

Black Jack

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



Issue No: 175

Summer 2015



Royal Caribbean's latest ship **Anthem of the Seas** (168 666/15) is seen on her maiden arrival at 101 berth on 15 April 2015. She is now operating a season of sailings from the port.

Photo: David Oldham

Black Jack – Summer 2015 No.175

Editorial team
Nigel Robinson, Michael Page & Andy McAlpine.
Website – Neil Richardson

Black Jack is the quarterly magazine of 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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www.sotonwss.org.uk

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2015 Branch Meeting Programme

June 9th	Shipping at Rotterdam – Paul Gosling <u>Note change to programme</u>
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. £20 payable to Treasurer Andrew Hogg at the June Branch meeting or by post see address opposite. Anthem of the Seas, Azura, Britannia & Queen Elizabeth are due to be in port that day.

The Tripartite meeting of the Southampton, Isle of Wight and South Coast Branches postponed from May 23rd will now take place on board Shieldhall on Saturday 11th July – 11am to 3pm. Note that Shieldhall will be at 48 berth that day and not 110 berth as would have been the case.

Date for your Diary:

The South East Social will take place on 3rd October at St. Andrew's Art Centre, Gravesend. Contact for further details - Krispen Atkinson WSS Branch Liaison, South & South East 14 Serenity Court, Evelyn Walk, Greenhithe, Kent, DA9 9UD krispen.atkinson@gmail.com

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 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.

Andy's Notebook

Some new or infrequent callers to Southampton Docks by Andy McAlpine

We have seen a number of one off and first time callers over the last few months. A number of bulkers have called to load scrap, including the **Lila** and **Peregrine** which both called in March.

April saw the maiden arrival of **Anthem of the Seas**, and the first call by **Caroline Maersk** - notable is the raised superstructure the series now has.

On 28th May **Eemsgracht** arrived from Poland carrying 10 new straddle carriers for the DP World container terminal.

Future New Services & Vessels

From the end of June a new US East Coast container service will start calling, operated by CMA-CGM & UASC with vessels are due to call as follows:

7th June	HH Nikol	(built 1993 ex Essen Express)
14th June	Columbia	(built 2002 ex APL Columbia)
21st June	Deira	(built 1998)
28th June	Cap Hatteras	(built 2009 ex UASC Ramadi)
5th July	JPO Taurus	(built 2010 ex UASC Ajman)
12th July	HS Mozart	(built 2002 ex MSC Firenze)
19th July	Viktoria Wulff	(built 2006)
26th July	AS Mariella	(built 2010 ex Mereda)

In addition to the new service, larger vessels are being deployed on the existing Maersk/MSC service. The older Maersk vessels are being phased out and the replacements include some MSC owned vessels.

9th June	MSC Luciana	(built 2009)
7th July	MSC Vega	(built 2012)
23rd June	Maersk Altair	(built 2007)
30th June	Maersk Alfirk	(built 2007)



Above:

Eemsgracht (8448/950) arriving on 28th May with straddle carriers from Poland.

Right:

The Marshall Islands registered **Peregrine** (28647/01) ex **Sea Beauty** 05, loading scrap in the KGV Dock during March.

Photos: Andy McAlpine



ROD BAKER (1944-2015)

The Southampton Branch was sorry to hear of the sudden, unexpected passing on 21 March of Rodney Francis Harry Baker, who was a Life Member of the Society and had been Honorary Secretary of the Branch for almost 30 years from 1978 until 2007. More than a dozen members of the Society attended his Service of

Thanksgiving at the Wessex Vale Crematorium on 10 April.

Rod was born in Hemel Hempstead on 29 April 1944 to the late Joan and Don (onetime Branch Treasurer). He was full of bonhomie and a friendly, approachable sociable character, who would occasionally dress extrovertly including cream suits, flowery waistcoats, a red cape and cane.

A retired secondary school teacher, he taught history at Bitterne Park, Eastleigh and Millbrook schools. He took school parties abroad and also enjoyed leisure travel, which included the Trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to Irkutsk and a trip by United Baltic ferry to Finland. Many years ago, after having his pocket picked in a Moscow Station, any trip abroad involved using a body-belt to hide his valuables!

