Black Jack

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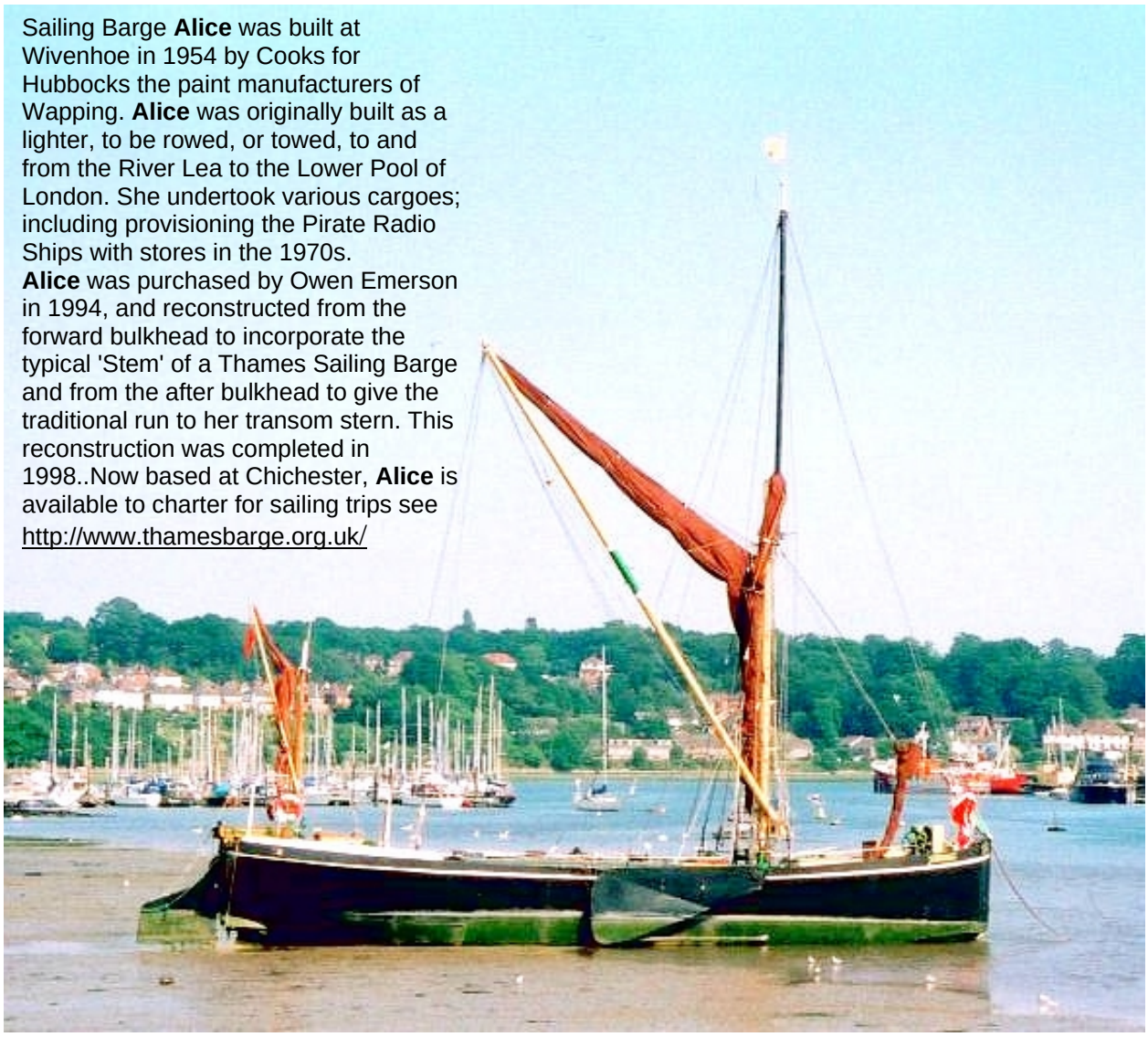
Sailing Barge **Alice** was built at Wivenhoe in 1954 by Cooks for Hubbocks the paint manufacturers of Wapping. **Alice** was originally built as a lighter, to be rowed, or towed, to and from the River Lea to the Lower Pool of London. She undertook various cargoes; including provisioning the Pirate Radio Ships with stores in the 1970s.
Alice was purchased by Owen Emerson in 1994, and reconstructed from the forward bulkhead to incorporate the typical 'Stem' of a Thames Sailing Barge and from the after bulkhead to give the traditional run to her transom stern. This reconstruction was completed in 1998..Now based at Chichester, **Alice** is available to charter for sailing trips see http://www.thamesbarge.org.uk/



Sailing Barge **Alice** of Rochester at anchor in the R. Itchen near Northam Bridge – Photograph Rod Baker

WORKING TOGETHER FOR MARITIME CELEBRATION

A celebration of Southampton's role as Britain's leading maritime city was launched in June. Under the banner of 'Sea City, Southampton' many of the organisations across the city and region will pull together to put together events and exhibitions throughout 2006 recognising the relationship the city has with the sea, both in the past and in plans for the future.
Sea City Southampton has already got support from the Chamber of Commerce, Southampton City Council, University of Southampton, Associated British Ports, Southampton Boat Show and Southampton Airport., Sea City Southampton.

