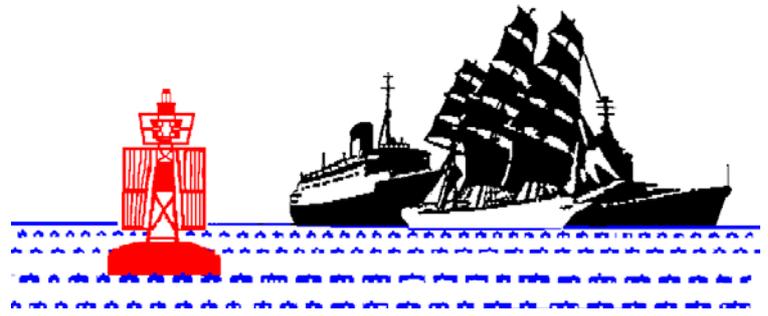


Black Jack

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY



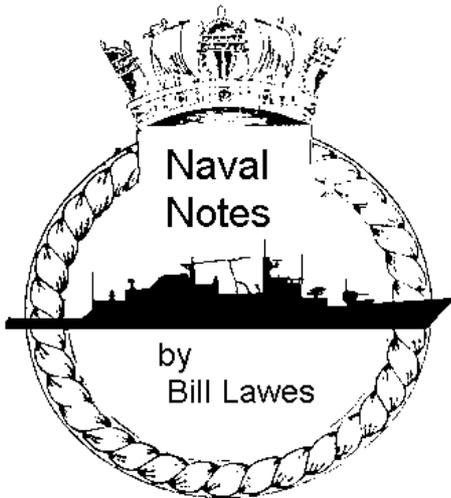
Issue No: 122

Autumn 2002



A fine photograph of Princess Danae 55/9763 arriving in Southampton (ex Baltica-96, Starlight Princess-94, Anar-92, Danae-92, Therisos Express-74, Port Melbourne-72). Originally built by Swan Hunter in 1955 still retains her good lines after numerous refurbishments.

Photograph Monty Beckett – Courtesy ABP



With the arrival in July of **USNS "Comfort"** we have at last a military vessel to comment on. The "**Comfort**" and her sister ship "**Mercy**", are two of the very few hospital ships still in operation with the world's navies. Seeing the ship alongside 38/39 berth gave a good impression of the size of the vessel. Her full load displacement is listed as 69320 tons (54367grt), much of the displacement is seawater ballast, her major dimensions are 272.6 m x 32.2m x 10 m.

The story of these two ships really dates back to the early eighties when the Americans considered converting the SS "United States" into a Hospital Ship. This plan was abandoned in favour of converting two "San Clemente" class tankers for the same role. The two ships selected were "Worth" converted between July 1984 and July 1986 to become **USNS "Mercy"** and "**Rose City**" whose conversion began in April 1985 and was completed by December 1986 when she entered service as **USNS "Comfort"**. Both conversions were carried out by National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. at

San Diego, the same company that had built the ships originally. As tankers their displacement had been 44875tons and both had been launched in 1976. During the conversion the mid-ship section of the ships was altered to provide a helicopter landing area, boat storage and accommodation. The medical equipment includes 1000 beds, 12 operating theatres, laboratories and all the back up services of a hospital.

The ships still retain their original 24500hp steam turbines that can produce a top speed of about 17kts. At 15kts they have a range of 12500 miles.

Normally one ship is held on either U.S. coast at five days notice, being maintained by a Military Sealift Command crew and civilians, the medical specialists being brought in from Military hospitals when required.

Both ships were deployed to the Gulf during 1990/91. As an aftermath of September 11th, **USNS "Comfort"** was berthed at Pier 92 in New York Harbour to supply logistics, food and sleeping accommodation for the rescue personnel. She arrived in New York for that duty on Sept 15th and departed 1st Oct. This is a good example of the flexibility of these vessels.



USNS Comfort passing the Hook buoy outward from 38/9 berth.

Photograph - Bill Lawes

Two new military vessels have appeared in local waters during August. HMS "**Echo**", the first of two survey vessels arrived at Portsmouth. She was built at Appledore, having been sub-contracted by Vosper Thornycroft. She sailed round to the South Coast for final completion. She and her sister "**Enterprise**" are fitted with podded electric propulsors.

