

Black Jack

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



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Spring 2023



Our feature article this quarter is about the 1924-built **Southampton Floating Dock**, seen here being used by White Star Line's **Majestic** with the Edwardian Baroque style 1925-built Grade II listed Southampton Harbour Board offices on the left foreground. In the background are a 4-masted troopship (possibly Bibby's 1917-built **Lancashire**) at 49 berth and Cunard's **Berengaria** in the Ocean Dock.

Black Jack – Spring 2023 No.206

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

Branch Meetings

Venue:

St James Road Methodist Church

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Shirley

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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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2023 Branch Meeting Programme

March 14th	A time at sea with the British Antarctic Survey	Capt Robin Plumley MBE
April 11 th	Cornish Ports No 6	Krispen Atkinson
May 9 th	Meanderings on the Water	Paul Gosling
June 13 th	Bristol 'Floating Harbour and SS Great Britain.	Philip Benstead
July 11 th	Mini-talks - Geest Bananas	Adrian Tennet
	other mini talks	TBA
Mon July 17 th	Annual Branch Solent Cruise	
	see below for details	
August 8 th	London Docks	Ian Wells
September 12 th	TBC	
October 10 th	Italy part two	David Oldham
November 14 th	AGM and Photo Competition	
December 12 th	Cruising Again	Bill Mayes

The 2023 Southampton Branch Solent Cruise will take place on Monday 17th July, 11.15 to 18.15 from Town Quay – price £25. Please book via our Treasurer Andrew - address on left. Cheques payable to WSS Southampton Branch.

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, here are some updates on the comings and goings and other news from around the port.

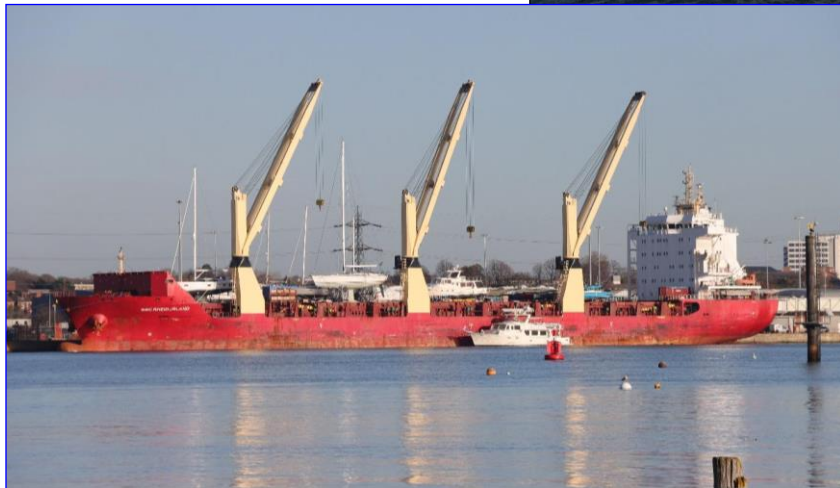


At the end of 2022 we saw the maiden call from P&O Cruises newest ship **Arvia**, sistership to **Iona**. On 6th January 2023 she sailed for the Caribbean for her inaugural cruise season and will be named in Barbados on 16th March 2023. **Arvia** will return to the UK in April.

Left: **Arvia** seen alongside the Ocean Cruise Terminal 19th December 2022.

At the end of last year, the Polish built Con-Ro vessel **Timca** made a couple of visits to Marchwood port.

Right: **Timca** (built 2006) seen sailing 29th December 2022



On 7th December **BBC Rheiderland** was in port loading yachts for Port Everglades.

Left: **BBC Rheiderland** (built 2013 as **Clipper Helvetia**).

At the container terminal we continue to see some varied and vessels making their first visits. On 23rd December **Cosco Faith** was alongside on her visit. She was transferring to the AEX transatlantic service. On the same day the **GSL Chateau D'if** arrived she was previously the **CMA CGM Chateau D'if** and is deployed on the EPIC India - North Europe service.

until next time stay safe and
happy ship spotting
Andrew

all photos by Andrew McAlpine

SOUTHAMPTON FLOATING DOCK

by David Hornsby

The transfer of the White Star Line North Atlantic services from Liverpool to Southampton in 1907 was achieved partly due the building of the White Star Dock, which was opened in 1911. After the First World War, the Cunard Steamship and Canadian Pacific also moved their express services to the Port and the dock was then renamed the Ocean Dock. These new services, and the increasing size of ships, then led to a significant further expansion of the Port and its facilities, including early planning for the New Dock Extension (see *BJ 204 Autumn 2022*)

Following the arrival of these services, by the early 1920's the Ocean Dock became the focal-point for the largest ships in the World, including Cunard's **Mauretania** (1907/31,938g), **Aquitania** (1914/45,647g) and **Berengaria** (1913/52,226g) ex-**Imperator**, United States Lines **Leviathan** (1914/54,282g) ex **Vaterland** and White Star's **Olympic** (1911/45,234g), **Majestic** (1914/56,551g) ex-**Bismarck** and later the **Homer** (1922/34,351g) ex **Columbus**.

