

**Vol 57 No 4 Autumn 2022**

# ***Mersey Log***

***Journal of the Merseyside Branch  
World Ship Society***

**The Merseyside Branch of the World Ship Society meets on the second Tuesday of each month – August excepted- at the Seafarers' Centre, Cambridge Road, Crosby, L22 1RQ**



**JEWEL OF THE SEAS** in the Crosby Channel heading for Amsterdam on 16 August 2022. (Adrian Sweeney)

# **Mersey Log**

Autumn Issue 2022

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## **Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2022/2023**

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Secretary: Dave Crolley

Hon.Treasurer: John Williams

Outside Visits Secretary: Dave Crolley

Committee Members: Geoff Holmes, Stan McFerran.

## **Branch News With Dave Crolley**

### **July 2022**

July 12<sup>th</sup> brought our Branch AGM hosted by our current Chairman John Luxton. The current Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were all elected to stand for another season as were two other existing committee members. After the interval we were shown images and slides from John Luxton, Peter Evans, Dave Crolley, Geoff Holmes and Jim Charnock. Thank you to you all for a great members evening.

### **September 2022**

Krispen Atkinson travelled from Greenhithe, Kent to talk to us for our September '22 meeting. As you might expect from Krispen his presentation was very interesting, professional and entertaining. What he told us about was his 2018 trip to Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong, all most interesting as he showed us all manner of vessels that under normal circumstances we would never see, all very colourful and great to watch. Thanks a lot Krispen for coming to see us and we hope to see you again next year.

### **October 2022**

For our October 2022 meeting we once again welcomed David Booth from the Manchester Branch. David continued from where he left off last season telling us about his life at sea in the mid 1970's. He mainly showed us great slides from Hong Kong, Singapore and West Africa. It was most interesting to watch aspects of Cargo Handling that we don't normally see so his presentation was really fascinating. Thanks a lot David and hopefully we will see you again soon.

## **North West Ship Show 24 September 2022**

The North West Ship Show that Bernard McCall used to hold hasn't run since 2019 due to Covid problems and Bernard passing away. After a consultation with Bernard's wife Doreen and son Iain it was decided that the North West Ship Show would be held again this year sponsored by the WSS Merseyside Branch. This event took place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at the Old Christ Church

at Waterloo, Liverpool. It was a very successful event and was attended by over 120 members of the public plus 22 stallholders taking up 52 tables. Exhibitors included booksellers, maritime artists, boat clubs and small scale model sellers, postcards and photographs sellers and organisations such as the RNLI and the Liverpool Seafarers Centre was also in attendance. The Catering stall was very busy and well organised by Dot Gibbons, daughter Lindsey and grand daughter Chelsea. Many thanks go to our Committee who spent a lot of time and effort into making this event so successful. Below is a photograph showing the wonderful church building and the layout of the tables on the day. Photo below by Dave Crolley.



## Mersey Maritime News

### Liverpool's Royal Albert Dock is up for sale for about £50m.

The investment company which owns the Royal Albert Dock has instructed property agents to sell nearly 400,000 sq ft of shops, offices, hotels and restaurants. The Grade I-listed dock - once the location of ITV's *This Morning* - was granted a royal title in 2018.

A spokesman for owners CBRE Investment Management confirmed "375,295 sq ft of mixed use commercial space at the Royal Albert Dock' is for sale. The dock was opened in 1846 but fell into disuse in the 1970s as part of the city's decline. The dock, officially opened by Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert on 30 July 1846, was redeveloped into a visitor attraction in the 1980s and named Royal Albert Dock in a ceremony at Tate Liverpool.

The Albert Dock, designed by architect and dock engineer Jesse Hartley, was given Grade I-listed status in 1952 but was abandoned 20 years later. The deserted dock was the backdrop to the final episode of Alan Bleasdale's bleak depiction of unemployment in 1982 in his BBC One series *The Boys From The Blackstuff*. It was later redeveloped, with the first phase completed in 1984. Two years later the Merseyside Maritime Museum opened on the site, followed by Tate Liverpool in 1988. By the end of decade the revived complex was the setting for ITV's daily magazine show *This Morning*.