Making her first call to Marchwood was the "**Hurst Point**". She is the first of six Ro- Ro vessels ordered as part of the Rapid Reaction Force. These ships will fly the Red Ensign and be manned by Merchant seamen who are classed as Sponsored Reserves, meaning that they can be called -up as reservists in an emergency. Two of the vessels are under construction by Harland & Wolff; the remaining four were contracted to Flensburger (This being due to EC regulations regarding vessels ordered by a government !). "**Hurst Point**" is one of the German built ships. When not required by the Military the vessels can be chartered out for other use.

A port located multi-storey car terminal opened at the end of April to boost the vehicle storage capacity for Wallenius Wilhelmsen Lines. The Swedish and Norwegian ambassadors were the guests of Bo Lerenius, Associated British Ports group chief executive and Lauritz Andersen, President of WWL's European region services.

Early last year WWL and ABP signed a 10-year agreement for the Scandinavian vehicle carrier specialist to concentrate all of its export traffic at the British south coast port.

Constructed by civil engineers Dean & Dyball, the new five level Southampton International Vehicle Terminal provides the equivalent of almost five hectares of car storage on just one hectare and can accommodate up to 3,120 cars at a time.

The terminal features the latest car handling safety mechanisms and computer technology such as a bar coding system that scans cars as they enter the terminal and provides tighter inventory control.

ABP Southampton is the United Kingdom's leading automotive port for both deep-sea and short-sea routes with more than 500,000 vehicles handled by the port each year with calls by all the leading vehicle carrier companies.

Southampton's new Radar and CCTV system starts work.....

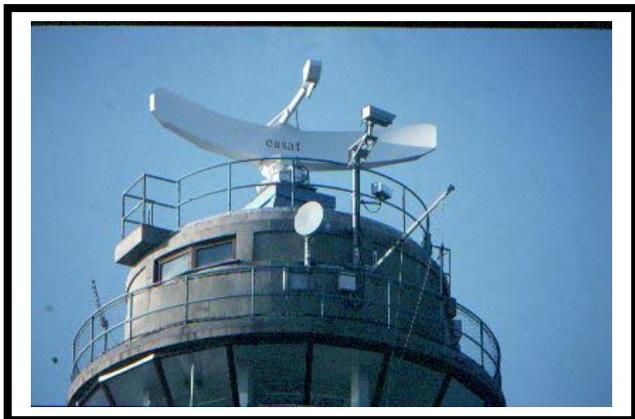
Daylight viewing radar and closed circuit television surveillance are features of the outfit available to controllers in the Port of Southampton Vessel Traffic Services Operations Centre, which has been commissioned by the Princess Royal.

The new £2.5m system developed by ABP engineers in association with STN Atlas, effectively doubles the ports radar coverage and provides VTS controllers with an advanced radar image of the whole of Southampton Water and eastward approaches where there are more than 140,000 vessel movements a year.

The new outfit, which includes four new radars takes advantage of an additional site at Eastney giving a wider range of vision to the east and also a number of CCTV cameras mounted at strategic points along Southampton Water, enables the controllers to see everything that is passing in the waterway. A visual watch through the television screens will permit the controller's to have closer contact with often fast moving events, particularly useful during the yachting season when the ports waters are crowded with small leisure craft.

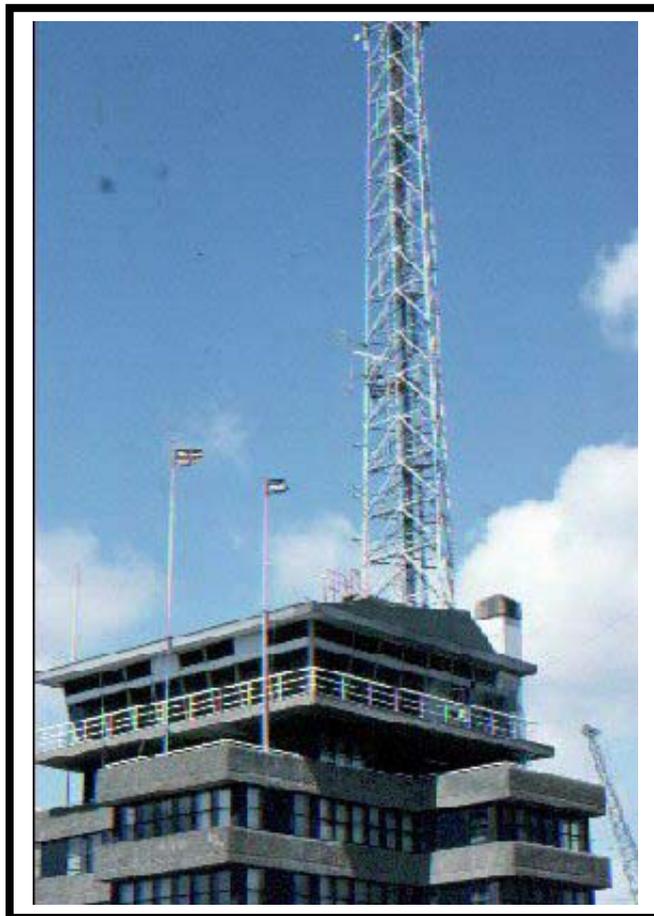
The system, which also oversees the approaches to Portsmouth, would help ensure that major sailing events do not disrupt the commercial operations in the port.

