

Southend Branch News and Views

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NOTES

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African Queen

My Queen

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NEWS

Tech tycoon Mike Lynch's 'unsinkable' yacht sank due to design flaw, report finds



A British investigation has found that fatal design flaws left tech entrepreneur Mike Lynch's £32m super yacht Bayesian dangerously vulnerable to capsizing – contradicting builder claims that the vessel was "unsinkable". The interim report presents a desktop study of the facts as we know them. The study has reviewed the yacht's stability, the likely local weather conditions at the time, and the effect of that weather on the yacht. The findings indicate that the extreme wind experienced by Bayesian was sufficient to knock the yacht over. Further, once the yacht had heeled beyond an angle of 70° the situation was irrecoverable.



Major expansion plan submitted for Port of Tilbury

Plans have been submitted to expand the Port of Tilbury by 100 acres (40ha) in Essex.

Construction work on the north bank of the Thames estuary could begin in 2026, with owner Forth Ports hoping it would be operational by 2030.

Plans sent to Thurrock Council showed the Tilbury3 (T3) project would focus on brownfield land that once housed a power station.

The area of land that could be developed is equivalent in size to 70 football pitches.

Forth Ports said T3 would benefit from tax breaks due to its designation as part of the Thames Freeport where normal tax and tariff rules do not apply.

Planning proposals suggested it could accommodate warehouses, container handling infrastructure and vehicles.



The company said it would create habitats for protected species in the area during the works.

It planned to submit a detailed planning application if outline approval was granted.

Ferry order book: a year of deliveries

With a significant number of ships set for, or nearing, completion in 2025, this will be a defining year for launches and deliveries that will shape the future of ferry operations worldwide. Shipyards and ferry operators have now turned their attention to integrating them into fleets and ensuring they deliver optimal operational performance.

One vessel poised to redefine maritime transport is Incat Tasmania's catamaran China Zorrilla, which will be operated by South America's Buquebús. The launch of the world's largest battery-electric ship in May will mark a pivotal moment in maritime history, ushering in a new era of sustainable sea travel.

When China Zorrilla enters service, it will carry over 2,100 passengers and 225 vehicles between Argentina and Uruguay, powered entirely by battery-electric energy. At the heart of this revolutionary vessel is an industry-leading energy

storage system that will provide more than 40-megawatt-hours of power, the largest ever installed on a ship. With over 250 tonnes of batteries, the vessel represents a bold leap forward in emission-free, large-scale ferry transport. China Zorrilla, which is undergoing internal fit-out, will also feature the largest retail shopping space on any ferry in the world, spanning 2,300 square metres.

Incat Tasmania takes delivery of key equipment for Buquebús's China Zorrilla, the world's largest electric ferry

Australia's TT-Line accepted delivery of the first of its two new Spirit of Tasmania ferries from Rauma Marine Constructions in September 2024. It has not been plain sailing however, and Spirit of Tasmania IV has yet to begin service on Bass Strait between Geelong and Devonport. Port infrastructure setbacks in Tasmania have postponed deployment and the ship has spent its first six months laid up in Leith as interim solutions were explored to utilise its capabilities effectively until it can commence operations. These options include chartering the ship to offset expenses and prevent it from remaining idle.

The delays in the delivery of Spirit of Tasmania IV, and the approaching completion of sister ship Spirit of Tasmania V in mid-2025, have added to the anticipation surrounding their arrival. The new ships were expected to significantly boost capacity and enhance the travel experience across Bass Strait, offering modern amenities and much improved comfort for passengers. However, the extended wait has been felt deeply by the Tasmanian community, who have eagerly anticipated the benefits these vessels will bring. With an increased capacity and tailored features, the delayed ships will ultimately provide a much-needed upgrade to the vital crossing, helping to support tourism and the local economy in the long run. The required port upgrades are expected to be finished by February 2027.



TT-Line

TT-Line's Spirit of Tasmania V is expected to be completed by mid-2025 and will eventually operate on Bass Strait between Tasmania and mainland Australia

In Europe, Stena RoRo's eleventh and twelfth E-Flexers, Saint-Malo and Guillaume de Normandie, have entered service on long-term charter with Brittany Ferries. These vessels serve the routes from Portsmouth, England, to the French ports of Caen and Saint-Malo routes, offering accommodation for 1,290 passengers and featuring 387 cabins across four decks.

As with four of the five E-Flexer ships previously delivered to Brittany Ferries, these latest vessels are equipped with multi-fuel engines and a 12-megawatt-hour battery-hybrid system. This allows the ships to operate in and out of port solely on battery power, enabling them to manoeuvre during berthing without relying on their diesel engines. The ships have a maximum speed of 23 knots, or 17.5 knots when operating on battery power alone.

Grandi Navi Veloci's (GNV) new GNV Polaris entered service between Sicily and Sardinia in January. The first of four newbuilds by Guangzhou Shipyard International, the ship accommodates 1,500 passengers in 239 cabins.

The second vessel in the series, GNV Orion, will not be an exact sister ship; it will feature extended accommodation, with more cabins and public spaces, increasing its capacity to 1,785 passengers in 420 cabins. The third and fourth ships, GNV Virgo and GNV Aurora, are the company's first LNG ships and are slated for delivery in 2026.

Caledonian MacBrayne's (CalMac) newest ferry, Glen Sannox, finally entered service earlier in January 2025 after significant build delays. Serving Scotland's Isle of Arran, this dual-fuel vessel can carry up to 1,000 passengers and 127 cars or 16 trucks, and its arrival is a major milestone for the communities it serves, providing much-needed capacity and reliable transport after years of anticipation. The introduction of Glen Sannox is part of CalMac's ongoing fleet renewal project, with sister ship Glen Rosa now expected by the end of the year. Both were originally planned to enter service in 2018-2019.

Another delayed CalMac vessel is Isle of Islay, originally scheduled for delivery in October 2024 but pushed out by four months due to ongoing supply chain issues beyond the shipyard's control. Built to provide the Islay services linking Port Askaig and Port Ellen with Kennacraig on the mainland, this vessel has capacity for up to 450 passengers and 100 cars or 14 trucks.

In January, Turkey's Özata Shipyard held a steel-cutting ceremony for Misterøy, the first of two electric ferries being built for Norwegian operator Torghatten Nord. Designed by The Norwegian Ship Design Company, Misterøy and its sister ship Fløytind will each feature a 1,960-kilowatt-hour battery. At 76.85 metres in length, both ferries will be capable of carrying 202 passengers and 60 vehicles. These zero-emission ferries are specifically designed to operate on the Festvåg–Misten route, linking Bodø and Kjerringøy in Norway. The vessels are expected to be delivered in June and September 2026, significantly enhancing sustainable transportation in the region.

Meanwhile, in the USA, contracts for a long-awaited series of new hybridelectric car and passenger ferries for Washington State Ferries (WSF) were expected to be awarded in February 2025, with three shipyards in contention. The fleet will consist of five 1,500-passenger, 160-vehicle hybrid-electric vessels, with propulsion systems designed and supplied by ABB. WSF has indicated a preference to split the contract between two low bidders, allowing for simultaneous construction at two shipyards and accelerating delivery. If this plan is approved, the first two vessels could enter service in 2028, followed by two more in 2029 and the final vessel in 2030, significantly enhancing reliability on WSF's Mukilteo-Clinton and Seattle-Bremerton routes. Damen Shipyards Galati in Romania laid the keel for the first two of four 81metre fully electric ferries for Canadian operator BC Ferries in November 2024. The keel laying ceremony marked an important milestone in the third phase of construction of the Island-class Ferries, which will bring the total number of Damen vessels in the BC Ferries fleet to 10. Currently, Damen has six fully electric ferries under contract to be constructed at the Galati yard. This includes the four Island-class ferries, which are scheduled to be operational in Canada in 2027, as well as two ferries for the City of Toronto.

Scandlines' new emission-free ferry completes first sea trial



Danish ferry operator Scandlines' new emission-free ferry Futura has successfully completed the first of two sea trials in the Sea of Mamara in Turkey.

The sea acceptance tests were completed following auxiliary systems and inclining tests at the Cemre shipyard's outfitting quay. During the sea trial, the shipyard tested the ship's systems under load in cooperation with Scandlines and under the supervision of Lloyd's Register. Successful completion of these tests and the first sea trial means the ship is complete and ready to sail, and the crew is trained in the ship's operation and maintenance.

Once the remaining sea trial has been successfully completed, the ferry, which will accommodate up to 140 passengers and 66 freight units, will be handed

over to Scandlines to begin operations on the Fehmarn Belt in the Baltic Sea, between the ports of Rødby, Denmark, and Puttgarden, Germany.

Futura will be officially christened at a ceremony later in 202

Viking floats out new ship for the River Nile

Viking has floated out its newest river cruise ship, the 82-guest Viking Thoth, during a ceremony at the Massara shipyard in Cairo, Egypt. The ship, which is due to be delivered in October 2025, will now be moved to a nearby outfitting dock for final construction and interior build-out.

Viking Thoth has been inspired by Viking's award-winning river and ocean ships and features their signature Scandinavian design. It's a sister ship to Viking Amun and features 41 staterooms, a square bow and an indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace.



Viking's new ship touched water for the first time at the floating out ceremony in Cairo, Egypt

Once delivered, Viking Thoth will be Viking's eighth river vessel in Egypt and will sail Viking's 12-day 'Pharaohs & Pyramids' itinerary. Guests will have the opportunity to visit iconic sites such as the Great Pyramids of Giza, the necropolis of Sakkara, the Mosque of Muhammad Ali, or the Grand Egyptian Museum, as well as the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens and the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings.

Viking plans to add four new ships to its Egyptian fleet in the next two years, which will mean it will be operating 12 vessels on the Nile River by 2027.

VISITORS



Santa Isabel Built 2010 85676 GRT Denmark

Current Position London Gateway



World Traveller Built 2022 9930 GRT Portugal

Current Position London



Murcia Maersk Built 2018 214489 GRT Denmark

Current Position En route Algeciras



Msc Hong Kong V Built 2002 53453 GRT Liberia

Current Position En route Antwerp



Athina Carras Built 2012 44190 GRT Greece

Current Position Tilbury



Vaga Maersk Built 2019 34882GRT Denmark

Current Position En route Rotterdam



Msc Napoli Built 2024 151702 GRT Liberia

Current Position Atlantic en route UAE



Namrata Built 2008 57144 GRT Malta

Current Position North Sea



Electra GR Built 2019 23765 GRT Marshall Islands

Current Position En route Gdynia



Msc Oriane Built 2008 66399 GRT Panama

Current Position En route Le Havre



Emerald Leader Built 2008 40986 GRT Bahamas

Current Position Cuxhaven



Dintelborg Built 1999 6280 GRT Netherland

Current Position Rouen



Los Angeles Express Built 2014 148667 GRT Singapore

Current Position En route Tanger



Seadream II Built 1985 4333 GRT Bahamas

Current Position En route Kiel Canal

operated by <u>SeaDream Yacht Club</u>. was formerly named Sea Goddess II and operated by Cunard. Followed by a transfer to Seabourn in 2000 where she became Seabourn Goddess II. In 2001 sold to Sea Dream Yacht Club.



Manchester Maersk Built 2018 214286 GRT Denmark

Current Position Tanger



HMS Sutherland Built GRT



Navig8Wolf Built 2023 62000 GRT Marshall Islands

Current Position En route Malta



Norwegian Dawn Built 2002 92250 GRT Bahamas

Current Position Baltic



Morten Maersk Built 2014 194849 GRT Denmark

Current Position En route Hamburg



Msc Judith Built 2006 89954 GRT Panama

Current Position West Africa en route Mauritius



Msc Cassandre Built 2022 113697 GRT Liberia

Current Position Antwerp



Brussels Express Built 2014 153224 GRT Germany

Current Position West Africa en route Singapore



Tayma Express Built 2012 141077 GRT Liberia

Current Position West Africa en route Oman



Maersk Londrina Built 2012 90107 GRT Denmark

Current Position North Sea en route Antwerp



ML Freya Built 2017 24133 GRT Italy

Current Position En route Zeebrugge



Madrid Maersk Built 2017 214286 GRT Denmark

Current Position West Africa en route Singapore



Tomini Alize Built 2016 24940 GRT Marshall Islands

Current Position En route New Haven



Aquasmeralda Built2021 29725 GRT Liberia

Current Position North Sea en route New York



Madsison MaerskBuilt 2014 194849 GRT DenmarkCurrent Position North Sea en route Pelepas Malaysia



Green Pioneer Built 2010 2874 GRT Singapore

Current Position En route Algeciras



Mumbai Maersk Built 2018 214286 Denmark

Current Position West Africa en route Singapore



Red Orchid Built 2015 34618 GRT Panama

Current Position Mediterranean en route Malta



Elbtower Built 2024 18292 GRT Portugal

Current Position En route Setubal



Msc Lisa Built GRT

Current Position



BG Red Built2024 18292 GRT Portugal

Current Position Liverpool



Msc Lyon III Built 2024 74785 GRT Liberia

Current Location West Africa en route South Africa



Istanbul Express Built 2016 94684 GRT Panama

Current Location Caribbean en route Columbia



Svitzer Tiger Built 2025 409 GRT GB



Msc Mina Built 2019 228741 GRT Panama

Current Position South Africa En route UAE



Anthea Y Built 2015 994416 GRT Liberia

Current Position Caribbean



RSS Formidable



BG Orange Built 2024 18292 GRT Portugal

Current Position En route Rotterdam



Msc Nederland III Built 1992 37071 GRT Panama

Current position En route Lome off West Africa



Navig 8 Matrtinez Built 2011 43904 GRT Liberia

Current Position En route Lome off West Africa



Lily Bolten Built 2009 19972 GRT Marshall islands

Current position Rostock



Le Bellot Built 2020 9988 GRT France

Current Location Faroe Islands



Dong A Metis Built 2010 60986 GRT Panama

Current Position West Africa



Mathilde Maersk Built 2015 194849 GRT Denmark

Current Position Indian Ocean en route Singapore



Atlanta Express Built 2014 148867 GRT Liberia

Current Position En route UAE off East Africa

ASUKA 11



An unusual visitor to Tilbury on 23rd May was the Japanese flagged cruise ship Asuka 11. She left Yokohama on 31st March on what is billed as "her last world cruise". The cruise is programmed as being 103 nights long. She arrived from Rouen and was due to depart for Boston, USA, the same evening. She is being replaced, on long-distance cruises at least, by the imaginatively named ASUKA 111, which was completed in April and is due to start her first cruise on 20th July.



