

RESTORATION OF STEAM TUG MOVES AHEAD WITH BIRKENHEAD SURVEY

ONE OF Britain's oldest surviving steam vessels, the tug-tender Daniel Adamson, is pictured right undergoing a full survey at the equally historic former Cammell Laird No.4 dry dock in Birkenhead.

The tug entered the Monk's Ferry dry dock in late April for a two-week survey as

part of the project planning phase of a restoration project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society, formed in 2004 as a registered charity, is seeking to restore the vessel to its former glory and to carry passengers on the Merseyside and Cheshire and Manchester waterways.

Members of the society have already spent some 11,000 hours working on the project and when the Daniel Adamson is restored, it will be the oldest operational Merseyside-built ship in the world.

Originally named Ralph Brocklebank, the Daniel Adamson is a unique twin-screw tug-tender, built in 1903 for the Shropshire Union Canal and Railway Company to tow barges and carry passengers. It was bought by the Manchester Ship Canal in 1921 for corporate hospitality purposes, and was retired from service in 1984.

Also present in the dry dock with Daniel Adamson has been the steam tug Kerne, built in Scotland in 1913. For around a fortnight, the No.4 Dry Dock has contained two of Britain's oldest surviving steam vessels, with a combined age of 196 years.



news

CRUISE BOOM CONTINUES

CUNARD's Queen Elizabeth 2 is pictured leaving Southampton to sail to the Hamburg yard of Blohm + Voss for repair work last month as a new report forecast further expansion of the UK cruise market.

New figures revealed in the Passenger Shipping Association's annual cruise review estimate that some 1.25m Brits are expected to take an ocean cruise this year and 1.5m will be taking cruises by 2008.

The PSA said the growth in demand for cruise holidays comes at a time when the package foreign holiday market is contracting — down 3% in 2005.

Its figures showed a significant increase in the number of cruises that leave direct from the UK — with almost 40% of passengers choosing

to cruise from UK ports, compared with 25% in 2001.

Much of this increase is the result of additional capacity deployed by P&O Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Saga and Thomson Cruises, the PSA said, and the expansion came despite the withdrawal of Airtours' Sun Cruises. The figures were also boosted by Royal Caribbean and Princess Cruises, which based ships in the UK specifically for the UK market for the first time.

PSA director Bill Gibbons commented: 'It looks to be a very strong year and I can confidently say that there will be a 17% year on year increase in ocean cruising, to 1.25m at the end of 2006.'

PICTURE: GARY DAVIES/MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC



Revenue denies waging a war on seafarers' NI payments

THE INLAND Revenue has denied reports that it is waging a campaign to 'maximise tax takings' by targeting merchant seafarers' National Insurance payments.

NUMAST assistant general secretary Mark Dickinson took up the issue after press reports suggesting that some seafarers were receiving sudden and unexpected bills of as much as £8,000 for unpaid Class 1 contributions.

In response, the Revenue has assured the Union that there have been no changes to the NI rules since October 2003, when legislation was introduced covering 'host' employer responsibilities for seafarers serving wholly or mainly in category A, B, C or D waters.

However, the Revenue said there is frequent confusion over 'self-employed' status and it points out that the overwhelming majority of seafarers outside the share fishing sector are not self-employed.

As a result, it adds, 'many mariners are required to pay compulsory "employee" Class 1 National Insurance on their earnings. Mariners who are not required to pay Class 1 contributions may be able to pay voluntary Class 2 contributions. This is not because the mariner is self-employed — but because the contribution regulations allow certain people who are not allowed to pay Class 1 contributions, to pay Class 2 to protect their Social Security record when they work overseas.'

Seafarers working on British

flagged vessels have to pay the employee Class 1 contribution and those who work on foreign-flagged vessels pay Class 1 if they are:

- ❖ domiciled or resident in the UK; and
- ❖ the contract of employment was entered into in the UK and was intended to be carried out either wholly or partly during the ship's voyage; and
- ❖ the employer, or the person paying the wages, has a place of business in the UK.

