The World Ship Society

Southend Branch

News and Views

Edition 100- LOCAL

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NOTES

Thanks go to Krispen ,Stuart,Geoff, Eddie, Andrew and Tony, for their contributions

Graham remains in hospital where he has been most of the time since November but we have included some of his previous yarns in this 100 edition

Colin is still largely confined to his bed in the home that he is in but still manages to remember his interest in ships. We have used his pictures in the Mystery Ships

Welcome to this our 100th Edition

CONTENTS

- Derv3elopments at London Gateway Port
- Russian Tankers
- REM Energy

Visitors

Pictures from Krispen

Solent

Quiz

Mystery Ships 100

Grahams Yarns

- Adrift but not on the high sea
- S B Cymric
- Another Lockdown

Colourful Cliffside Towns of the Amalfi Coast Borealis Cruise Part 5

CLDN its current fleet and operations

Lady Clara

Launching of the Great Eastern

Cosette

The steam tug Cervia

HTMS Pin Klao

Prisoner of War Ships Moored off Southend in WW1

HTMS Pin Klao

Scot Pioneer

Fitburg

NEWS

DEVELOPMENTS AT LONDON GATEWAY PORT

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

The throughput figure for LGP was announced in mid-January giving a total for 2025 of 3 million TEU, hugely up on the 2024 figure of 1.9 million TEU. The increase was partly due to the opening of Berth 4, but also thanks to calls by the Gemini Corporation's Asia – Europe routes since February 2025. The second rail terminal was also commissioned in 2025. The total box throughput of the UK is slightly over 9 million TEU, so with Southampton contributing 2 million, DP World ports handled over half of it.


ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

Included in a £1 billion investment, the all-electric Berths 5 and 6 are under construction, with Berth 5 due for opening in Summer 2027 and Berth 6 in 2029. A further £170 million is to be invested in the next two years for the installation of a "Boxbay" automatic container handling system. Tesco is set to become one of the largest tenants at London Gateway.

There are Russian ghost ships in the Channel and the UK is surrounded by 50 more

Story by Richard Holmes • from Stuart Emery

Two sanctioned Russian ships currently sailing through the English Channel are among at least 50 suspected shadow tankers to have closed in on UK waters in the past three days, The i Paper can reveal.

A day after British forces helped the US seize a runaway Russian tanker, Bella 1, just over 100 miles from UK waters north-west of Scotland, another "zombie" vessel sailed through the Channel under a false name.

It was sanctioned by the US in 2024 while carrying the name Tia. It now uses a fake name – Tavian – to evade detection while carrying oil across the globe, providing a huge income source for Moscow's war in Ukraine.

It was followed into the Channel on Thursday by the Aria, sailing under the Barbados flag, and sanctioned by the US in January last year. The ship is similarly suspected of enabling illicit Russian oil trades.

According to open-source tracking data provided by Starboard Maritime Intelligence, the Bella, Tia and Aria are among at least 50 of Vladimir Putin's suspected "shadow fleet" that have traversed through or near UK waters over the past three days.

It can also be revealed that yet another tanker, the Voskhod – also sanctioned and suspected to be in the shadow fleet – left the UK's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) – a 200-mile buffer stretching from a country's shoreline – on Tuesday, a day before the US raid on the Bella 1.

British armed forces were involved in US seizure of oil tanker, says John Healey

It has sailed past the west coast of Ireland, passed the UK, and is now off the shore of western Spain.

The Voskhod was sanctioned by the UK Foreign Office in October for carrying goods from Russia to "a third country" that could contribute to "threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine". Under the terms of the sanctions, access to UK ports is prohibited and it may be subject to a "detention direction, and a port entry direction or a movement direction".

There are Russian ghost ships in the Channel. And the UK is surrounded by 50 more

Mark Douglas, of Starboard Maritime Intelligence, told The i Paper that an increase in sea ice has closed the northern passage along Russia's Arctic coast, meaning many more vessels are expected to take the route around UK waters.

He added: "The fact that 50 such vessels continue to operate is a concern, not just for the continued flow of oil and other goods to feed Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, but also the risk that these vessels travelling – which are often old and lack proper management and oversight – pose to critical maritime and underwater infrastructure and the environment."

The British Government signalled it was prepared to seize more of the "shadow fleet" after the successful boarding of Bella 1, which has been

renamed the MV Marinera, by US special forces assisted by the RAF and Royal Navy.

The operation was carried out in a stretch of sea between the UK and Iceland after a two week-long cat-and-mouse pursuit across the Atlantic.

British airbases were used as the launchpad for the mission, while RFA Tideforce, a Royal Navy tanker, provided support. The RAF also flew surveillance missions, as first reported by The i Paper.

Following the operation, Defence Secretary John Healey described disrupting the shadow fleet as a "priority for the Government", adding: "The UK will not stand by as malign activity increases on the high seas. And alongside our allies, we are stepping up our response against shadow vessels – and we will continue do to."

The list of 50 includes ships that are sailing overtly under the Russian flag as well as those sailing under suspected false flags, masking their identity by claiming to be owned by another state.

Under UN law, Britain would be able to board a vessel passing near its waters if it suspected it was sailing under a false flag. The UK would be further emboldened if the ship sailed into its territorial seas – an area of 12 nautical miles from the coast.

But with so many dark-fleet ships using British waters on a daily basis, exactly how the Government plans to tackle the issue remains unclear amid practical and legal limitations.

Shipping laws leave loopholes for malign actors

Putin relies on a vast network of more than 1,400 shadow-fleet vessels to evade sanctions, enable illicit trade deals, and launch hybrid warfare operations in the West.

The United States has blacklisted 744 active tankers, while the UK has blacklisted 549. The overlap between both lists is 235. When adding the EU's 580 blacklisted tankers to the mix, the overlap across all three authorities is just 195 tankers.

Experts say that in order for officials to halt the vessels, there first needs to be unification of the sanction lists.

Emma Salisbury, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, said it was “encouraging” to see the recent action from the US and UK, but warned that the rules and laws around commercial shipping are “complicated”, leaving loopholes and “unwatched corners for malign actors to exploit”.

Although they face accusations of engaging in nefarious trades, the legality of trying to seize these ships is still limited under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

The internationally recognised law states that ships, even if sanctioned, are to be given the right of innocent passage through international waters. However, under the same convention, a ship cannot change its flag mid-voyage – which led to the legal argument for the Marinera to be seized.

The US Coast Guard observing the Marinera following its seizure (Photo: US_EUCOM/X/PA)

The US Coast Guard observing the Marinera following its seizure (Photo: US_EUCOM/X/PA)

The English Channel, while partly falling within UK territorial waters – an area of sea where Britain would have much more jurisdiction to act – is an internationally recognised passage for shipping. Therefore ships can traverse innocently unless suspected criminality is being conducted.

“The UK and European allies should tighten legislation on such ships passing through their waters, particularly building on existing international law around false-flagging, lack of insurance and seaworthiness, making it easier for suspicious ships to be queried and boarded,” Salisbury said. “Russia will keep using its shadow fleet while it can get away with it, so more enforcement is vital.”

How UK Special Forces would intercept Putin’s tankers – and why they won’t

If UK authorities were able to establish the political will and legal clearance to board a suspected vessel, they would also have to fire up an impressive fleet of Special Forces personnel and equipment to carry out the operation.

The seizure of the Marinera involved specialised helicopters, gunships and surveillance aircraft, as well as Royal Navy tanker.

A former UK Special Forces officer who carried out vessel boardings, and wished to not be named, said “the reality” was that it would be “inconceivable” for the UK to tackle each Russian shadow fleet tanker they saw.

The level of planning, it is high risk,” they said. “Its inconceivable that the UK are going to be doing this on a mass scale.”

S forces apprehended a second stateless tanker, MT Sophia , in the Caribbean Sea on Wednesday (Photo: X/Southcom)

They added that for each boarding mission the Ministry of Defence would need to deploy a Special Forces squadron skilled in maritime operations, along with at least two surveillance aircraft, a refueling tanker, and specialist helicopters.

“Fundamentally the reality is the UK wouldn’t have the confidence to conduct a seizure independently,” they said.

The Ministry of Defence refused to comment on specific vessels currently operating in the Channel, but reaffirmed that “deterring, disrupting and degrading” the Russian shadow fleet is a “priority” for the Government.

In October, UK Defence Secretary John Healey sent a clear message to Putin: “If Nato is threatened, we will act.”

The UK may now be tested on those words.

Rem Energy – Battery-powered, windfarm maintenance vessel for Norway's Rem Offshore

Recently seem on AIS in the outer Estuary

The DNV-classed, Havyard-designed Rem Energy was originally built as a platform supply vessel for a different owner and was to be named Atlantic Harrier. Construction on the PSV was well underway when the unfinished hull was transported from another shipyard to Green Yard Kleven in Ulsteinvik, Norway, for completion. The vessel was also re-designed to be optimised for offshore wind construction and walk-to-work operations rather than the platform supply role.

Rem Energy has an LOA of 90.7 metres, a beam of 19.74 metres, and a draught of 5.9 metres. Conference areas and berths for 99 personnel are also available, making the vessel ideal for operating as an accommodation platform in addition to providing offshore construction and maintenance support. All interior spaces were designed by Vestnes Ocean and are kept comfortable with the aid of a complete HVAC system from AF AeronMollier.

The batteries have a total output of 12 MW and are designed to be charged either through a shore connection or through the onboard diesel generators. The batteries supply power for the engines, which in turn drive a set of Steerprop azimuth thrusters. The Caterpillar main and auxiliary engines, which are also fitted with selective catalytic reduction systems, were provided by Pon Power. To provide added manoeuvrability during berthing/unberthing, station keeping, and sailing in close quarters, the vessel relies on tunnel thrusters and retractable thrusters from Brunvoll.

The vessel was designed to allow future modifications to the propulsion system as newer technologies such as hydrogen propulsion and fuel cells become available to further reduce emissions. It may also accommodate additional battery packs if required.

To ensure proper station keeping when working on wind turbines, Rem Energy utilises a dynamic positioning system supplied by Kongsberg, which also provided the vessel's gyrocompass and joystick control system. One application supports fuel consumption and emissions reduction, as well as automates reporting processes, while the other application is an advanced decision support tool.

Equipment includes an SMST package consisting of an access tower with lift, a motion compensated gangway, and a 3D motion compensated crane. Also fitted are a Bergen Hydraulic crane on the aft and gangways from Gurskoy.

The array of deck machinery includes an anchor and chains from Fossen Shipping, Adria Winch mooring winches and capstans, and Varde rope drums.

Rem Energy is presently deployed in support of Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy under a long-term contract for maintenance at various wind farms off the northern coast of Germany.

VISITORS

High Freedom Built 2014 29935 GRT Liberia

Current Position Antwerp

Msc Cotonou Built 2024 75448 GRT Liberia

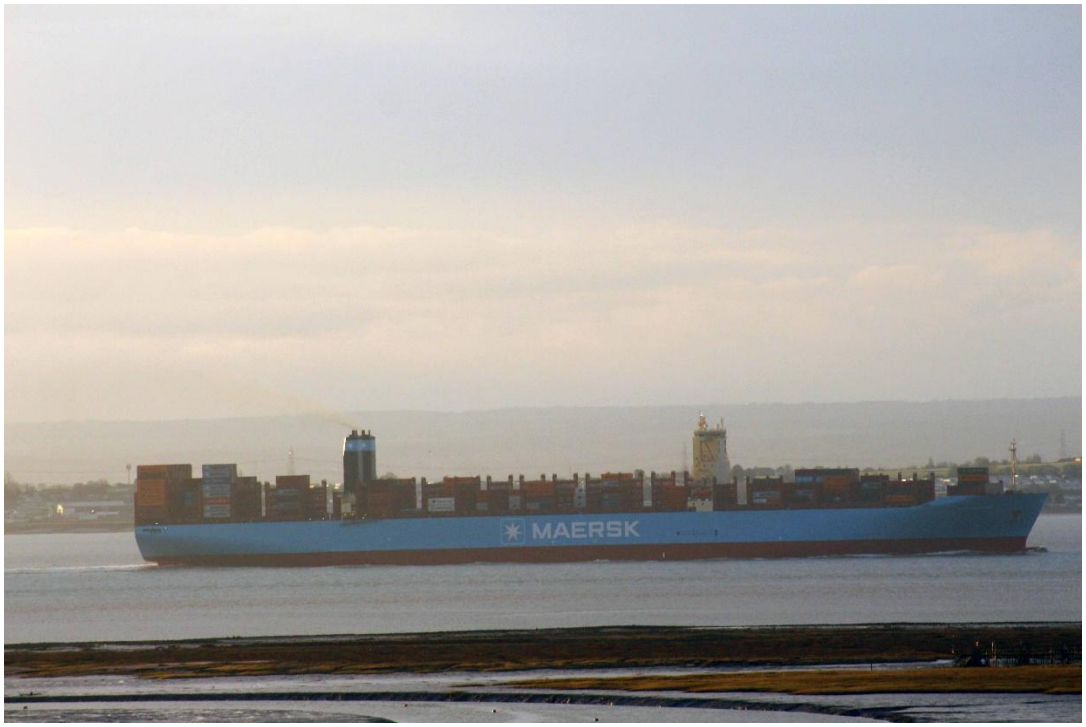
Current Position Atlantic Ocean

Apl Savannah Built 2013 109712 GRT Singapore

Current Position North Sea en route Antwerp

Mogens Maersk Built 2014 194845 GRT Denmark

Current Position North Sea en route Aarhus



Marchen Maersk Built GRT

Current _Position West Africa

Grande Nigeria Built 2003 57000 GRT Italy

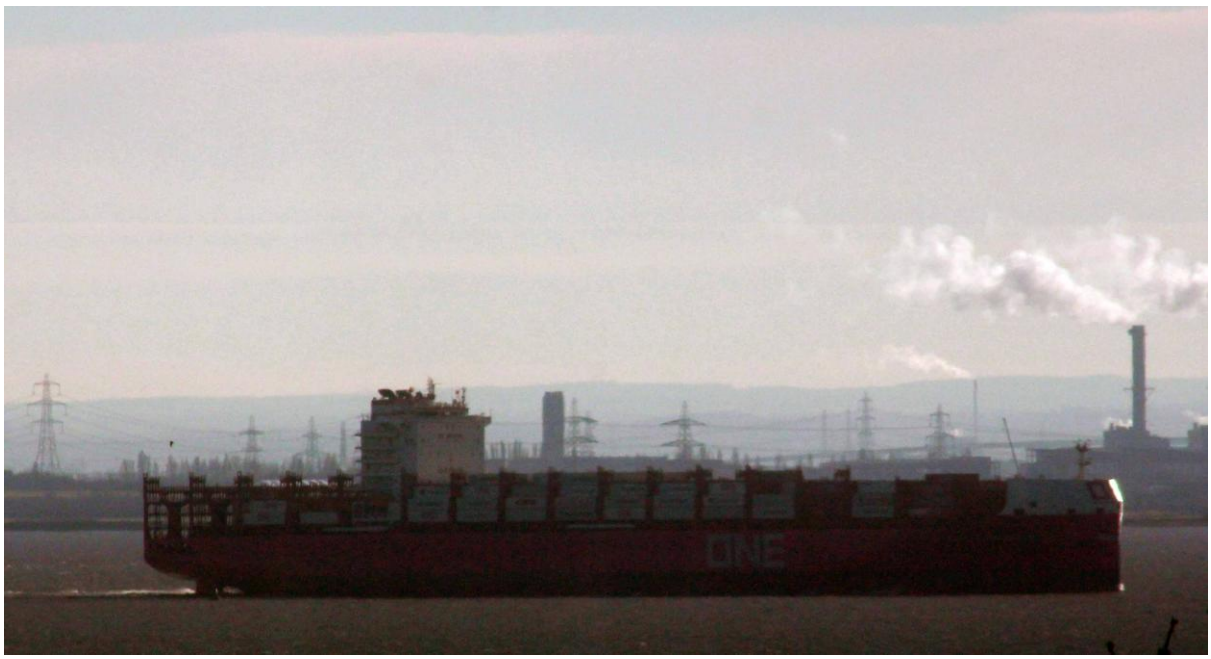
Current Location West Africa en route Lagos

Trans Iberia Built 1999 13015 GRT Malta

Current Position Atlantic en route Ravenna

Fure Viskar Built 2024 12763 GRT Sweden

Current Position En route Ghent



ANL Wyong Built 2008 39983 GRT Malta

Current Position West Africa en route Senegal

One Responsibility Built 2024 74068 GRT Hong Kong

Current Position West Africa en route Coega South Africa

Don Juan Built 207 14116 GRT Portugal

Current Position Gijon Spain

Munkebo Maersk Built 2014 194985 GRT Denmark

Current Location North Sea en route Pelepas

Golden Maple Built 2025 11944 GRT Liberia

Current Position Atlantic en route Augusta Italy

Atlanta Express Built 2014 149475GRT Liberia

Current Position South Africa en route Oman

Msc Muge Built 2025 101311 GRT Liberia

Current position West Africa en route Rio de Janeiro

Msc Alanya Built 2021 113677 GRT Liberia

Current Location West Africa en route Dominican Republic

Msc Anshika VI Built 2003 64845 GRT Portugal

Current Position Gulf of Mexico en route Houston

Msc Clea Built 2016 95514 GRT Portugal

Current Position West Africa en route to Mauritius

Bf Carp Built 2009 9946 GRT Antigua

Current Position West Africa en route Thames

NEWS FROM THE SOLENT

Queen Anne and Queen Victoria in .QV off to Canaries and QA to Hamburg

CMA CGM Moliere Built 2009 88209 DWT

Grande Napoli Built 2003 14565 DWT arrived from Ringaskiddy

AICC Kunpeng Built 2025 18885 DWT off to Algeciras


GRIMALDI LINES


CMA CGM

PICTURES FROM KRISPEN

Wilhelmine

Trans chemical

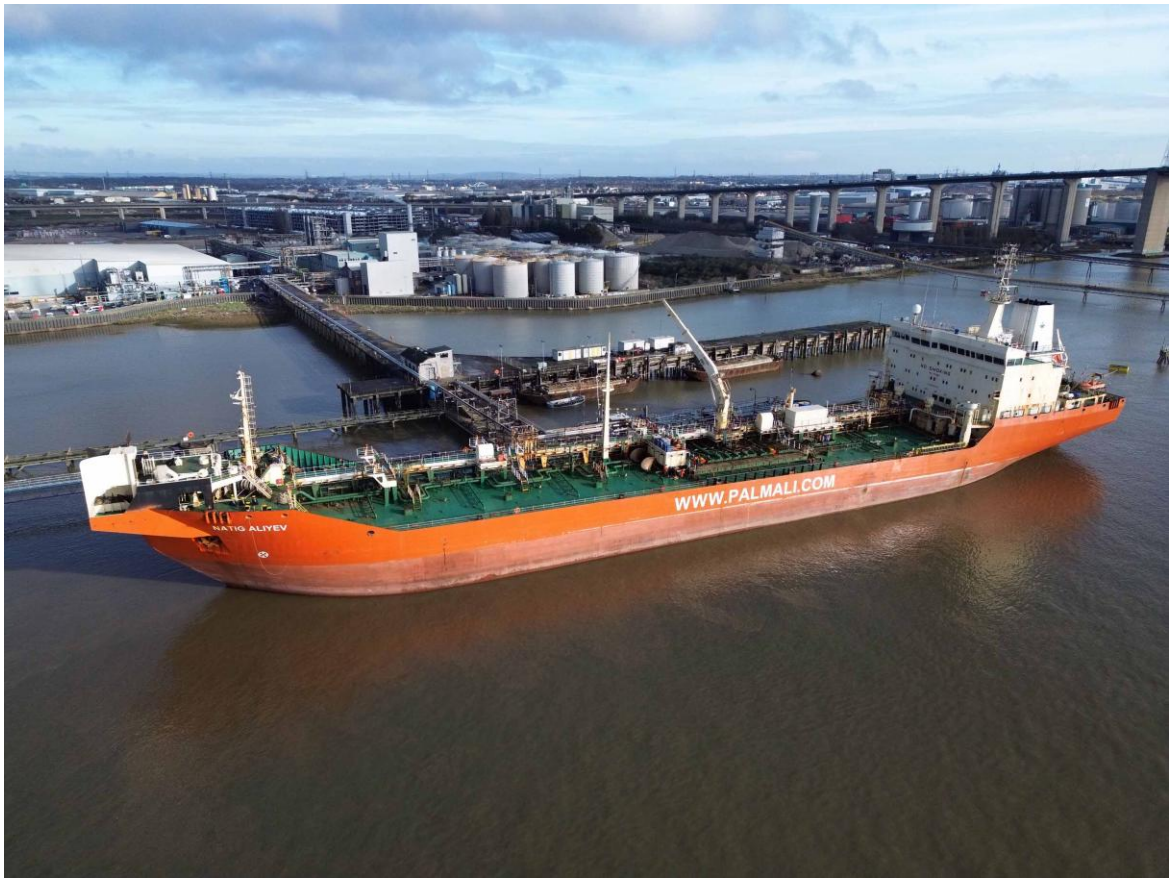
Svitzer Intrepid

Seychelles Prelude

Seacod

Prime

Navig8 Universe



Natig Aliyev

Cormoran

Celandine

WSS quiz questions – February 2026

1. What is the name of the oil tanker seized by the US 0n 7 January 2026, accused of breaking US sanctions by carrying oil for Venezuela, Russia and Iran?

2. The German port of Hamburg lies on which river?

3. Late last year, the UK secured a £10bn deal to supply 5 new type-26 frigates to which country?

4. What is the name of Disney's new cruise liner of 208,108 gross tons that left Germany on 4 January on its delivery voyage to Singapore, via the US and Japan?

5. Which UK port has the fishing registration SM?

6. In what year did Ambience start cruising for the Ambassador cruise line?

7. Captain Vladimir Motin was described in court in January 2026 as "highly trained" with a "constellation of information" telling him he needed to act. What were the consequences of his failure to act?

8. The musical *The Last Ship*, about the demise of the shipbuilding industry in Wallsend, Tyne and Wear has recently started a world tour, commencing in Amsterdam. Who is the famous musician who wrote the musical?

9. Neptune’s staircase, the longest staircase lock in Britain, is on which canal?

10. What did Sir Francis Chichester achieve in 1967?

MYSTERY SHIPS 100

Nova V 23 04 93

Maersk Cancun 10 04 18 Bitter Lakes

Lucky Star 14 03 18 Phumy

La Mpassa 01 11 92 Dunkirk

Kwie Chow 20 03 18 Singapore Swire

Berge Strand

Grahams Yarns

Some from the early days

ADRIFT (But not on the high seas)

The bow rope on a lighter was known as a 'headfast' and was used to moor the vessel and sometimes as a towrope when being towed by a tug. Therefore it was a pretty sturdy affair and often included one or more coloured strands (The PLA's colour was green and Orient Lighterage, I believe, yellow). This was an attempt to minimise the 'borrowing' or even sale of rivals' rope.