The largest ship repair facility in the Port for these liners was the Trafalgar Dry Dock opened on 21st October 1905, the centenary of the famous battle,. The Dock was enlarged in 1911 to 912 feet by cutting a bow-shaped 'V' slot at the northern end, but even then the sterns of the largest ships would overhang the dock gate.

The redesign of the planned New Dock Extension included provision for new 1,200 and 800 ft dry docks, but these would not be completed until the 1930's, so a decision was made to order a floating dock to be positioned between 50 berth and the Town Quay. In October 1922, the London & South Western Railway, then owners of the Port, placed a £380,000 order with Armstrong, Whitworth & Co Ltd of Newcastle-on-Tyne for the new Floating Dock (yard no. 990), on completion the largest in the World.

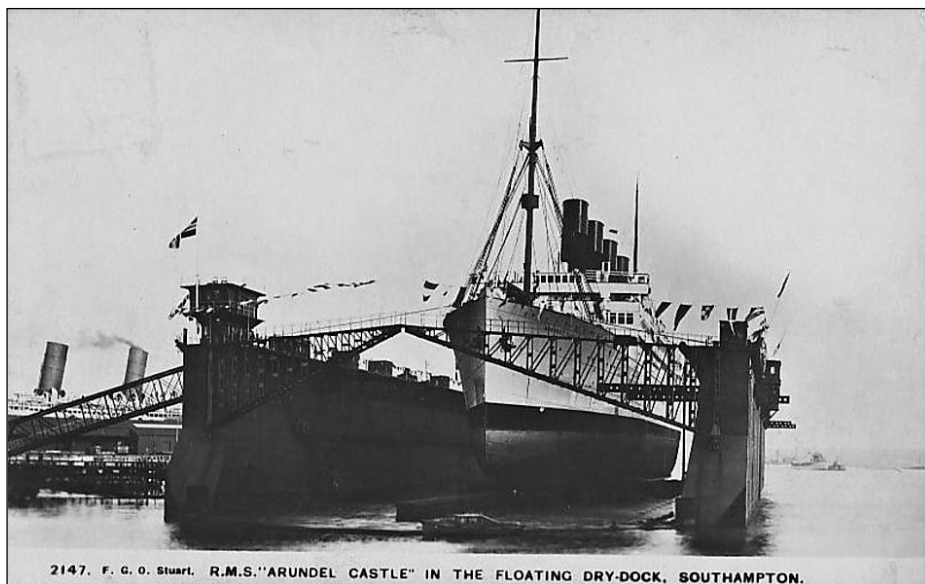


As built, the Dock was constructed as a box type dock 960 feet (293 m) long, 170 feet (52 m) wide overall, 130 feet (39.6m) between sidewalls and 70 feet 6 inches (21.5 m) high. The hull was divided into seven 'U'-shaped sections, which could if necessary be disconnected from each other. The five inner sections - constructed at the High Walker yard - were nearly identical, each being 130 feet 3 inches (40 m) long. The two identical end sections with pointed ends – constructed at the Low Walker yard - were each 102 feet 7½ inches (31.3 m) long. The Dock was of riveted construction using over 3.4million rivets, with a displacement weight of 19,330 tons and a designed lifting capacity of 60,000 tons, however later tests showed it to have a slightly greater capacity. The design of the Dock incorporated a strengthened floor/bottom capable - if necessary - of supporting a battleship, also provision for additional sections to be added, should ships get even larger. If any of the Dock hull sections needed repair or overhaul, the design also allowed individual sections to be detached, turned and floated into the remaining Dock for work to be carried out, while each section also incorporated electric two motors for the sections ballast pumps.

It was originally planned to use White Star's **Majestic** for the official Newcastle trials of the Floating Dock, but due to the delays, she was not available. Trials were finally carried out between 7th and 12th July 1923 using the slightly smaller **Olympic**, which - as planned - was lifted out of the water in less than 4 hours, with the pumps discharging some 80,000 tons of water from the side and bottom compartments of the Dock. The contract time for delivery of the dock was originally set at ten months, by which time railway amalgamations had resulted in the Port owners becoming Southern



Railway, but due to strike action at the builders, completion was eventually delayed until April 1924, 8 months late. The Floating Dock was towed from the Tyne by five tugs on 17th April 1924 and was delivered at Southampton on 21st April 1924. However, the mooring dolphins were not complete and before the four 100ft steel securing booms and mooring chains could be installed, some minor damage was caused to the Dock, when it was pushed against the dolphins by a gale. The area off Berth 50 had initially been dredged to 62ft depth and the Floating Dock was later repositioned on occasions to allow silting to be dredged. (above left: Dock on the delivery voyage).



