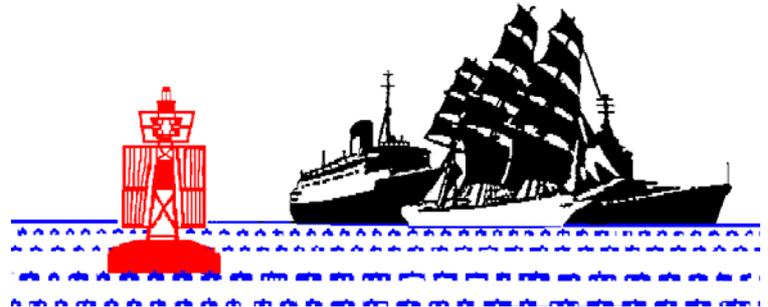


# Black Jack

Price £1.00

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH  
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY  
[www.sotonwss.org.uk](http://www.sotonwss.org.uk)



Issue No: 151

Summer 2009

CMA CGM ANDROMEDA 131332/09  
SAILING FROM SOUTHAMPTON.



Monty Beckett Photograph

On Saturday 18 April 2009, DP World Southampton welcomed the **CMA CGM Andromeda**, as part of her inaugural deployment between Asia and Europe, as she set a new record for the largest containership to ever be handled at the terminal. **CMA CGM Andromeda** at 131,000 gross tonnes, is 363 metres in length and has a capacity of up to 11,400 TEU. **CMA CGM Andromeda**, which will be carrying dry cargo such as manufactured goods destined for the high street, is the latest in a succession of record arrivals for DP World Southampton. In February, **Marit Maersk** was the longest-ever vessel to call at Southampton. She is four metres longer than **CMA CGM Andromeda** but has less carrying capacity. Last November the **CMA CGM Vela**, at 347m and with an 11,040 TEU capacity, took the crown from the **CMA CGM Orfeo** before being eclipsed by the **CMA CGM Andromeda**.

## Black Jack Summer 2009 No:151

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*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:**

**Main Lecture Theatre**

**Southampton Oceanography Centre**

Waterfront Campus

European Way

Eastern Docks

Southampton

All meetings commence 19.15 and the meeting  
room is to be vacated by 21.30.

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found on the Southampton WSS website at  
[www.sotonwss.org.uk](http://www.sotonwss.org.uk)

## 2009 Branch Meeting Programme

### **January 13<sup>th</sup>**

Around the Country - Steve Bigley

### **February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Bernard McCall to be rescheduled due to inclement  
weather.

### **March 10<sup>th</sup>**

Fifty Years of Hovercraft Development - Brian  
Russell

### **April 11<sup>th</sup>**

Cammell Laird 1903-1939 - Philip Welsh

### **May 12<sup>th</sup>**

Shipping in Singapore - Andrew Hogg

### **June 9<sup>th</sup>**

Thames and Medway Shipping, Past and Present -  
Steve Spouse

### **July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Ten Members, Ten Minutes - Members'  
Participation

### **August 11<sup>th</sup>**

Members' Image Gallery - Competition

### **September 8<sup>th</sup>**

From the Archive - Southampton Branch Slides

### **October 13<sup>th</sup>**

In Search of I.O.W. Ferries - David Oldham

### **November 10<sup>th</sup>**

AGM + Short Programme

### **December 8<sup>th</sup>**

Preserved Lake Titicaca Steamer Yavari - Meriel  
Larkin

All contributions to BJ either 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 Editor could reproduce  
magazine or newspaper articles but preference is  
given to 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. Colour printing costs are  
relatively high so all recent Black Jacks can be  
viewed all in full colour via the Branch website in  
pdf format. [www.sotonwss.org.uk](http://www.sotonwss.org.uk)

## Ship Visits

Ship visits though rare these days often become  
available at short notice and more recently during  
the week due to the nature of shipping these days  
and those wishing to participate should ensure their  
details are given to the Visits Organiser and kept  
accurate. All members participating in visits  
organised by the branch do so entirely at their own  
risk and be aware that ships and dock areas may  
have trip and other safety hazards and advised to  
use personal protective equipment when  
appropriate. All participants must accompany the  
'guide' at all times unless instructed otherwise and  
follow any instructions from the party leader.

