

Black Jack

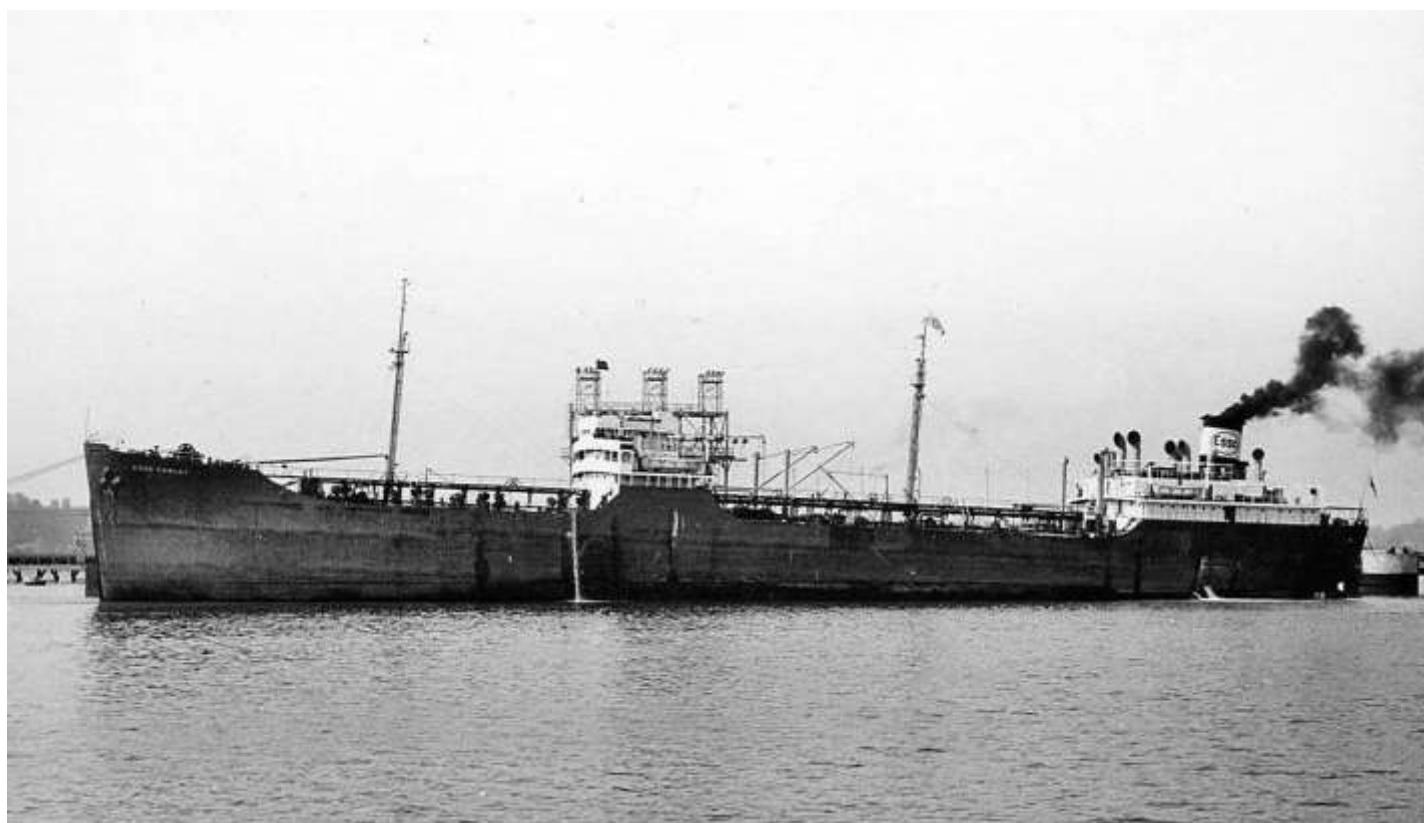
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

www.sotonwss.org.uk



Issue No: 220

Autumn 2026



The 16,500 dwt, T2 tanker, **Esso Fawley** (above) made the first delivery of Arabian Gulf crude to the Esso Marine Terminal at Fawley in August 1951, one month prior to the official Terminal opening by the then Prime Minister Clement Attlee. *(Image from IOW Collection, photographer unknown)*

THIS QUARTER'S FEATURES

ANDY'S NOTE BOOK
FAWLEY CRUDE SUPPLIES
LOCAL SHIPPING NEWS

Andy McAlpine
Dr Merv Rowlinson

Black Jack 220 – Autumn 2026

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

Branch Meetings

Venue:

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

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.

