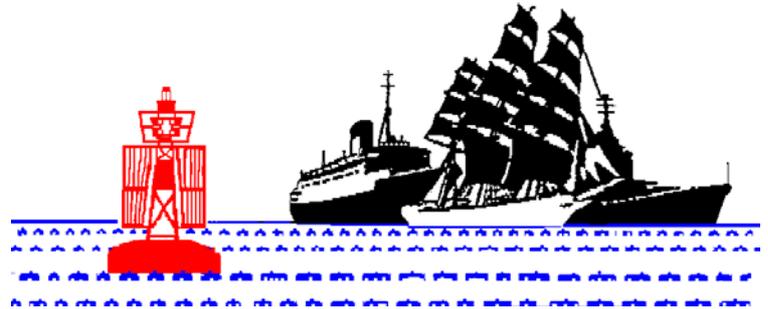


Black Jack

Price £1.00

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY



Issue No: 135

Summer 2005

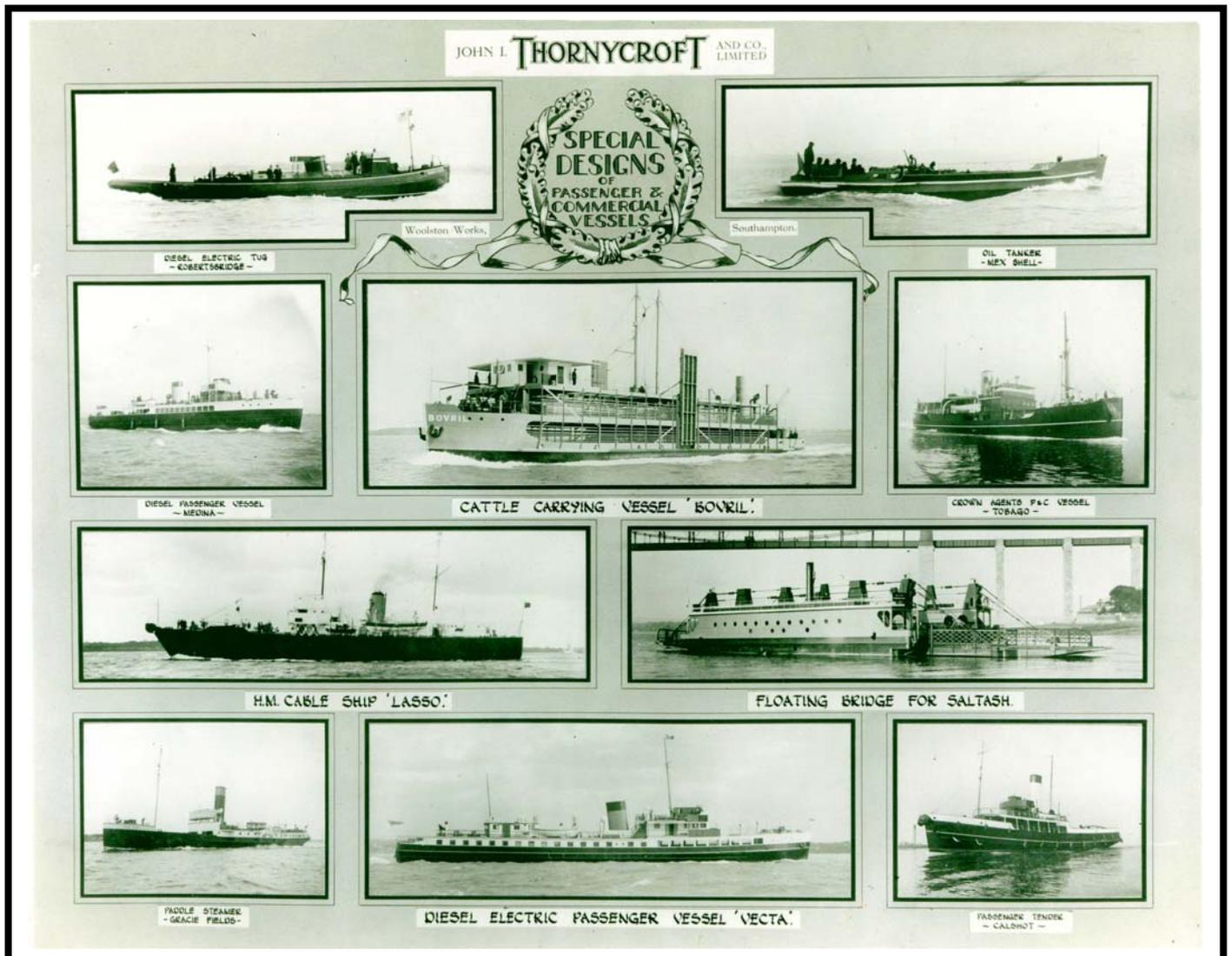


Photo R. Baker Collection

ABP APPOINTS NEW ASSISTANT PORT MANAGER, SOUTHAMPTON

Ray Facey, 56, has been promoted to the post of Assistant Port Manager for Associated British Ports' (ABP) Port of Southampton. At present the Sales & Marketing Manager for ABP's Port of Southampton, Ray's appointment takes effect on 1 June 2005. He succeeds Matthew Kennerley, who has recently been appointed Port Director, ABP Hull & Goole.

