

FERRY FOCUS REPORT

Christopher Burrows · East Kent Ferry Club

P&O STENA LINE

As reported in the last Ferry Focus, P&OSL saw profits nearly halve for 2000 and this was again the case for the first six months of this year, with the impact of foot-and-mouth disease and intense competition taking its toll. Since the Dover-Zeebrugge service was reopened to passengers on 1st May, bookings through the summer have been satisfactory.

Compared with SeaFrance's pending new arrival Hoverspeed's revamped fleet and Norfolkline's twins which are less than two years old, P&OSL's newest fleet unit, *P&OSL Burgundy* is now some eight years old and its flagship *P&OSL Aquitaine* a decade old. Therefore P&OSL are expected to announce orders soon to replace *P&OSL Canterbury* and *P&OSL Kent*, now both in their 21st year of service.

The P&OSL website was recently revamped with a complete redesign and many new features including a jobs section, children's activities, competitions and weather updates. Visit www.posl.com to check out all the features.

SEAFRANCE

As this Ferry Focus was being penned, it is expected that the £185m *Seafrance Rodin* will now not enter service on the Calais-Dover service until mid-November, some two months later than planned. The extra delay will allow for thorough sea and berthing trials as well as crew familiarisation. This new ferry with a beam of 27.70m and weighing in at an impressive 34,000 tonnes will have capacity for 1900 passengers, some 700 cars and up to 100 officers and crew. The 25-knot, French-flagged ship will be able to cross the Channel in just an hour and will be replacing the 1981-built *Seafrance Renoir*, formerly *Cote d'Azur*. The *Renoir*, it is expected, would be laid up at Dunkerque

as fleet reserve or possibly sold or chartered out.

Within the next five years, the 1980-built *Seafrance Cezanne* and the 1984-built *Seafrance Manet* will also need to be replaced. www.seafrance.com

NORFOLKLINE

UK management have reported good loadings through the summer on the Dover/Dunkerque West service. It is expected that the 22,000 tonne twins *Northern Merchant* and *Midnight Merchant* will require their first visits to dry dock this winter. Norse Merchant Ferries, from whom Norfolkline charter their two ships, may send a sister ship south from their Liverpool Belfast service to deputise. www.norfolkline.com

HOVER SPEED

At the time of writing, there was still indecision over fleet deployment and services this winter. However, the three Superseacats are expected to be laid up at Ostend for the winter. The Dover/Calais service will probably be in the hands of *Seacats Danmark* and *Hoverspeed Great Britain* from the end of October, back from the Irish Sea. Meanwhile, the Dover/Ostend service is likely to be in the hands of *Seacat Diamant* currently based at Newhaven.

This summer, the Dover-based operations have been reasonably reliable, but congestion at the sole berths at both Dover and Calais has thrown schedules into chaos as has unseasonal bad weather at times. There have also been many complaints over some crossings taking up to 75 minutes, the cleanliness of the cabin areas and problems with toilets and onboard power. A planned second berth at Dover for next season will go some way to reduce congestion.

The long term future of the Belgian service hangs in the balance as Hoverspeed's three year agreement with the Belgian Government ends next February. Some 90% of the staff at Ostend and onboard the craft are employed directly by the Belgian state and not

Hoverspeed. Hoverspeed are known to have been affected by the debut of the Norfolkline and P&OSL's new passenger service to nearby Zeebrugge and TransEuropa's pending new passenger service from Ramsgate to Ostend.
www.hoverspeed.co.uk

NEW BOOKS now available

MY DOVER

by Joe Harman

Joe Harman has lived all his 86 years in Dover and was a tram conductor, bus driver and ambulance man. This book tells his own personal and often amusing story interwoven with his research. The book is lavishly illustrated and most of the pictures are from Joe's own collection.

The book costs £10.00 and can be obtained from Derek Leach, 24 Riverdale, River, Dover CT 17 0QX. Delivery is free within the Dover area. Postage and packing outside Dover is £1.50. Cheques should be made payable to D.A.Leach.

Copies also available from W.H.Smith, the museum, the library and from Tylers Bookshop, Deal.

DOVER AND THE MONARCHY from Conquest to Glorious Revolution 1066-1688 by Ivan Green

The book covers the history of Dover from 1066 to 1688 with special reference to its connections with the kings and queens of that period. All the illustrations are from Ivan's own collection. This is Ivan Green's 23rd book and will be welcomed by all his readers.

The book, which is a production of the Dover Society via Triangle Publications, costs £10.00 and is available from Merril Lilley, 5 East Cliff, Dover, Kent CT16 1LX (Tel 205254) or from Derek Leach, 24 Riverdale, River, Dover, Kent CT17 0QX (Tel 823926)

Cheques should be made payable to Triangle Publications. Post and packing outside Dover £1.50. Also available from W.H.Smith, the museum, library and from Tyler's Bookshop, Deal, and Albion Bookshop, Canterbury.

THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER Images of Cliff and Shore by Peter and Julie Burville

Peter and Julie Burville have spent four years working at Dover Museum to produce this delightful book of images of the cliffs and shore from Dover to St. Margaret's. The illustrations include many rare and unusual views of the area.

This book, published by Triangle Publications, costs £8.75 and is available from Merril Lilley, 5 East Cliff, Dover, Kent CT16 1LX (Tel 205254) or from Peter Burville, 'Seagate', Goodwin Road, St. Margaret's Bay, Dover CT15 6ED (Tel 853267)

Cheques payable to Triangle Publications. Postage and packing outside Dover £1.50. Also available from W.H.Smith, the museum and the library, Tylers Bookshop, Deal, Albion Bookshop, Canterbury, Dover Castle and the National Trust Visitor Centre.