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Visit our WSS Branch Website at

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.

2026 Programme of Branch Meetings

September 8 th	British-India at War	Merv Rowlinson
October 13 th	John and Pat Havers on Board	
November 10 th	AGM and image competition	
December 8 th	British Cargo Liners in the 60's and 70's	David Hornsby

It is with very great sadness that the Branch announces

The death of KEN DAGNAL on 6th August, our senior regular attendee, just a few weeks after moving to a Care Home at Hythe. The Branch send condolences to his son Steve and other members of the family.

Due to diminishing membership, the official closure of our neighbouring Isle of Wight WSS Branch followed their 24th June 2026 meeting and a “Last Supper” on 27th July. All former members and friends of that Branch are more than welcome to attend our Southampton meetings.

STOP PRESS

Articles please!!

Black Jack is intended to be ‘by the branch members – for the branch members’.

What 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 to the Editor by post, email, memory stick or CD.

Andrew's Note Book

From the Port of Southampton by Andrew McAlpine

Welcome to my latest 2026 Note Book.

The Port has continued to be very busy of the summer, and we have seen maiden calls from new ships across the three main cargo types namely cruise, cars and containers.



The elegant 2003-built **Crystal Serenity** sailing 7th July.

68,870 gt 250 x 32m
740 passengers in 347 cabins
Now owned by Crystal Cruises LLC
and operated by Abercrombie & Kent

Explora Journey's **Explora III** made her north European debut on 17th August having been handed over on 23 July by Fincantieri at Genoa to MSC's luxury Yacht Club subsidiary.

73,904 gt 268m loa
926 passengers in 463 suites
first in series with LPG dual-fuel

The next in the series of six, **Explora IV**, is scheduled to make 9 calls at Southampton between April and August 2027.



We are consistently seeing a number of new car carriers across many shipping line's.

Grimaldi Lines **Grande Michigan** launched in February seen arriving 7th June.

Ammonia-ready PCTC delivered on 12th February by China Merchants Heavy Industry, Jiangsu in China
93,145 gt, 27,064 dwt
220m x 38m beam
9,000 ceu on 14 decks
Third of five sisters, after **Grande Shanghai** and **Grande Svezia**, with five larger 9,800 ceu sisters to follow.

The container terminal has been very busy, with two additional services from CMA CGM, a Gemini Partnership deep sea service and most significantly the arrival in June of the Zhen Hua 28 carrying the first two ZPMC cranes from China. The 3rd, 4th cranes are now on their way from China. The first two new cranes seen from the quayside as they arrived.



On the 17th July we saw three Maersk Line ships alongside at once, which I believe could be a first. The ships were **Maersk Danube** at SCT1, **Maersk Lanco** at SCT3 and **Maersk Monte Alto** at SCT4

Until next time Happy Spotting
Andrew

FAWLEY CRUDE SUPPLIES: On the Texas Trail

by Dr.Merv Rowlinson

The current US-Iran conflict raises questions over world crude oil security and this short paper deals with crude oil supplies to Britain's largest oil refinery at Fawley. With the seaborne crude oil flow falling by 16%¹, since the start of the conflict, the focus has been upon alternative sources. It will be seen that the shift away from Persian Gulf crude supplies was well underway before the start of the present conflict. Here the focus is on the evolving crude oil supply chain, reflecting the current shift towards North Atlantic sourced crude imports.

Refinery capabilities at Fawley stretch back to 1921, when the Atlantic, Gulf and West Indies Oil Company (AGWI) was set up. The first consignment of crude oil received at Fawley was from the Tuxpan River, Mexico when the 12,000 dwt, **Agwilake**, arrived on 18th June with: 1,398 tons of Mexican crude, 5,843 tons of fuel oil, 2,677 tons of gas oil.²

Refining capacity increased dramatically with the emergence of the modern Esso Fawley complex, which was opened by the (then) Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, in September 1951. Resonant with the current conflict involving Iran, the Prime Minister's speech featured a threat to Persia. At the time a dispute smouldered between the UK and Persia (became Iran in 1935 but title not used by the UK at the time). Iran had upset British sensibilities by nationalising the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. By 1954, relationships between the British Government and the Iranian Government had improved, and a compromise was reached enabling production to be restored.³

In recent years Fawley has been weaned away from Arabian Gulf crude, with USA becoming a major supplier. Although the majority of crude carriers serving Fawley are in the 80,000-120,000 tonnes AFRAMAX range, or the 160,000 tonnes max SUEZMAX range, the occasional VLCC and ULCC size also call, usually after lightening.



