

Vol 59 No 3 Autumn/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



A CGI Image of the new Mersey Ferry, about to start construction at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead. (Merseytravel)

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Autumn/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

August 2024

It was with great joy that we welcomed our own branch member Philip Welsh to our August 2024 meeting. Philip's presentation was yet another of the many he has given in the past about the Cammell Laird Shipbuilders at Birkenhead. This time he talked about the 1964 to 1977 era. Both Phil's commentary and fantastic slides were of very high standard and very well received by those who attended. Most of the launches we saw were of ships well known to us but there were many that were foreign owned which was of great interest. Thanks Philip and we look forward to another presentation very soon.

September 2024

It was a great pleasure to welcome back to the Branch, Krispin Atkinson, WSS Council member who gave us a wonderful presentation of Cornish Shipping Through the Years, centering mainly at Falmouth. Krispin's photos ranged from vintage views from the 1920's or earlier through to the 1950's up to the 1980's and interspersed throughout were scenes from old cine film of Queen of Bermuda. Views of all sorts of shipping were enjoyed in the River Fal, the dry docks, Prince of Wales Pier, Custom House Quay and the Queen's Wharf. All of this coupled with Krispen's extensive knowledge of the south west shipping scene made this an evening to remember.

It was of course the first meeting since the passing of Dave Crolley, our long serving Branch Secretary, which was in fact just one of the posts he held at the Branch over the last 40 years or so. A minutes silence was observed before the meeting. Dave's obituary appears below.

October 2024

October's Presentation was given by acting Branch Secretary, Adrian Sweeney. Adrian showed the photographs of former Branch member, the late Tom Hesketh, the subject of which was ships on the Mersey and in the Dock systems from the early 1980's. The photos illustrated what was the end of an era as the ships shown were mainly cargo liners and tramps of the "old school" whose trade was soon to be completely taken by containerization. Of equal interest to the ships were some of the dock scenes...a by gone age indeed. Only half the slides were used in the show so part two will no doubt be part of a future programme. Thanks must also go to John Luxton, Branch Chairman, who spent a lot of time digitizing the slides.

November 2024

November's Presentation was given by Branch Member David Shore, the title of which was "Scandinavian Shipping 2015 – 2024. David concentrated on ships owned and operated from Norway, Finland and Sweden together with shipping at the ports on the island of Gotland. Many of David's

photographs were indeed of ships in Scandinavian waters but there were also photos of Scandinavian ships on the Mersey and on the Humber. The Branch were treated to a large variety of types of vessels – tankers, passenger cruise ships, ferries, car carriers, bulkers, container ships, coasters and even general cargo ships, all accompanied by a knowledgeable and entertaining commentary. Many thanks David and we hope to welcome you back up to the projector in the near future!

DAVID CROLLEY (1946 - 2024)

It is with great sadness that both Merseyside Branch members and his many friends elsewhere in the Society learnt of the unexpected death of Dave Crolley on 7 September 2024, aged 76, after a short stay in hospital. He had given many years sterling service as a lynchpin of the branch, being Chairman for a record four periods and worked tirelessly as our Secretary and Outside Visits Secretary for several decades.

Born and bred in war-battered Bootle, Dave was initially absorbed with the steam trains on the line near his home and later with the local folk scene. He converted to following shipping, joining the WSS and our branch c.1978. With his friendly and generous nature, and of course his scouse sense of humour, he made many friends both locally and throughout the World Ship Society, becoming well-known both at AGM weekends and on the many European ferry trips organised by Jimmy Poole. Dave developed a wide network both of fellow ship enthusiasts and within the Liverpool commercial maritime community and hence knew promptly of all current events (and the rumours & gossip) on the Mersey scene. His contacts enabled him to continue the branch's reputation for having many ship visits, sadly curtailed post-9/11 and finally by covid. He was a worthy successor as our Outside Visits Secretary to the legendary Jack Griffiths, Phil Dickinson and Dom MacArthur

Dave qualified as a draughtman whilst employed by Campbell & Isherwood, electrical & mechanical engineers, but in the early 1980s became a contract draughtsman at Kodak's site at Kirkby where he worked for about thirty years until his retirement. Because he was responsible for recording and monitoring the site's cabling and other utilities and issuing contractors with permits to work, ironically after the site was closed and its buildings gradually demolished, Dave was retained and became one of the last two people on the site.

Dave's abilities included being very organised, a skill he also applied to his extensive collection of shipping material. His principal interest was the Vestey Group fleets (Blue Star, Booth and Lamport & Holt), with whom his brother Brian was a Chief Engineer and he built up an excellent photographic archive of their ships. Additionally, he was an avid recorder of the Mersey tug scene and of locally built ships. He gave slide presentation to a variety of groups and clubs but, having prepared them meticulously, he naturally didn't take kindly to on several occasions having to share the venue with loud music or loud conversations in a curtained-off bar room!

One person he met at Kodak was Dot, who became his very supportive partner and fiancée. They ventured on a variety of cruises and needless to say he involved her in our branch activities, with her becoming our honorary caterer at our Merchant Ship Days and the NW Ship Show. She also became renowned for the delicious cakes provided annually at Christmas and on several special occasions. Dave's funeral, which was appropriately maritime-themed, was attended by many shipping friends. To Dot and to both his and her families we extend our sincerest condolences. He will be greatly missed by so many of us.
(JW)

Merseyside Maritime News

Naval Visitors

August 9th saw two naval visitors arriving at Liverpool and berthing in Canada No. 3 branch. The German replenishment tanker RHON arrived from Kiel. She is the lead ship in a pair of vessels originally ordered by Libyan owners as acid tankers. RHON and her sister SPESSART were built by Kroegerwerft at Rendsburg, originally named OKENE and OKAPI and were launched in August 1974 and February 1975. The West German Navy acquired the pair designated as type 704 in 1976. OKENE was converted by Kroegerwerft and commissioned as RHON in September 1977. OKAPI's conversion to SPESSART took place at Bremerhaven. Two type 707 replenishment tankers currently under construction in Germany are expected to replace RHON and SPESSART with delivery planned for 2025.