## THE A – Z OF SAIL by Michael Page

The steel barque **Favell** has a special place in history, as she was the last deep sea sailing vessel to be built in Bristol. Also she was built totally on a covered slip, which rare in those days is usual practice now. In addition she was launched bow first, a frequent practice then in some Continental countries but unusual in British yards. She was built by Charles Hill on speculation and as no buyer was found they sailed her themselves, calling her **Favell** after one of the daughters of the Hill family.

After she had made two round voyages to Australia, West Coast South America and home, she was sold in 1897 to Finnish owners in Raumo. They kept her name which was unchanged to the end of her life. (they did however paint the hull white).

In 1907 she was sold again to the Finnish Shipping Company, which, in 1911 was re-organised into the Finnish School Ship Association. **Favell** became a cargo carrying cadet ship, but the only major change was the addition of a second deck-house abaft the mainmast.

It was not until 1919 that Finland became independent of Russia and now ran under the Finnish flag of a blue cross with a white background, which was very familiar in the last days of sail. Even so she continued for some time to show her port of registry as Helsingfors, rather than Helsinki, as we know it today.

She carried grain from Australia to Europe in 1921 and 1925, and from 1927 onwards became a regular member of the grain fleet, sailing latterly again with a black hull. In 1933 she was in a collision in the Channel with a small steamer which failed to give way, but fortunately the damage was above the waterline, and after repairs was able to continue her voyage to set single topgallantsails.

Her end came in 1934

However, her days were numbered, and it was probably only her cadet-ship activity that kept her so long in trade. She was only about half the size of the other grain ships, and with low freight rates, she could not have shown much return. However by this time she had had the added distinction of being the last deep-water sailer registered on the Finnish mainland, and was also one of the last trading vessels, as opposed to pure school ships, when she carried her last grain cargo from Port Germein, Australia, and after unloading in Cardiff loaded coal for Helsinki. From there the **Favell** sailed at the end of the year on her last voyage to Finnish breakers. She had nearly 40 years service to the credit of her Bristol builders and her Finnish owners.

### Vessel Specifications.

=====

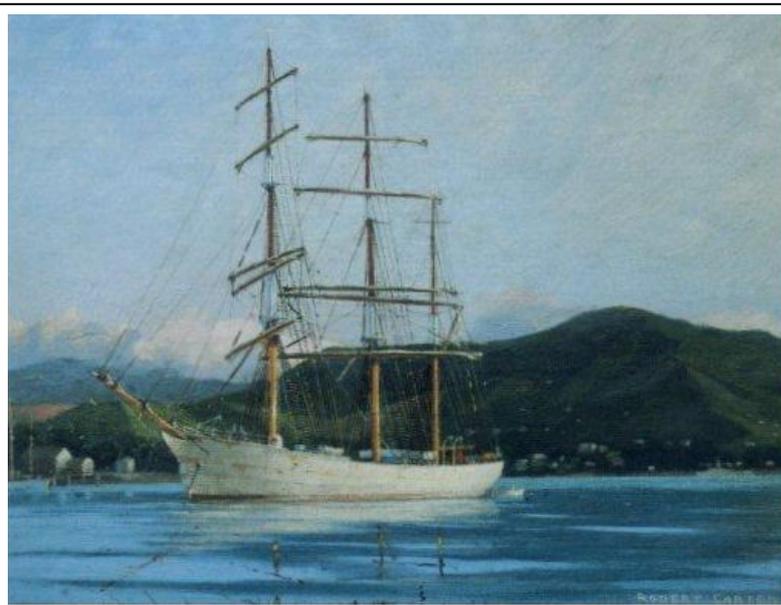
Built in 1895 in Bristol. UK.

3 masted steel barque.1309 tons.

Length: 237 feet.

Beam: 36 feet.

Broken up in Finland in 1934.



Painting by Australian artist Robert Carter **Flavell** at Reunion 1926

## **MONTYS NOTEBOOK**

A round-up of new or infrequent recent callers to Southampton Docks. Details compiled and photographs **Belgian Reefer**, **Mazin Arab**, and **Fokko Ukena** supplied by Monty Beckett.