On the 10th of November, 2024, the 320,000 dwt, Greek flag, vessel, **Maria A Angelicoussis**, arrived at Fawley with an estimated 180,000 tonnes of Texas crude, after lightening at Marseilles (FOS). The picture below shows this vessel, complete with stern-tug escort departing Fawley, bound for Corpus Christi, Texas.

Left: **Maria A. Angelicoussis Departs Fawley for Corpus Christi, Texas.**
Source: By Courtesy of John Wright



The 2025 Fawley visit of 313,433 dwt tanker, **Baghdad**, serves to remind us of the major role that the USA now occupies in Fawley oil supplies. Arriving on 04.06.25 from Galveston via Rotterdam, where lightening occurred in order to avoid the draught restrictions of Fawley. An estimated 140,000 tonnes, of the cargo will have been discharged at Rotterdam, leaving the Fawley bound tanker with a draught of 14.9m and an estimated 160,000-170,000 tonnes of Texan crude for the final leg of the voyage.

Above: **Baghdad Departs Fawley with Tug Escort 06.06.25**
Source: By Courtesy of David Potter

¹ The Tanker Operator Newsletter, April 2026.

² Mitchell, W.H., Sawyer, L.A., (1987) Sailing Ship to Supertanker: *The Hundred Year Story of British Esso and its ships*. Lavenham, Suffolk. p.81

³ BP: [Our history](#) | [Who we are](#) | [Home](#)

A similar, via Rotterdam schedule, was recently followed by the 297,670 dwt, **Horten** (see Table One). On this occasion, **Horten** had loaded at the Liza Unity Floating Production, Storage and Off-loading (FPSO) facility in Guyana. Crossing the Atlantic at a draught of 20.9m on the deepsea leg to Rotterdam, **Horten** was able to achieve considerable economies of scale, tonne-nautical mile, savings over smaller tankers.



The Rise of Texas Oil in Fawley's Crude Oil Imports

Galveston Ship-to-Ship Operations

Left captures **Horten**, 297,670 dwt, topping up (loading) from **Orchard Spirit**, 112,750 dwt.

Source: By Courtesy of Letterio Tomasello

Horten loaded “Down to Her Lines” Departs Galveston Off-Shore

Source: By Courtesy of Letterio Tomasello

Integral to the success of Texas exports is the opportunity to load, off-shore, VLCCs to maximum capacity. The picture (right) shows **Horten** in her fully loaded state with an estimated cargo of 280,000 tonnes of crude.



In order to complete the view of Canadian East Coast crude oil operations, **Horten** is pictured left discharging at the Canaport, St.John, New Brunswick, off-shore single-mooring buoy. Crude oil bound for the St.John refinery is currently shown (on ais) as arriving from both Galveston and Houston.

Horten Discharges at Canaport Off-shore, New Brunswick

Source: Jim Turnbull, 12 O'Clock High Drone Services

Crude oil from Texas and other US states has become a major source for the UK's oil demand. The emergence of US crude oil in British petrochemicals has a long history; however it was only the reforms made by the Obama administration that allowed US crude to flow overseas freely.

From the 1970s, the US had carefully managed crude oil resources, limiting exports in order to stabilize prices in the US domestic market. The technological breakthrough in oil drilling techniques – generally referred to as “fracking” was to change the strategy. US oil production in the first term of office under President Obama grew by 5.5m Barrels Per Day

