TRIP OUT

January 2000

The summer season will start early on the south coast, with a Tall Ships Race starting from Southampton in mid-April and providing much business for local excursion vessels. Easter Monday this year is on 24 April. Southampton will also have a large gathering of excursion vessels in September when the BT Global Challenge round-the-world yacht race begins on the 10th.

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's departure from Avonmouth was delayed by repeated bad weather, but she left on 18 December and managed to get round Land's End the next day; after calling at Southampton on the 20th for bunkers, she reached Great Yarmouth on 21 December. She is due to return to service on 1 July on the Clyde. The BALMORAL begins her season on the south coast on 11 April and spends six days running trips to view the tall ships at Southampton. After Easter on the Clyde, she goes to the Western Isles, Irish Sea, Bristol Channel, Thames and South Coast, before beginning her main Bristol Channel season in mid-July.

THAMES

Amongst the many vessels on charter in London on 31 December was the veteran Dutch vessel HYDROGRAAF which has since remained moored at Butler's Wharf Pier. She is 133 ft long and was built as a survey vessel in 1910, but now carries 200 passengers.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The KINGSWEAR CASTLE will offer afternoon cruises in July and August daily except Mondays and 18 August. Special trips include Snodland on 7 May, a Thames estuary cruise on 14 May, the Medway Barge match on 27 May, a cruise round Sheppey on 17 June, Southend on 25 June, the MEDWAY QUEEN on 17 September, Whitstable on 1 October, Queenborough on 28 October and a bird watching cruise on 29 October, and trips to and from London on 2-4 September, with a trip from London to board the "puffer" VIC 56 on 3 September.

Livett's Launches/ Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN was transported from Sweden aboard a barge and is now being refitted at Lowestoft.

Campion Launches The service from Greenwich to the Barrier is due to resume after the usual winter break on 21 February.

City Cruises The last two new catamarans from Vosper Thornycroft are named MILLENNIUM DAWN and MILLENNIUM TIME, and all four were in service by the beginning of January, running from new piers at Waterloo (underneath the "millennium wheel") and Blackfriars to the Dome. The service is only open to Dome ticket holders, and it is not possible to make a non-landing cruise to the Dome.

White Horse Fast Ferries are running a frequent service from Greenwich to the Dome, using two of their fast trimarans; it is possible to do a non-landing return trip from Greenwich.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink Car ferry services are reduced during the overhaul period, from 8 January to 7 April on the Fishbourne route, and from 8 January to 19 March on the Yarmouth route.

Red Funnel Ferries The pontoon at Cowes is to be moved slightly downstream; while the work is carried out, from 9 January for five to six weeks, the fast craft will run from a temporary terminal at Thetis Wharf near the floating bridge. The car ferry terminal at Southampton is also being redeveloped, to improve passenger facilities and speed up vehicle embarkation. On peak weekends this summer, the car ferries will run every 50 minutes, with some turn-rounds reduced to 20 minutes.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The Dart Valley Railway has advertised four boats for sale as "surplus" - the MY QUEEN (at £70 000), PLYMOUTH BELLE (£75 000), TOTNES PRINCESS (£70 000) and WESTERN BELLE (£70 000).

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The OLIVER CROMWELL is to be joined by a new 22-berth vessel being built at Stourport.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL DAFFODIL'S cruise on New Year's Eve was cancelled owing to a lack of bookings.

Sovereign Cruises, Northwich The narrow boat AQUARIUS OF ANDERTON has been offered for sale, with her business on the Trent & Mersey Canal, for £35 000.

Coniston Launch Sailings run on Sundays this winter and during the school holiday from 13 to 20 February. Daily services resume on 25 March and continue till 31 October. Two new landing stages are due to open on the southern part of the lake at Sunny Bank and Lake Bank.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The season runs from 25 March to 29 October, with a two-boat service from 21 April to 1 October.

 © G P Hamer 9 January 2000

Waverley Excursions By end the end of January, the WAVERLEY's funnels, sponsons, paddle wheels, crankshaft and boiler had been removed while she lay afloat at Great Yarmouth.

THAMES

The second new section of Tower Pier was moved into position in January. Westminster Pier is due to be replaced and is closed until March; boat services are running from Waterloo Pier (though ticket offices are still at Westminster) with a connecting bus service.

City Cruises are now offering non-landing return trips from Waterloo to the Dome at certain times of the day.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open to visitors this year from 1 April to 1 October.

Wightlink All the ships are having their annual refits in Portsmouth Dockyard.

W Hogg, Southampton The FAVOURITE LADY 2 has been advertised for sale for £18 000 and is apparently being replaced by a larger vessel.

The Solent Steam Packet In addition to Solent cruises, the SHIELDHALL is due to go to Dordrecht, Holland, from 25 to 29 May for the 'Dordt in Stoom' steam event, to Shoreham on 7-16 July for the 'Maritime 2000 Festival', and to Weymouth on 13-20 August.

Croson (The Dorset Belles) The POOLE BELLE did some "Santa cruises" from Poole before Christmas, and was on charter on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. The season starts on 1 April and all four vessels will be sailing from Hythe during the Tall Ships event at Southampton. In the summer, the FLAMBORIAN will run from Weymouth on four days a week and on other days will run from Swanage to Brownsea Island and Poole.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR EXPRESS went to Falmouth on 10 January for her annual refit. On 17 dates between 30 June and 4 September, there will be additional direct night crossings between St-Malo and Weymouth, taking 4 hours.

Isle of Sark Shipping Co The SARK VENTURE is to start a weekly cargo sailing from Sark to Diélette.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's Ilfracombe sailings start on 14 March and continue till 28 October, with a further trip from Ilfracombe on 23 December. There are only four trips from Clovelly to Lundy, on 13 and 27 July, and 10 and 28 August.

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (Bradford) has bought the wide-beam AQUARIUS from Cambridge to replace the narrow boat LADYWOOD which has been run by the Trust since 1977. The AQUARIUS is to be renamed BARBARA MCLELLAN.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL DAFFODIL returned to Manchester for refit from 10 to 25 January.

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA's season runs from 1 April to 31 October.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE began her refit at Birkenhead on 19 January, while the LADY OF MANN ran to Heysham.

MISCELLANY

In London, the restaurant ship HISPANIOLA (the former MAID OF ASHTON) has been moved to a new berth downstream of Embankment Pier, nearer the QUEEN MARY, to allow work on Charing Cross Bridge.

www.trip-out.co.uk © G P Hamer 6 February 2000

Waverley Excursions The Heritage Lottery Fund has refused to give more money for the WAVERLEY's rebuild this year. There is enough money to fit a double bottom in the after part of the ship and to refit the after accommodation including the deck shelter, but renewal of the forward part of the ship and much of the timber decking will be postponed. The WAVERLEY was towed into dry dock at Great Yarmouth on 11 February and was expected to spend eight weeks there. The BALMORAL was dry docked at Sharpness, returning to Bristol on 18 February. She will sail from Liverpool and in North Wales on 18-24 May, with a first trip from Mostyn on 18 May.

THAMES

White Horse Fast Ferries The service in central London has been reduced to a Monday-Friday morning and evening commuter service from Holiday Inn and Canary Wharf to London Bridge City and Blackfriars.

Livett's Launches/ Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN arrived in London in February and is moored just upstream of Tower Pier.

Absolute Pleasure Boats The ROYALTY will not be running cruises from Greenwich this season. She is on charter to City Cruises running to Tower Pier or to the Dome.

Thames Cruises The Westminster-Barrier service is due to resume on 20 March.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Sailings to Kew and Hampton Court are due to resume on 2 April.

Salter Bros The pattern and frequency of services for this season is the same as last year. Oxford-Abingdon runs from 21 May to 24 September, Reading-Henley from 28 May to 10 September, Marlow-Henley and Marlow-Windsor from 22 May to 15 September (but not 26 June to 2 July, or on Bank Holidays), and Windsor-Maidenhead and Windsor-Staines from 22 May to 8 September (except Bank Holidays).

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 3 was refitted at Brest between 11 January and 4 February.

Channel Hoppers Ticket holders claiming refunds and other creditors seem unlikely to be paid as the company's directors have disappeared and the company has no assets.

Condor Ferries The CONDOR EXPRESS left Falmouth after refit on 4 February and was thus late resuming service. The COMMODORE CLIPPER suffered a breakdown at St Helier on 4 March and was expected to be off service for a week.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Totnes sailings run daily from 1 April to 31 October. Coastal cruises will run most days in summer at 1130 or 1330. Evening trips to land at Sharpham for a tour of the vineyard and tasting of cheese and wine are scheduled for 4 June from Dartmouth, and 4 July and 1 August from Totnes.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III runs from 1 April to 18 November. Until 15 April and from 2 October, sailings are on Mondays, Wednesday, Fridays and Saturdays only. No Sunday sailings are advertised. There is a double trip on just two Saturdays, 27 May and 3 Jane, and on all other days, departures are at 0915 from Penzance and 1630 from St Mary's (except on Saturdays from 10 June to 2 September when the return from St Mary's is 30 mins later). The day return fare is £34 in July and August, and £30 at other times.