She was built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries at Nagasaki as CRYSTAL HARMONY for Crystal Cruises. She was laid down on 14th April 1989, launched on 30th September 1989 and completed on 21st June 1990. In 2006 she was transferred to the parent company, Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), refurbished and renamed Asuka 11, replacing an earlier ship, ASUKA. Her capacity is 960 passengers with 545 crew.


She is of 50,142 gt with dimensions 241.0m x 29.6m x 7.8m. She is dieselelectric powered, with four 8-cylinder MAN 8L58/64 diesels of 32,800 Kw combined, 6 generators of 48,650 KVa total and two ABB OY electric motors of 24,000 Kw combined driving 2 screws and giving 21 knots. She has 2 bow thrusters.



She had an engine room fire on her maiden cruise in 1990 near Christobal in Panama and another in Yokohama in June 2020. A pretty ship and hopefully she will soldier on for a few more years.

WSS QUIZ QUESTIONS JUNE 2025

- 1. The film "A Night to Remember" was a story about which ship?
- 2. How many cruise ships are operated by TUI Group's cruise brand Marella Cruises?
- 3. Forth Ports Group operates eight ports in the UK. Seven of these ports are in Scotland and one is in England. Which is the port in England?
- 4. The ferry HSC Manannan mainly operates on which route?

- 5. Which port has the registration GY?
- 6. The Gatun Locks and Miraflores Locks are on which canal?
- 7. Who died in 1967 whilst attempting a world speed record on Coniston Water on board *Bluebird*?
- 8. A new all-weather RNLI vessel recently began operations in Clacton. What class of lifeboat is this vessel?
- 9. Of the 35 Atlantic liners to hold the Blue Riband for the highest average speed crossing the Atlantic Ocean, 25 were British, followed by five German, three American, and one each from which other two countries?

10. What is the name of the French Navy's aircraft carrier?

MYSTERY SHIPS 92



Tern Arrow 18 09 92



Merrrur Sea 31 01 93



Majo 06 03 92



M/Retta 22 04 93



Carol Bolten Solent 03 09 2002



Baltiysk 27 09 92

NEWS FROM PEMBROKESHIRE

Luxury yacht 'Akula'

Although Fishguard attracts about twenty-five cruise ships each summer, it is certainly not a magnet for luxury yachts owned by the mega-rich. However, one such yacht, the 'Akula', did pay a brief visit in April this year.



The 'Akula' anchored in Fishguard Bay

The 'Akula' is quite a new ship, built in 2024 by Rossinavi in Italy. Having worked its way northward from the Mediterranean she overwintered in Portsmouth, before setting off along the south coast of England and up through the Irish Sea towards Scotland. For the Fishguard section of the voyage, the vessel was *en route* from Bristol and had spent the previous day in Whitesands Bay, near St David's – a common anchoring point for oil tankers waiting for a berth at Milford Haven. She just spent one day anchored in Fishguard Bay, from where one of its tenders came into the harbour presumably for visiting and/or supplies. That night she sailed for Porthmadog and then onto Conway Bay in North Wales.

She has an unusual appearance with the superstructure extending through to the bow, where there is a forward 'sky observation lounge'. The forward superstructure and the hull are painted bright red.



Close-up view of the 'Akula' in Fishguard Bay, with one of her two tenders at the stern

The 'Akula' is 60m long, 1,241 gross tons and flies the flag of the Cayman Islands. She has diesel-electric propulsion powered by four Caterpillar generators, with twin Veth L-drive thrusters (azimuth pods with counterrotating propellers). This combination is intended to give an efficient and quiet running – beneficial both to guests and for marine life observations. She has a normal cruising speed of 11.5 knots and top speed of 14 knots. She has an iceclass hull for polar explorations and a dynamic positioning system. She is designed to carry up to 10 passengers and 13 crew. When not being used by her owner, the vessel is intended to be available for scientific expeditions, for which she has laboratory facilities, and possibly for private charter.



Interior view of the 'Akula' International)

(Photo: Boat

The ship's name, 'Akula', means shark in Russian and Ukrainian. Apparently, the name was chosen as it refers to a class of nuclear attack submarines first used by the Soviet Navy in 1986. There is a model (made by the owner) of this type of submarine displayed on board, together with many other nautical artefacts. The owner's name is not explicitly stated in articles about the vessel, but a number of news sites report that the owner is believed to be Jonathan Faiman, a co-founder of Ocado and previously a bond trader at Goldman Sachs. According to Wikipedia, he has had a controversial career and has had both Russian and Ukrainian business connections.



Interior view showing the 1:90 model of an 'Akula' class submarine (Photo: www.luxurylaunches.com)

From Fishguard, it is planned that the vessel will sail to Scotland, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, the Caribbean and Central America. Perhaps, this visit will start a trend of luxury y

LAST OF THE SAILOR MEN IN TRADE

I can recall the day that my interest in the Thames sailing barge really took off. My family had recently moved "down the hill" into Old Leigh and I was cycling home from Westcliff High School as it was a bright summer's day> As I turned the corner onto Leigh Hill I was looking down on Leigh Creek and there were two steel sailing barges, both being towed by motor barges. They were Goldsmith's CALLUNA and CARINA with stack of timber on deck . One was being towed by the motor barge QUEEN and the other by the M.B. PIMLICO . All four flew the red flag , defaced by a white crescent moon of London and Rochester Trading Co. (Later Crescent Shipping)

Although this was my first sighting I already knew a bit about these vessels , largely from Harvey Benham's excellent book "Down Topsail". Enough, anyway to know that Goldsmith barges had little to do with LTRTC, unless of course a takeover had occurred. Which I found out later was nearer the truth as Goldsmith had just sold most of their 160 ton capacity vessels to the Rochester firm. There was a similar story behind PIMLICO which LTRC had recently acquired from Sidney Ellis of Sittingbourne.



MAID OF CONNAUGHT

There were two more visits from ex Goldsmith iron pots that Year. CAMBRIA and KISMET , but the majority of Leigh cargoes ,mainly timber and ballast,

were carried by local motor barges – PERSEVERE, ADA MARY, MARY ANN, MAUD OF MUNSTER, MAID OF CONNAUGHT. One notable exception was LRTC's wooden barge FEDERATION . Having discharged her cargo timber, she left "over the top". In other words not following Leigh Creek or the barge run, but sailing (under full sail!) straight out towards Canvey Point. She must have had a huge tide to do this

After a while , barge watching at Leigh became somewhat tame , so I sought further fields by visiting Southend several times. This was somewhat disappointing as I only -ever saw two sailormen there- ASHINGDON, the last commercial sailing barge to be owned in Southend and unusually BRIAN BORU of Pipers of Greenwich .

But voyages on my father's motor cruiser ISLANDER presented a much better chance of sightings. These trips were largely to the rivers Medway and Swale, but also one long holiday up the East Coast to Pin Mill in Suffolk and a couple of anchorages on the Thames.

The easiest run was to Queenborough at the West mouth of the Swale and at that time, late forties, the little port was a hive of activity. Quite apart from yachts and fishing vessels, fairly large ships and their attendant tugs used to pass through the anchorage on their way to Ridham Dock and there was quite a lot of barge activity, mostly motorized.

High on the mudflats stood the former Goldsmith 180 tonner SCOT ,awaiting sale, still fully rigged . Eventually she went to Sadd's , the Maldon timber merchant who used her as an unrigged lighter. At that time Queenboro was notorious for it's foul-smelling glue works, to which barges still delivered a few cargoes mainly rancid delights, such as hooves and horns , which have been ingredients in glue manufacture . Among these were MN, an LRTC motor barge and the last survivor of Craske's ABC fleet and Brices's PLOVER , reputed to be a bad sailor.



sailing barge again? But she did.

There was much coming and going in the harbour, for Queenborough was the western entrance to the River Swale and was also a good stopping point for barges on their way further north. (It struck me that every other building in the town seemed to be a pub!). Among barges calling for this reason were the motor barges IRONSIDES and SURREY. Most local motor barges were often to be seen, including DEE and PRIDE OF SHEPPEY which seemed inseparable, always on the move together. There was also the motor barge C.I.V. which sported a yellow wheelhouse which looked as if it had come off a Motor

Torpedo Boat. Who, then, would have thought that she would become a

THOMA II

Not very far from Queenborough ,on the other side of the Medway, was Port Victoria, once a ferry port and later a good spot to watch Medway barge matches, at that time organized by the Marina Club at Hoo. We did this a couple of times and, among others saw PETREL,VIPER,IOTA,LYFORD ANNA and the elegant THOMA II take part. The last mentioned had a clipper bow and a counter stern and was painted white with white sails. She was destined to becomes a motor yachts on the Mediterranean. Also seen from the vantage point was the rather ugly motor barge H.T. WILS ploughing upstream with a deck load of timber.



One year ISLANDER did an extra long voyage to above Maidstone which was ideal for barge spotting (which had by then, taken the place of train spotting for me). As we entered the Medway we passed our first group of barges . These were all owned by Solomon Brice of Hoo and were discharging coal for Sheerness gas Works. They included VIOLET, NELSON and G.C.B.. First stop, after Queenborough ,was Upnor where we took the mast down, before going above bridges. Here I saw the, former wooden Goldsmith sailor man VIPER, by then a yacht and the London barge ADRIATIC on a slipway and evidently in the middle of being converted to power. As we passed through Chatham and Rochester there was plenty to see. On her own singing to a mooring was ASHINGDON, the last barge owned in Southend, apparently awaiting a buyer. Nearby was a much bigger group consisting of all(bar one) pf all the 160 tonners acquired by LRTC from Goldsmiths= ASPHODEL, CARINA, CALLUNA, CAMBRIA, KISMET, GEISHA, SPERANZA, SENTA, LORNA ,and YARANA all stripped of their masts, spars and sails and (if at all) as lighters. ASTRILD was missing from this group and later we were to see her loading cement at Cuxton. She was indeed the last of this group to trade under sail, not being scrapped until 1954.

It was a quiet time at LRTC's yard with only GEORGE and ELIZA visible, having an auxiliary engine fitted> Once through Rochester Bridge we could see Brice's Point Barge Yard where two of their barges -ROWLAND and R.S.JACKSON lay, looking derelict without their sails, although later that year we were to see ROWLAND under full sail in the Thames ,so it was not the end of her> R.S. JACKSON took her name from her original owners solicitor.

Further upstream we passed the paper mills at New Hythe which were quiet with only the ex-Goldsmith motor barge SAXON alongside discharging paper. These mills ,for whatever reason never wanted their paper carried by LRTC craft , preferring their subsidiary Hutsons, although this firm had been taken over in the 1930's> For this reason , a proportion of newly acquired barges were allocated to Hutson and continued to fly their house flag until the 1950's. At Allington we locked into fresh water. Interesting to note that the transition from salt to fresh water caused wooden barges to leak badly and sometimes to sink.



MOUSEME

Waiting to lock out was Kent River Catchment's little barge LLANDUDNO, laden with ragstone for seawall repairs, while later we saw LRTC's MOUSME lock in .The only ba4rge at Maidstone was BRITISH KING one of two barges known to collide, resulting in such bad damage that BRITISH KING was immediately converted to a motorman and not sailing again until a brief rerigging many years later.

Above Maidstone, at Tovil was another paper wharf ,unoccupied at the that time, but decorated with the painted names of many barges. I can only remember two SURREY and GRETA, a Dunkirk veteran that is still sailing today. No doubt bored crews, given a bit of painting to do, had left their vessel's names for posterity. Even further upriver was another wharf where a number of Wakeley's barges were loading Kentish ragstone ,no doubt for the repairs to Essex seawalls.

There were few sightings on the way back but, at a sand wharf on the seaward side of Allington Lock were a number of sailormen, reduced to power, loading sand. They included KING, QUEEN, VICTOR, IMPERIAL and CORONATION. Funny that barges with such patriotic names should come together.

GED

To be continued

ANDREWS RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE SOUTH COAST

My Uncle in the 1960's had a Dauntless then upgraded to a Sea King. He kept them in the mud "marina" at Hoo. Well at that time the "marina" was a number of concrete barges with holes smashed in them so they sank. You took your life in your hands walking across the.



Oddly he never sailed outside the Medway. Just down to Stangate Creek for Saturday night and back again. I remember anchoring in Stangate Creek and as the tide went out you sank below the mudbanks which even cut out the noise from BP's Isle of Grain refinery. Rowing around in his dinghy was very soothing and so few boats anchored there, unlike these days. It was because of sailing there made me to decide to join BP Tanker Company in 1965 as an Engineering Cadet.

My uncle finally bought a Albin Vega, which I never understood, as she was a fin keel (think Medway mud at Hoo) and my aunt who was a very good sailor could not make him sail outside the Medway! When I go t my Mirror 16 one of the first things I did was to sail from Gillingham out of the Medway, across to Leigh and pick up some cockles, to eat on the way back and sailed close to the masts of the Richard Montgomery. Cannot do that nowadays.



The Mirror 16 was a great dinghy. Same dimensions as a Wayfarer but much lighter with a double bottom and 70% more sail area. If you capsized so long as you did not turn turtle (which should not have happened as she had a foam filled mast, though I did) you righted her and the water poured out of the openings in the transom and off you went – no bailing at all. I did turn her turtle in the Hamble with a friend from BP Tankers when we got the mast caught under the trot moorings and the only way was to undo the shroud pin (whilst under tension) and pull her up. I had my British Seagull on the transom which, as you have guessed, went under water. I motored home (To Croydon) that night and the next day I just pulled the start cord and the engine started without any bother. Given that the fuel was 1:12 or sometimes 1:20 two stroke everything was covered in an oil film so no wonder there was no water damage!!

PICTURES FROM STUART RECENT

TRIP TO IJMUIDEN



Ambience



Svitzer Tiger



Andria



Stena Pro Marine



Maersk Lanco



Delphine Zeebrugge

FORMIDABLE CLASS FRIGATES

A recent visitor to the Thames was RSS Formidable . Unfortunately my pictures didn't materialise



The Formidable-class multi-role stealth frigates are multi-mission derivatives of the French Navy's *La Fayette*-class frigate in service with the Republic of Singapore Navy. The six ships form the First Flotilla of the Navy.

In March 2000, the Singapore Ministry of Defence awarded the contract to DCNS for the design and construction of six frigates. Under the arrangement, DCNS was to design and build the first frigate in its Lorient yard in France while the remaining five frigates were to be built locally by Singapore Technologies (ST) Marine at its Benoi yard in Singapore. Subsequent maintenance and mid-life retrofit will be done by ST Marine.

Construction of Formidable began in late 2002, when the keel was laid down in Lorient in November 2002.

