

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

Mid - Essex Branch

Newsletter Number 2 12th May 2020

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER TO KEEP IN TOUCH DURING THIS STRANGE TIME IN OUR HISTORY

Our monthly report from ex-Chairman Robin

Robin has kindly supplied us with his thoughts on the shipping scene for our May newsletter.

Where has April gone? I hope and trust that you are all well and can claim to be safe and virus free. The debate looks set to continue for some time to come before we get something different in the news.

The struggle with oil took pride of place for a few hours but soon lost out to the most and much more important struggle with the virus.

We talked last month about oil prices and the effect on prices at 'the pumps'. As was well reported over production or more likely the huge drop in consumption across the globe brought about not only a huge drop in prices with a never seen before with oil producers paying traders to take the stuff away. This brought a huge increase in daily rates for tankers to be used for storage with reports in the middle of April of US\$ 180,000+ a day for six months for VLCCs. Whether this is going to be profitable in the longer term only time will tell. OPEC has started to reduce their supply which is reflected in rates which have dropped by something like 50% to US\$ 100,000 a day. Storage space for fully loaded tankers has or is drying up and in six months time everything could look very different. What we don't know for sure is whether Russia will continue to cut production as agreed even if the Arab states keep their part of the bargain. We live in interesting times and it was ever thus in shipping.

The uncertainty in the market currently has produced a flurry of activity in sale and purchase including new buildings with an announcement also that Qatar has ordered sixteen LNG carriers from a Chinese yard. Where what and how is difficult to find out and only time will tell but we understand that a MoU has been signed with Hudong.

We have talked in the past about the crew on cruise ships not being allowed on shore etc or even allowed home. With seven or eight ships moored in or around Manila Bay having finished their cruises in Australia Japan etc. the OFW's (Technical term for Filipino crews) are having to wait another 14 days in quarantine to meet local regulations which has prompted protests without success so far,

Staying with cruise ships. Only a few months ago most talk was about the record season expected this summer amid concerns about 'over tourism' in Alaska. Then came the virus with both Princess and Holland America cancelling most of their 2020 sailings. It is thought that cruise ships brought a little more than half of Alaska's visitors and support more than 52,000 jobs and create more than 4/5 billion US\$ in economic activity with more than 1.4 million people in 43 ships expected to visit. Juneau alone was expected to have 626 cruise ship calls.

Last month I drew your attention to the drop in Carnival's London share price but failed to mention the purchase by Saudi Arabia of an 8.2% stake in the business. Thank you David for drawing my attention to this oversight. I am grateful. Whether the investment will be beneficial long term we can only wait and see. The Saudi record on choosing investments is not a good one!

All the best and stay safe please.

Robin Butcher

Bits and Bobs from David Brown

I have been keeping my usual log of tankers visiting Southwold (See www.midessexships.org.uk/southwold_transfers). The number of visitors over the last couple of weeks has risen considerably, although many just anchoring before onward travel to mainly European destinations.

I've also kept an eye on cruise ship movements. ALLURE of the SEAS managed to get into Southampton for a short stay last weekend after cruising around the Celtic Sea waiting for a berth. She is now believed to be at Gibraltar. Several of the P&O fleet were at Dover but have now relocated to the Portland Anchorage. Other lay-up ports include Portsmouth, Firth of Forth Anchorage (for the Olsen Fleet), the Nab Anchorage (the Marella fleet), Tilbury Dock and landing stage. Three dredgers are also laid up, two in Tilbury, one at Cliffe, reflecting perhaps the effect this has had on the building industry. I try and update details every few days on our website www.midessexships.org.uk/home. Many ships seem to take a jaunt down the channel and return or relocate so it's not easy to keep up with their movements sometimes.

I also noted that SAMSKIP INNOVATOR left Tilbury at about 1700 hrs on 10th May. Later that evening she was stationary in the Thames between Canvey and the Kent coast and posted as "aground". Several tugs were in attendance. In the morning she was off Shoeburyness and then proceeded to Sheerness with SVITZER INTREPID in attendance. Late afternoon she proceeded on her journey to Rotterdam. She then proceeded to Vlissingen and is now (14/05/2020 p.m.) returning to Tilbury.

As mentioned last month, the Arun Class Lifeboat, Sir William Arnold is still believed to be at Heybridge Basin. See Lifeboat5202.com <https://www.facebook.com/guernseyhero/>

David Brown

FROM THE IAN WELLS COLLECTION

Two ships that are featured in Ian Well's "London Shipping Part 1" PowerPoint slide show.



BENRINNES © Ian Wells taken on 28/03/1972 in the Royal Albert Dock

Built by Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corp. Tacoma, Washington on a C3 hull and launched as the escort aircraft carrier PERDIDO.

She was assigned to Great Britain under Lend-Lease agreement and was taken over by the Royal Navy and named HMS TROUNCER. Fitting out was completed by Burrard Dock Co. Vancouver B.C.

On the 29th September 1945 whilst off Port Said she went to the aid of EMPIRE PATROL that had caught fire. She managed rescue 420 Greek refugees who were being repatriated from Abyssinia and East Africa to the Dodecanese from where they had fled when the German Army occupied the islands in 1940.

In 1946 she was returned to the U.S. Navy. She was reconstructed as a merchant vessel. It was rumoured at the time that the superstructure of two Liberty ships were used due to the shortage of steel. She was sold to the Lancashire Shipping Co. (Moller's, Hong Kong) in 1948 and renamed GREYSTOKE CASTLE. In 1954 she was chartered by Shaw Savill & Albion and renamed GALLIC. In 1957 she was chartered to Ben Line proving to be ideal for the growing trade with Japan and then purchased later that year by Ben Line. She was renamed BENRINNES in 1959. On 3rd November 1973 she arrived at Kaohsiung, Taiwan to be broken up.



GLENFRUIN © Ian Wells taken on 13th April 1972 in the Thames.

One of a series of six ships for Blue Funnel Line (DEMODOCUS, DOLIUS, DIOMED, ANTENOR, ACHILLES, and AJAX) designated A class Mk 5. DOLIUS was built at Harland & Wolff, Belfast in 1956 and was of 7,672 Gross tons. She had fine underwater lines which unfortunately led to stability problems when lightly laden and carried permanent ballast in the form of rutile sand.

She is seen here under Glen Line colours arriving from Maniils bound for KGV dock where she remained for two weeks. She then sailed for Rotterdam where she reverted to a Blue Funnel. In Swansea, the next loading port she was renamed DOLIUS once again for a voyage to Japan. She was only named GLENFRUIN for a year and eight months.

In 1972 she was sold and renamed HUNG MIEN. Registered at Mogadishu she flew the Somali flag and was operated by the Golden City Maritime Corp. S. A. a member of the Ocean Tramping Company of Panama.

In 1977 she was transferred to the Peoples Republic of China and renamed HONG QI 119 and further renamed ZHAN DOU 51 in 1984. Her eventual demise is unknown and disappeared from Lloyds Register in November 1991.

PowerPoint shows are now up to show 7. Our website lists other shows in the series.

Best wishes to all WSS Mid-Essex branch members along with other WSS members. Please take care of yourselves until we can meet on a Monday evening once more.

Thank you to Robin Butcher and John Raven for their contribution

Newsletter Number Three will be published as and when there is any further news to impart.

If you have any articles or photos of interest for publication please contact me on bravedown09@live.com or through our website contact form:

<http://www.midessexships.org.uk/contact.html>

David Brown,

WSS MID-ESSEX BRANCH Secretary