

Vol 59 No 2 Summer 2024

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



SNOWDROP and QUEEN ANNE at Liverpool, 3 June 2024. (Malcolm McRonald)

Mersey Log

Summer Issue 2024

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Merseyside Branch Officers and Committee 2023/2024

Chairman: John Luxton

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Sweeney

Hon. Secretary: Dave Crolley

Hon. Treasurer: John Williams

Outside Visits Secretary: Dave Crolley

Committee Member: Stan McFerran.

Branch News with Dave Crolley

May 2024

It is with great regret we have to announce the passing of branch member Christy MacHale aged 75. Christy was a great friend to us all, a man of very many talents; our condolences go to his wife Sam and all his family. Our May 2024 meeting was a great night when David Hearn from Wallasey came to talk to us about Liverpool Shipping Lines. David covered most of the big Companies that we all know such as Bibby Line, Cunard, White Star, Canadian Pacific, Harrison Line, Alfred Holt, Elder Dempster and finishing off with Larrinaga Line. David's explanations were most interesting accompanied by excellent ship photos and wonderful shipping company's posters. Thank you David for visiting us and we hope to see you again soon.

June 2024

Branch Chairman John Luxton gave us an excellent presentation for our June 2024 meeting. It was another of John's Maritime Infrastructures talks, this time entitled Ports of Cornwall Part 1. He began by talking about Looe which has been featured on the television lately, doubling up as Shipton Abbott in the Beyond Paradise programme. John showed us scenes from many years ago comparing them with the modern day panorama. This included old railway tracks and interesting buildings. He mentioned that Looe will be requiring new flood gate and breakwater soon because of recent severe storms. After the interval we visited St Ives which as we all know is wonderful. We saw many old photos of the town and the harbour both ancient and modern. It was most interesting to see the preserved 1899 RNLi Lifeboat JAMES STEVENS No. 10 in such good condition. Shipwrecks from over the years were also shown which was most interesting. Thanks a lot John for all the research and hard work that went into your talk.

July 2024

Tuesday 9th July 2024 brought our Branch AGM hosted by our current Chairman John Luxton. The current Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were all elected to stand for another season as was existing committee member Stan McFerran. Geoff Holmes has had to retire this year from the committee and we thank him for his past service. After the interval we all enjoyed shipping images compiled by Adrian Sweeney, John Luxton, Dave Crolley, Simon Smith and John Brady which was enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone that attended.

Branch Presentations September 2024 to December 2024

10th September 2024

Cornish Shipping
Krispin Atkinson, WSS Council Member
An evening of great shipping nostalgia

8th October 2024

Liverpool Shipping 1979 to 1984.
Adrian Sweeney, Merseyside Branch.
The Slides of the late Tom Hesketh

12th November 2024

Scandinavian Shipping 2015 to 2024
David Shore, Merseyside Branch.
Ships owned and operated from Norway, Finland and Sweden together with shipping at the ports on the island of Gotland

10th December 2024

The Port of Hayle
John Luxton, Merseyside Branch
More of John's Maritime Infrastructure Series

Christy MacHale

Christy MacHale, who has died aged 76 was a longstanding Merseyside Branch member. Christy had an extensive knowledge of shipping. His interest came from his youth in South Shields watching the ships entering and leaving the Tyne. He started attending the Blue Funnel socials and became friendly with Tom McKenna and Tony Denny with the result that he began attending our Branch meetings. Christy had a large collection of books and shipping photographs.

A lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Liverpool, Christy had a deep knowledge and extensive photo collection of Blue Funnel and other Liverpool ships, was fluent in the Catalan, Gaelic & Welsh languages, had wide-ranging musical interests and was for many years an active participant on the Irish folk scene.

His last years were marked by illness rendering him housebound.

To his Wife, Sam, and family we send our condolences.

Mersey Maritime News

May 2024

Mersey Shipping Line Introduces New 'Green' Vessels

BG Freight Line has unveiled its 'greenest ships yet' – four vessels that will carry freight between Liverpool and Rotterdam, increasing capacity and cutting carbon emissions. BG Freight Line is introducing four new vessels onto its Liverpool to Rotterdam cargo route that it says will slash carbon emissions. A subsidiary of Port of Liverpool owner, Peel Ports, BG Freight Line says the four new ships – BG GREEN, BG BLUE, BG RED, and BG ORANGE – are 70m long and can carry up to 1,380 containers. This is 300 containers more than the older vessels. That increased capacity will result in a lower carbon footprint per container. They will also use a state-of-the-art 'scrubber' to catch CO2 and sulphur particles.

