

Black Jack

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



Issue No: 218

Spring 2026



WHAT IS THE FUTURE NOW FOR THE HYTHE FERRY?

Following the sale of Red Funnel Group to Njord Partners (*see page 8*) the new owners have announced that they wish to sell Hythe and Southampton Ferry Company with 'expressions of interest' required by the 19th February 2026.

Founded in its current form in 1889 by the Percy-family's General Estates, the service has now been out of operation since 22nd August 2024 due to problems with the landing pontoon at Hythe Pierhead.

Photographed laid up at Town Quay in April 2025 is the current ferry 68 gross ton **HYTHE SCENE**, a 21 metre catamaran. She was built at Gravesend in 1992 as **GREAT EXPECTATIONS** by White Horse Ferries for their Tilbury-Gravesend service, before moving to local waters in 1995, four years after White Horse acquired the Hythe ferry. She was renamed in 2017 after the service was acquired by Blue Funnel Ferries, who later sold the service on to Red Funnel in 2023.

Black Jack 218 – Spring 2026

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

Branch Meetings

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

Venue:

St James Road Methodist Church
St James Road,
Shirley, Southampton, SO15 5HE

Branch Officials & Committee

Branch Chair and Website

Neil Richardson 07484807756
email: g4emm2024@outlook.com

Honorary Branch Secretary

Dr Mervyn Rowlinson 07960278411
80 Manor Farm Road
Bitterne Park, Southampton SO18 1NT
email: mervmarin@gmail.com

Honorary Branch Treasurer

Andrew Hogg 07495 774268
"Debanker", Lyburn Road,
Hamptworth, Salisbury SP5 2DP

Black Jack Editor:

David Hornsby 02380 339799
email: david.hornsby546@btinternet.com

Visits Organiser and Minutes

Adrian Tennet 02380 600197

Committee member

Nigel Robinson

WSS Branch Website

www.sotonwss.org.uk

Would members please ensure that any changes to their postal and/or email addresses are notified to the Branch as soon as possible.

Programme of 2026 Branch Meetings

March 10 th	Manchester Ship Canal Traffic	Jim Charnock
April 14 th	Paul's Shipping Miscellany	Paul Gosling
May 12 th	30 Years on the Schelde	Krispen Atkinson
June 9 th	The Early RFA.	John Hoar, HCMM
July 8 th	Coastal Shipping Diary	Iain McCall
August 11 th	Arctic Circle Bound	Capt Robin Plumley
September 8 th	British-India at War	Merv Rowlinson
October 13 th	John and Pat Havers on Board	
November 10 th	AGM and photographic competition	
December 8 th	British Cargo Liners of the 60's and 70's	David Hornsby

Saturday July 4th Southampton Branch annual Solent Cruise operated jointly with T.S.S.

Articles please!!

Black Jack is intended to be 'by the Branch members – for the Branch members'. What subjects, current or historical, would you like to see in **Black Jack**? Tell the Editor.

Your editor would appreciate and be delighted to receive any maritime articles with a connection to Southampton or The Solent area for inclusion in **Black Jack**, also any snippets of news and photos for possible inclusion.

Contributions can be sent by post, email, memory stick or CD.

STOP PRESS NEWS

At high water on 3rd February, ABP's large mobile crane at 45 Berth was rolled onto Wynn's heavy-load/shallow draft 80m Damen-built barge **TERRA MARIQUE** (04/2,786 gt, then moved to SGL4 ready for a delivery voyage to ABP Newport in South Wales. The escorting tug, a 3,500 bhp 42 ton bollard pull Damen-built Shoalbuster **DUCHESS** (21/193 gt), owned by Ports of Jersey later moved to Saxon Wharf before returning to SGL4

About 4.15pm on 9th February, the DFDS ro-ro **CAESAREA TRADER** (96/11,166g) ex Commodore Goodwill-25 suffered a serious engine room fire between St Helier and Portsmouth, anchoring at the western end of the Nab Anchorage for emergency services and tugs from Portsmouth to attend.

MARCHWOOD QUAY – plans have been announced, subject to planning approval, to convert the former aggregates quay and adjoining area into a 1.8ha asphalt plant, including a new 40m high production building. If the plant is built, weekly imports of aggregates are planned from N. Ireland, Norway and France.