Born in Liverpool, but a resident of Southampton for most of his life, Ray joined the Company as a junior management trainee in 1967. Prior to his current role, Ray held the post of Commercial Manager for ABP Southampton for 18 years.

Ray Facey is married with two children. He is a 'long-suffering' Southampton Football Club supporter.

Doug Morrison, Port Director for ABP Southampton, congratulated Ray on his promotion.

"During his time at Southampton, Ray has amassed considerable experience and an intricate knowledge of the workings of the port, making him ideal for this position. Ray's expertise is invaluable to the Port of Southampton and I look forward to working with him in his new capacity."

ALCOHOL AND SAILING DON'T MIX'

'Alcohol and sailing don't mix'; this is the clear message being sent to all users of Southampton Water and the Central Solent by Associated British Ports (ABP), the Harbour Authority and owner of the Port of Southampton, who recently prosecuted two leisure users for being under the influence of alcohol while in charge of their craft, in contravention of the Southampton Harbour Byelaws.

One of the skippers was not only found guilty of being under the influence of alcohol, but also of contravening the 'Moving Prohibited Zone' (MPZ) in front of a large containership arriving at the Port of Southampton. This is the zone that operates 1,000 metres ahead, and 100 metres on either side of any vessel over 150 metres in length, while navigating the main shipping channel between Cowes and Calshot. This is the first prosecution for a violation of the MPZ since it became a byelaw offence in 2003.

Captain Steven Young, Harbour Master, ABP Southampton said:

"While not wishing to curtail leisure users' enjoyment of the water, these successful prosecutions send a clear message that no one should be navigating a small craft when unfit by reason of excess alcohol consumption. Southampton is an extremely busy commercial port with large, deep-draughted vessels arriving and departing every day, and all mariners need to be fully alert to ensure their own safety and that of all harbour users. The byelaw involving the 'Moving Prohibited Zone' is a pragmatic measure aimed at keeping the area immediately ahead of a large vessel clear of small craft to ensure the safe passage of both vessels."

Southampton's position as the sole UK port of entry for fresh produce imported from the Canary Islands has been reinforced recently when the agreement between Associated British Ports (ABP), Southampton Fruit Handling Ltd (SFH) and the Federations of Canary Island Producers (Fedex Las Palmas and Aceto Tenerife) was renewed for a further four years.

Each year, the port handles over 100,000 pallets of fresh produce from the Canary Islands. The imports consist predominantly of tomatoes destined for supermarket shelves around the UK. Smaller volumes of peppers, avocados and cucumbers are also handled during the season, which lasts from October to May. During this period, two refrigerated vessels call every week at the purpose-built ABP Canary Islands Terminal in Southampton's Western Docks for discharge by specialist company Southampton Fruit Handling Ltd.

Andrew Kent, ABP Port Director for Southampton, said:

We are, of course, delighted that Fedex-Aceto has chosen to continue to use ABP's Port of Southampton. This new contract is an extension of a long and successful association that spans more than 18 years."

The President of Fedex-Aceto said:

"Southampton has first-class facilities and enjoys an excellent location for fast distribution throughout the UK, which makes it the perfect choice for handling the high- quality fresh produce that we export from the Canary Islands."

From Monty's Camera.....Compiled by Monty Beckett

A summary of new or infrequent callers to Southampton Docks over the last few months.
Photographs : **Thomson Celebration, Chikuma Reefer and Zeran**

Berths 204-7: Colombo Express, Los Angeles Express 75590/03, P&O Nedlloyd Manet 94724/05, V.Ushakov 2295/85, Philipp 2567/78

RoRo Vessels: Al Yona 32228/81, Morning Sapphire 45707/85, Toledo 61321/05, Vibeke 16950/96, Garden 10762/77, Hual Paris 57280/05, Morning Champion 57692/05, Morning Crown 57962/05, Valmont Express 8553/82, Grande Roma, Morning Noble, Olympian Highway 47077/95

No7 Drydock: Adonia 77499/98, Ocean Village, RMS Duisburg 1281/83

Berths 107/8: Sunrana 3663/76, Petra 2545/00, Sea Eagle 1785/82, Midland1 4991/92, Eilsum 1662/92, Laga 3911/01, Azur 1829/81

Berths 104: E.W. McKinley 6911/83, Wellington Star 7944/92, Green Karfoy 5084/89, Chikuma Reefer 7367/98, Nagato Reefer 7367/00

Berths 102/3: Link Trader 1082/81, Ilka 1366/85, Danica Hav 1522/84.