**Berths 204/7:** New York Express 54437/00, Maersk Algol 108393/08, X-Press Elbrus 9701/05, Wan Hai 602 66199/07, APL London 71786/08, NYK Themis 76928/08, Maersk Alfirk 108393/08, Maersk Sydney 93511/05, Wan Hai 605 66199/08, Bublin Express 46009/02, CMA CGM Pelleas 111249/08, Maersk Saigon 94483/06, Soroee Maersk 91560/99, Believer 5006/92, CMA CGM Vela 128600/08, NYK Theseus 76928/08, Enforcer 7642/04, Maersk Stockholm 91427/08, CMA CGM Thalassa 128600/08, NYK Triton 76614/08, Maersk Singapore 93511/07, APL Poland 86692/08, CMA CGM Andromeda 131332/09, MOL Cosmos 88089/08, Carsten Maersk 91560/00, Hyundai Brave 94511/08, X-Press Matterhorn 7642/04, CMA CGM Ivanhoe 11149/08, X-Press Matterhorn 7642/04, Zim Rio Grande 40030/08, APL Washington 75582/09, MOL Celebration 86692/08, OOCL Rotterdam 89097/04, APL Almandine 49716/94, Baltic Trader 4984/95.

**RoRoVessels:** Olympian Highway 47077/95, Oregon Highway 57147/07, Tijuca 71673/09, Gentle Leader 57697/08, Georgia Highway 56973/07, Triumph 46800/08, Tokyo Car 46800/08, Artemis Leader 62571/08.

**Berths 107/9:** Alana 2999/99, Fokko Ukena 2451/07, Mazin Arab 14280/79, World Trader 35345/81, Transjord 2997/95, Beaumagic 2545/07, Kaili 3117/96, Arklow Resolve 2999/04, Kan Huan 29995/04, Frisian Lady 3666/02, RMS Jurmala 2363/81, Tyumen 3 2084/90, Sormovskiy 3051 3041/84, Arklow Sea 2300/98, Bouga 2999/99, Arklow Rogue 2999/07,.

**Berth 104:** Deep Pioneer 11856/84, Chilean Reefer 7944/92, Belgian Reefer 12383/83

**Berths 102/3:** Aristote 1426/83, Helen 1425/81

**Berth 36:** Shirkan C 5608/07, Edzard Cirksena 2451/08, Ingunn 2998/01, Arklow Raven 2999/07, Baltic Skipper 2280/97, Solvi A 2999/99, River Aln 2829/01.

**Berths 24/5:** Marlene Green 11894/01

**Berth 43/4:** Soul Sound 2046/83

**Callers for Yacht transportation:** Singelgracht 16641/00, Eglantiergracht 8448/94, Cornbrook 4983/84, Beluga Formation 9611/07, BBC Iceland 4086/99, Spuigracht 16639/01.

**Dibles Wharf:** Mana 1585/86, Sky Vita 2497/91

**Princes Wharf:** Arklow Racer 2999/04, Isidor 2735/93, Bondenau 2461/07, Ostenau 2461/05, Norderau 2461/05

**Passenger Ships:** Norwegian Jade 93558/06, Grand Princess 108806/98, Voyager of the Seas 137276/99



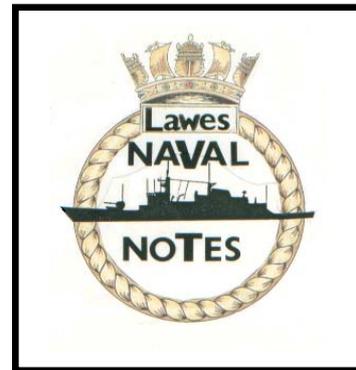
## ROYAL NAVY PAST AND PRESENT

JUL 18 2009 - JUL 19 2009

Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 July 10am – 6pm

### Royal Navy and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard present

The past and the present Royal Navy will be brought to life over the weekend of 18-19 July to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the Laying of HMS Victory's keel. Alongside tours of HMS Victory and the Trafalgar Experience at the Royal Naval Museum, visitors will be able to go on board a modern naval warship (HMS Daring subject to operational commitments) and see the world famous Band of HM Royal Marines perform in Victory Arena. A display of over 300 model boats and warships from the 18th century to the modern day, with a miniature Battle of Trafalgar and Fleet Review and a rare glimpse of the Royal Naval Museum's reserve model boat collection plus family entertainments will complete the day out.