NORTH WEST

M Wigzell, Llandudno, has advertised the SAUCY SAL for sale for £25 000.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE resumed service around 4 February; the LADY OF MANN continued in service to run the weekend sailings to Liverpool.

OBITUARY

Mr Jon Holyoak died on 7 February. A law lecturer at Leicester University, he was a familiar figure on the BALMORAL and WAVERLEY, and was chairman of the Balmoral Restoration Fund.

 © G P Hamer 7 March 2000

TRIP OUT

April 2000

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's first sailing is scheduled for 8 July, from Glasgow, and she then continues on the Clyde till 28 August. She is on the South Coast from 1 to 19 September, then on the Thames from the 21st to 10 October, before closing the season on the Bristol Channel on 13-16 October. The BALMORAL starts her season on the South Coast on 11 April and has a cruise from Kingswear and Plymouth to view the start of the Tall Ships race on the 18th. She is in Scotland from 21 April to 5 May, then has various sailings around the Irish Sea until 24 May. Her first Bristol Channel sailings are between 26 May and 13 June, then she again visits the South Coast, moving to the Thames on 21 June. She returns to the South Coast for a trip from Eastbourne on 12 July, then begins her Bristol Channel season on 14 July. This finishes at Milford Haven on 19 September, and she ends her season on the Clyde on 22-25 September. There is no longer an office at Barry and all telephone inquiries should be directed to Glasgow.

THAMES

Catamaran Cruisers have introduced 50-minute multilingual sightseeing cruises from Waterloo, in addition to the trips from Embankment; two HYDROSPACEs are used on these, so Campion Launches' VISCOUNT is again being chartered to cover the Greenwich service.

Thames Leisure began one-hour sightseeing trips from Tower Pier on 1 April, using all three vessels.

Thames Cruises The Westminster-Barrier service now calls at St Katharine's, but calls at Canary Wharf are no longer advertised; while Westminster Pier is being replaced, the service runs from Lambeth, with a connecting bus.

London Frog Tours has converted six ex-army DUKWs for sightseeing trips by road and river in London. They will enter the river via a slipway at Vauxhall and will have Class V certificates for 30 passengers.

London Waterbus Co (Regent's Canal) The service runs daily from 1 April to 29 October, then at weekends in winter. Day trips are to Limehouse on 10 and 25 June, 22 July, 5 and 19 August, and 23 September, to Ponders End and back on 1-2 July, to Brentford and back on 2-3 September, and to Black Jacks Mill, Harefield, and back on 9-10 September.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE runs trips to Cowes on Tuesdays and Thursdays this summer, with Hamble River cruises usually on Wednesdays and Sundays, and occasional day trips to Ryde and cruises to Southampton Docks.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines have ordered the SOLIDOR 5 from the Fjellstand yard in Norway for delivery in September. She will be an improved version of the SOLIDOR 3 which will be returned to the yard.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Afternoon river cruises run from 28 March to 5 October. Morning trips, landing at Topsham, are on Mondays to Fridays from 23 May to 21 September. Sea trips will include trips to Dawlish and Sidmouth, and day trips on Wednesdays to land at Babbacombe and Teignmouth.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company Last year's sailings from Watchet, Minehead and Porthcawl are not being repeated this year. The OLDENBURG is being chartered by the Clevedon Pier Trust for trips from Clevedon to Swansea, returning by coach, on 11 June, Swansea-Clevedon on the 12th, and for a cruise from Clevedon to the River Parrett on 13 June.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum There will be day trips to Sharpness on 18 June, 16 July, 27 August and 17 September, and to Tewkesbury on 4 June, and 2 and 23 September.

www.trip-out.co.uk © G P Hamer 5 April 2000

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY was moved out of dry dock on 20 April and the rebuild is continuing alongside a quay. The BALMORAL had engine trouble on her way from Bristol to start her season at Southampton, and had to put into Falmouth for repairs. On 11 April, Blue Funnel's OCEAN SCENE was chartered to take passengers from Southampton and Portsmouth to Ryde where they joined the BALMORAL which had travelled overnight from Falmouth.

EAST ANGLIA

Reedham Ferry The service was suspended for around two months before Easter while the vessel was refitted and re-engined.

THAMES

Westminster Pier will not reopen till later this month or June; boats are running from Waterloo, except for the Barrier and upriver services which are using Lambeth.

T W Taylor, Wallasea Island Trips from Wallasea and Burnham-on-Crouch follow the usual pattern, with cruises to view the seals on various dates from 1 May to 24 October. Day trips to Battlesbridge are on 3 July and 1 and 16 August.

White Horse Fast Ferries The two latest fast trimarans are named, like the others, after Dickens' characters - DANIEL QUILP (from "The Old Curiosity Shop") and URIAH HEEP (from "David Copperfield").

City Cruises The service from Tower Pier to London Bridge City, HMS BELFAST, Butler's Wharf and St Katharine ceased last October and is not resuming this year.

C H Wyatt, Westminster, has retired and the KINGWOOD has new owners who are continuing to run to Kew and Hampton Court, trading as King Cruises. Mr Wyatt bought the KINGWOOD in 1985, having previously run THE KING.

Parr Boat Hire, Kingston, have bought the WALTON MINSTREL from JGF Passenger Boats of Walton-on-Thames and renamed her TILBURY HOPE, replacing the wooden vessel of the same name.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Coastal Cruises, St Helier The PRIDE OF THE BAY has been sold and has gone to Bristol where she has been renamed BRISTOL QUEEN. Originally the LEVEN on the Clyde, she became the PRIDE OF THE BAY in 1966 at Paignton, later running from Torquay before going to Jersey in 1985; her sister is the WYRE LADY at Doncaster.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The WESTERN BELLE has been sold and is now on the Thames. She was built at Great Yarmouth in 1935, and had spent all her working life at Plymouth and Dartmouth.

St Mary's Boatmen's Association The veteran LILY OF LAGUNA is laid-up and is to be replaced this season by a new boat.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Manchester Ship Canal trips are scheduled for 26 dates between 20 May and 17 September.

Coniston Launch are to introduce calls at Park-a-Moor, a landing stage previously used by the National Trust's GONDOLA.

 © G P Hamer 4 May 2000

Waverley Excursions announced on 15 May that the WAVERLEY's return to service would be delayed by six weeks, and that her inaugural trip would be on 18 August on the Clyde. After 11 days on the Clyde, she will return south as scheduled. The delay is blamed partly on bad weather which delayed the start of the work. The BALMORAL's first call at Mostyn on 18 May was cancelled by the weather. She is now on the Bristol Channel.

NORTH EAST

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is being chartered by the RSPB for bird watching cruises on 12 dates from 10 June to 23 September.

THAMES

Southend Water Pleasure The DUCHESS M is running again this season and has day trips from Queenborough to Southend at weekends until 3 September, and on Wednesdays in July and August and on Saturdays in September; it is possible to do a non-landing afternoon cruise from Southend to Queenborough, but no day trips are advertised to Queenborough. There are day trips from Southend to Strood on ten Thursdays from 4 May to 14 September, but no day trips from Strood.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS went to Ipswich for her refit and is running her usual range of trips this season, but has fewer public trips owing to the number of charters booked, including day trips to London from Gravesend or Southend for parties visiting the Dome or 'London Eye' wheel.

Thames Leisure has bought the PRINSEPLAAT from Spido of Rotterdam and she is being refitted on the Medway. She was built at Duisburg in 1961, is 124 ft long and could carry 440 passengers on three decks, with saloons on the main and upper decks, and an open promenade deck. She is the second former Spido vessel in London: the KONININNEPLAAT arrived in 1988 and is now the MERCEDES of Westminster Party Boats.

STRAITS OF DOVER

Amongst vessels crossing to Dunkerque to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the evacuation were the former Isles of Scilly launch SOUTHERN QUEEN, now privately owned, and the DEVON BELLE of Thames Rivercruise of Reading, which was the River Dart Steamboat Co's SEYMOUR CASTLE in 1940. The former paddle steamer PRINCESS ELIZABETH, the largest surviving ship from the 1940 evacuation, has been berthed at Dunkerque since last year.

SOUTH COAST

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL travelled to Dordrecht in Holland on 25 May for the weekend 'Dordt in Stoom' steam event.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR VITESSE returned from New Zealand via Suez in May after her winter charter in New Zealand.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III made an extra trip on the evening of 10 May when air services were grounded by fog.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

North Devon District Council is to receive £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the rebuilding of Ilfracombe Pier and Harbour, and work is due to start in September with completion due in March 2001.

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Public day trips from Weston to Steep Holm, using chartered boats, are offered up to five times a month from Easter to 14 October. The fare is £13 and bookings should be made with Mrs J Rendell.

B D Williams, Swansea The CYGNET has recently been running trips from Penarth Marina, presumably for new owners. She had run from Swansea since 1995, having previously run in Northern Ireland.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN left Liverpool on 24 May to begin her sailings for the TT Races. She then has excursions between 13 and 16 June from Fleetwood, Llandudno, Whitehaven and Warrenpoint, then an evening cruise round the Island on 17 June, after which she is expected to return to lay-up.