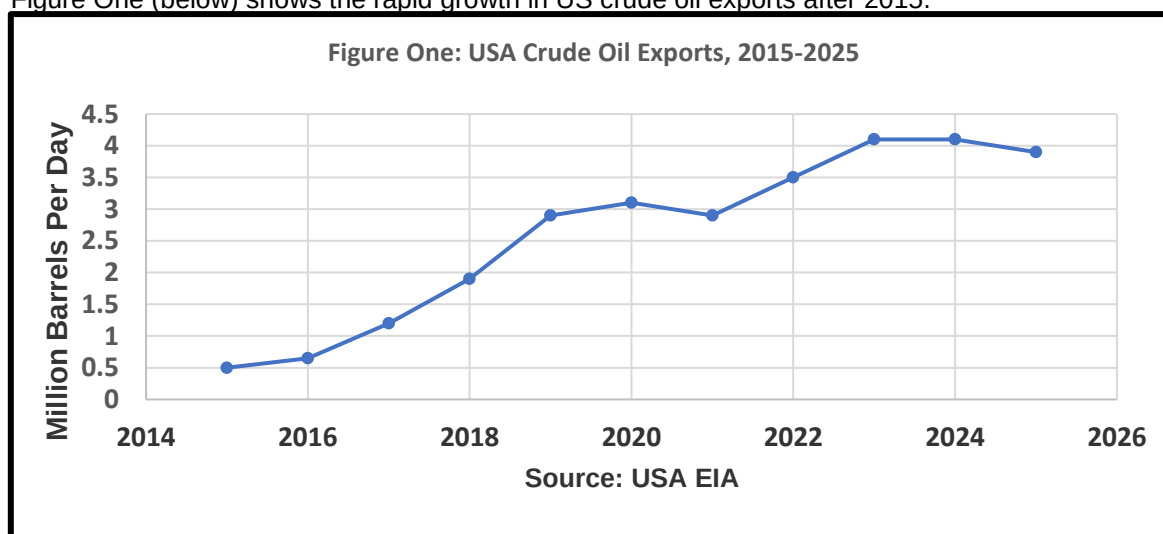
(bpd). Fuel prices fell as a result of the increased supply and “gas guzzling” cars, notably SUV’s, benefited from increased sales as they once again became more affordable to operate. The result of the liberalization of oil drilling has led to the USA becoming a net exporter of crude, with import levels reduced. In 2008, USA imported 11.1 bpd, by 2015 imports of crude were down to 4.7 bpd.⁴ Renewed emphasis on oil drilling, led by shale fracking, brought a gain of 88% in oil output during Obama’s presidency, an output not matched by any previous US president.⁵ Crude exports grew. In 2000, behind Saudi Arabia and Russia, with 4.1mbpd exported.⁶ USA was 10th in world exports.⁷ By 2024, USA had risen to third position.

Table One’s short sample of recent Fawley tanker movements reveals the extent of Texas crude in six of the sixteen arrivals, also the rise of Canadian crude oil exports to Fawley, which have doubled between 2010 and 2025. Although some 89% of Canadian crude exports to USA are moved by pipeline, a steady flow of Atlantic coast shipped crude is evident.⁸ Four of the 16 samples in Table One emanated from Newfoundland or Labrador fields.

Table One : Sample Fawley Crude Oil Arrivals March-May 2026					
Vessel	ETA	From	DWT	Flag	Draught on arrival
Maran Thule	28/03	Whiffen Head, Newfoundland	147,098	Bahamas	N/A
Njord DF	30/03	Rotterdam	114,545	Greece	N/A
Front Santiago	02/04	Houston, Texas	157,271	Hong Kong	13.4
Haifeng	04/04	Hound Point, Scotland	109,898	Liberia	13.6
Seaways San Saba	08/04	Houston, Texas	159,018	Marshall Islands	13.2
Horton	09/04	Liza Unity FPSO, Guyana via Rotterdam	297,670	Liberia	20.9/14.7 Lightened Rotterdam
Jill Glory	13/04	Houston, Texas	115,415	Marshall Islands	13.6
Jag Lara	18/04	Whiffen Head, Newfoundland	105,258	India	14.3
Minerva Astra	20/04	Corpus Christi, Texas	114,377	Greece	13.7
Eagle Brasilia	24/04	Come By Chance, Newfoundland	113,416	Singapore	13.2
Maran Current	26/04	Mongstad, Norway	129,801	Bahamas	14.2
Levantine Sea	30/04	Aransas Pass, Texas	114,258	Liberia	13.3
Ingrid Knutsen	04/05	Balder FPSO, Norway	111,634	UK	12.6
Newbury	05/05	Ras Lanuf, Libya	112,095	Bahamas	13.4
Evridiki	06/05	Houston, Texas	167,294	Liberia	13.5
Jag Laxmi	10/05	Whiffen Head, Newfoundland	105,525	India	

Source: [ABP: Shipping Movements and Cruise Ship Schedule](#)

Figure One (below) shows the rapid growth in US crude oil exports after 2015.



Conclusion

Up until recent years the arrival of more than half of Fawley’s crude oil from Atlantic sources would have ensured supply chain integrity. However, recent events in the politics of oil have taught us not to be complacent!

⁴ “The Irony of President Obama’s Oil Legacy”. *Forbes Magazine*. 15.01.16

⁵ Loc.cit

⁶ Opec: [asb-2025.pdf](#)

⁷ [World Oil and Gas Review 2010](#)

⁸ Canadian Petroleum Producers: CPP Reports

Local Shipping and Port News

OYSTER YACHTS LEAVING LOCAL WATERS

In late May, only a year after moving from Hythe Marine Park, the Saxon Wharf luxury yacht builder announced that it would cease local production by the end of the year, to concentrate investment on their site at Wroxham in Norfolk.

