

Black Jack

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



Issue No: 215

Summer 2025



*Atlantic Blue Riband holder SS **United States** of 1952 so well known in Southampton in the 1950s and 60s and which has languished in lay-up since withdrawal from service in 1969 is to become an artificial reef.*

Black Jack – Summer 2025 No.215

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Nigel Robinson, David Hornsby & 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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2025 Branch Meeting Programme

June 10th	Slides from the 1960s	Sid Balham
July 8th	Tugs, Tugs, Tugs!	Maurice Napier
August 12th	The Life & Times of Capt Peter Callaghan (Gosport Sailor) 1870-1907	John Hoar (HCMM)
September 9th	Union Castle Line	Capt Roy Plumley MBE
October 14th	Competition on the North Atlantic	Dr Mervyn Rowlinson
November 11th	AGM & Photo Competition	
December 9th	TBA	

Branch Cruise 2025

Saturday 26th July – from Town Quay departing 11.15
returning at 6.15 cost £40

Articles please!!

Your editor would as always be delighted to receive any articles for inclusion in Black Jack and also any snippets and photos for possible inclusion,

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.

As is tradition in the early months of the year, cruise ships have begun returning for the start of their summer season.

Among the most notable arrivals so far was **Norwegian Aqua**, which made its maiden call on 25th March. True to form, its early arrival that morning was met with gloomy skies, but on 29th March, it was beautifully illuminated by the evening sunlight as she sailed for Miami - *pictured right*



Another significant visit came from **Rotterdam**, a Holland America Line cruise ship built in 2021, which made its inaugural call on 24th April. *pictured left*



But it's not just cruise ships making their debut at the port—new car carriers are arriving as well. On 15th March, **Hoegh Sunlight**, the fourth Aurora-class vessel from Hoegh Autoliners, marked its maiden call. *pictured right*



Beyond these arrivals, the first few months of 2025 have brought major changes to the number of container vessels visiting Southampton, due to the changes within shipping alliances, as outlined in my last notebook. Significantly the number of container services calling at the port has jumped from 13 in 2024 to 24 this year. Additionally, congestion at other ports has led to a rise in diversions and ad hoc calls. One vessel that made headlines was **CMA CGM Pelleas**, which ran aground at Marchwood while sailing on 9th April. She is seen here (*left*) being assisted by tugs after dropping anchor, shortly after being refloated

All photos Andrew McAlpine

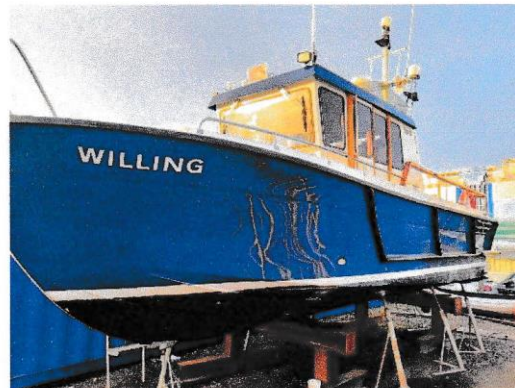
Until next time wishing you Happy ship spotting
Andrew



WILLIAMS SHIPPING

Updates and Fleet changes since Fleet Lists in BLACK JACK's 200-203

WILLING ex **Sentinel** - 8/2021 acquired from Associated British Ports (ABP)
GRP Targa 25 Mk.2 Fast Workboat
completed 2001 by Botnia Marin, Malax, Finland;
7.97 x 2.8m with 0.8m draft; 5 crew in wheelhouse, cabin for 4 persons; Volvo 200hp diesel, 26 knots cruising
(right: **WILLING**)



WILANNE Stan Tug 1605
sold about October 2022 to Marine Plant Hire, Plymouth, renamed **CHRISTINE** based at Dawlish (associated with Teignmouth Maritime Services)

In 2022, Williams Shipping signed a new 15-lease on their site at Milford Haven/Pembroke Dock and in January 2023, they also acquired

WILLSUPPORT ex **Ocean Supporter-23**, ex **Toplift** based at Pembroke Dock
Road-transportable Meercat RT18 built 2014 by Meercat Workboats with two 4.5 tonne cranes, 10 tonne deck winch, 44 tonne deck load capacity;
18.75 x 8.7m with 1.3m draft; 560 bhp diesel giving 5 tonne bollard pull; 2 crew and up to 12 persons.