2147. F. G. O. Stuart. R.M.S. "ARUNDEL CASTLE" IN THE FLOATING DRY-DOCK, SOUTHAMPTON.

The official opening of the Dock on 27th June 1924 was carried out by HRH Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), who had arrived in the Royal Train at Southampton West Station. In an open-topped Buick car, he was initially driven down Above Bar and through the Bargate, then across a specially decorated floating bridge to visit the Supermarine Works at Woolston. Returning through bunting to the Docks, he boarded the Floating Dock and after pulling levers in the control room, the Dock started to submerge, when the Port/Railway Directors and Royal Party retired to the **Aquitania** for lunch. At 2.15pm, the Prince now casually dressed, boarded the Southern Railway Isle of Wight paddler **Duchess of Fife**,

which entered the Floating Dock breaking a tricoloured ribbon to the sound of ships' sirens, before proceeding to the Royal Pier to land the official party. Later the same day, Union-Castle's **Arundel Castle** (above) entered the Floating Dock and, as a further trial, was raised in 2¼ hours before moving back to her normal berth the following day. Over the following 15 years the Dock became a major spectacle on the Town Quay waterfront with numerous vessels using the Dock, especially the Southampton-based Transatlantic liners **Olympic**, **Berengaria**, **Majestic**, **Mauretania**, **Aquitania** and **Homeric**, the only the exception from the "largest vessels in the World" being USL's **Leviathan**. Other vessels to use the Dock included **Bremen**, **Empress of Britain**, **Empress of Australia**, **Duchess of Richmond**, **Asturias**, **Belgenland** and the naval 15" monitor **HMS Erebus**.



2218/5 J.V. THE LARGEST FLOATING DOCK IN THE WORLD, SOUTHAMPTON (1924)



Above left: view from the floating crane taken in early 1930's with the New Dock Extension partly in use.
Above right: inside the floating dock showing the keel blocks and beams to ensure ships were central.

It has often been pointed out that the position of cranes on the Dock side-walls frequently changed. This was because the no cranes were permanently installed, but normally two 5 tons quayside cranes were 'appropriated' from a quiet berth when required and installed by the Ports 150 ton floating crane, which was also available for heavier lifts.

In March 1939, the Dock was requisitioned by the Government and after work on **HMS Erebus** was completed in August 1939, the Dock was purchased. Thornycroft then carried out strengthening and removal of the two end sections, reducing her length to 856 feet and the lifting capacity to 54,000 tons. On 24th February 1940, the dock was moved to Portsmouth, where it was renamed **Admiralty Floating Dock 11 (AFD 11)** and was used to and repair smaller floating docks and later construct sections of Mulberry harbours. Due to the vulnerability of ships in the Dock, it was not used by larger naval craft until after the end of WW2, but these then included the aircraft carriers **Illustrious**, **Implacable**, **Indefatigable**, **Indomitable**, **Leviathan**, **Theseus**, **Triumph** and **Victorious**.

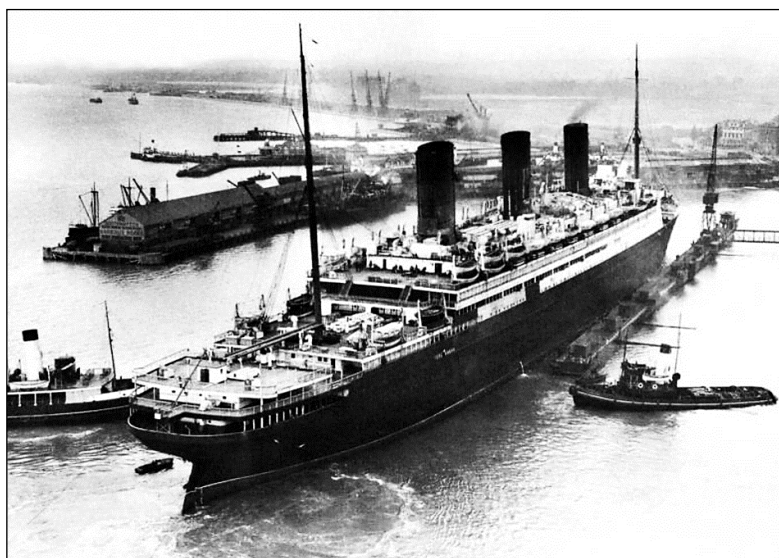
By 1958, the Floating Dock was surplus to MOD requirements and was sold to Rotterdam Drydock Company (Rotterdam Droogdok Maatschappij (RDM)) leaving Portsmouth on 14th May 1959 renamed **Prins Bernhard Dok 10** towed by the tugs **Elbe**, **Tasmanzee** and **Schelde**. The Nieuwe Waterweg approaching Rotterdam was closed for the arrival of the tow, the Dock becoming the largest of the 10 floating docks operated by RDM.