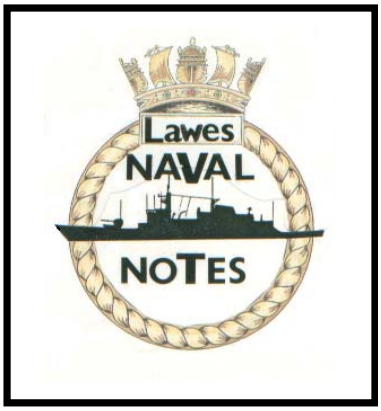
"It is clear that we are missing a trick in Southampton," says Jimmy Chestnutt, Director General of Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce, and also the organisation which will be co-ordinating the events calendar for 2006. "We have often complained that local citizens can't get access to the water - so let's see what we can do with the water and be creative with these ideas. We need people and organisations to support this - through organising or sponsoring events, helping to promote the celebration or by helping to fund the organising office for future years. This can only work by us all working together.

A links can be found to the activities through September – through ABP Southampton website and our own branch website among others.

Four of the world's container lines have given a huge vote of confidence to Southampton Container Terminals (SCT) by agreeing to consolidate all their UK deep-sea calls at Southampton. The decision by the Grand Alliance represents a remarkable change in fortune for SCT from the congestion difficulties of a couple of years ago.
Now, Alliance members Hapag-Lloyd, NYKLine, OOCL and MISC are to shift all their transatlantic services from Thamesport to Southampton from September. Southampton already handles the consortium's Europe – Asia traffic.
Altogether Southampton is expected to gain six new services as a result of the move. The groups ATX transatlantic service already calls at Southampton.
The Grand Alliance decision to cease calling at Thamesport will bring another 150,000 containers per year to SCT, equivalent to around 200,000 to 250,000 teu.
SCT plans to invest in two new post-panamax cranes as a result of the extra Grand Alliance cargo.

Over 250 guests saw Lady Sponsor, Mrs Maureen Wall, name the 61,321 GRT M/V Topeka in Southampton 15th August

As part of the naming ceremony **M/V Topeka** was re-flagged from the Norwegian flag to the British Red Ensign. Built with a particular emphasis on environmental protection, the UK registered **M/V Topeka** can carry upwards of 6,500 cars on 12 decks with a service speed of more than 19kts. The vessel will help maintain 28 sailings per month on its global trade routes from Southampton to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the U.S. **M/V Topeka** is one of a series of ships which received the 'ShipPax Award for Outstanding Ro-Ro Cargo decks 2004' for its highly optimized PCTC design. This combines double bottom fuel tanks and solid ballast with cargo space that maximizes the capacity and flexibility to carry a wide variety of Ro-Ro cargoes. She is the fourth in a series of ten new ships built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries for Wilh. Wilhelmsen. Her sisterships, **M/V Torrens, M/V Toledo, and M/V Toronto** were delivered to Wilh. Wilhelmsen in October 2004, January 2005 and July 2005 respectively. Wilh. Wilhelmsen will take delivery of another ten new vessels, including the remaining six from Mitsubishi, between now and the end of 2009. The vessels range in carrying capacity from 6,345 to 8,000 cars. M/V Topeka's advanced hull and propeller design and yard patented stator fins are expected to deliver a 10% reduction in fuel consumption. This will help Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics meet its ambitious environmental targets for 2005 and beyond.



The summer months are often rather sparse for Military movements, but this year has proved to be an exception.

In June Portsmouth hosted vessels from several nations for "Frukus" exercises. The ships involved were the French destroyer **De Grasse** (Tourville class; 5885 tons full load, entered service in 1977) the Russian destroyer **Admiral Levchenko** (Udaloy class; 8400tons 1988),the British Type 23 Frigate **HMS Monmouth** (4300 tons 1993) and American **Barry** (Arleigh Burke class destroyer; 8850tons 1992).

The exercise title being derived from the initial letters of the countries participating and its aim was to discuss and practice various maritime security maters. It was interesting to compare these vessels that were a reflection of different eras of construction and national concepts of the ship's duties. The Russian ship was no stranger to the South Coast as she was in Portsmouth for the Trafalgar 200 celebrations last year.

