

# Black Jack

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



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Spring 2017



*An atmospheric view of HMS **Illustrious** leaving Portsmouth for the breakers at Aliaga, Turkey on the morning of 7th December 2016, just as the last edition of Black Jack was “put to bed”. At her stern can be seen the Southampton (Fawley) tug **Lomax**. She was taken on to Turkey by the Italian tug **Eraclea**. photo Bill Lawes*

## Black Jack – Spring 2017 No.182

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

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

### Branch Meetings

#### Venue:

**St James Road Methodist Church**

St James Road  
Shirley

Southampton, SO15 5HE

All meetings commence at 19.30 and the meeting room is to be vacated by 21.30. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month.

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March 14th **Shipping Around Scotland**  
Bernard McCall

April 11th **Cornish Shipping Part 4**  
Krispen Atkinson

May 9th **Historic Hectic Month for the RN**  
Bill Lawes

June 13th **European Mini Cruises**  
David Walker

July 11th **N. German Ports and Shipping**  
Mick Lindsay

August 8th **Members Digital  
Photographic Competition**

September 12th **HM Coastguard** Geoff Matthews

October 10th **Another 40ft View** Chris Bancroft

November 14th **Branch AGM + Mini Talk TBC**

December 12th **Salvage Master** Kevin Patience

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The annual WSS Southampton Branch Cruise will take place on Saturday 3rd June 11am to 6pm from Ocean Village – price £20. Please book with Andrew Hogg – contact details opposite or see him at branch meetings.

#### More dates for your diary:

Krispin Atkinson has arranged a WSS South East Spring Meeting & Photographic Competition on Saturday 8th April 2017 at the Clarendon Royal Hotel, Gravesend. For further details see:

[www.wsssoutheastsocial.wordpress.com](http://www.wsssoutheastsocial.wordpress.com)

N.B. The South Coast, Isle of Wight and Southampton Branches Annual Tripartite Meeting – which was due to be held in June has now been postponed until later in the year.

On Saturday 24th June the Ocean Liner Society will be holding their Ship Show at St James Road Methodist Church, Shirley, Southampton, SO15 5HE from 10am until 4pm. Further details on their website at [www.ocean-liner-society.com](http://www.ocean-liner-society.com)

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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 Spring 2017 notebook from the port of Southampton.

In the last few months the port has recently been host to an interesting vessel. EDT Jane is an Offshore Supply vessel built in 2011. She has the distinctive X-boy design which is not often seen in the port. She made her first call at the end of 2016 and has made a number of calls to the port to load supplies while involved in a contract off Shoreham.

Left: **EDT Jane** Seen loading stores alongside 104 berth December 2016

The container terminal continues to invest in new equipment; on 22<sup>nd</sup> February the 2012 built Heavy Lift Vessel **Meri** visited the container terminal. She was delivering 8 brand new straddle carriers manufactured in Finland by Kalmar. This wasn't her first visit to the port; she had also called in 2014 with another delivery of straddles carriers.

Right: **Meri** loaded with 8 x Kalmar straddle carriers for DP World berthed at SCT4 22<sup>nd</sup> February



From April we will be due to a big change in the containerships visiting the port, this is due to big changes in the container alliances which will mean for the first time the port will see visits from COSCO, Evergreen, KLine, and Yang Ming vessels. Vessel details are still to be confirmed but what follows is an up to date breakdown of the services and vessels by each alliance.

## 2M Alliance



From April the AE1/Shogun (Europe-Asia) service will replace the current AE6/Lion service. We will continue to get calls from the 13,462TEU Maersk Edinburgh class ships but will also see a number of the 13,000TEU ex Hanjin ships deployed.

## OCEAN ALLIANCE



FAL 1/NEU1	(Europe - Asia)	16 x CMA-CGM 18,000TEU vessels
FAL 3/NEU3	(Europe - Asia)	COSCO & Evergreen vessels TBC
Liberty Bridge/ATE1	(Transatlantic)	1 x CMA-CGM/1 x COSCO/1 x EVERGREEN/ 2 x OOCL 8,00TEU vessel's

## THE ALLIANCE



FE1	(Europe - Asia)	NYK 8,000-9,000TEU Class vessels TBC
FE2	(Europe - Asia)	UASC 18,800TEU / MOL 20,000TEU Vessels
FE4	(Europe - Asia)	UASC 13,200TEU / Yang Ming 14,000TEU vessels
AL3	(Transatlantic)	4 x Yorktown Express class vessels
AL4	(Transatlantic)	vessels TBC