Berths 101/2: Junetta 7406/02, Ariana 7876/88, CEC Enterprise

Marchwood RLC: CEC Fighter 4980/94, Tor Futura 18725/96, BBC Denmark 4086/99, Zeran 15685/87, Savannah Express

Berth 36: Atasoylar II 5368/91, Sardinia 2997/98, Midland 5 4955/96, Wittenburgen 2381/92, Arklow Viking 2829/99, Wilson Caen 2999/97, Arklow Ranger 2999/02

Berths 46/7: Levantgracht 6037/88, Pietersgracht 5998/86, Socol 1 6030/91, Lootsgracht 5998/89

Berths 30/25: Achtergracht 7949/90, Bavaria 2550/96, Atlantic Bay 4996/84, Fri Star 1499/81, Jetstream, BBC Korea, BBC Singapore.

Dibles Wharf: Kielder 2097/82, Sunlark 1044/84.

Princes Wharf: Bounder 1984/89, Sirius P 2440/90, Gavigo 2446/92, Arlau 2461/04, Pensum 1960/90, Antabe 2446/97, Eva Maria Muller 2446/98, Eider 2452/03, Monika Muller 2446/98.

Passenger Vessels: Arcadia 82972/05, Thomson Celebration 33933/84, Sea Princess, Legend of the Seas 69490/95, Star Princess 108977/01.



Ships in Port - Past and Present Dart Line Trio

Container ships capable of loading 8,000teu are ubiquitous these days, but back in 1970 a new series of 1,500TEU box ships became what were the worlds largest.

The introduction of the 33,000gt **Dart Europe**, **Dart America** and **Dart Atlantic** represent the culmination of an agreement between three former rivals CMB of Belgium, Clarke Traffic Services of Canada and the UK based Bristol City Line, to containerise their trans-Atlantic cargo liner services following their joint venture Dart Line in 1969.

Each of these three companies would own and manage one ship, while all marketing and management of the service was arranged by Dart Line itself. Not surprisingly, CMB decided to place the order for its ship with its favoured yard, Cockerill of Hoboken. Meanwhile, Clarke and Bristol City Line ordered their vessels from the renowned British shipyard Swan Hunter, using the same design as the Cockerill-built vessel.

CMB's **Dart Europe** became the first of the trio to enter service, in November 1970, closely followed by Clarke's **Dart America**. Ports of call for the Dart Line service originally comprised Southampton, Antwerp, New York and Norfolk. The final ship **Dart Atlantic**, was delivered in May 1971, permitting Dart Line to offer a complete weekly service by new purpose built container ships.

The new vessels offered a maximum loading capacity of 593-40ft and 370-20ft boxes, the equivalent of 1,556TEU. Unlike today's box ships, which load over half of their cargo on deck, the majority of containers were then stowed in the cellular holds with only a maximum of two-tier stacking on deck possible.

The Dart trio were the first large container ships powered by a single low speed diesel engine during a period when thirsty steam turbines were the norm for big carriers. Their 29,000bhp Sulzer 10-RND installation provided a service speed of 23kts and was capable of UMS operation. Other advanced features included a fully enclosed full width bridge, KaMeWa bow thrusters and a flume stabilisation system, with extensive use of high-tensile steel in the hull construction.

A very high standard of accommodation was provided for a crew of 31, including three cadets, all housed in single cabins with private facilities. Separate lounges were provided for the officers, Captain and ratings and each ship had a large owners suite.

The threesome provided sterling service on the North Atlantic run until 1981, when the ships were switched to the Montreal-North Europe trades following changes to the ownership structure of the Dart Line partners. All three ships provided reliable service on this trade until 1996, when they were replaced by purpose built newbuildings before shortly afterwards, heading for the beaches of Bangladesh.

Hapag Lloyd named the 52nd ship in its fleet the 8,749teu **Colombo Express** in Singapore during mid-April, she made her maiden call at Southampton at the end of the April. The vessel enters the Grand Alliance Loop D China Express Service. Another nine 8000+ teu vessels will follow until 2008. The management aim to keep its current level of 60% owned tonnage. Of the ten new post panamax six will be owned by the carrier, two chartered in and two leased.

Qinetiq has sold the 90m long triple-hull research vessel **Triton**, in a deal that will see the worlds largest motor powered trimaran re emerge as a one-off hydrographic surveying vessel for Gardline Shipping. Great Yarmouth based Gardline is said to have paid around £7m for a ship built in 2000 as a test platform for the trimaran concept by Vosper Thornycroft for £13m. The vessel was converted at Falmouth where additional echo sounding and navigational equipment was fitted. She will be employed initially in the UK Western approaches delivering data to maintain British Admiralty charts.

Dart Atlantic passing Calshot outward bound. Photo Editors Collection



P&O's newest ship the **Arcadia** arrived in the port during April where she was named by double Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes. The **Arcadia** is the largest ship to be built exclusively for the British market. Photo Mick Lindsay



My Years with Vosper-Thornycroft – by John Lillywhite

My first experience with ships was from January 1961 when I worked on the refit and air conditioning of the liner **Iberia** for John I. Thornycroft in the docks. From there I worked for Harland and Wolff, Southern Railway, Heaton and Tabb (a London based interior ships furnishing company) Gray Connolly, Kirkcaldy and later the Vosper Thornycroft building and the penthouse suites for the **Queen Elizabeth 2**.