On 1st June 2023, Williams Shipping took over the pilot boarding contract to service pilotage for Portsmouth International Port. During 2023, the Company also acquired five pilot boats/harbour masters' fast launches from ABP.

WILLSERVE ex **Hamwic (1) - 23**
WILLSTRIVE ex **Haslar (2) - 23**; currently based at Pembroke Dock

WILLSEEK ex **Hampstead (3) - 23**
Nelson 48/50 fast launches delivered 2003 by VT Halmatic, Portsmouth under original 10-year contract to ABP; 15.1 loa x 4.26m beam with 1.4m draft; 6 passengers; 23 knots (right: **WILLSERVE** off Gosport 2024)



NB: other sister pilot boat **Hampshire (4)** initially remained with ABP, then reported sold, still operating locally as dive vessel under same name.

WILLPROSPECT ex **Prospect - 23**; currently based at Pembroke Dock/Milford Haven
fast launch/pilot boat built 1988 by Halmatic at Southampton; 14.78 loa x 4.42m beam with 2.31m draft; 8 passengers; 900 bhp from twin Volvo diesels, 20 knots (illustrated right)





In February 2024, Williams also acquired from Cowes Harbour Commissioners

[illegible]

NEW PILOT BOATS FOR ABP AT SOUTHAMPTON



The new Southampton pilot boats, 2022-completed **MAYFLOWER**, together with the 2023-built **MAJESTIC** and **MARY ROSE** at the May 2023 naming ceremony for the latter two, taking place at the Endeavour Quay Gosport pilot station.

The new vessels were built by Goodchild Marine at Great Yarmouth as part of a £9 million contract for 9 boats from ABP. The vessels are faster than their predecessors and their double chine hull and forward 'beak' will achieve approximately 40% fuel saving. The other pilot boats in the order are based on the Humber (5) and at Barry (1).

Old Southampton Callers



Karotua (1958/9221g) of the national Shipping Company of Pakistan May 1979



Andrew Jackson (1945/6065g) of the Waterman Steamship Corp. September 1970

both photos Nigel Robinson

Working in African Waters

Part 3

by David P Hawkins



I joined the **Gulf Supplier** (IMO No 7531814) as Master in Duala (Cameroon) on 30-Oct-02. The vessel was not owned by Gardline, but supplied the ships crew. The vessel is Panamanian flagged, built 1976 and of 495 G.R.T., owned by IMI Del Peru SAC of Talara. Her ex-names are *Trojan Express*, *Marta Del Golfo* and *Trojan Express*. The vessel is a Deep seismic vessel with 4 x 100 cubic inch compressed air guns, tows a single 6 Km streamer. This makes getting other vessels to avoid the cable quite interesting!!

The vessel was not in a good state of repair and being American built was very noisy. We had a quiet time of it really as the shipping was keeping well away from the Nigerian coast, near to where we were working. We had to refuel twice whilst at sea due to the Chief Engineer miscalculating the amount of fuel we had and received from a small bunker barge. This did not go down well with the American charterers, who got back at us by making us refuel on Christmas morning!! We had to go alongside the vessel Loukia (IMO No 7430357) ex-names are *Sea Fox*, *Fransin*, *Titta*, *Baltic Pride* and *Botany Trust*. See picture below, not very good I am afraid.

The American charterers requested that we enter Nigerian waters without going through the formalities, I politely declined as all the vessel certificates were now out of date and I didn't fancy going to a Nigerian prison or being taken by pirates. I left the vessel back in Douala on 28-Dec-02 after handing over command to an American Master. I heard that a few days later the vessel was attacked by pirates and the Master and the Indonesian 2nd Officer were taken hostage. They were released 10 days later after the American company paid a ransom, believed to be between \$10,000 and \$80,000. The vessel was ransacked of all electrical equipment with the exception of 1 hand-held VHF radio so the vessel could communicate with a port. I was so very glad that I had decided not to go into Nigerian waters!!!



Motor tanker **Loukia** 7430357

Part 2 of this article appeared in BJ 212 Autumn 2024



To go with the cover picture of the **United States** here is her predecessor and one-time fleet-mate **America** of 1940 which in 1964 became the **Australis** of Chandris Lines – she was well known in the port under both guises.