Radar cross section (RCS) reduction features have been incorporated into the Formidable class design, with inclined hull sides and bulwarks as well as concealment of ship boats and replenishment-at-sea equipment behind low-RCS curtains. The Formidable class have a significantly reduced profile than *the La Fayette* class and its other derivatives, due to the smaller superstructure and the use of enclosed sensor mast technology. The frigate is also constructed entirely of steel, unlike the La Fayette class which makes extensive use of weight-saving composite structures in its aft superstructure block. The frigates also possess better sea keeping qualities and are able to stay at sea for longer periods of time.

The frigates are equipped with the Thales Herakles passive electronically scanned array multi-function radar, which provides three-dimensional surveillance for up to (155.3 mi . The radar provides all-round automatic search and tracking of both air and surface targets, and is integrated with the MBDA Aster air defence system Utilising the DCNS Sylver vertical launch system , each frigate is equipped with 32 cells. It is reported that the frigates have a special surface-to-air missile configuration, combining the Thales Herakles radar with the Sylver A50 launcher and a mix of Aster 15 and 30 missiles.

Each frigate has a span of influence that stretches up to about 200 nmi (where it acts as the Navy's mobile operations center out at sea and receives information from sister ships and aerial assets deployed within the range. The Combat Management System will then make sense of the different data, establish an accurate picture of the area of operations, and send the information back to shore and to its army and air force counterparts.[This increases battlespace awareness and allows little time for the enemy to react due to the short sensor-to-shooter loops

The frigates are equipped with Boeing Harpoon missiles and Oto Melara 76 mm guns for surface defence. The Harpoon missile has a range of 70 nmi and uses active radar guidance. It is armed with a 500 lb warhead. There is space for as many as 24 Harpoon missiles at the center of ship making it the most well armed ship of its class. The gun fires 13 lb shells to a maximum range of 33,000 yd at a firing rate of up to 120 rounds per minute.

The frigates are also equipped with the EDO Corporation active low frequency towed sonar to enable long range submarine detection and classification, as well as EuroTorp A244/S Mod 3 lightweight torpedoes fired from two B515 triple-tube launchers hidden behind the bulwark.

The frigates are equipped with Sikorsky S-70B naval helicopters. Helicopter Long Range Active Sonar (HELRAS) dipping sonar, EuroTorp A244/S Mod 3

torpedoes and a Raytheon AAS-44 electro-optic system to provide infrared detection and tracking. The naval helicopters will be raised as a squadron in the Republic of Singapore Air Force and piloted by air force pilots, but the system operators will be from the Navy.

On 5 May 2023, the Ministry of Defence of Singapore announced plans to update the capabilities of the Formidable class frigates in order to maintain technological edge. On 14 December 2023, ST Engineering announced a contract was received for the upgrade which it expects to complete by 2028.



ARM CUAUHTEMOC

IN HER PRIME

At about 8.20 pm, local time, on Saturday 16th May, the Mexican Navy training ship Cuauhtemoc collided with the deck of the Brooklyn Bridge, causing the loss of two on board with injuries to a further 22 people, 3 of which are critical, as all three upper masts came down. The bridge received only superficial damage. As is the custom when she is ceremonially entering or leaving a port, as well as illuminating her masts and yards with hundreds of LED lamps, many of her crew were "manning the yards" and regrettably this was the cause of the deaths and injuries. It all happened very quickly, and by 8.30, the accident had occurred, and the bridge had been closed temporarily to road traffic.



The ship was on a 254 day "Goodwill Mission", having have left her base at Acapulco on 6th April. The itinerary included Jamaica, Cuba, Iceland, UK, Spain, France, Norway, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. In July, she was due to call at Aberdeen for the start of the Tall Ships Race. On board were 153 permanent crew and 84 trainees.



She had berthed at Pier 17 adjacent to the South Street Seaport Museum downstream of the bridge and had been open to the public for several days. In the late afternoon of 16th May she left the berth for bunkering at Bay Bridge Dock prior to putting to sea. It was never intended that she would pass under the bridge, as it was known that her air-draught was too great for the headroom under it. At the time of impact, headroom under the bridge was 41.1m. The air-draught of the ship is 48.2m.



Sadly, she lost all power and reversed into the bridge. Video images show her moving quite quickly towards the bridge, some reports say she was doing 6 knots when she hit the bridge, either with her diesel in reverse gear or just carried by wind and tide. The East River has a very strong tide, but apparently the accident occurred shortly after low tide. The captain said that he had "lost steering of the ship after the rudder stopped working". There was a harbour pilot on board and a tug, the CHARLES D. McALLISTER was in attendance as required by the Coastguard. The tug had assisted her coming off her berth at Pier 17 but had then reverted to just escorting her. In hindsight, the tug should have stayed longer in the assisting role.

Most of those on board were flown home to Mexico on the Sunday evening, leaving just a few essential crew members. The ship is, as at19th May, berthed upstream of both the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges at Pier 36 so that full assessments can be made as to the cause of the accident and the damage to the ship. The work is to include an inspection of the rudder by divers. The investigations are to be jointly conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Mexican naval authorities

THE SHIP



The name Cuauhtemoc in Aztec means "the one who descends like an eagle", and is named after the last Aztec emperor who fought against the Spanish Conquistador Herman Cortes. He was caught and executed in 1525.

The Cuauhtemoc is an auxiliary three masted barque. Her design evolved from the pre-war German training ships, GORCH FOCK, HORST WESSEL and ALBERT LEO SCHLAGETER built by Blohm & Voss at Hamburg. She was designed by the Madrid-based Senermar Engineering Design Company. She was the last and largest (and prettiest) of four half-sister sail training ships built by Astilleros Celaya S.A. at Bilbao in the 60s, 70s and 80s, The GLORIA for the Colombian navy, the GUAYAS for the Ecuadorian navy and the SIMON BOLIVAR for the Venezuelan navy.



1986

She was laid down on 24th July 1981, launched on 9th January 1982 as the CELAYA and commissioned on 29th July 1982. Her displacement is 1800 tons and her dimensions are 79.5 m (length of hull) x 11.99m x 5.4m. Her air-draught is 48.2m. Her hull is of steel and her masts and spars are partly of steel and partly aluminium. She has an 838 Kw auxiliary diesel engine which can give her up to10 knots. During her time with the Mexican Navy she has trained 27 cadet classes, circumnavigated the globe 3 times and sailed more than 800,000 miles. She has completed 28 cruises to over 217 ports in 63 countries.

OP SAIL



CHARLES D McALLISTER: she is a tug built in Jacksonville Florida in 1967 as the ESSO GARDEN STATE. In 2003 she was acquired by the McAllister Towing & Transportation Company of New York and renamed Charles D. McAllister. She

is of 197 gt with dimensions 94' x 29' x 10'. She is powered by twin Caterpillar 12-D398 turbo diesels of 1800 hp driving 2 screws with kurt nozzles and flanking rudders.



SS ALMOND BRANCH

ALMOND

BRANCH

A small feature in the media caught my eye recently, an amateur diver and treasure hunter had bought a wreck off the Cornwall coast for £300.00. Mr D. Robinson, to the dismay of his wife, bought the wreck of the steam ship ALMOND BRANCH, which lies in 54 metres of water, after checking the legality with H.M. Receiver of Wreck.

The Almond Branch was built as the SS ASHMORE by William Doxford & Sons Ltd. of Sunderland in 1896. She was of 3461 grt with dimensions 103.6m x 13.8m x 7,4m. She was powered by a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine of 300 notional horsepower, which was also built by William Doxford, and which gave a cruising speed of 12 knots. She also was, at least at first, schooner rigged.



ALMOND

BRANCH AT PORTLAND OREGON





She was of the "turret deck" type, a hull design common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The hull of the type was rounded and stepped inward above the waterline. This gave some advantages in terms of strength, but more importantly, it allowed these ships to pay lower canal tolls under the tonnage measurement rules then in effect. Of the 180 or so ships of the turret deck type that were built, William Doxford built the majority.



HAVING COLLIDED WITH STERNWHEELER VULCAN BY THE MORRISON BRIDGE IN PORTLAND OREGON

The Ashmore's first owner was the Belgian-American Maritime Co. of Liverpool, but in 1897, only a year after completion, she was sold to F.W. Ritson's Nautilus Steamship Co. Ltd. of Sunderland, which traded as the Branch Line. She was renamed Almond Blossom. The Branch Line, around this time had ten vessels, mostly turret deck ships built by Doxfords. They mostly traded between London and the west coast of South America with general dry cargoes but also were involved in the tramping trade. Presumably the turret deck etc saved the company fees each time the ships traversed the Panama Canal. The Branch Line survived until 1931, after having several losses in WW1.

On 27th November 1917, she was on a voyage from London to west and central South America with a cargo of coal plus 1000 tons of general cargo. She was attacked by the German U-Boat UB 57 when some 2 miles off Dodman Point on the south coast of Cornwall. She was armed with a single 4" gun, but was hit by a torpedo from the submarine and sank One member of her 43 man crew was lost.



UB 57

UB 57 was a UB-111 type submarine, built by A.G. Weser in Bremen and commissioned on 30th July 1917. Her displacement was 516 tons(surfaced) and 712 tons (submerged) and her dimensions were 55.85m x 5.8m x 3.72m. She was powered by 2 Korting 4-stroke 6-cylinder diesels of 780 kw and 2 Siemens-Schuckert electric motors of 580 kw. These gave 13.4 knots when surfaced and 7.8 knots when submerged. She carried five 500mm torpedo tubes and an 88 mm deck gun.



UB-111 CLASS SUBMARINE

After a short but successful career (45 merchant ships totalling 112,535 grt sunk), she was lost with all hands on 14th August 1918, hitting a mine off the Belgian coast near Zeebrugge. The wreck was only positively identified in April 2025. The wreck is upright and almost completely buried, with only the conning tower and part of the deck gun visible.

А



UB 57 MULTIBEAM IMAGE

NEPTUNE STAR 25



Hitting the shipping news columns recently was the "Handysize" geared bulk carrier Neptune Star 25. She is in the middle of a bitter dispute between her two former joint owners, and is being broken up at Gadani Beach, Pakistan.



She was built as the SEA HAPPINESS by Imabari Shipbuilding of Imabari, Japan in 1996. She is of 25,398 gt with dimensions 159.94m x 26.0m x 9.815m. She is powered by an Akasaka 6EUC45LA engine of 7200 kw. In November 2002 she was renamed PANTOKRATOR, and in January 2008, NEPTUNE STAR 25.



In November 2023 she was sold by the Vietnam Ocean Shipping Co. to OK Shipping for \$2.8 million. OK Shipping was a joint venture between Friends Shipping and Elinkar Shipping & Ship Management. She traded happily for OK Shipping, under the Tanzanian flag until January 2025, when she was fixed to carry iron ore pellets from Bandar Abbas in Iran to China.



It is alleged by Friends that Elinkar and its Iranian partner removed the crew from the ship which left the port with its AIS transponder turned off. The AIS was apparently only turned back on as the ship approached Gadani Beach on 22^{nd} March. Documents submitted by Friends showed that Elinkar sold the ship to a cash buyer, Last Voyage DMCC, on 5th March for \$2.2 million.



AT GADANI BEACH

Friends took steps to arrest the ship by lodging a \$2.14 million claim with the High Court of Balochistan in Quetta, made up from \$2.14 million being its share of the value of the ship, with the rest relating to ship management costs. On 4th April, the Warrant was granted, and demolition work ordered to stop.

At the beginning of May, Friends told the court that it had no objection to the recycling work continuing, so breaking began again. The court ordained that no scrap metal should be sold until the case was resolved. The case could run and run, but without the revenue from selling the scrap, the recycling could take a long time.

THE CLIPPERS TAEPING AND ARIEL AND THE GREAT TEA RACE OF 1866

Tea races and the 1866–67 tea season

In the middle third of the 19th century, the clippers which carried cargoes of tea from China to Britain would compete in informal races to be first ship to dock in London with the new crop of each season. The Great Tea Race of 1866 was keenly followed in the press, with an extremely close finish. Many bets were placed on the outcome of the race, in London, Hong Kong, and the ports of Britain, and by the captains and crews of the vessels involved.

Taeping, Ariel and the other contenders

There were five front runners for the 1866 Tea Race:

- Ariel, launched in 1865. She was thought to be the fastest clipper of her day, being designed for excellent performance in light winds. The downside to this was that in a strong gale, sail had to be reduced rapidly or the ship even hove to, as her extreme lines left her susceptible to waves breaking over the ship. She was of composite construction of wooden planking on an iron framework. She was built by Robert Steele & Company in Greenock on the Clyde. She was 853 tons, measuring 197.4 feet (60.2 m) x 33.9 feet x 21 feet (6.4 m).
- Taeping was also a composite ship built by Robert Steele & Co, being launched in 1863. On her maiden voyage she was dismasted in a typhoon off Formosa, losing her foremast and main and mizzen topmasts. After repairs, she then made a remarkably fast passage of 89 days to London. She measured 183.7 feet (56.0 m) length on deck, had a beam of 31.1 ft (9.5 m) and a depth of hold of 19.9 ft (6.1 m) feet. She was 767 tons.
- *Fiery Cross* had been the first tea clipper home in 1861, 1862, 1863 and 1865. As a slightly older ship, built in 1860, she predated the widespread acceptance of composite construction, so was built of wood. Nevertheless, she was full of the latest technology such as steel masts.
- Serica, launched in 1863, was another ship built by Robert Steele & Company, and the penultimate wooden clipper from that yard before they moved to composite construction. She was the first ship home from China in 1864.
- *Taitsing* was another Clyde-built ship, of composite construction. She was launched from the yard of Charles Connell & Co. of Glasgow in 1865, so was on her first trip to China.

In May 1866 the clippers loaded tea in in Foochow (Fuzhou) and the five leading contenders (out of 16 in total) sailed on 30th or 31st May.
The route from the China tea ports to London was across the China Sea, then the Indian Ocean, passing Mauritius, rounding the southern tip of Africa into the Atlantic, generally passing to the west of the Azores before turning towards the English Channel. The major variations were in the China Sea, with different strategies to pick up favourable winds. A direct route to the Indian Ocean was through the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra. The five ships leading the 1866 race all headed for the Sunda Strait.

Though these ships were out of sight of each other for much of their passage back to England, they were a few days apart for most of that time. During the race, the leadership shifted between *Taeping, Ariel* and *Serica*.

Approaching the final stages of the race, *Ariel* was first to get a pilot on board and approaching South Foreland off the Kent Coast had a short lead. Both ships signalled for a tug. *Taeping* had a better tug, so she took the lead as they were towed round the coastline of Kent and into the Thames.