On 14th February, container ship **ONE HUMBER** (06/98,747g) had an engine room fire in the Solent arriving from Singapore and assisted by tugs **APEX**, **LOMAX** and **SD INDULGENT** anchored in Stokes Bay before moving to SCT 2/3 early on 15th.

STOP STOP PRESS CMA CGM have just announced their new weekly **OCR** container service from Japan/South China to Southampton with fourteen 7-10,000 teu vessels, starting in April with **CMA CGM BYBLOS** departing Kobe on 2nd April.

Andrew's Note Book

From the port of Southampton by Andrew McAlpine

Welcome to the first Note Book from the Port of Southampton for 2026.



As is the norm for this time of year only a few cruise ships continue to call while others are in sunnier climates around the world.

The winter-season MSC ship this year operating 7-day cruises to Hamburg-Rotterdam-Zeebrugge and Le Havre has been **MSC POESIA**. Delivered in 2008, she is 92,627 gross tons with berths for 2,550 (lower) 3,060 (max) passengers.

She left the Port on 13th February for dry-docking at Malta, before Mediterranean cruises, then heading to USA for two years of Alaska cruises from Seattle and Caribbean cruises out of Miami.

MSC Poesia seen 19th December 2025 at the Horizon Cruise Terminal



Another Southampton regular is Fred Olsen's **BOREALIS**, originally delivered in 1997 to Holland-America Line as **ROTTERDAM**. 61,849 gross tons with berths for 1,360 (lower) 1,685 (max) passengers

Borealis seen on 28th January 2026, shortly before she departed on a 76 night cruise to South America, visiting Antarctica, Falkland Islands, and transiting the Panama Canal.



The 107/8 berth bulk terminal continues to be busy, with regular visits from both large bulkers and smaller multi-purpose vessels.

The smart-looking 2009 Chinese-built geared 'handysize' bulker **KURPIE** is one of several Polsteam bulkers to have arrived at 107 berth from Garrucha in southern Spain with gypsum. 24,109 gross, 38,981 dwt.

Kurpie seen 19th December 2025, later sailing on 21st to Halmstad in Sweden.



..... and smaller multi-purpose vessels

ARKLOW CREST is one of nine 'C class' sisters from Ferus Smit, Leer, Germany, built in two series during 2016-7 and 2021-2. 2022 2,999 gross, 5,049 dwt.

Having arrived 3 days earlier from Tilbury, **Arklow Crest** is seen 28th January 2026 shortly before sailing to Lisbon, Portugal



On the container side we are getting visits from HMM's ultra large 24,000 teu vessels, many of which have recently had wind deflectors fitted in China.

One of the latest was 2020-built **HMM GDANSK** seen (left) on her first visit in June 2023 and (below) in December last year sporting a new wind deflector. 228,283 gross, 232,606 dwt

*Until next time
Happy Spotting*



CHINESE PCTC fleet expansion

by David Hornsby

In recent months, anyone regularly visiting the Port of Southampton would have noticed the significant resurgence in the number of Pure Car and Truck Carriers (PCTC) vehicle carriers calling in both the Eastern and Western Docks, also more recently at Solent Gateway at Marchwood.

After the massive sector expansion between 2003 and 2008, the car carrier market entered a period of stabilisation until the start of the 2020's, when the large-scale introduction of electric vehicles (EV's) led to a significant shortage in the sector, with vessel charter rates rising to sky-high levels. The substantial increase in car production and exports from China, especially EV's, combined with the limited availability of car carrier capacity to deliver those vehicles to their new markets has resulted in Chinese manufacturers investing significantly in fleets of new PCTC's.

Industry sources give slightly conflicting data, but in 2023 around 14 new PCTC's were delivered, in 2024 there were 49, followed by 55 in 2025 with orders indicating 70 due in 2026 and 41 more in 2027. Current ship deliveries and orders indicate that by 2028, China's fleet of these specialised vessels will have increased to around 77 vessels, leaping ahead of South Korea (Hyundai Glovis) and only in third place behind Norway (102 vessels – Wallenius, Hoegh, NOCC, Siem) and Japan (283 vessels – NYK, MOL, Kawasaki).

The market shortage has also resulted in established operators ordering larger capacity new tonnage, including 11,700 ceu vessels for Wallenius, while a number of parties have seized the opportunity to enter the sector, including operators such as CMA CGM, MSC (through Gram Car Carriers) and non-operating companies such as Eastern Pacific, Zodiac, Seaspan (12 + 8 options for 10,800 ceu vessels with 14 decks, 5 moveable) and Siem ordering vessels for chartering out.