MISCELLANY

A White Paper, published in April and proposing changes to licensing laws in England and Wales, includes regulations for passenger boats. The present anomaly which would allow children to buy drinks on boats and trains will be ended. Boats will have to be licensed to sell alcoholic drinks, and at least one crew member will have to have an appropriate licence. If there is disorder aboard a vessel, a police inspector will be able to order the vessel to return to its base and the drinks licence will be suspended.

 © G P Hamer 5 June 2000

TRIP OUT

July 2000

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL is due to complete her Thames and South coast sailings on 12 July, then goes to the Clyde for charters, before beginning her Bristol Channel season on 18 July, four days later than originally planned. Bristol Channel sailings are again cancelled on 17-20 August so that the BALMORAL can perform a charter from Belfast instead of the WAVERLEY.

THAMES

Westminster Pier is still being rebuilt and is not expected to reopen until August.

Thames Leisure The PRINSEPLAAT arrived in London in June and has been renamed DUTCH MASTER.

Catamaran Cruisers The official report into the accident on 4 October when the SYMPHONY hit Lambeth Bridge blames a mechanical failure in the steering control. However, the skipper was found to have been drinking alcohol and so was dismissed.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) have suspended evening cruises until Westminster Pier is reopened. The PRINCESS FREDA is running extra services from Richmond to Hampton Court on 4-9 July for the Hampton Court Flower Show.

Connoisseur Charter Co previously marketed the steamboat ALASKA, based near Marlow, but now offer the HIGH SOCIETY, a 37-passenger boat built in 1990 and used for charters from Maidenhead before a long period laid-up. She has been refitted and is now based at Chelsea Harbour.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry Trips to Cowes, originally advertised for Tuesdays and Thursdays, are being offered only on Tuesdays.

Red Funnel Ferries Associated British Ports has announced that it wants to sell Red Funnel in order to concentrate on running ports. ABP bought Red Funnel in 1989 and has since built three new ferries and three fast catamarans. Annual turnover is now around £26 million, producing an operating profit of £8 million.

Croson (The Dorset Belles) Only two vessels are running from Bournemouth. Trips to Brownsea are daily, but day trips to Yarmouth (leaving at 1100 and arriving back at 1745) are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays only, while Swanage sailings are on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays only.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The States of Alderney has advertised for an operator to provide a fast summer service to the island from Portsmouth, Southampton, Poole or Torquay.

WEST OF ENGLAND

P J Moule, Kingsbridge The season runs from 21 May to 8 October, with sailings following the usual pattern.

Torpoint Ferry The service has been reduced since 2 May to allow the LYNHER to be towed to Falmouth for refit; when she returned, it was found that further work was needed on one of her prows.

St Mary's Boatmen's Association The new SAPPHIRE, built for Mr J Pender as a replacement for the LILY OF LAGUNA, arrived on 5 June and entered service the next day. She was built by Kingfisher Boats and is very similar to the KINGFISHER OF ST MARY'S, built in 1995.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

The Bristol Industrial Museum offers short trips in the steam tug MAYFLOWER, motor tug JOHN KING or fire float PYRONAUT, each carrying 12 passengers, on certain weekends.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises The new vessel is named EDWARD ELGAR.

NORTH WEST

Menai Historical Cruises bought the SOUTHAMPTON STAR from Torquay and renamed her SNOWDON STAR (she is also advertised under the Welsh equivalent, SEREN-YR-WYDDFA). She now carries a carved dragon as a figurehead. After brief service on the Menai Strait, she was moved last year to Lake Padarn where she runs 40-minute cruises from Llanberis and Gilfach Ddu.

Huddersfield Canal Society The GREATER MANCHESTER has been sold and trips from Ashton-under-Lyne are offered only by a 10-seater boat.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN has been chartered to Açor Line for service in the Azores, as she was in 1998. She left the Mersey on 26 June and arrived in Ponta Delgada on the 29th, making her first trip the next day. She will run there until September, running mainly between the five central islands of Faial, Graciosa, Pico, São Jorge and Terceira; crossing times vary between 40 minutes and 4 hours.

 © G P Hamer 6 July 2000

TRIP OUT

August 2000

A year ago, I commented on the Dart Valley Railway's takeover of Dart Pleasure Craft and G H Ridalls & Sons. Their investment has given them a very profitable business even before surplus vessels were sold and marketing improved. It is odd to recall that back in 1974, the old River Dart Steamboat Co gave up the business as not worthwhile. It is heartening to see that with the right boats run in the right place, pleasure trips can still make for a successful business.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL is now on the Bristol Channel, while the WAVERLEY is still scheduled to return to service on the Clyde on 18 August.

THAMES

Thames Leisure The sightseeing cruises from Tower Pier now call at Bankside and Festival Piers.

White Horse Fast Ferries have started a service between Bankside and Waterloo, running daily every half hour.

Chris Cruises, Hampton Court, are the new owners of the WESTERN BELLE which arrived from Dartmouth in April, and she is now at the firm's mooring below the weir by Molesey Lock. She has not been used for charters yet, but had a certificate for one week to run a ferry service to the Hampton Court Flower Show in July.

French Brothers Public trips follow the usual pattern with the addition of a Maidenhead-Windsor sailing at 1100 which is offered daily (except Sundays) from 29 April to 23 September; an afternoon sailing from Windsor to Maidenhead operates according to demand. The service from Runnymede to Hampton Court runs from 3 July to 7 September.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne The only cruises from the beach are the 45-minute trips to Beachy Head, but an evening cruise leaves from inside Sovereign Harbour at 1845, returning at 2015.

Wightlink Five men, apparently including some employees, were arrested in June over the use of counterfeit tickets.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Cornwall County Council's public transport timetable has been replaced by five free area booklets, but these still include ferry services as well as other transport. By post, they can be ordered from the Council's Passenger Transport Unit for £1.50.

G H Wheaton Ltd, Torquay The NOMAD collided with a speedboat outside Torquay Harbour at 1540 on 7 July. She had just left for Babbacombe with four passengers; there were no injuries but the boat may be out of service for the rest of the season. A man from the speedboat was found to be drunk and was arrested.

Dart Pleasure Craft The parent company, Dart Valley Railway PLC, reported an operating profit in 1999 of £421 000 of which £200 000 was made by the boats (Dart Pleasure Craft were taken over in April, and Ridalls' fleet in July).

Plymouth Boat cruises Calstock trips are advertised to run on various dates from 1 May to 24 September.

Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER returned to service on 7 July after a break of over two months.
Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry The TAMAR BELLE is now known to have been the LOOK AHEAD II which was built in 1960 and operated for many years at St Mawes, latterly with Balcomb Boats.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SUPERSEACAT THREE's Liverpool-Dublin service will be suspended for the winter on 7 November, and her Isle of Man services are expected to be taken by the LADY OF MANN, currently on charter in the Azores. The "LADY" has a certificate until May, but if she is to continue in service will need alterations to meet new stability rules.

MISCELLANY

The Island Cruising Club at Salcombe is considering selling the former Mersey ferry EGREMONT, moored in the estuary and used as a base since 1976.

www.trip-out.co.uk © G P Hamer 6 August 2000

TRIP OUT

September 2000

The WAVERLEY's return to service has been eagerly awaited, but now we can assess the work that has been done. The result is very impressive, with the ship's performance improved and the toilets brought up to present-day standards. The refitted areas of the ship now show up the older parts which need similar treatment. Some of the new fittings need more work: the uncomfortable deck seating, for example. The great disadvantage of the Heritage Lottery Fund's grant was the need to restore the ships's appearance to that of 1947 - which would be fine for a museum ship, but a burden for one that has to attract today's passengers. The lounge bar with period furnishings looks, frankly, depressing, while the ship's only extra catering outlet is a counter serving teas in the after deck shelter, something that should have been fitted years ago. Overall, though, a good job has been done and we must hope that the money can be found to complete the rest of the ship.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY left Great Yarmouth at 0010 on 16 August and, after calls at Aberdeen and Kyle of Lochalsh, arrived in Glasgow in time for her first trip on the evening of 18 August. She left on 29 August for Weymouth, calling at Falmouth for fuel, and began South Coast sailings on 1 September. On the 21st, she moves to the Thames. Evening Christmas cruises from Glasgow have been advertised for 12-22 December.

THAMES

White Horse Fast Ferries ceased running from Greenwich to the Dome on 13 August, after sustaining losses.

Campion Launches began running from Greenwich to the Dome on 14 August. The LONDON BELLE calls there on her trips to the Barrier, and makes extra round trips to the Dome in the morning, late afternoon and early evening.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink has bought two catamarans from the Philippines for around £6 million to replace the present craft on the Ryde service. The SUPERCAT 17 and 18 were built in 1996, are 478 gross tons and 131 ft long, and carry 370 passengers. The "18" has been renamed FASTCAT SHANKLIN and is now being refitted at Portsmouth while the "17", renamed FASTCAT RYDE, is due this month.

Gosport Ferry A new ferry to replace one of the present pair is being built by David Abels at Bristol. Costing £1.2 million, it will be 107 ft long and carry 300 passengers. The general layout is similar to the QUEENs', but it is slightly bigger and has a full-width upper deck.

