

Vol 60 No 1 Winter 2024/2025

Mersey Log

*Journal of the Merseyside Branch
World Ship Society*

The Merseyside Branch of the World Ship Society meets on the second Tuesday of each month – January excepted- at the Liverpool Seafarers' Centre, 20 Crosby Road South, Crosby, L22 1RQ



SVITZER SURREY in the Mersey. (Simon Smith)

Mersey Log

Winter Issue 2024/2025

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Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2023/2024

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Acting Hon. Secretary: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Treasurer: John Williams

Committee Member: Stan McFerran, Peter Purland

Branch News

November 2024

For our November meeting we welcomed our own David Shore who gave a well attended meeting a Presentation entitled "Scandinavian Shipping 2015 – 2024." The Presentation centered around ships owned and operated from Norway, Finland and Sweden together with shipping at the ports on the Island of Gotland. As well as some excellent photographs, David's knowledgeable commentary on a wide range of shipping, including oil tankers, car carriers, passenger vessels and general cargo vessels made for an excellent evening's entertainment which was enjoyed by all. Many thanks David and we hope to have you back at the projector before very long!

December 2024

Our Chairman, John Luxton, was our host for the December Branch Meeting. John continued his Maritime Infrastructure series, this time giving members present a well researched and well photographed presentation on the Port of Hayle. Many thanks John for another enjoyable evening.

February 2025

We once again welcomed our good friend Iain Quinn from Glasgow for our February presentation. On this occasion Iain dedicated his Talk to two recently deceased friends, firstly our own Dave Crolley and secondly to our good friend Ian Wilson, from Glasgow, who in recent years has accompanied Iain to the Branch. Iain's presentation centred around the turbine steamers of the Clyde such as DUCHESS OF MONTROSE and later around the turbine steamers of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company such as LADY OF MANN (I), mainly, but not exclusively in Scottish waters. Thank you Iain for another fantastic evening and we hope to see you again next year.

Merseyside Maritime News

November 2024

Former Mersey Ferry ROYAL DAFFODIL, ex OVERCHURCH was towed into Canning Half Tide Dock on Mon 18 Nov after extensive refurbishment over a five year period to become a bar and restaurant attraction in the dock. She is now called just DAFFODIL.

December 2024

On Sun 1 Dec H.M.S. PRINCE OF WALES berthed at the Cruise Liner Terminal at Liverpool, a few days earlier than scheduled. Sadly bad weather accompanied her visit and her public open day on Sat 7 Dec was cancelled due to Storm Darragh. She departed the Mersey on Sun 8 Dec.

Caledonian MacBrayne's LORD OF THE ISLES departed Vittoria Dock, Birkenhead, after an extensive refit at Cammell Laird on Mon 9 Dec, and headed for Oban.

Storm Darragh on Sat 7 Dec hit the Mersey hard and most shipping movements were cancelled. These included the Mersey Ferries, Stena Line's Birkenhead – Belfast service, sailings to Dublin and Isle of Man Steam Packet sailings from and to Douglas.

Storm Darragh had successfully demolished some of the ferry berthing structure at Holyhead and after it became apparent that the port would be closed for some time, Stena Line and Irish Ferries began to put extra capacity on their other Irish Sea routes. At Birkenhead 12 Quays, Stena Line re-introduced a Ro-Pax service to Dublin, employing STENA EMBLA, usually in service at Holyhead. There was one round trip per day.

January 2025

On Sun 5 Jan Caledonian MacBrayne's CLANSMAN arrived at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead, for her annual refit.

On Tues 7 Jan OSCAR WILDE (Irish Ferries) arrived at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead for refit. This was the first time the vessel had visited the Mersey.

February 2025

EUROPEAN HIGHLANDER departed Cammell Laird on 14 Feb after her refit and made her way back to Larne where she resumed service on the North Channel route to Cairnryan.



EUROPEAN HIGHLANDER leaving Cammell Laird, Birkenhead on 14 Feb 2025. (John Luxton)

Tug News with Simon Smith



SVITZER SARAH at Eastham. (Simon Smith)

Two vessels have been added to Boluda's Liverpool fleet in the last seven months. The Chinese-built SERVICEMAN arrived from the Thames in Late July. Delivered for Lamnalco Sharjah as HAMRA in 2005 she was acquired by SMS Towage in 2016. The VB prefix was added to her name in the Autumn.

The Japanese-built VB STRATHDEE arrived from Sullom Voe in early February. Delivered as IIDE MARU she was acquired by J P Knight in 2007 as KINTORE. In 2014 she became STRATHDEE and along with other Boluda vessels she acquired the VB prefix last year. An ASD tug she is powered by two Niigata engines and has a bollard pull of 65 tonnes.