The 2024/5 delivered Chinese-owned vehicle carriers, some now visiting Southampton regularly, include

BYD, Shenzhen, China (the World's largest EV car maker by end 2024)

BYD EXPLORER No.1 * (right) 2024 69,407 gross
BYD CHANGZHOU 2024 69,250 gross
first Chinese-built car carriers for export cars and chartered from Zodiac Maritime (series of 8); 19,177-19,259 dwt 199.99 x 38m with 8.6m draft; 7,000 ceu on 13 decks; LNG dual-fuel, 19 knots service speed; built by Yantai CIMC Raffles shipyard at Longkou.

BYD HEFEI * 2025 69,542 gross
BYD ZHENGZHOU 2025 69,542 gross
19,080-19,119 dwt 199.9 x 38m with 9m draft; 7,000 ceu; LNG dual-fuel; built by Guangzhou SB

BYD SHENZHEN # 2025 87,973 gross # for short time largest capacity car carrier;
BYD XI'AN 2025 87,973 gross
25,376-25,422 dwt 219 x 37.7m with 9m draft 9,200 ceu on 16 decks; LNG dual-fuel with battery hybrid propulsion, 18,5 knots; built China Merchants Heavy Industry Jiangsu shipyard

BYD CHANGSHA * (below) 2025 88,033 gross
BYD JINAN * 2025 88,033 gross

As previous pair, but 25,109-25,205 dwt and built at CMHI Haimen shipyard, Nanjing Province.



CHINESE PCTC FLEET EXPANSION continued

SAIC Group, Anting, China (formerly Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp.)

Through their operating subsidiary Anji Logistics (for SAIC vans and MG Motors cars)

SAIC ANJI ETERNITY 2024 69,250 gross
SAIC ANJI HARMONY 2024 69,250 gross
 19,099-19,116 dwt 199.9 x 38m; 7,600 ceu (car equivalent units); built by Longkou CIMC Raffles Shipyard, Longkou. chartered from Zodiac Maritime

SAIC ANJI SINCERITY * # 2024 74,871 gross
SAIC ANJI SPLENDOR 2024 74,871 gross
 # when delivered, World's largest LNG car carrier; 18,163-18,204 dwt 199.9 x 38m 7,600 ceu; LNG dual-fuel; built by CSSC Jiangnan shipyard.



ANJI PRESTIGE (above right) 2024 75,604 gross
ANJI VIRTUE * 2025 75,604 gross
ANJI COMMONALITY * 2025 75,604 gross
 19,359 dwt 199.99 x 38m with 10.2m draft; 7,800 ceu; LNG dual-fuel, 19 knots; built by Jiangnan SB

ANJI ANSHENG * # (right) 2025 87,008 gross
ANJI SOUNDNESS * 2025 87,008 gross
ANJI PROSPERITY 2025 87,008 gross
ANJI FOREVER * 2025 87,008 gross
ANJI FLOURISHMENT 2025 86,996 gross
ANJI FORTUNE 2025 87,000 gross
ANJI LUCK 2025 87,000 gross



World's largest on delivery 24,435-24,664 dwt 228 x 37.8m with 10.3m draft 9,500 ceu; built by China Merchants Industry Holdings (CMIH) at Jinling shipyard, Nanjing.

Zhejiang Geely Holdings, Hangzhou, China (through their operating subsidiary JISU Logistics transporting brands such as Geely, Lotus, Smart, Zeekr and Farizon brands)

JISU FORTUNE * (right) 2025 69,250 gross
JISU GLORY 2025 69,250 gross
 chartered from Zodiac Maritime (see **BYD** sisters above); 19,160 dwt 199.9 x 38m with 8.6m design draft; 7,000 ceu on 12 decks (8 fixed, 4 moveable, upper two designed for hydrogen/LNG powered cars); LNG dual-fuel, 19 knots; built by Yantai CIMC Raffles shipyard, Longkou.