Croson All three BELLEs were in service for the peak season and, until 17 September, the Swanage service is daily and IoW trips are daily except Sundays.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The HAVELET has been sold and will apparently run between Italy and Montenegro (Yugoslavia). She sailed from Weymouth to the Mediterranean in August as the SVETI STEFAN ("Saint Stephen"). Originally Brittany Ferries' CORNOUAILLES, she became the HAVELET in 1989 and ran regularly to the CI until 1996, then becoming relief ship until the delivery of the COMMODORE CLIPPER last year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

K J Bridge, Plymouth The QUEEN OF FALMOUTH (previously the MAID OF THE FORTH at Southend) was used only for last season, and the DEVON BELLE II is running alone this season.

Calstock Steam Packet & River Navigation Co The service to Cotehele, started last year, is run by a 12-passenger boat, but this season the larger GLORIA has been bought from Tenby for charter trips.

Mountbatten Water Taxi, Plymouth, runs a service from near the Mayflower Steps to Mountbatten using a 12-passenger boat which this season has been joined by the CORAL STAR IV from Lymington.

Mevagissey Ferries, Fowey, have bought the MACLEOD OF MACLEOD from Dunvegan, Skye, and renamed her CHRISTINA JANE to open a service from Fowey to Mevagissey, taking 35 minutes each way. The service is advertised to continue to 15 October with up to six round trips a day.

MISCELLANY

The National Trust's visiting figures for 1999 show that St Michael's Mount had 191 364 visitors (204 596 in 1998) and Brownsea Island had 98 453 (100 909).

 © G P Hamer 5 September 2000

TRIP OUT

October 2000

The weather in the past summer has been changeable, and not too far removed from an average British summer. August was the best summer month, being warmer, sunnier and drier than average.

Following the closure of the cross-channel hovercraft service from Dover, the Southsea-Ryde service is now left as the only one in this country, and one of only a handful in the world. Thirty years ago, hovercraft were predicted to take over from conventional ferries, and experimental services ran in many parts of the country. It soon became obvious that they had practical and economic deficiencies, and are now destined to be just a minor footnote in transport history along with Sinclair's C5 and Concorde.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions Bad weather prevented the WAVERLEY from making her trip from Portsmouth to Folkestone on 20 September and she did a trip to Yarmouth before sailing light to Folkestone. She began her Thames sailings on the 21st. A couple of Clacton calls have been missed owing to low tides, and on the 29th started from Tilbury instead of Tower Pier so that a steam leak could be repaired. She completes her Thames sailings on 10 October, then goes to the Bristol Channel, ending the season at Milford Haven on the 16th.

NORTH EAST

Pennine Boat Trips of Skipton The owner, Mr A J Hughes, plans to retire and has advertised the business for sale.

THAMES

The new Westminster Pier was still incomplete in September, and boats have continued using Waterloo or Lambeth.

White Horse Fast Ferries had abandoned their Bankside-Waterloo service by mid-September, and their only fast service is the commuter service between Rotherhithe and Blackfriars; all except one of the fast trimarans is now laid-up.

Thames Cruises A public inquiry into the sinking of the MARCHIONESS in 1989 started on 2 October.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The FASTCAT SHANKLIN entered service in mid-September. The FASTCAT RYDE is now being refitted at Portsmouth.

Red Funnel Ferries The more intensive "shuttle" car ferry schedule with intervals between sailings reduced in some cases to 50 minutes, was operated daily from 28 July to 2 September, and is continuing on Mondays and Fridays until 27 October.

The Isle of Wight Pleasure Boat Co, Cowes, is a new operator which last winter bought the SOUTHERN BELLE from Plymouth. She is advertised as a "Victorian pleasure boat" and has offered cruises of one or two hours from the Town Quay on the River Medina and Solent.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries introduced a fuel surcharge on fares from 6 September, charging passengers travelling to or from the UK an extra £2; ten days later, this was increased to £3. Next summer, the craft will make a daily round trip from Poole to Cherbourg which will be marketed by Brittany Ferries.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Western Lady Ferry Service One of the vessels was chartered from Southampton to follow the start of BT Global Challenge yacht race on 10 September.

Plymouth Boat Cruises The SOUTHERN BELLE was sold last winter. She was built in 1928 as the steamer SHUTTLECOCK for the Cremyll ferry and was renamed in 1945 when she was converted for excursion work. She had spent her life at Plymouth, apart from the 1983 season when she was at Dartmouth, while her sister, the NORTHERN BELLE, has spent 70 years on the Cremyll ferry.

K&S Cruises, Falmouth The TEMPTRESS II has been replaced by the TEMPTRESS, a similar 45-ft launch built in 1942 and now carrying 72 passengers; she had previously operated from Kirkcaldy as the MONA LISA. The owners, Ken and Sandra Pill, also run the 52-passenger GIRL ALICE which is used mainly for angling trips.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN arrived back in the Mersey from her charter in the Azores on 24 September and is now laid-up.

 © G P Hamer 4 October 2000

TRIP OUT

November 2000

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's figures. The lists show the effect of the introduction of new vessels in London: City Cruises' new vessels, the DIXIE QUEEN and DUTCH MASTER.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(3)	City Cruises	2003
2(1)	Woods River Cruises	1692
3(8)	Thames Luxury Ch	1429
4(2)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(4)	Windermere Lake Cr.	916
6(5)	Catamaran Cruisers	842
7(6)	George Wheeler L.	544
8(7)	Blue Funnel Cruises	538
9(9)	Salter Bros	414
10(10)	Thames Cruises	405

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	4458
2(2)	Catamaran Cruisers	2742
3(3)	Windermere Lake Cr.	2736
4(4)	Salter Bros	1790
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(6)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1482
7(9)	Solent & Wightline	1294
8(7)	French Brothers	1288
9(8)	Woods River Cruises	1045
10(-)	Thames Leisure	1038

Waverley Excursions Gales prevented the WAVERLEY from sailing from Tilbury to the south coast on 10 October. She eventually left on Friday the 13th, called at Falmouth for fuel and reached Penarth on the Sunday morning. Friday's sailing on the Bristol Channel was cancelled, the BALMORAL came out of lay-up in Bristol to take Saturday's trips, and Sunday's sailing from Newport and Clevedon to Penarth where passengers transferred to the WAVERLEY. The final sailing, on Monday 16 October to Milford, was amended to finish at Swansea where the WAVERLEY was booked for a guarantee dry-docking (the yard is run by George Prior). She then went to Avonmouth on 22 October for work on her port boiler which has a fault.

EAST ANGLIA

Snape Maltings Riverside Centre have not operated river trips this year. The trips started around 1982 with the former Lundy launch LADY MOYRA and since 1991 had been run by the EDWARD ALAN JOHN.

THAMES

Most services in London reverted to their winter schedules on 30 October, with Westminster Pier still out of use.

White Horse Fast Ferries have ceased all services in London. Four of the fast trimarans are laid-up at Gravesend and are to be sold in order to pay creditors. The ABEL MAGWITCH, which is sponsored by the Holiday Inn at Rotherhithe, continues to run a commuter service but is now managed by Collins River Enterprises. The Tilbury-Gravesend ferry will continue till at least 31 March when current subsidy arrangements end.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink A naming ceremony for the FASTCAT RYDE and FASTCAT SHANKLIN was held on 16 October.

Croson (The Dorset Belles) The POOLE BELLE is scheduled to offer cruises from Poole Quay on 9, 10, 16 and 17 December, then daily from 21 December to 1 January (except Christmas Day).

R A Hale, Poole, was fined £2500 and ordered to pay costs of £3000 on 3 November, after pleading guilty to breaches of the Merchant Shipping Act. The PURBECK GEM made an evening disco cruise to Swanage on 30 August 1998 which was not covered by her passenger certificate, and attempted to land passengers without using a gangway. One passenger was injured and fell in the sea.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR VITESSE is being drydocked in Portsmouth before a winter charter in the southern hemisphere.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Western Lady Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY IV was the vessel which visited the Solent on charter on 10 September.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co has advertised the business for sale. The company was founded in 1888, but now says that most shareholders live outside Cornwall, and that the business should be in local ownership.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

The demolition and rebuilding of Ilfracombe Pier began in September. The £2.5 million project is due to be completed next spring.

Cardiff Cats, Penarth, are the new operators of the CYGNET, previously at Swansea. There are regular trips from Penarth Marina in Cardiff Bay, and charters can go along the coast "retracing the first part of Captain Scott's journey to the South Pole as far as Lavernock Point."

NORTH WEST

Ashton Packet Boat Co The MARIA went to the National Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey on the River Lea in August, making the 200-mile journey towed by a horse to raise money for charity.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN was in service on 26-30 October when the fast craft were affected by bad weather. From 9 November, she will run from Liverpool to Douglas on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 1900, and leave Douglas the next morning at 0700.

MISCELLANY

The SOUTHSEA, lying derelict in Newport Docks, has been advertised for sale by Associated British Ports; the ship's last owner is believed to have disappeared without paying any port dues.

 © G P Hamer 7 November 2000

TRIP OUT

December 2000

When the steamboat owners of Southampton and Cowes in 1861 formed the company which later became known as Red Funnel, they probably would never have thought that their business would one day belong to an American merchant bank. J P Morgan who have bought Red Funnel are simply interested in it as a profitable business, and not because they have any interest in serving the Isle of Wight. This is fine so long as Red Funnel's business is profitable, but if circumstances change, they will want to pull out and invest elsewhere, which may not be good news for the Isle of Wight.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY left Swansea on 21 October (not on the 22nd as stated last month) and boiler repairs were completed at Avonmouth in November. Her return to the Clyde is now dependent on the weather, with her first Christmas cruise scheduled for 12 December.