At the time of our Branch Boat Trip whilst passing around Portsmouth harbour we had a brief glimpse of the new Falklands Island patrol ship **HMS Clyde** alongside the VT complex. This vessel had been "launched" in an unusual manner on 14th June. The 1300 ton vessel was firstly loaded onto tractor conveyor units and moved 100 yards to the barge VT Woolston where she was welded to fittings. The ships and barge were next moved to a near by dock which was then pumped out till the barge rested on the bottom of the dock . The fastenings were then disconnected, the barge re-ballasted, so that when the dock was re-flooded the Clyde floated free and was moved back to the fitting out area.

An unusual visitor to Southampton at the end of July was the submarine **HMS Tireless**. As might be expected she arrived with an escort of two RMAS tugs, **Sheepdog** and **Powerful**, two Police launches and the Harbour Patrol boat. **Tireless** is one of the Trafalgar class nuclear hunter-killer submarines; she displaces 4740 tons when surfaced and 5208 tons submerged . The ships of this class have 5 torpedo tubes and can fire Spearfish and Tigerfish torpedoes, Harpoon missiles, and some of the ships have been equipped to operate the Tomahawk missiles. **Tireless** was built at Barrow-in- Furness by VSEL and entered service in 1984, her sail and diving planes have been reinforced for under-ice operations. She is powered by a Rolls Royce pressurised water nuclear reactor, but instead of a propeller, she is fitted with a pump-jet system. **HMS Tireless** was in the news during 2000 / 01 when she was in Gibraltar Dock Yard for repairs to reactor plant pipe leaks. In 1999 her sister ship **Trenchant** tested a light blue paint camouflage scheme and this year **Torbay** was painted in a darker "steel blue" colour, this was to try to make the ship less visible in shallow coastal waters where the they now have to operate rather than in the deep Atlantic Ocean which has previously been their patrol area.

The ex **Sir Percivale** who has been on a berth close to Town Quay for many months has been moved back to the Marchwood base. She is now in the hands of Babcock Disposal Services and it seems likely that she will be moved to Portsmouth to join the multitude of vessels awaiting disposal that are accumulating there**. Sir Galahad** is also likely to go to Portsmouth when she is withdrawn from service, but she may replace **HMS Bristol** as the Sea Cadet Corps training ship moored off Whale Island.

Reverting back to the Branch Boat Trip. This year was the last chance to see the vessels moored at the US Army base at Hythe as it is shutting down in September. For several years there have been a number of tugs there, they are the LT 130 type, classed as Large Diesel Waterway Tugs. Six of these ships were built, all entering service in 1994. The contract was awarded to Robert E. Derecktor at Rhode Island, but that company defaulted after the first three were completed so Friede Goldman Halter at Mississippi completed the last three. It is uncertain if all six ships were at Hythe, but for convenience all are listed below:-

LT 801 Maj.Gen Nathanael Greene
LT 802 Maj.Gen Henry Knox
LT 803 Maj.Gen Anthony Wayne
LT 804 B. Gen Zebulon Pike
LT 805 Maj.Gen Winfield Scott
LT 806 Col. Seth Warner

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Combat Equipment Base-North Atlantic. CEB-NA

The American Department of Defense announced in May that the United States military would cease operations at the Army Prepositioned Site (APS) in Hythe, United Kingdom.

Due to U.S. European Command force structure realignment and transformation, and the attendant reduction in storage requirements that has occurred during the past several years, the U.S. Army storage facility at Hythe has been identified as excess to the Army's needs and will begin the process to be returned to the host nation.

Consequently, U.S. operations at APS Hythe will cease by the end of September 2006. This action is expected to save $15.2 million annually, and will affect one U.S. service member, one U.S. DoD civilian employee and 210 host nation employees. As with all stationing actions, the United States has coordinated with host nation officials before this announcement.

I thought it appropriate timing to give a description of the activities of the facility and some of the numerous craft that have been moored there over the years overshadowed by the Hythe scanner for Southampton VTS.

Covering 11 acres Hythe offered facilities and a workforce tailored to the maintenance, storage and support of forward-deployed Army watercraft. As the only US government-owned and -operated facility dedicated to that increasingly important mission, Hythe has played an essential role in maintaining a variety of Army vessels earmarked for use in Southwest or Southeast Asia.