## July 2022

It was noted on Sat 16 July that ENS ABU SIMBEL (Ex RFA FORT ROSALIE) was berthed at the Cruise Terminal, Liverpool until Sun 17 July when she was moved over to Cammell Laird at Birkenhead.

There were no Mersey Ferry services at all on Sat 30 July due to what **Mersey Ferries** described as "operational reasons."



VICTORINE in the Queen's Channel on 16 August 2022. She is operating a Dublin – Liverpool – Santander triangular service – freight only, unfortunately. (Adrian Sweeney)

## September 2022

### Award for Tug Captain

Captain Dan Cross has been awarded the Mariners Merchant Navy Medal – the highest medal of honour within the maritime sector - for his efforts in restoring the iconic tug-tender steamship DANIEL ADAMSON, which first set sail in 1903. Through Dan's restoration efforts, he has supported young people from all backgrounds and abilities to learn, participate and eventually volunteer as part of the ship's crew and go on to lead careers in engineering and across the maritime sector.

Captain Cross said: "*I am deeply honoured to be awarded this wonderful medal alongside some prestigious recipients over the years. I played a small part in saving and returning the DANIEL ADAMSON back to operational condition for future generations to enjoy and benefit from. It is often said the ship runs on two things, steam and volunteers and this reflects what a magnificent team effort the project is. Having worked on harbour tugs for nearly 30 years, the work of the harbour tug*

*is often overlooked. As a key part of ensuring goods keep flowing in and out of the ports and harbours in the UK it is great that services to harbour towage is recognised and the work we do can be remembered through vessels like the DANIEL ADAMSON, which also offers great training and education opportunities.”*



STENA EMBLA heading into Liverpool from Belfast on 16 August 2022. (Adrian Sweeney)

### **Strike Action**

On Tues 20 Sept, dockers and other port workers employed by Peel Ports, began a two week period of industrial action over pay in the Port of Liverpool. This seemed to mainly affect Seaforth and Liverpool 2 as other areas of the port seemed to be operating more or less as usual.

Operations appeared to resume at Liverpool 2 on Tues 4 Oct when MSC INGRID was observed working on T2 South during the morning.

### **October 2022**

After a few days delay, the ENS LUXOR ex FORT AUSTIN A386 1979/20043 was moved by 4 Boluda tugs, from a long layup on the East Float, to Alfred Basin/Lock on 8th October 2022. The tug ALP WINGER 2007/2789 IMO 9367504 (ex Janus) was to tow the vessel to Alexandria Egypt with arrival scheduled for 27 October. Once moved into the river the Alp Winger took the ship in tow. The start of her voyage didn't go well as the towing hawser parted mid-river and she temporary berthed on the Liverpool Cruise Terminal. She was reconnected and finally departed a few hours later.

Meanwhile the ALP FORWARD another Ocean Going tug arrived at Camell Laird on 9 Oct to tow the Fort Rosalie A385 1978/23284 also to Egypt. Both these RFA replenishment ships have been in extended layup as they were incompatible with the Royal Navy two new Aircraft Carriers, and have been sold to the Egyptian Navy, The FORT ROSALIE has been renamed ENS ABU SIMBEL.



**ENS LUXOR going astern through Alfred Loch into the Mersey at the beginning of her voyage to Egypt on Sat 8 August. (David Pointon)**

### **Strike Again**

Unfortunately dockers and other port workers at Liverpool resumed strike action on Mon 10 Oct for another seven days after rejecting the latest pay offer from Peel Ports. The industrial action appeared once again to mainly affect Liverpool 2 and Seaforth.

### **Seacombe Ferry Terminal**

The Seacombe Mersey Ferries Terminal re-opened first thing on Mon 17 Oct after being closed for almost two years for major refurbishment. With its re-opening Woodside Terminal closed for its own refurbishment although what this will entail and for how long the closure will last is not as yet clear.