NEW HOVERCRAFT ROUTE TRIALED TO ISLE OF WIGHT

Hovertravel announced trials “to gauge public interest and potentially” of a possible new hovercraft route from Lee-on-the-Solent hovercraft museum slipway to Ryde on three dates in June, August and September. With more than 3,000 enquiries for tickets, the first runs on 28th June were “a tremendous success” with Hovertravel immediately announcing three additional trials dates in July and August.

CAR FIRE IN WESTERN DOCKS

In the early morning on 3rd June, a block of 33 Jaecoo E5 hybrid SUV’s were burnt-out or damaged in a Western Docks car pound, the fire being attended by 10 fire engines, 2 water carriers and an aerial ladder platform.

SVITZER TUG CHANGES AND VISITORS

On the 10th June, after arriving at 44 berth a couple of days earlier from Hebburn, the 1991 McTay Marine-built former Svitzer Humber tug newly renamed **Cadia Josephine** (ex Svitzer Josephine, Adsteam Josephine, Lady Josephine) departed in company with the newly renamed former locally-based 1996 Damen-built tug **Melton** (ex Svitzer Melton, Melton), initially to St Helens Anchorage for their long delivery voyage to Nigeria, arriving at Port Harcourt in early August. Two ‘strangers’ have been in the Port recently, Target Towing’s 2024 Sanmar-built 85 ton bollard pull ASD escort tug **Camperdown** spend a few weeks, working mainly at Fawley before heading back to Aberdeen on 23rd August. On 21st August, Svitzer’s own Tees-based Spanish 2000-built **Ormesby Cross** (60 ton bollard pull) arrived at 44N berth, after previously escorting the feeder ship **BG Orange** from the Tyne to Rotterdam, following collision damage on 19th July with the departing **Wind Orca** installation ship, which resulted in a 750-tonne gantry crane collapsing with its boom lying on the container ship (*Port of Tyne image*)



RECORD DRUGS SEIZURE

On 16th June, after 3 arrests were made in South Wales, details were announced of a record UK Border Force drugs seizure on 6th May. The 12 tonnes of cannabis, worth £139 million, were contained in 1200 packages in two containers that arrived in the Container Port from Canada. In a separate case, at the end of July, Border Force announced a 240kg cocaine seizure (£19.2m) from the **Atlantic Klipper** at Portsmouth.

CROSS-CHANNEL FERRY ROUTES TO CLOSE

Brittany Ferries announced on 1st July that, “due to falling passenger and freight numbers since Brexit”, the Portsmouth-Le Havre route - currently operated by **Commodore Clipper** - would cease in October and that the Poole-Cherbourg service operated for many years by 1992-built **Barfleur** would close in November 2026 with the latter ship being sold, together with the 2007-built **Cotentin** from the Cherbourg-Rosslare route.

WALLENIIUS WILHELMSEN, GLOVIS & EUKOR VEHICLE CARRIER DEVELOPMENTS

On 6th July, **Tirranna** arrived in the port sporting a new top-deck wing-sail or WPU ‘wind propulsion unit’ (folded-down horizontally in port) finally installed a week earlier by Damen at Rotterdam onto a foundation unit fitted in China in 2024. On 14th July, the dual-fuel **Glovis Lighthouse** arrived at SGL, the first of six Waigaoqiao Shanghai-built sisters, chartered from Seaspan, measuring 102,429 grt on dimensions 230 x 40m with 14 decks – 5 adjustable - and 10,800ceu capacity. Also, watch out for the new dual-fuel/methanol-ready ‘Shaper-class’ vehicle carriers on the **EUKOR** Asia-Europe service, the first of which, **Arctic Tern**, was delivered on 9th July with a blue top colour scheme instead of the more usual green. Twelve of the class are on order from Jinling Shipyard in China, the first eight are 232m x 38m with 9,300 ceu capacity and the final four 6m longer, 2m wider, with two additional decks and space for 11,700 ceu (car equivalent units).

NEW BATTERY STORAGE FACILITY IN PORT?

In August, an application was submitted for one of the UK’s largest Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) on a Port of Southampton vehicle storage site “equivalent to 39 football pitches” between Redbridge Station and the River Test. The proposal, which will “assist decarbonisation of the Port and the City’s climate ambitions”, includes 504 battery storage containers to store excess power from the National Grid, a new 400kv substation and associated works. Once approved, construction is estimated to take 18-24 months with the majority of equipment arriving through the Port.