From there I spent a few months with Camper & Nicholson's at Northam. I learnt that Vospers at Woolston wanted hands, I applied and on Wednesday 30th May 1973 I joined the company as a joiner and started working as such on the type 21 frigate **HMS Amazon**. So this was my introduction to shipbuilding. Joiners work consisted of thermal insulation of ships sides and where applicable deck heads and beams in the galley, rates cabins and messes, PO's cabins and mess, officers and C.O's quarters. When the insulation is complete and painted the furniture has to be scribed and fitted. The wooden furniture is made in the joiners shop and supplied to the ship as and when required. The metal furniture was either made in the light plate shop or M.O.D. supplied. While the cabins and messes are being fitted out cork insulated vent trunking is supplied and fitted all over the ship. Certain pipes are insulated by joiners and when these are complete, decks in passageways, cabins and messes and covered in different coloured corticene tile or lino. As cabins and messes are progressed they go through inspections, preliminary and final and compartments such as MCO (main communications office), Ops Room, Ships Control Centre, Weapons compartments are sometimes handed over to the Navy as a completed item.

Insulation is also fitted in the engine rooms, fan rooms, the hangar (on larger ships). Every cabin and mess, the bridge, sick bay, wardroom, heads, etc will then have sundries fitted such as mirrors, clocks, notice boards, key safes, ships honours board.

At the end of the build of the ship and prior to its C.S.T.'s (Company Sea Trials) they then go to dry-dock or the syncro lift at Portchester in the case of smaller ships such as M.C.M.V. and S.R.M.H. for final underwater inspection. Then the Commodores inspection and if passed handed over to the Royal Navy or foreign navy. So they are the ingredients of the build of a ship, more or less, and what joiners and all the other trades are required of.

I worked on **HMS Amazon** for about 14 months when I joined the **HMS Antelope** from her launch date 23 July 1971 to her completion date 19th July 1975, the longest period I had worked on any ship in the yard. Sadly seven years later she was lost in the Falklands Campaign. From **Antelope** I stated working on the third of four Mk 10 frigates for the Brazilian navy **Constituicao** in June 1975 and a year later I put in for the foreman's job and was accepted. So the men on that ship I worked with, they worked for me, they too accepted me as their leader; most ships had two or three foreman of each trade depending on the type of ship.

My next ship was the first M.C.M.V. (Mine Counter Measures Vessel) **HMS Brecon** then on to **Cattistock** in 1981. March 1982 I was back on a big ship, the type 42 destroyer **Nottingham** but only for three weeks when I returned M.C.M.V's. First the **Dulverton** and in October 1983 the **Chiddingfold**. In between these two ships I was sent to the docks with a group of joiners and cleaners on the **QE2** for protection work of passage and stairs prior to her voyage to the Falklands.

May 1984 the **Hurworth** and while I worked on her during the day, the evenings 1600 to 1800 worked on two of three Tribal Class frigates **Gurkha** and **Tartar** for the Indonesian Navy.

From June 1985 to December 1987 I worked on **Atherstone**, **Berkeley** and the last M.C.M.V **Quorn** in January 1989 I worked on the first S.R.M.H. (single rille Mine Hunter) for the Saudi navy **Al Jawf**. November 1990 on to SRMH **Cromer** and in 1992 **Bridport**. 1993 another Saudi ship **Al Kharj**.

My last ship was the 83m corvette for Oman **Qahir Al Amwaj** from May 1992 to March 1996.