### Southampton's glass recycling plant

Thanks to the support of people across Hampshire, keen to make a positive difference to the environment, the glass recycling plant at ABP Southampton's Western Docks is booming. Last year the Recresco plant processed a huge volume of nearly 80,000 tonnes of glass. By far the most popular colour glass recovered by the plant is green, as wine bottles are brought in from across Hampshire, Dorset and Surrey to be processed.

#### What happens to glass we put in the bottle bank?

While the UK isn't a huge producer of wine, much of the glass processed by the Southampton plant is actually sent to bottle recycling companies in the UK. Increasingly, new world wine is coming into the UK in bulk, to be decanted into green bottles recycled in the UK and put back on our supermarket shelves. Other ships leave Southampton laden with green glass bound for France, Portugal and Spain, to be recycled and refilled there.

The journey of any amber glass reflects the Brit's love of traditional ales, as that is sent to the East Coast of England to be recycled into beer bottles and filled with more brown nectar. It is also shipped across the sea to Northern Ireland to be recycled into new Bovril jars and Guinness bottles.

#### Reducing traffic on local roads

Glass is brought into the Port in 29-tonne lorries from holding bays in Basingstoke, Portsmouth and Winchester. Using these large lorries, that can carry bulk, saves councils and other recycling companies having to send fleets of smaller lorries loaded with glass from across the South to the Port.

Holding bays along the Western Docks hold massive mountains of green, amber, clear and mixed glass. These are sorted by hi-tech optical equipment that can recognise glass colours and sort 10 tonnes every hour, removing any non-glass items such as corks, labels or metal lids.

To get as much as possible off the roads, the processed glass is ferried via ship to bottle factories across the UK and Europe, with more than 400 tonnes an hour being loaded onto ships, the most environmentally sustainable source of transport.

### Ocean Terminal

The new cruise terminal, Ocean Terminal, at berth 46 in the Eastern Docks opened for business on the 9<sup>th</sup> May. P&O's cruise ship **Oceana** was the first vessel to use the berth, before she set sail for a Norwegian Fjords cruise, with the first port of call Stavanger. However, it was a low key event, designed to be a dry run for the official opening ceremony on 29<sup>th</sup> May when P&O's **Ventura** will set sail from the berth

## Pictures of the Past No:4 – Bert Moody

.This picture of Southampton Docks was taken on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1938.It is of special interest as most of Southampton fleet of troopships were in port.

On the River Itchen on the right at 31 Berth is Rotterdam Lloyds **Baloeran** and ahead of her is Royal Mail Lines **Asturias**, **Carnarvon Castle** is at 34 Berth with **Stirling Castle** at 35/36 Berths at Dock Head is the small feeder ship **Walmer Castle** which traded between Southampton and Bremen/Hamburg and at 38 Berth on the River Test side is **Capetown Castle**. At 41 Berth near the cold store is the troopship **Somersetshire**. At 46 Berth in the Ocean Dock is the **Dilwara** and at 49 Berth there is another troopship **Dunera**. In the Empress Dock the vessel on the move is the troopship Nevasa and behind her is the **Dorsetshire** while the **Neuralia** is I on the left at 22 Berth. In the New Docks (now Western Docks) is the three funnelled **Empress of Britain** and three cruise ships – **Voltaire**, **Arandora Star** and **Atlantis**.



The three former Wightlink vessels from the Lymington to Yarmouth route, the **Caedmon**, **Cenwulf** and **Cenred** are currently laid up at Marchwood awaiting their fate. They were all built in 1973 at the Henry Robb shipyard in Dundee so they have had a long life of 36 years.

Two car carriers have arrived in the Eastern Docks for lay up. The **Triumph** arrived on 6th May at berth 40 in the Eastern Docks from Zeebrugge. She is a new vessel built in China at the Xiamen Shipbuliding Company of Xiamen. She was completed in May 2008, is of 46,800 gross tons and 182 metres overall length. She is operated by Zodiac Maritime Agencies, flying the British flag. The **Tokyo Car** arrived in Southampton on 8th May, also at berth 40 and berthed alongside the **Triumph**. **Tokyo Car** is an identical sistership to the **Triumph**, having been completed at the same shipyard in Xiamen, China in November 2008. She has arrived at Southampton from Jacksonville, USA.

The **Soul Sound** 83/2046 which has been operating the Channel Islands service from the purpose built terminal at Berth 45 has been replaced by former sistership the **Coastal Wave** 83/2046 (ex Pellworm 98, Neptunus 95, Craigantlet 88.)

