscher Lloyd of Bremen and renamed **Commodore Johnson**. This new owner modified her to a cargo-carrying training ship. More accommodation was provided, as the ship, apart from her permanent crew, was to have a complement of 50 to 60 trainees on each journey.

She survived WW11 but was handed to the Russians as war reparation. The Soviets converted her into a sail training vessel of the Soviet Navy and renamed **Sedov**, after the Arctic explorer Georgy Sedov who died during an expedition in the Arctic in 1914, and used as a training ship for the Navy from 1952-1957.

From 1957 to 1966 used as a oceanographic research ship in the North Atlantic and then transferred to the reserve in Kronstadt with only occasional training trips to the Gulf of Finland.

Finally in 1981 after many renovations was based at Baltic Division of Training Ships in Riga. After Latvian declaration of independence in 1991 she went to Murmansk Naval School. So this is the mighty **Sedov** we see today - a giant amongst the other Sailing ships.

SEDOV Class “A” a four-masted Barque with a steel hull. In 2010 she had the title of largest sail training ship in the world. Length (loa) 117.5 metres Beam= 14.84 m Depth 6.5 m Speed 18 knots . A displacement of 7,300 long tons.



*Two fine views of **Sedov** under full sail*

