

Black Jack

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



Issue No: 216

Autumn 2025

75th Anniversary of the WSS Southampton Branch



*This quarters' cover features the **France** so well known in the port both in her original guise as here and later as the **Cruiseship Norway***

Black Jack – Autumn 2025 No.216

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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

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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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2025 Branch Meeting Programme

September 9th	Union Castle Line	Capt Roy Plumley MBE
October 14th	Competition on the	North Atlantic
		Dr Mervyn Rowlinson
November 11th	AGM & Photo Competition	
December 9th	Dec 1981 Orpheus Med Cruise	
		Bill Mayes

Wed 8 October at 12.30

Platinum Jubilee Lunch at Miller & Carter, Bursledon

See separate email from David Hornsby

Articles please!!

Your editor would as always be delighted to receive any articles for inclusion in Black Jack and also any snippets and photos for possible inclusion,

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.



The summer season has continued to see call from many of the regular cruise ships, one of the most significant ships to homeport in Southampton this year is Disney Dream which arrived 31st July ahead of her first season out of the UK.

*Left **Disney Dream** built 2010.*

There have been significant changes to the container Alliances resulting in a shuffling of services. While Southampton has lost some of the big ships the number of vessel calls has increased, with May being a record month with over 100 containership calls.



There have been a number of ad hoc calls notably from Maersk and Evergreen, on 4th June the 20,160TEU EVER Muse became the largest Evergreen vessel to call

*Left: **EVER Muse** deployed on CES (China Express Service) arriving 4th June.*



*Big Lift **Happy Delta** seen sailing early 13th July.*

This year has seen an influx of Chinese built and operated vehicle carriers, after a number of COSCO vehicle carriers the latest was the BYD Changsha, the sixth in a new class which with a capacity of 9,200 vehicles are classed as the world's largest.



BYD Changsha operated by Chinese company BYD (Build Your Dreams)