The Blackwall entrance to West India Dock was reserved, almost exclusively, for the lighterage trade, but, unfortunately it normally only operated between the hours of 8a.m. - 7p.m. Any lighters arriving after it had closed had either to use the main lock or wait, tied up to the pier outside until the next morning.

It so happened that one evening about sixty lighters remained to be locked in

at 7p.m. The main lock was busy with actual ships so they were left, moored to the pier with most of the weight being taken by the lead lighter's headfast. It was a calm evening so nobody was worried.

But, about midnight, the wind freshened out of the north – west. This, combined with the flood time, placed additional strain on the headfast which parted, putting sixty lighters, splitting, into smaller groups as further ropes parted adrift on the Thames. They drifted on to wharves and mudbanks, fouled lighterage roads and impeded such shipping that was under way that night. The Thames Navigation Service received a number of complaining radio calls although no ships were damaged and were obliged to issue a broadcast which went something like: "Any tug that is under way on the Thames please proceed to the vicinity of West India Dock to help retrieve drifting lighters.

How successful this appeal was is not recorded, but all I can say is that, by the time I had walked down to the lockside pub, the Gun, for a pint the next lunchtime, you would not know that anything had happened, G.E.D.

S.b. CYMRIC

In 1903 E.J.& W. Goldsmith of Grays took delivery of six 250 ton steel barges, built in Holland. This was the first instalment of twelve, all to be given names ending in 'IC'. While the second batch of six was being completed one of first group, Cymric, was in bad trouble.

In December 1903 she was bound from Cherbourg to Sheerness in Kent with a cargo of stone, under Captain Henry Marshall. How she came to be ashore at Brightstone, then a remote spot on the Isle of Wight, is a bit of a mystery. The weather was not good, but not bad enough to prevent seven other barges crossing the Channel that day without trouble. It was believed that the barge had broken some vital item of gear, such as her sprit and had been run ashore for the crew's safety.

CYMRIC ended up bows on to the beach and it seemed that Captain Marshall had done this deliberately so that he and his crew could escape via the bowsprit. Lloyd's agent for Brightstone visited the wreck several times and reported her full of water with her starboard shell plates buckling. In his opinion, with the onset of winter weather she was not worth salvaging. The owners then declared her a constructive total loss and claimed the insurance money.

So there CYMRIC stayed for four months until the wreck was purchased by Clements – Knowling, a company well known for supplying towage above bridges on the Thames. Clements set about salvaging the barge which given the remoteness of Brightstone and the weather conditions must have been a difficult and dangerous job.

Eventually, however, on the 30th June 1904, she was reported under tow by a tug off St. Katherine's Point, the southernmost point of the Isle of Wight Clements had been successful with their salvage. They took her to Brentford where she was refitted and turned into a boomie barge or ketch but retaining her leeboards. She was, somewhat triumphally, renamed SUCCESS.

However, Clements did not trade her for long, as ,in 1907, she was sold to the shipbroker Joseph Constant who quickly sold her on to her original owner, Goldsmith. This was not surprising since most of Goldsmith's bigger barges were mortgaged to Constant anyway.

Goldsmith's turned her .back to a spritsail barge but kept the large mizzen and the three jibs provided under the ketch rig, making her a very powerful barge. She was converted to a motor barge in 1932, with a 50 h.p. Bolinder engine. She was requisitioned by the Ministry of War Transport for the whole of World War II.

When Goldsmiths sold their remaining fleet in 1950 she went to the London & Rochester Trading Co. and continued to trade to the continent under their flag until sold for demolition at Sheerness in 1963.

As for Captain Marshall, he took command of a smaller Goldsmith steel barge, NAMARA. He was soon in trouble again when the barge was on passage from Conyer to Sandwich with a heavy cargo of brick rubble and went ashore near the Reculver Towers on the North Kent coast. Local labour volunteered to help discharge part of the cargo so that the barge could be refloated but before much could be done the weather changed with a strong northerly gale and NAMARA was badly damaged. She was eventually salved and taken to Goldsmith's yard at Grays for refitting. It is doubtful that Goldsmith's were impressed by one of their skippers stranding two of their newly built barges in quick succession but Marshall's further career cannot be traced.

ANOTHER LOCKDOWN

Sometime in the 1960's a small coaster was locking out of the main lock of West India dock. To take the way of the ship the skipper rang down 'slow astern' to the engine room, However the engineer put the engine 'full ahead'. The coaster was not badly damaged but the outer pair of lock gates were completely wrecked, a problem for the Port of London Authority.

Larger ships (e.g. Ellerman Lines, Ben Line) were trapped within the Dock; although new arrivals could be diverted to the Royal or Tilbury Docks. However all was not lost. In their wisdom the PLA had allowed for a similar happening and provided the lock at West India with a middle pair of gates so that a 'half- lock' could be operated for medium size ships. So life went on

quite happily with engineers and divers working on the wrecked gates, the larger ships still discharging and everything else using the 'half lock'

.

That is until Swedish Lloyd's 'Suecia' or 'Brittania' docked on the following Monday. (They would offload their passengers at Tilbury Landing Stage and then come upriver to Millwall Dock to discharge and load cargo), This time the liner managed to catch a wire attached to the inner lockgates with her propellor and the strain wrecked the gates completely. So there was the main entrance to the India docks out of action.

All that remained was the Blackwall entrance, designed to admit tugs, lighters and barges only. Some of the smaller ships managed to squeeze out through this route but the vast majority remained trapped. About this time PLA Head Office decided that those trapped ships that had overstayed their welcome should be paying rent at the rate of 4/7d per net registered ton per day. This was swiftly followed by a number of vitriolic letters and phone calls from shipping companies and their agents and, after due consideration by the powers that be, the charges for rent were refunded.

Not an easy task for us poor souls in the Dock Dues Office who had rendered the charges in the first place and then had to refund them by credit vouchers which needed many signatures in authorisation. By this time repairs had been completed and marine operations returned to normal but the whole episode did not reflect well on the PLA,

Graham D.

COLOURFUL CLIFFSIDE TOWNS OF THE AMALFI COAST

BOREALIS CRUISE AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2025

PART 5: Friday 5th to Monday 8th September

Friday and Saturday were spent at sea and uneventful. The weather was mainly cloudy and Wind Force 4 to 5 with slight to moderate seas as we headed WSW at a stately 15 or so knots.

On Sunday 7th we berthed at Tangier Med at about 8 am in cloudy and low visibility conditions with a gentle NW breeze. Maggie and I had holidayed at Tangier some 40 years beforehand, and at that time it was a small but bustling port. Since then, the port has been hugely enlarged but there seemed to be little traffic except for fast ferries etc. Maybe the actions of the Houthis in the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz had dissuaded most of the Far East traffic from using the Mediterranean and hence calling at the port.

MARIA DOLORES

Crossing near us was the Malta flagged High Speed catamaran ferry MARIA DOLORES. She was built in aluminium by Austal in Australia in 2005. She is of 3022 gt with dimensions 68.4m x 18.2m x 2.6m. She is powered by 6 MTU diesel driving 4 Rolls-Royce Kamera waterjets giving 36 knots. She can carry 600 passengers and 65 cars. She is operated by Virtu Ferries on the Tangier Med to Spain service.

MOROCCO EXPRESS 1

Another fast ferry observed was the Cyprus flagged MOROCCO EXPRESS 1. She was built in 2000 by Austal in Australia as HIGHSPEED 3. She is of 2926 gt with dimensions 74m x 17.5m x 2.75m. She can carry 647 passengers and 70 cars. She is powered by four MTU 16V59TE engines each providing 8200 kW enabling a maximum speed of 45 knots. She is owned by Hellenic Seaways

Maritime SA of Athens and operates between Tarifa in Spain and Tangier Med under the Africa Morocco Link banner.

Berthed near us were a pair of new Morocco flagged harbour tugs, the VB AZLA and the VB AMSA, supplied by Boluda Towage and delivered to the port in March 2025. They were built by Damen in Vietnam and are of the ASD2813 design (Azimuth Stern Drive) They are of 387 gt with dimensions 28m x 12.3m x 5.2m. They are powered by twin Caterpillar 3516-C TA HD/D engines of 5047 kW giving a bollard pull of 83 tons.


AVEMAR DOS

Also berthed in the port was the Spanish flagged High Speed Passenger Ro-Ro ferry AVEMAR DOS. She was built in 2000 by Austal in Australia as the SUPERSTAR EXPRESS. She is of 5517 gt with dimensions 82.3m x 23.3m x 2.86m. She is powered by four MTU Series 1163 units totalling 26000 kW with four Kamewa 112 511 waterjets. Her normal service is on the Algeciras and islands of Ceuta route.

We departed Tangier Med at about 5 pm and headed west and then north for our next port, La Corunna. Visibility was still very poor, and the whole of the Italian Navy could have escaped through the Straits of Gibraltar completely unseen.

Monday 8th September was spent at sea running parallel with the Spanish and Portuguese coasts with Force 6 winds and rough seas. I dosed myself with Stugeron once again. During the morning, the crew were put through various safety drills, as required by the SOLAS Regulations. They took up a couple of hours to complete, and I wondered what if there was a real emergency during that period. I thought of one episode of Fawlty Towers, but perhaps the reported radio announcement at Pearl Harbour in December 1941 with the "This is no Drill" message.


THE CLOCK

A feature of Fred Olsen's Bolette that I very much admired was a large full-height ornamental clock in the ship's atrium which dated from the ship's Holland America origin. The Borealis also had one, although sadly, it was permanently non-operational, unlike that on the Bolette, with its various bells and whistles.

FOOTNOTE: Our cruise continued homewards to Southampton via La Corunna in mostly rough and rather uncomfortable conditions. Sadly, my Sim card

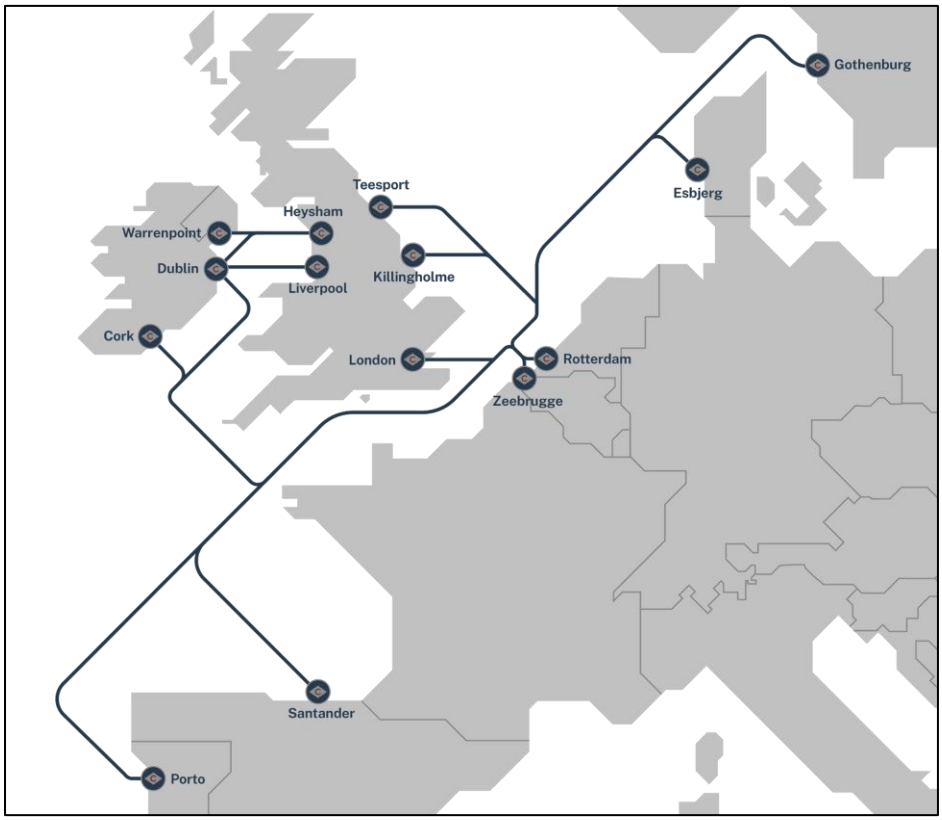
thingy got corrupted and a series of ships at La Corunna has been lost. Overall, though, a very enjoyable cruise on a very fine ship.

CLdN – It's current fleet and operations

Krispen Atkinson

All photos by Author unless otherwise stated.

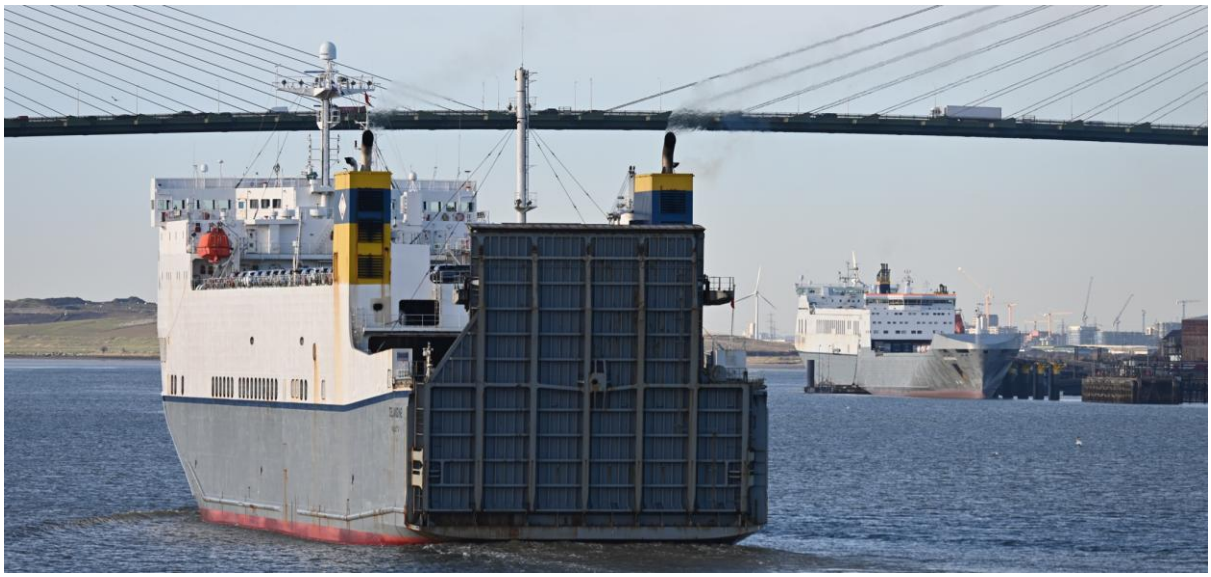
Ro-ro's of CLdN, commonly referred to as Cobelfret, a name it shed from its short sea operations in 2021, are a familiar sight on the Thames. It operates three routes into the river, calling at its terminals in Purfleet and Dagenham. The routes are part of a larger network, with vessels regularly rotating between routes and connecting ports from Gothenburg in the north to Leixoes in the south, as well as providing services across the Irish Sea.



CLdN's short sea routes around northern Europe. Image: CLdN

The company's origins date back to 1929, when it was established as Dieschburg & Cigrang. It was subsequently renamed Cigrang Freres, based in Antwerp,

before adopting the title Compagnie Belge d'Affretements (Cobelfret) in 1939. During the mid-1960s, the firm served as agent for a roll-on/roll-off service between Antwerp and Harwich, later assuming direct operation of the route in 1974. In 2011, CLdN became an independent entity with a strategic focus on multimodal transport, port operations, and short sea shipping.



Celandine approaches the Dartford Bridge, heading towards Dagenham from Vlissingen nearing her fleet mates at Purfleet: Pauline, which is loading for Zeebrugge, and Catherine, preparing to depart for Rotterdam.

Today CLdN controls three terminals in Zeebrugge, three in Rotterdam, with terminals in Vlissingen, Killingholme, Purfleet and Liverpool. Serving these terminals, the company primarily relies on a fleet of purpose-built vessels, its operations are also supported by second-hand ships. The company is also active in the sale and purchase market, frequently acquiring and disposing of ro-ro vessels, and providing tonnage to other operators.

The company expanded by acquiring several competitors, including Dart Line in 2006 (with routes from Dartford to Dunkirk, Zeebrugge, and Vlissingen), Ferryways in 2007 (which operated services between Ostend and Ipswich, Tilbury, and Immingham), and Seatruck Ferries in 2022. The acquisition of Seatruck Ferries provided the company with access to the Irish Sea market.

In addition to its short-sea logistics operations, the company owned by the Cigrang family and headquartered in Luxembourg also manages a fleet of bulk carriers, all bearing the "Lowlands" prefix. Furthermore, the company is a joint

venture partner in BTS Tankers, which operates a fleet of chemical/oil product tankers within the Asian market.

Clearly sporting the same funnel markings as their ro-ros, the mini-capesize bulk carrier Lowlands Energy is seen leaving Europoort in April 2017.

The following covers the current fleet of the short-sea operation, with the basic specifications for each class.

Vessels built for the company

Kawasaki type

Builder: Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd, Sakaide KG

24,000g 9,415d 6.5

Length: 163 Breadth: 25.6 Depth: 15.4 Draught:

Lane metres: 2,307 Trailers: 157 Cars: 654

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
MELUSINE	1999	Zeebrugge-Esbjerg	
CELANDINE	2000	Dagenham - Vlissingen	
VICTORINE	2000	Zeebrugge-Santander-Dublin	

Celandine inward for Dagenham, from Vlissingen. Originally a class of six vessels, three have since been sold.

FSG "Ro Ro 4600" type

Builder: Flensburger Schiffbau-Ges. mbH & Co. KG, Flensburg

49,166g 17,023d Length: 203 Breadth: 31 Depth: 18.6 Draught: 7.8

Lane metres: 4,600 Trailers: 305 Cars: 1,358 TEU: 848

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
PAULINE	2006	Purfleet - Zeebrugge	
YASMINE	2007	Purfleet - Zeebrugge	

Pauline departs Purfleet, whilst Yasmine swings to take her berth. When built, the pair were the largest ships in the Cobelfret fleet, and initially operated between Zeebrugge and the Humber, and were dubbed 'HumberMax" when delivered.

Yasmine seen heading down the Thames, heading for Zeebrugge.

FSG "Con Ro 220" type

Builder: Flensburger Schiffbau-Ges. mbH & Co. KG, Flensburg

25,600g 14.500d Length: 195 Breadth: 26 Depth: 18 Draught: 7.4

Lane metres: 2,907 Trailers: 190

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
PEREGRINE	2010	Liverpool-Dublin	

Peregrine is seen arriving at Zeebrugge from Purfleet. Among the six vessels constructed in this class for the company, she is the sole example that has not undergone modification.

FSG "Con Ro 220" type - Jumboized

Builder: Flensburger Schiffbau-Ges. mbH & Co. KG, Flensburg

Additional deck added in 2019/2020 at Remontowa Shipyard.

31,340g 14,500d

Length: 195 Breadth: 26 Depth: 18 Draught: 7.4

Lane metres: 3,678 Trailers: 245

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
MAZARINE	2009	Liverpool-Dublin	
PALATINE	2009	Purfleet-Rotterdam	
VESPERTINE	2010	Liverpool-Dublin	

Vespertine and Mazarine alongside at Purfleet, following their rebuilds.

Vespertine catches the late evening sunlight as she departs from Purfleet.

FSG "Con Ro 220 Plus" type

Builder: Flensburger Schiffbau-Ges. mbH & Co. KG, Flensburg

Built as Con Ro 220 type, additional deck added and sponsons added at Remontowa Shipyard before entering service.

33,960g 13,440d Length: 195 Breadth: 30 Depth: 24 Draught: 7.4

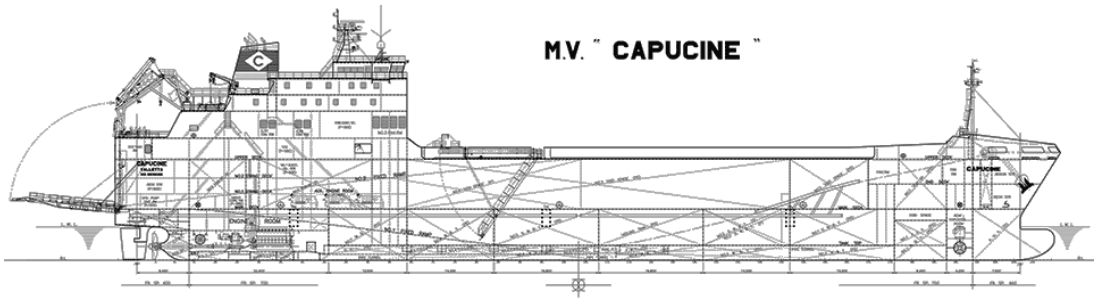
Lane metres: 3,923 Trailers: 270

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
OPALINE	2010	Purfleet-Zeebrugge	
AMANDINE	2011	Teesport-Zeebrugge	

Opaline is seen departing from Rotterdam. Prior to entering service, both vessels were modified by the addition of an extra deck, resulting in a 40% increase in cargo capacity. To help with stabilising the vessel, sponsons were also added amidships.

Kyokuyo type

Builder: Kyokuyo Shipyard Corp, Shimonoseki YC



16,342g 6,374d Length: 152 Breadth: 22 Depth: 8.2 Draught: 5.4

Lane metres: 1,760

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
CAPUCINE	2011	Chartered to Italian MOD	
SEVERINE	2012	Chartered to Italian MOD	

Capucine and her sisters were designed with a low profile to pass beneath the Orwell Bridge, when serving Ipswich. The service closed not long after the first two vessels were delivered. Since then, both ships have been chartered, first by Stena Line, and later by other operators in the Mediterranean. Photo & GA Plan: Kyokuyo Shipyard

Kyokuyo type (Plus)

Builder: Kyokuyo Shipyard Corp, Shimonoseki YC

Additional deck and sponson added by Chengxi Shipyard, before entering service.

21,020g 6,700d Length: 152 Breadth: 25 Depth: 16.2 Draught: 5.2

Lane metres: 2,342

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
WILHELMINE	2012	Dagenham - Vlissingen	
ADELINE	2012	Dagenham - Vlissingen	

A rare view of Adeline, after undertaking sea trials off the Japenese coast, prior to having the additional deck added. Kyokuyo made initial modifications, raising the accommodation, prior to the upper deck being added in China. Photo: Kyokuyo Shipyard.

Adeline with a deck load of new vehicles for the UK market, inbound from Vlissingen. The company's Ipswich operation was closed whilst the ships were under construction, prompting their rebuild before they entered service.

HMD 8000 type/G9 type

Builder: Hyundai Mipo Dockyard Co Ltd, Ulsan

74,273g 27,687d 8.2

Length: 234 Breadth: 35 Depth: 31.9 Draught:

Lane metres: 7,972 Trailers: 580 Cars: 3,795

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
CELINE	2017	Killingholme-Zeebrugge Zeebrugge-Dublin	
DELPHINE	2018	Zeebrugge-Gothenburg	2023: Fitted with 2 rotor sails

When she entered service, Celine became the largest short sea ro-ro in service. She is seen soon after entering service, approaching Purfleet in December 2017.