The Revenue points out that the UK has entered into agreements to improve the social security position of people who move between states to work. These agreements can sometimes vary the normal National Insurance rules for foreign flagged ships and more details can be found on the website:

www.hmrc.gov.uk/cnr/seafaq3-working-on-a-non-british-ship.htm

It also points out that if a seafarer is in the UK when they are sent an employment contract to sign, or ahead of signing the contract, accept a firm offer of employment from a foreign employer when they are at home in the UK, they will be judged to have entered into their contract in the UK.

❖ Seafarers wanting further advice about these issues, or their personal situation, should contact: Marine NICs, Inland Revenue, 15th Floor East Wing, Ty Glas Road, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5FP or check the website: www.hmrc.gov.uk/cnr/seafarersni.htm

PIRACY ALARM

Watchdog reveals increase in attacks and violence in first quarter

NUMAST has expressed concern at new statistics showing that pirate attacks on merchant shipping in the first quarter of this year are 8.9% up from 2005.

The Union — which recently gave evidence to a House of Commons inquiry into the problem — is disturbed at figures released by the International Maritime Bureau showing a total of 61 attacks in the first three months of 2006, compared with 56 in the same period last year.

Worryingly, there has been a marked increase in attacks on seafarers — with 63 crew members taken hostage, more than double the number in the same period last year, and 13 kidnapped for ransom.

Incidents involving violence during the attacks — including deaths, assaults and threats — also

rose during the first quarter to a total of 87, up from 48 in 2005. One person was killed during the period, in an incident in January in the Philippines where five pirates dressed in military-like uniforms and armed with automatic rifles attacked a fishing vessel.

More than two-thirds of the 61 attacks took place in Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, Somalia and Nigeria.

However, cooperation between coastal states bordering the Straits of Malacca has resulted in a dramatic reduction in attacks on merchant shipping in the area — with no piracy incidents in the Straits or in Indian waters during the first quarter of this year.

'Our findings indicate that actions taken by law enforcement agencies, notably in the Malacca

Straits and India, have made a major contribution to keeping these figures down,' said IMB director Captain Pottengal Mukundan.

Capt Mukundan said the cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore was now 'better than ever before' and had played a key role in reducing the rate of attacks.

Indonesia had demonstrated increased determination to defeat piracy with its Operation Gurita, which had provided a show of force in known hotspots through several intelligence-led actions.

'These efforts have yielded positive results, with numerous gangs of pirates being arrested,' said Capt Mukundan.

He said the 'plateau' in attacks was the result of increased law enforcement activity in high-risk

areas, and improved onboard awareness and anti-piracy watches. But the IMB report also warns that the international shipping industry 'should not be tempted to drop its guard' — with ships at risk from attacks in many parts of the world.

The IMB singled out Somali and Nigerian waters as remaining 'particularly dangerous'.

Indonesia accounted for almost a third of the attacks, with 19 incidents in the period, up from 16. Bangladesh ranked second with nine attacks. Somalia followed with five incidents, up from three in the year-ago period, while Nigeria had four attacks compared with none a year ago.

Pirate attacks fell to a six-year low of 276 in 2005, which compares with the all-time record of 469 in 2000.

Fatigue sparks alert

FRESH evidence of the safety risks posed by fatigued seafarers was uncovered when Clyde Coastguard received a call from a fishing vessel, Kiareen, reporting that the crew had spotted another fishing vessel 'going round and round in circles' off the west coast of Scotland.

A rescue helicopter was scrambled and Oban RNLI was tasked to investigate after crew members onboard the Kiareen said they were unable to ascertain whether there was any sign of life onboard the other vessel, which was identified as Morvern OB37 — which had left

the port of Oban earlier in the day.

Oban lifeboat intercepted the fishing vessel and sent a crew member aboard. He roused the fishing boat's skipper 'who appeared to have been asleep at the wheel'.

Clyde Coastguard's duty watch manager Richard Morgan said it was fortunate the Morvern OB37 had not run aground and said it was a matter of 'great concern' that the crew had been asleep.

Further investigations are being made by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.



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