THAMES

White Horse Fast Ferries have advertised the four redundant trimarans and the Tilbury landing stage used by the Gravesend ferry for sale.

Campion Launches The Barrier service finished for the season on 3 December, but Greenwich-Dome sailings continue daily till the 31st (except Christmas Day).

Collins River Enterprises has bought another of the former Riverbus catamarans which has been renamed SKY CLIPPER. Both these craft run a commuter service between Greenland Pier and Savoy Pier via Canary Wharf, St Katharine's, London Bridge City and Blackfriars. White Horse's ABEL MAGWITCH is used by Collins for a ferry service between Canary Wharf and the Holiday Inn, Rotherhithe.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries On 1 December, Associated British Ports announced that Red Funnel had been sold for £71 million to J P Morgan International Capital Corporation who are expected to retain the present management. ABP had owned Red Funnel since 1989 and had invested in new ferries and catamarans. The two redundant hydrofoils laid-up at Cowes, the SHEARWATER 5 and 6, are on the market for £175 000.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR EXPRESS's winter service is on Mondays and Fridays only from 1 November to 12 February, except from 15 December to 6 January when there are extra sailings, and from 7 January to 1 February when the service is suspended for her refit. From 16 February, there are five sailings a week from Weymouth, increasing to daily services from Weymouth and Poole from 1 April. Both fast ferries run from 22 May, with departures from Poole at 0730 to Cherbourg, 1345 to St-Malo via Guernsey or Jersey, and 1610 to Guernsey and Jersey, and from Weymouth at 0730 to both islands. Thus, the additional service to Cherbourg results in fewer services to the CI and St-Malo.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The DEVONAIR BELLE is advertised to make 1-hour cruises from Dartmouth on most days until 3 January; there are sailings from Totnes on 19 December and 2 January.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III is scheduled to run next year from 31 March to 17 November. Sailings are daily (except Sundays) from 7 April to 29 September, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays early and late in the season. As this year, there is a double trip on just two Saturdays, 26 May and 2 June; on Saturdays from 9 June to 1 September, the sailing is at 1100 from Penzance and 1500 from St Mary's, but sailings are otherwise at the normal times of 0915 from Penzance and 1630 from St Mary's. The day return fare will be £32, except in July and August when it will be £35. Sailings are also scheduled for 17, 19 and 21 December 2001, and 2 and 4 January 2002.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Trent Lady Riverboat, Nottingham The TRENT LADY has been advertised for sale for £110 000.

 © G P Hamer 6 December 2000

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY left Avonmouth on 6 December but then had to shelter at Milford Haven, and did not reach Glasgow till the evening of the 16th. The PSPS charter on 16 December was cancelled and alternative venues ashore were used for the evening Christmas parties scheduled for 12-16 December. The WAVERLEY successfully ran evening cruises on 19-22 December. In the 2000 season, 95 682 passenger journeys were made on the BALMORAL, sailing on 135 days, and 58 728 journeys were made on the WAVERLEY in 48 days; total revenue was £961 000 for the BALMORAL and £742 000 for the WAVERLEY. The WAVERLEY starts next season on the Clyde at Easter, and both ships' seasons seem likely to follow the usual pattern.

THAMES

Westminster Pier reopened in December after being closed for 11 months. The new pier is much larger and has covered waiting areas.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Afternoon cruises are scheduled for Sundays from 24 June to 2 September, Mondays 7 May and 27 August, Tuesdays to Fridays from 11 July to 7 September, and Saturdays 21 and 28 July, and 11, 18 and 25 August. Special trips include a Thames Estuary cruises on 19 May and 15 September, London on 9-11 June, the Medway sailing barge match on 16 June, round the Isle of Sheppey on 23 June, Southend on 14 July, Snodland on 4 August, Whitstable on 6 October, Queenborough on 27 October, and a bird watching cruise on 28 October.

City Cruises The four catamarans finished running from Waterloo to the Dome when it closed on 31 December, and now run a half-hourly service from Westminster via Tower Pier to Greenwich, competing with the established Westminster-Greenwich service.

Thames Speed Ferry Co was set up in 1999 to start a commuter service. Two 56-seater catamarans have been built and started running last November from Cadogan Pier, Chelsea, to Westminster and Blackfriars.

Salter Bros This year's timetables are identical to last year's: Oxford-Abingdon runs from 20 May to 23 September, Reading-Henley from 27 May to 9 September, Marlow-Henley and Marlow-Windsor from 21 May to 14 September (except Bank Holidays and 4-8 July), and Windsor-Maidenhead and Windsor-Staines from 21 May to 7 September (except Bank Holidays).

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink A new ferry for the Fishbourne service is being built by the Remontowa yard at Gdańsk, Poland. The order was placed last year and work started in October without publicity; delivery is due in June. The ship will measure 3500 gross tons, be 282 ft in length, and carry 820 passengers and 204 cars on three vehicle decks. Unlike the present "Saints", she will be double-ended, with a central wheelhouse, and will have two Voith Schneider propellers at each end.

R A Hale, Poole, has advertised the PURBECK LADY for sale for £100 000. Originally the NEW MARY LOUISE in London, she went to Poole in 1992.

I A Robertson, Weymouth, plans to retire and the business, including the ENCHANTRESS and MY GIRL, has been advertised for sale for £89 000.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The HAVELET, sold and renamed SVETI STEFAN in August, entered service in December between Bar, Montenegro (Yugoslavia), and Bari, Italy.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The DEVONAIR BELLE continues to run 1-hour cruises from Dartmouth on two to four days a week; there are sailings from Totnes on 16 and 30 January, and 13 and 27 February.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Cats, Penarth, have bought the SAPPHIRE from Paignton and she arrived by road on 23 October. She was built as a tender for the cruise ship KUNGSHOLM of 1966 (now P&O's VICTORIA) which first visited the Bristol Channel in 1967. The SAPPHIRE ran from St David's and then Arbroath before Paignton. In December, the CYGNET started a regular service from Penarth Marina to Mermaid Quay at Cardiff with hourly departures from 0700 (0900 on Saturdays, 1000 on Sundays) until 2200. The trip takes 15 minutes each way.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries This year's Manchester Ship Canal cruises are scheduled for 6-7 and 20-21 June, 7-8, 21-22 and 25-26 July, 4-5, 11-12 and 18-19 August, and 1-2 and 22-23 September; in each case, the ship sails from Liverpool to Salford on the first day, then returns from Salford to Liverpool the next day.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The season will run from 24 March to 28 October, with the full two-boat service from 7 April to 30 September.

MISCELLANY

The former Gosport ferry and Thames passenger boat FERRY PRINCESS, withdrawn from service around 1991 and later converted for private use, has left this country and by mid-December was in Le Havre.

TRIP OUT

February 2001

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat Public sightseeing trips are offered daily from 10 February to 25 November. Evening ghost cruises and floodlit cruises run from 31 March to 31 October. The RIVER COUNTESS and RIVER KING have both been offered for sale this year.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The steamer is now on the slipway at Strood for her refit and the installation of her new boiler; the old one was lifted out on 26 January.

White Horse Fast Ferries The Gravesend-Tilbury ferry seemed threatened with closure when it became known in January that Thurrock Council (the local authority on the Tilbury side) wanted to end its annual subsidy of £28 000. Kent County Council pays £32 000 yearly. Thurrock subsequently decided to continue paying its subsidy.

Crown River Cruises have ordered a new vessel to carry 400 passengers.

Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co has been taken over by Livett's Launches/Thames Luxury Charters. The Maidenhead business, owned by the Harris family, began operating the BELLE in 1981 and subsequently added THE EDWARDIAN and THE GEORGIAN. The latter has been operating charters in London this winter with the DIXIE QUEEN, .ELIZABETHAN and GOLDEN SALAMANDER, but will return up river for the summer.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open this year from 31 March to 7 October.

Wightlink Car ferry services are similar to last year's, but with extra night-time sailings on the Yarmouth route. During the overhaul period, the Yarmouth route is reduced to a two-ship service until 18 March, and the Fishbourne service has a three-ship service until 5 April. On the Ryde route, the timetable is no longer reduced to cover overhauls, and two catamarans are scheduled to run every day.

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE has a greater variety of public cruises next season, with cruises up the Beaulieu River, a 6-hour "five rivers" cruise covering Southampton, the Hamble and Medina, and cruises round the forts with time ashore at Spitbank Fort. As last year, the Cowes trip is offered only on Tuesdays.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The new SOLIDOR 5 arrived at St-Malo on 24 December and entered service on 5 January. The SOLIDOR 3 has returned to her builders in Norway and is to be refitted for new owners.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The DEVONAIR BELLE is being renamed DART EXPLORER. The original name was linked to Devonair Radio which lost its franchise in 1995.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG is due to resume on 8 March after her refit at Appledore. There are sailings from Clovelly on 21 and 24 March, and 4 and 7 April. The first call at the rebuilt Ilfracombe Pier is scheduled for 14 April. On 23 June, and Saturdays in July and August, the ship makes two round trips to the island with an afternoon call at Ilfracombe for staying visitors. She is being chartered by Clevedon Pier Trust for three days as usual, with trips to and from Gloucester on 22-23 July (though with very early starts because of the tides) and to Steep Holm, with the BRISTOL QUEEN acting as tender, on the 24th.