Hythe has maintained more than 65 watercraft and major marine end items. The watercraft includes 100-foot tugs, self-propelled landing craft, 100-ton floating cranes and an assortment of barges and floating causeways. These watercraft and equipment are used to open ports and provide logistics over-the-shore, and lighterage operations, to support Army units in a theatre of war. In fact, at any given time, half of the war reserve watercraft maintained by Hythe workers was riding on the deck of a semi-submersible heavy-lift ship, **American Cormorant**, stationed in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

The ship surveyors and inspectors of Hythe's Quality Control Division examine the vessels to determine what repairs or modifications are needed, and then write the specifications for the work. The job is then done by the electricians, ship fitters, shipwrights, mechanics, electronics technicians, packaging specialists and painters of Hythe's Maintenance Division. The watercraft structural work done at Hythe can range from minor repairs to the sort of stem-to-stern maintenance. During the late 90's a number of 1950s-vintage tugs underwent a comprehensive, 18-month-long facelift that gave them redesigned interiors, new engines, sophisticated electronics and up-to-date fire fighting systems. Members will recall seeing these ships sold on to private owners around the port.

Hythe's other main task was preserving watercraft and the supplies and equipment embarked aboard them is and was undertaken by the depot's Supply and Storage Division. The division's Preservation Section takes everything removable off the vessels and then "cocoons" the craft by sealing all exterior openings. The items removed for storage are inspected, replaced if necessary and then preserved until needed. Many items have "use by" dates on them, and when that date passes the items are reinspected, repaired or replaced, and returned to storage. Before the vessel is put into the water all necessary items ---- from spare parts to first aid kits to mattresses for the crew bunks ---- are taken out of storage and put back aboard. The division's other function supply requires the procurement and tracking of everything from basic soldier items to repair parts for the watercraft. The depot's Administration and Services section keeps track of all the personnel, planning and policy issues involved in running the facility. One of its tasks is supervising the dispatch of small, customized teams of specialists to forward areas to support watercraft operations.

The facility was a vital player in the buildup for Operation Desert Storm, and played equally important roles in Somalia, Rwanda and the 1994 buildup of US forces in Kuwait. Hythe brings two things to CENTCOM. The first is flexibility. The facility and its workers can quickly switch focus from a normal maintenance cycle to a contingency support mission. The ability to pull out all the stops was CINC's requirements were one of the depot's greatest assets. Hythe's location is a plus. The depot is closer to Third Army's area of responsibility than any continental United States port, yet is far enough away from any danger zone to be safe from possible hostile action. Moreover, the port of Southampton can handle virtually any vessel afloat, and Hythe is just four miles from the British military watercraft centre at Marchwood.

Commanded by an Army major, Hythe is on an old British Ministry of Defence installation dating back to World War I. This installation was established in 1967 to store and maintain Army watercraft intended for wartime port operations in Europe. Over the years we developed the structures and facilities needed for that task, and assembled a professional and motivated workforce. When the Cold War ended, Hythe was a logical choice to assume the mission of supporting prepositioned Army watercraft.

MV American Cormorant

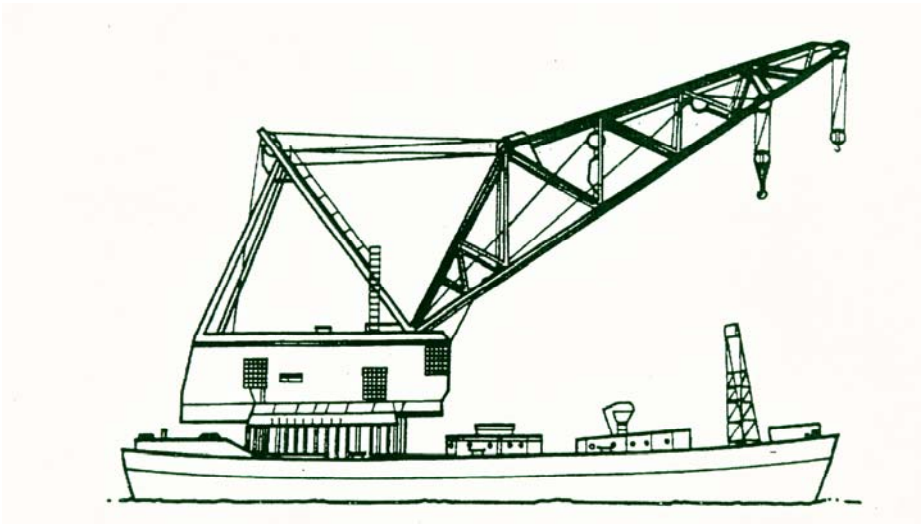
Built at the Swedish shipyard of Eriksberg at Lindholmen in 1975 as their yard number Koll & Co as the 135,900 dwt tanker *Kollbris*. As built she had a length of 918 ft and width of 135ft, her engines were B&W 10 cyl developing 25,000 bhp for a serviced speed of 16kts.
In 1982 Kolls sold her to Fearnley and Eggar who converted her to a float on float off heavy lift ship and renamed her *Ferncarrier*. To equip her for the new role she was shortened by 180 ft by removing a section just aft of midships, her dwt was correspondingly reduced to 52,000 tons.
She served with Fearnley and Eggar for only three years during which she carried a wide variety of heavy lift cargoes such as oil drilling rigs, floating hospitals and accommodation barges. It was under the name of *Ferncarrier* that she arrived in Charlie anchorage of Gilkicker Point in about August 1985. On that visit she loaded three LT's, two LCM 8's and two BD's under the acronym of TALS (Tactical Army Logistics Ship), for transportation to Charleston, South Carolina. There she loaded the remainder of the ships that constituted the first propositioned that the
Ferncarrier returned to Hythe two years later under the name of **American Cormorant**. The download in 1987 involved in the region of 250 troops and the subsequent turnaround catered for 22 vessels all of which was accomplished in eight weeks. Since then **American Cormorant** returned to Hythe approximately every two years, but sometimes more frequently such as when she was involved in the Gulf War and Ethiopia