Anhui Port & Shipping Group (through their subsidiary Anhui Hangrui International RoRo Transportation, a joint venture with Chery and JAC car brands for Chery, Omoda and Jaecoo models)

AICC HUANGHU * (right) 2025 71,663 gross
AICC KUNPENG * 2025 71,577 gross
AICC FENGHUANG * 2025 71,540 gross
 18,773-18,885 dwt 199.9 x 38m with 10m draft; 7,000 ceu on 12 decks (4 liftable); LNG dual-fuel; built at Wuhu shipyard, Zhoushan



CHINESE PCTC FLEET EXPANSION continued

COSCO Shipping Specialized Carriers Co., Guangzhou, China, some in joint venture with Chinese Guangzhou Yuan Car Carrier Transportation and BoComm (Bank of Communications Leasing)

LIAO HE KOU *	2024	72,255 gross
HAI HE KOU *	2024	72,255 gross
MIN JIANG KOU * (right)	2024	72,255 gross
TING JIANG KOU *	2025	72,255 gross
LIU JIANG KOU *	2025	72,255 gross
GUI JIANG KOU	2025	72,255 gross
CHENG KANG KOU	2025	72,255 gross
ZHEN GUAN KOU	2025	72,255 gross
KAI YUAN KOU	2026	73,000 gross



19,358 dwt 199.9 x 38m with 8.65m draft; 7,500 ceu on 13 decks (9 fixed, 4 moveable), incorporating fire data monitoring of up to 5,000 EV cars; LNG dual-fuel; built by Fujian Shipbuilding, Xiamen, part of CSSC China State Shipbuilding Corp and as part of an order for 16 PCTC's.

PEONY LEADER # *	2024	68,252 gross
ORCHID LEADER # *	2025	68,252 gross
HUANG HE KOU *	2024	68,252 gross
GAN JIANG KOU *	2024	68,252 gross
XIANG JIANG KOU * (right)	2024	68,252 gross
HAN JIANG KOU *	2024	68,252 gross
YUAN HAI KOU	2025	68,252 gross
YUAN JIANG KOU	2025	68,252 gross



19,133 dwt 199.9 x 38m; 7,230 ceu on 12 decks (top two for hydrogen-fuelled cars); LNG dual-fuel and solar powered; built by Guangzhou Shipyard International (CSSC) at Guangzhou or at Longxue shipyard, Nansha.

managed by COSCO Shipping Specialized Carriers, but operated by NYK Line.

WEN JING KOU *	2025	77,410 gross
HAN WU KOU	2025	77,410 gross
YONG LE KOU * (right)	2025	77,410 gross

20,964 dwt 199.9 x 38m; 8,600 ceu on 14 decks; LNG dual-fuel, 19 knots; built by Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding, Shanghai (CSSC)

China Merchants Energy Shipping, Shanghai, China

CM HONG KONG * (right)	2025	87,824 gross
CM SHEN ZHEN	2025	87,824 gross

World's first large methanol dual-fuel car carriers; 25,505/25,640 dwt, 219.9 x 37.7m with 9.1m draft; 9,492 ceu on 13 decks (3 adjustable, 3 for hydrogen fuel-cell powered cars); methanol dual-fuel, 19.5 knots; built by China Merchants Industry Holdings (CMIH) Jinling shipyard at Jiangsu Shipyard



Four 7,800 ceu methanol dual-fuel vessels on order for 3Q 2026 delivery from same yard, first one laid down July 2025 (artists impression below right)

* indicates vessels that have called at Southampton since 2024 (from *Michael Davies* list with updates)

ceu (car equivalent unit) was introduced in the 1960's to provide a standard unit for calculating the carrying capacity of Roll-on, Roll-off vessels and is based on the space required for a 1966 Toyota Corona RT43 model approximately 4.125m x 1.55m x 1.40m high.



With many modern cars being larger than 1960's models, it does not therefore mean that a new 9,000 ceu vessel can actually carry 9,000 modern cars, more realistically 7-7,500 cars could be carried. For instance, the footprint of a current Land Rover Discovery requires 1.61 ceu of deck space, while a long wheelbase Range Rover Evoque requires 1.68 ceu.

Images from operator and shipbuilders PR pages.

Local Shipping and Port News

SOLENT GATEWAY 2 EXPANSION PROPOSALS

In September 2025, ABP published plans for public consultation on a possible enlargement of this Marchwood port area on part of the 800 acre Dibden Bay reclaimed area for an extended vehicle terminal “to enhance the Port’s capacity and resilience”.