Cardiff Cats The Penarth-Cardiff service, which started in December, has been reduced and now runs from 1300 to 2200 on Fridays, 1100-2200 on Saturdays and 1100-1700 on Sundays.

NORTH WEST

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA runs this year from 31 March to 31 October, and continues for private parties until 21 December.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SUPERSEACAT THREE is to be replaced on the Liverpool-Dublin and Liverpool-Douglas services by the RAPIDE from Dover this year.

MISCELLANY

The former Yugoslav passenger ship PRINCE ALBERT, laid-up in Liverpool since June 1999, left on 6 January for trials, but developed steering problems in Liverpool Bay and started taking in water so had to be towed back into Liverpool.

 © G P Hamer 6 February 2001

TRIP OUT

March 2001

NORTH EAST

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is being chartered by the RSPB for puffin cruises on seven dates from 19 May to 7 July, and for skua and shearwater cruises on eight dates from 18 August to 29 September. For details send a stamped addressed envelope to RSPB in Bridlington.

EAST ANGLIA

C J Lovewell (Southern River Steamers), Norwich, has sold the business to Highcraft who run the passenger boats as City Boats. Mr Lovewell had run trips in Norwich since the mid-1970s. Public trips run at Easter, then daily from 21 April to 1 October.

THAMES

Southern Water services, Bewl Water The SPARKLE has been bought from Paignton and was delivered by road to the lake on 15 February. She will enter service at Easter as the SWALLOW, replacing the FRANCES MARY which is being bought by the Clyde Maritime Trust for trips from Glasgow.

White Horse Fast Ferries have asked for the annual subsidy for the Tilbury ferry to be increased from £60 000 to £90 000, thus putting the future of the service in doubt again.

City Cruises Since 12 February, the Westminster-Tower-Greenwich service has been operating every 40 minutes, instead of half-hourly. The summer service, from April to October, will have sailings from Westminster to Tower every 15 minutes, with half-hourly services continuing to Greenwich. A fare of £7.50 gives unlimited travel for a day.

French Brothers have taken over the two passenger boats of Bray Boats of Maidenhead, the BRAY PRINCESS and BRAY ROYALE. Bray Boats, run by Mr A Thompson, continues to run small hire boats.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The new ferry is to be named ST CLARE.

Red Funnel Ferries There was a two-ship service to East Cowes from 6 January to 15 February while the ships were refitted in turn at Portsmouth. The more intensive schedule with some sailings at 50-minute intervals runs from 7 to 22 April, 26 May to 3 June, and 6 July to 2 September; otherwise, the intensive service runs on Mondays and Fridays, with an hourly service on other days.

Croson (The Dorset Belles) Sailings from Bournemouth resume on 1 April. Trips from Bournemouth to Brownsea will also serve Poole Quay this year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

R Bewley, Paignton The SPARKLE has been sold for service on Bewl Water (see above). She was built for Mr Bewley by Hinks of Appledore in 1977.

Dart Pleasure Craft Totnes sailings are, as usual, offered daily from 1 April to 31 October. Unusual sailings include wildlife cruises on 22-24 June, 22-24 July and 20-22 August, and trips from Totnes to Sharpham Vineyard on 22 July and 5 August.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

M Woolls, Weston-super-Mare, is the operator of the former PRIDE OF THE BAY from Jersey which was renamed BRISTOL QUEEN last year. His other vessel is the CANBERRA QUEEN, a former tender on the liner, which has been offered for sale for £36 000.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The offices on Beacon Quay at Torquay, used since the owner ran Torbay Seaways, were vacated last autumn to allow redevelopment.

Linda Cruising Co, Cosgrove, have bought a vessel named MADE IN BRITAIN to replace the LINDA which has been advertised for sale for £21 000.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The MOUNTWOOD is to be refitted and re-engined at a cost of £2.5 million to make her more suitable for excursions and charters. The work will be carried out at the Wright & Beyer yard at Birkenhead, which is owned by Cammell Laird. The refit will start this month and should be completed in the autumn.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN began her refit at Cammell Laird on 26 February. To mark her 25th birthday, she will make special trips from Douglas to Troon, where she was built, on 19 May, returning the next day, and day trips to Douglas from Llandudno on 21 and 24 May, from Whitehaven on the 22nd and from Fleetwood on the 23rd. A proposed church charter from Heysham to Peel on 20 May has been cancelled owing to lack of support.

 © G P Hamer 7 March 2001

TRIP OUT

April 2001

Some boat services in rural areas will be affected by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease which has led to closures of some tourist attractions and canal towpaths. Readers should check with operators before planning trips in the coming weeks.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The full timetable has been published. The WAVERLEY runs in Scotland from 13 April to 9 May, with a visit to the Western Isles on 4-8 May. She sails out of Dublin on 11-14 May, then on the Bristol Channel till 16 June, with trips from Milford Haven on 17 June and from Liverpool on the 19th and 20th before returning to Scotland. Her Clyde season finishes on 27 August, and is followed by the usual sailings on the South Coast from 31 August to 25 September, on the Thames until 16 October, and on the Bristol Channel on 19-22 October. The BALMORAL needs work on her engines but is due to start her season on 11 May at Barrow and runs on the Irish Sea till 29 May, with a first call at Mostyn planned for the 17th. In June, she goes to the east coast of Scotland, then Newcastle on 7-11 June, the Thames from 14 June to 4 July and the South Coast till 11 July. Her Bristol Channel season is from 13 July to 17 September, and she finishes with the weekend of 21-24 September on the Clyde.

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat has bought the PRIDE OF YORK from rival York Marine Services and advertised her for sale for £250 000.

THAMES

The report of the official inquiry into the 1989 MARCHIONESS disaster was published on 23 March. The masters of the MARCHIONESS and BOWBELLE are blamed for not keeping a proper lookout, and the vessels' owners, the Department of Transport and the coroner are also criticised.

R Mahony, Dover, has run cruises around the harbour and along the coast with a 12-passenger motor yacht, the STAR OF KILLARNEY. He has now bought the CALDEY QUEEN from Tenby which is due to start trips from Dover at Easter.

Catamaran Cruisers The Embankment-Tower-Greenwich service has been reduced this summer and runs half-hourly only at weekends and in July and August; at other times, sailings are every 45 minutes. Multilingual sightseeing cruises run all year from Waterloo and in summer from Embankment.

Crown River Cruises The new vessel is being built by Richards at Great Yarmouth and is due in service next month. It is 115 ft in length and has a saloon seating 250, with an open upper deck seating 150; her wheelhouse is aft, giving a similar layout to Woods' SILVER BONITO.

Westminster Passenger Services Association The half-hourly summer schedule of the Greenwich service runs from 19 March to 11 November, and some sailings now continue to the Thames Barrier, replacing the separate Barrier service run by Thames Cruises. Westminster-Barrier sailings are at 1100 and 1200, and, from 2 April to 7 October at 1300, and from 28 May to 2 September at 1400.

WEST OF ENGLAND

R H E Cord, Torquay The MARGARET ANN has been offered for sale by brokers for £40 000.

Plymouth Boat Cruises Calstock trips are advertised for 15 and 16 April, and for various dates from 6 May to 30 September.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company Passenger trips are suspended to try to keep out foot and mouth disease, and the OLDENBURG is carrying only cargo.

Bristol Packet Afternoon river trips run on Sundays from Easter to mid-September and on most days in school holidays. One-way trips to Bath are advertised for 19 May, 9 June, 7 July, 25 August and 22 September. Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 5, 19 and 28 May, 2 and 30 June, 14 and 28 July, 2, 11, 26 and 27 August, 15 September, and 13 October.

WEST WALES

S Crockford, Tenby The CALDEY QUEEN has gone to Dover after about 12 seasons running from Saundersfoot and Tenby under various owners. She previously ran at Dartmouth as the HEART'S CONTENT.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council Swift Offshore Services gave up running the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry last year. A new operator planned to operate a 12-passenger boat this season, but has pulled out, so the service may not operate this year.

Coniston Launch Because of foot and mouth disease, the boats are not calling at Monk Coniston, Torver or Sunny Bank.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The RAPIDE broke down between Douglas and Liverpool on 31 March and had to return to the island. She resumed service the next day.

MISCELLANY

The BEAUPORT, which served the Channel Islands in 1992-93, has since operated various charters in the Mediterranean but left in November and is now running between Trinidad and Tobago. This charter is due to continue till at least 2002.

The former CONDOR 8, the catamaran used for Channel Island services from 1988 to 1996, has now returned to Europe as the Italian SNAV ARIES, after running in Canada as the WATERWAYS 1.

 © G P Hamer 3 April 2001

TRIP OUT

May 2001

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY entered service as scheduled on the Clyde at Easter. The BALMORAL has gone to Sharpness for dry docking.