MV Strong Virginian

In July 1988 the **Strong Virginian** entered Southampton Western Docks to load equipment from Hythe. On a previous visit she had delivered some of the LARC's before going into dry-dock for pre charter repairs. She was to form an addition to the **American Cormoran**t and **Gopher State.** In shape she has distinctive appearance with the accommodation built right forward and a large derrick immediately aft of the focsle.
The **Strong Virginian** was not a new ship approximately 15 years old at the time having traded under a variety of names. She was ordered by Hansa Line 1981 from Bremer Vulkan A.G. of Bremen-Vegesack on the River Weser. It was a relatively new yard at the time and she was allocated a yard number of 33. She was accepted by her owners named *St Magnus*, she was classed by Germanischer Lloyd with a length of 512 ft a beam of 105 ft and a depth of 30ft. Her engines were supplied by Krupps-Maschinenbau and two 6 cyl oil installed, the cylinders were 580mm in diameter with a stroke of 600mm enabling them to develop a total of 16,320 bhp.
The ship has a ro-ro capability being equipped with a stern door with a ramp 44ft long x 85ft wide. On each quarter she has an angled side ramp 79 ft long x 16 ft wide. Her single hold is served by a hatch 251 ft long x 30.5 ft wide in this space she can carry 1,413 teu's placed 507 in the hold and 906 on deck. As a vehicle carrier, she has in her hold a lane length of 8,205 ft with a width of 23ft in this space she can carry 188 trailers. Cargo is handled by two 50 ton cranes and one 800 ton derrick. She has a grt of 16,169, a net tonnage of 6,592 with a dwt of 21,441.
As *St Magnus* she traded for Hansa for about a year, she was then chartered to Ignazio Messina Spa under the Italian flag the port of registry changing from Hamburg to Naples. With Hansa she traded world wide and towards the end of this phase of her life war broke out between Iran and Iraq and Hansa Line found very good freight rates in the Arabian Gulf. In 1991 with a cargo of containers she was struck on the starboard side just aft of the focsle by a guided missile. There were no casualties but serious flooding which was controlled by the ships pumps. She was able to continue her voyage once her trim had been corrected. Following repairs she traded for only a few months before being sold to Van Ommeren in 1992 and once again changed her name and flag. She became the **Strong Virginian** under the US flag registered in New York NY. Under this guise she traded for six years until chartered by the US Government for service as a prepositioned ship and came within Hythe's sphere of operations. On the 11th September 1998 she loaded about 178 vehicles of different types, 4 x LCU 2000. She is stationed in Diego Garcia and her cargo is kept under de-humidification for up to two years.

SS Gopher State

This ship started life at the shipyard of Bath Ironworks, Bath Maine, in 1969 when American Export Lines of New York placed an order for 3 identical C5-S-73b container ships capable of carrying 1,070 teu. Theses were given the shipyard numbers 357, 358 and 359. The middle ship of the three, No 358 was given the name *Export Leader* and was completed in 1973. She served the company for several years in their world wide container service, but eventually she was declared surplus to requirements and deleted from American Export Lines fleet. Instead of being broken up she was laid up in the National Defence Reserve Fleet, probably Suisan Bay in California.
As most container ships rely on shore side cargo handling equipment the need to increase the potential of the US fleet of ships by the provision of ships capable of discharging themselves and other ships in ports without container facilities was identified. As a result, in July 1982 the decision was taken for the acquisition of suitable ships for conversion and in September that year authorisation was approved for the conversion of seven for seven ships from the reserve fleet. These ships were to carry the US navy designation T-ACS (Transport-Auxiliary Crane Ship)
In April 1983 the department of the navy and the Maritime Administration (Marad) placed a contract with bay Shipbuilding Corporation, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin for the conversion of the first of seven ships. *Export Leader* was the fourth ship to be converted, and was renamed **Gopher State**. She was given the designation T-ACS 4. Owned by the Government of the United States Department of Transport, she under the operational control of Marad.
Gopher State emerged from her conversion having acquired among other things, four twin boom, pedestal mounted, rotating, hydraulic deck cranes and a coat of haze grey paint. The new cranes can be worked in a variety of modes. They can be worked singly for a SWL of 30 tons, twinned for 60 tons. Finally they can be twinned and used in tandem in which case there capacity is increased to 120 long tons.
She is propelled by cross compound General Electric high and low pressure steam turbines driving a single propeller through a double reduction gearbox and develops 17,500 shp. An astern turbine is incorporated in the low pressure turbine casing. Steam is provided by two Babcock and Wilcox oil fired watertube boilers working at 870 psi at a temperature of 955 F. The ship burns Bunker C fuel oil, has bunker capacity of 2,118 tons and an endurance of about 9,300 miles at 20 kts. Electricity is provided from two 450v General Electric steam turbine generator sets each of which has a rated continuous capacity of 1,000Kw. Emergency power comes from a diesel generator with a rated continuous capacity of 125 Kw.