After 24 years continuous service in Rotterdam for RDM, lifting ships under repair, under conversion or newbuildings - including **Nieuw Amsterdam** and **Sea-land** container ships - in 1983 RDM was declared bankrupt. The Dock was offered for sale with a condition preventing operation in Europe and in 1984 was sold to Verolme Docks in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Floating Dock was divided into two sections placed onto pontoons before leaving Rotterdam on 17 December 1984 in tow of **Smit Houston**. On the 24th December, the tow broke in two north of La Corunna, one part being driven onto rocks and wrecked, the other pontoon being towed to Vigo, where the remains of the Dock were declared a Total Loss and scrapped.

What is left at Southampton?

Just some of the dolphins off 50 Berth. When the dock was removed from Southampton the dolphins to which the dock had been moored remained. In 1948, the international flying boat services returned to Southampton from Poole Harbour, after an absence of eight years. The leftover dolphins had been turned into the flying boat terminal, with offices and passenger terminal erected nearby at 50 berth. In 1949 the flying boats started to be phased-out with BOAC ending their operations in 1950. Some services were taken over by Aquila Airways, which closed the terminal in 1958.

Some more views of ships in the Floating Dock:



Above: **Aquitania** (left) and **Berengaria** (right) using the Floating Dock

Below: **Majestic** (left) and the 1929 newly-built **Bremen** (right)





Above: The dry-dock under construction and nearing completion on the Tyne.



Left: **Olympic** in the floating dock

As an afternote those who remember the Triang Minic series of 1:1200 scale model ships produced in the 1950s and 60s may recall the floating drydock which was part of the series – that model was indeed based on **AFD 11** the old Southampton floating drydock - Ed.

A – Z of Sail

by Michael Page

For the letter “G” I have chosen the GUAYAS

The **Guayas** is a sail training ship of the Ecuadorian Navy. Launched in 1976 it was named in jointly in honour of in honour of Chief Guayas, the Guayas river and Guayas, the first steamship that was constructed in South America in 1841 and is displayed on the Ecuadorian coat of arms.. The ships home base is Guayaquil, Ecuador.

The **Guayas** is a three masted barque with a steel hull that can carry a sail area of 1410 square metres (15,200 sq ft. The main mast reaches 38 metres

The main mast reaches 38 metres (124ft 8 inches) above deck. The ship carries a crew of 120 sailors as well as eighty cadets under the leadership of 35 officers. The **Guayas** is one of four sailing ships that were built by Astilleros Celaya S A in Bilbao, the **Gloria** (Colombia) being the a similar ship. The other two sister ships are the **Simon Bolivar** (Venezuela) and the **Cuauhtemoc** (Mexico). The four ships present a basic design that is very similar to the Blohm & Voss built **Gorch Fock** that was built more than four decades earlier.

As an ambassador of its country the **Guayas** is a participant in tall ship regattas.

In 2010 she participated in Velas Sudamerica 2010, an historical tour by eleven tall ships to Celebrate the bicentennial of the first national governments of Argentina and Chile.

The **Guayas** also participated in OpSail 2012, visiting New York, Norfolk, Baltimore and Boston, before proceeding to Europe.

The most recent participation was in the Tall Ships Race 2012. In 2002 the **Guayas** undertook a voyage along the West Coast of North America with ports of call at Acapulco, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. In 2008 the **Guayas** crossed the Pacific Ocean to visit Vladivostok, Japan, Korea and China. On the Osaka Pusan – Shanghai leg of this her first trip the **Guayas** took on board an officer of the Chinese navy for reefing training.

Over her lifetime, by the end of 2008 the **Guayas** had visited 25 countries and covered about 340,000 nautical miles (630,000 km)

She is classified as a Class A Tail Ship.....

Depth 6.60 m. (21 ft 8 in)

Launched 23 September 1976 934 gross tonnage, length 78.40 metres....Beam..10.16 m....Draught 4.40 metres.

Propulsion is General Motors diesel 700 hp. Sail Plan 1410 sq metres 15200 sq ft)

80 trainees 35 officers and 120 Crew.



Two views of **Guayas** under sail that on the right being in Dublin Bay