Close behind the RHON was the Portuguese frigate DOM FRANCISCO DE ALMEIDA arriving from Lisbon. Launched in November 1992 at the Koninklijke Schelde Group yard at Vlissingen she was commissioned as the Dutch Navy Karel Doorman-class frigate VAN GALEN. Portugal acquired the ship in 2010.

Both vessels were participating in Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1).



RHON in Canada No. 3 (Simon Smith)



Dom Francisco de Almeida in Canada No. 3. (Simon Smith)

September 2024

QUEEN MARY 2 returned to the River Mersey for a short stop over visit on Fri 6 Sept during the mid-afternoon. She berthed at the Cruise Liner Terminal and remained there till just before midnight on Sat 7 Sept. The ship was in Liverpool as part of the celebrations of her four hundredth transatlantic crossing.

On 30 Sept the Isle of Man Steam Packet flagship MANXMAN made her first visit to the Mersey. She had departed Douglas light ship at 1600 and sailed for Cammell Laird at Birkenhead for her first refit. She entered the Wet Basin and was secure alongside at 2240.

October 2024

MANXMAN departed dry dock at Birkenhead at about 0715 on Tuesday 15th October. She spent some time in the river before berthing for the first time at the new Steam Packet Terminal at Liverpool. The tug VB ELBE was in attendance for this berthing trial. She overnighted on the Cruise Liner Terminal.

On Wednesday 16th October MANXMAN departed the Cruise Liner Terminal early morning and sailed down the Mersey and into the Crosby and Queen's Channels before returning for more berthing trials at the new Liverpool Terminal. Once again she spent the night on the C.L.T. before doing more berthing trials the following day. At about 1300 on Thursday 17th October she set sail for Douglas and re-entered service on Friday 18th October with the 0845 sailing to Heysham.

BEN-MY-CHREE sailed to the Mersey on Monday 28th October in order to do berthing trials at the new Liverpool terminal. She was all secure at 1036 on the berth and soon after the stern ramp was lowered. During the early afternoon she moved on to the Cruise Liner berth where she overnighted. She departed for Heysham early next morning.



MANXMAN in the Mersey on 15 Oct 2024 about to approach the new Liverpool Isle of Man Terminal for the first time. (IOMSPCo)

Mersey Mosaic with Philip Parker

A busy and interesting day on the river last month (29th Sept) when the largest (to date) container vessel docked at LCT 2 on the River Mersey, not the largest vessel to arrive in the river as tankers for Tranmere have larger specific dimensions, e.g., beam, gross tonnage, and deadweight.

Pictured heading down the channel on the mid morning tide MSC TRIESTE IMO 9484479 assisted with 4 Tugs, VB PHOENIX , VB ELBE, MILLGARTH and SVITZER ELIZABETH as the vessel turned prior to docking.

Built in 2011 at Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering, Geoje, South Korea.

Length 365.8m

Beam 48.46

GRT 143,521

Speed 15.3 average, max 24 knots

TEU 13,050.



On the same tide we saw the return to service of ACL's G 4 ATLANTIC STAR, after several weeks dry docking at Antwerp and sister vessel ATLANTIC SKY outward from Gladstone Lock and passing astern

of ATLANTIC STAR mid river before passing the MSC TRIESTE in the Crosby channel. Both ACL vessels assisted by SVITZER AMAZONS and VB DONAU.





WISBY VERITY IMO 9283459 Chemical/Oil Products Tanker built in 2004 and currently sailing under the flag of Netherlands.
Outward from Langton Lock to lay by at Point Lynas, Anglesey.



Crude Oil Shuttle Tanker JASMINE KNUTSEN IMO 9273557 inward for Tranmere on approach towards New Brighton assisted by SVITZER STANLOW.

Built 2005, Length 276.96, Beam 46.04, Gross tons 80,918, DWT 148,644. Average/Max Speed 9.2/15.4 knots.



The B & I Line Vessels at Liverpool 3rd July 1981. Philip Parker

The occasion of the latest vessel to join the B & I delivered into the fleet in June 1981. LEINSTER pictured arriving on her maiden voyage at Liverpool prior to entering the Waterloo River entrance. Sister vessel CONNACHT delivered some years previously in 1979 having joined the Liverpool to Dublin service in 1980.

Photo: CONNACHT enters the river stern first after exiting Waterloo River Entrance.



**Photo: Connacht turns and makes for mid river as Leinster makes her approach.
Photo of both vessels passing mid river.**



Leinster dressed overall viewed prior to docking.



Both vessels were built at the Verolme Cork Dockyard, Cork, Ireland of similar specifications, both capable of carrying 1,500 passengers however LEINSTER having a greater number of berths 536 compared to CONNACHT'S 306.

During January 1983 changes within the Port Authority (Mersey Docks and Harbour Company) over the cost of keeping Waterloo River Entrance open required the B & I line to move further north in the port to North Brocklebank Branch Dock. The first sailing was on 18th October 1983 with LEINSTER.

Pictured here alongside the “Portacabin City” berth and during evening operations loading in 1984.



Photo: B & I Line's Innisfallen alongside Brocklebank Dock as cover for Leinster/Connacht.



The last sailing from Liverpool to Dublin for B & I Line was by Connacht on 6th January 1988. During a visit to Cork in November 2019 in the company of fellow World Ship Society members who gave me a guided tour of the area including a visit to the Verolme Dockyard. (pictured below)



All photos by Philip Parker