BD – Barge Derrick 100t Design 264B (BD 89T)
Purpose: To load and discharge heavy lift cargo beyond reach capacity of ships gear. It is commonly called the 100 t crane which is the short ton capacity rating.
Transportability: The BD 89T is not self propelled, it can be towed overseas or deck loaded aboard a semi submersible ship fro transport.
Length: 140ft
Beam: 70 ft
Displacement: 1630t
Boom Length: 123ft
Capacity: 89 long tons at 80ft Radius Auxiliary Lift: 28 short tons
Draft: 6.3ft
Power: DC for crane operations and AC for ships service.

Gopher State alongside in the Ocean Dock – Editors Collection

Strong Virginian arriving in Southampton – M Beckett

American Cormorant anchored in "C" anchorage – Editors Collection

Watercraft designations:

BG – Barge Liquid Cargo Non-Propelled
Purpose: to transport liquid for offshore river and intercoastal waterway service
Transportability: Can be towed to overseas destinations and is equipped with two skegs aft, thereby improving towing capabilities by the reduction of yawing.
Length: 120ft
Beam: 33ft
Depth: 10ft 6'
Displacement: Light 185tons Loaded 763 tons
Capacity: Deck 578 tons Liquid 160 bbls
Cargo Pump: One diesel 1.050 gallons per minute.

BK – Barge Deck Cargo Non-Propelled
Purpose: to transport wheeled and tracked vehicles and general cargo in harbours and other inland waters
Transportability: Can be sectionalised, and nested for shipment by rail or marine transportation.
Length: 81ft
Beam: 22ft
Depth: 7ft
Displacement: Light – 51 tons Loaded 181 tons
Capacity: Deck Area 1,782 sq ft
Cargo: 180 tons

ROWPU – Barge Water Purification Non Propelled
Transportability: Vessel not suitable for ocean towing. It should be loaded on the deck of another vessel. A type 231 barge with a steel frame equipment house containing two complete 150,000 gpd Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units (ROWPU). Below deck are drinking water storage tanks. A chlorination unit, auxiliary generators and spare ROWPU engines.
Length: 120 ft
Beam: 33ft
Depth 10ft
Displacement: Light 420tons Loaded 505t

Visit the website www.globalsecurity.org/ for more information on US watercraft.

LT – Tug, Large, Inland and Coastal 128ft
Purpose: This tug is used for coastal and ocean towing and docking and undocking operations with large ocean vessels.

Speed: Light 13.5 kts
Range: 5,000nm
Propulsion: 2 Diesels Twin Screw 2550 bhp @ 900rpm BP 58 tons
Length: 128ft
Beam:36ft
Depth: 10ft
Displacement: 1057t

LT 805 Maj.Gen Winfield Scott

Lt - Tug 1200hp Design 3006
Purpose: To berth and unberth large vessels and for heavy towing within a harbour area. Second function includes general utility uses, fire fighting and salvage operations.

Speed: Light 12.75kts
Range: Light 3,323nm
Propulsion: Diesel single screw 300rpm BP 25,500 lbs
Length 107ft
Beam:26ft
Depth: 14ft
Displacement: 390t

LT2090 Larry G Dahl

LCU – Landing Craft utility 174ft LCU-2000 Class - 35 Built
Purpose: The LCU is designed to transport cargo from ships offshore to shore and to transport cargo to areas that cannot be reached by ocean going vessels. The LCU can carry rolling stock (trucks, trains, and other vehicles and dry cargo. It can beach and retract itself on remote coastlines or undeveloped port areas. The LCU is alo capable of deploying overseas under its own power.
Transportability: Can be deck loaded on commercial bulk carriers or heavy lift ships as well as being deployed to overseas destinations under its own power.