Taeping arrived at Gravesend some 55 minutes before *Ariel*, but that gave her no advantage as both ships had to wait for the tide to rise sufficiently. *Ariel* had the shorter distance to go – arriving outside East India Dock gates at 9:00 pm, but the tide was still too low for the gates to open. *Taeping* carried on up-river to London Docks. Here, unlike the entrance to the East India Dock, there was an inner and outer set of gates. *Taeping's* shallower draft allowed her through the outer gates, then they topped up the lock from the dock basin. She passed through at 9:47 pm on 6th September. *Ariel* entered East India Dock 28 minutes later at 10:15 pm.

While *Ariel* and *Taeping* were racing up the English coast of the Channel, *Serica* had been speeding along the French side. She just managed, at 11:30 pm, to get into the West India Dock before the lock gates were shut.

Fiery Cross was not far behind the first three; she sighted the Isle of Wight at 10:00 am on 7th September but, off the coast of Kent she was compelled to anchor because the wind had now risen to gale force. She docked in London at 8:00 am on 8th September. *Taitsing* arrived on the morning of 9th September.

So three tea clippers had arrived, in commercial terms, at the same time. This would cause a glut in the market for new crop tea. Tea merchants were obliged to pay a "premium" of 10 shillings per ton, as written into the bills of lading, to the winning ship. There was a risk that they would refuse to pay on a technicality, calling the race a dead heat or void because there was no outright winner. Therefore, *Taeping's* owners agreed to share the premium with *Ariel* if they did not contest the result – and this agreement was put into effect. The two ships' captains also shared the £100 prize for the winning captain.

This was the last tea season in which a "premium" was written into any bill of lading for being the first clipper home from China.

Whilst the outcome thrilled its followers, it was clear to some that the days of the tea clipper were numbered. Steamships were beginning to make the journey in a much shorter time. Even in 1866 the first cargo of tea had arrived over two weeks earlier in the steam auxiliary ship Erl King, a ship that was not considered part of the race. Also, the Suez Canal opened in 1869. This gave a much shorter route (a reduction of about 3,250 nautical miles (6,020 km; 3,740 mi) or nearly a quarter less distance), so favouring the steamships, as the Canal was not a practical option for sailing vessels.



Taeping and *Ariel* racing up the Channel, by the contemporary marine artist T. G. Dutton



Taeping



The Pagoda Anchorage, Fuzhou, in 1866 with tea clippers lined up awaiting their cargo. Pictured from left to right: The *Black Prince, Fiery Cross, Taitsing, Taeping*, and *Flying Spur*

SS RICHARD MONTGOMERY



Familiar to anyone who lives in Southend is the wreck of the Richard Montgomery, still half full of ammunition after she sank some 80 years ago.

The Richard Montgomery was a Liberty Ship (Type EC2-S-C1), built by the St. Johns River Shipbuilding Company of Jacksonville, Florida. She was the 7th of the 82 Liberties built by the shipyard, out of over 2700 built in total. She was owned by the U.S. War Shipping Administration, and operated on their behalf by Agwilines Inc.



She was of 10,865 dwt with dimensions 441' 6" x 57' 0" x 27' 9.25". She was powered by two oil-fired boilers operating at 220 psi providing steam for a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine rated at 2500 hp driving a single screw and giving a cruising speed of 11.5 knots. She was laid down on 15th March 1943, launched on 15th June 1943 and completed on 29th July 1943, a construction time of some 136 days, quite leisurely for a Liberty at that time. She was defensively armed with a 3" gun forward, a 4" gun aft and a number of 20mm and 37mm anti-aircraft guns.



In early August 1944 she was loaded with 6225 tons of bombs and other explosive material for the use of the US forces in France. She left Hog Island Philadelphia and joined convoy HX-301, which consisted of 100 merchant ships and 33 escorts. She was bound for Cherbourg via the Uk, rounding to the north of Scotland and arriving in the Thames Estuary, awaiting the formation of another convoy for the trip to Cherbourg. On board were 52 seamen and 30 gunners.

On arrival in the Thames, she was ordered by the King's Harbourmaster from HMS Leigh, at the Pier Head, to anchor at the Great Nore anchorage off Sheerness in about 10 metres of water at low tide. The Montgomery was trimmed to 9.45m aft, some 900mm more than was usual for a Liberty ship. On 20th August, in a Force 8 gale she dragged and grounded amidships on a sandbank.



Intensive efforts began to offload her cargo, but the next day a crack appeared in the hull at the front end of No.3 hold, and the forward end of the ship began to flood. Stevedores from Rochester and some U.S sailors unloaded cases of bombs using the ship's derricks powered by a steam line from the tug ATLANTIC COCK, which was assisting the salvage vessels EMPIRE NUTFIELD and FLATHOUSE.





On the 8th September she broke her back, leaving holds 1 to 3 permanently submerged. Despite a request from the authorities, the destroyer IMPULSIVE sailed past at high speed and the resulting wash caused the two salvage vessels to break their moorings and the Flathouse rolled and clanged alarmingly against the side of the Montgomery, inside of which the cargo shifted.

A few days after the Impulsive incident, the Admiralty objected to the stevedores being paid danger money. The Admiralty tugs FIRM and EMPIRE BEN tried to drag the Montgomery off the sandbank, but without success. The removal of the cargo from holds 4 and 5 increased the buoyancy of the aft section which caused it to separate. It moved 15m away from the front section and tilted.

On 25th September 1944, Watson & Gill, the salvage company in charge, decided that the operation had become too dangerous, and they abandoned the work quite suddenly. Possibly the lack of danger money may have influenced this decision. Around half of her cargo had been removed and very little has changed since then apart from the slow deterioration of the ship's structure.



There remain in the forward three holds a large amount of munitions. The official figure is some 1400 tons, but facts are difficult to obtain, and some reports refer to over twice this amount. Most of the explosives are considered to be stable, with fuses long-since deteriorated, but on the Tween Deck are 175 tons of fragmentation cluster bombs "fully armed and ready to go". If the decking collapsed, these could set the whole remaining munitions off.



The ship is still notionally the property of the U.S. government. They have on two occasions (in 1948 and 1967) offered to make the ship safe, but the British authorities deemed the risks too great in each case. The wreck is monitored on a 24/7 basis and annual condition surveys undertaken over many years by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

A report by the Explosives Research and Development Establishment in 1972 calculated that the blast would shatter virtually every window in Sheerness and send a 300m wide column of mud, metal and munitions shooting up almost 3000 m into the air together with a tsunami.

The Receiver of Wreck commissioned a risk assessment in 1999, but their report has never been published. The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) convened a meeting with local and port authorities in 2001 to discuss the report and concluded that "doing nothing (was) not an option for much longer".

A survey by the MCA in October 2023 found that " the whole forward section of the wreck appears to have had an increase in lean, approximately 100 to 150mm eastward. The shift could destabilise the delicate balance of the unexploded ordnance. The deck space near hold 3 appears to have started to collapse on the port side, indicating the vessel's weakening structural integrity". Recently, a contract to remove her masts to prevent their collapse onto the cargo has been postponed yet again.

There she remains, only about 250 m from the Medway Approach Channel and close to the town of Sheerness in about 7.3m depth at low water. Accidental impact from a passing vessel is an ongoing risk (LNG tankers must have three tugs assisting when passing her, but other types do not) and the huge tanks of the LNG terminal on the Isle of Grain are also a concern if the Montgomery blew.

Because of the shallowness of the wreck, the detonation of her remaining cargo would, it has been estimated, be one of the world's biggest non-nuclear explosions.

SHIPS INVOLVED IN THE ATTEMPTS AT SALVAGE



ATLANTIC

СОСК

ATLANTIC COCK: She was a tug built in 1932 by Alexander Hall & Co. at Aberdeen for the Gamecock Steam Towing Co. of London, requisitioned by the Admiralty between 1940 and 1946. She was of 182 grt and was powered by a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine of 1000 hp driving a single screw. She was broken up in Belgium in 1970.



C5 COASTER

EMPIRE NUTFIELD: She was a dry cargo ship built in Dublin Dockyard in 1919 as the standard C5 coaster WAR LIFFEY, but was completed as the BERMONDSEY for the South Metropolitan Gas Company. She was of 1561 grt and her triple expansion steam engine developed 172 notional horsepower. She was in a collision in December 1942 and written off. She was repaired, however, and acquired by the Ministry of War Transport and renamed EMPIRE NUTFIELD. She was scuttled on 3rd September 1946 with a cargo of obsolete chemical warfare ammunition in the Bay of Biscay.



FLATHOUSE

FLATHOUSE: She was a dry cargo ship built in 1931 by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson for Stephenson Clarke. She was of 1559 grt and was powered by a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine of 178 notional horsepower. She was broken up at Grays in February 1961.



HMS IMPULSIVE

HMS IMPULSIVE: She was an "I class" destroyer built by J, Samuel White at Cowes and commissioned in January 1938. She was of 1730 tons displacement and was powered by 3 Admiralty type 3-drum boilers serving 2 Parsons geared steam turbines of 34,000 shp giving a maximum speed of 35.6 knots. She was armed with four 4.7" guns, eight 0.5" machine guns and ten 21" torpedo tubes plus depth charge throwers etc. She was broken up in Sunderland in 1946.



ROBUST CLASS TUG

FIRM: She was one of ten Robust class Admiralty paddle tugs and was built at Chatham Dockyard in 1910. She was of 690 tons and her triple expansion steam engine developed 1250 indicated horsepower. She was broken up in Belgium in 1960.



VICTOR

EMPIRE BEN: She was an Admiralty Dunstan class tug built by J.S. Watson Ltd. of Gainsborough, being completed in March 1943. She was of 242 grt with a triple expansion steam engine of 163 shp driving a single screw. In 1948 she was sold to Leith Salvage & Towage Co. Ltd. and renamed E. NICHOLSONIn 1951 she was sold to the Melbourne Harbour Trust Commission as the VICTOR, and she seems to have spent the rest of her life in Australia. She was broken up in Melbourne in 1989.

HISTORIC LAUNCHES

MV WATCHFUL



Breadth: Beam 19.57 feet Depth4.59 feet

Length: Overall 89.93 feet Tonnage: Gross 75.00

CORONIA was built as BRIT by Fellows & Co., Great Yarmouth, in 1935 for Longfield Brothers, who offered excursions from Great Yarmouth's Town Hall Quay and Britannia Quay. She was licensed to carry 200 passengers and spent her first five summers taking holidaymakers out to see the seals basking on the sandbanks along the north sea coast of Norfolk. She was powered by twin Crossley diesels. Following the outbreak of war, she was requisitioned by the Admiralty on 16 September 1939 for service as a tender. Renamed WATCHFUL, she became the base ship for the fleet and was repainted in battleship grey. She carried stores and torpedoes to the destroyers lying in Yarmouth roads, her bar became the wardroom for her officers and she had a gun turret installed on her foredeck.

On 29 May 1940, she was deployed to assist in the Dunkirk evacuation and reportedly rescued 900 troops. On 12 December 1945, she was returned to her owners, the Longfield brothers and was refitted and restored to her orignal name, BRIT, to operate once more as a pleasure cruiser for the start of the 1946 season. In 1950, she was modified with a lower funnel and bridge to be operated on the Thames by Thames Launches for excursion work during the Festival of Britain.

In spring 1951, she was sold to D. Dalton & G. Round for excursion work at Scarborough and renamed YORKSHIRE LADY. She was repainted with a white hull and a yellow funnel, which later had the company's house flag emblazoned on it. In a 1961 refit at Eyemouth, she was re-engined with Gardner 6LX diesels and a new wheelhouse was fitted. In 1968, she was sold and renamed CORONIA. After a refit in Scotland in 1975, she eventually sailed for Gibraltar in 1985 and provided trips around the bay, showing visitors the Rock and the marine life around the colony. At the end of 1991, CORONIA was sold to North Sea Leisure and on 5 June of that year, she returned to Scarborough, where she resumed service alongside REGAL LADY (cert 180). Source: Paul Brown, Historic Ships The Survivors (Amberley, 2010), updated Mar 2011.

Under current ownership since 2017, the vessel underwent a five year restoration that included new upper deck work to funnel and wheelhouse, replated fore end on hull and full ultra sound of the hull. Renamed MV WATCHFUL, she is now seaworthy and available for viewing in Hartlepool Marina. A Tea room in the after lounge area and a Bar in the ward room are both open to visitors, along with a small museum displaying the Dunkirk evacuation story of this Little Ship's life. All proceeds of the tea-room and Bar go to the upkeep and continued restoration of this eighty-six year old lady that served us all in this country's darkest days, restored by her current owner and volunteers. 1935-1939 Summer cruises along the Norfolk coast from Great Yarmouth

1937 Dummy funnel fitted

1939 Requisitioned by the Admiralty for boom defence work on the Humber and renamed HM Tender WATCHFUL

1940 Took part in the Dunkirk evacuation rescuing 900 troops from the beaches

1942-1944 Worked on the Pluto pipeline project

1942-1950 Returned to Great Yarmouth renamed BRIT and used for pleasure cruising

1950 Modified with a lower funnel and bridge Operated by Thames Launches for excursion work for the Festival of Britain

1951 Sold to Scarborough Cruises

1951-1984 Carried out pleasure cruises from Scarborough along the Yorkshire coast and renamed YORKSHIRE LADY

1968 Renamed CORONIA

1985 Sold to Gibraltar based owners

1985-1990 Operated from Gibraltar as a pleasure cruiser and at one time acted as host to HRH The Duke of Gloucester on an official visit

1990 Sold to Tom Machin of North Sea Leisure - now Scarborough Pleasure Steamers

1997 Extensive restoration work undertaken

1991-2011 Pleasure sailing from Scarborough in conjunction with another historic vessel, REGAL LADY

2011 Sold into new ownership

MV WATCHFUL plans to attend the 85th anniversary Return to Dunkirk commemorative cruise in May 2025.

SOUTHERN BELLE



Breadth: Beam 13.44 feet Depth 4.59 feet Length: Overall 65.97 feet

Tonnage: Gross 26.00

SOUTHERN BELLE was built in 1925 at Rogers Boatyard in Cornwall as the ferry between Plymouth and Cremyll. She is constructed entirely of wood, using pitch pine on an oak keel. Originally powered by steam, she was named SHUTTLECOCK and was converted to diesel after World War II, when she was also re-named SOUTHERN BELLE. Her current engine is a Gardner 6 cylinder diesel.

She was bought by the Isle of Wight Pleasure Boat Company in 2000 and ran pleasure trips on the Solent and to Southampton; she also went on private hire to the Classic Boat Museum at Newport, Isle of Wight. She later moved to Plymouth where she cruised with a passenger capacity of 159. Apart from excursions around the Dockyard and to the rivers Yealm and Tamar and to Looe, she ran a regular service to Cawsand between May and September. She also offered charter trips.