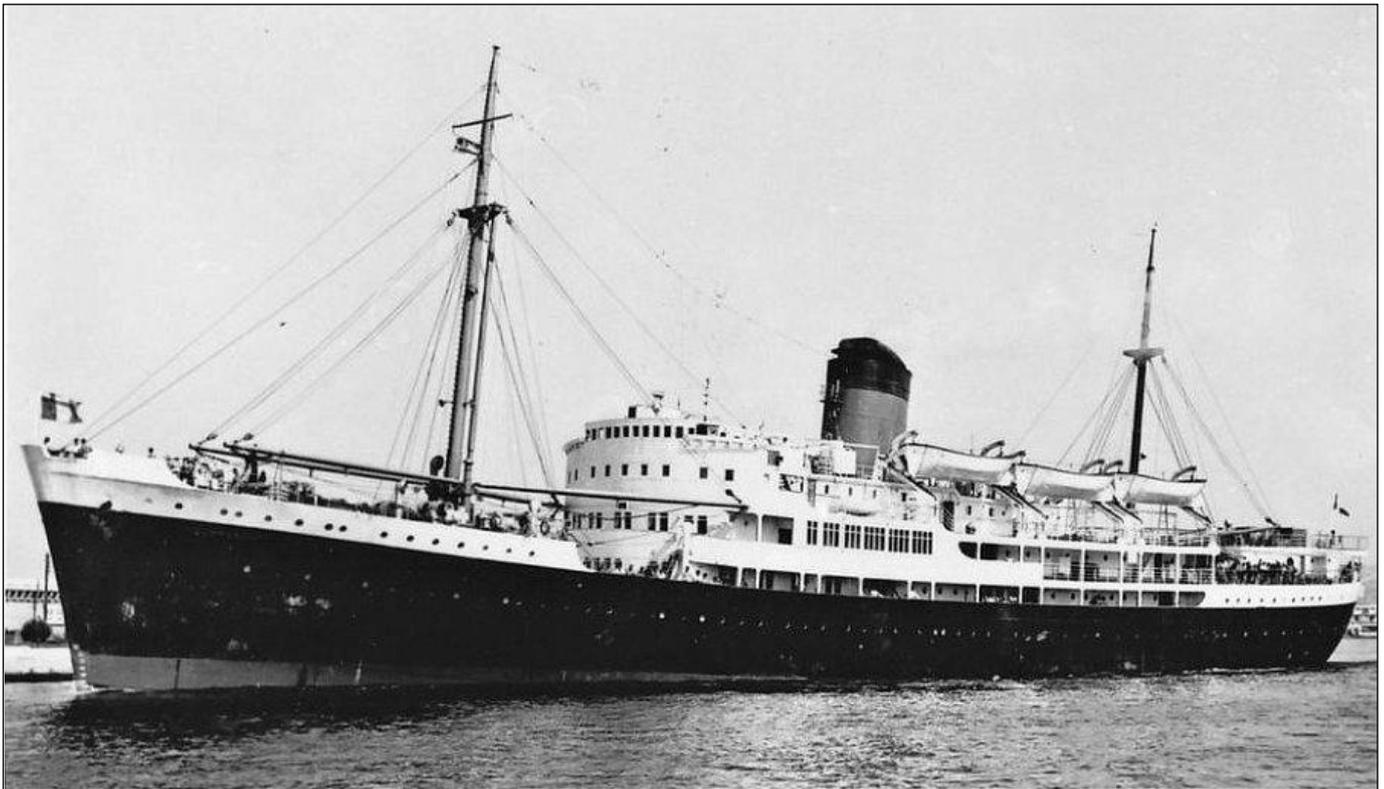
until next time

photos by Andrew McAlpine

**Woolston-built ferry COMMANDANT QUERE**

On 29 November 1947, the first post-war French Mediterranean ferry was launched by John I Thornycroft at Woolston and named **COMMANDANT QUERE** (yard no 4114). She was ordered by the French Government (Ministere de la Marine Marchande) to be managed by Compagnie de Navigation Fraissinet, but on 1 May 1948 - while fitting out - management of the Fraissinet services was transferred to Compagnie Generale Transatlantique. The ferry was named after the Master of the Fraissinet ferry **GENERAL BONAPARTE**, who died showing great gallantry when his ship was torpedoed and sunk between Ajaccio and Nice on 19 May 1943.

The completed vessel was delivered in June 1948, entering service on 13 July 1948 between Marseille-Corsica, calling at several ports including Ajaccio, Bastia, Ile Rousse and Calvi. Later, she also operated from Nice to Corsica and some seasonal services from Marseilles to North Africa, principally Algiers, Oran and Tunis for Compagnie de Navigation Mixte.