Leaving Boluda's Liverpool fleet is the 1992-built VB ZEEBRUGGE. She first arrived in Liverpool in 2013 wearing the colours of URS and sailed on 11th October 2024 for Newport. Another ASD driven vessel her bollard pull is 39 tonnes.



ZEEBRUGGE in the Mersey. (Simon Smith)

Svitzer have sold the Bromborough-built SVITZER SARAH to Portland-based Quest Marine Towage. Having reverted to LADY SARAH in November she sailed for Swansea in December. The third of eight sisters built by McTay Svitzer continue to operate the ALMA, CECILIA, JOSEPHINE, KATHLEEN and LYNDHURST. The lead vessel, ANYA, is now with Romanian operators as BSV FRANTA whilst the former TRAFALGAR is with Taiwan owners as YU FU No. 569.

The Great Yarmouth-built SVITZER SUSSEX was Belfast-based but operated at Liverpool for a time in late 2022. She was recently renamed SUSSEX TUG at Hull under Tanzanian registry for as yet unidentified owners. Her sister, SVITZER SURREY, also had spells on the Mersey. She emerged from dry docking at Cammell Laird as MORVA in January 2024 following sale to A&P Falmouth.

Cruise Ship Calls 2025

MARCH 2025

Saturday 29 March 2025 – Viking Vela

APRIL 2025

Monday 14 April 2025 – Viking Vela

Tuesday 15 April 2025 – Ambition

Thursday 24 April 2025 – Bolette

Saturday 26 April 2025 – Viking Vela

Sunday 27 April 2025 – Ambition

MAY 2025

Thursday 1 May 2025 – Celebrity Eclipse

Friday 2 May 2025 – Bolette

Sunday 4 May 2025- MSC Preziosa
Tuesday 6 May 2025 – Ambition
Wednesday 7 May 2025 – Bolette
Thursday 8 May 2025 – Norwegian Prima
Saturday 10 May 2025 – Mein Schiff 3
Monday 12 May 2025 – Viking Sky
Wednesday 14 May 2025 – Regal Princess
Friday 16 May 2025 – AIDAluna
Sunday 18 May 2025 – Ambition
Monday 19 May 2025 – Amera
Tuesday 20 May 2025 – Mein Schiff 3
Saturday 24 May 2025 – Bolette
Sunday 25 May 2025 – Regal Princess
Monday 26 May 2025 – Queen Anne
Tuesday 27 May 2025 – Queen Anne
Wednesday 28 May 2025 – Ambition
Thursday 29 May 2025 – Bolette
JUNE 2025
Tuesday 3 June 2025 – Viking Jupiter
Thursday 5 June 2025 – Regal Princess
Friday 6 June 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 7 June 2025 – Celebrity Eclipse
Monday 9 June 2025 – Mein Schiff 3
Tuesday 10 June 2025 – Viking Saturn
Friday 13 June 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 14 June 2025 – Viking Mars
Sunday 15 June 2025 – Britannia
Monday 16 June 2025 – Britannia
Tuesday 17 June 2025 – Seven Seas Grandeur
Monday 23 June 2025 – Bolette
Wednesday 25 June 2025 – Carnival Mircale
Friday 27 June 2025 – Silver Shadow
Sunday 29 June 2025 – Celebrity Eclipse
Monday 30 June 2025 – Seven Seas Grandeur
JULY 2025
Tuesday 1 July 2025 – Seven Seas Grandeur
Wednesday 2 July 2025 – Seven Seas Grandeur
Thursday 3 July 2025 – Viking Vela
Saturday 5 July 2025 – Mein Schiff 3
Monday 7 July 2025 – Emerald Princess
Wednesday 9 July 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 12 July 2025 – Regal Princess
Sunday 13 July 2025 – Viking Jupiter
Tuesday 15 July 2025 – Viking Vela
Thursday 17 July 2025 – Azamara Journey
Friday 18 July 2025 – Bolette
Wednesday 23 July 2025 – Viking Sky
Thursday 24 July 2025 – Viking Vesta
Friday 25 July 2025 – Bolette
Monday 28 July 2025 – Crown Princess
Tuesday 29 July 2025 – Viking Jupiter
AUGUST 2025