Speed – 12 kts
Range: 4,500nm
Propulsion: Twin Diesels Twin Screws 2,500 hp total
Length: 174ft
Beam:42ft
Displacement: Light – 575t Loaded – 1087t

LCU 2020 Fort McHenry

Working a Box ship at SCT by Mike Davies

Prior to Arrival

The operations team will discuss which berth and the stack space required.
The stowage co-ordinator for the shipping company and the SCT planner will work on a stowage plan.
All containers for Southampton discharge will be entered into the SCT computer.
The day before arrival an operations meeting will draw up plans for working the ship, i.e. the number of crane gangs required, finishing time for sailing and any problems foreseen. From this meeting the planner will write a working program with bay plans. This will be distributed to the control room staff, outside supervisors and all leading hands. (one per crane) on the vessels arrival.

On Arrival

Two teams of 4 SCT men plus supervision will tie up the vessel and when the gangway is in position gangs of lashers working in pairs will go onboard and remove all the deck lashings that secure the containers to be discharged at Southampton. This is done by loosening the turnbuckles which are secured to the deck cleats and then the metal bars can be removed from the corner castings of the containers.
The gantry cranes will be positioned over the bays to be worked and the booms will be lowered. The leading hand allocated to the crane will start unlocking the automatic conlocks that hold the containers together by means of a long metal pole with an attachment on the end to pull the toggles open. With today's modern containerships deck containers can be loaded up to 7 high and so the leading hand will have to go in a special cage attached to the cranes spreader to unlock the high tiers.
Once this is completed the ship gear boxes are discharged, these metal container frames containing bins for the conlocks will be distributed to lane 2 under the crane and then discharge commences with the containers (20ft or 40ft) going into lanes 1 & 3. Before they are lowered to the ground, 2 padders will remove the conlocks into the bottom castings and these will be placed in the gearbox.
The removal of the containers into the stacking area will be done by van carriers. Three are allocated to a crane and these machines will have a lifting capacity of 60 tonnes. They pick up the container by means of a spreader, the same as the gantry crane and this spreader can lift both 20ft and 40 ft or even twin lift two 20ft boxes. In the cab the driver is in radio communication with the control room, if he has problems. Also the van carrier has a computer system known as 'Radio Data Transmitter' (RDT) which is a small screen with a keypad in which the driver will key in the last 4 digits of the container number and a stack position will show on the screen. Once the van carrier has reached the row the driver will put the container in the next available position. He will then key in the position and if everything is correct will be given an 'OK to Stack' and then return the crane for another container. GPS (Global Positioning System) is also available in all the van carriers, this is helpful for finding the correct row or even help the control room find lost containers.

Once all the deck containers have been discharged the crane driver will removed the ships hatch lids and place them in the backreach of the crane. Under deck discharge then commences and the containers can be nine deep in the hold. When discharge is completed the reverse system will take place for loading.
SCT is a very modern terminal using experienced and dedicated dock workers, with safety being of paramount importance. Using the latest technology and mechanical equipment and with deepwater so that the ship can be worked at any state of the tide the future looks good for the port with the ever increasing size on container ships.

New Channel Patrol Vessel for GLA

Trinity has received the first of three vessels that form part of an extensive upgrade of the General Lighthouse Authority fleet. The new rapid intervention vessel **Alert** at first sight an unassuming patrol and buoy handling vessel, the 39.3m Remontowa-built **Alert** bristles with imaginative design features and the technology that goes with a multi purpose role.

These roles include buoy handling, and providing about 100 service aids to navigation around the Dover Strait, but also search and rescue, hydrographic surveying and emergency response capabilities.

Alert is the first of three vessels that will this year join the assets at the mutual support arrangement between Trinity House, the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Trinity House is due to take delivery of a second larger ship from the same Polish yard at the end of the year to replace the 1987-built **THV Mermaid**. The 84m **Galatea,** costing £17m will have accommodation for 29 people and will be equipped with helicopter landing facilities. It will have a 30t capacity carne, azimuthing propellers, two 750kW bow thrusters and DP2 dynamic positioning. For its part, the Northern Lighthouse Board will receive an 84m long sister ship to replace its lighthouse tender **Pharos**.

The **Alert** which is the property of William and Glyns Bank has been leased to Trinity House on commercial terms. Part of the design criteria was an emergency response facility for the high risk area of the Dover Strait. Current vessels can only achieve 12 kts at full speed.

This first vessel will primarily be operating between Cromer and St Katherine's stations, the ships speed of 17kts together with dynamic positioning will enable it to act as a marker in an emergency. Recent events in the English Channel with the *Tricolor* have identified the needs for such a facility. Also part of the bridge operations is a gyro stabilised camera from the marine night vision specialist Seenite installed to look fro survivors which can sense body heat up to a distance of 2km.