Seen moored up in Zeebrugge, Delphine features two rotor sails manufactured by Norsepower. These 35-meter-high units are reported to decrease overall fuel consumption by approximately 7–10%.

HMD 5400 type/H5 type

Builder: Hyundai Mipo Dockyard Co Ltd, Ulsan

50,443g 20,600d Length: 216 Breadth: 32.6 Depth: 27.3 Draught: 8.2

Lane metres: 5,400 Trailers: 310 Cars: 820

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
LAURELINE	2019	Rotterdam-Dublin	
YSALINE	2019	Killingholme-Rotterdam	
SIXTINE	2019	Rotterdam-Dublin	
HERMINE	2019	Killingholme-Rotterdam	
FAUSTINE	2021	Rotterdam-Leixoes-Zeebrugge	LNG-propulsion
SERAPHINE	2021	Rotterdam-Leixoes-Zeebrugge	LNG-propulsion

Laureline turns into Gravesend Reach, as she makes her way up the Thames towards Purfleet.

Faustine passing Greenhithe, fully loaded from Purfleet whilst temporarily operating on the service to Zeebrugge. She and Seraphine differ slightly in appearance to the earlier four vessels in the class, referred by CLdN as H5 type.

HMD 8400 type/G9e type

Builder: HD Hyundai Mipo Co Ltd, Ulsan

77,678g 25,460d 8.0

Length: 234 Breadth: 35 Depth: 33.2 Draught:

Lane metres: 8,400 Trailers: 510 Cars: 920

Ship	Built	Current Service	Notes
CHAUMINE	2025	Killingholme-Zeebrugge Zeebrugge-Dublin	Fitted with hybrid-battery propulsion
LEONINE	2025	Killingholme-Zeebrugge Zeebrugge-Dublin	Fitted with hybrid-battery propulsion

Seen whilst on sea trials off South Korea, the Chaumine features a vehicle-carrier look. Photo: HD Hyundai Mipo

Vessels acquired by the company

Romira-type

Builder: Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding (Group) Co Ltd, Shanghai

21,370g 13,320d Length: 182 Breadth: 25.8 Depth: 17.4 Draught: 7.8

Lane metres: 2,750 Trailers: 212 TEU: 504

Ship	Built	Acquired	Current Service	Notes/former names
CATHERINE	2002	2002	Purfleet-Rotterdam	2002-02: ROMIRA

Catherine is seen south of Portland when operating between Zeebrugge and Leixoes. Built as a one-off for Engstroms, completed in April 2002, she arrived in Europe and briefly worked on charter with Suardiaz and Transfennica before Cobelfret acquired her in October 2002. For most of her time with the company, she sported a blue hull.

Naos P121/Wagenborg S class

Builder: Flender Werft AG, Luebeck

21,005g 12,500d Length: 183 Breadth: 25.2 Depth: 15.3 Draught: 7.5

Lane metres: 2,475 Trailers: 190 TEU: 136

Ship	Built	Acquired	Current Service	Notes/former names
SOMERSET	1999	2015	Cork-Zeebrugge	1999-15: SPAARNEBORG
MAXINE	2000	2021	Zeebrugge-Santander-Dublin	2000-19: SLINGEBORG 2019-21: GOTHIA SEAWAYS

Maxine seen when filling in on the Purfleet to Rotterdam service. One of three vessels built for Wagenborg and chartered to Cobelfret to serve a contract with

Stora Enso, operating between Gothenburg and Zeebrugge. The third ship in the class currently operates as Belgia Seaways. Plan: Naos Ship & Boat Design

FSG "Ro Ro 2200" type

Builder: Flensburger Schiffbau-Ges. mbH & Co. KG, Flensburg

19,722g 5,300d Length: 142 Breadth: 25 Depth: 21.3 Draught: 5.7

Lane metres: 2,166 Trailers: 151

Ship	Built	Acquired	Current Service	Notes/former names
PROGRESS	2011	2022	Heysham-Warrenpoint	2011-25: SEATRUCK PROGRESS
POWER	2012	2022	Heysham-Dublin	2012-25: SEATRUCK POWER
PERFORMANCE	2012	2022	Heysham-Warrenpoint	2012-12: SEATRUCK PERFORMANCE 2012-18: STENA PERFORMER 2018-25: SEATRUCK PERFORMANCE
PRECISION	2012	2022	Heysham-Warrenpoint	2012-12: SEATRUCK PRECISION 2012-18: STENA PRECISION 2018-25: SEATRUCK PRECISION

Seatruck Power, bearing CLdN's funnel markings but still displaying the Seatruck name on her hull, is pictured passing Crosby Beach on her way to Liverpool from Dublin in September 2024. When CLdN acquired Seatruck from Clipper Group in 2022, six ships were included in the purchase; however, two of these vessels have since been sold. Plan: FSG

Lo-Lo Services - Chartered

Hegemann RW 850 type

Builder: Detlef Hegemann Rolandwerft GmbH & Co. KG, Berne

8,250g 11,100d Length: 140 Breadth: 22 Depth: 9.5 Draught: 7.3

TEU: 962

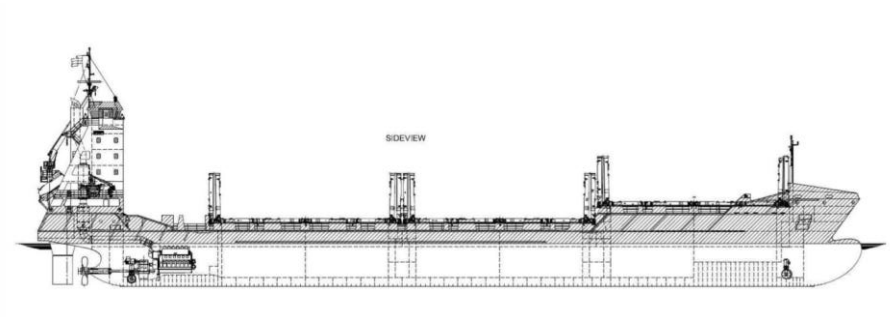
Ship	Built	Period	Current Service	Notes/former names
ANDROMEDA J	2006	2024-	Rotterdam-Dublin	
PAVO J	2007	2024-	Rotterdam-Dublin-Waterford	2007-07: PAVO J 2007-08: SEBAS 2008-09: GRACECHURCH HARP

Pavo J is seen departing Rotterdam in July 2025. To meet growing demand on longer Irish Sea routes, the company introduced a container service in 2024, deploying two sister ships chartered from the German firm Jungerhans. Prior to launching this operation, the company secured a terminal located across from its ro-ro terminal in Rotterdam's Brittaniehaven.

Damen Container Feeder 800 type

Builder: Santierul Naval Damen Galati S.A., Galati

Sub-contracted by B.V. Scheepswerf Damen Hoogezand, Foxhol



7,852g 9,342d Length: 140 Breadth: 22 Depth: 9.5 Draught: 7.3

TEU: 803

Ship	Built	Period	Current Service	Notes/former names
FINE SCHEPERS	2006	2025-	Rotterdam-Dublin (Lo-Lo service)	2006-11: SAMSKIP EXPLORER 2011-16: JORK ROVER 2016-25: JSP ROVER

Increasing the frequency of lo-lo services into the Irish Sea, CLdN took on the JSP Rover; during its charter, it was acquired by German owner HS Schiffahrts Group and renamed Fine Schepers. Plan: Damen

On the 20 January 2025, CLdN announced it was commencing lo-lo operations between Rotterdam and Leixoes.

Lo-Lo Services – On order

HMD 1100 type

Builder: HD Hyundai Heavy Industries Co Ltd, Ulsan

17,500g 12,700d Length: 161 Breadth: 24.8 Depth: 15 Draught: 8

TEU: 1,100

Ship	Built	Service	Notes
Hull no. 4279	2027	Rotterdam-Dublin Rotterdam-Waterford	
Hull no. 4280	2027		

Hull no. 4281	2027		
Hull no. 4282	2027		
Hull no. 4283	2027		
Hull no. 4284	2027		

Options held for 4 more vessels.

LADY CLARA

A familiar sight over some years in the Medway and the Swale is the small Antigua & Barbuda flagged dry cargo ship LADY CLARA. She was built by Slovenske Lodenice Komarno in Slovakia as the OKKO TOM BROOK, being laid down on 15th December 2004, launched on 22nd January 2007 and delivered on 1st April 2007. She was renamed Lady Clara on 1st January 2011.

OKKO TOM BROOK

AT BLACKTOFT JETTY ON THE RIVER OUSE

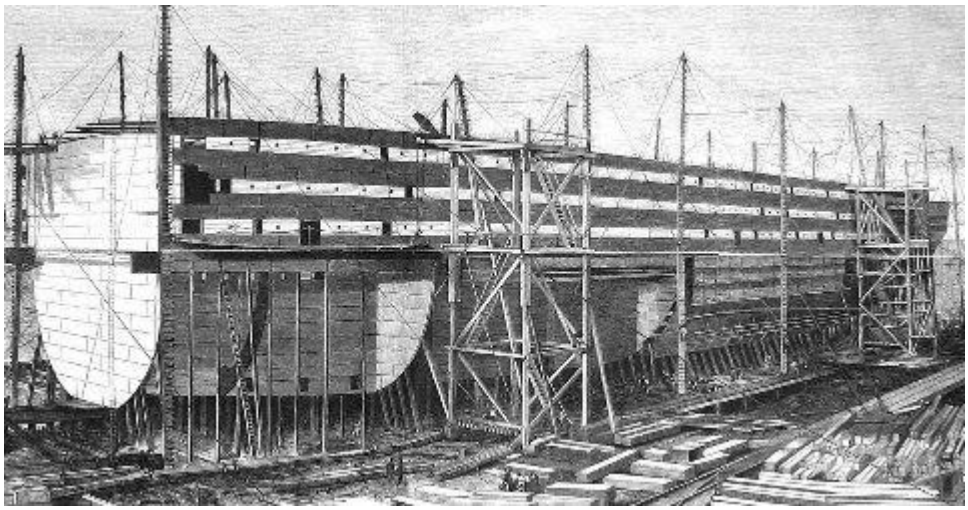
She is of 3638 dwt with dimensions 88.24m x 12.4m x 5.14m. She is powered by a Wartsila 6L20 6-cylinder 4-stroke engine of 1125 kW @ 1000 rpm driving a fixed pitch propellor giving 10.5 knots. She is owned by Vertom-Bojen Schiffahhrts MS “OKKO TOM BROOK” Gmbh & Co.KG and managed by Bojen Bereederung Gmbh & Co. KG of Moormerland, Germany. Vertom-Bojen have a considerable fleet of small short-sea dry cargo vessels.

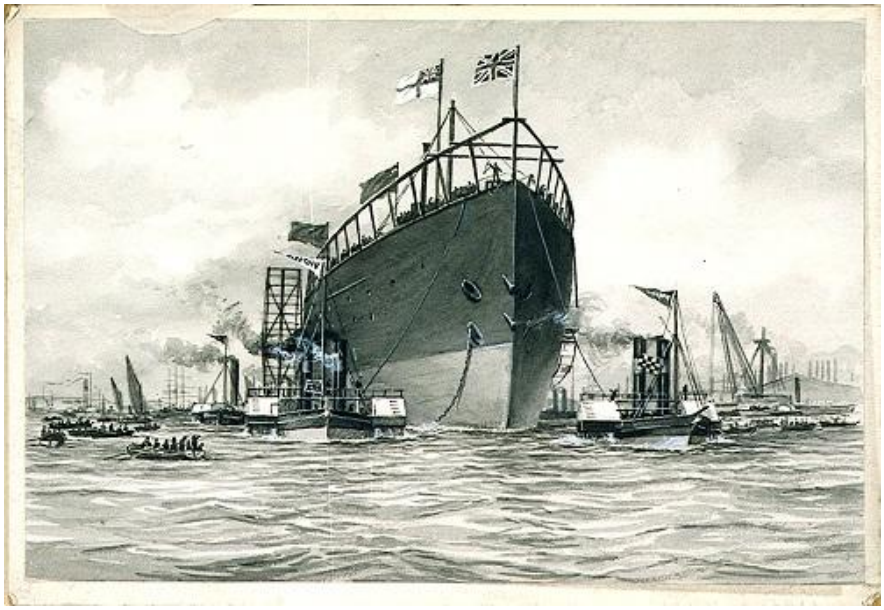

AT GROVEHURST JETTY

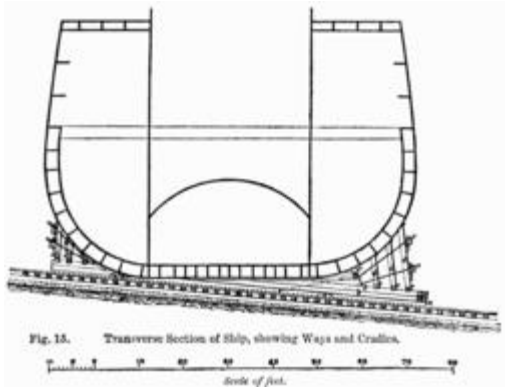
She is a frequent visitor carrying gypsum for the Knauf Drywall WHO plasterboard factory at Sittingbourne, berthing mainly at the Grovehurst Jetty, but sometimes at Ridham Dock nearby.

A small unsophisticated vessel, but continuing to earn its keep in UK and north European waters.

THE LAUNCH OF THE GREAT EASTERN







Section of Great Eastern with launching cradle on slipway

Great Eastern was planned to be launched on 3 November 1857. The ship's size posed major issues; the ship's 19,000 tons made it the single heaviest object moved by humans to that point. On 3 November, a large crowd gathered to watch the ship launch, The launch, failed, and the ship was stranded on its launch rails –, two men were killed and several others injured,.

Brunel rescheduled the launch for January 1858, hoping to use the tide in the next launch attempt.

In the leadup to the second launch, Brunel and Great Eastern's backers gathered a significant number of chains, jacks, hydraulic rams, and windlasses to assist in launching the ship. Some were obtained from sympathetic engineers, others through returned favours, and yet more for increasing sums of money; so lucrative was renting out of supplies for the ship's launch that engineer Richard Tangye was able to found his own engineering firm (Tangye & Co) the next year,

High winds prevented the ship from being launched on 30 January, but the next morning a fresh attempt successfully launched the ship around 10:00 in the morning.

Following her launch, Great Eastern spent a further 8 months being fitted out.

The cost of the fitting out concerned many investors,

With the building company already in debt, cost cutting measures were implemented; the ship was removed from Russell's shipyard, and many investors requested she be sold.

These efforts had mixed success, with the ship eventually being sold to a new company for £800,000, The new company modified parts of its predecessor's design, most notably cutting the ship's coal capacity as it intended to use the ship for the American market.

Fitting out concluded in August 1859 and was marked with a lavish banquet for visitors (which included engineers, stockholders, members of parliament, 5 earls, and other notables)

In early September 1859, the ship sailed from her dock towards the channel, accompanied by many spectators.

Off Hastings she suffered a massive steam explosion (caused by a valve being left shut by accident after a pressure test of the system) that killed five crewmen and destroyed the forwardmost funnel. She proceeded to Portland Bill and then to Holyhead,

Great Eastern successfully rode out the Royal Charter Storm, after which it was moved to Southampton for the winter.

The start of 1860 led to a further change of ownership when the owning company was found to be badly in debt and the value of the ship depreciated by half. This revelation forced the resignation of the board of directors, who were then replaced by a third group of controlling stockholders.

With the new board in place, the ship was recapitalized to raise an additional $50,000. The new board was determined to finish the ship, but also bet heavily on making large profits exhibiting the ship in North American seaports. To accomplish this, the company played major American and Canadian cities against each other,

Ultimately New York City – which had quickly dredged a berth for her alongside a lumber wharf – was decided on as the ship's first destination.

COSETTE

At work in late December at the London Gateway Port was the little water injection dredger COSETTE. She is owned and operated by the Jan De Nul Group of Luxemburg, for whom she was launched in October 2022 by Neptune Marine of Dordrecht in the Netherlands. Her sister, the PANCHO was launched a few months earlier. Both are Luxemburg flagged. She has a crew of 6, accommodated in air-conditioned quarters.

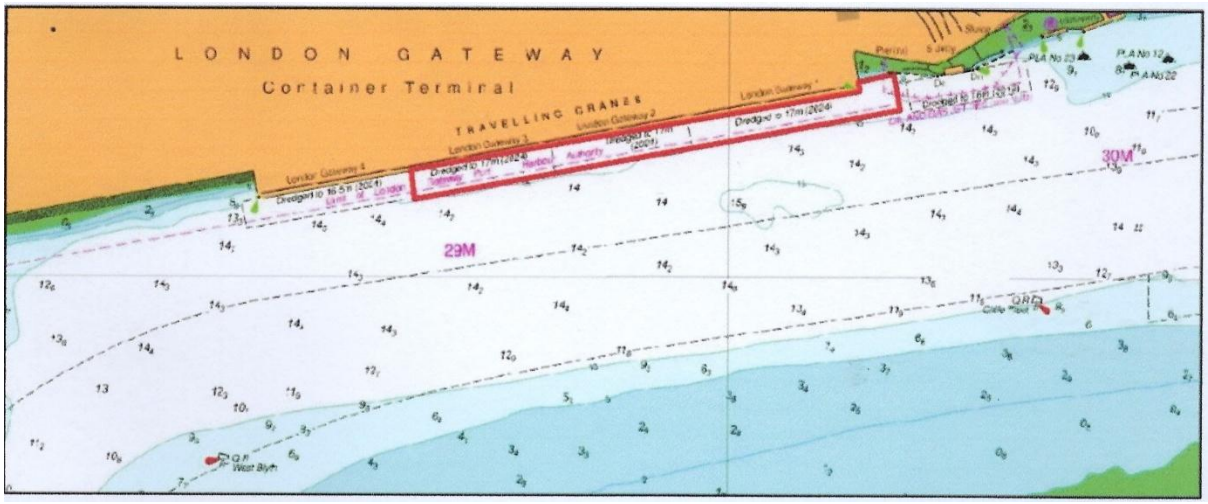
She is based on a standard Neptune Marine EURO 2710 workboat, but with dredging equipment, including dredge pumps, dredge pipes, winches, hydraulics and other necessary components, designed and built by Jan De Nul. She is of 281 gt with dimensions 27.53m x 10.0m x 3.0m.


COSETTE

For propulsive power she has twin 12-cylinder 4-stroke MAN D2862LE diesels of 735 kW at 1800 rpm driving two 1750mm dia. propellors in nozzles giving a bollard pull of 25 tons and a free cruising speed of 10 knots. She has diesel particulate filters and a selective catalytic reduction system which remove 99% of nanoparticles from the exhaust gases and significantly reduce Nox emissions. The system complies with IMO Tier 3 emission standards.

PANCHO

The main auxiliary power supply is from a third MAN D2862 diesel of 735 kW. Equipment provided includes a 9m wide sweep beam and jet water pumps with a flow rate of 10,000 cubic metres per hour. Her maximum dredging depth is given as 23 metres, so working at the Gateway, with its dredged depth in the berthing pocket of 17.5m below Chart Datum and the approach channel at 14.5m below Chart Datum, is likely to be somewhat tide dependant.

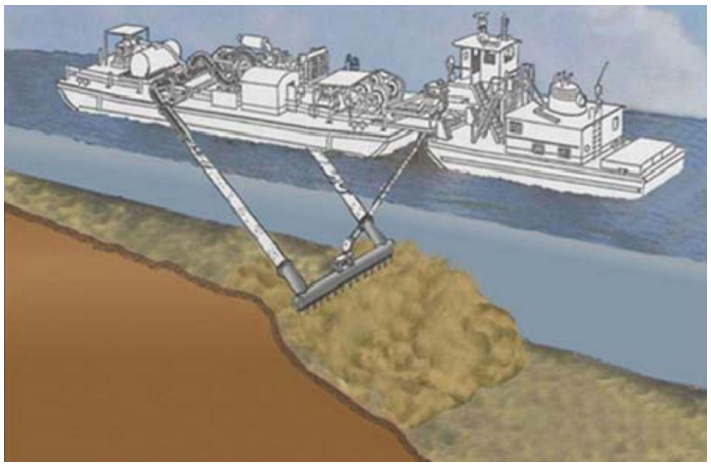


According to a PLA Notice to Mariners, her dredging work was due to start on 23rd December and to last until 7th January in the vicinity of Berths 1 to 3 of the London Gateway Port. The AIS on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day showed the operation continuing on each ebb tide with her moored on the Tilbury Landing Stage or Gravesend between dredging operations. Probably she was making use of a very quiet time at LGP over the holiday, with only a large Maersk ship on Berth 4 and a small BG Freight ship on Berth 3, both of which

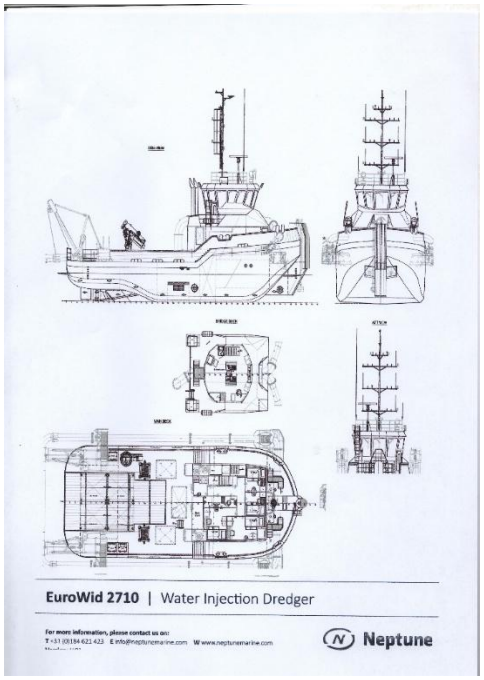
departed on Boxing Day leaving the three berths completely clear of ships for a tide or two before things got busier again on the 27th. She departed on 28th, apparently finishing early after favourable weather conditions over the holiday period.

A WATER INJECTION DREDGER

Water Injection Dredging (WID) is used to maintain the right depth of water in ports, harbours and access channels. As rivers and tides constantly transport sediments, maintenance dredging is vital to remove these sediment deposits. During WID, a beam with jet nozzles is lowered to the required depth. Through the nozzles, a high volume of water is injected into the sediment layers at a low pressure. Recently deposited sediment is thus fluidised and is transported horizontally by the current to a deeper area.