The vessels are also equipped to handle biomethanol, allowing them to be powered by this more sustainable fuel source as it becomes increasingly available in ports. With the ships servicing the container route between Liverpool and Rotterdam, BG GREEN is the first in operation, having made her maiden voyage from the Port of Liverpool on April 27, with the other vessels set to come into service later this year.

David Huck, chief operating officer at Peel Ports Group, said: *"Sustainability is at the heart of everything the maritime logistics sector can be."*

June 2024

On Mon 3 June the new Cunard Line vessel QUEEN ANNE arrived in Liverpool for the first time at around 0630. Mersey Ferries put on special viewing cruises so as to enable people to get a good view of the new cruise ship. Her official naming ceremony took place at 1600 at the Pier Head.



BG GREEN on her way to Liverpool.

With the opening of the new Isle of Man terminal at Liverpool pending, MANANNAN once again performed berthing trials at the new linkspan on both Tuesday 18 June and Wednesday 19 June. Meanwhile BEN-MY-CHREE departed Douglas during the afternoon of Wednesday 19 June and sailed to the Mersey Bar Anchorage where she dropped anchor. The following morning she entered the Number 7 Dry Dock at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead, for a full refit.

Paddle Steamer WAVERLEY arrived at Holyhead in the early morning of Mon 24 June after sailing light ship from Milford Haven. Her first sailing this century from the Anglesey port was at 0930 to cruise the north Anglesey coast viewing Moelfre and on to Llandudno from where she offered an afternoon cruise to Puffin Island and then an evening cruise to Seacombe.

The following two days of cruises out of Seacombe to Llandudno and cruises to Puffin Island and along the Anglesey coast went according to plan in fine sunny weather with very good loadings.

Meanwhile Mersey Ferries were experiencing various operational difficulties. On Wed 5 June due to high winds, the 1020 and 1120 River Explorer Cruises from Seacombe Ferry terminal did not operate due to being unable to safely board passengers. The River Explorer Cruise from Pier Head at 1000 and 1100 operated a non-stop 50-minute cruise.

The annual Friends of the Ferries Across the Mersey Dock and River cruise scheduled for Sat 22 June was unfortunately called off due to continuing mechanical problems with ROYAL IRIS.

Better news was to be had a few days later when it was announced that 90% of tickets for the series of Manchester Ship Canal Cruises during the summer had already been sold. However with ROYAL IRIS still "struggling for fitness" only one ferry, SNOWDROP, was available to carry out all advertised sailings on Tues 25 June/Wed 26 June. As two fully booked Manchester Ship Canal cruises were in the schedule, all River Cruises and commuter services on these two days were cancelled as SNOWDROP sailed the canal. ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY finally re-entered service on Thurs 27 June. All services were suspended due to a technical issue with SNOWDROP on Thurs 27 June from mid-morning onwards. However, services resumed at 1700 with ROYAL IRIS. SNOWDROP, which had been in more or less non stop service for several months, retired to the Liverpool Dock system for rest and recuperation! However yet another technical problem with ROYAL IRIS on Tues 2 July resulted in a cancellation of all sailings for the day. All sailings remained cancelled until Fri 5 July.

Preserved tug/tender DANIEL ADAMSON was also encountering operational difficulties. A boiler damper issue on Sat 22 June ruined her planned programme of sailing from Canning Half Tide Dock in Liverpool to Acton Bridge. The fault manifested itself just as the vessel was off the Queen Elizabeth II Dock and she managed to berth at Eastham with the help of the tug VB ELBE. MSC VOLANT assisted DANIEL ADAMSON to Ellesmere port where passengers were disembarked and the rest of the cruise was terminated. It transpired that the damper had sheared off and cruises on the following two days had to be cancelled. Fortunately, by Tues 25 June the issue had been resolved although the repairs had resulted in much cleaning needing to be done before she could return to service. She raised steam the following day and on 27 June returned to Sutton Weaver for cleaning prior to returning to service.

The new Liverpool Terminal for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company opened on Tuesday 25 June. After further berthing trials by MANANNAN over the previous few days, and with a new berthing platform welded to her port side forward to enable her to load and unload foot passengers at very low water, she opened the new multi million pounds facility with the 1500 sailing ex Douglas's arrival at just before 1800. The first departure was the 1915 sailing returning to Douglas. A new era had begun.