4,478 gt 1,835 dwt 363' loa (345' bp) x 50'2" beam, depth 28' and draught 17'0½"

Passengers (as built) 158 tourist, 134 second and 700 fourth class, later amended to 204 first, 146 third (forward of superstructure) and 644 fourth class (located aft and sometimes referred to as fifth!). Only two 'de-luxe' cabins had private facilities. A lounge for First Class was located on the Promenade Deck, with dining saloon beneath on A Deck. Three cargo holds. Twin screw steam turbine machinery with single-sided three-drum Thornycroft oil-fired water-tube boilers supplying four Parsons double reduction geared turbines by builders, 5,400 shp, 15½ knots service speed. Trials were carried out on 17 June 1948, when she achieved an average of 18.63 knots.

The ferry was similar in many respects to the Egyptian cargo-passenger vessel **EL MALEK FOAD** (yard. 4108) launched just five months previously. Although build for very different roles, the general profile – including the "Thornycroft-funnel" - of both ships were similar, but the superstructure of the ferry extended further forward and aft to accommodate more than six times the number of berthed passengers. The hulls were very similar with moulded beam and depth to main deck exactly the same, although the ferry was 13 feet longer between perpendiculars. However, the maximum deadweight of the ferry was only 66% of the previous ship, so the draught was 3'6" less and the freeboard correspondingly greater. The increased length, reduced draught and requirement for a lower service speed for the overnight crossing to Corsica also reduced the required machinery output.

She operated on the similar routes and under the same name for her entire career until 1966, when the three older 'black-hulled' Corsica service ferries **SAMPIERO CORSO** (1936/4,041g) **CYRNOS** (1929/2,406g) and **COMMANDANT QUERE** were all replaced by the new 'white-hulled' CGT-owned ferries, **CORSE** (1966/7,162g), her sister **COMTE DE NICE** (ex **PROVENCE**) and **FRED SCAMARONI** (1966/6,743g). At the same time, the service was also rebranded as Cie Generale Mediterranee.

**COMMANDANT QUERE** was decommissioned on 4 August 1966 and scrapped in Italy during 1968, after barely 20 years of service.

## Where have the Southampton cable-ships gone?

by Barry Peck

During the 1970s, 80s and early 90s cables ships became a very familiar sight in Southampton. Apart from the many visitors to the old STC factory on 109 berth, the General Post Office centralised its marine operations at their Central Marine Depot on the new 203 berth in 1974 where the cable and submersibles were stored, and the red hulled ships became a regular feature. Over the following two decades the controlling company became British Telecom International Marine Services in 1981, and this in turn became the subsidiary company BT (Marine) Ltd in 1987. The next change occurred in 1994 when BT sold the company to Cable & Wireless Marine Ltd. Finally, in 2002 Cable & Wireless sold the combined company to an American company and the name was changed to Global Marine Systems Ltd.

In 1995 ABP wanted 203 berth for container storage and feeder operations. As there remained a substantial period to the lease, C&WM negotiated very favourable release terms which enabled them to move the entire operation to Portland. With the STC factory being closed in the same period Southampton lost a type of vessel that had become a part of the scenery.

It should be noted that for these five ships the "CS" was not a pre-fix but actually part of the name, a practice dating from 1969 when the GPO was formed and its cables ships became commercial vessels and not "HMTS", which produced a naming conflict with other vessels on the register. However, as they were still government owned they flew a defaced blue ensign instead of the normal red ensign.



*CS Alert after 1985 refit*

Until the sale in 1994 there were five Southampton based ships. The oldest, the **CS Alert**, dated from 1960 and was a laying and deep water repair vessel. From 1975 and 1976 respectively were the **CS Monarch** and **CS Iris**, two sister repair vessels, whilst the newest BT owned cables ship was the **CS Sovereign** built in 1991 primarily for Atlantic repair work but with good laying capability. Finally, there was the **CS Nexus**, a time chartered ex-drillship converted for cable laying and owned by James Fisher & Sons.



*CS Monarch passing Fawley about 1983*

In the main their cable work kept them fully occupied, with the notable exception of the seven months during 1982 that **CS Iris** spent in the South Atlantic with the Falklands fleet as a dispatch vessel.

From 1991 **CS Alert** and **CS Iris** were mainly working out in the Far East, and **CS Nexus** worked worldwide. Once C&WM took over, other cables ships occasionally appeared at 203 berth, but the two regulars remained **CS Sovereign** on Atlantic and **CS Monarch** on North Sea maintenance contracts.

So, where have the ships gone? A combination of age and industry downturn took its toll. First to go was the **CS Alert**, which had worked herself to death and was scrapped in India in 1995. Three others lasted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and became victims of age and the march of technology in the submarine cable industry. **CS Monarch** went to a Spanish scrap yard in December 2002 and **CS Iris** to an Indian one in February 2003, whilst **CS Nexus** was handed back to her owners as surplus to requirements at the end of 2002.