In 2005, she was bought by the Reedham & Gorleston Steam Packet Company and transferred to Norfolk where she operated as a trip boat on the Norfolk Broads until about 2013. The company is no longer operating. She is now based at Oulton Broad, near Lowestoft, Suffolk. She sank at her moorings in 2022. She may have been owned at some point by Waveney River Tours.

April 2025: Vessel under new ownership

THE PRINCE



Breadth: Beam 10.00 feet Depth 3.84 feet Length: Overall 40.98 feet

Tonnage: Gross 12.00

The RATHO PRINCESS was originally known as the PRINCE and was built as a passenger boat for George Smith & Company of Wroxham in 1923 by well known boat builder Graham Bunn She was licenced to carry 50 passengers and in 1936 was sold to Broads Tours who owned her until 1973 when she was sold to Waveney River Tours of Oulten Broad. In 1977 she was sold to Southern

River Steamers and the then owner renamed her PRINCESS VICTORIA. She ran until 1983 from Norwich. The PRINCESS VICTORIA was brought to Scotland by Waterside Promotions Ltd to be used as a trip boat on the Forth & Clyde Canal at Kirkintilloch. In November 1993 the vessel was bought by her present owner, relocated to the Edinburgh Canal Centre and renamed RATHO PRINCESS. She was drydocked and a full sympathic restoration project was undertaken The RATHO PRINCESS has a BMC 1.5 diesel engine which was fitted in 1970.

She has a "V" shaped hull with a deep keel. Her construction is pitch pine planks on oak ribs. The RATHO PRINCESS was used when the first sod was cut in the Union Canal when the restoration work began for the reopening of the lowland canals of Scotland under the Millenium Link Project. She has carried many VIP's in her service along the canal. In 2005 she was drydocked and again a full refurbishment took place where any suspect planks were removed and replaced. She has had many trips along the Union Canal through the Falkirk Wheel and then onto the Forth & Clyde Canal to Bowling and onto the River Clyde in Glasgow. She has also had memorable trips on the River Forth in Edinburgh and up to Stirling.

Her new owners bought her in 2014 and she has been changed from a tour boat to a live aboard. It has a fitted kitchen, dishwasher, washing machine, deep bath, larder. The vessel has also had some structural changes, including glass fibre roof. The hull is mostly original although several larch planks and some off the ribs have been replaced.

In 2024 she has been moved ashore and let as holiday accommodation, maintenance continues to be carried out by her owner. There are no plans to return her to the water.

RIVER KING



Length: Overall 74.95 feet (Tonnage: Gross 33.90

RIVER KING was bought by T.S Townshend and Sons Ltd of Albion Flour Mills, Worcester on the 16th April 1938 and was towed there by sea by The Hull Towing Company's Tug no. 10. The Registration was transferred to Gloucester, and stripped of her superstructure she was used to transport grain along The Worcester Canal. In the late 1950s the engine's crankshaft broke and she was laid up for a couple of years until the firm went into voluntary liquidation.

Mr Head, owner of The Severn Steam Boat Company of Stourport on Severn, an old established firm, realised the potential of the boat because she was still registered to carry passengers and in 1960, bought her and refitted her out again as a passenger boat complete with new engines and put her to work again with his fleet of pleasure craft. The Severn Steam Boat Company was owned for several years by The May Family.

Under current ownership, RIVER KING continues to operate on the River Severn, carrying up to 130 passengers on pleasure trips and being hired out for weddings, private parties and funerals.

STAR CURACAO



STAR CURACAO

Moored for a few days recently in the Leigh Small Ships Anchorage opposite my front windows was the STAR CURACAO. She is a Dutch flagged edible oil tanker and is owned and managed by Chane, formerly Koole Tanktransport of Zaandam in the Netherlands. On departing the anchorage, she sailed up to the Edible Oils terminal at Erith, where presumably her cargo was discharged for processing at the bottling and packaging complex ashore.



STAR CURACAO



STAR CURACAO

The Star Curacao was built by Intervak Scheepswerff & Constructie of Harlingen in the Netherlands in 2008. She is of 4400 dwt with dimensions 109m x 13m, She is powered by a Wartsila 9L20 engine of 1823 kw.

Koole Tanktransport operate two other edible oil tankers, both of which call at the Erith facility or the former Jurgens Jetty at Purfleet. They are the STAR ARUBA and the STAR BONAIRE.



STAR ARUBA

The Star Aruba was built in 1972 by EWB Elbewerk at Boizenburg in Germany as the general cargo ship KROPELIN and converted in Holland into an edible oils tanker in 1993 and renamed Star Aruba. She is of 1515 sdwt with dimensions 71m x 10.1m x 4.5m and is Dutch flagged. She is powered by a Caterpillar 3812 engine of 800 kw at 1500 rpm which gives a speed of 12 knots. She is double skinned and has 10 stainless steel tanks with stainless steel heating coils by hot water at 80 degrees Celsius. She was up for sale in January 2025, and appears to have been sold and renamed JOAL in some recent reports.



The Dutch flagged Star Bonaire was built in 1997 by Harlingen Scheepswerf at Harlingen in the Netherlands. She is of 3400 dwt with dimensions 89.9m x 11.9m x 5.15m. She is powered by a 9-cylinder 4-stroke single acting Wartsila diesel of 1487 kw which gives a speed of 12.5 knots. She is owned and

managed by Koole Tanktransport.



H M TRAWLER BEDFORDSHIRE

A while back we were on a road trip with American friends in their mobile home, we were exploring Georgia the Carolinas and Virginia The Outer Banks are a 200 mi (320 km) string of barrier islands and spits off the coast of North Carolina and south eastern Virginia, on the east coast of the United States the Outer Banks are known for their wide expanse of open beachfront, hundreds of shipwrecks along the Outer Banks have given the surrounding seas the nickname Graveyard of the Atlantic. The Outer Banks were also home to the Wright brothers' first flight We were surprised to come across a War Grave Cemetery on the Island of Ocracoke.

"IN MEMORY OF THE HMT BEDFORDSHIRE AND ITS CREW DESTROYED BY TORPEDO FROM GERMAN SUBMARINE U-558 IN MAY 1942"



37 souls lost, the total complement, one survivor, a stoker, Sam Nutt detained by the local Police prior to the ship sailing on its last voyage. On May 10th 1942, Sam had been on shore leave and was due to join the Bedfordshire the next morning. That night when leaving a bar in Morehead City, he was arrested by two policemen and locked up in a cell without an explanation.

The next day on May the 11th, Bedfordshire, with their stoker still missing, went out as usual and patrolled the coast. During that night her luck suddenly ran out and she was torpedoed and sunk by a U-boat. All 37 crew were lost and only four bodies were ever recovered from the sea.

Meanwhile after being released with no charge, Sam had been trying to join his ship."I never did know what the Americans were going to charge me with. I

spent a night in the cells and they let me out and the American soldiers took me down to the dock to join the Bedfordshire ... but she had gone to sea. We

THE STEAMSHIP IMO

I was surfing the Internet a week or so back, looking at the Richard Montgomery and past explosions of ammunition ships. I came across the Halifax Disaster of December 1917. It makes sober reading when read in the context of the Montgomery.

The French cargo ship SS MONT-BLANC was inbound, fully loaded with munitions ready for transport to France, collided with the Norwegian whaling factory ship SS IMO in Halifax Sound. The Mont-Blanc caught fire, and her crew were forced to abandon ship.



After about 20 minutes, there was a huge explosion on the Mont-Blanc and metal and other materials were flung into the air. 1963 people on the shore were killed and 9000 injured, together with 1600 houses destroyed with 12000 damaged. The "Yield" of the explosion was said to be equivalent to 2900 tons of TNT, and that it was the largest man-made explosion until Hiroshima. The cloud of white smoke rose to 3600 metres, and the blast was felt as far away as Cape Breton, 129 miles distant. A tsunami formed that was said to be18 metres tall. Both captains and the two pilots were equally blamed in the subsequent inquiry on the disaster. Shards of steel from the Mont Blanc are still being dredged up from time to time today.



The Mont-Blanc was completely blown apart by the explosion, but the Imo, beached nearby at Dartmouth and was only slightly damaged. By 26th April 1918 she returned to service. In 1920 she was sold to A/S Odd and renamed GUVERNOREN for service as a whale oil tanker. In November 1921 she was wrecked on the coast of East Falkland. Her remains are still visible there.

SS MONT BLANC



SS MONT

BLANC IN 1899



She was a French cargo vessel, having been built by Raylton Dixon & Co. in Middlesborough in 1899 for Societe Generale de Transport Maritime. She was of 3279 grt with dimensions 320' x 44.8' and was powered by a triple expansion steam engine of 247 notional horsepower driving a single screw.



In 1906 she was acquired by E. Anquetil of Rouen, and in 1915 by G. Petit, also of Rouen. On 28th December 1015, the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique bought her and registered her at St. Nazaire. For what turned out to be her last voyage, she was chartered to carry a mixed cargo of military explosives from New York City to France. The cargo consisted of 2300 tons of picric acid, 500 tons of TNT and 10 tons of guncotton. She also had barrels of high octane fuel on deck. On 6th December 1917 she was leaving Halifax for France, after waiting to join a convoy to cross the Atlantic.

SS IMO



SS RUNIC

She was a Norwegian whaling factory ship built in 1889 by Harland & Wolff in Belfast as the livestock carrier RUNIC for the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. for

operation by the White Star Line. She was of 4649 grt with dimensions 430.7' x 45.2'. She was powered by a single triple expansion steam engine rated at 424 notional horsepower driving a single screw and giving 12 knots. She was designed to carry 1000 head of cattle with berths for 48 passengers. She had a crew of 40.



In 1895 she was sold to the West India & Pacific Steamship Co. and renamed TAMPICAN, and in 1899 she was transferred to Frederick Leyland & Co. In 1912 she was acquired by H.E. Moss & Co. and then by the South Pacific Whaling Co., converted into a whaling factory ship and renamed her IMO and Norwegian registered her. After the conversion, her tonnage increased to 5043 gross.



In 1917 she was chartered by the Belgian Relief Commission to carry humanitarian supplies to German-occupied Belgium and entered Halifax Sound ready to load. Sadly, in the narrow channel into the port, she being light was high in the water and difficult to manoeuvre. She collided with the Mont Blanc and the disaster ensued.





IMO LYING DAMAGED AT DARTMOUTH AFTER THE BLAST

Damage to the Imo was relatively minor, and by the following April, she returned to service. In 1920 she was sold to A/S Odd and renamed GUVERNOREN and used as a whale oil tanker, still Norwegian flagged. In November 1921 she grounded off Cape Carysfort, some 20 miles from Port Stanley, and there she remains to this day.



GOVERNOREN TODAY

SS

THE PURUS CHINOOK



On the morning of 6th May, I noticed an unusual vessel heading upstream in the Thames. It later berthed alongside HMS Belfast in the Upper Pool. She is a new "Commissioning Service Operational Vessel" (C/SOV) and unusually, she is UK flagged (I of Man).





She was designed by Vard at Alesund in conjunction with Norwind Offshore and is a modified Vard 4 19 design. Her steel hull and superstructure were built by Vard Romania at Braila and her outfitting and commissioning was carried out by Vard at Soviknes in Norway. She was built for Purus Marine UK, and on delivery, om 29th April 2025, she began a multi-year charter to the Danish offshore wind concern, Vestas Wind Systems A/S. A sister, the PURUS CORIOLIS, due for delivery in 2026, will also be chartered to Vestas, although her hull will be built by Vard's yard in Vietnam. Purus have an option with Vard for two further vessels of this type.



She is of 6217 gt with dimensions 87.7m x 19.5m x 5.6m. She is hybrid powered with four Yanmar 1370 kw diesel generators and a Vard Electro 744 kwh battery pack. The generators can be configured to run on methanol in the future if required. The battery pack will allow for zero-emission operation for extended periods.



Propulsion is via two 1800 kw thrusters aft which give 13 knots. She also has two 1200 kw azimuthing thrusters forward and a 1200 kw tunnel thruster fitted near the bow. She has a Kongsberg DP2 system which can provide safe station-keeping even in wind conditions up to 40 knots, 2 knots of current or significant wave heights up to 2.5 metres.

She has an all-electric walk to work gangway capable of seamless operation between 15 and 30 metres above sea level and a 5 ton motion compensated crane, an 18 m helicopter deck and an 12 passenger daughter craft. She has capacity for 97 industrial personnel and 23 crew members in 85 cabins.



SMS MACKENSEN



ARTISTS

IMPRESSION

The Mackensen class were the last German class of Grobe Kruezers (battlecruisers) of World War 1. Originally there were to be seven ships, but the last three were to be built as larger and heavier 15" gun battleships. Construction work on the remaining four, Mackensen, Graf Spee, Prinz Eitel Friedrich and the Furst Bismark began during the war, and the first two were launched in 1917, but none were commissioned by the end of hostilities, as they were regarded as being of a lower priority than the building of U-Boats. All four were scrapped by 1922.

The Mackensen was built by Blohm & Voss at Hamburg, being ordered on 14th August 1914, laid down on 30th January 1915 and launched on 21st April 1917. Construction was halted about 15 months before she would have been completed. She was stricken from the German navy on 17th November 1919, according to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. She was sold for scrap and eventually broken up in 1922 at Kiel-Nordmole.



She was of 31,000 tons displacement with dimensions 223m x 30.4m x 9.3m. Steam was to be provided by 32 boilers (24 single-ended coal fired and 8 oil fired). Steam was to be provided for 4 geared steam turbines of 89,000 shp in total driving 4 screws giving a top speed of 28 knots. Her range was to be 8000 nautical miles at 14 knots. Ship's complement was to be 46 officers and 1140 men.



BUILDING

Her armament was to consist of eight 13.8" guns in twin turrets, fourteen 5.9" guns, eight 3.5" flak guns and five 600mm submerged torpedo tubes. Her armour was main belt 300mm thick tapering to 120mm forward and 100mm

aft; deck 80mm to 30mm; forward conning tower-sides 300mm and roof 130mm; rear conning tower- sides 200mm and roof 50mm; main turrets-sides 270mm and roof 110mm and casemates 150mm.



BUILDING

The design was a considerable improvement on the previous class of battlecruisers, the Derfflingers. The main armament was to be increased from 305mm diameter to 350mm, and more powerful engines were to be installed, giving a higher top speed and a better cruising range. Limitations of the sizes of available dry docks and locks on the Kiel Canal, however, gave the designers many headaches to overcome.