All Mersey Ferry services were suspended due to a technical issue with SNOWDROP on Thurs 27 June from mid-morning onwards. However, services resumed at 1700 with ROYAL IRIS. SNOWDROP, which had been in more or less non stop service for several months, retired to the Liverpool Dock system for rest and recuperation!

July 2024

After many weeks in dry dock at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead, BEN-MY-CHREE left the Mersey during the morning of Thursday 25th July and sailed straight to Douglas. Her refit is thought to include the conversion of all cabins on the Starboard side on Deck 8 into crew accommodation, to enable the vessel to operate like MANXMAN, with live-on crew on board.

Yet another technical problem with ROYAL IRIS on Tues 2 July resulted in a cancellation of all sailings for the day. All sailings remained cancelled until Tues 9 July when sailings resumed at 1400 ex Liverpool with ROYAL IRIS struggling on.

Technical problems with SNOWDROP on Sat 20 July resulted in the cancellation of River Explorer sailings for the day. Services resumed at 1000 the following day.

CldN Invest



CldN vessel CELANDINE waiting to enter the Dock System at Liverpool on 11 July 2024 (Editor)

CldN, who took over Seatruck Ferries in 2023, have decided to make a major investment in the Brocklebank Dock Terminal at Liverpool. The main aim is to increase cargo capacity on the Liverpool – Dublin service.

Infrastructure upgrades at the Dock will enhance the flow of cargo, there will be a new more efficient gate set-up and improved facilities for freight drivers. There will be a new terminal operating system to increase efficiency and enhancements on the quayside will facilitate the use of the terminal by larger and more environmentally efficient vessels.

The work will take about four months to complete and whilst it is going on, operations will move temporarily to Gladstone Branch No. 3.

Cunard Line Queen Anne naming at Liverpool **By Dave Crolley**

Cunard's newest Cruise Ship QUEEN ANNE arrived from Belfast at the Liverpool Cruise Terminal on Monday 3rd June 2024 at about 0700 for her naming ceremony. She was met off New Brighton by two tugs, SVITZER ELIZABETH and SVITZER BIDSTON that gave her a water canon greeting and then escorted her onto the cruise terminal. She stayed there until 1530 when she moved to a position in the river just off the Liver Building for her naming which began at 1600. At this point it was announced that the Godmother of the ship would be the City of Liverpool represented by five Liverpudlians, Spice Girl Melanie C, local broadcaster Ngunan Adamu, entrepreneur Natalie Haywood, musician Jayne Casey and British Olympian Katarina Johnson-Thomson who performed the naming with the usual smashing of a traditional bottle of champagne from the stage that had been built on the Pier Head. There was also music provided by the legendary Opera superstar Andrea Bocelli and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra plus other well known artists. At 2030 the evening entertainment was hosted by D.J. Craig Charles and at 2215 a grand firework display was held from the roof of the Cunard Building and a barge that was moored in mid river. QUEEN ANNE then sailed away at about 2230 for her next port of call the following day at Cobh, Southern Ireland.

Copied below are two of Dave Crolley's taken on the day from off the Mersey Ferry SNOWDROP and from Birkenhead Woodside.





WAVERLEY on the Mersey



Paddle Steamer WAVERLEY at Seacombe on 25 June 2024, prior to her excursion to Llandudno and the Anglesey Coast. (Editor)



WAVERLEY in the Crosby Channel, 24 June 2024. (D. Stewart)

The North West Ship Show 2024

Once again the Merseyside Branch of the World Ship Society are hosting the annual North West Ship Show. This is the third year that the Branch has hosted this show, taking over from Coastal Shipping in 2022 after the Covid pandemic forced the show to take a temporary break.

Once again the Old Christ Church will be bursting with trade stands, model exhibitors and Society representatives. The Branch itself will have a trade stand at the show once again. On sale will be a large variety of previously loved maritime books at unbelievably low prices and all profits from this stand will go to the future sustainability of the Merseyside Branch. Other trade stands will include Coastal Shipping/Mainline and Maritime who will offer an extensive collection of up to date maritime titles.

Full details, date, times entry fees and enquiries are on the copy of the official flyer on the following page. Make sure that Saturday 21st September 2024 is ringfenced in your diary!

North West Ship Show 2024

Exhibitors, Traders & Societies

- Models
- Photographs
- Post Cards
- Artwork
- Books
- Collectables
- Ephemera
- Maritime Information

Refreshments Available

Saturday 21st September 2024

11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Admission: £3.00 - Under 12s free

Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road,

Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RE

Onsite Parking 8 minutes walk from Waterloo Station

Sponsored by:

The World Ship Society Merseyside Branch

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