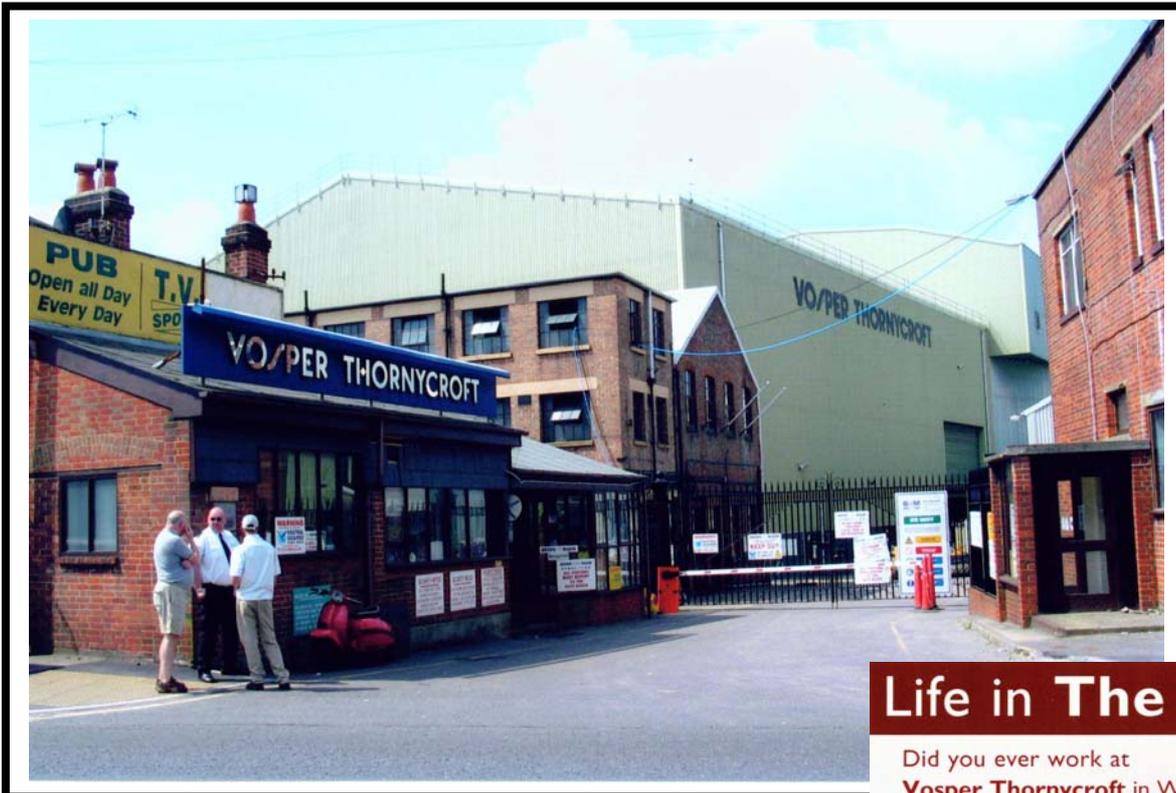
In October 1996 I was made redundant along with four other foreman about my age.

Yes I did enjoy my 23 years with Vosper Thornycroft.

The Clipper Group of Denmark has made a surprise purchase of cruise ships only a few months after also diversifying into VLCC's. One on these ships the **Island Sky** has recently put in an appearance in Portsmouth she was built 1992 and refurbished is 2003.

Clipper has purchased the 114 passenger Italian-built sisters **Island Sky** and **Island Sun**, following the demise of Mauritius Island Cruises. International Shipping partners (ISP) of Miami, will continue to manage the ships. They are fixed on long-term charters, **Island Sky** to Noble Caledonia and **Island Sun** to New York based Travel Dynamics.

Clipper is registered in the Bahamas but has commercial headquarters in Denmark, has no plans to become a cruise operator, although it does not rule out purchasing other cruise ships. The **Island Sun** has since been renamed **Corinthia II**.



Life in The Yard

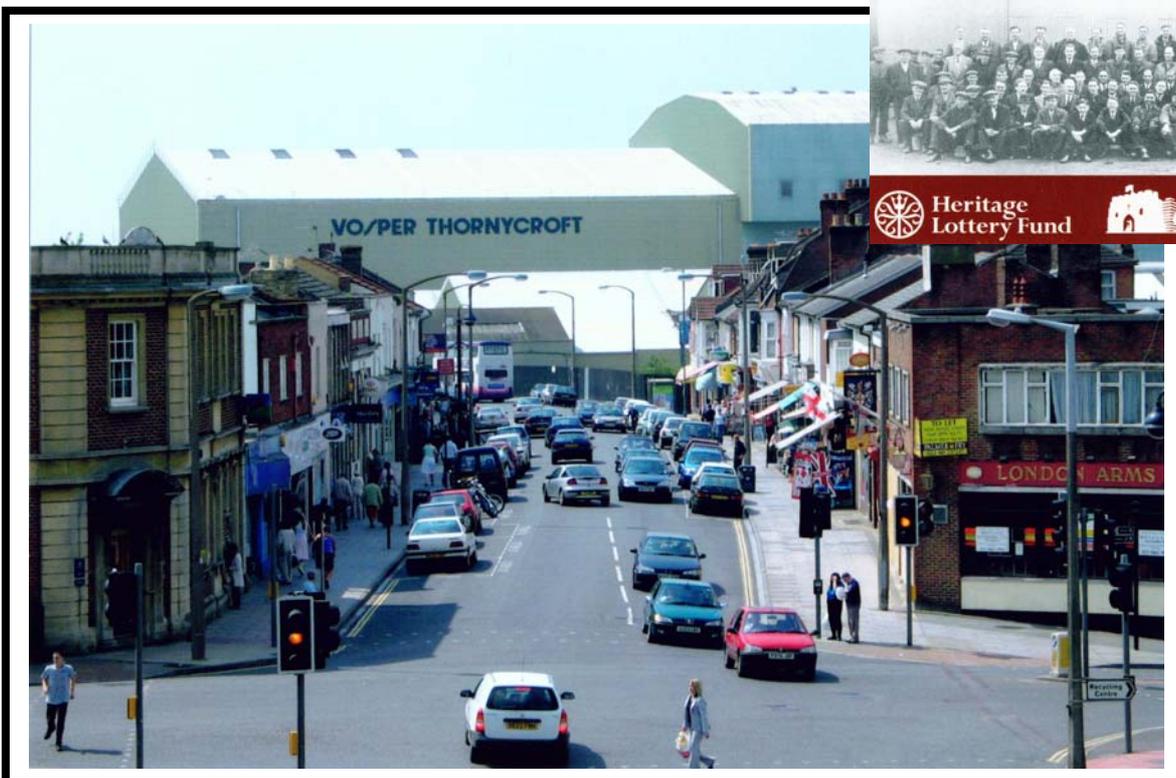
Did you ever work at
Vosper Thornycroft in Woolston?
 Do you have memories of working there?
**We are recording the history of
 Thorny's and we'd love to hear from you.**