## Southampton Patrol (SP)

### Spitfire and Pathfinder

'SPITFIRE' The first of two Interceptor 55 'patrol' vessels built for VT Critical services to be supplied to the ABP Port of Southampton, looks sleek and graceful, and very striking with her dark blue hull and yellow flashes, with a 25kts operational speed she is exceptionally smooth and quiet with very low noise levels, she handles sweetly and is rock solid in the water. She will replace their current Halmatic FRC vessel. Spitfire is due to be delivered in June 2009 where she will be displayed at the Sea Work Exhibition. The new launches names were chosen from those submitted by ABP employees. The disposal of the older vessels is as yet is not confirmed.

The two vessels will be used as patrol boats on Southampton Water and also as pilot boats alongside their existing Nelson 48/50.s As one of their primary roles will be providing 24hr cover on Southampton Water they are equipped with full live aboard 'hotel facilities' and are fitted out to a very high standard, featuring an 8,000btu air conditioning unit, a 6.5kw 1500rpm generator providing 240v throughout the vessel, full galley facilities with a 240v electric hob, microwave, hot and cold water. A large, separate heads with showering facilities, holding tank and pump out facilities. One of the advantages of the Interceptor design which has the engines mounted just aft of the LCG is the spacious forward accommodation area providing twin bunk berths, a large seating area and table, full galley with an abundance of locker storage.

Her main cabin features a new GRP moulding specially developed to suit the crews preference for a port side helm position, designed to encompass the helmsman with all navigational equipment, engine controls and instrumentation easily visible and falling quickly to hand providing a focused driving environment. She has a central access to the f/wd accommodation and a crew position featuring its own dedicated console to st/bd.

Behind the helm is a second larger dedicated navigation position with a large work top, angled instrument console and storage lockers allowing the navigator to monitor ship movements with a full paper chart assisting navigation throughout Southampton's busy waters. Opposite are two pilot seats for when the vessel is operating in pilotage duties. At the aft of the cabin she features a VIP area with a large, circular seating area with a table between to port and a second large 'L' shaped settee to st/bd, allowing comfortable seating for when she is used to carry dignitaries. The cabin has been finished correspondingly to a high standard with walnut effect wood laminate, a teak and holly cabin sole and corian effect work tops to provide a high class ambiance throughout.

They will be powered by Scania D16 engines through Twin Disc V drive 'Quick Shift' gearboxes which allow precise fingertip control of the vessel at slow manoeuvring speeds, and allow creep speeds of less than 1kts, an advantage when operating in close quarters manoeuvres. The engines rated at 650hp will give her a 25kt max speed at a 25,000kg displacement. Scania D16 V8 engines were chosen due to their compact nature and proven service record. Engine removal is facilitated via a large opening hatch on the aft deck which is capable of being opened for maintenance quickly without breaking a silkaflex seal, and will allow the engines to be lifted straight out of the craft without the need for further lengthwise manoeuvring of the engines.

The vessel has a flush aft deck area which provides a seating area, this has been incorporated in to the engine ventilation boxes which also feature emergency engine room escape access on one module and storage locker space incorporated into the other module. One of the vessels roles will be the removal of floating flotsam such as trees, pallets and other debris that often finds its way into the channel and becomes a hazard for boat users. To facilitate this she is fitted with a large stainless steel basket that can be lowered down 400mm below the surface to recover flotsam. In addition the platform doubles as an MOB recovery system. The basket is hydraulically operated via a stainless steel ram and has a 250kg lifting capacity. The aft cockpit area allows the carrying of recovered objects to shore.

Her hull design is twin chine deep V, with a full length keel, this gives her a soft ride into head seas, tremendous stability running beam on in big seas with little rolling and great directional stability downwind. She will be fitted with a Safehaven developed ride control Interceptor / trim tab system which lowers running trim to a wave splitting 1.5 degrees for fast head sea work allowing her to punch trough 2m seas at 25kts. Being able to adjust running trim keeps her sharp (55 degree deadrise) bow immersed into head seas and lifts the bow in following seas preventing her burying in to the back of waves. This, coupled with an exceptionally low VCG gives her exceptional levels of sea keeping.