The class were never completed, so the effectiveness of their design in comparison with British battlecruisers can only be guessed. The nearest
equivalent are the Renown and Repulse, which, although a few thousand tons lighter than the Mackensens, toted 15" guns instead of 13.8". They were, at least in theory, some 4 knots faster. The disposition of the armour in the German design was much better than that of the British, and in a conflict between the Mackensen and the Renown, the latter might well have been glad of that extra speed to get out of danger.



MACKENSEN AND GRAF SPEE IN 1917

The Hood was a larger ship, but she was completed after the Battle of Jutland, and she incorporated many lessons from the battle, principally though, much improved deck armour.

THE MAERSK SANA



The MAERSK SANA is an 8450 TEU container ship operated by Maersk A/S under the Singapore flag. She had an engine room fire and explosion on 28th April when some 354 nautical miles off Bermuda, leaving her without her main engine, but the fire was quickly extinguished. Her diesel generators are still available, so her bow thrusters etc remain operable. Three of her crew were injured, and two of them were transferred to hospital in Bermuda. The ship remains "safely adrift" nearly two weeks later, waiting for a salvage tug coming from Europe, in fairly benign sea conditions.



The ship was operating as part of the Gemini Corporation's TP11 (Transpacific) service. Gemini is a joint venture between Maersk and Hapag Lloyd. It provides a multiple weekly connection from major Asian ports like Shanghai, Yantian, Ningbo and Busan to key US East Coast ports, including New York, Savannah and Houston. At present the route is across the Pacific, through the Panama Canal and then back to China via the Cape of Good Hope.





MONDREAN

The Maersk Sana departed Newark, New Jersey on 26th April bound for Singapore via the Cape of Good Hope, and then to Haiphong (North Vietnam), Ningbo (China) and Shanghai. The fire and explosion occurred on 28th April. The U.S. Coast Guard listed that the vessel had undergone a standard inspection on April 16th in Charleston, South Carolina when no deficiencies were identified.



On 2nd May it was reported that a salvage tug had been ordered from Mexico, and it was due to arrive on 6th May. However, this seems not to have been the case, and another tug left Europe on 4th May and was expected to take about a week to reach the scene. A Maersk company spokesperson said the company "wanted to employ a first-time right approach", where "it had to find the right tug for this operation, not necessarily the closest tug".



She was built as the MONDRIAN STAR by the Japan Marine United Corporation, being laid down on 5th April 2004, launched on 17th September 2004 and delivered on 14th December 2004. Shortly after completion she became the P & O NEDLLOYD MONDREAN. She is of 102,861 dwt with dimensions 335.48m x 43.16m x 14.47m. Her engine is a Wartsila 2-stroke 12-cylinder 12RT-Flex 96C diesel of 61,880 kw @ 94 rpm built by Diesel United in Japan driving a single fixed screw and giving a top speed of 24.5 knots.

The engine was designed to burn heavy fuel oil, and as she is not fitted with scrubbers, in areas with strict emission rules she has to use expensive low sulphur gas oil. In any case, the engine type is known for its high fuel consumption, around 14 tons per hour.



She is owned by Moller Singapore A.P. PTE. Ltd. and managed by Maersk A/S. She is one of eight near sisterships, the other seven being MAERSK SARNIA, MAERSK SANTANA, MAERSK SYDNEY, MAERSK SEVILLE, MAERSK SHEERNESS, MAERSK SOFIA and MAERSK SINGAPORE. All are small by modern standards and getting rather long in the tooth.

It seems curious that Maersk are so relaxed about getting her under tow and her containers transferred onto another vessel. She is big, but not enormous, and towing her would not require a super-powerful tug. Perhaps most of her containers are empty, following a sudden surge to import goods into the USA to beat the tariffs.



FOOTNOTE: On 16th May the tug finally arrived. She is the Norwegian flagged SEA 1 RUBY, an Anchor Handling Tug Supply (AHTS) vessel, which left Bergen on 4th May. The Maersk Sana will be towed to the Bahamas with arrival there expected for the end of May.



The Sea 1 Ruby was built by Kleven Verft in Norway in 2010 as the NORMAND PROSPER. She is of 7558 gt with dimensions 91.0m x 22.04m x 7.95m. She is powered by twin Wartsila 16V32 engines of 20,800 kw combined giving 310 tons bollard pull. She is owned and operated by Sea 1 Offshore, a Norwegian company with offices in several countries.



SS SCHILLER OF 1873

This May marks 150 years since the German iron screw steamer SCHILLER was lost on the Isles of Scilly with huge loss of life. The ship was on its normal New York City to Hamburg via Plymouth and Cherbourg service for the German Transatlantic Steam Navigation Line of Hamburg.



In dense fog and heavy seas, she sailed the wrong side of the Bishop's Rock lighthouse and grounded on the Retarrier Ledges. She managed to pull herself off, but following three freak waves she struck again sideways on, causing major damage to her hull. Only 2 of her lifeboats were successfully launched and a total of 335 passengers and crew were lost, with just 37 surviving the accident.



The SCHILLER was an iron screw passenger and cargo steamer built by Robert Napier & Sons at Govan on the Clyde. She was launched on 26th August 1873 and completed in August. Her maiden voyage began on 5th February 1874.

She was of 3421 grt with dimensions 380' x 40' with a depth of hold of 24'. Her coal fired boilers provided steam for her 550 notional horsepower compound engine. She was also square rigged on both her masts. She had 7 watertight compartments and was classed 100 A1 at Lloyds. She was owned and operated by the German Transatlantic Steam Navigation Line and was registered in Hamburg.



On her fateful voyage she was carrying 254 passengers and 118 crew together with 250 mail bags for Australia, and valuable general cargo including 300,000 twenty dollar gold pieces (worth around £450 million today) and a number of sewing machines. The passengers were made up as 59 saloon passengers, 75 second cabin and 120 steerage.



THE ONLY

TWO LIFEBOATS THAT MADE SAFETY AT St. MARY'S HARBOUR

She departed New York on 27th April 1875 and made good time across the Atlantic. By 7th May she was nearing Plymouth where she was to drop 22 passengers when disaster struck. The two lifeboats that made it to shore saved 27 people. The St. Agnes pilot gig rescued a further 5 and another 5 were rescued from the rigging or were able to swim ashore.

Element of her cargo as well as bodies were washed up on the Cornish coast for several weeks. The last of the gold pieces had been salvaged by August 1877. A pair of brass signal cannons is preserved in the Scilly Isles Museum.

In recognition of the assistance and kindness shown by the islanders, orders were given by the German authorities in both world wars to spare the islands from attacks by German forces.



THE WRECK RECENT

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL TREATY OF 1922



HMS NELSON

In the aftermath of the First World War, the combatant countries had huge warship building plans, but with the exception of America and Japan, they were very nearly broke. A treaty limiting the number and size of newbuilding seemed a very good idea. The treaty was signed by the British Empire, the USA, France, Italy and Japan on 6th February 1922, and registered with the League of Nations on 16th April 1924. As the defeated nation, Germany was not a party to the treaty but was forbidden to build capital ships of over 10,000 tons displacement for a number of years.

The treaty limited the construction of battleships, battlecruisers and aircraft carriers. Cruisers, destroyers and submarines were not limited, but cruisers were limited to 10,000 tons displacement and main armament limited to 8" guns.

The treaty required the scrapping of existing or planned capital ships to give a 5:5:3:1.67:1.67 ratio of tonnage with respect to Britain, the USA, Japan, France and Italy respectively. Ongoing limitations were placed on capital ship tonnage within the 5:5: 3 ratios etc.

TONNAGE LIMITATIONS AGREED

	CAPITAL SHIPS	AIRCRAFT CARRIERS
British Empire	525,000	135,000
USA	525,000	135,000
Japan	315,000	81,000
France	175,000	60,000
Italy	175,000	60,000

Capital ships were limited to 35,000 tons and 16" guns. Aircraft carriers were limited to 27,000 tons, but each signatory could use two existing capital ship hulls for aircraft carriers, with a displacement limit of 33,000 tons each. All existing carriers (ARGUS, EAGLE, FURIOUS, HERMES, LANGLEY & HOSHO) were declared to be "experimental" and could be replaced without regard for their age. Thus the Royal Navy converted the GLORIOUS and COURAGEOUS into carriers and the US, the LEXINGTON and SARATOGA.





USS LANGLEY





HMS GLORIOUS



The treaty also detailed the individual ships to be retained by each navy, including the allowance for the US to complete two further ships of the

Colorado class (COLORADO and WEST VIRGINIA) and for the Royal Navy to build two new ships of the Nelson class (NELSON and RODNEY).



USS WEST VIRGINIA



The US had to scrap 30 existing or proposed capital ships, Britain 23 and Japan 17.

For some years, the treaty was successful in its purpose in limiting the naval arms race, although by the early 1930s, Japan and Germany rescinded it and began building up their navies with more and larger ships.

The terms of the treaty produced a number of odd-looking capital ships, as designers sought to maximise the effectiveness of their vessels, whilst still complying, at least nominally, with the terms of the treaty. Examples are the NELSON and RODNEY, the French DUNKERQUE and STRASBOURG, and later, the RICHELIEU and JEAN BART. The design of the German pocket battleships ADMIRAL SCHEER, ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE and the LUTZOW was in compliance with the Treaty of Versailles although affected by the thinking of the Washington treaty.



STRASBOURG



RICHELIEU



ADMIRAL SCHEER

TRAIN FERRIES AT HARWICH



HARWICH

TRAIN FERRY TERMINAL (RECENT)

Looking very sorry for itself lately is the former train ferry terminal at Harwich, which has been disused since the train ferry service was closed in 1987, when the remaining services were concentrated at Dover. The terminal is Grade 11Listed, but little or no maintenance work seems to have been carried out on it for many years.



The ferry terminal was developed by the Great Eastern Train Ferry Company during 1923/24. Three steam powered train ferries, imaginatively named

TRAIN FERRY 1, 2 and 3, were purchased from the Ministry of War Transport in 1923, together with the linkspans, gantries and machinery from terminals at Richborough and Southampton. The ferries and terminals had been built in 1917 by the MOWT to speed up the transport of men and materials to France.



T.F. 1 IN 1917

Initially it was proposed to use the Southampton linkspan etc for Harwich, but the cargo shifted on the barge arrangement carrying it from Southampton capsized in heavy seas and sank outside Harwich. The linkspan, at 120 feet long, was needed because of the tidal range at Harwich, so it was salvaged. The rest of the cargo and the barges were demolished to keep shipping lanes clear. The gantry and machinery were brought in from Richborough and erected with the linkspan at Harwich.

The Harwich to Zeebrugge train ferry service opened in April 1924, the official opening by the then Prince George took place on 24th April 1924. In 1925 all three ferries were converted from coal to oil burning. In July 1933, the Great Eastern Train Ferry Company was declared bankrupt and its assets were taken over by the London & North Eastern Railway Company.



At the start of WW2, all three ferries were requisitioned and used for a variety of non-railway-related duties. TRAIN FERRY 2 was abandoned when damaged by enemy gunfire at St. Vallery in June 1940. TRAIN FERRY 3 hit a mine off Normandy in March 1945. After some ferrying back military equipment from France, TRAIN FERRY 1 was returned to LNER and refitted in 1946, being renamed ESSEX FERRY. She was finally scrapped in 1957 at Grays.

After the war a replacement ship, the diesel-powered SUFFOLK FERRY was built by John Brown & Company at Clydebank and was completed in August 1947. Soon after that, LNER was nationalised, and the ships and service came under British Rail. John Brown built a third ferry named NORFOLK FERRY, which came on service in July 1951 along with a fourth ship, ESSEX FERRY, which was completed in 1957, replacing the old vessel of the same name.

The final vessel ordered for the Harwich service was built by R & W Hawthorn Leslie & Co on the Tyne and was completed in December 1963 as the CAMBRIDGE FERRY. In 1970, the ferry operations of British Rail were rebranded as Sealink. With the decline in rail traffic generally, the service became increasingly unprofitable. The Suffolk Ferry was withdrawn from service in September 1980 and was broken up in 1981. The Essex Ferry was next, being withdrawn in 1981, followed by the Norfolk Ferry, which was scrapped in 1983.



In 1980, Sealink UK chartered the RoRo vessel STENA SHIPPER from Stena, On 4th May 1980, she arrived at Smiths Dock in Middlesbrough for conversion into a combined train/RORo vessel and was delivered to Sealink in August 1980 and was renamed SPEEDLINK VANGUARD. In November1982 she was in collision with the Townsend Thoresen ferry EUROPEAN GATEWAY off Harwich with the loss of 6 lives. She finished her charter and made her last Harwich to Zeebrugge on 31st January 1987 and was returned to Stena.

In 1984, Sealink UK was sold to Sea Containers. In 1987, the train ferry services were concentrated at Dover, and Harwich was closed as far as train ferries were concerned. The Cambridge Ferry was transferred there, but was withdrawn in 1992, by which time, Sea Containers had been sold to Stena Line. The service from Dover did not last much longer, finally closing in 1994 with the opening of the Channel Tunnel.

THE SHIPS INVOLVED



1/ESSEX FERRY (1)

TRAIN FERRY No. 1: She was built by Armstrong Whitworth & Co. Ltd on the Tyne as the T.F.1 for the Ministry of War Transport. She was launched on 3rd August 1917 and completed in November 1917. She was of 2683 grt with dimensions 350.6' x 58.7' x 15.5'. She had 4 Scotch boilers providing steam for her twin 3-cylinder Howden triple expansion engines of 403 notional horsepower driving 2 screws and giving 12 knots. She had 4 sets of rails along her train deck.

In 1921 she was acquired by the Port of Queenborough Development Company and renamed TRAIN FERRY No. 1 in that October. She was laid up in 1922. In 1923 she was bought by the Great Eastern Train Ferry Company and started on the Harwich to Zeebrugge service in 1924 along with her two sisters.

In 1941, having been requisitioned by the Admiralty, she was converted into a landing craft carrier and commissioned as HMS IRIS. She could carry 14 of them on her train deck and another 4 on her upper deck. In 1942 she was renamed HMS PRINCESS IRIS. She survived the war and was refitted and renamed ESSEX FERRY in 1946. Finally, she was scrapped at Grays in 1957.

ΤF



TRAIN FERRY 2

TRAIN FERRY No. 2: She was also built by Armstrong Whitworth on the Tyne as the T.F. 2 for the Ministry of War Transport. She was launched on 12th September 1917. She was of 2678 grt but her dimensions and machinery etc were the same as TF 1. After the end of the war, she was laid up. In 1923 she was acquired by the Great Eastern Train Ferry Company and renamed TRAIN FERRY No.2. In 1940 she was requisitioned by the Royal Navy. During the evacuation of troops from France, she was hit by shore artillery and sank on 13th June 1940 off St-Vallery-en-Caux.