Rod was co-author of *Great Steamers White & Gold - History of Royal Mail Ships and Services* and of *A Maritime History of Southampton in Picture Postcards*, as well as articles on the history of Hoffman postcards in *Picture Postcard Annual* and on the loss of the *Stella in Sea Breezes*. He also enjoyed 'traditional' ships, not least the SD14 type having attended the launch of *United Drive* in April 1982. However, his particular interest was 'ships letters and related postal material', which also led to him being President of Southampton & District Philatelic Society for many years until 2012.

In the mid-1980's, Rod joined myself on the first of more than a dozen shipping trips to the continent. These 'peregrinations' involved eight different ferry routes from the UK, six different destination countries and more than 60 different ports and harbours. In hotels, single rooms were a pre-requisite due to Rod's sleep apnoea and snoring volume, but when sharing a cabin on overnight ferries to Esbjerg, Cuxhaven and Hamburg, earplugs alone were just never enough!!

One of the many highlights of our trips was crossing into the former East Germany in 1991, only a few months after unification. Never to be forgotten was 'main' road from Rostock to the ferry port of Sassnitz. In the first hour, we covered just 27 miles, due to potholes and cobbles, plus every vehicle being either a slow-moving 'Trabant' or an ancient articulated lorry with a drawbar trailer behind.

When visiting Antwerp, the first evening always had to be a meal in an Argentinian steakhouse. After that, there was always a variety of Indonesian or other Far Eastern foods, Italian normally being saved to the last evening, but never a "Big Mac", as "Golden Arch" signs were only useful for navigation.

In The Netherlands, another must for Rod was to find either the main post office or a dealer to buy the latest special issue stamps, closely followed finding the nearest off-licence to buy one of his favourite tipples, Dutch Jenever gin!! Never to be forgotten was an evening spent in an Amsterdam 'brown' bar with a retired Dutch sea captain, seeing how many different Jenever could be sampled from the rows on offer, before staggering arm-in-arm back to Central Station for the last train to our hotel in the suburbs.

Another of his foibles was losing or mislaying things – the search for binoculars left on the foreshore, hats blown off into the water and on one occasion even persuading a fisherman on an adjoining pontoon to 'hook' and retrieve a favourite hat from the water.

In the summer months, for many years Rod was a spin bowler for the Educational Eccentrics cricket club and he also enjoyed snooker, at the Baizz Club on Fridays, at Bitterne Conservative Club and in Holland.

Unfortunately, in recent years, Rod had suffered with the onset of Alzheimer's disease, but his many Branch friends will hopefully only remember his social friendship, integrity and organisational skills. Our sympathy for their loss goes out to his brother Phil and other members of the family.

David Hornsby

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO ROD BAKER

I first met Rod on the quayside at 38-9 berth, waiting for a passenger ship to arrive in 1984. I was chatting to people in general when the ship arrived. After the ship had docked Rod came over to me and said "so you like looking at ships then?" – I said yes and he asked me if I had heard of the World Ship Society? I said no and he offered me a meetings programme card saying to come along and see if I wanted to join and the rest is history.

He made me welcome and introduced me to other members and I have never looked back! Thanks to Rod I have made many good friends. May he rest in peace.

Paul Gosling

Yavari Peru Expedition

This promises to be an exciting year for the **Yavari**, the Victorian gunboat on Lake Titicaca, Puno, Peru. She will be refitted to the standard of "seaworthiness" required for her to carry passengers.



After 60 years this will be momentous. Equally so will be the arrival at Lake Titicaca of sixteen young trekkers from east London's West Ham - the birthplace of the **Yavari** having climbed the Andes and hiked across the Altiplano in the footsteps of the 19th century **Yavari**.

There will also be an adults' trek of a month. Anyone interested in joining part or parts of the adult trek, please get in touch.

Over the many years, the **Yavari** and her crew have enjoyed the generous support and encouragement from thousands of visitors and admirers from afar.

Many knew Giselle Guldentops who is now managing a fleet on the Amazon and many knew Captain Carlos Saavedra who is back at the **Yavari's** helm for this historic event.