From the past above: At the old marine base the **SHB Neptune** alongside **SHB Seahorse**. Above right the **SHB Triton** a wooden hulled patrol launch delivered in February 1956, 30 grt, 14.94 loa x 4.12m beam, twin screw 500 bhp from twin 4SA 6-cyl Rolls-Royce diesels having been re-engined in 1965; built for BTDB in Southampton Water. (Photograph Cdr Tamblin)

Below the present: **Portunus** arriving at Calshot Jetty and **Sentinel** patrolling 38/9 berth.





Photographed by Ted Pearce

## **Deep Pioneer**

called at the port on 14<sup>th</sup> May for bunkers an unusual vessel, at 11,856gt and 156.75m long she is a deep water support vessel to support the oil industry operated by Technip Paris and flagged in the Marshall Islands. The vessel was completed in 1984 Cantiere Navale Breda Italy as the barge carrier Anatolly Zheleznyakov, renamed Smit Pioneer 1998 then in converted 1999 by A&P Tyne with a further accommodation refit in 2003.

### **Capabilities**

Offering versatility and the ability to work in deepwater locations the **Deep Pioneer** provides cost-effective solutions for a variety of offshore activities.

The large aft deck enables the vessel to suit client's needs. From a vertical Lay System (VLS) through a moon pool, to laying mooring chains under tension over the stern roller.

The high freeboard and dock walls almost eliminates the potential of water on deck therefore protecting the crew and cargo in adverse weather conditions.

### **Working Decks**

The main deck has an exceptionally large working area of 2,230m<sup>2</sup> and offers a uniform loading capacity of 10t/m<sup>2</sup>. The stern area is additionally strengthened and therefore able to support a J-Lay or other heavy equipment. The vessel is equipped with two KARM Fork Chain Stopper Units, rated to 500t and two towing pins rated at 240t.

### **Cranage**

Fitted with a main 150t offshore heave compensated crane supported by a 40t (2x20t) overhead gantry crane and a 3t stores crane, the **Deep Pioneer** is more adequately equipped to support the most demanding of ultra deep water support and construction work. In harbour conditions the main crane can be up rated to 250t to allow the loading of flexible reels.

### **ROV**

The vessel is fitted with one moon pool launched heavy duty work class Triton-MRV and one overside A-frame launched heavy duty work class Triton-MRV.

Both systems are heave compensated and rated for operation to a working depth of 3,000m in conditions of sea state 6.

### **Dynamic Positioning System**

The **Deep Pioneer** is fitted with a fully redundant Kongsberg SDP21 Dynamic Positioning System with 5 independent reference systems enabling her to maintain position during a variety of offshore installation activities.

### **Machinery**

The **Deep Pioneer** is powered by four engines with a total power of 4,118kW, these propellers are not used for DP operations but can be used to provide a constant pulling tension as required up to a bollard pull of 120t. Additionally there are two azimuthing thrusters aft each powered by a 2,600kW Wartsila engine. At the fore end the transverse thrust for the DP is provided by three tunnel thrusters each directly driven by three Caterpillar engines each of 1,566 kW.

ROV/Electrical supplies are provided by three 1,300 kW, 440V Caterpillar diesel generators.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation is available for 105 people in 58 one and two berth cabins air conditioned cabins.

## FROM AMERICA TO AMERICAN STAR by Mick Lindsay

It now appears that one of Southampton's most notable post-war callers has finally succumbed to the sea, with just a small part of the bow left above the surface. A familiar sight locally from the late 1940s until 1964 as the **America**, and from 1965 until 1977 as the **Australis**, this popular ship went aground under tow on the west coast of Fuerteventura in a storm in 1994.

Having been refused passage through the Suez Canal (it is illegal to tow through the canal) for her voyage to Thailand, the ship was towed by the tug *Neftegaz 67* from Greece out into the Atlantic for the long voyage round the Cape of Good Hope and on to a new life in Phuket as a floating hotel. As the two ships entered the Atlantic, the good weather gradually changed to a Force 12, and the **American Star** went ashore at Playa de Garcey. The ship lay across a finger of rock and sand and after two days of being lashed and pounded by the storm, she broke in two just aft of the funnel.

The **America** was the brain-child of the brilliant William Francis Gibbs, whose career high point was the design of the superb **United States**, with the **America** undoubtedly the inspiration for the later ship, but a more conservative vessel, without the speed and élan of her bigger sister. She was, though, at the time of her construction, the largest passenger ship ever built in the United States and marked the country's determination to be a major player on the North Atlantic.