T.F. 3 (TH 1 & 3 similar)

TRAIN FERRY No. 3: She was built by Fairfield Shipbuilders of Govan for the Ministry of War Transport as the T.F.3. She was launched on 12th September 1917. In terms of tonnage, dimensions and machinery etc. she was identical to the other two, and she became TRAIN FERRY 3 in 1922. Her career was similar to that of Train Ferry No.1, including conversion into a landing craft carrier as HMS DAFFODIL, until March 1945 when she hit a mine and sank off Normandy.

SUFFOLK FERRY: She was built by John Brown & Co. at Clydebank for the LNER. She was launched on 7th May 1947 and completed in August 1947. She was of 3134 grt and 1979 dwt. Her dimensions were 404' 6" x 61' 6" x 12' 1". She was powered by twin 6-cylinder Sulzer single action diesels rated at 2680 bhp each giving 13 knots. She could carry 35 railway wagons and 12 passengers. She was taken out of service in September 1980 and scrapped in Antwerp in April 1981.



NORFOLK FERRY

NORFOLK FERRY: She was also built by John Brown for British Railways. She was launched on 8th March 1951 and completed in July that year. She was of 3157 grt and 1955 dwt with dimensions 399' 10" x 61' 4" x 12' 0". She was powered by twin 6-cylinder Sulzer single action diesels rated at 2480 bhp each giving 12.25 knots. She was scrapped in Holland in 1983.

ESSEX FERRY (2): She too was built by John Brown for British Railways. She was launched on 24th October 1955 and completed in January 1957. She was of 3242 grt and 1988 dwt with dimensions 399' 10" x 61' 4" x 12' 0.57". She was powered by twin 6-cylinder Sulzer single action diesels of 2680 bhp each giving 12.25 knots. She was scrapped at Rainham, Kent in 1983.



CAMBRIDGE FERRY

CAMBRIDGE FERRY: She was built By Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd. on Tyneside for British Railways. She was launched on 1^{st} November 1963 and completed that December. She was of 3294 grt and 1825 dwt with dimensions 403' 0" x 61' 4" x 12' 1". She was powered by twin 7-cylinder Mirrlees 4-stroke single action diesels rated at 3720 hp driving 2 screws and giving 13.5 knots. She could carry 35 wagons or 200 cars and 100 passengers. She was taken out of service in 1983.

She was sold to Sincomar Malta in April 1992 and renamed ITO UNO. She was rebuilt in Malta and in 1993 was renamed SIRIO. For some years she was laid up at Bari, Italy. She was reflagged in 1993 to Panama, but was broken up at Aliaga, Turkey in May 2003.



SPEEDLINK

VANGUARD

SPEEDLINK VANGUARD: She was built by A. Vuyk & Zonen's Scheepswerven in Holland in 1973 for the Stena Line as the RoRo vessel STENA SHIPPER. When built she was of 2638 grt and 3816 dwt with dimensions 115.32m x 16.37m x 4.50m. When built she was powered by twin 6-cylinder Stork Werkspoor 6TM410 diesels rated at 5295 kw. In 1981 chartered by Sealink and was converted into a train ferry by Smiths Dock at Middlesbrough. She was enlarged to 142.7m x 18.6m x 5.6m and renamed Speedlink Vanguard. She could carry 56 wagons.

After her release back to Stena in 1987, she came under various names, ownerships and flags, finishing as BOA VISTA and was broken up at Aliaga, Turkey in June 2013.

RENAISSANCE



The Renaissance is a smallish cruise ship currently operated by the Ambassador Group. She was built by Fincantieri at Monfalcone in Italy for the Holland America Line as the MAASDAM. She was launched on 12th January 1992, completed on 26th October 1993 and began her maiden voyage on 3rd December 1993. She was one of four "S- class" ships built for Holland America, the others being RYNDAM, STATENDAM and VEENDAM.

She is of 55,575 gt with dimensions 220m x 30 94m x 7.6m. Her propulsion is diesel-electric, with two Sulzer 12ZAV405 (of 8640 Kw each) and three Sulzer 8ZAL40 (of 5760 Kw each) connected to two 12,000Kw ABB Cyclo converto electro motors driving 2 screws. She has two Becker rudders and 2 bow and one stern thrusters. Her maximum speed was 22 knots and her cruising speed was 14 knots. Her capacity was 1258 passengers and 580 crew.



MAASDAM

She served with Holland America from her maiden voyage in 1993 to 2020, primarily in North American waters and was registered in Rotterdam. In March 2020, Holland America suspended all their cruises because of Covid. In that July it was announced that she had been sold, with the Ryndam to Piraeusbased Seajets and renamed AEGEAN MYTH. she was laid up in Greece until 2022, when she was bought by Compagne Francaise de Crosiers CFC).



AEGEAN

MYTH WITH AEGEAN GODDESS (ex RYNDAM) LAID UP IN GREECE

CFC had her refitted at Damen Shipyards in Brest and renamed her Renaissance, with Bahamian registry and she started operating for them in June 2023. As part of her refit, her passenger capacity was reduced to 1100 with 560 crew. CFC used her for no-fly cruises from French ports, serving mainly the French cruise market.



RENAISSANCE

On 9th January 2025 it was announced that the Ambassador Cruise Line and CFC were to merge, forming the Ambassador Group. She received an engine upgrade in January/February 2025 at Lloyd Werft in Bremerhaven to meet imo Tier 111 standards, with a new exhaust gas cleaning system as well as preparing her for using shore power.

As of May 2025, she is being marketed here as the third Ambassador ship, offering fly-cruises in and around the Caribbean aimed largely at British customers. On the experience of a cruise on Fred Olsen's BOLETTE (Ex Holland America's AMSTERDAM) a couple of years ago, I would expect her to be well laid out and rather more comfortable than Ambassador's other two ships, the AMBIANCE and the AMBITION.



THE OMAR BABUN



THE WRECK

I came across recently the story of an interesting small ship incident on the east coast of America in 1954. A Honduran registered freighter named OMAR BABUN was beached on the Outer Banks off Cape Hatteras in heavy seas. The area is well known as a ships' graveyard, and it was thought by the local experts that both ship and cargo would be a total loss. However, a local Buick car dealer succeeded in salvaging the cargo and then getting her refloated and towed back to port.



USS STAGBUSH



USS STAGBUSH

The ship was built by Camulette Shipbuilding at Slidell, Louisiana as the USS STAGBUSH (AN-69), an Ailanthus class net laying vessel. She was laid down on 9th February 1943, launched on 29th January 1944 and commissioned on 30th August 1944. She was one of forty ships in the class. They were wooden, due to a chronic shortage of steel at the time, and presumably to protect them from magnetic mines. Net layers were built primary to handle anti-submarine nets and booms to protect harbours or even individual ships.



USS STAGBUSH

She was of 1175 tons displacement with dimensions 194.5' x 37.0' x 13.5'. She was diesel-electric powered, with a Bosch-Sulzer 539 diesel of 1200 shp and two60 Kw 120V electic motors driving a single screw and giving 12.1 knots. She was armed with a single 3" gun and two, later four, 20mm guns. Her boom

lifting capacity was 12 tons. Ship's complement was 4 officers and 52 enlisted men.

She served in the Asiatic/ Pacific region until the end of the war, winning battle honours during the Okinawa Gunto operations between Maech and June 1945 after which she was involved in mine clearance off Japan. She was decommissioned on 26th March 1946 at Mare Island, California and stricken on 21st May 1946.

In April 1947 she was sold to R. A. Martinolich Shipbuilding of San Francisco, who had her converted for service as a 1275-ton dry cargo freighter. She emerged from the conversion in 1948 and was sold to Maderina Babun of San Lorenzo, Honduras renamed ANNA LUCIA. In 1949 she was renamed Omar Babun.



OMAR BABUN

In May 1954 she took on board a cargo of ready-to-assemble equipment for a cement factory and a steel forging plant and sailed from Philadelphia for Havana, Cuba. Off the Carolina coast she ran into a full gale, and in heavy seas her cargo broke loose, tearing away deck supports and ripping her hull plating. Her captain, Jose Villa, beached her on the Outer Banks, some 25 miles from Cape Hatteras to avoid her sinking. The whole crew of 14 were taken off using a Breeches Buoy, and it was assumed that the ship and its cargo would be written off as a total loss.

A local Buick car dealer, Esveld Canipe, checked out the wreck from a hired aircraft and bought it from the insurers for \$3500. The contract agreed with them was that Canipe could keep 30% of the value of any cargo he was able to salvage. He set up Canipe Salvage Company for the project. He used 5 of his own team and hired 25 local labourers to form his salvage team. After several attempts during that May and June, he built a roadway of sand out to the wreck, and then used bulldozers and trucks to recover the heavier items in the cargo. A steel press weighing 23 tons was the most valuable item involved at \$45,000.

Once the cargo had been removed, he set to work on the ship itself in July. He bought two enormous anchors from a scrapyard, attached cables to them, and set them a quarter mile out to sea. He overhauled the ship's engine and winches and connected the anchor cables and started to wind in the cables. By the next morning, she was floating free, despite another gale. Soon after she was towed to safety at Norfolk Port nearby.

The ship was surveyed but found to be beyond economic repair. After items of value, such as her machinery had been removed, she was burnt on 16th October 1954 at Norfolk Virginia. It was reported that Canipe's costs had been about \$40,000, but his overall profit was over \$100,000. All seems not to have been plain sailing, however, as litigation with several parties lasted some years.

ESSEX BOATBUILDING & SHIPBUILDING PART 1 SOUTHEND , LEIGH-ON-SEA CHAPTER 1 SOUTHEND



We look at the subject by river moving north and starting in Southend and Leigh you will find fishing boats and yachts, At Paglesham yachts ,barge yachts and fishing boats, Burnham yachts Maldon Barges , Brightlingsea fishing boats and barges, Rowhedge , and Wivenhoe tugs warships and coasters Harwich Barges and fishing boats

It is by no means complete and has errors and inconsistencies . .

PART 1 LEIGH & SOUTHEND ON SEA

W S MEADE



1929 Iwunda

Iwunda was built in 1929 as a one off vessel by W S Meade, a cabinet maker of Southend on Sea and her first owner was F H Garon who was Commodore of the Nore Yacht Club. In the 1950s, she was owned by Jack Coote who sailed her widely on the River Thames and the East Coast estuaries and it was at Maldon that he met the editor of Yachting Monthly and was commissioned to write a series of articles and sketch charts on East Coast rivers; these formed the basis of the book East Coast Rivers published in 1956.

G R KING 10 Western Esplanade No information found

S & J PETERS

Yard located on Eastern Esplanade close to Hayward

1905 Alice and Florrie

A centre plate cockler 30 ft x 10 ft . She was sold in 1935 for conversion to a yacht when her centreplate was removed

HAYWARD

Established in Southend 1885 .Previously a boatbuilder at Deal in Kent where he had built beach boats

He became a designer of Bawleys and cockle boats as well as yachts and later motor craft .

He designed by draughting and many fast craft were built for local owners near the gasworks on Eastern Esplanade Beach Road and Burdett Road. Used Southend Corporation Jetty to launch vessels His office walls were lined with half models of his designs

His larger boats built there included sailing and motor pleasure boats up to 40 ft to 50 ft launched on a large wheeled cradle towed by a steam engine



He was building pleasure boats and other craft into the 1920's

Monarch

Built between 1900 and 1930 as a Bawley or cockle boat,. She was commandeered by the Navy during the War II and took part in Dunkirk. After

the War she reverted to her previous trade, until 1972 when she was converted for sea angling . In 1975 she was refitted as a private cruiser

By the 2000s, she was at Cookham. In Spring 200, the boat was put on the hard at Shepperton Marina, to locate a leak and remedial action taken By 2013 she was at Lowestoft but her back was broken. At some point she was scrapped.

1906 Gauntlet 28 ft NO PIC

Designer: W. Hayward

Converted from centre boarder in late 50s by Fox of Ipswich.

Counter rebuilt 1973.

1912 Shamrock

The first cockler to have well rounded stem profile

1914Reindeer

33 ft sister ship to Marie Amelia for owners in Leigh. These were the lasting siling cocklers built by Haywards



1914 Mary Amelia MN59

Originally under sail she was fitted with an engine during the 1920s and worked from Burnham on Crouch until the 1930s. Later she sank whilst anchored at Pin Mill, was bought by Colin Fox and restored

In the early 1990s she was bought by a film producer and kept at St Katherines Dock. In 2001 she was bought by her owner who sailed her until 2006 when she was lifted out and restored. In 2009 she was put back in the water and now still sails on the East Coast .

1920 DEFENDER NO PIC

Defender was the first of a new design, which was heavier, so that she could carry a crew of up to ten. This was to enable her to be more productive. But they soon discovered that her greater weight meant that she had to be beached further out, with a longer walk for her crew and a shorter time before the tide refloated her.

She and her sister ships went to r Dunkirk. Defender carried one RNVR officer, Sub Lieut. Soloman - - in charge of the Leigh cockle boats Letitia, Renown, Endeavour, Reliance and Resolute.. By 2240 they entered the harbour in formation and loaded troops to be transferred to other ships,

At 0300 it was time to return to Ramsgate where Defender arrived in company with Resolute, landing her load of soldiers,

After the war the Defender was converted into a cruising boat with a 50ft mast and a Bermudan rig. Under her shallow draft hull, she has a drop keel and she was much loved by her owners, which included Comdr. P.F. Clayton RN, his wife and six children.

Her later flirtation with the film world nearly proved fatal She was chosen again as an extra by Television and a clever young film director had the bright idea to burn her as a climax for an episode of a soap opera, but she escaped on that occasion.. She fell on hard times and in the Autumn of 1999 she finally gave up the struggle.



1923 Jumbo

Jumbo was built in 1923. The vessel was built for a master stevedore for pleasure and kept at Brightlingsea where it_cruised the English Channel. It won the London to Cowes race in 1938. The vessel was called up for war service as a tender to a minesweeper in and around Harwich. After the war it continued cruising the south coast with its original owner. Jumbo had a paid skipper from 1923 until the outbreak of World War II and later until 1969 when her original owner had to sell her




1932 New Prince of Wales 1 ex Julia Freak

1932 Julia Freak

The Julia Freak , and her near-sistership, the Britannia I, were built by in a temporary boatyard set-up in what was the Kursaal's coach-park. They were moved from there on trailers, along the Eastern Esplanade to the Corporation Loading Jetty, where they were each launched using the Corporation's Crane. She was the only SMNCo vessel to be returned after the war and returned to service as the New Prince of Wales

After Dunkirk she served the rest of the War as an inshore minesweeper, in November, 1945. Refitted by Cooks' Boatyard, in 1945, "New Prince of Wales 1" was in service by May 1946 Sold in the mid-1960's to buyers from Yorkshire. Driven ashore after her engines failed during bad weather, was declared a "total constructive loss".).