**The tug ALP WINGER waiting in the Alfred Basin on Sat 8 Oct waiting to begin her tow of ENS LUXOR to Egypt. (David Pointon)**

## **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

With the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as a mark of respect on Wed 14 Sept, all ships in the port and on the river sounded their ship's whistles in unison at 1400. In addition tugs on the river performed a fire monitor display. Large crowds gathered on both sides of the river to mark the event. Ships taking part included both of the Mersey Ferries, ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY and SNOWDROP and the cruise liner berthed at the Princes Landing Stage, DISNEY MAGIC.

The photo of the event below was taken by Dave Crolley



## Obituary

### Captain Michael D.R Jones 20.5.1931-2.7.2022

Michael was born in Oxton Village Birkenhead in 1931 and later evacuated to Tarporley in Cheshire, returning to Merseyside to begin work as an office boy with Ellerman Hall Line in Birkenhead before he embarked on a seagoing career as an apprentice with T & J Harrison as a deck cadet on board MV LINGUIST in January 1948 remaining with the company for over 45 years. After working his way through the stages of third/second and chief officer board examinations his first command was in 1970 on board MV WAYFARER aged 39, Michael would later command a variety of general cargo vessel types and bulk carriers, the latter two ( WANDERER and WARRIOR 1977/78) direct from the shipyard on their maiden voyages before taking a shore based position as assistant Marine Superintendent/recruiting officer before becoming Marine Superintendent until retirement in 1993 a period covering six decades. Michael was the nominated Harrison person in the Carol Consortium, part of his role involved vessel planning as the consortium vessels were delivered into service in the late 1970's.

As well as being a long standing member of the World Ship Society, Michael was also a member of the Merseyside Master Mariners, President of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society, a former trustee of Liverpool Seafarers Centre and a member of the North West Merchant Navy Welfare Board.



One of Michael's favourite vessels , MERCHANT, pictured here alongside N.2 Canada Dock in the early 1970's. Built in 1964 as SCYTHIA at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders, Birkenhead, for North Western Line(Mersey) Ltd. and long term chartered to the Cunard Steamship Co. Acquired by T & J Harrison Ltd in 1969.

## **Obituary Frank Purser**

Manchester Branch member Frank Purser passed away suddenly on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2022. It was a great shock to all his family friends and fellow branch members as he attended the Manchester Branch meetings only 3 days earlier. Frank was well known in Maritime circles and was also a member of the Coastal Cruising Association and Friends of the Ferries Society at Liverpool. He was very active in everything he undertook such as daily long walks along local Manchester canals, maybe sailing on the many pleasure boats that frequent the area. For many years Frank worked for Manchester Liners supervising cargo stowage which entailed him visiting the Manchester Liners that was about to sail mainly to Canada. He lived in the Urmston area of Manchester in his flat surrounded by all manner of maritime objects such as ships models, photographs and paintings. Our sincere condolences go to out to Frank's family, he will be sadly missed by us all.

## **Mersey Pictorial**



Above is the STENA CONDUCTOR leaving Liverpool light ship on 13 Sept 2022 on her way to Rotterdam. She had brought into Liverpool , on 10 Sept, animal and vegetable oils from Papua New Guinea. Built in 2022 the photo was taken by Dave Crolley.



Illustrated above is the tug ZEEBRUGGE, which came to the Mersey in 2013. She is seen in the West Float on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022. She was built in Belgium in 1992 for URS Belgie and has a bollard pull of 249t -39t forward and 37t astern. She is now owned by Baluda Towage.

Below is a photo of her assisting the bulker SOLITAIRE in the East Float, Birkenhead on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – nine years to the day from when the first photo was taken. SOLITAIRE was on her way to Russia.