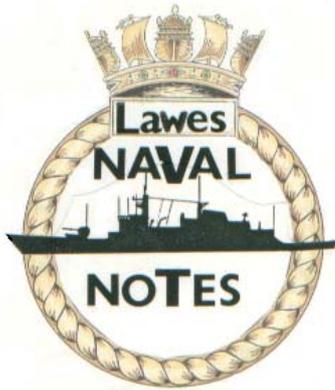
We also need volunteers to help on the project
 with interviewing, scanning and archiving.
 Training and support will be given.

Please contact Krista or Karen at the
 Oral History Unit on **023 8091 5730** or
 email krista.woodley@southampton.gov.uk



Two views of Vospers shipyard in Woolston by Ivan Bovey showing the main entrance and main sheds.





The only naval movement of note during the last few weeks has been the arrival at Portsmouth of two US vessels. These were the aircraft carrier **Harry S. Truman** and the destroyer **Barry**.

The carrier was in the Solent in May 2003, so should be familiar to most of our members as it was described at that time. The destroyer is one of the numerous Arleigh Burke class of guided missile ships. She was completed in 1992 by Ingalls at Pascagoula. Before that time she changed her name three times, originally to be known as *John Barry*, then *Barry*, then *John Barry* and finally just **Barry**. These ships displace 8850 tons full load, carry a crew of 21 officers and 315 ratings. Their armament consists of "Standard" SAM; "Harpoon" SSM and "Tomahawk" missiles, together with a 127 mm gun and a Phalanx close-in-weapon. They are fitted with a helicopter deck, but do not carry an aircraft. Gas turbine engines produce 90000 hp for a maximum speed of 31 kts. Altogether there are 28 ships of this type in the US Navy plus over 30 others of a slightly enlarged type called "Flight II A" which carry helicopters.

Solent Reviews by Bill Lawes

Part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations will be a Review of ships assembled in the Solent, this will be the latest of a long history of such gatherings.

The Solent, because of its sheltered waters and geographic location has always been a favourite area for assembling vessels either for military or peaceful activities.

One of the earliest recorded reviews was in 1346 when King Edward III inspected about 1000 large and 500 small ships used to transport troops to France for a campaign that led to the Battle of Crecy. In 1415 King Henry V in his Royal Yacht "**Trinity Royal**" reviewed 1400 ships at Portchester, again heading for France and the Battle of Agincourt. Another war with France in 1512 brought Henry VII to Portsmouth to see more vessels that were to carry soldiers across the Channel. Although not a review, in 1545, Henry VIII was at Southsea Castle to witness the "**Mary Rose**" capsize and sink when leading an English fleet into action with a French fleet off the Isle of Wight.

In 1582 Queen Elizabeth I reviewed a squadron at Spithead, this was the first time that the yardarms were manned by the crews and that gun salutes were fired. During their reigns, both King Charles I and II had reviews, the latter in 1662 when he was married in Portsmouth to Catherine of Braganza after his ship the "**Royal Charles**" had brought the Princess from Portugal.

King George III carried out several reviews; one in 1794 was to celebrate Howe's victory during the "First of June" battle. The King went onboard the Flagship "**Queen Charlotte**" anchored in Spithead.

Queen Victoria's reign saw many fleet assemblies, partly due to the length of her reign, but also because the Royal Navy was at the peak of its power, it was also a time of change and evolution for the Navy. The first Spithead review carried out by Victoria was in 1842. Two years later when she inspected British and French ships at Spithead two Paddle steamers, "**Volcano**" and "**Comet**" were present for the first time. In 1845 Queen Victoria reviewed the "Experimental Squadron" that had been formed to compare the sailing qualities of various ships, a screw steamer "**Rattler**" was also present. By 1853, most of the ships in a review were steam powered. In 1856 Queen Victoria in the Royal Yacht "**Victoria & Albert**" attended the "Great Peace Review" to mark the end of the Russian War, 254 ships were present including 22 line-of-battle ships, 16 screw frigates and 26 paddle frigates. A review in 1865 saw all Royal Navy ships flying the White Ensign for the first time, the previous division of ships into Red, White & Blue squadrons had been abolished in 1864. When the Sultan of Turkey visited Britain in 1867 the review arranged for him included 15 iron or ironclad frigates or sloops. For Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee review in 1887, 128 ships were present, including some from France, Germany and Holland. Ten years later, at the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee 165 ships were in the review, all of them British, included in this number were 21 battleships. It was during this review that Charles Parsons demonstrated, un-officially, his steam turbine powered "**Turbinia**" that steamed at over 34 knots through the Fleet. On the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 a five-mile long row of ships assembled in the Solent, through which the Royal Yacht "**Alberta**" steamed with King Edward VII onboard. Battleships from Germany, France Japan & Portugal were also present.