Please catch up on the **Yavari**, the Expedition and meet the young "Hammers" by clicking on following link <http://www.peruyavariexpedition.com>

In short, this is our 2015 target for the **Yavari**. It is within reach. If you could help us achieve it, together we could make history.

Meriel Larken
Director
The Yavari Project
(UK Registered Charity)

Members of the Branch may remember Meriel gave us a talk about the **Yavari** Project a few years ago.

Preserved WW2 Coastal Craft (Part 3)

by Bill Lawes

HDML 1387 - HMS Medusa

HMS **Medusa** was built by R.A. Newman at Hamworthy (Poole) in 1943. These craft, which displaced about 56 tons, were designed by the Admiralty for patrol duties in coastal and estuarial areas. This class of vessels were designated as Harbour Defence Motor Launches (HDML) and were of a relatively simple round bilge design and of course of wooden double diagonal construction. Their design meant that some of these vessels could also be constructed by builders in other countries. They proved to be very good sea boats and therefore they were used for a wide range of duties. Their power was provided by diesel engines which gave them a speed of 11 knots. The advantage of the diesel power was that in spite of their small size, length was 72ft. overall, these vessels could travel a considerable distance. Their planned armament was a single 1pdr. Forward and 2 twin .303 guns on the bridge wings, but many variations of armament appeared. Well over 300 of these craft were built by a variety of companies in this country and many others by builders overseas.

HMS **Medusa** is the only vessel of this type that has survived, in a working style. This together with her varied duties, are the reasons for her preservation. Those of our Branch that attended the "Tripartite" meeting at Haslar in July had the opportunity to visit the vessel. This was an excellent way to learn far more about the history of the craft, the type of life the crews of these vessels experienced, but also the complicated work that was required to bring the Medusa back into a usable condition.

After her completion in 1943 **HDML 1387's** first duties were as a convoy escort in the Western Approaches. However as D-day activities started her activities moved to Slapton Sands in May 1944 when the American Army carried out their practice landing. At the D Day landings she was given a very vital task - that of acting as a Navigational Marker to mark the approach channel through minefields off Omaha Beach. This was not a simple task as she accompanied the minesweepers during the night to mark the starting point of the channel they were to clear through the minefield. She then had to station herself at the entrance into the channel to mark it for the convoys. When you recall the rough weather and the fact that the water there was too deep to anchor, and that the initial swept channel was narrow, it must have been a very difficult task to ensure that her position was precise. I believe various signals from the mainland did help her to keep her station. You can also imagine the strain this task put on the crew.

Later in the war **HDML 1387** operated off Holland. Amongst other tasks she carried out was to be the first vessel to enter IJmuiden whereupon the Germans surrendered to her. Another role she carried out was to take a group of senior officers through the North Sea Canal to Amsterdam to organise the surrender procedures.



After the war she was refitted at Littlehampton and classed as Fast Despatch Boat 76 (**FDB 76**) she was then attached as a training ship to Cardiff University Naval Division. By 1947 she was serving with the RNVR's Severn Division, then in 1949 she was moved to the London Division RNVR and reclassified Seaward Defence Motor Launch (**SDML 3516**)

In 1952 the craft was reclassified again, this time to become a hydrographic survey vessel in which role she continued, and as such, in 1961 was renamed HMS **Medusa** and given the pennant number A 353. She continued in this duty till 1965 when she was paid off at Devonport. Unfortunately during her last day in service a fire in her forward accommodation area caused a lot of damage, but fortunately she survived.

She was laid up till 1968 when she was sold for use as a private yacht. By 1972 the vessel needed extensive repairs to her hull and superstructure, when completed, these kept her in service for several more years. In 1985 she was passed on to the Gosport Borough Council to become part of a Coastal Forces Museum. Unfortunately nothing materialised, so the craft was to be seen at various moorings around Portsmouth Harbour. Fortunately in 1994 she could take part in the D Day 50th Anniversary celebrations and she visited Omaha and Juno beaches.