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat The PRIDE OF YORK, bought from York Marine Services, has been renamed PRINCE WILLIAM.

EAST ANGLIA

Statham Water Tours have ceased operating. The owner, Mr H Morphey, retired last autumn after running the OSPREY since the mid-1980s.

THAMES

R Mahony, Dover The CALDEY QUEEN has been renamed SOUTHERN QUEEN.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The steamer successfully ran trials with her new boiler on 26 April and returned to service on 4 May.

London Waterbus Co (Regent's Canal) The service runs daily as usual from 1 April to 27 October, then at weekends in winter. Day trips are to Limehouse on 7 and 28 July, 18 August and 22 September, to the London Canal Museum at Kings Cross on 23 June and 4 August, to Brentford on 8 and 9 September, and to Hillingdon on 14 July.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The new vessel is to be the SPIRIT OF GOSPORT and is expected to be delivered this month.

Solent & Wight Line Cruises are running Portsmouth Harbour cruises from a new landing stage at the Gunwharf Quays shopping development near Portsmouth Harbour station, and it is also the destination for day trips from Cowes.

Brownsea Island Ferries now run to Brownsea Island from Poole as well as Sandbanks. Another new vessel, the MAID OF THE HARBOUR, 85 ft long and carrying 185 passengers, is due this year.

R C Greenslade, Poole, has taken over the PURBECK GEM from Mr R A Hale who has retired.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The services from Normandy to the CI, run jointly with Alizés Côte des Isles, are reduced this season, with no sailings from Portbail or Diéette. The NORMANDIE EXPRESS, chartered for the past two seasons, has been bought by Emeraude Lines and runs from Carteret and Granville, while Alizés' CÔTE DES ISLES is to be sold.

Herm Seaway Marine The Herm launches have been sold to Mr P Wilcox, owner of the Trident Charter Co.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Coastal trips are advertised to Torquay on Mondays from May to September, and to Babbacombe and Teignmouth on Wednesdays in July and August.

R H E Cord, Torquay, died at the end of last summer and the family will no longer be running trips. The MARGARET ANN is for sale.

WEST WALES

S Crockford, Tenby The new vessel, originally to have been named CELTIC SPIRIT, is the CATALINA OF TENBY.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips are advertised to Tewkesbury on 9 June, and 1 and 15 September, and to Sharpness on 1 July and 23 September.

Linda Cruising Co, Cosgrove The LINDA's replacement has been named ELIZABETH OF GLAMIS.

B Nicoll, Watford, retired last year after running trips in the narrow boat ARCTURUS since 1959.

M N Thompson, Sawley, has ceased running trips and the DESTINY is being converted to a hire boat to carry up to 12 Passengers.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council has advertised for an operator to run the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry.

 © G P Hamer 7 May 2001

TRIP OUT

June 2001

Waverley Excursions Terry Sylvester has announced his retirement after being involved with the WAVERLEY since 1973; he was latterly chairman of the Waverley Steam Navigation Co. Ellie Newlands, commercial director of Waverley Excursions for the past two years, is leaving on 29 June for another job. The BALMORAL suffered further engine problems and her first sailings, from Barrow on 11 and 12 May, were cancelled; she began her season from Douglas on the 13th. Her trip from Mostyn, on 17 May, was cancelled by the weather.

THAMES

Southend Water Pleasure In addition to regular trips from Queenborough to Southend, the DUCHESS M makes day trips from Southend to Strood on Thursdays 7 and 21 June, 5 and 19 July, 2, 16 and 30 August, and 6 and 20 September, and to Whitstable on Tuesdays 10 and 24 July, and 7 and 21 August.

White Horse Fast Ferries has gone into receivership. The Tilbury-Gravesend ferry ceased operating on 18 May, but the receivers allowed it to resume two days later.

Crown River Cruises The new SARPEDON arrived from her builders at Great Yarmouth around 26 May. Sarpedon was a son of Zeus in Greek mythology.

Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co, now owned by Thames Luxury Charters of London, has taken over Showboat's PINK CHAMPAGNE and SOUTHERN COMFORT MISSISSIPPI, to increase the Maidenhead fleet to five.

Hobbs & Sons, Henley, are having a 75-passenger 75-ft new vessel for the charter trade, named HIBERNIA.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink A naming ceremony was held in Gdańsk on 26 April for the ST CLARE, which was already afloat and being fitted out.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The NORMANDIE EXPRESS is scheduled to run from Jersey to Sark from 13 April to 30 September. From 25 April to 9 September, she sails most days from either Granville or Carteret to St Helier, then on to Sark and St Peter Port. There are no services running to Gorey this year.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

The rebuilding of Ilfracombe Pier is still not completed and the WAVERLEY's schedule has been amended as she can only berth around low water. On her Lundy trips, she cannot use Ilfracombe on both outward and return journeys, so calls at Minehead in one direction, with coach connections. The new pier should to be in full use by the time the BALMORAL makes her first call on 13 July.

NORTH WEST

Liverpool Duck Tours has introduced one-hour sightseeing trips around the city, including a cruise in the docks, in amphibious ex-army DUKWs named WACKER QUACKER I and II. Departure point is the Albert Dock. Similar services now run in London, Dublin and Glasgow.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Following the cancellation of the island's TT Races because of foot and mouth disease, the LADY OF MANN's sailings were cancelled. The excursions scheduled from Fleetwood, Llandudno, Whitehaven and Troon were also cancelled. Her only service this summer is expected to be in the Azores on charter to Açor Line.

Laxey Towing Co, has bought the TOTNES PRINCESS from Dart Pleasure Craft and she has been renamed KARINA. She will offer coastal trips from Douglas to land at Laxey or Port Soderick. Built by Philips at Dartmouth as the MAY QUEEN for the Oreston & Turnchapel Steamboat Co of Plymouth, she later ran as the Millbrook Steamboat Co's EASTERN BELLE before going to Ridalls of Dartmouth. The Laxey Towing Co is run by a Captain Carter.

MISCELLANY

The Ukranian owner of the coastal passenger ship PRINCE ALBERT, laid-up in Liverpool for the past two years, is being deported. He leaves several creditors, including the tug company who towed the ship from Tilbury.

www.trip-out.co.uk © G P Hamer 6 June 2001

TRIP OUT

July 2001

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY completed her Bristol Channel sailings, including first calls at the new Lundy pier, then made well-supported trips from Liverpool on 19-20 June before returning to Scotland. The BALMORAL has been sailing as scheduled on the Thames and is now on the South Coast.

THAMES

Crown River Cruises The new SARPEDON was issued with a passenger certificate on 7 June and can carry 400 passengers. She entered service in June on the circular trips from Westminster to Festival Pier, London Bridge City and St Katharine's.

Westminster Party Boats has bought another vessel from Germany. LA PALOMA was built in 1984, is 110 ft long and could carry 300 passengers. She operated from Lauenburg on the Elbe upstream from Hamburg. She arrived in London in June but has not yet been refitted or renamed.

French Brothers Keith French, one of the three founders of the business, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours "For services to the passenger boat industry."

Hobbs & Sons, Henley The new HIBERNIA was built by Mustang Marine at Pembroke Dock and delivered to the Thames by road. She cost £360 000.

SOUTH COAST

W Hogg, Southampton Both boats are now for sale, having apparently lost the berth at the Town Quay used for the past five years.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 3, replaced by the SOLIDOR 5 last winter, was sold to German operator FRS and now runs as the TANGER JET across the Straits of Gibraltar from Tarifa to Tanger.

WEST OF ENGLAND

St Mary's Boatmen's Association The LILY OF LAGUNA, replaced by the new SAPPHIRE last year, is laid-up.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co The commuter service between Temple Meads station and the Centre now runs in the evening as well as the morning.

Cardiff Cats The boats have started calling at the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Normally, one boat runs every 40 minutes from Cardiff's Mermaid Quay to the Barrage, while the other boat runs between Mermaid Quay and Penarth Marina, with some river cruises. On Fridays and Saturdays, Penarth sailings continue until 2300.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN left Cammell Laird on 11 June after her £1.5 million refit. Her refurbished passenger accommodation was shown off to the public in Douglas before she left on 15 June for the Azores. She is spending her third season on charter to Açor Line and will operate inter-island services until mid-September. The SEACAT ISLE OF MAN was due to make a two-hour round-the-island cruise from Douglas on 6 July.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA entered service on 31 May, sailing to Port Soderick, and made her first trip to Laxey on 10 June.

MISCELLANY

The 1956-built SCILLONIAN is now known to have ended her career in Bulgaria. She left this country after service as the DEVONIA, DEVONIUN and SYLLINGAR in 1986 for Greece, then went to West Africa. In 1998, she was taken to the Bulgarian port of Bourgas on the Black Sea where she and her crew were abandoned. The crew were eventually repatriated to Africa.

The owner of the PRINCE ALBERT, lying at Liverpool, is now in prison awaiting deportation to Ukraine. It seems that last winter the ship was loaded with old tyres which the owner hoped to take to West Africa to sell.

 © G P Hamer 5 July 2001

TRIP OUT

August 2001

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY will be on charter on 23 September for the start of the Volvo Ocean Race, the round-the-world yacht race formerly sponsored by Whitbread.