In 1902 Edward's Coronation review included 114 ships with 21 battleships. This was the last occasion in which the ships appeared in the "Victorian Livery" of black hulls and white upperworks. The next major gathering was for "Our Sailor King's Review" in August 1907 when 181 warships were present and it was claimed that not one of them was obsolete. Edward VII went to sea in the "**Dreadnought**" at the end of the review. Two years later 144 ships of the Home & Atlantic Fleets were on show for the members of the Empire press.

When King George V came to the throne his Coronation Review in 1911 had 170 ships, 32 of them battleships, of which 8 were "Dreadnoughts". It was also the first time submarines were included in the review fleet, 8 of them being present. One year later, 223 warships were inspected by Members of Parliament. During this event aircraft participated for the first time, one actually taking off from HMS "London". On 16th July 1914 King George V onboard "**Victoria & Albert**" reviewed 648 ships in 11 lines stretching for 40 miles. This was known as the "Mobilisation" review as the ships dispersed to their home bases after the review, but remained fully manned because of the expectation of war with Germany.

The first review after World War 1 was the "Royal Review" of 1924 by King George V, which featured 10 battleships, 1 battlecruiser and for the first time a large number of minesweepers. It was in 1935 that the King's Silver Jubilee Review was held with the combined Home and Mediterranean Fleets. The event ended with a flypast by the Fleet Air Arm. When King George VI came to the throne, his Coronation review was held in 1937, with 141 Royal Navy ships which included 9 battleships; 2 battlecruisers and 5 aircraft carriers. Amongst the foreign warships present were "**Graf Spee**" from Germany, "**Asigara**" from Japan and "**New York**" from USA. The next "review" was in completely different circumstances. In late May 1944 King George VI onboard **RML 529** reviewed the ships and craft gathering in the Solent ready for Operation Overlord.

Queen Elizabeth's Coronation Review in 1953 was the last to feature a battleship, HMS "**Vanguard**". There were however 9 aircraft carriers and over 200 other vessels, including for the first time some with gas turbine engines. Another first was that helicopters were part of the flypast. The Queen's Royal Yacht on the occasion was the Navy's Despatch Vessel HMS "**Surprise**". By the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Review in 1977 the "**Britannia**" could carry out her duty as Royal Yacht. In this gathering about 100 RN ships together with those from other "Treaty" Navies formed the review fleet. This was the first time the Nuclear Powered ships were in the line up. The Royal Navy had four nuclear submarines and USA sent one nuclear submarine and the nuclear powered guided missile cruiser "**California**". A more modest review occurred in 1990 to mark 150 years of the Cunard Line. The Queen in "**Britannia**" sailed past **QE 2**; **Vistafjord** and **Atlantic Conveyor**, then transferred by Royal Barge to the **QE 2**. This was followed by a flypast by Concorde. On 5th June 1994 the "**Britannia**" again carried the Queen through the Solent to review the vessels assembled to mark the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. Ten years later the Royal Yacht was no longer available for a similar event to mark the 60th anniversary of the Normandy landing.

This year's review will most likely consist of fewer vessels than some of those in the past, but it should still be an interesting event to observe. Also you can guarantee that if at some time in the future another review is organised, it will be much smaller than Trafalgar 200.

Type 45 Destroyers

VT's involvement in the Type 45 has enabled them to increase their capacity and design of the shipbuilding facility by relocating to Portsmouth. In addition to **HMS Daring**, VT Group have a contract for at least 5 vessels in its class.

The construction of the ship parts begins with the laser cutting process, which cuts large sheet stock into necessary components to an accuracy of a fraction of a millimetre. All sheets are printed with the part information and markings to help minimize errors.

The cut steel pieces are then welded together to form the hull and deck components with supporting structure. Their manufacturing process for the components is designed as a large-scale production line with workstations tasked dynamically for the specific part. The sheets are temporarily welded to a steel pallet structure to minimise distortion in fabrication.

The builds for the bow sections of **HMS Daring** and **HMS Dauntless** are occurring simultaneously in the main construction hall in Portsmouth, steel cutting for the third 50m 1,200 tonne section commenced at the end of February.

The aluminium structures, including funnel and the foremast for the Sampson multifunction radar, will follow the main bow section when it is transported to Glasgow for final construction. To enable the large modules to be joined together a 50mm excess is manufactured on the joining components on the module interface, a 3D mapping system is used to create a model of the structure and then the required trimming is calculated.

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Please Note:
Black Jack is available in
colour via email and at the
branch website
www.sotonwss.org.uk
shortly after printing.

Forthcoming Programme and Events

Venue:
Southampton Oceanography
Centre
Waterfront Campus
European Way
Eastern Docks
Southampton
All meetings commence
19.15 and room to be vacated
by 21.30.