The £500 million proposal is for an addition new two-berth jetty for the largest ro-ro vessels on the northern part of the reclaimed area opposite the remains of the Royal Pier, together with additional parking and preparation areas, all served by the new link to the A326 road.



RED FUNNEL SOLD AND EAST COWES REDEVELOPMENT PLANS APPROVED

On 29th September 2025, after months of speculation, the sale of the Company was announced to private equity investment firm Njord Partners, whose portfolio includes Ambassador Cruise Line, the acquisition from the previous consortium of British and Canadian pension funds being completed on 1st December. On the 27th November, it was also reported that the latest redesign of the East Cowes terminal had been given the go-ahead, including an automated check-in with 350 vehicle spaces, an 80 bedroom hotel and 30 new homes.

SHIPS LOOSING CONTAINERS

After many years with no instances of containers being lost overboard in local waters, in recent months we have had a series of mishaps.

At about 6pm on 6th December 2025, Seatrade’s 2010-built 14,091 grt **BALTIC KLIPPER** lost 18 containers near the Nab Tower on her way into Portsmouth from the West Indies. The wrecked remains of 15 containers and their fruit cargo eventually coming ashore and creating pollution on the West Sussex coast around Selsey, Pagham and Bognor Regis. The ‘hazard to navigation’ delayed the departure of the P&O’s **IONA** sailing on a cruise from Southampton.

A month later, on 6th January 2026, another Seatrade vessel heading to Portsmouth from Vlissingen, the 2002-built 14,413 grt **LOMBOK STRAIT** lost 17 containers in the same Nab Tower area during *Storm Goretti*, while just 45 minutes later about 16nm off St Catherine’s Point, the 2011-built 12,795 grt **CONDOR VALPARAISO** (ex Clipper Nassau-2018) lost 7 empty containers while on passage from Antwerp to Aviles in Spain.

CARISBROOKE SHIPPING

With an actively managed fleet of 20 vessels between 5,000 and 12,900 dwt, the Cowes-based company has recently taken delivery of its first new vessel for 13 years and has orders for several new vessels for 2026 and 2027 delivery.

Delivered on 17th November 2025 was IOM-flagged **JILL C** from Chowgule Shipyard in India (y/n C-295); 3,913 gt, 6,113 dwt, 99m loa with 14.3m beam and 6.5m draft, one 260,000 cubic ft hold and diesel-electric propulsion for a 10.3 kts service speed.

Due for 2026 delivery are two LABRAX 7680 design dry-cargo (y/n 375 & 376) under construction at the Royal T Shipyard (formerly Thecla Bodewes shipyards) at Kampen in The Netherlands. These are a similar design to 10 sister ships built for Vertom, but with increased draft and deadweight, being about 4,766 tons gross and 7,700 deadweight with an overall length of 118.6m, a beam of 14.3m, maximum draft of 6.5m and capacity of 329,700 cu feet in two full-box holds. Diesel-electric propulsion system will again ensure ‘greener’ operations with 30% reduced CO2 emissions.

The first named **GRETA C** is due to be launched on 13th March with delivery in April, followed by **HELEEN C** due for delivery in August.

(Builders impression above right)

Also recently ordered are six Dutch Groot-6600XL design dry-cargo ships plus four options for delivery from 2027 by Jiangsu Dajin Heavy Industry at Yangzhong City in Jiangsu Province, China, these will be 4,999 gt and 7,000 deadweight with 110m loa, 15.45m beam and 6.5m draft. *(Artists impression above)*



WHITAKER TANKERS

With its Southern operating base in Southampton since 1988, this 146 year old Hull-based bunkering and coastal tanker Company was acquired about March 2024 by Henley-on-Thames based Lindsay Blee & Co Ltd.

They have recently acquired two tankers, in late December 2025, the previously Turkish-owned **DUZGIT VENTURE**, which was renamed **WHITVENTURE** under the Maltese-flag initially to operate out of Pembroke and Milford Haven. This addition to the fleet is 2,166 gross tons and 3,166 dwt with an overall length of 89m and a beam of 12m., she was completed in 2009 at the Selahattin Aslan Shipyard in Istanbul. Then in late January, the **WHITPIONEER**, formerly the Norwegian-owned, 2006 Turkish-built **BERGEN STAR** 3,618 gross tons and 4,410 dwt on 90m loa x 16.5m beam.