The **Alert** will actually replace two vessels, the rapid intervention vessel **Ready** which has been transferred to Irish Lights on a trial basis, and the inshore survey vessel **Vectis** which has been sold to Gardline.

The vessel has a £750,000 hydrographic suite including a 300 kHz multibeam echo sounder and side scan sonar from Kongsberg for wreck identication and surveys.

Alert is powered by twin Caterpillar 3512 main engines each generating 1,492 kW and each driving Kamewa controllable pitch propellers. The vessel is distinguished form other Trinity House vessels in that it adheres to the aft working principle where older vessels in the fleet such as **THV Patricia** are for ward-working.

The aft working principle was first specified aboard Irish Lights vessel **Granuaile** (1,132 dwt) which was delivered in 2000 from which **Alert** is said to have evolved.

With 30.5 tonnes of bollard pull by means of a RAPPhyderma winch and a 48 tonne Palfinger Marine deck crane capable of lifting 3.3 tonnes at 12m outreach the new vessel can hoist four 3.3m marker buoys aboard for deployment after a wreck in a matter of hours. The ability to operate the deck crane remotely means that deck duties can be carried out by two or three crew.

The upshot is that where ships such as the 1982-vintage **Patricia** (990dwt) feature two thirds accommodation to one third working area, **Alert** features one third accommodation and two thirds working area. High levels of automation mean that **Alert** can run fully operational with a crew of just 5, 30% down on the number required to run the **THV Mermaid**. The accommodation provision is two single and four double cabins means that a full complement of ten can be accommodated if required.

Phosphoric acid leaking from a wreck is being monitored using instruments installed on the **Pride of Bilbao**. Using a monitoring system called Ferrybox which samples seawater during the ferry crossing, scientist are monitoring the acid's impact on the marine environment of the Channel.

Phosphoric acid is a fertiliser and encourages rapid growth of phytoplankton. The team believes that leakage of the acid into the English Channel could have a significant effect on the ecosystem.

MV Ece was carrying 10,000 tons of a phosphoric acid solution when she collided with a bulk carrier in the English Channel off Guernsey, despite attempts to tow the vessel the **Ece** sank in 70m of water 20m west Guernsey.

The **Pride of Bilbao's** track to Spain passes very close to the wreck – The Ferrybox instruments detect changes immediately. The changes are relayed back to the National Oceanography Centre via satellite.

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Forthcoming Programme and Events

Venue:
Southampton Oceanography Centre
Waterfront Campus
European Way
Eastern Docks
Southampton
All meetings commence 19.15 and room to be vacated by 21.30.

2005/6 Branch Meeting Programme

12th September
Slide & Print Competitions
10th October
Itchen Wharves
Bert Moody
14th November
AGM + Support Programme
12th December
Aspects of Tankers
Neil Richardson

Where were you all?

The Southampton over 50's Festival usual manages something to maintain interest, this year was no exception. They presented 4 maritime films from the 60's with a variety of subjects including Union-Castle and Southampton Docks. For 50p I suggest you take a look at next years programme its extremely good value. I was expected to see some of you there!
Rod Baker

Branch Notice Board

All contributions to BJ are gratefully received either by post, email, floppy disk or CD. Any article related to the Solent area would be much appreciated. BJ editor can reproduce magazine and newspaper articles but preferred are articles by the branch – for the branch.

Any member who would prefer to receive the Branch Magazine Black Jack by email please contact the Editor. Colour printing cost are relatively high so all recent Black Jacks can be viewed all in full colour via the Branch website in pdf format. www.sotonwss.org.uk

The branch committee try's its best to provide value for money services that benefit WSS members. To make best use of the budget available within the branch for producing Black Jack and sotonwss.org.uk etc suggestions and ideas of what members would find more beneficial if they could be included in the pursuit of their hobby are very welcome.

Acknowledgements for extracts from – ABP, Lloyds List, Daily Echo, Fairplay, Tradewinds, Ocean Zone

Photographed by Bill Lawes On 16th August the tug **Rhea** (299g 2002) towed **LT 801** and **LT 802** from Hythe and **Elsbeth III**
(301g 2002) towed **LT 804**. Smith Maritime of the USA manages both of these tugs.
If anyone can add details of other movements from the US base Bill Lawes would appreciate the information.

The **RRS James Cook** a new ship for marine science is arrived in Empress Dock Southampton Sunday afternoon 27th August after a few hours trials in Sandown Bay from builders in Angholmen, Norway. She started sea trials in June with completion and delivery at the end of the summer. The ship represents a £36m investment by her owners the Natural Environmental Research Council. The hull was completed last November at Gdansk from where she was towed to Angholmen in Norway to be fitted out. The ship will be based in Southampton and will operate worldwide. The vessel replaces **RRS Charles Darwin** which was built in 1984.
Photograph – NERC Website. The website is comprehensive with build pictures.