**Both photos courtesy of David Pointon**



## The RMS Majestic Bell

### by John Luxton

During 2022 I found myself back at my old school – Liverpool College – having been asked to undertake a detailed photographic survey of the school for the Old Lerpoolian Society "Old Boys" and since I left in 1978 "Old Girls".

During the second of two visits I came across the bell from the White Star Line ship MAJESTIC.

This bell was no stranger to me.

During my days in David House (the Liverpool College prep school) between 1966 and 1969 the MAJESTIC bell was the school bell.

Pupils would be chosen to ring it and over those three years I must have rung it a few times.

The photograph taken from 'Liverpool Gentlemen' by David Wainwright – the official history of the school published by Faber and Faber in 1960 shows the MAJESTIC bell in all its polished glory. Over the years since I left Liverpool College in 1978 there have been many changes, David House Prep School was closed and sold with the Prep School relocating to the main Queen's Drive site.

When entering the school chapel to photograph the interior, there standing in the porch was the MAJESTIC bell looking much less polished than I remember it or as can be seen in the 1960 photograph.

I always knew the basic history of the bell – that it had been given by Bishop of Liverpool Albert David (1867 – 1950) to the school. David House on Park Avenue having been the bishop's private residence before his retirement and the sale of the house to Liverpool College.

I decided to do some delving into the history of the bell and came to the conclusion I was not certain as to which MAJESTIC it was nor was it entirely clear how Bishop David obtained the bell.

David Wainwright the author of 'Liverpool Gentlemen' states the "bell of the Atlantic liner MAJESTIC was the gift of Bishop David (of Liverpool) whose brother was the ship's last captain."

Bishop Albert David had three brothers.

According to the Bishop's Wikipedia biography he was one of three siblings born to Rev William David and his wife "all three of William David's sons became clergymen."

If his three brothers were clergymen how does that reconcile with his brother being the last master of the MAJESTIC? – unless perhaps he was a seafarer first and then sought holy orders later?

Of course, Wikipedia is not a 100% trustworthy source and possibly could be wrong in this case. If the last captain of the MAJESTIC was named "David" then the mystery is partially solved. But then one has to consider which MAJESTIC the bell came from as.



Bishop David (and presumably his brothers) was of such an age to span the careers of both MAJESTIC [I] (Harland and Wolff 1889) and MAJESTIC [II] (ex-BISMARCK) of 1914 constructed by Blohm and Voss and seized after WWI as war reparations.

In May 1936, Cunard White Star sold MAJESTIC [II] for £115,000 to Thomas W Ward shipbreakers, to be broken up for scrap.

However MAJESTIC [II] was re-sold in July 1936 by Ward's, to the British Admiralty and renamed HMS CALEDONIA adopting a role as a static cadet training ship based at Rosyth. She was delivered to the Royal Navy in April 1937 having sailed up from Southampton.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1939, a fire broke out on board and the ship was badly damaged.

The following March the HMS CALEDONIA was sold back to Thomas Ward who demolished her over the following three years finally completing the job at Inverkeithing in July 1943.

Several sources claim that the bell from the scrapped ship was placed at St. Nicholas' Church, Dereham in Norfolk.

However, none of the sources make it clear whether that bell was one created for HMS CALEDONIA or whether it was the MAJESTIC bell.

If it was the MAJESTIC bell was Bishop David's brother the Vicar of Dereham (and not the last captain of the MAJESTIC) and did he in that role pass it on to his brother who was Bishop of Liverpool?

There is no mention of a White Star connection on the St Nicholas Church web site and few places appear to overlook any connection with the White Star Line.

The questions therefore are:

Was Bishop Albert David's brother the MAJESTIC [I] or [II] last captain?

Is the school bell from MAJESTIC [I] or MAJESTIC [II]?

Or did the bell from MAJESTIC [I] (scrapped 1914) get and placed on MAJESTIC [II] when she entered service, or was a new bell made for MAJESTIC [II]? It is an interesting little maritime / school puzzle which I would like to solve and feed the information back to the Old Lerpoolian Society.

The truth must be out there!