*CS Iris in BTM livery*

That left **CS Sovereign** as the only survivor. She remained based in Portland on Atlantic repair work until the end of 2003 when Global Marine lost the Atlantic maintenance contract. She was still one of the most powerful and best designed cables ships in the world, and therefore too good to lose. The power cable industry was already expanding, especially with the advent of wind farms, and over the last decade the ship has been upgraded with equipment to lay and repair them as well as retaining her telecoms cable working abilities, and although now 25 years old she continues to have a good future.



*CS Sovereign in Global Marine colours 2002*

We sadly have to report the passing at the age of 95 on 29 January 2017 of Joyce Marina Mitchell the widow of W H (Bill) Mitchell. She died peacefully at a nursing home in Cardiff. Joyce was always welcoming and supportive of Bill who served as Branch Chairman and later as editor of Black Jack. Bill, a noted maritime author, and Joyce never failed to encourage younger members, your editor included, in our interest in ships when we first joined the WSS.

## Bits and Pieces



Left: The new Border Force **Eagle** off Calshot on 5th October last. One of a fleet of 8 ribs reportedly refitted from former offshore rescue boats previously carried aboard larger off shore vessels,  
*photo Bill Lawes*

### First *Courage* and now *Honor*!

It will be recalled that in June 2015 the American car-carrier **Courage** suffered a fire off Harwich and was brought into Southampton (see BJ No 176 Autumn 2015). Well history has repeated itself – on the evening of 23 February **Honor** (1996/49821) owned by the same company, American Roll-on Roll-off Carriers (ARC), departed berth 35 bound for Baltimore and early the following morning off Lyme Bay a fire broke out on a vehicle deck. The fire was extinguished by the ships own automatic system and there were no reported injuries to the crew of 21. She turned back, first to anchor off the Isle of Wight for assessment, and then that evening she was brought back in to berth 46. Later she was at 101 berth and finally resumed her voyage to Baltimore on 7 March.



### A new tug on the block!

The keen eyed among you may have noticed a new tug assisting with towage around the port. The **Svitzer Experience** has been moved here on temporary basis while the company awaits delivery of a brand new tug due later this year. Built in 2015 she was previously **Multratug 28** and was based in Rotterdam, and from June - October 2016 was renamed **Experience** and moved to Ijmuiden. The new tug will have a higher bollard pull in order to cope with the increasing number of calls from ultra-large box boats and VLCC's.

Left **Svitzer Excellence** seen on 23rd February  
*photo and text by Andrew McAlpine*

**Saga Cruises** has released images and details of its first new-build cruise ship, which is set to enter service in Summer 2019. The 999-passenger vessel will have 540 all-balcony cabins and suites, including 81 which will be designed specifically for solo passengers. The ship -- which Saga refers to internally as "Project Olympic" -- will include two speciality restaurants, main dining room, and a Britannia Lounge. The 55,900-ton ship will also have indoor and outdoor pools; library, spa and beauty salon. Work will start at the Meyer-Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany shortly.



# A – Z of Sail

by Michael Page

## For the letter “G” I have chosen L’HERMIONE

The *Hermione* is a replica of the French warship “Hermione” that was launched in 1779. This replica was built at Rochefort 1997 and named *L’Hermione*. In April 2015 she sailed to the USA arriving in June, as reported in the New York Times.

The vessel is a Concorde class 12 pounder Frigate:  
Displacement - 550 tons. Complement 255.  
Length - 145ft (44.2 m) Beam - 36.9ft (11.24m),  
Draught - 19.0ft (5.78 m).  
Armament - 32 guns. (26 x 12 pounder long guns and 6 x 6 pounder long guns).

The original *Hermione* was built in 11 months at Rochefort by shipwright Henri Chevillard as a light (French *Legere*) frigate fast and manoeuvrable. Between May and December 1779 she underwent successful sea trials in the Gulf of Gascony under the command of Lt de Latouche.

She then proceeded in Boston on 18th April carrying secret news that he had secured French reinforcements (5500 men and 5 Frigates) for George Washington. She fought several times in company with the *Astree* commanded by Laperouse, especially at the Naval battle of Louisbourg on 21st July 1781. After the end of the American Revolutionary War she returned to France in 1782. She formed part of a squadron sent to India to help Suffren against the British. However peace was declared and she returned to Rochefort in April 1784. In 1793 she ran aground and was declared a wreck and master declared responsible and discharged from the French Navy.



Painting of the original *L’Hermione*



The 1997built *Hermione* under full sail



*USS Mitscher* welcomes the replica *Hermione* after her Atlantic crossing.