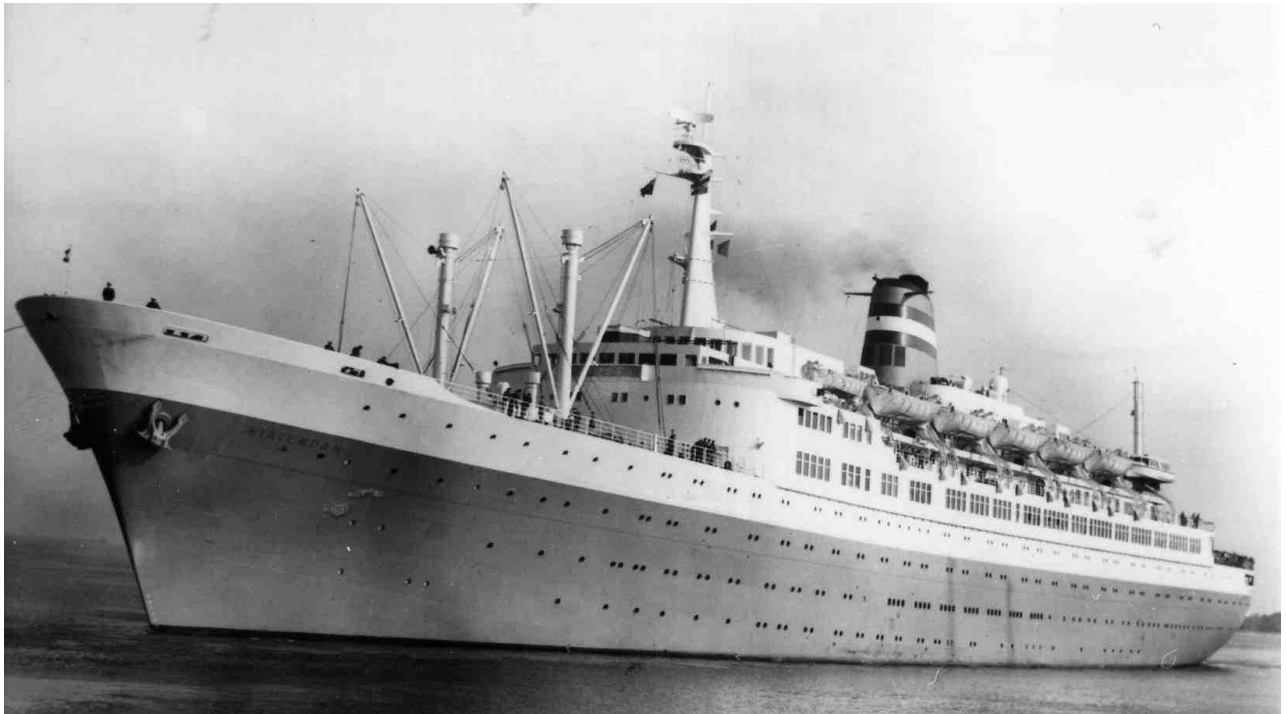
All photos Andrew McAlpine

*Until next time wishing you Happy ship spotting
Andrew*

Old Southampton Callers of Holland-America Line



Ryndam 1951/15015g



Statendam 1957/24,294g

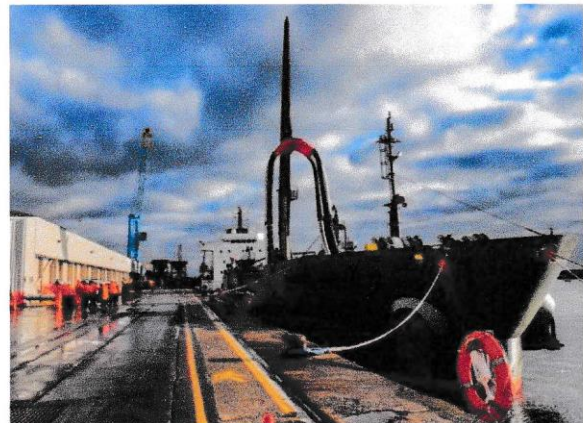
New Marchwood Vehicle Terminal

Solent Gateway manages the Marchwood Military Port (the 'Sea Mounting Centre') for ABP under a lease expiring in 2051, following acquisition of the original operators MacBrayne and GBA shareholding in February 2023. The Port is part of Solent Freeport, but remains a designated Strategic Military Port by the MOD after partial conversion to commercial use in 2020. Following work on reorganising parts of the 225 acre site, more commercial activities are now taking place, particularly car/vehicle traffic and storage. This has been aided by an additional recently installed mooring dolphin, now allowing vessels up to 245m with 38m beam to moor alongside ro-ro berths SGL3/4. Since that work, there has been an increasing stream of PCTC carriers calling, including huge new Chinese vessels from BYD and Anji. The sites under-utilized rail access may also benefit from new traffic, while a new access road link is planned directly to the A326 Marchwood by-pass.



New Bulk Cement Terminal

As part of a 20-year agreement between Aggregate Industries (part of Holcim), ABP and Solent Stevedores, a new £6million 'state-of-the-art' bulk cement terminal opened in December 2024 at 107 berth to handle traditional and new 'green' cement. Construction of the new terminal started in March 2024 and it is expected to handle 100,000 tonnes per annum, reportedly with the fastest discharge rate in the UK (one tonne/5 seconds), and will supply customers across the south and south-west of England. The Panamanian-flag 1996 purpose-built 16,061 dwt cement carrier **NACC Indian** has called to discharge part-cargoes from Arzew in Algeria each month, her voyages often also including calls at Ellesmere, Eastham or Glasgow.



Williams Shipping – new vessel and additional quay

On 12th June at the *SeaWork* exhibition, the Company signed a contract with Dutch-builder Neptune Shipyards for an €3 million EuroCarrier 2495 multi-cat vessel. The 24m vessel will be similar to two others in their fleet, but with improved 24 tonne bollard pull to support an additional A-frame and plough for expanding operations in coastal and marine work. It was later announced that, following an in-house competition, the new vessel would be named **Willdiscover** (IMO 1112525). The 173 gross tons vessel arrived at 21 berth on 14th August, after fitting out at Aalst (upstream from Rotterdam/Gorinchem on the Afgedamde Maas).

Following the decision by Vestas to stop constructing 85m offshore wind turbine blades at their River Medina works in favour of smaller on-shore blades, it has been announced that in future Williams will generally be exporting blades from the Eastern Docks, rather than from Portsmouth.

The Company has taken over a yard area behind 40 berth with space to store up to 100 of the new smaller blades with two of the Company's crawler cranes available to discharge and load. The first ship to load was **Scot Mariner**.

Blades will continue to be delivered to the quay by the Company's 2003-built Aveco (Teeside) Ltd purpose-built shallow-water barge **MTB Blade Runner Two** (right) 416 gross tons, 75m loa x 9.5m beam with a maximum loaded draft of 0.75m carrying up to 180 tons cargo and propelled by three Schottel pump-jets driven by Scania diesel engines.



Cruise Welcome Desks celebrate 10th Anniversary with Lord Mayor

In July at the Horizon Cruise Terminal, SEE Southampton tour guides and volunteers celebrated their 10th anniversary providing Welcome Desks at ABP's five cruise terminals for all 'transit' cruise ships calling midcruise at Southampton. They were joined by the City's 4th Lord Mayor, James Baillie, and representatives of



ABP and local museums. Under their contract from ABP, the volunteers currently support about 70 'transit' ships each year carrying around 200,000 passengers mainly originating from German homeports.

AIDA call fortnightly throughout the year currently with AIDAperla (summer season/4,300 passengers) and AIDAnova (winter/up to 6,650 px), TUI with Mern SchilT3 (summer round Britain cruises from Bremerhaven/2,700 px) and MSC's MSC Poesia (winter 7-day Hamburg-shuttle /3,100px).

Desks are also provided for Cunard's Queen Mary 2 when continuing transatlantic crossings to mainland Europe and other 'occasional' cruise ships calling on repositioning voyages. The

writer is one of the Team leaders, another WSS member volunteering is David Connor, while previous volunteers have included member John Davidson and former Hon.Sec. David Oldhams' wife Angela.

Mayflower Park - changes afoot

Members should be aware that a new barrier controlled entry system is due to be installed with ANPR registration monitoring to try to curb the "huge problem" of night-time anti-social behaviour in the Park. Recent visitors may have seen bore-holes being drilled adjoining the 400 metre southern revetment sea wall, where the City Council is also planning a £7 million scheme to replace the ageing sea-wall in early 2026.

Bomb threat at Mayflower Cruise Terminal

Just before noon on Saturday 9th August, a man claiming to have an explosive device resulted in a 200 metre exclusion area being placed around a lorry at the Mayflower Cruise Terminal, which was evacuated and passengers were stopped from boarding the cruise ship Venfura alongside. Armed Police were called and Dock Gate 10 was closed whilst the lorry was searched with normal service being resumed around 2pm.



Mont St Michel of Brittany Ferries



Victoria of Wight of Wightlink

photos Nigel Robinson

Bits and Pieces

The very familiar local tanker **Jaynee W** (pictured right) has been sold and is now under the flag of St Kitts and Nevis as **Blue Star** and at the time of writing is reported as off Senegal, West Africa.