WATER INJECTION DREDGING



The Steam Tug Cervia

The Cervia design closely followed an early designed steam tug class called Foremost[1] which had been conceived in 1923. The reasoning behind the recycling of this old design was due to Britain's need to quickly replace losses, and because of the government's rapid rebuilding programme. Using the best of pre-war tried and tested tug designs would avoid the need for new designs, and get round any delays to the Admiralties rebuild plans. Empire Raymond, as the Cervia was originally named, was part of the revised building programme ordered for Operation Overlord, the invasion of Europe on D-Day. In the event she was not completed until after the end of the Second World War. The tug was finished with many of the design features[1] intended for the invasion. She had an armoured wheelhouse and gun emplacements installed. She weighed over 350 tons and was powered by a 1,000 horsepower (750 kW) triple-expansion steam engine. Her boiler had been installed with oil burners but the design allowed for rapidly reverted to coal firing. All the ships that were ordered by the British government during the War period were given the prefix Empire which was the equivalent of the "Liberty Ship" building programme in the United States of America.[3] The Cervia is thought to be last Empire Ship surviving in the United Kingdom.

[4] The Cervia was launched from the yard of Alexander Hall and Co. Ltd[5] in Aberdeen, Scotland, on 21 January 1946 and was handed to the Ministry of War Transport. In December 1946 she was sold on to the maritime towing business of William Watkins Ltd for the sum of £36,000. The business had purchased the tug using compensation it received for the vessels it lost on War service such as the tugs "Napia" and "Muria", which were sunk after collisions with mines near Ramsgate in 1939 and 1940

In 1947 the Empire Raymond[5] name was changed to Cervia after the Italian Adriatic resort where the Watkins family owned a holiday villa.[6] The name had previously been used on an earlier tug owned by William Watkins which taken part in the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 returning from there with 230 troops.

On 25 October 1954[6] the Cervia was employed at Tilbury docks in London. Cervia was involved in the undocking of the P&O liner Arcadia, towing the liner stern first away from her landing stage. During this manoeuvre, the Arcadia had gone full ahead to avoid collision with liner P&O liner Orcades. The resulting wash caused Cervia to be dragged over and capsize and sink.[7] Despite their valiant efforts to release the towing hawser

the Cervia Captain Russell, MBE and five of her crew died. Another Watkins owned tug, Challenge, managed to rescue three of the crew. The subsequent court of enquiry into the case, recorded that the deaths were accidental, and the sinking was caused by the failure of a quick release pin on her towing hook. On 28 October[6] the Cervia herself became subject of a salvage operation. The tug was raised from the Thames riverbed and she was taken to Claxton's Ltd in Ramsgate for a refit and then returned to service. On 27 January 1969[6]

Cervia was at work on the Thames when her owners merged with W.H.J. Alexander & Company Ltd to form the London Tug Company. The London Tug Company had a policy to phase out steam tugs in favour of more modern diesel vessels. The modernization of the fleet went ahead at speed and by 1971[6] the Cervia was laid up at Sheerness. It was hoped a buyer could be found or the tug would go to the breakers. The Cervia was offered to a Michael List-Brain[6] a potential buyer who wished to preserve her. The Board of London Tugs agreed to her sale "as is, where lies", for the sum of £3,500. Mr List-Brain purchased the ''Cervia'' in April 1973 and took possession at Poplar Docks, London.

The tug then was given a refit and was back in steam by the summer. At this time exploration in the North sea for gas and oil was beginning to pick up in pace. This provided an ideal opportunity for the Cervia to earn her keep again. The Cervia was contracted to a construction firm based on the Medway. The construction firm of Howard Doris needed all manner of craft to assist with oil rig construction projects. In November 1974[6] Cervia to towed a crane barge to the Humber. She completed the contract with no problems, but with the cost of a very rapid re-equipping and complete lack of understanding as to the economics of marine towage meant the nett profit from this first towing contract was only £7.00.

After negotiations between Cervia's owners and Thanet District Council's Harbour Master and his deputy, the tug was loaned and placed in the care of Ramsgate Maritime Museum, run by the East Kent Maritime Trust in July 1985.[6] Later in July she was taken to moorings in John Smeaton's Historic Dry Dock. Funding was then secured for restoration work to be carried out on the Cervia. She was repainted to her original working livery of William Watkins days. A new mast was also fitted, and her crew accommodation was refurbished to provide areas for museum displays. In 1986 Cervia was visited by Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.[6] To mark Cervia's 50th birthday a specialist engineer John Vineer oversaw restoration of the tugs 1,000 horsepower engine to full working order. Cervia became the centre point of

the 'Historic Harbour' initiative and was joined by other vessels from the maritime museum's collection and privately owned classic boats.

HTMS PIN KLAO

On 10th September 2025, the Thai government signed an order to decommission the frigate PIN KLAO due to its deterioration over prolonged service, and it was no longer considered viable for further operation. The decommissioning took place on 1st October, thus ending an extraordinarily long period of active service.

She was built by the Western Pipe & Steel Company of Los Angeles as the Cannon class destroyer escort USS HEMMINGER. She was laid down on 8th May 1943, launched on 12th September 1943 and commissioned into the USN on 30th May 1944.

She was of 1240 tons displacement with dimensions 306’ x 36’ 10” x 11’ 8”. She was diesel-electric powered with four GM Mod 16-278A diesels of 6000

shp driving two Altus-Chalmers motor generators with two Westinghouse DC electric motors and two screws giving 21 knots. Her operational range was10,800 nautical miles @ 12 knots.

Her armament consisted of 3 single 3” guns, six 40mm and eight 20mm A.A. guns, three 21” torpedo tubes, one Hedgehog, eight Mk. 6 depth charge projectors and two Mk. 9 depth charge racks. A total of 116 destroyer escorts of the Cannon and associated classes were planned, with 72 being completed, the last being commissioned in December 1944.

After her working up, the Hemminger reached Pearl Harbour in August 1944 and was used for training US submarines. She also undertook patrols and worked in hunter-killer anti-submarine operations. In April 1945 she escorted a

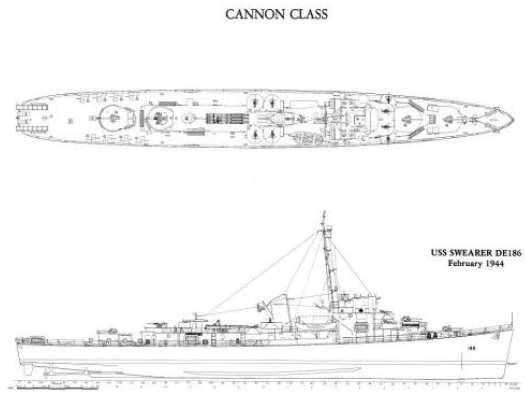
convoy to Okinawa, and in May/June 1945 she escorted a carrier group near Okinawa. After further hunter-killer patrols, she sailed for the Philippines on 27th September. She arrived at Norfolk Virginia on 2nd December. She was decommissioned on 17th June 1946 and placed in reserve.

On 1st December 1950, during the Korean War, she was recommissioned and carried out reserve coastal training cruises to Canada and the Caribbean. On 23rd November 1957 she was reposted to New York for inactivation, was decommissioned at New York on 21st February 1958 and she joined the Atlantic Reserve Fleet.

On 22nd July 1959 she was loaned to Thailand, being commissioned into the Royal Thai Navy on 31st August that year as the HTMS PIN KLAO. For the next 65 years she served in the Thai navy, mainly as a training ship for naval cadets and petty officers. She also operated as part of the guard of honour for the royal barges at Klai Kangwon Palace in Hua Hin. Technically, she was on loan from the USA until 6th June 1975.

On 10th September 2025, the order for her decommissioning was signed. Apart from the badly deteriorated hull structure, obtaining spare and replacement parts had become a major problem. As of mid-October 2025, the fate of the ship has not been announced.

She has had an extraordinarily long career, 81 years in total, with 9.75 active years in the US navy and 67.5 years in the Thai navy. It would be good to see her restored somewhere in the USA if funding could be found. Otherwise scrapping in south Asia seems the most likely fate.



CANNON CLASS DESTROYER ESCORT

PRISONER OF WAR / INTERNEE SHIPS MOORED OFF SOUTHEND IN WORLD WAR 1

At the start of World War 1, there was a need to find secure accommodation for German Prisoners of War and internees. The initial solution was the use of prison ships, and three ships were moored off Southend pier - the Royal Edward, Saxonia and Ivernia.

Ivernia was used for holding soldiers with the other two being used for civilians. The prisoners of war arrived in November 1914 by train. The prisoners walked along the high street and the length of the pier to board the ships via a tugboat which took them to the ships. The men were guarded by the National Reserve of the Surrey Division.

700 more PoWs arrived in December 1914, mainly infantrymen with a few Prussian Guards and some sailors saved from the Mainz, a German cruiser sank at the Battle of Heligoland Bight in the south eastern North Sea. Local reports were that some of the PoWs were not more than boys while some were getting on in years.

Eventually Ivernia was to hold 1575 PoWs while Saxonia held 2300 internees, and the Royal Edward held 1200.

At Christmas 1914, boxes arrived from friends of the detainees containing 100 tons of mutton,100 barrels of beer, one ton of apples, oranges and nuts, two and a half tons of tobacco and cigars, several Christmas trees and a large quantity of decorations.

On 27 January 1915, a German PoW died from food poisoning, said by the German PoW Doctor to have come from eating a sausage sent from a friend in Germany which became poisonous during its long journey. He was buried with full military honours at the Roman Catholic Church in Southend in the presence of some of his colleagues from the Prison Ship.

On 26 February 1915, four German prisoners interned on the Royal Edward were escorted to London where they met four British women at a register office and were married. They then enjoyed a wedding breakfast before the

men were escorted back to the ship while the women returned to their homes. In all cased the couples were known to each other before the start of the war.

In April 1915 the ships became the subject of a complaint about the volume of pollution on the foreshore from the ships. It was reported that the accumulation from the ships included cabbages, under vests, old boots, boot leather, parts of lemons, oranges & potatoes, cigarette packets, torn letters, rabbit skins and general litter.

By the end of May 1915, the use of the ships was discontinued because accommodation had by now been built and the PoWs and internees were moved out.

SAXONIA

Saxonia was built by John Brown & Co on Clydebank and departed Liverpool on her maiden voyage on 22 May 1900, bound for Boston, Massachusetts. She operated on the Liverpool–Boston route until 1909, when she shifted on an alternating basis between Boston and New York, and between Liverpool and the Adriatic ports of Rijeka in Croatia and Trieste in Italy.

When the United Kingdom entered World War 1 in August 1914, Saxonia was requisitioned for government service. She made a single voyage as a troopship, carrying troops from the 41st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, arriving in England in October 1914. After her time as an accommodation ship for PoWs, she resumed service as a troopship.

After the war ended, Saxonia returned to commercial service, returning to the North Atlantic run on the route between Liverpool and New York City. She underwent a major refit at Tilbury in 1920. After her refit, she returned to the North Atlantic service, operating between London and New York City. An additional stop at Hamburg was added later.

In 1925, the aging and outdated Saxonia was sold to a company in the Netherlands for scrapping and her scrapping was completed before the end of the year.

RMS IVERNIA

RMS Ivernia was built for Cunard by C.S. Swan & Hunter of Wallsend and launched in 1899. Ivernia catered to the vast immigrant trade between Europe and the USA in the early 20th century. After her time as an accommodation ship for PoWs, she continued in military service and was sunk by a torpedo from a German U-boat on New Year's Day 1917.

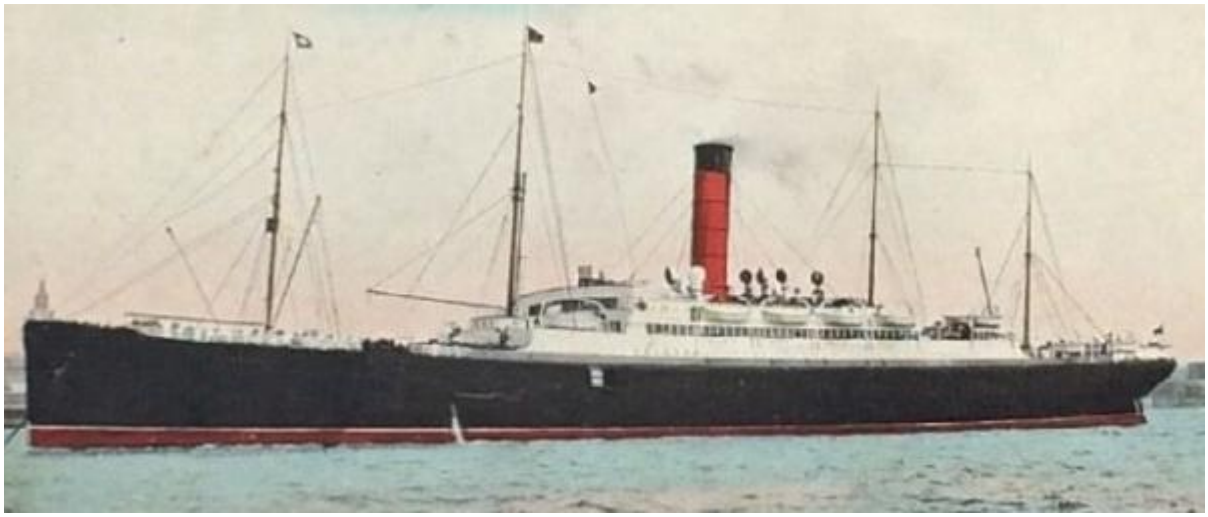
Ivernia was the first of three related liners of the Ivernia class. Saxonia was her larger sister ship. The third related liner was the smaller half-sister, Carpathia, built at the same yard as Ivernia and launched in 1902. Carpathia became famous for her role in picking up survivors from RMS Titanic in 1912.

ROYAL EDWARD

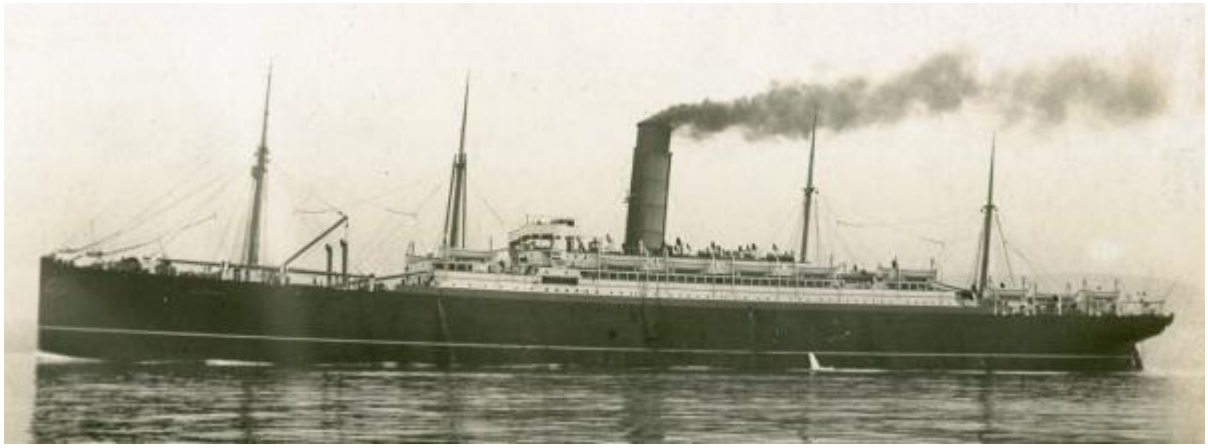
Royal Edward was built in Govan, Scotland and launched in 1907 as RMS Cairo and entered service in January 1908 for a mail service between Marseille and Alexandria in Egypt. The service was not successful, and Cairo was laid up in 1909 when the service ended.

The ship (along with her sister ship, Heliopolis) was sold to the Toronto-based Canadian Northern Steamship Company, a subsidiary of the Canadian Northern Railway in 1910. She was renamed Royal Edward. She sailed from Avonmouth to Montreal in the summer and to Halifax in the winter. At the outbreak of World War 1 Royal Edward was requisitioned for use as a troopship. She was used to bring Canadian troops to Europe before being used as an accommodation ship for PoWs.

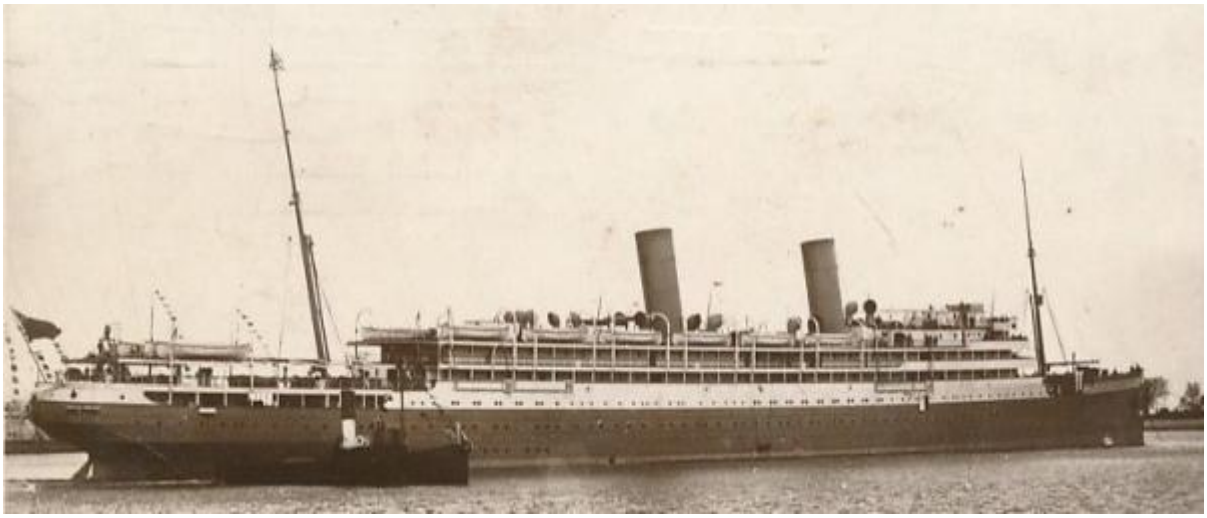
On 28 July 1915, Royal Edward embarked 1,367 officers and men at Avonmouth, all destined for Gallipoli. However, on 13 August she was spotted by a German U-Boat among the Greek islands and was torpedoed, and she sank within six minutes. An Admiralty casualty list reported over 800 lost.



Ivernia



Saxonia



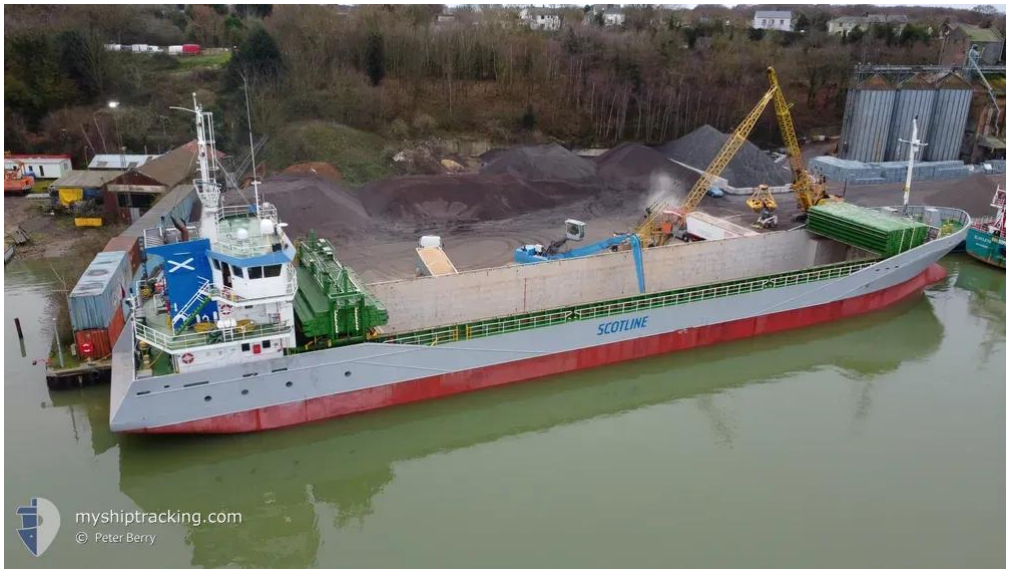
Royal Edward

SCOT PIONEER

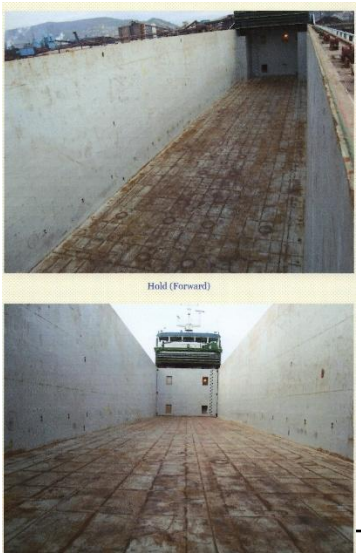
In the news briefly during the new year holiday was the UK flagged short sea vessel SCOT PIONEER. She had grounded on the approach to her berth in Teignmouth Harbour at 17.25 on New Year's Eve, despite the assistance of the harbour tug TEIGN C. She was carrying a cargo of animal feed from Hamburg, which she left on 26th December. She was refloated on the next tide at about 02.00 on New Year's Day, again with the help of the Teign C. No injuries to her crew of eight or damage to the ship were reported.

AGROUND IN TEIGNMOUTH

Teignmouth is a small port mainly operated by ABP (Associated British Ports). The port provides four NAABSA (Not Always Afloat But Safely Aground) berths able to cater for vessels up to 120 metres long and 5.5 metres draught. The main export is ball clay and imports include aggregates and grain.



Where necessary, vessels are assisted by the local harbour tug TEIGN C, which also provides some maintenance dredging of the harbour. Vessels getting stuck on sandbanks within the harbour happens from time to time, ironically, the last reported grounding was in April 2025, when another Scotline ship, the SCOT BAY, was stuck for some 12 hours.



THE SHIP'S HOLD

The SCOT PIONEER was built as the HARNS by Peters Werft Gmbh at Kampen in the Netherlands, being laid down on 23rd December 2004, launched on 4th July 2006 and completed on 13th December 2006. She is a multi-purpose dry cargo single decker of 3636 dwt with dimensions 89.99m x 12.50m x 5.30m. Since February 2008 she has been owned and operated by Scotline Ltd (UK).