The system, which includes bespoke ABP software, has the facility to record digitally radio. Radar and CCTV data and play this back as real time footage. The new integrated system computer management system and radar system also gives operators access to detailed information on a vessel much more quickly.



Photograph – Editors Collection

The new Calshot scanner and CCTV camera. This site has a backup emergency generator, differential GPS transmitter and remote tide gauge for the VTS centre.



Photograph – courtesy ABP



A photograph showing the Queen Elizabeth in the Ocean Dock which was the centre for North Atlantic passenger traffic. The dock was completed in 1911 shows the Ocean Passenger Terminal which opened in July 1950 under construction. The dock has an entrance width of 400ft and a nominal depth of 40ft.

Photograph – Rod Baker Collection

From Monty's Camera.....Compiled by Monty Beckett
A summary of new or infrequent callers to Southampton over the last few months.



RoRo vessel **Hurst Point**
Arriving at Marchwood on her
first call on August 2nd.

Photographs – Monty Beckett courtesy ABP

Ocean Scene on the WSS annual cruise in
June passing 204 berth.



Seven Seas Mariner 01/48705
departing Southampton

Europe's most powerful tanker and escort and berthing tug **Ajax** was on station at Fawley in July to cover routine dry-docking of the **Silex** and **Thrax**.

Owned by Norwegian Operator Ostensjo Rederi, the 10,340 hp vessel has Voith Schneider propulsion and is normally based on the west coast of Norway at Sture.

Delivered in 2001 the vessel is 41.60 metres long and is equipped for ship handling, escort duties, firefighting and pollution control.

In the escort role the tug can generate dynamic forces of more than 150 tonnes when operating at ten knots. Installed in the superstructure is a complete outfit of oil containment boom and skimming equipment.

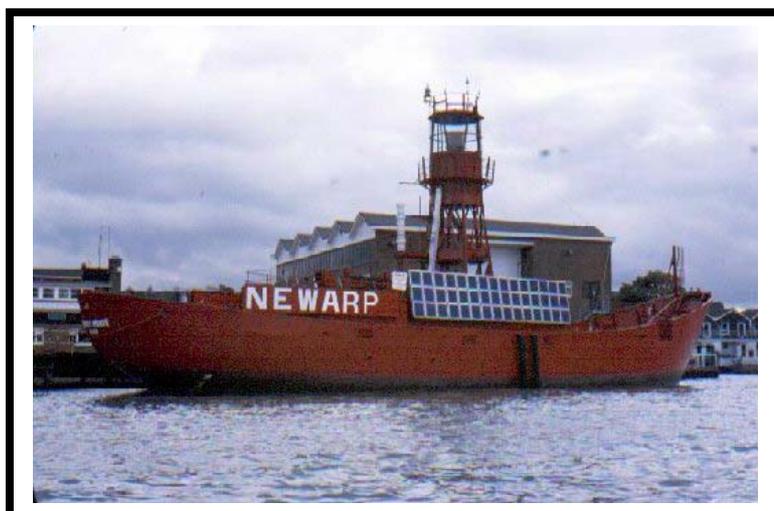


Photographed just after arrival the **Ajax** on the barge at the south end of Esso No5

The Bahamas registered ro-pax vessel **Isle of Inisfree**, is undergoing repairs and a change of livery at the A&P Falmouth shipyard. P&O European Ferries will take delivery of its latest charge at Portsmouth where **Isle of Inisfree** will be renamed **Pride of Cherbourg**. It will replace the present **Pride of Cherbourg** and **Pride of Hampshire** after the summer season on the Portsmouth-Cherbourg route entering service mid September.