**America**  
All  
photographs  
form the Mick  
Lindsay  
collection.

The Second World War was to play a significant part in the careers of both ships, however. The **America** was completed in 1940 and could not operate on her intended service on the North Atlantic and was sent cruising instead. Gibbs had intended that his "big ship" (the **United States**) would be built by the mid-1940s, but World War II delayed his plans. This led to a quite different ship (with the lessons of the two troopship Queens' speed and capacity taken into account), one that would convert easily to a troop transport in the event of another conflict.

Converted for trooping, the **America** was renamed **West Point** and had an exemplary war record, carrying in excess of half a million troops to and from places as diverse as Liverpool, Bombay, Rio de Janeiro, the Far East and Australasia.

After a major post-war refit, she entered service on her intended North Atlantic run in 1946 and for fifteen years was very successful. The early sixties, though, was a period of decline, with air travel and crippling strikes taking their toll and in 1964 the emerging Chandris Lines could not believe their luck when the ship became went up for sale. This was the ship they had been looking for to become top dog on the Australian emigrant service.

Despite the hostility of various American unions to the sale, it went through and the ship sailed from New York to Piraeus for the conversion work needed to turn her in to an emigrant carrier. This was done at Ambelaki with the ship anchored off shore, with workers and materials carried out to the ship.

At the end of the conversion, the capacity of the ship had more or less doubled, the superstructure having been extended aft, her cargo holds converted to cabins and other high-end accommodation sub-divided to make yet more rooms.

Her maiden voyage to Australia was from Piraeus on 28 August, 1965, and thereafter from Southampton, often calling at Bremerhaven. Initially the ship was all white, with the blue Chandris funnels, but in 1967 her hull was painted a mid-grey at Southampton after the original black was found to bleed through the white. She also went through a dramatic change of character, from the reserved, second-fiddle (to the **United States**), North Atlantic liner, she became something of a “fun ship”, for want of a better term. Despite carrying 2,400 people on most voyages (compared to her original 1,200), in less than spacious conditions, passengers flocked to her and enjoyed the experience.

It all came to an end in 1977 after the emigrant contract was withdrawn and **Australis** was laid up in Timaru, New Zealand. She was sold for \$5 million to American Cruise Lines (later Venture Cruise Lines), hastily refitted and painted, renamed **America** and began a series of cruises to nowhere. The venture was a complete disaster and the ship was arrested and later auctioned. Chandris were the surprise buyers, paying \$1 million for the ship. On paper a handsome profit, but Chandris had only received a \$500,000 down payment, so actually lost on the deal.

They ran the ship (minus her forward funnel) in the Mediterranean as the **Italys**, but her age and the high cost of fuel meant that after a year she was laid up at Perama Bay. She was sold in 1980 and became the **Noga** and then **Alferdoss** four years later after a further sale. In 1988 her hull ruptured and the ship had to be beached, but went back to her anchorage after repairs. Then, in 1993, the ship was sold to a Thai company to become a 5-star(?) hotel in Phuket.

The rules of the Suez Canal do not allow ships to be towed through and so the ship (now named **American Star**) had to go the long way round via the Cape of Good Hope. The Ukrainian tug **Neftegaz 67** was to do the job and the two left Piraeus on 22 December, but found the weather conditions too severe and had to turn back. They left again on New Year’s Eve and were passing Gibraltar by 12 January in good weather. Within three days, however, there was a dramatic change and the tow line snapped. Re-attached, the line broke again the following day (16 January) in Force 12 winds. Two more lines also broke and the ship was then left to its own devices, with members of the tug crew lifted off by helicopter.