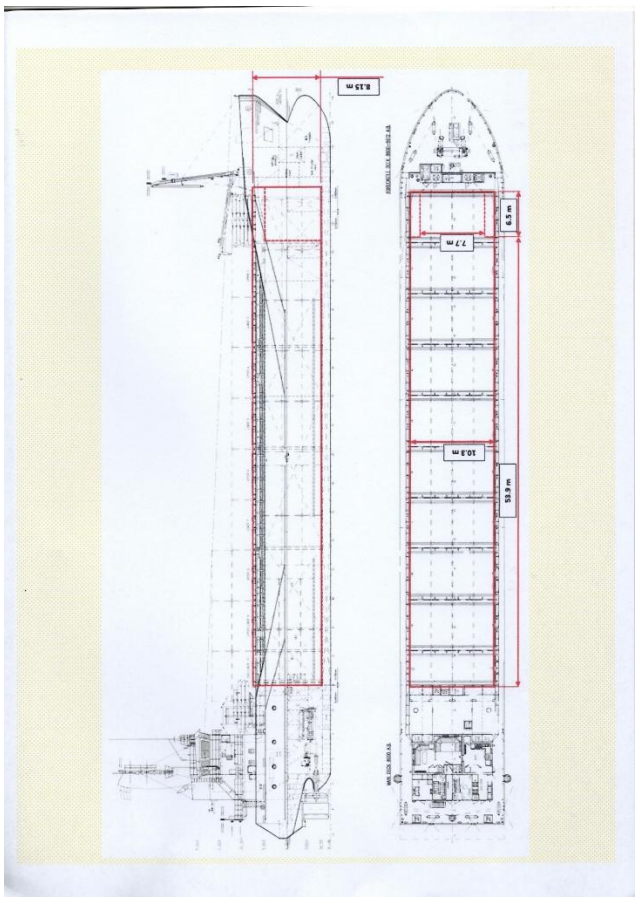
She is powered by a 9 cylinder 4-stroke single-acting Wartsila 9L20 engine of 1800 kW @ 1000rpm driving a single controllable pitch propellor giving 13 knots. She also has a 250-kW bow thruster. She is classed as Ice Class 1A, indicating strong hull strengthening for navigating difficult, first-year, ice conditions (around 500mm to 1000mm thick).

TEIGN C

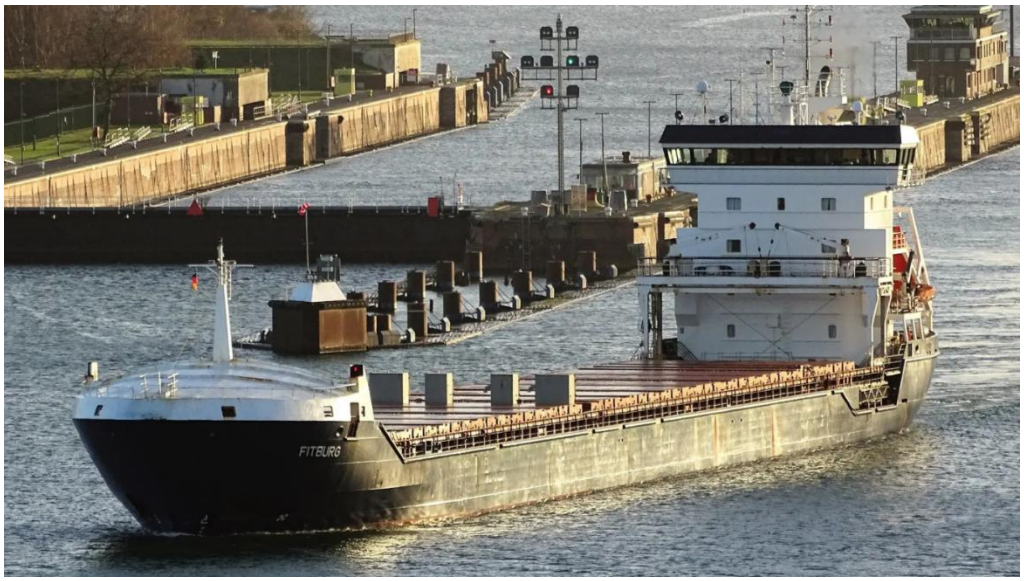
The TEIGN C is a UK flagged harbour tug operated by Teignmouth Maritime Services but is also used by ABP in Teignmouth for emergencies. She is a 14m Damen Stan Tug / dredge bed leveller with limited firefighting capacity. She was built in 1997 and is of 27 gt with dimensions 14.4m x 4.73m x 1.5m. She has twin diesels, probably Volvo, delivering about 600 bhp in total driving twin

propellors in kort nozzles. She has a bollard pull of approximately 7.5 tons.

TEIGN C



FITBURG



FITBURG

In the news early in the New Year was the St. Vincent & Grenadines flagged dry cargo ship FITBURG. She was on a voyage from St. Petersburg to Haifa in Israel when she was detained on 31st December by the Finnish Police and Coast Guard using a helicopter and the patrol vessel TURVA.


TURVA SHADOWING THE FITBURG

She was detained within Finland's Exclusive Economic Zone in connection with damage to an undersea telecom cable running

between Helsinki and Tallin. She was found to have its anchor chain lowered, and this had been so over several hours. She was ordered into Finnish territorial waters and on 1st January, she berthed at Kirkkonummi in Finland. It was also found that she was carrying sanctioned steel products. Two members of her crew were arrested whilst the Finnish authorities decided their next move.

The Finnish Customs consider that the cargo of Russian structural steel does fall under the EU's sectorial sanctions. The Finnish Police are investigating the damaged cable incident as "aggravated criminal damage, attempted criminal damage and aggravated interference with telecommunications".

The legal situation seems to be complicated. In December 2024, a similar case against the EAGLE S fell apart. The court found that the Finnish authorities had failed to prove intent (over damage to undersea cables), and that negligence must be pursued by the flag state or the crew's home countries. This seems to show a major loophole in the international law of the sea.

THE SHIPS INVOLVED

FITBURG

FITBURG: She is a general cargo vessel built as the FINEX by Daewoo Mangalia Heavy Industries at Mangalia in Romania in 2001. She is of 9822 dwt with dimensions 132.2m x 15.87m x 7.75m. She is powered by a six-cylinder Wartsila 6L38A engine of 3960 kW and is owned and managed by Albros Shipping & Trading of Istanbul. She has a crew of 14.

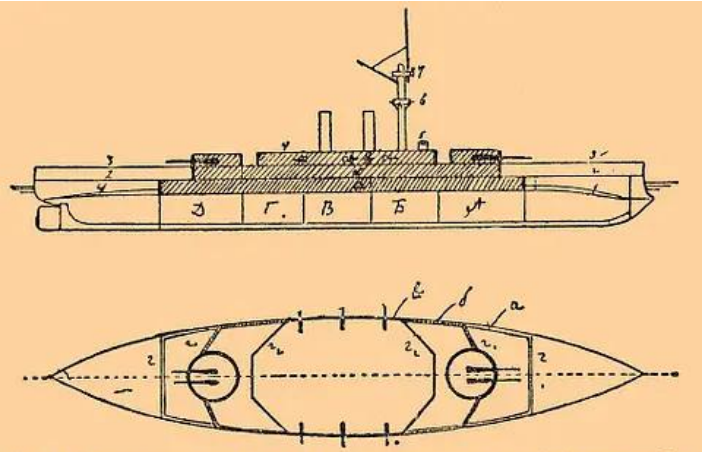

TURVA

TURVA: She is a Finnish offshore patrol vessel operated by the Finnish Border Guard. She was built by the STX Finland Rauma Shipyard, being laid down on 25th February 2013, launched on 2nd August 2013 and commissioned on 9th May 2014. Her displacement is 4000 tons and her dimensions are 95.8m x 17.7m x 5.0m. Her powerplant is dual fuel (marine fuel oil and LPG) with a 12-cylinder Wartsila 12V34DF engine of 6400 kW in her aft engine room coupled to a controllable pitch propellor. In the forward engine room are twin 6 cylinder 6L34DF generating sets with output of 3000 kW each producing power two two electrically driven Rolls-Royce AZP120CP azimuth thrusters giving 18 knots and 100 bollard pull. She has DP2 dynamic positioning and is capable of breaking level ice up to 800 mm thick. Her complement is 30 officers and men.

EAGLE S (AS NORSTAR INTREPID)EAGLE S: She was a Cooks Islands flagged products tanker built in 2006 as the FR8 PRIDE by the New Century Shipyard in China. She was laid down on 20th December 2004, launched on 28th August 2005 and completed on 16th March 2006. She was of 74,035 gt with dimensions 228.6m x 32.3m x 14.5m. She was powered by a 5-cylinder MAN B&W 5S60MC-C engine producing 11,300 kW at 105 rpm driving a fixed pitch propellor and giving a maximum speed of 14.5 knots. Whilst being held in Finland, it was found that she had numerous safety deficiencies and in November 2025 she arrived at Aliaga in Turke

HMS AGINCOURT

HMS AGINCOURT was an iron 50-gun armoured frigate of the Minotaur class, her two sisterships being MINOTAUR and NORTHUMBERLAND. She was, in effect an enlarged and improvement of HMS WARRIOR, which had been launched just a few years before her. The concept was similar, with her armament in a broadside arrangement, but with improved armour protection and steam engine and a ram bow.



Фиг. 6. Заштрихованы пояса брони. *А—Д* — крюйтъ камеры и бомбовыя погреба. *В—В*—котельные отдѣленія. *Г*· машинное отдѣленіе. *а*—поясъ брони по *GWL* (грузовой ватерлиніи). *б—в*—пояса брони казематовъ. *t, t₁, t₂*—траверзная броня. *1—4*—карапасныя носовыя и кормовыя палубы. *2* — жилая палуба. *3* — верхняя палуба. *4*—спардекъ (палуба надъ казематомъ). *5*—броневая командирская рубка. *6*—марсъ съ скорострѣлками. *7*—марсъ для боевого фонаря.

She was built by Laird, Son & Co of Birkenhead, the forerunners of the modern day Cammell Laird. She was laid down on 30th October 1861 as HMS CAPTAIN. The name was changed to Agincourt before her launch (or rather undocked) on 27th March 1865. Completion was on 19th December 1868, the protracted construction time being largely due to design changes to try to keep up with rapidly changing warship technology.

Her displacement was 10,627 tons with dimensions 407.0’ (oa) x 59.5’ x 26.9’. Her ten coal-fuelled rectangular fire-tube boilers provided steam for her 2-cylinder horizontal return connecting rod steam engine of 4426 hp, built by Maudsley, driving a single screw and giving 14 knots. She could carry 750 tons of coal, which gave a range of 1500 nautical miles at 7.5 knots.

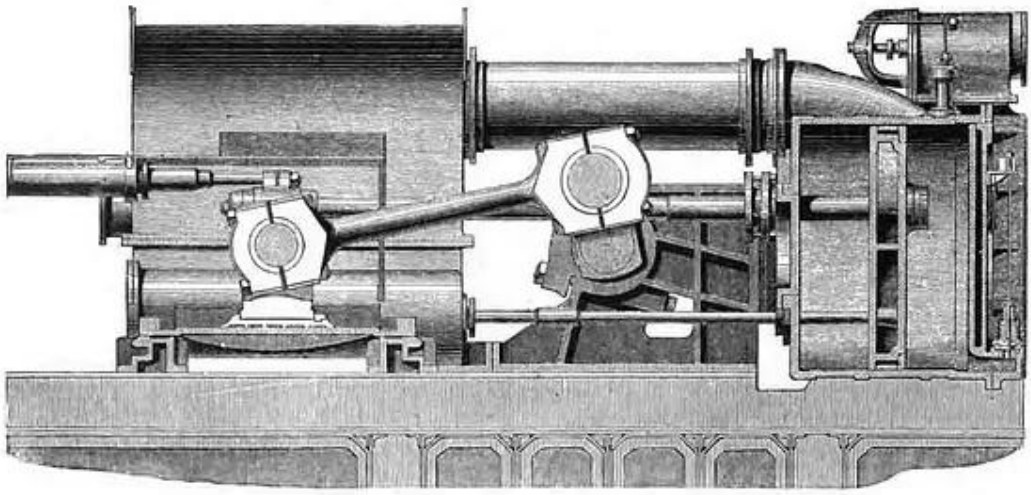


Fig. 12.—Engine of H. M. S. Agincourt.

As was still the custom in the Royal Navy, she was fully rigged with 5 masts, but reportedly she sailed terribly, partly because while her propellor could be disconnected, it could not be hoisted up into the stern when under sail alone. Her two funnels were telescopic and could be lowered when under sail.

She was never fitted with the 50 guns originally intended but instead began her service life with four 9” muzzle-loading guns and seventeen 7” muzzle-loading guns. In terms of her iron armour, she had 4.5” to 5.5” on her hull sides for almost the full length of the 50 guns she was designed for, with 10” of teak inside it and 5.5” on her 15 watertight bulkheads. She had a double bottom beneath her engine and boiler rooms, Her armament was completely changed in 1875 to seventeen 9” guns. In 1883, two of her 9” guns were replaced with two breach-loading 6” guns. In 1891/2, near the end of her active life, four quick firing 4.7” and eight quick firing 3 pounder guns were added together with eight machine guns and two torpedo tubes.

She spent most of her career as flagship of the Channel Squadron’s second-in-command. She did participate in Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee Fleet Review in 1887. In 1889 she was placed in reserve and became a static training ship, with her boilers being removed in 1992. In 1993 she served as a Harbour Training Ship at Portland and by 1996 she was in the Reserve Fleet at Chatham.

She was renamed BOSCAWEN 111 in March 1904 and in 1905 she was moved to Harwich and renamed GANGES 11. Her time as a training ship ended in 1909 when she was towed to Sheerness. She was converted into a coal hulk imaginatively named C.109. As part of the conversion, her masts were removed, one topmast being installed at the shore establishment HMS GANGES at Shotley.

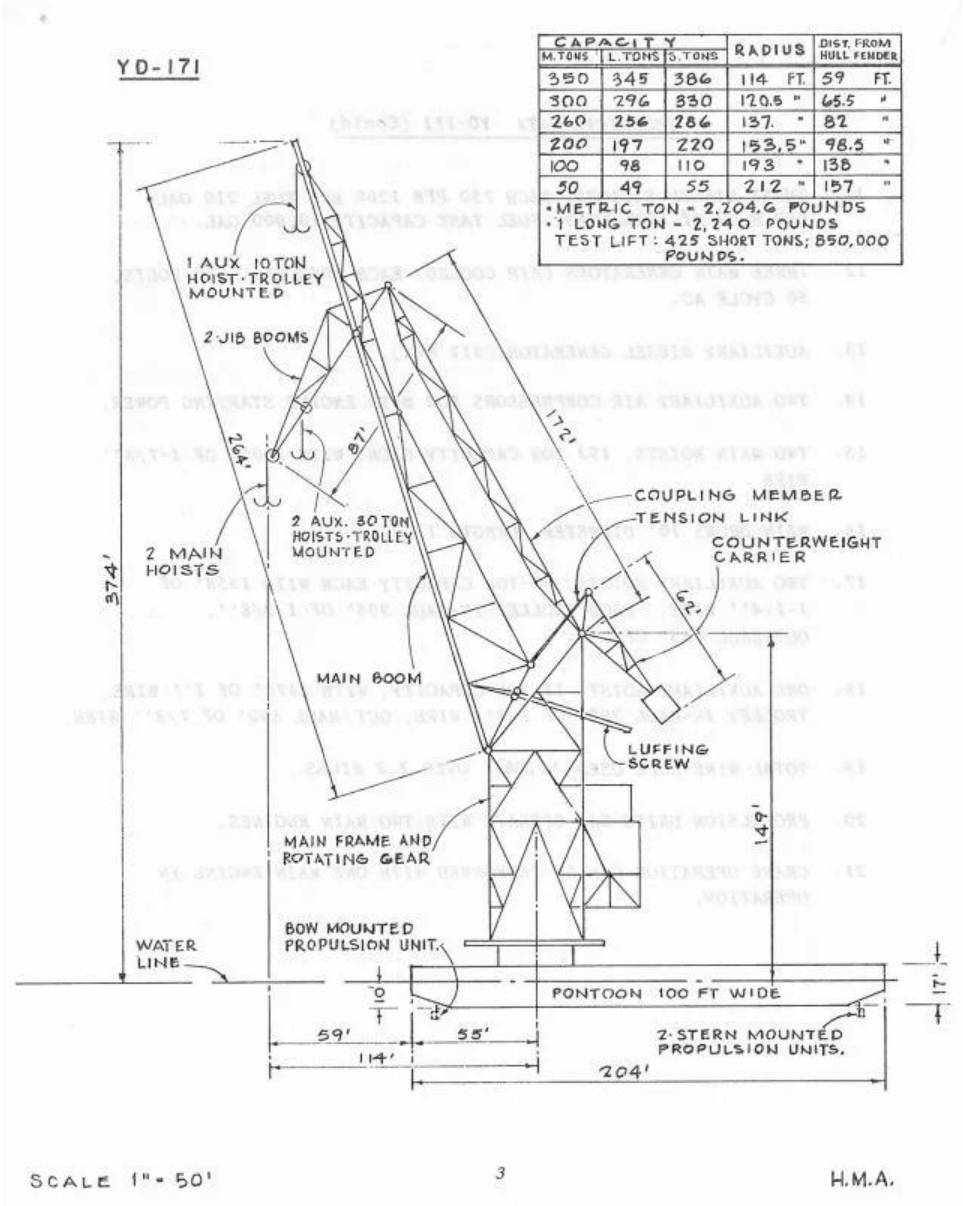
Coal hulk “C.109”, now being demolished at Grays, Essex, was once the ironclad H.M.S. “Agincourt”

For the next 50 years or so she was anchored off Sheerness Dockyard and used for coaling naval vessels, becoming more decrepit as the years passed. On 21st October 1960 she was sold for scrapping to Thomas Ward (Shipbreakers) at Grays.

FOUR BIG GERMAN FLOATING CRANES

YD-171 AT LONG BEACH IN 1957

In 1941, Demag Cranes AG built four large self-propelled cranes in Bremerhaven for the German navy. The were designated SCHWIMMKRAN Nos 1 to 4 and they had a lifting capacity of 350 tons. Reportedly they were intended to lift U-boats out of the water for repairs, but with the 350 tons capacity, this would only be possible with the small coastal type submarines. They were also intended for handling large gun turrets. Apart from one that capsized in the Channel whilst under tow after the war, they all had long and successful service lives, a tribute to German engineering even in the middle of the war.



The hull dimensions were 204’ x 108’ x 10’ with the height of the crane jib 374’ above water level, and the displacement was about 5000 tons. The crane

capacity was 350 tons with a radius of114', reducing to 50 tons at 210' radius. Their power plant consisted of 3 diesel generators of 2400 KVA in total powering 6 azimuth thrusters. This gave 5.8 knots travelling forward and 4.6 knots travelling astern. Their complement was 3 officers and 20 men.


YD-171

Schwimmkran No. 1: She was captured by the British Army in Kiel along with S. No. 2 at the end of the war. She was transferred to the United States as a war Reparation. She was dismantled and towed across the Atlantic and through the Panama Canal in August 1946 and berthed at Long Beach Naval Base.

RE-ASSEMBLY AT LONG BEACH WITH THE HELP OF THE FORMER USS KEARSAGE

After evaluation and re-assembly (which took two years to complete and utilised the converted ex battleship KEARSAGE) she was commissioned in the US Navy as YD-171 in 1949. She was more commonly known as “Herman the German”, however. In 1996 she was sold to the Panama Canal Authority and renamed TITAN to handle heavy lifts for lock maintenance, and she is still active there.

TITAN

Schwimmkran No. 2: She was initially stationed at Gdynia but then moved to Denmark in 1943/44 to raise Danish Navy vessels that had been scuttled in August 1943. She was then moved back to Gdynia and then Kiel, where she was seized by British forces. After the war, she was sold to France and was under tow with the crane jib still fully erect when she capsized and sank off the coast of Denmark.

HHLA 111

Schwimmkran No. 3: She was stationed at the Blohm & Voss Shipyard in Hamburg and was severely damaged in the July 1943 “Operation Gomorrah” bombing raid on Hamburg. She was raised and rebuilt in Germany with a lower crane capacity. She is still in use as HHHLA 111.

Schwimmkran No. 4: She was sold to the USSR before the outbreak of WW2 and was moved in pieces overland to Danzig and then Leningrad. A team of Demag technicians were sent to assemble it but were recalled before that was completed. The partly assembled structure served as an artillery spotting tower in the siege of Leningrad. She was presumed lost, but she was seen in 2015 still in use at the Admiralty Shipyard in St. Petersburg.

PLA FLOATING CRANES


LONDON TITAN

At one time, the Port of London Authority had a number of floating cranes, some, but not all, self-propelled. They were mostly used in the Royals and in Tilbury Docks for loading and unloading heavy loads such as railway locomotives from ships. Their names generally had the London prefix. Confusingly, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board had a similar fleet of floating cranes which had the same names, although thankfully without the London prefix.

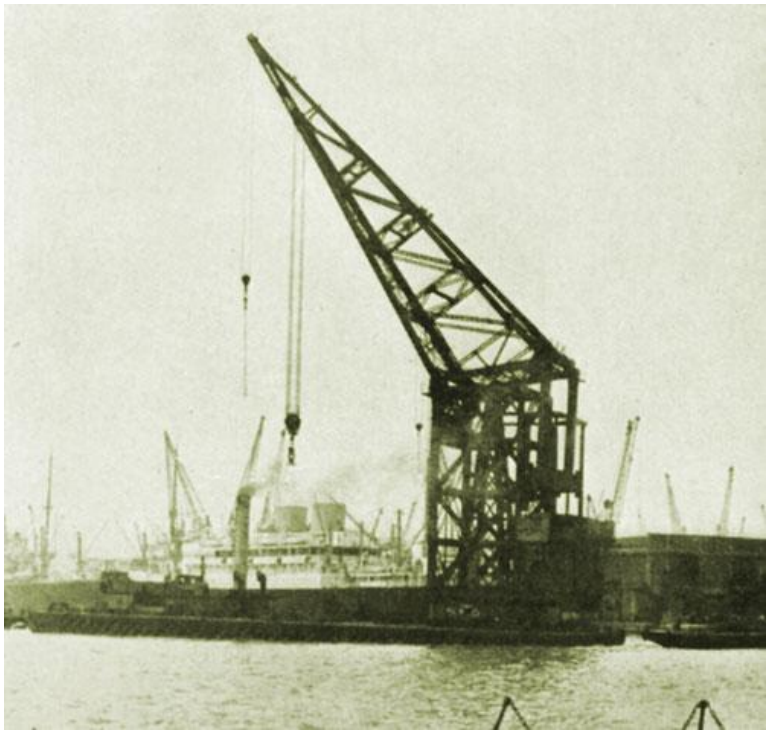
THE PRESENT LONDON TITAN

The fleet was sold off by the PLA due to a combination of port modernisation, the move to containerisation and ever-increasing maintenance costs, the last ones going in the mid-1990s. The present LONDOM TITAN is operated by the PLA, but it is tiny with only a 25-ton crane capacity, so I have excluded it from the list of floating cranes. I have also omitted the LONDON ATLAS from the list because it was owned by Humber Workboats and not the PLA. The very rare occasions when we see floating cranes in the river today involve hired-in Dutch or Chinese concerns.