In 1997 **Medusa** acted as a training tender for the Southampton Unit of the Maritime Volunteer Service, as such in 2005 she participated in the review to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Also in 2005 the vessel became the responsibility of the Medusa Trust which had the responsibility to carry out a major refit to try to extend her operational life by 60 years. The costs of such a refit were enormous, about £3m for materials and labour; fortunately the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded nearly £1m. The Trust decided that the best way to proceed with the refit was to use that fund to buy the necessary materials and to train students to do the craftsmanship. In 2008 during this refit at Hythe the workshop had a major fire, although the **Medusa** was outside the shed her engines and most of the craftsman's tools were damaged. However by October 2010 the Princess Royal attended the rededication ceremony to acknowledge the completion of **Medusa's** refit.

When you see **Medusa** now you have to appreciate just how much work has gone into her restoration. She started her operational life as just one of many, now she is the only survivor of many. You also have to appreciate the work done by a few really dedicated people to keep her in service.

Bits and Pieces

Red Osprey re-entered Red Funnel service in March after a £2.2M refit which saw alterations to her passenger accommodation similar to those carried out on **Red Falcon** last year.

Wightlink's **St Helen** of 1983 is, as this is written, laid up at Hythe having been replaced in March on the Portsmouth-Fishbourne route by the **Wight Sun** from the Lymington-Yarmouth route. **St Helen** is reportedly set to join her sister **St Catharine** in Sardinia.

The tug/work boat **Asterix** of Solent Towage sank off Fawley in windy conditions on 30th March. No lives were lost thanks to a prompt and brave rescue by a worker on the jetty. The vessel was raised two weeks later.

P&O's **Azura** was delayed returning from a Norwegian Fjords cruise in early May arriving back 24 hours late due to an electrical problem. She missed a call at Stavanger and went to Bergen instead for repairs. She then sailed 48 hours late on her next cruise.

Colin's Southampton Memories

A selection of Colin Drayson's pictures from a lifetime in and around Southampton Docks
The first of a new occasional series

Benarmin at 47 berth - Eastern Docks



France-berthing in Western Docks



Shaw Savill's Akaroa (Ex RML Amazon) at 101 berth



Akaroa (ex-Amazon of Royal Mail Lines)

*My father was Chief Baker and Confectioner aboard this vessel in both her guises. Whilst part of the London based South American service she and her sister-ships **Arlanza** and **Aragon** often called at Southampton on the homeward leg of their voyage to disembark some of their passengers and a portion of their cargoes.*

All photos Colin Drayson collection

A – Z of Sail

by Michael Page

“A” is for *Amerigo Vespucci*

For my first tall ship of this second series I have chosen the *Amerigo Vespucci* from the sunny climes of Italy.

In the 1920's Benito Mussolini gradually came to power in Italy until he was ruling it like a police state. However there was one good thing about this situation; he believed in the greatness of Italy once again, and built up the armed forces, and made Italy great again.

He issued a decree authorizing Regina Marina to build two training ships at the Royal Shipyard - formerly Castellamare Di Stabia - to be designed by Lieutenant Colonel Francesco Rotundi of the Italian Navy Engineering Corps and based on a late 18th Century wooden warship. The design of these two vessels was inspired by the style of the large 74 gun ships of the line of this period, and they were to be used as training vessels by the Italian Naval Academy. They would be called *Amerigo Vespucci* and *Cristoforo Colombo*. (As we know at this time the 74 gun ship was the most popular and multi purpose warship and was the mainstay of the line in battle.

Cristoforo Colombo entered service in 1928 and the *Amerigo Vespucci* in July 1930.

Technical details (for *Amerigo Vespucci*).

Flag.....Italy.	Homeport.....Livorno,Italy.
Type.....Full Rigged.	Class.....A
Sail area.....2824 sq mtr	Sails.....26.
Tonnage.....4100.	Length.....331 feet
Breath.....51 feet.	Depth.....23 feet.
Crew: 16 Officer, 70 non-commissioned officers and 200 sailors.	

All sails are traditional canvas, with a rig of about 30 km of rope. All ropes are hemp except mooring lines which are synthetic, in order to comply with port regulations. Currently she is the only three decked square rigger. She has a steel hull, with decks of teak which need to be replaced every 3 years. The stern gallery is only accessible through the captain's saloon. She has a life sized figurehead of Amerigo Vespucci who was a famous 15th Century Florentine merchant explorer. After WW11 the *Cristoforo Colombo* was ceded to the USSR, and many years later was broken up.