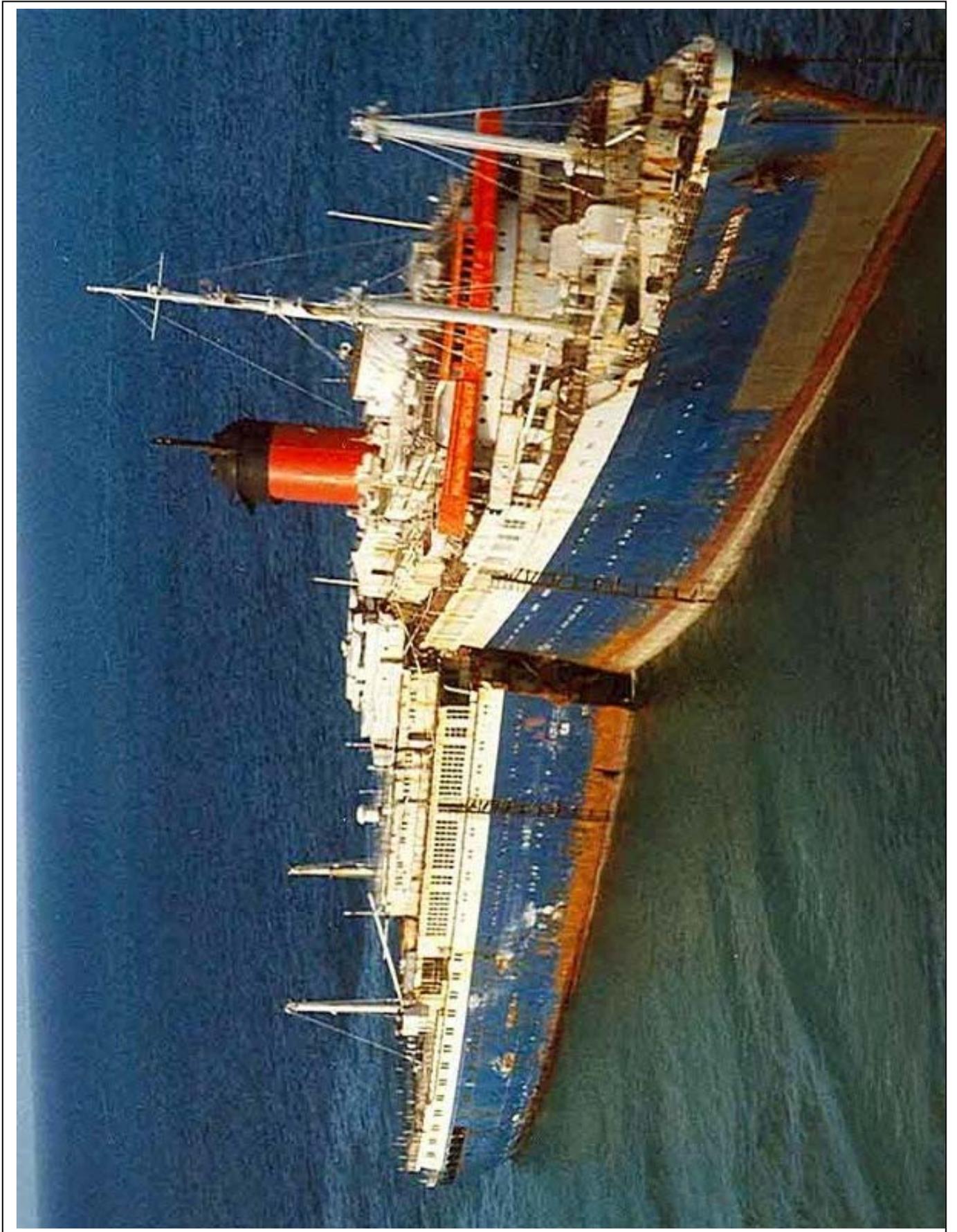
Eventually the ship beached and broke in two after a couple of days of intense pounding from the angry Atlantic. In the following six months, the ship was pillaged and emptied of anything useful. Many homes, hotels and bars around the island can be found with items taken from the wreck; pianos, furniture, carpets, portholes and even the large brass windows from the Promenade Deck.

After a few years, the stern section gradually collapsed into the sea, leaving the front half of the ship to fight the elements. By the early part of this year, only two small sections of the bow were still visible above the surface and the latest reports suggest that the whole ship is now under water. That it has taken this long is a testament to her builders.

It has taken 15 years and the lives of eight people who have tried to swim to the ship and board her. It has been done and I am fortunate to have two pieces of deck planking which have been made into desk furniture by a friend who did get on the ship.

She will be remembered here in Southampton, firstly in her original incarnation as the **America**, and after her sale as the highly successful **Australis**.





Acknowledgements for extracts from sources – ABP, Lloyds Fairplay, Daily Echo, Tradewinds, Navy News, DP World and Safehaven Marine