1) THE LONDON MAMMOTH

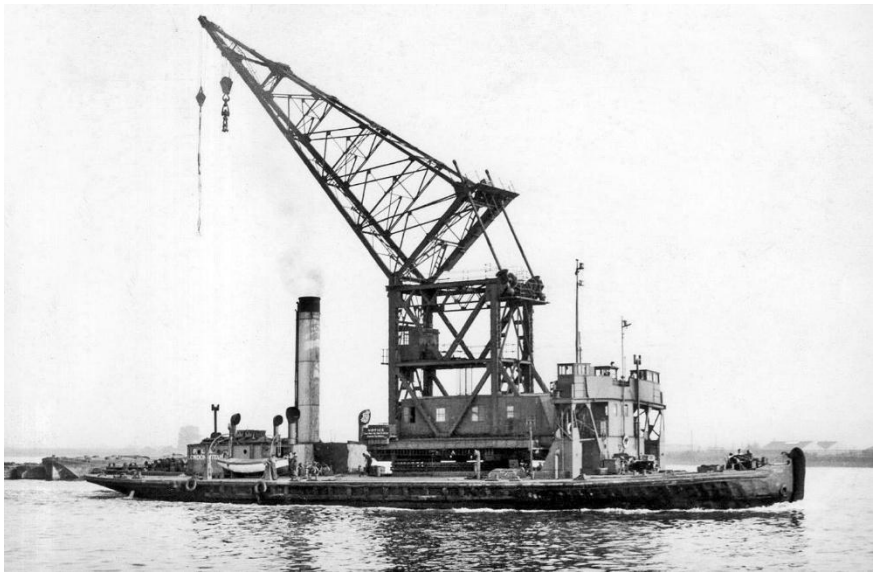

LONDON MAMMOTH

The largest and probably the earliest was the London Mammoth. She was built by Harland & Wolff's Govan shipyard, having originally been ordered for the Russian Tsarist government, but the order was taken over by the PLA before completion. She was launched on 9th September 1926 and delivered on 16th July 1927. She was of steel and self-propelled and of 1580 grt with dimensions 191.6' x 75.2'. She was electric powered by onboard steam engines, and had a lifting capacity of 150 tons, which was later upgraded to 200 tons. She had twin compound 2-cylinder steam engines of 855 nhp built by A & J Inglis Ltd of Glasgow located aft driving 2 screws.


LONDON MAMMOTH

In1975 she was sold to Greek American Ship Building & Repair Co. of Piraeus and renamed SYROS MAMMOTH. In 1978 she was sold to John Alexander & Leonidas Goulandris of Syros and again that year to Neorion Syros Shipyards Ltd. of Syros. She was broken up by Nisar Gemi Sokum A/S at Aliaga in Turkey, starting on 21st May 2011.

2) THE LONDON TITAN


LONDON TITAN

She was built by Fleming & Furguson of Paisley in 1943 as the self-propelled M.O.W.T.9 (Ministry Of War Transport) and was managed by the PLA. The PLA bought her in 1946 and renamed her LONDON TITAN in 1948. She was of 779 grt with dimensions 179,8’ x 57.1’. She had a 69-ton crane with an 80 ‘ boom designed by Sir William Arroll & Co. of Glasgow. She was powered by twin compound 2-cylinder steam engines of 800 ihp driving 2 screws and giving 10 knots.


PORT ENGINE ON DISPLAY AT NMM

In1993 she was converted to a non-propelled storage barge but her port steam engine was acquired by the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and restored for display.

3) THE LONDON SAMPSON


LONDON SAMPSON

She was built by IHC Gusto Engineering at Schiedam in the Netherlands in 1963 for the PLA. She was of 1075 grt with dimensions 179.8 ‘ x 57.3’ x 8.0’. She had diesel electric propulsion with 6 diesels and 2 Voith Schneider propellors and had a lifting capacity of 120 tons.


LONDON SAMPSON

DEVON SAMPSON ON THE MEDWAY

In 1991 she was sold to a firm in the West Country and in 1994 she was resold to the naval base at Devonport. Later she was owned by Babcock Marine in Devonport Dockyard as the DEVON SAMPSON. By 1997 she had ceased to be functioning as a crane. In 2023 she was laid up near Rochester Bridge on the Medway.

4) LONDON LEVIATHAN

LONDON LEVIATHAN

LONDON LEVIATHAN

She was built by IHC Verschure in Amsterdam in 1965 for the PLA. She was a sistership to the London Sampson and was also of 1075 grt with the same dimensions and machinery. When built, her crane capacity was 150 to 250 tons, but after a fracture in 1967,her crane capacity was reduced to 60 tons.

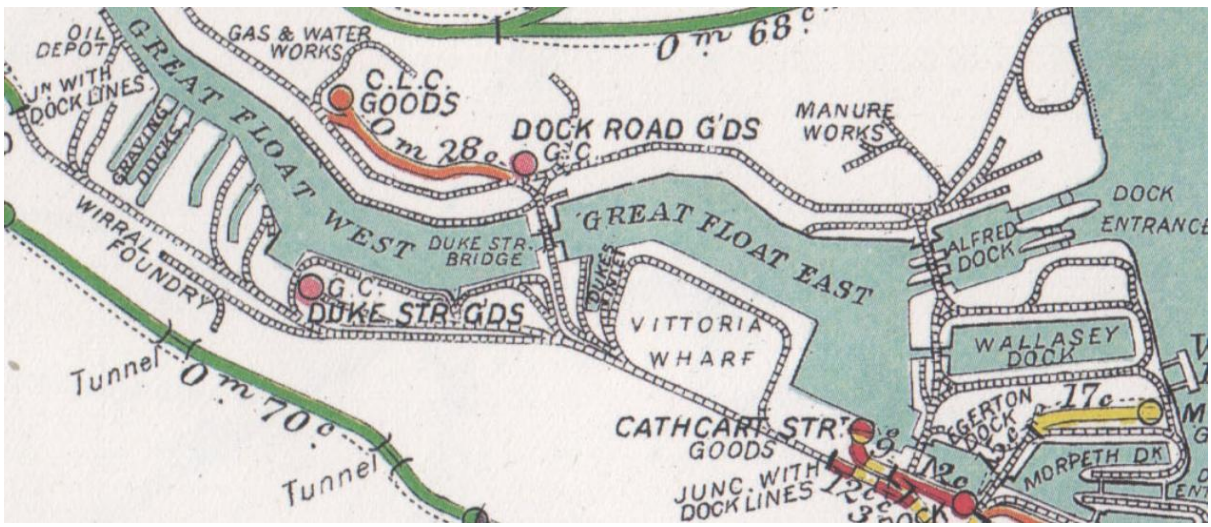
In 1993 she was sold to Reed Heavy Lift Marine Ltd and operated as LEVIATHAN registered in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. In 1997 she was sold to the Woodstock Maritime Corporation and registered in Belize. In 2005 she was sold to Leviathan Marine Services Ltd. It was reported that in 2022 she was still in the Caribbean cut down to a flat-topped pontoon with a smaller crane in operation.

THE TWELVE QUAYS RIVER TERMINAL

Stena RoRo services from the Port of Liverpool to Belfast and Dublin operate from the Twelve Quays River Terminal at Birkenhead. The terminal was opened in 2002 serving the STENA LAGAN and the STENA MERSEY. It was modified in 2019 / 20 to cater for Stena's new larger "E-Flexer" vessels, the STENA EDDA and the STENA EMBLA. The service provides 3 crossings a day all year round, the crossing taking 8 hours. Stena also operate a freight-only service between the terminal and Dublin, normally making one eight-hour crossing per day using the chartered BORE SONG. Another ferry, the STENA FORWARDER proves additional freight-only capacity on the Belfast service. Stena added the Dublin service following the closure in 2023 of the P&O Ferries operation on the Liverpool to Dublin route.

The terminal consists of a fixed bridge, a link span and a floating two-berth pontoon together with various dolphins etc. To cater for the two E-Flexers, the bridge and link span have a second raised roadway to allow upper and lower level loading and unloading simultaneously. The facility is able to handle vessels of up to 215 metres overall length, 28.4 metres beam and a draught of 7.0 metres. Technically, the berth gives 17.66 m at MHWS and 11.10m at CD.

The facility is owned by Peel Ports, the owners of the Mersea Dock and Harbour Company. Peel Ports were the instigators of the much larger Twelve Quays development project, which covers many hundreds of acres of open storage, terminal buildings and a business park.



The site of the development was locally known as the “Four Bridges” site, the bridges crossed the Alfred Dock, Wallasey Dock and the Egerton and Morpeth

Dock entrances. The bridges were of the steel rolling bascule lifting type although the one over the Wallasey Dock entrance had been inoperable as a lifting bridge for many years.

STEEL ROLLING BASCULE BRIDGE

THE SITE IN 1951WITH THE OLD CATTLE LANDING STAGE IN THE RIVER

RECENT

In the early 1980s I ran a feasibility study for the Merseyside Development Corporation covering the civil engineering aspects of redeveloping the whole ren-down area, including the infilling of the heavily polluted Wallasey Dock and the nearby impounding station which maintained water levels in the whole Birkenhead Docks System. In essence, some 20 years later, funding was found and the project finally came to fruition.

THE E-FLEXERS

E-FLEXER CONCEPT

The E-Flexer was designed by Deltamarin and Stena RoRo and is a class of Ro-Pax ferries ordered by Stena for their European line service. Including some on long term charter Brittany Ferries, DFDS Seaways and Marine Atlantic, 15 have

so far been built or are ordered. Their builder is China Merchants Jinling Weihai Shipyard.

STENA EDDA

STENA EMBLA

The first batch, including the Cyprus flagged STENA EDDA and STENA EMBLA, are of 42,400 gt with dimensions 214.5m x 27.8m x 6.7m. They can carry 1000 passengers, 120 cars and provide 3100 lane metres of freight. They are powered by twin 12-cylinder medium speed MAN M43C diesels of 25,200 kW coupled with twin feathering controllable – pitch propellors giving a service speed of 22 knots. The engines at present burn marine fuel oil, but they are designed to be “gas-ready” for future conversion to LNG or methanol. They are compliant with IMO Tier 11 emission standards.

BORE SONG: She is a Dutch flagged RoRo freight carrier built by Flensburger Schiffbauuu Gmbh & Co. KG in 2011. She is of 25,586 gt with dimensions 195.4m x 26.7m x 7.4m. She has 2863 lane metres of cargo space and is powered by a Wartsila 12V46F-CR, CSR of 12000 kW at 600 rpm which gives 19 knots.

STENA FORWARDER

STENA FORWARDER: She is a Danish flagged RoRo freight carrier built by Cantieri Navale Visentini in 2016 as the FRIJSENBORG. She is of 21,966 gt with dimensions 179.4m x 26.2m x 7.6m. She provides 2550 lane metres of cargo space. She is powered by twin MAN 9L32/44CR diesels of 5400 kW each giving 20 knots.

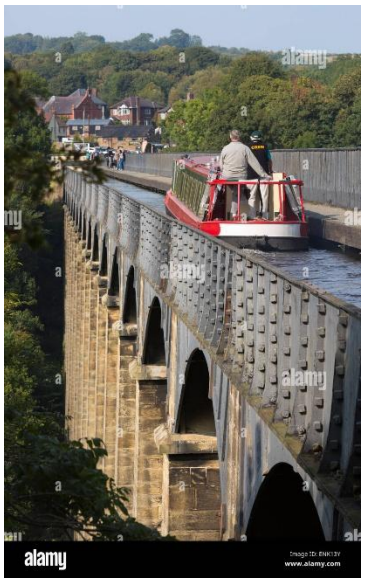
THE WHITCHURCH CANAL BREACH

THE BREACH WITH THE PACEMAKER NEAREST THE CAMERA AND SEFTON AND GANYMEDE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOLE

At 04.22 am on the morning of 22nd December, the emergency services were notified of a major collapse on the Llangollen Canal near the town of Whitchurch, close to the Welsh border. A canal embankment had collapsed, causing an estimated 420 tons of water to escape onto nearby fields, draining about a mile of the canal and the stranding of several narrowboats. Thankfully there were no reported injuries or fatalities.

The canal now termed the Llangollen was built between 1798 and 1808 as the Ellesmere Canal. As well as being navigable by narrowboats, it also functioned as a water supply from the Horseshoe Falls to Harleston Reservoir, serving much of south Cheshire. It was formally abandoned to navigation in 1944, but it was saved from infilling by that water supply function. It was rebranded officially as the Llangollen Canal in the 1980s, but the name had been used increasingly by leisure boaters since the 1950s.

NB SEFTON SLIDING INTO THE HOLE



THE PONTCYSYLITE AQUEDUCT

The Llangollen Canal is high on most canal boaters bucket list. Although narrow in places, the canal includes two wonders, the Chirk and the Pontcysylite Aqueducts. Because of these and some magnificent scenery, it is

very popular and, particularly during school holidays, can be rather overcrowded with boats.

It is also a popular destination for boaters over Christmas, and sadly, many narrowboats on the 30 or so mile length of canal on the Welsh side of the breach will be isolated from the main canal network for many months. As at 6th January, a number of boat owners were negotiating with the nearby Whitchurch Marina for a mass craning and transport by road operation to get their boats to Nantwich Marina and hence reconnect with the main canal network.

An earth retaining wall forming one side of the canal embankment had apparently collapsed, allowing a large quantity of canal water to escape into nearby fields. In doing so, the torrent of water had carried away the material forming the embankment wall and the canal bed, resulting in a cavity 150 to 180 feet long and 15 feet deep. Sitting on the bottom of the resulting hole were two narrowboats, the SEFTON and the GANYMEDE, with another boat, the PACEMAKER, resting precariously at one end of the collapsed section. The PACEMAKER, was winched to safety later in the day. Six or seven other boats were stranded because of the drop in the canal water level.

NB PACEMAKER WAS LATER WINCHED TO SAFETY

The breach was to the east of the New Mills Lift Bridge just south of Chemistry, a suburb of Whitchurch. The Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service were quickly on the scene, followed by a team from the Canal and River Trust (CRT), who administer the canal network.

Once it had been established that the three craft directly affected by the collapse had been safely evacuated, temporary dams consisting of barge boards and water gates were erected to minimise further losses of water. More permanent dams were then put in place by the CRT further from the scene, limiting the stretch between Grindley Brooks top lock and the Whitchurch Bypass Bridge, a distance of about half a mile.

It is hoped that the PACEMAKER will be refloated in early January, but recovering the two boats in the hole, both probably damaged, will take rather longer. It is understood that the CRT will bring in an excavator and carefully reprofile the steep side of the breach hole to form a ramp on which the two boats can be winched up for appraisal and eventual refloating.

A 600mm diameter water pipe and temporary pumps were then brought in and water was pumped past the dammed section to refill the canal downstream of the collapse, refloating various moored craft and to restore the water supply to the reservoir. The section between the dams, with its boats sitting some 15 feet down, remains undisturbed for safety reasons.

This part of the canal had been inspected by CRT engineers in November under their regular inspection regime, and no evidence of structural weakness or potential failure was noted. Investigations into the cause of the accident will take some time, but clearly there was a weakness in the canal lining and embankment core. Possibly the combination of the long very dry summer and recent heavy rainfall may have contributed to the problems. Corrosion of the steel sheet piling is unlikely to have been a significant factor in the collapse. Repairs could well take around nine months to complete, but until then, navigation on the Llangollen will be severely reduced. Several boatyards and hire fleets will suffer major loss of revenue, and perhaps as many as a hundred boats will remain isolated from the main canal system. The millions of pounds involved in repairs will unfortunately stretch the already tight maintenance budget of the CRT. Whether the CRT will be found fully liable for these losses will no doubt employ many lawyers for many months.

FOOTNOTE: The Pacemaker was refloated on 11th January after a preliminary survey. She is due to travel to a dry dock for a full condition survey. The other two boats remain in the "hole", but CRT's contractor is preparing a ramp to enable them to be winched out. Brackets were welded onto the bow/stern of the other two boats, and on 15th January, first the Ganymede and then the Sefton were winched up a ramp and out of the hole. On 17th, the two were afloat again, and readied for being towed to Grindley Brook, a few miles away, for dry docking or craning out of the water for inspection of damage to the hulls.

Investigations regarding the cause of the embankment collapse are ongoing.

VESSELS ON THE HISTORIC SHIPS REGISTER BUILT AT ROCHESTER

PART 2

Glenway

Glenway was built in 1913 by James Little of Rochester for the coasting trade, and worked with a 2,000 strong fleet of barges to ferry cargoes from the East Coast into the port of London. Sailing unscathed through the minefields and dangers of World War One, GLENWAY survived the economic depression of

the 1930s and a grounding ashore off North Norfolk. She was then requisitioned as a supply ship and left abandoned on the beaches of Dunkirk during the 1940 evacuation. 213 soldiers from the 27th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, managed to get onboard and, after a desperate attempt to re-float her, they sailed home. However, 1951 saw her washed ashore off Great Yarmouth during a storm and, by the late 1950s, she had retired from the trade to become a houseboat. In the 1970s, she was re-rigged, but was later left to rot at the end of Maldon promenade. Sold into safer hands, GLENWAY underwent a restoration during which approximately ninety per cent of her was re-built. She was then transferred to her current owners, who have now opened a new heritage centre onboard her.

Seagull II

Seagull II, Thames barge, was built in 1901 by Gill & Sons, Rochester, for the War Department. She is half the size of normal craft of her type and her purpose was to carry ordnance and stores in Pembroke dockyard. She did this until 1930 when she was sold and became a private yacht back in the Thames Estuary before becoming an architectural feature on Free Trade Wharf Wapping in 1988. Sold in 1999 for restoration at Gillingham to her current owner, this was estimated to be continuing until 2010. In 2008, she moved to

the dry dock at The Medway Cruising Club to undergo a major rebuild, during which everything was being replaced except the flat bottom. She came out of the dry dock in 2014 and her rebuild was completed in 2021.

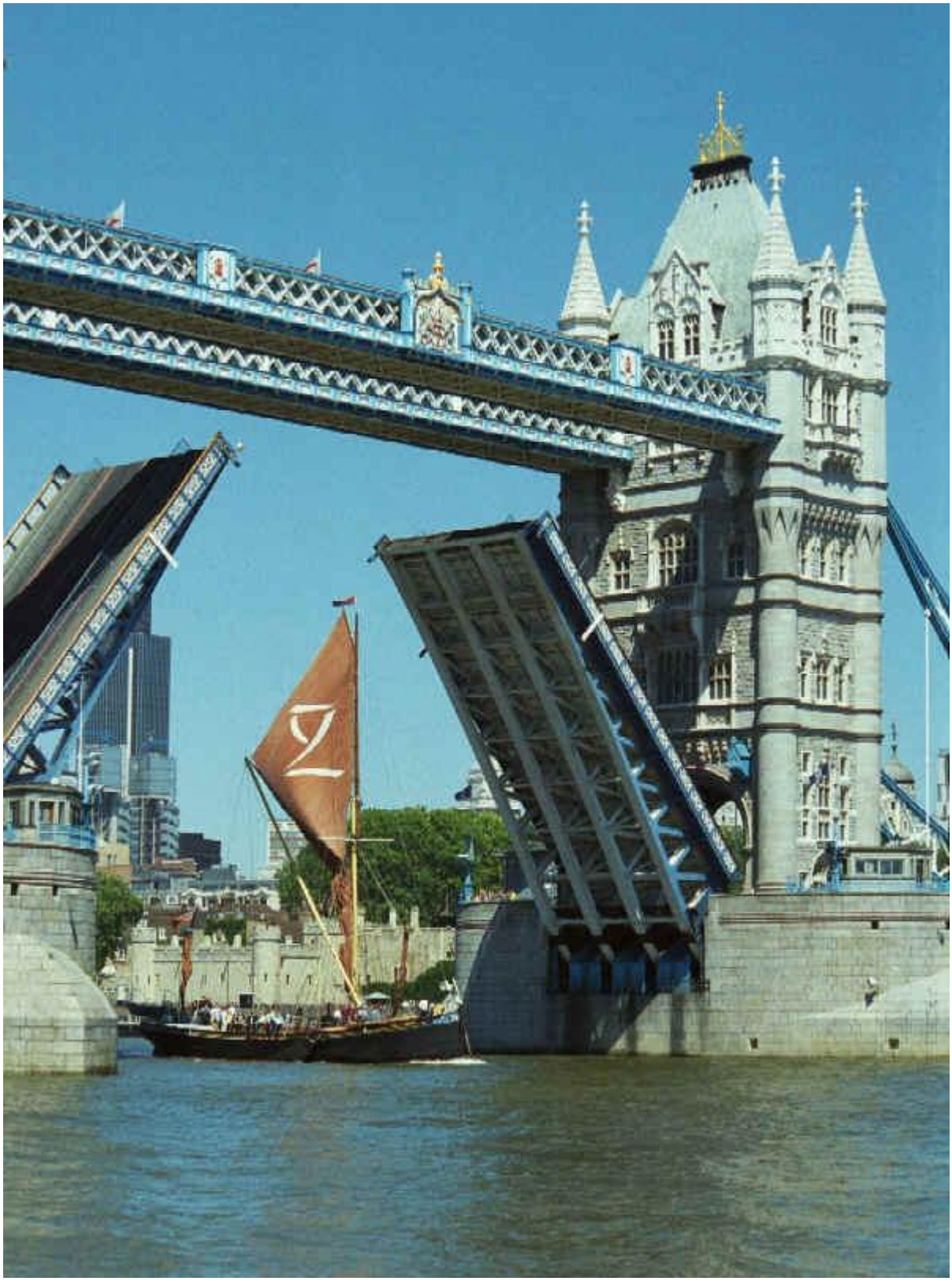
Lady Jean

Built in 1926 by Short Brothers at Rochester for Bradleys of Rochester, LADY JEAN is a Thames Sailing Barge of wooden carvel construction. Her current engine is an inboard diesel made by Kelvin (GEC) in 1973. She made history on her first commercial voyage which was to Coruna in Northern Spain; this is believed to be the longest cargo carrying trip ever made by a Thames Sailing Barge. Subsequently she traded from the Medway to ports in Cornwall carrying cement and returning with cargoes of china clay or granite.

In 1937 she was sold to the maltsters R & W Paul of Ipswich who operated her for 36 years on the East Coast. During this time she was given a larger engine and her sails were progressively removed. In 1973 she was bought by the East Coast Sail Trust, completely renovated and renamed SIR ALAN HERBERT; she then worked as a school ship for the Inner London Education Authority and the Trust, sometimes cruising to Belgium and Holland.

LADY JEAN has had several private owners since at least the early 2000s, and is believed to be based at the Broadness Cruising Club, Kent as of 2025.