1921 Brittania 1

Britannia I Southend from 1921 to 1958 and on the Thames for Thames Motor Boats as Thames Britannia to 1982. She was the first boat of Plymouth Boat Cruises as Plymouth Princess in 1982 She passed to Sound Cruising in

2005 and remained in the fleet in 2007.

The Myall brothers expanded their fleet with a second vessel, "Southsea Britannia," leading to the distinction of "little Britannia" and "big Britannia." She went to Dunkirk and later served as an inshore minesweeper.

Returned to Myall brothers post-WWII and resumed passenger services until 1958.

Subsequent Ownership and Modifications (1958 – 2018):

Sold to The Thames Motorboat Company, renamed "Thames Britannia," with significant modifications including an enclosed bridge and covered stern deck. Sold to Plymouth Boat Cruises and renamed "Plymouth Princess," receiving extensive alterations such as a new superstructure, enclosed saloon, and upper deck, likely completed at Mashfords Boatyard.

Modifications occurred from 2005 to 2007, including installation of restrooms and relocation of access points.

Renovations were made from 2013 to 2018 to improve seating and life raft arrangements.

Operated on the Forth for boat tours, continuing its legacy as a historical passenger vessel(current passenger capacity130) through various adaptations and ownership changes.



1927 Resolute

The Resolute was built for Cecil Osborne for £375.

During the war she went fishing all the year round.

On reaching Dunkirk they went to the outside of the Mole of Dunkirk harbour. They . We had their our full load and motored outside the harbour. It was 5 or 5.30 and Defender was close by us. We couldn't find a large passenger ship or coaster and the Sub-Lieut. on Defender told us to head for Ramsgate." In 1969 she was bought by 'Dusty' Miller, who fitted her out for cruising the South Coast and France, Holland and Belgium. By 1993 she needed considerable work which he was unable to undertake, the Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust therefore agreed to take her over and arranged to transport her to the Medway for restoration. Until now the Trust has been unable to raise the necessary funds to restore her.

1928 Renown for Osbornes No Pic

Sank on return journey from Dunkirk



1936 Dreadnought

Dreadnought was built in 1936 as a 60 ft sailing vessel, and continued to work as such after the war, the last sailing excursion vessel at Southend. She carried 120 passengers on short cruises from the jetty adjacent to the pier. She was owned by J.D.Polkinghorn until passing to Southend Water Pleasure c.1987,.

Dreadnought was converted from a Sailing Yawl during the winter of either 1949 or 1950 by Johnson & Jago,. I'm sure "Dreadnought" did the first few summer seasons post-war under her original Sailing Yawl rig, until her owner was able to buy a pair of ex-Naval marine engines and their shafts and propellors from an Admiralty Small-Craft Disposals Auction at Sheerness Dockyard.

ONE FACT WONDER VESSELS WITH QUEEN IN THE NAME MISSISSIPPI QUEEN

The *Mississippi Queen* was the second-largest paddle wheel driven river steamboat ever built, second only to the larger American Queen. The ship was the largest such steamboat when she was completed in 1976 by the Delta Queen Steamboat Company – the American Queen was built in 1995. *Mississippi Queen* was built at Jeffboat, a shipyard in Jeffersonville, Indiana, formerly known the Jeffersonville Boat and Machine Company. The company was the largest inland shipbuilder in the United States and the second-largest builder of barges before it closed in 2018.

The name "*Mississippi Queen*" was chosen from over 220 different name suggestions including such colourful names as Creole Belle, Magnolia Maid, Southern Cross, Jasmine Jewel, Eagle Star, Natchez, Robert E. Lee, River Queen, and Dixie King. The selection process whittled the final choices to three names: Delta Grande, Grand Republic, and Mississippi Queen.

She was a seven-deck recreation of a classic Mississippi riverboat. She had 208 state rooms with a capacity of 422 guests and a crew of 157. She was 382 feet long, 68 feet wide, and had a height of 71 feet to the top of the twin telescoping stacks. She displaced 3,364 tons.

The ship was a genuine stern paddle-wheeler with a wheel that measured 22 feet in diameter by 36 feet wide and weighed 70 tons.

The ship had the world's largest calliope with 44 gold-plated solid-brass pipes, played from a solid-state keyboard. It was specially built for the *Mississippi Queen*. A calliope is a North American musical instrument that produces sound by sending a gas, originally steam or, more recently, compressed air, through large whistles.

Mississippi Queen was commissioned by a charter airline, Overseas National Airways (ONA), which owned the *Delta Queen* at the time. Construction, which started in 1973, was overseen by the brother of the ONA CEO. However, by the time of the first voyage in 1976, the Delta Queen Steamboat Company had been sold to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of New York. She was later owned by the Majestic America Line.

She went out of service in October 2001 due to the bankruptcy of her owners but returned to service in May 2002. Majestic America Line took the ship out of service at the end of 2007. She was laid up in New Orleans at Perry Street Wharf after being gutted, initially for renovation. Instead, however, she was sold for scrap in May 2009. She was towed for the last time to Morgan City, Louisiana, in March 2011 to be broken up.

The bell of the *Mississippi Queen* was saved and transported to Jeffersonville to find a new home in the Howard Steamboat Museum.

THE AFRICAN QUEEN

The African Queen is a 1951 adventure film adapted from the 1935 novel of the same name by C. S. Forester. Starring Humphrey Bogarde & Katherine Hepburn.

Two vessels were supposedly used in the filming there is controversy over the claim that the Livingstone was the vessel used. Other assertions that 'African Queen' was built at Lytham (by Lytham Shipbuilding and Engineering Co) have been denied by Lytham historian, Jack. M. Dakres

Director of the film, John Huston, had a reputation for risk-taking, but the insurance risk of two film stars having charge of a genuine steamer would have been a risk too far. Boilers can explode when in the hands of inexperienced people. It is clear that 'African Queen' was a motor boat! In the movie, exhaust from an internal combustion engine can be seen flowing from the stern of the vessel, port side, and about 20 cm above the waterline.

Comments by Commander L. G. Dennis are significant. From 1953 he was in the employ of East African Railways and Harbours, being Marine Superintendent (Lakes)from 1965 until his retirement in 1971. He has written in 1996 to the effect that the 'African Queen' was a Railway Marine petrol driven motor boat of 14 hp, built in 1930, 28 feet in length. He wrote that she was fitted with a wooden mock-up steam boiler and funnel made in the (Butiaba Marine) workshops and that oily rags were burnt to produce smoke(5). Reports elsewhere relate that separate mock-ups were made and positioned so that the large colour film cameras, then in use, could effectively shoot close-ups.

The Congo Boat

This African Queen was originally the 30-foot steam launch Livingstone, built of riveted sheet iron in 1912 in the United Kingdom for service in Africa on the Victoria Nile and Lake Albert where the movie was filmed in 1950. Originally named Livingstone, she was built for the British East Africa Railway^[2] and used from 1912 to 1968. She spent most of her first 50 years in the waters of the Ruki River in the northern Democratic Republic of Congo where she was used to transport hunters, mercenaries, and cargo.^[2]

According to an article on its 2012 restoration, the boat was built by Lytham Shipbuilding and Engineering Co.,^[2] as evidenced by the boiler plate and Lancashire records.

The boat was found in Cairo, Egypt in the 1970s, with coal still in its bunker. Purchased and shipped to the United States, she has had a succession of owners and is currently held in trust. The boat was refurbished in 2012, including installation of an interior steel hull frame and new boiler, and restored to service as a tourist boat.^[2]

The Nile Boat

The other African Queen was built in 1950 for the film and was discovered by Yank Evans, a Patagonian mechanical engineer who had come across what was left of the vessel while working on the roads in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda in 1984. "Yank came across a carcass of a steel boat, in the bushes there just left to rot. He asked the locals what this was and they said well that's the African Queen. So he bought it off the National Parks for \$1."^[3] Evans, who had worked on the boat with his son Billy and gave her a steam engine then stored the boat when he moved to Kenya in 1997 and her new home became a trailer in the garden.^[3] Cam McLeay purchased the Nile African Queen after hearing her story and set to finishing the restorations and getting the boat's original steam engine functioning and in the water.^[3] McLeay and his team rebuilt the African Queen's century-old Brady steam engine and replating the hull and replacing over 100 pipes, sourcing parts mostly from the UK but also from within Uganda..



So who do we believe or is it another London Bridge sale

MY QUEEN



Built in 1929 by Husk & Sons of Wivenhoe, Essex, MY QUEEN is a passenger vessel with the capacity for 169 passengers. During World War II, she was requisitioned by the Navy and at that time was named GONDOLIER QUEEN. She took part in the 1940 Dunkirk evacuation. She was kept by the Navy and was next heard of as a pleasure boat at Southend where she remained until the early 1970s. George Wheeler Launches then brought her to the Thames, running a water bus service between Westminster and Greenwich. From there she went to the West Country and was given a new enclosed saloon, top deck and upper wheelhouse. She is well adapted to her work, having a very broad beam for her length and a shallow draft. Based on the River Dart, she sailed between Dartmouth and Totnes and also operated sea and river cruises from Dartmouth, and a service from Darmouth to Dittisham from April to October. MY QUEEN still operates as a passenger vessel but is now located at Starcross, Devon running river trips and sea cruises from Dawlish. She has been the RSPB's official Avocet Cruise boat for four years and has featured on 'How to watch Wildlife' with Bill Oddie. She also appeared on another wildlife programme with Chris Packham for the BBC, and is often on the local news. She is very popular with holiday makers for her Dunkirk connections.

July 2022: After being unused for several years she sank over the winter 2021. She was subsequently re-floated after about three weeks. Now after several months, today a fishing vessel (Danmark reg Scillies) came up and towed her away at high tide. Marine traffic indicates that the Danmark has arrived at Kingswear, presumably having completed the voyage successfully

ANSWERS TO QUIZ 92

1. The film "A Night to Remember" was a story about which ship?

RMS Titanic

2. How many cruise ships are operated by TUI Group's cruise brand Marella Cruises?

Five - Discovery, Discovery 2, Explorer, Explorer 2 and Voyager

3. Forth Ports Group operates eight ports in the UK. Seven of these ports are in Scotland and one is in England. Which is the port in England?

Tilbury

4. The ferry HSC Manannan mainly operates on which route?

Liverpool to Douglas (Isle of Man)

5. Which port has the registration GY?

Grimsby

6. The Gatun Locks and Miraflores Locks are on which canal?

Panama Canal

7. Who died in 1967 whilst attempting a world speed record on Coniston Water on board *Bluebird*?

Donald Campbell

8. A new all-weather RNLI vessel recently began operations in Clacton. What class of lifeboat is this vessel?

Shannon class

9. Of the 35 Atlantic liners to hold the Blue Riband for the highest average speed crossing the Atlantic Ocean, 25 were British, followed by five German, three American, and one each from which other two countries?

Italy (Rex) and France (Normandie)

10. What is the name of the French Navy's aircraft carrier?

Charles de Gaulle



MYSTERY SHIPS 92

Tern Arrow, 18.9.1992

TERN ARROWIMO 8316730 Open Hatch Bulk Carrier28,349g 41,077dLength: 187.5 Breadth: 29.5 Depth: 16.9 Draught: 12.4 (m)

1986: Completed by Samsung Shipbuilding & Heavy Industries Co Ltd, Geoje as TERN ARROW.

2013: Broken up in India.



Merkur Sea, 31.1.1993

 MERKUR SEA
 IMO 8310906
 Container Ship

 16,430g 21,888d 1,302TEU
 Length: 166.5 Breadth: 26.5 Depth: 15.3 Draught: 10.3 (m)

1984: Completed by Bremer Vulkan AG Schiffbau u.Maschinenfabrik, Bremen as MERKUR SEA.

1986: Renamed VILLE D'URANUS.

1987: Renamed DUTCH SENATOR.

1989: Renamed MERKUR SEA. NEDLLOYD HIMALAYA.

1990: Renamed CMB MERKUR.

1991: Renamed MERKUR SEA.

1993: Renamed CITY OF GLASGOW.

1997: Renamed CSAV RANCO.

1998: Renamed MERKUR SEA.

1999: Renamed MSC SANTIAGO.

2000: Renamed MERKUR SEA.

2007: Renamed KOTA ABADI.

2012: Broken up in India.



HAJO, 6.3.1992

HAJO

IMO 7717236 General Cargo/Container – Type 95 class 1,694g 2,040t 127TEU Length: 72.3 Breadth: 12.8 Depth: 6.8 Draught: 4.5 (m)

1979: Completed by .J. Sietas KG Schiffswerft GmbH & Co, Hamburg as OSTERHEIDE.

1987: Renamed NICHOLAS.

1990: Renamed HAJO.

1999: Renamed HEIMLY.

2005: Renamed IRENE V. Believed to still be in existence.



Marietta, 22.4.1993

MARIETTA 284g 428d

IMO 5121342 General Cargo ship Length: 42.3 Breadth: 7.5 Depth: 3.3 Draught: 2.9 (m) 1950: Completed by Schiffbau Gesellschaft Unterweser AG, Bremerhaven as FRIEDA MORGENROTH.

1967: Renamed MARIETTA.

2014: Broken up in the Netherlands.



Carolina Bolten, Nab Anchorage, Solent, 3.9.2022

CAROLINA BOLTEN	IMO 9718454 Bulk Carrier – Seahorse 375 type
24,198g 37,567d	Length: 180 Breadth: 30 Depth: 14.7 Draught: 10.7 (m)

2015: Completed by Yangzhou Guoyu Shipbuilding Co Ltd, Yangzhou JS as CAROLINA BOLTEN.

2024: Renamed UBC THESSALONIKI. Still in Service.



Baltiysk, 27.9.2002

BALTIYSKIMO 8715285General Cargo/Ro-Ro - Astrakhan type15,893g 19,036d 533 TEULength: 173.5Breadth: 23Depth: 13.7Draught: 10.4 (m)

1987: Completed by VEB Warnowwerft Warnemuende, Rostock as BALTIYSK.1996: Renamed AENEAS.1996: Renamed SANTIAGO.

1997: Renamed MONTREAL.
1998: Renamed PCC HOUSTON.
2001: Renamed NORGATE PRIDE.
2003: Renamed GLOBAL SPIRIT I.
2004: Renamed LYKES HUNTER.
2005: Renamed OLGA.
2008: Renamed ATLANTIC HOPE.
2012: Broken up in India.