Friday 1 August 2025 – Viking Vesta
Saturday 2 August 2025 – Seven Seas Voyager
Sunday 3 August 2025 – Nieuw Statendam
Monday 4 August 2025 – Viking Sky
Tuesday 5 August 2025 – Carnival Miracle
Thursday 7 August 2025 – Bolette
Friday 8 August 2025 – Seven Seas Mariner
Saturday 9 August 2025 – Celebrity Eclipse
Sunday 10 August 2025 – Viking Jupiter
Monday 11 August 2025 – AIDAbella
Friday 15 August 2025 – Queen Anne
Sunday 17 August 2025 – Viking Saturn
Monday 18 August 2025 – Regal Princess
Wednesday 20 August 2025 – Aurora
Friday 22 August 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 23 August 2025 – Seven Seas Grandeur
Monday 25 August 2025 – Norwegian Dawn
Wednesday 27 August 2025 – Bolette
Thursday 28 August 2025 – Viking Vela
Saturday 30 August 2025 – Mein Schiff 3
Sunday 31 August 2025 – Marina
SEPTEMBER 2025
Monday 1 September 2025 – Nieuw Statendam
Wednesday 3 September 2025 – Viking Jupiter
Thursday 4 September 2025 – Europa
Friday 5 September 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 6 September 2025 – Silver Dawn
Sunday 7 September 2025 – Crystal Serenity
Tuesday 9 September 2025 – Viking Vela
Thursday 11 September 2025 – Disney Fantasy
Sunday 14 September 2025 – Bolette
Monday 15 September 2025 – Ambience
Tuesday 16 September 2025 – Ambition
Thursday 18 September 2025 – Queen Mary 2
Friday 19 September 2025 – Queen Mary 2
Sunday 21 September 2025 – MSC Preziosa
Wednesday 24 September 2025 – Bolette
Thursday 25 September 2025 – Viking Vela
Friday 26 September 2025 – Viking Saturn
Sunday 28 September 2025 – Ambition
OCTOBER 2025
Friday 10 October 2025 – Bolette
Tuesday 14 October 2025 – Artania
Thursday 16 October 2025 – Ambition
Thursday 23 October 2025 – Bolette
Saturday 25 October 2025 – Ambition
Thursday 30 October 2025 – Ambition
NOVEMBER 2025
Monday 3 November 2025 – Bolette
Friday 7 November 2025 – Ambition
Monday 17 November 2025 – Bolette
DECEMBER 2025

Tuesday 2 December 2025 – Bolette
Wednesday 10 December 2025 – Bolette
Monday 15 December 2025 – Bolette
Monday 22 December 2025 – Bolette

ISPS Port Passes

There are some changes to Port Passes in 2025 being trialled by Peel Ports from January and going nationwide from March. This notice refers to Port Passes issued by Peel Ports to Merseyside Branch WSS members as per long standing agreement.

The Home Office are to start overseeing port passes from March but Peel were selected for the trial and are already running the scheme.

There is a portal on the government web site.

You are issued with an iPad for the purpose and have to provide:

- A valid email address
- Type of pass you will be applying for
- A valid form of ID. This must be one of the following: Passport, UK Drivers Licence, National Identification, Birth Certificate
- National Insurance number, or confirmation of your right to work

Once completed and verified online they email the ISPS Officer with confirmation (takes about 2 minutes) then the pass is issued. Of course, the Government wants its cut so passes have increased from £35 to £40.

Plans Approved for new Liverpool Cruise Terminal

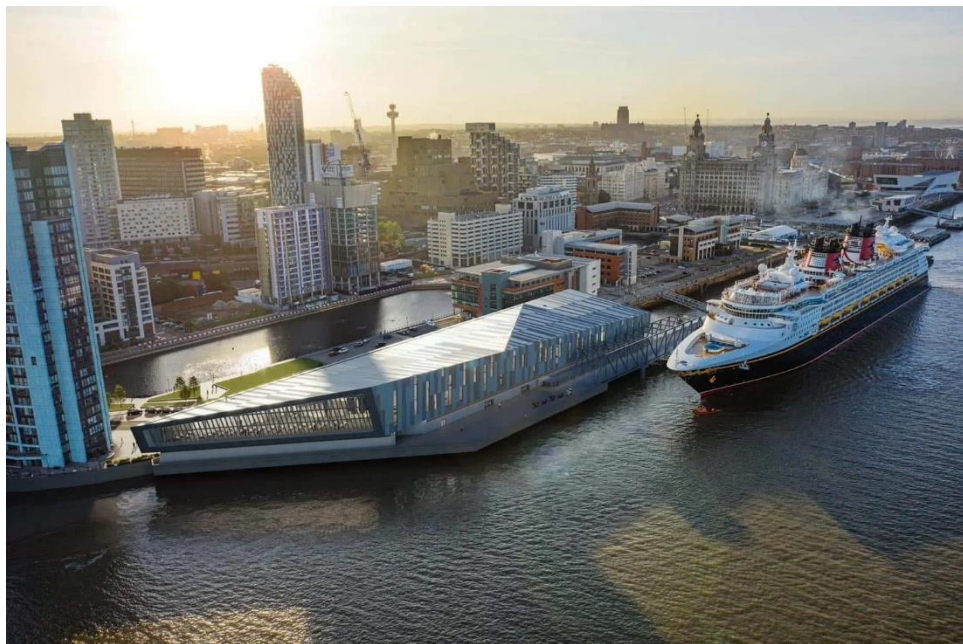
Plans have now been approved for a landmark Liverpool Cruise Terminal, which we see the city's new terminal situated within Peel L&P's £5bn Liverpool Waters scheme.