Lady Daphne



LADY DAPHNE was ordered in 1921 from Short Brothers, Rochester, by David Watson a part-owner of Thomas Watson (Shipping). The company had a tradition of naming vessels with the prefix ‘Lady’, and when launched in January 1923 LADY DAPHNE was named after David Watson’s eldest daughter

Daphne. The barge was constructed of wood - with oak frames, side planking and wales, elm chine planks, Oregon pine spars - and a steel keelson, and had a marked sheer to the foredeck as befitted a vessel intended for coastal work. Together with her near sister, LADY JEAN, she was amongst the very few wooden barges built after the First World War and, unusually for a sailing barge, she was built from lines. During half a century of trading as a coasting barge she carried cargoes such as china clay, Portland Stone, cement and grain between ports scattered around the east and south coasts of England. She was reckoned to be a fast barge: making London Docks from Ipswich, light, in twelve hours, and from the Docks to Ipswich, loaded with 190 tons of wheat, in 14 hours.

LADY DAPHNE was known as a lucky ship following a bizarre escape in December 1927. On passage from Weymouth to Fowey in a thick snow storm driven by an easterly gale the skipper was washed overboard and lost. The mate and third hand desperately burned improvised flares as the vessel drifted out of control. This was a forlorn gesture but the barge was at last spotted by the Lizard signal station, their final hope, late on Christmas Day. The Lizard lifeboat was launched and rescued the two exhausted crew members in the early hours of Boxing Day leaving the vessel to run on into the blackness, with only the pet canary left on board. A day later she was seen heading for the rocks near Crowe Sound in the Isles of Scilly, and the St Mary's lifeboat was launched. Her crew boarded the barge which was still underway under jib alone, about three hundred yards from the shore of the island of Tresco, and were surprised to find only the canary aboard. Reaching the wheel the lifeboatmen put the helm over, whereupon the jib split with a crack like a gun, and headed for the shore, beaching the barge in two feet of water on safe shelving sand. After a full refit she was back in service within a year and continued trading for another 45 years.

LADY DAPHNE was transferred to Lillian Bradley on the death of her husband in 1928. In 1932 a four-cylinder 60 hp 4SA Kelvin oil engine, made by Bergius Co Ltd of Glasgow, was fitted and connected to a propeller on the port side, and a wheelhouse was also fitted. In 1936 LADY DAPHNE was engaged in salving cargo from the four-masted barque HERZOGIN CECILLE, which went ashore near Bolt Head, south Devon, and became a total loss. In 1937 she was sold to

R & W Paul (Maltsters) Ltd, of Ipswich and was thoroughly overhauled at their yard there. On 4 November 1944 LADY DAPHNE was struck by a tramp steamer on the Thames at Vauxhall and sustained serious damage to her port bow. Skipper Fred Roberts nursed her to the Crown Quay Yard at Sittingbourne for repairs. In 1947 LADY DAPHNE was re-engined at Richards Bros, Lowestoft, with a five-cylinder 100 bhp unit built by Ruston and Hornsby Ltd, Lincoln. She mainly worked to Yarmouth, Kings Lynn and Norwich. In 1951 she loaded baskets of imported oysters at Felixstowe Docks for the Colne. The oysters had to be continually sprayed with salt water until they were unloaded at Brightlingsea for relaying in the oyster beds. On the night of 30 January 1953 the great east coast tidal surge lifted her bows onto the quay at Ipswich and she had a lucky escape when she was levered off, avoiding a capsize into the dock. In 1957 LADY DAPHNE's sailing gear was removed and she traded as a motor barge until 1973.

In September 1975 LADY DAPHNE was sold to Taylor Woodrow Property Ltd, London, for re-rigging and conversion to a promotional and charter barge at Maldon. In January 1986 she was re-engined with a Mermaid Mariner diesel and continued in corporate and charter work. In May 1996 she was sold by Taylor Woodrow and based at St Katharine Docks, London, for charter work under the management of Nymph Ltd. She mainly cruised on the Thames but also ventured further afield for events such as barge matches and Cowes Week. She was entered in races each year with some success. In the 2009 Swale match she was first in the restricted staysail class and in the 2010 Thames match she was first in the coasting class. In winter 2010/11 the mid section on the port side was reframed and re-planked at Faversham.

In 2016, she was sold to private owners who moved her to Ham Wharf, Oare Creek, Faversham to dry dock and a full restoration of starboard midships to stern was undertaken with all planking and framing replaced in this section by shipwright Tim Goldsack. In 2018 and 2019, she had two seasons back on the Thames running numerous public and private charters, participating in the Classic Boat Festival 2018 and 2019, the Blackwater and Thames barge matches in 2018, the Pin mill and Thames barge matches in 2019 and Gravesend Waterfront weekend in 2019. Covid lockdown restrictions of 2020-

2021 meant her planned restoration on the port quarter which began in Spring 2020 was delayed completion until Autumn 2021.

In September 2021, a re-enactment event was held in London as part of a scout initiative to follow in footsteps of Ernest Shackleton's voyage in Quest to Antarctica. She passed through Tower Bridge 100 years to the day and time (1pm 17th September 2021) to recreate the promotional event held by Shackleton 100 years earlier. She was taken back to Ham Wharf until April 2022, when she undertook the journey south west to Charlestown Harbour, where she is available for static event hire while undergoing restoration works. She celebrated her 100th birthday in 2023.

In November 2023, the Friends of Lady Daphne won the Marsh Volunteer of the Year - Group award at the 2023 National Historic Ships Awards. The following year, she was one of NHS-UK's Flagships of the Year for 2024.

ONE FACT WONDER THAMES TUGS

Thames Tugs a Potted History

The history of Thames tugs began with the introduction of steam power in the early 19th century, which rapidly transformed shipping on the river. The first steam tug, the Majestic, appeared in 1816, marking the beginning of a shift from manual labour to mechanised towage.

Before steam tugs, large sailing vessels navigating the Port of London (which handled thousands of vessels annually) had to be towed to port by gangs of men in rowing boats against the wind and tide. Steam tugs dramatically increased efficiency.:

Early tugs were predominantly paddle-wheelers. Their ability to apply full power quickly in either direction and the ability turn nearly on the spot made them ideal for the confined spaces of the river.

The use of steam tugs quickly became a competitive advantage among rival dock companies, allowed Companies such as the London and St Katharine Docks, to tow vessels past competitors' facilities.

One of the earliest and most significant tug companies was William Watkins Ltd, founded in 1833. They were involved in general ship towage, salvage operations, and long-distance towing, famously bringing Cleopatra's Needle to London in 1878 with the tug Anglia. They also traded Liverpool to London under sail

Whilst screw tugs started appearing in the 1860s, paddle tugs remained common until the 1920s, when they were finally superseded by more efficient diesel propulsion.

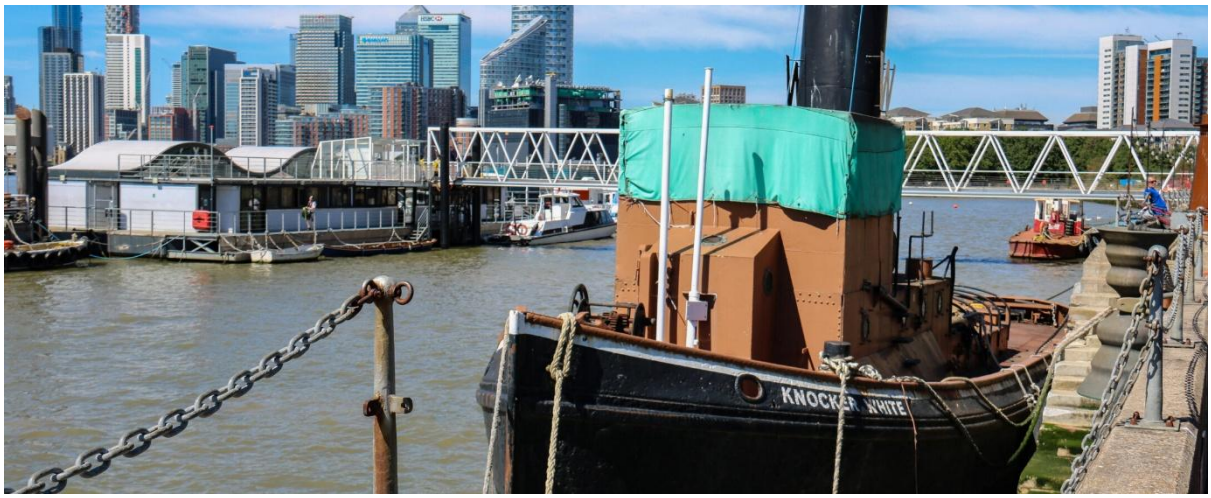
Many Thames tugs and their crews were requisitioned for government service during both the First and Second World Wars. They served in various capacities, including at Gallipoli, Dunkirk, and in naval bases like Gibraltar, with several vessels lost to enemy action.

Through the mid-to-late 20th century, various independent tug companies like William Watkins Ltd, Elliott Steam Tug Company, and Gamecock Tugs gradually merged, eventually being taken over by larger entities such as the Alexandra Towing Co. Ltd, breaking the links with original London owners.

A few historic Thames tugs have been preserved, the steam tug ST Portway survives at the West India Docks ,the TID-class tug ST Brent (built 1945, formerly TID 159) is owned by a charitable trust working on her restoration and is on the National Register of Historic Vessels.

Moored at Maldon 

KNOCKER WHITE



The tug KNOCKER WHITE is now a floating exhibit owned by the Trinity Buoy Wharf Trust.

She was built by T. van Duivendijk at Lekkerkerk in the Netherlands in 1924 as the CAIRNROCK. Her machinery was installed by Fellows & Co. at Great Yarmouth; the boiler having been made by Blair & Co and her steam engine by Crabtree & Co.

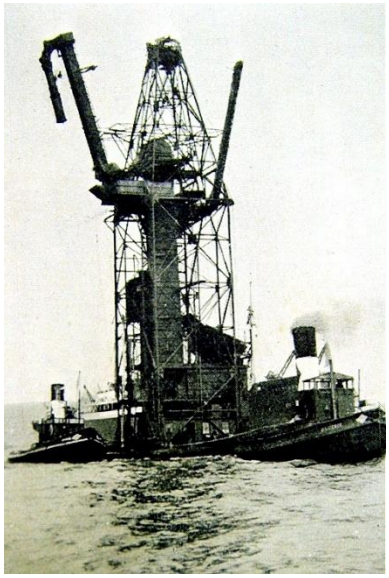
CAIRNROCK

She is of 90 grt with dimensions 77.2’ x 20.0’ x 9.5’. Her original 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine gave 400 bhp. She ran on coal right up to 1960 when her boiler and steam engine were removed and replaced with twin 300 bhp Petters & Co. diesels. She had a drop-down funnel for upriver work, which was modified in 1960 along with her wheelhouse.

KNOCKER WHITE

She was built for the Harrison (London) Lighterage Company, and she worked for them from 1924 to 1960. As well as towing lighters and general towage work on the tideway, she regularly towed Harrison’s floating coal elevator WOTAN about the lower reaches of the Thames during her 36 years’ service. The Wotan was non-self-propelled, but her elevator bucket mechanism was steam powered. Colliers were unloaded onto lighters for onward transit

upriver, or to riverside depots or power stations including Battersea Power Station.



CORY TUGS AND FLOATING COAL ELEVATOR

In 1960 she was sold to Alfred White and then in 1962 to W.E. White & Sons of Hope Wharf, Rotherhithe who re-engined her and renamed her Knocker White, after a member of the White family. She was out of service in 1982 and sold for scrap to Todd (Breakers) Ltd of Dartford and some parts of her diesels were taken, but in 1984 she was bought by the Museum of London Docklands.

AT TRINITY BUOY WHARF

In November 2016 she was bought by the Trinity Buoy Wharf Trust for restoration and public display, and she is at present moored at Trinity Buoy Wharf. She is registered on the National Historic Ships by National Historic Ships.

Steam tug Challenge

*Challenge i*s the last surviving example of a large purpose-built, Thames ship-handling steam tug. She was designed for manoeuvring ships of considerable size in and around the Thames Estuary and across the English Channel. She was based on the Thames for her entire working life, although she carried out work as far afield as Scotland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the south coast of England.

She was built in 1931 by Alexander Hall & Co. Ltd of Aberdeen, for the W Elliott Steam Tug Co. Ltd and is 238 gross tons. Her triple expansion steam engine was also built by Hall, whilst her boiler was built by Palmer's Shipbuilding & Iron Co. Ltd, of Hebburn. She passed through two further ownerships: Ship Towage (London) Ltd (1950-1969) and London Tugs (1969-74).

Between 1931 and 1939 she was based on the Thames, towing barges of bricks from the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as square-rigged ships, cargo ships and passenger liners and carrying crews to their vessels.

Between 1939 and 1945 she was requisitioned by the Admiralty but continued to work as a tug. She was one of the Dunkirk Little Ships engaged in the evacuation of Allied troops from France in May and June 1940. On 31 May, she worked at Dunkirk berthing vessels in the harbour during the evacuation and, the following day, towed small craft to Dunkirk to evacuate troops. She helped tow HMS Impulsive and HMS Worcester after they sustained damage. She was also involved in duties at Dover around this time, assisting ships which were engaged in the Dunkirk operation.

After returning to the Thames, she was fitted with a flying bridge to mount an Oerlikon cannon, and a forebridge for two Lewis guns. Her work in 1941 included towing Maunsell anti-aircraft towers out into the Thames estuary and towing Army Sea Forts for assembly in the estuary. In 1944, she towed parts of the Mulberry harbours used in the D-Day landings.

On 3 July 1944, she was damaged by a V1 flying bomb in the Royal Albert Dock and was repaired at Rotherhithe. She still bears the marks of this attack – there are repair marks from shrapnel all along the port side of the main superstructure, there are dents and the back side of a hole in the fire cupboard door, and there are shrapnel dents and holes in the port side handrail.

After the war, she continued in Thames service and was converted from coal to oil firing at Sheerness in 1964.

In 1971, she was laid up at Gravesend, having been the last steam tug to serve on the Thames. In 1973, she was sold to Taylor Woodrow Ltd for preservation at St Katharine's Yacht Haven, near Tower Bridge, and was berthed there as a static exhibit.

In July 1993, she was acquired for restoration by the Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust for the price of £1. With the aid of Sun Tugs and the Port of Tilbury she was moved downstream to Tilbury where groups of volunteers slowly brought her back to working condition. The hull needed repair, particularly along the waterline.

The vessel was recorded on the National Register of Historic Vessels in 2000 and given the status of inclusion in the National Historic Fleet.

After obtaining a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2001 she was towed to Marchwood (Southampton) for repair and repainting. After relaunch she was shown at many locations including Liverpool, Bristol, Brest and in the Netherlands. In 2005 she returned to Dunkirk for the first time since the 1950's.

In 2007 increasing concerns about her boiler – still the original – led to investigations which made it clear that it needed replacement to meet pollution and safety requirements. In 2011 and 2012, grants approaching £1million each were obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This enabled restoration including a new Byworth boiler from Yorkshire (named Rosie), two new diesel generators and refurbished boiler feed water tanks. The boiler replacement introduced multi-fuel capabilities, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations while preserving her operational status.

In 2020 she was bought by her current owner after having stayed at berth for nearly a decade and restoration started. Whilst in Southampton she was open regularly for the public to visit.

In 2021 she took part with Shieldhall in a celebration of steam at Southampton in July and at the boat show in September, steaming along Southampton Water.

In 2022 she relocated to Chatham on the Medway. She proved to be a popular attraction at the annual Queenborough Boat Festival where hundreds of visitors were able to come onboard for guided tours. She has been seen on TV, featuring on both Celebrity Antiques Road Trip and The Great Steam Journey. In both 2023 and 2024 she sailed alongside Waverley during the latter's visit to the Thames. In June 2024 she sailed to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

In April 2025, it was reported that the tug, still moored on the River Medway in Chatham, near the Sun Pier House, needed restoration. Chris Bannister, owner of the vessel and founder of the Steam Boat Trust, said he needed £35,000 to restore it, with the hope of opening it to the public to educate them about the vessel's history. During his five years of ownership, Mr Bannister said he had spent £200,000 of his own savings to repair and maintain it, but it needed repairs for the condenser and vacuum pump, which are critical components that maintain the steam system. It also needed funds to keep the boat's generator running because she is moored mid-river, and relies on the generator to keep water, electricity and toilets running. The vessel did not now qualify for the Heritage Lottery Fund as it was not open to the public because of the need for repairs.

William Watkins Paddle Tugs.

The first steam tug that came to the London river was the LADY DUNDAS in 1832; she came from the Tyne

In 1833 the firm of W. Watkins was founded and this company is the only one of the pioneer English tug-owners to survive

On the Thames the Watkins tugs were conspicuous with their black and green hulls, white paddle boxes and black funnels with a deep red band painted well down from the top.

The first tug owned by Watkins was the MONARCH, needless to say a paddler; with two exceptions all the firm's tugs were paddlers until 1880, when the screw was finally adopted. The MONARCH hailed from the North. was clincher built, having a cut-away bow and counter stern. Tonnage just over 26. The engine registered 20 N.H.P. being built by Wait of N. Shields.

In 1856, in spite of her age, new patent paddle wheels were fitted and the engine, boiler and hull were overhauled,

In 1861 the MONARCH was again given a new boiler, and in 1876, she was sold for scrapping,

FIDDLER, . In 1840 came the FIDDLER, but no details of this tug have survived, beyond the fact she could take on jobs that were beyond the capabilities of the MONARCH.

LORD WARDEN. The LORD WARDEN followed the FIDDLER, but little is known about her, except that her engine was put into another tug when her hull was worn out.

PUNCH (I), 1846. In 1846, the PUNCH was acquired, afterwards she went out to Constantinople, being one of the first tugs in Turkish waters.

PAUL PRY, 1847. The PAUL PRY was built at Millwall in 1847, clincher built and 80 ft. in length with a beam of 15 ft. 5 in. and a gross tonnage of 83. In 1858,

she was overhauled and fitted with a new boiler and patent paddles which gave her another lease of life, as the hull was perfectly sound, although she had been laid up since the close of the Crimean War as obsolete. In 1865, she was in again for general overhaul and in the year following was sold to the Commercial Towing Co., but after that did not survive on the river long.

JOHN BULL, 1849. In 1849, JOHN BULL was added to the fleet, she was carvel built by Wigram's, Blackwall. Length 96 ft. having an 18 ft. 2 in. beam and a gross tonnage of 114. In 1853, Mr. Watkins Junr. who was setting up in business as a tug owner at Birkenhead on the Mersey took over the JOHN BULL. In 1859, the JOHN BULL returned to the Thames and then had new side-lever engines and boilers installed.

UNCLE SAM, 1849. The UNCLE SAM came in 1849, built by C. J. Mare and Co., West Ham, 10i ft. 7 in. in length by 18 ft. 3 in. beam. This veteran survived until 1900, when she was sold to Dutch shipbreakers.

SAUCY JACK / JOHN LEE, 1850. This tug was built in 1844 by A. Woodhouse of South Shields. She was clincher built 90.2 ft. long by 17 ft. beam with a registered tonnage of 28. When she came round to the Thames she was not very successful and in consequence was sold to the Southampton Dock Co. for handling big steamers. In December, 1850, she was purchased by the Watkins firm and re-named SAUCY JACK, but after a time she reverted to the original name of JOHN LEE.

BRITANNIA (I), 1852. In 1852, the BRITANNIA was built by Money, Wigram and Co. at their Northam shipyard. This tug was a wooden paddler 100.5 'ft- in

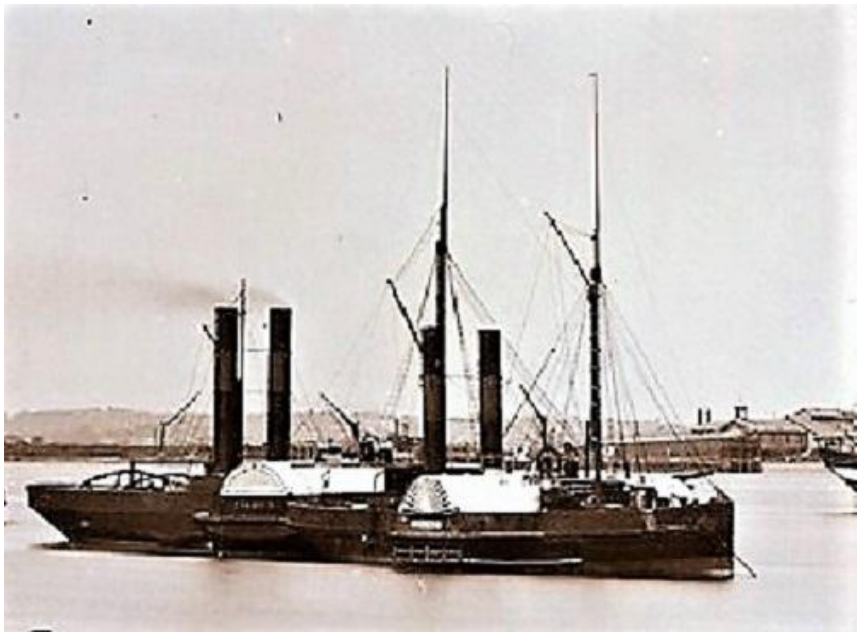
length having a beam 16.7 ft. and carried a figure-head and bowsprit. It may be said there were two classes of Thames tugs, those mainly confined to the river and the sea-going fraternity. The sea-going tugs frequently went far down into the Channel and across to Continental ports; early in 1855 the BRITANNIA was put on this work and one of her first long tows was to take the 735 ton COLUMBIA from Deptford to Calais Roads. The BRITANNIA proved to be one of the best tugs on the Thames. Late in 1855 she was sold to Constantinople.

VICTORIA, 1853. The VICTORIA was built in 1853, and was by far the largest and most powerful tug on the river for some years. She was built of teak and oak and had a gross tonnage of 152. She had a clipper bow and one of her improvements was a steam windlass which saved a great deal of time in hauling in the anchor.

The VICTORIA was one of the few boats at the time to have two funnels athwart but soon after the practice of having two boilers side by side became general. In 1859, she was given new boilers and patent paddle wheels. However, the new boilers did not give satisfactory results and in 1864 another new set of boilers were put in and at the same time a general overhaul was given. A fourth set of boilers was put in in 1875. In January, 1906, this fine did tug was taken to Mill wall for scrapping.