Also P&O Portsmouth has renewed its charter on the **Pride of Le Havre** and **Pride of Portsmouth** serving its Portsmouth-Le Havre line for a further 5 years at the end of June.

P&O which had been believed to be harbouring doubts about the future of the Le Havre – Portsmouth route not so long ago, now says that it sees Le Havre as one of the major gateways into France, last year its passenger total on the route increased to 814,256. The company is Le Havre's only remaining ferry operator after the departure of Irish Ferries



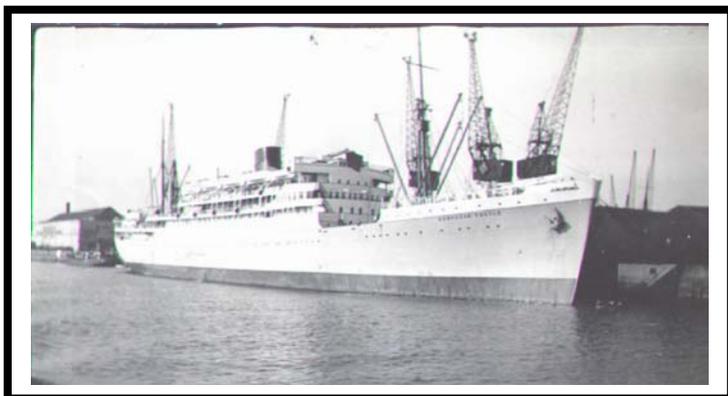
Trinity House is planning to close its engineering base in East Cowes ending a 160-year link with the town. The plan to close the base at East Cowes, which began as an operational base for ships and lighthouses activities in the area, is part of a wider restructuring plan to be studied by the Department of Transport and a final decision will be made later in the year. The present buildings were built in 1842 and then converted for use as a project-engineering base in 1989. The engineers have been responsible for the major lighthouse automation projects ending with the conversion of North Foreland Lighthouse in 1998. Modernisation schemes, including the conversion of lighthouses and lightships to

solar power operation will continue until the major programme has been completed in 2007. Engineering functions will then be consolidated pending the outcome of a study into the feasibility of co-locating most Trinity House staff to a single site either in Southampton or Harwich.

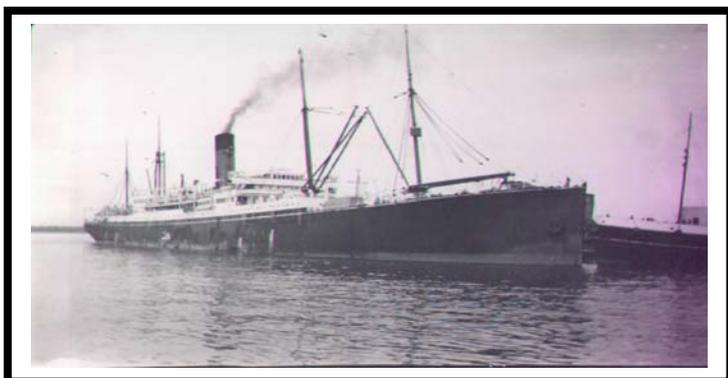
Pre WWII Memories captured by my camera – John Havers



Esperance Bay in the Ocean Dock 20th April 1937.



Dunvegan Castle photographed from the tender Calshot 25 April 1937



Ceramic photographed in 1937



Troopship Cunard White Star **Laurentic** departs for Palestine

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**Thanks to ABP
Southampton for
providing news items.**

**Forthcoming
Programme
and Events**

Venue: 1st floor
Portswood Conservative
Club
127 Highfield Lane
Southampton
Meetings are held on the
2nd Tuesday of each
month at 19.30.

2002 Programme

October 8th
**Built in the
Netherlands**
David Hornsby and Rod
Baker
November 12th
**A.G.M. + Members
Displays**
December 10th
Queen Mary
David Ellery

**Branch
Notice
Board**

A small number of members recently visited the station thanks to ABP Public Relations Vernon for arranging the visit and Les and John duty staff for showing us around.

All contributions to BJ are gratefully received either by post, email, floppy disk or CD. Any article related to the Solent area would be appreciated.

Most members will now be aware that ABP locally has revoked all photographic passes for unspecific Health & Safety reasons. The committee have written to ABP requesting dialogue or some concession for local members.



A group from the branch shown with "Les" VTS operator during a recent visit to VTS. In the background can be seen CCTV monitors and radio channel indicators.