2005 Branch Meeting Programme

June 14th
Members Evening – Slides,
CD's etc

July 12th
A Scandinavian Theme
Bernard McCall

August 9th
Members Evening

September 13th
Competition Evening
See Note

October 11th
Leander Class Cruiser HMS
Ajax 1933-50
Dr Richards Osborne

November 8th
A.G.M. and Auction (**see
note**)

December 13th
Travels with my Camera
David Oldham

Pls note change of program
Dr Richard Osborne will now
be scheduled for October.

Branch Notice Board

All contributions to BJ are
gratefully received either by
post, email, floppy disk or
CD. Any article related to
the Solent area would be
much appreciated. BJ can
contain magazine and
newspaper articles but
preferred are articles by the
branch – for the branch.

Any member who would
prefer to receive the Branch
Magazine Black Jack by
email please contact the
Editor. All recent Black
Jacks can be viewed all in
colour via the Branch
website in pdf format.
www.sotonwss.org.uk

Any member wishing to
enter the model competition
in September should
contact a committee
member in advance
preferable by the August
meeting at the latest. It may
not be viable to hold a
models category unless
sufficient entries are made.

Would members please give
a thought for items that
could be included in our
Branch Auction in
November after the AGM.
Could all members assist
your officers by submitting
lists of lots to the **Hon
Secretary** ASAP. We can
then let you have a list on
the night as well – **Any
transport related item is
acceptable.**

Moore-McCormack sisters.....

A deal was struck late last year to sell the 22,000gt **Universe Explorer** (built 1958) for scrap, bringing to a close the career of a ship that like the proverbial cat has had nine lives.

When Indian breakers claimed its sister, the **Enchanted Isle**, in August 2003, they paid what was described at the time a healthy \$135 per ldt.

Indicative of the high rates breakers were willing to pay for ships today, the **Universe Explorer** was sold for a far heftier \$351 per ldt.

Brokers say owners Azure Investments drove a hard bargain and competition was stiff and in the end, the price was a good \$10 to \$12 than what the market rates dictate.

An Indian cash buyer is said to have taken the ship and rivals described it as a speculative deal. If offers from breaking yards do not cover the purchase price, the new owner can at least take some comfort in knowing that he was not the first to lose money on the ship.

Moore McCormack Lines ordered the ship as the **Brasil** in the late 1950's, with the intention of using it and her sister **Argentina**, to shuttle wealthy travellers between New York and South America in luxurious surroundings.

Unfortunately by the time the ships were delivered, most of the target clientele had deserted ships in favour of air travel.

The pair soldiered on for a decade mostly operating long cruises. They lost Moore McCormack heaps of money and prompted one union official at the time to describe them as excellent examples of poor corporate decision-making.

After a lengthy lay up, the pair ended up in the fleet of Holland America Lines, where the **Brasil** was expensively refitted as **Volendam**. The Argentina became the **Veendam**.

The duo's second debut coincided with the oil crisis of the early 1970's. Profits proved elusive and both ships were soon back at their lay-up berth.

A brief but unsuccessful charter as **Monarch Sun** and **Monarch Star** followed, as did another short stint with Holland America.

The sisters parted ways in the early 1980's. The **Volendam** traded briefly as the **Island Sun** before being rebuilt at a cost of \$25m for American Hawaii Cruises (AHC) short-lived Tahitian cruise venture under the name **Liberte**.

But the ship still failed to turn a profit and it was quickly bought by Bermuda Star Lines (BSL) for less than half the amount AHC spent on refitting it the year before.

Under BSL it was reunited with its sister, by then called **Bermuda Star**. BSL used the ship for North American Cruises, first as the **Canada Star** and later as the **Queen of Bermuda**.

When BSL merged with Commodore, the ship became the **Enchanted Seas** until 1995 when it was sold to Azure Investments and renamed **Universe Explorer** for the University of Pittsburgh's Semester at sea programme. The sisters had parted ways for the last time but at least they were finally making money for their owners.

During the summer months the **Universe Explorer** was used for educational cruises to Alaska by the Tung-family controlled World Explorer Cruises (WEC), while in the winter months it would roam the globe with US university students on board.

WEC had hoped to secure another charter for the ship in 2004 and went so far as to send it to Hong Kong for refitting.

Age had by then caught up with the ship and the company backed out of the charter when it was discovered that it would need at least \$4m in structural repairs.

A UK probe into the grounding of the 6,200dwt chemical tanker **Attilio levoli** (1995) found that the masters use of the mobile phone distracted him from the second officers warnings about the positioning of the ship just before it grounded.

The ship had planned a passage through the Needles but had grounded on Lymington Banks last year in June last year.

The opening of a new office complex and buoy yard at Harwich this year will mark the completion of a major re organisation of Trinity House. The lighthouse service has invested £8m in its development at Harwich, where it is centralising operations. Trinity House maintains about 430 buoys, 74 lighthouses and 13 lightships from Harwich. The re organisation has involved the closure of depots at Penzance, East Cowes and Great Yarmouth



Photo Editors Collection