1854 Atlas

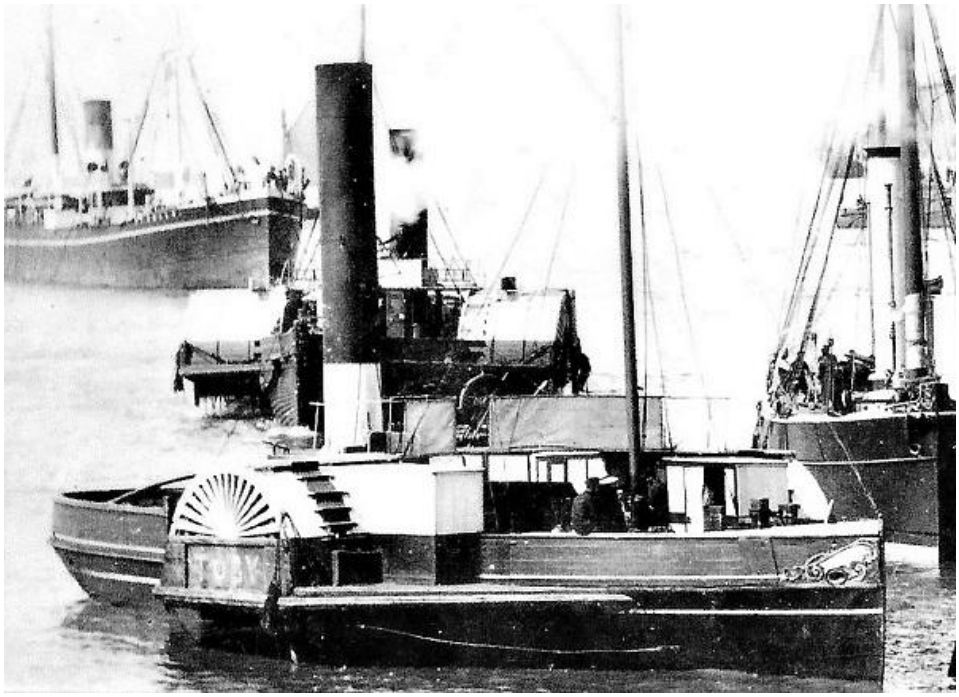
ATLAS 1854



PUNCH (2), 1854. In 1854, Money, Wigram of Blackwall launched the PUNCH - the second of her name. She was a fine little iron paddler of 115 tons gross drawing 6.5 ft. of water. At her bows she carried a fine carved wooden figure-head of Punch which she lost in a heavy sea in a gale in the Channel. However it was salvaged and afterwards graced the “ Blue Anchor ” public house in High Street, Newhaven until that hostelry was pulled down.

The PUNCH was the first mercantile vessel to pass under Tower Bridge after the opening in June, 1894. In November, 1895, this famous tug was sold to North Shields owners for £1,600 in spite of her age, and remained hard at work until November, 1911, when she was in collision off Shields, but although she was salved she never worked again and was scrapped.

DON, 1855. Early in 1855, this little wooden paddler was purchased for river use only. She was clincher-built of 45.9 tons and 72.2 ft. in length with a 14 ft. 9 in. beam; a single cylinder engine provided the motive power. The DON was built as far back as 1841. She was broken up in 1865.



TOBY, 1855. The composite built TOBY hailed from Greenwich in 1855. Length 80.3 ft. by 17 ft., and of 73 tons. In 1862, she was sold to Jersey, in 1879 she went over to France, and in 1882 she returned to England to go to Hull, remaining on the East coast until she was cut up in 1904.

DEFIANCE, 1856. The DEFIANCE was an iron paddler built at South Shields. She commenced work on the Thames in 1856. In 1869, she was modernised and re-boilered, and in 1871 sold to the East and West India Dock Company.

NAPOLEON, 1857. In 1857, the carvel-built paddler NAPOLEON was purchased, having been built at Southampton. This tug was specially designed for taking Jong tows and had all the latest refinements of her day. She had two funnels

abreast and twin engines thus introducing the double engine principle on the Thames. Unfortunately her twin engines proved to be too powerful for her wooden hull resulting in continuous expense. The gross tonnage was 157. In July, 1870, the NAPOLEON was re-boilered and practically re-engined at Wigram's. In 1881 she foundered at sea.

ANTAGONIST, 1857. The ANTAGONIST was an iron-built paddler by Lungley's of Deptford, built in 1857; a vessel 91.6 ft. in length. About 1863, the ANTAGONIST was chartered for a time by the Isle of Wight Steam Packet Co. to ply between Littlehampton and Ventnor. In August, 1867, she was sold to Dutch owners at Amsterdam.

MERRY ANDREW 1857

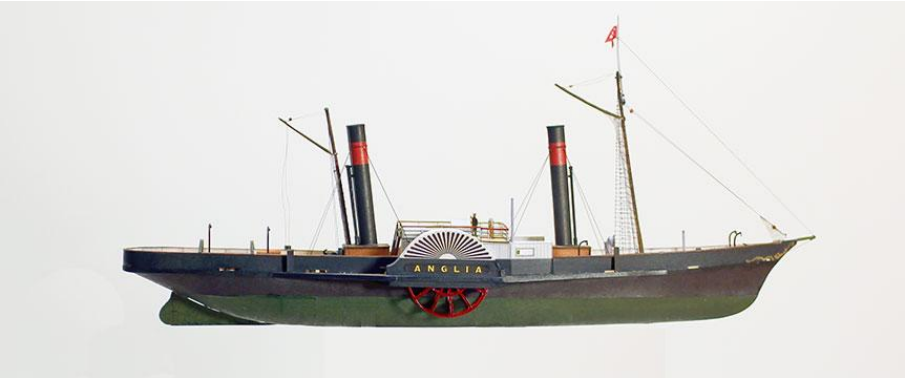
VICTOR, 1859. In 1859, clipper stemmed tug VICTOR was bought, having been built at Deptford in 1857. To enable the VICTOR to undertake long distance tows, she was fitted in 1866 with a surface condenser, new boilers and the engines given a thorough overhaul. On one occasion, she towed a dredger from the Thames to Cadiz and on another occasion took a dredger to Ferrol from the Victoria Docks. In 1880, she was again re-boilered and considerable repairs to the hull and engines carried out giving her another lease of life; she lasted until 1894.

TIMES, 1861. The TIMES, a wooden clincher-built paddler was purchased in 1861, being built at South Shields in 1857. She was a tug of 78 gross tons. In May, 1874, the TIMES was run down in the Thames, was salved and almost entirely rebuilt. She continued in service until broken up in 1887.

ANNETTE, 1862. The ANNETTE, an iron paddler built in 1862 by James Ash of London. She was fitted with Stewart engines, having 29 in. diameter cylinders. The boilers were in advance of their time being fitted with superheaters and surface condensers instead of the old jet type. In the 186o's the ANNETTE was chartered by Messrs. Brett to run in a competitive service between Ryde and Stokes Bay. In 1869 the ANNETTE was sold and went to the Danube.

BRITANNIA (2), 1862. The BRITANNIA, which had been built in 1855, was purchased by Watkins in 1862. A useful little paddler of 97 tons gross. She was sold in 1875 to the ship-breakers, the boilers being put into the EXPRESS.

EXPRESS, 1864. In 1864, the EXPRESS was bought, an iron paddler of 94 gross tons, she was built in 1856 on the Tyne. Her dimensions were 88.9 ft. long with an 18.6 ft. beam. In 1876, the EXPRESS underwent a large refit and received the boilers taken out of the BRITANNIA (2) which had been repaired and classed as equal to new. In 1880, she was disposed of to owners at Milford where she worked until she was broken up in 1898.



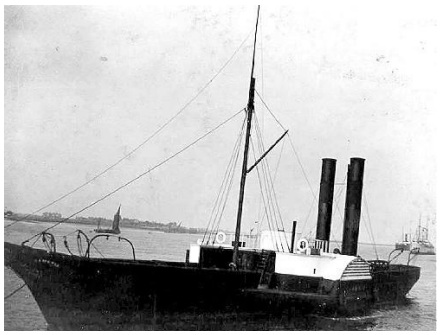
ANGLIA, 1866. The year 1866 saw the introduction of the very famous tug ANGLIA, the pioneer of all first-class long-distance tugs. The ANGLIA was in many ways a very noteworthy vessel, firstly she had two funnels abreast abaft the paddle boxes and one forward of them and as such was known on the river as "Three Fingered Jack" and was always conspicuous at sea. The ANGLIA had three boilers, a funnel to each boiler; the original intention was to have four boilers and four funnels, an arrangement only equalled by the celebrated BEN-MY-CREE the large paddle steamer owned by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. at one time. The ANGLIA carried the largest bunkers ever put in a tug and she needed them as she was very extravagant on coal. Her boilers were tubular and the side lever engines developed 700 I. H. P. thus making her the most

powerful tug on the London river and probably in the World. The ANGLIA was a fine sea-boat but she wanted careful handling in steering owing to her full lines aft. In 1872, she went to the Naval Review at Spithead held in honour of the visit of the Shah of Persia, conveying a party of guests. In 1880, she was thoroughly modernised and tackled some very big jobs, one being a tow to Malaga.

In 1894, the ANGLIA was sold as tugs of her date were obsolete, but it was not the end of her career as Messrs. Palmer's, the ship-builders, bought her. The engines, boilers and paddle wheels were scrapped and she was converted into a towing lighter to carry iron from the Tees to the Tyne.

When the 1914 war broke out she was employed working to and from the North East coast and France, generally in tow of a French warship, carrying coal for munition works and the railways. An event which made the ANGLIA conspicuous took place in 1875 and was referred to by every paper interested in shipping matters when she undertook the most difficult tow of the broken down Union Steamship Co. liner SYRIA from St. Helena to Southampton. Later she towed a dredger from Cardiff to St. Petersburg.

ALBION (I) ex FRIEND OF ALL NATIONS, 1868. The paddle tug FRIEND OF ALL NATIONS was purchased in 1868 and almost at once renamed ALBION. This tug was built at Newcastle in 1851 and was of 168 gross tons. Her usual work was to steam down Channel to pick up sailing craft and go as far west as Land's End. Her time with the Watkins firm was short as she was underpowered for their requirements. She was sold in 1869 and went to Trieste.



Cambria

CAMBRIA, 1870. The CAMBRIA was built by the Thames Iron Works in 1870 and was a big improvement on the ANGLIA. She was fitted with two cylinder side-lever engines by Stewart and was a vessel of 209 gross tons; she had two funnels abreast, the mizen mast being placed close to the rear of the funnels but the foremast was fixed well forward. The CAMBRIA was distinguishable from the other paddle tugs as she had side houses on the front only of the paddle boxes. In 1876, the CAMBRIA was chartered by the Duke of Bedford to visit the yachting regattas round the coast and for this purpose she was painted white and the funnels yellow. With her clipper bows she was a handsome craft, and in view of long sea-going trips was built with large cabins enabling the crew to sling hammocks. In 1887, the CAMBRIA had the novel experience of being placed under arrest at Cherbourg for violating the French law. The CAMBRIA had towed a vessel from Dunkirk, the law being that all coastal trade must be undertaken by French vessels. The CAMBRIA, excepting the IONA, was the last remaining paddle tug on the London river.

ALBION (2), 1870. The second ALBION was purchased in June, 1870, a small vessel of 109 tons, fitted with Stewart engines which gave a speed of 12 knots. One of the ALBION'S first duties was to cruise between Falmouth and the coast of Ireland to give warning to French ships of the outbreak of the Franco-German war. This duty was also performed by CAMBRIA. Although a handy vessel the ALBION was not up to requirements as owing to her light draught she did not have a proper grip on the water when engaged on a heavy tow, so in January, 1872, she was disposed of to Belgian owners at Antwerp.

ROBERT BRUCE, 1872. To replace the ALBION, the ROBERT BRUCE was purchased in 1872, a tug which had been built in 1865 for the Caledonian Steam Towing Co. at Poplar. The ROBERT BRUCE was a powerful iron-built vessel of 192 tons, a conspicuous feature was her very large paddle boxes. In 1892, she was laid aside and sold to the shipbreakers; she was not, however, broken up, but the boilers and engines were removed and the hull sold to the Port Sanitary Authority, London, who moored her off Gravesend as a medical hulk and named her HYGEIA. As such she remained until she was broken up in 1910.

ATLAS (I), 1873. In 1873, a small wooden carvel-built paddle tug of 100 gross tons was bought from Bristol. She was getting on in years, as 1854 was her date, but in spite of that she was a handy acquisition. In 1879, the ATLAS had a thorough overhaul and was given two second-hand tubular boilers and continued in service until broken up in 1887.

HIBERNIA, 1874. The HIBERNIA an iron vessel was added to the Watkins fleet in 1874, and was very similar to the CAMBRIA, she was fitted with side-lever engines and had a gross tonnage of 238. In 1883, the HIBERNIA was re-boilered and in the following year was solid to Havre and after many changes of ownership she returned to her original owners in 1911.

SCOTIA, 1874. The SCOTIA was a similar tug to the HIBERNIA and with the CAMBRIA were regarded as Watkins' best tugs.

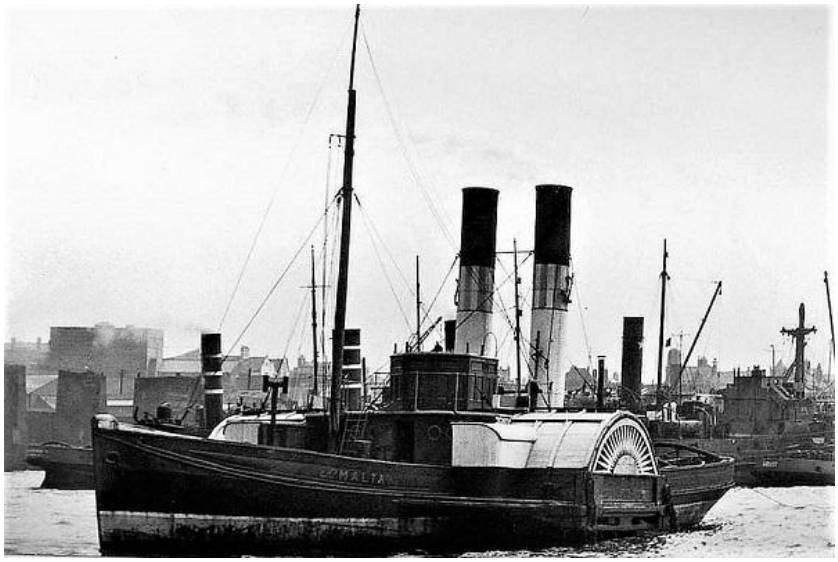
TITAN ex ATLAS, 1874. Following the SCOTIA, in the same year, was purchased the Dundee-built tug ATLAS for river work; she was immediately renamed TITAN, as there was already a tug named ATLAS belonging to the General Steam Navigation Company. The TITAN was built in 1865. In 1888, the TITAN was sold to tug owners at North Shields where she spent many years, being specially suitable for the narrow river.

RENOWN, 1874. In the same year, 1874, the RENOWN was purchased. She had been built at Deptford in 1863 and had Stewart- built engines and was an iron clipper bow paddler of 165 tons gross. The RENOWN was a light draught vessel. Prior to Watkins taking her over she had already seen service on the London river and prior to that was engaged at the Port of Fleetwood. In 1903, the RENOWN was sold to shipbreakers in Holland.

PILOT, 1875. In the autumn of 1875, this wooden clincher-built paddler of 71 tons gross with engines of 30 n.h.p. was purchased from South Shields. This tug

had been built as far back as 1858, and in 1864 had been fitted with new engines and boilers. A considerable amount of money was spent on her when purchased but she was a source of trouble nevertheless as the engines were too powerful for the hull and she was soon disposed of.

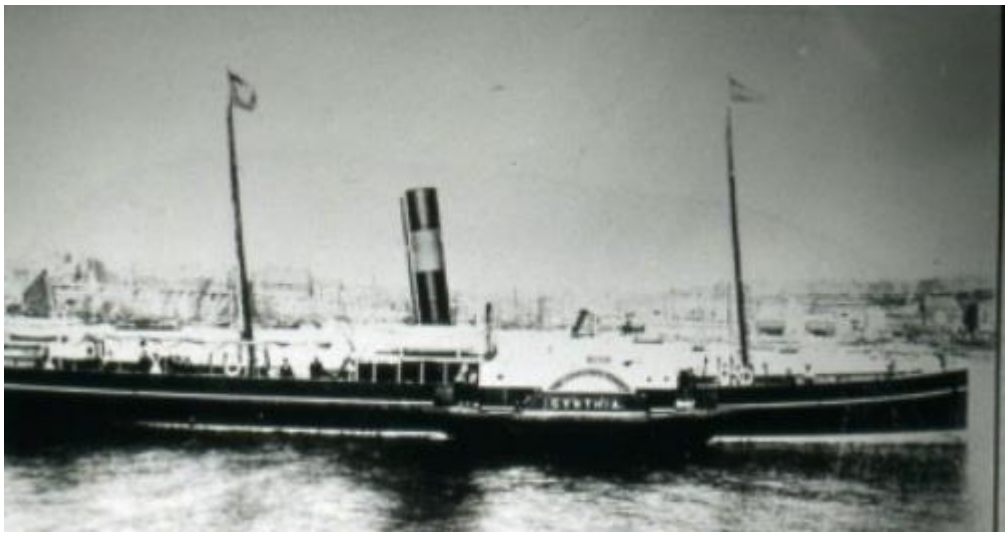
INDIA, 1876. In 1876, Watkins placed an order with Westwood & Baillie for a sea-going tug, to be named the INDIA. She had a gross tonnage of 218 and was fitted with Stewart's side-lever engines. Unfortunately, lack of power was her main drawback. She was a fine sea boat and during the summer months of 1890-3 was employed on sea excursions running from Margate which proved a profitable undertaking. In 1894, she was sold to the Tees, and ten years later was turned into a hulk.



1878 MALTA

MALTA, 1886. In the year 1886, Watkins purchased three of the Ben tugs, the first being the small tug BEN ACHIE, which was renamed MALTA. This vessel did not remain long on the Thames. Whilst undergoing repairs at Newcastle in 1888 due to a broken paddle shaft she was sold.

BURMAH and IONA, 1866. The other two Ben tugs, which were sisters, were the BEN LOMOND and the BEN NEVIS immediately renamed BURMAH and IONA respectively. When purchased they were in a poor condition and it was not until 1887 after they had been thoroughly overhauled that they were put in service. In 1899, the BURMAH was sold. The IONA had the distinction of being the last paddle tug to work on the Thames.



CYNTHIA, 1892. In 1892, Messrs. Watkins influenced by the success of the INDIA in making sea trips from Margate, decided to have a steamer built especially for excursion work. So the CYNTHIA was built at South Shields by J. T. Eltringham and Co. and was an exceptionally handsome little vessel.

After running for some seasons from Margate, competition became too keen and she was withdrawn and for a time went North but came back later to the Thames for a while. For three seasons the CYNTHIA was running from Hastings and in 1930 she went to Ireland. In 1934 during a severe gale, whilst she was in Kingstown, she broke away from her moorings and was driven against the harbour wall becoming a total loss.

The advent of the screw tug in 1880 brings this chapter to a close.

Over the years, the tugs became more sophisticated, towing ever larger ships a cross the Channel and seeking tows in the outer estuary and further afield. By1 875, the Anglia carried out tows from St. Helena and Suez, showcasing the com pany's capabilities. Watkins proved themselves as the premier company for oc ean towage during this period. They continued to develop and innovate, buildi ng their first screw tug, Era, in 1869, and by the 1880s, screw tugs were fast re placing paddle tugs on the Thames.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ 100

WSS quiz answers – February 2026

1. What is the name of the oil tanker seized by the US 0n 7 January 2026, accused of breaking US sanctions by carrying oil for Venezuela, Russia and Iran?

Marinera (previously known as Bella 1)

2. The German port of Hamburg lies on which river?

River Elbe

3. Late last year, the UK secured a £10bn deal to supply 5 new type-26 frigates to which country?

Norway

4. What is the name of Disney's new cruise liner of 208,108 gross tons that left Germany on 4 January on its delivery voyage to Singapore, via the US and Japan?

Disney Adventure

5. Which UK port has the fishing registration SM?

Shoreham

6. In what year did Ambience start cruising for the Ambassador cruise line?

2022 (April)

7. Captain Vladimir Motin was described in court in January 2026 as "highly trained" with a "constellation of information" telling him he needed to act. What were the consequences of his failure to act?

The ship he was captain of, Solong, collided with the US tanker Stena Immaculate off the East Yorkshire coast on 10 March 2025

8. The musical *The Last Ship*, about the demise of the shipbuilding industry in Wallsend, Tyne and Wear has recently started a world tour, commencing in Amsterdam. Who is the famous musician who wrote the musical?

Sting

9. Neptune's staircase, the longest staircase lock in Britain, is on which canal?

Caledonian canal

10. What did Sir Francis Chichester achieve in 1967?

First person to sail single-handed around the world

ANSWERS TO MYSTERY SHIPS 100

Nada V, 23.04.93

NADA V IMO **8313312** Vehicles Carrier
43,101g 14,820d Length: 186 Breadth: 32 Depth: 11.5 Draught: 9.2 (m)

1984: Completed by Tsuneishi Shipbuilding Co Ltd., Fukuyama HS as NADA V.
2009; Broken up in China.

Maersk Cancun, 10.04.18, Bitter Lakes

MAERSK CANCUN IMO **9786138** Chemical/Oil Products Tanker
29,816g 49,919d Length: 183 Breadth: 32 Depth: 19 Draught: 13.2 (m)

2018: Completed by Samsung Heavy Industries (Ningbo) Co Ltd., Ningbo ZJ as MAERSK CANCUN.
Still in Service.

Lucky Star 11, 14.03.18 Phu My

LUCKY STAR 11 IMO **9119062** General Cargo ship
5,543g 6,952d Length: 97.5 Breadth: 18.3 Depth: 13 Draught: 7.4 (m)

1995: Completed by Nishi Shipbuilding Co Ltd., Imabari EH as TIMBER WEALTHY.
2017: Renamed LUCKY STAR 11.
2020: Renamed LUCKY HARVEST.
2022: Renamed MASAKAZU.

2025: Renamed FARRUKH. Still in Service.

La Mpassa, 01.11.92 Dunkirk

LA MPASSA IMO **8311015** General Cargo ship
10,100g 12,665d 428 TEU Length: 150 Breadth: 21 Depth: 11.5 Draught: 9 (m)

1983: Completed by VEB Schiffswerft Neptun, Rostock as LA MPASSA.
1994: Renamed ALEXIS II.
1996: Renamed AFRICAN COAST.
2003: Renamed UNITED PROSPERITY.
2009; Broken up in Bangladesh..

Kweichow, 20.03.18 Singapore (leaving Keppel Terminal)

KWIECHOW IMO **9070694** General Cargo/Container ship
18,451g 23,000d 1,202 TEU Length: 185 Breadth: 27.6 Depth: 14.7 Draught: 10.1 (m)

1983: Completed by Minaminippon Shipbuilding Co Ltd., Usuki OT (Shitanoe Shipyard) as CARIBBEAN CHALLENGER
2003: Renamed TASMAN ENDEAVOUR.
2011: Renamed KWEICHOW.
2019: Broken up in India..

Berge Strand

BERGE STRAND IMO **7420089** LPG Tanker
43,849g 55,361d Length: 225 Breadth: 34 Depth: 19.1 Draught: 13.8 (m)

1982: Completed by Oy Wartsila Ab, Turku) as BERGE STRAND.
2007: Renamed BW STRAND.
2008: Renamed GAS BEAUTY I.
2021: Renamed VIET DRAGO