The terminal will be constructed at the Princes Jetty site, with the proposal enabling the world's largest cruise ships (up to 3,600 passengers) to embark and disembark at Liverpool, providing a world-class experience for cruise companies and passengers.

The cruise terminal is expected to directly create a number of local jobs. The City Council 's Planning Committee voted unanimously in favour of the application for the detailed design of the development, following outline planning permission being granted in April 2018.

The 10,000 sqm terminal will be built on a suspended deck on steel piles in the river, spanning two floors. It will boast a baggage hall in the ground floor, and the passenger lounge, café and check-in on the first floor.

The scheme will also include new public open space, hard and soft landscaping, and associated car and coach servicing arrangements. The plans will see the derelict Princes Jetty currently in situ dismantled, with construction of the new terminal taking place at the site of the existing jetty in the River Mersey. The Council is also investing a further £32m in upgrading the A565 to support the new cruise facility and north docklands and is gearing up to create a £20m link road to extend Leeds Street to the waterfront to support a new £30m Isle of Man Ferry terminal. Site preparation works for the new facilities are expected to start in the new year.



Computer Generated Image of the new Cruise Liner Terminal. (Explore Liverpool)

The QE2 Comes Home to Liverpool 24th July 1990

With Philip Parker (All photos by Philip Parker unless otherwise stated)

This was something of a major thing to happen in Liverpool, often too many negative things took the headlines, but the proposed homecoming would be a potential "Kodak Moment" for many to remember for many years to come. In conversation with Liverpool Pilot John Temple some weeks earlier who at the time was one of the appropriated Pilots for Atlantic Container Line of which Cunard were one of the major shareholders so it transpired that JT would be the Pilot throughout the Liverpool call anchoring mid river between Liverpool & Birkenhead. Having had a long-standing relationship with The Alexandra Towing Company over many years, I was invited to join a "snappers' boat" with other photographers and staff from the Company's Castle Street Office.

Joining the former Hapag-Lloyd Tug HERKULES alongside Princes Landing Stage we headed outward up river north on the eastern edge of the channel close to C18 marker buoy with a view of Crosby behind us as the incoming tide gathered momentum. By now the QE2 was clearly visible having passed the Mersey Bar light buoy making her way inward and the excitement was felt by all on board. Not being party to the VHF broadcasts taking place between the various vessels including ours, the Pilot John Temple had requested our tug to take the bow rope, much to the displeasure of Alexandra Towing staff on board who distinctly did not want HERKULES on any publicity photographs as this tug was not in ATCL colours. BRAMLEY MOORE was the chosen vessel to lead the QE2 in toward her anchorage at Liverpool. Following a mid-river exchange of personnel on board to tug CANADA and Herkules was off and running towards the bow of the QE2.

Below: HERKULES picking up speed to get ahead of QE2 and BRAMLEY MOORE with QE2 on approach to New Brighton.



Below: Mersey Docks aerial photograph passing Seaforth Dock with ACL's (Cunard owned) Atlantic Conveyor alongside Seaforth's S3 berth.



Below: QE2 Prior to anchoring mid river passing New Brighton inward surround by a flotilla of small craft to welcome QE2 to the city for the first time.



Below: Views from the Birkenhead side of the River Mersey soon after arrival as our tug passed astern and mid-afternoon 3.10pm according to the Liver Building clock, Mersey Ferry alongside operating as a passenger tender.





After a quick turnaround at home, I decided to join the many thousands of spectators on both sides of the river during the early evening and await the firework display planned later the same evening.

Below: Late evening view of the QE2 at anchor pictured from close to Alfred Lock.



CLdN Expands Liverpool Terminal with Multimillion-Pound Investment

CLdN has completed a multimillion-pound upgrade at its Brocklebank terminal in the Port of Liverpool, enhancing cargo flow and operational efficiency. The investment includes a new gate system, terminal operating system, and a widened RoRo linkspan, improving customer experience and facilitating larger, more eco-friendly vessels.

The expansion supports increased capacity on the Liverpool-Dublin route, where CLdN operates 17 weekly return sailings, strengthening freight links between Great Britain, Ireland, and Spain. The investment also brings new job opportunities at the terminal, with CLdN partnering with a local college to launch technical apprenticeships.

CEO Florent Maes stated: *"This upgrade is part of a series of major UK port investments by CLdN. It benefits our customers, creates skilled jobs in Liverpool, and reduces carbon intensity by enabling larger vessels on the Liverpool-Dublin route."*

CLdN took over Seatruck Ferries in 2023 and has taken over their operations out of Liverpool and Heysham. The Seatruck brand is gradually being phased out and many of their former vessels have been sold off.



Photo courtesy of CLdN.