THAMES

Westminster Party Boats The newly-acquired LA PALOMA was delivered from Lauenburg through the continental waterways via Hannover, Bremen, Emden and Amsterdam to Rotterdam and then across the North Sea. She has been renamed MERCIA and entered service in July on the circular trips from Westminster, replacing the MERCEDES which is being used mainly for charters.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The ST CLARE made the 870-mile delivery voyage from Poland via the Kiel Canal and arrived in Portsmouth on 16 July. She went into service on Friday the 20th, but the first trip was delayed by an electrical fault in one of the mezzanine car decks which had to be raised and lowered manually; she was withdrawn for repairs, resuming on the 23rd. On peak days, all five ferries have been running to Fishbourne, though with berthing delays at Fishbourne.

Gosport Ferry The SPIRIT OF GOSPORT, built by Abels in Bristol, was dry-docked at Sharpness before delivery to Gosport where she is being completed. The company hopes to have her in service on 24 August, but building of her sister, SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH, is not expected to be completed till next year.

M G Pearce, Portsmouth A new 60-ft saloon vessel, the DIANA S, has been completed this year but is being offered for sale for £285 000. She has a certificate for 153 passengers and has a saloon with a bar, and an open upper deck.

WEST OF ENGLAND

B R J Rackley, Dawlish The MY QUEEN has been noted at Starcross and seems to have been bought from Dart Pleasure Craft. Until 1999, she ran on the River Dart for G H Ridalls & Sons, but has since been laid-up.

Torpoint Ferry The local authorities have decided to build three new 73-car ferries to replace the present 50-car vessels. The new vessels are expected to cost around £10 million and should be in service by 2004.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co was bought by a local syndicate in April and operating hours have been extended this summer, with crossings continuing till 2230 on Wednesdays to Sundays.

G H & W G Pill, Falmouth Mr W George Pill died in March, aged 80. He had owned boats at Falmouth since the early-1950s and, with his son, George H Pill, ran the TUDOR PRINCE, PRINCESSA, and the ferry service to St Mawes.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Cats plan to introduce new catamarans similar in size to the present vessels.

WEST WALES

Caldey Boat Service Nine boats are now running on the service. The IONA has been sold to owners in Cambridgeshire, but has not been used as a passenger boat there, while the STAR QUEEN II was sold to Menai Historical Cruises (and appears as the STAR QUEEN in 'Trip Out 2001/02'). The SEA VIXEN II has been renamed SILVER SPRAY.

MISCELLANY

The THAMES SOVEREIGN which ran in London in 1988-1990 is now lying at the Medway Bridge Marina upstream of Rochester and has been converted by her owners as a home and office. She was built in 1930 for service on the Rhine as the DEUTSCHES ECK but, after her brief service on the Thames, spent the 1990s laid-up.

 © G P Hamer 6 August 2001

TRIP OUT

September 2001

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings on 31 August as scheduled.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich, has been formed to run cruises from Ipswich on the Orwell and Stour. The PURBECK LADY has been bought from Poole and renamed ORWELL LADY. Originally the NEW MARY LOUISE in London, she went to Poole in 1992.

THAMES

J Carter, Westminster, has sold the INTERCEPTOR to a company called Mulberry House of Ongar, Essex. She continues to offer charters in central London for small parties.

Thames Speed Ferry Co ceased operating at the beginning of August. The two catamarans, CABOT and CHANCELLOR, had run a commuter service from Chelsea since last winter, but were unreliable and incurred losses.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SPIRIT OF GOSPORT was issued with a passenger certificate on 21 August, and entered service on the 24th to run harbour cruises for the International Festival of the Sea. She measures 210 gross tons and has Class IV and V certificates for 300 passengers, and a Class VI (covering as far as St Catherine's or Bournemouth) for 250, though catering is limited to a drinks machine.

M G Pearce, Portsmouth The new DIANA S was in service running harbour cruises for the International Festival of the Sea on 24-27 August, with Class V and VI certificates for 127 passengers.

Solent & Wight Line Cruises The three catamarans are based at Cowes and offer a day trip to Portsmouth every day, and afternoon cruises to the Hamble River on Tuesdays and to the Needles on Thursdays.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED JET 2 suffered an engine failure and collided with a yacht off Cowes on 4 August. She was towed to Cowes and there were no injuries.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR EXPRESS had gearbox problems around 6-9 August and ran on three of her four engines, delaying sailings by up to 2½ hours. The winter schedule, from 1 November, again has fast catamaran services from Weymouth on Mondays and Fridays only (with additional trips around Christmas and New Year), while the COMMODORE CLIPPER continues to sail six times a week from Portsmouth.

WEST OF ENGLAND

D Gold, Dartmouth, has bought the QUEEN OF HELFORD from Falmouth and began running trips from Dartmouth in August. The boat was built to run from Falmouth but was on the Dart from 1976 to 1993 in Ridalls' fleet, before going to Plymouth then Falmouth. Passengers will be landed at Stoke Gabriel, Sharpham Vineyard and Greenway where the National Trust is to open the gardens of Greenway House to the public.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Flat Holm Project THE LEWIS ALEXANDER broke down at Barry on 14 August, leaving 40 people stranded on Flat Holm. The Barry lifeboat was launched and brought them back in two trips.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Telstar Cruisers, Tewkesbury, have offered the EMPRESS for sale for £22 500. She has spent two seasons at Tewkesbury, after a career running at Wroxham, Norwich, then York.

Foxton Boat Services British Waterways has been given planning approval to redevelop land around Foxton Bottom Lock currently leased by Foxton Boat Services. The lease expires next March and it is not clear what will happen to the two passenger boats.

Brayford Waterside Cruises, Lincoln, have advertised THE BELLE for sale for £25 000.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The Manchester Ship Canal Cruises on 22 and 23 September are sold out, so additional trips are scheduled for 26 and 28 September. The refit of the MOUNTWOOD is expected to be completed by the end of the year. She will be renamed ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY (the name ROYAL IRIS is held by the 1951-built ship lying derelict at Woolwich).

Wyre Borough Council has not found an operator for the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry and the service is not operating this season.

MISCELLANY

The National Trust's visiting figures for 2000 show that St Michael's Mount had 185 674 visitors (191 364 in 1999) and Brownsea Island had 91 584 (98 453).

 © G P Hamer 6 September 2001

TRIP OUT

October 2001

The summer of 2001 has brought fairly average British summer weather, with spells of hot sunshine and cool rainy periods. The summer holiday trade has been affected by foot and mouth disease on farms which restricted access to many inland waters and scared off visitors, but coastal towns have benefited from additional visitors.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY started her Thames sailings as scheduled on 27 September and continues to 16 October, before Bristol Channel sailings on 19-22 October. She will be offering evening cruises from Glasgow on 12-15 December, and a daytime cruise to the Holy Loch on charter to the PSPS on 16 December. The BALMORAL sailed on the Clyde on 21-24 September with her funnel repainted red with a black top ready for a charter on the 25th when she was used in the making of a tv drama at Tarbert, playing the part of a MacBrayne steamer in the 1930s. She returned to the Bristol Channel for an evening charter from Penarth on 29 September before going to Bristol for winter lay-up.

NORTH EAST

Castle Line of York The business, including the DUCHESS OF YORK, has been advertised for sale for £175 000.

THAMES

London Frog Tours Following a breakdown of the BEATRICE on 1 June, the MCA discovered that her passenger certificate had expired on 17 April and that the CLEOPATRA's certificate had also expired. The company was fined a total of £7000 and £4116 in costs, and the two craft have returned to service after surveys.

Kennet Horse Boat Co The business with the two boats has been offered for sale for £160 000.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island Ferries The new MAID OF THE HARBOUR was built by Halmatic which is owned by Vosper Thornycroft. The hull and superstructure were built at Southampton by the parent company, then towed to Portchester for fitting out. She is a sister of the MAID OF POOLE which was built by David Abels at Bristol.

WEST OF ENGLAND

K&S Cruises, Falmouth The LADY ELIZABETH was bought from P J Moule of Kingsbridge last November. Originally at Plymouth, she ran between Kingsbridge and Salcombe from 1981 until replaced by the new RIVERMAID in 1997.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The Christmas and New Year sailings scheduled for the SCILLONIAN III have been cancelled owing to a lack of bookings. The company hopes to have a new, faster ship to replace the SCILLONIAN III in 2003. A European Union grant would be needed to meet the building cost of £16 million.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Grebe Canal Cruises, Tring The business, including the three passenger boats, has been advertised for sale. The firm has been owned by Mr R H Saunders since it was established in 1977.

Trent Lady Riverboat, Nottingham The TRENT LADY has been taken over by new owners who trade as Trent River Cruises and continue to offer trips for parties.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The schedule for next year's Manchester Ship Canal cruises has been published already. The dates are 25-26 May, 15-16 and 29-30 June, 6-7, 13-14 and 27-28 July, 3-4, 10-11 and 24-25 August, and 7-8, 21-22 and 28-29 September 2002.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN arrived back in Liverpool on 24 September after her charter in the Azores.

www.trip-out.co.uk © G P Hamer 4 October 2001

TRIP OUT

November 2001

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's figures.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	City Cruises	2003
2(2)	Woods River Cruises	1692
3(3)	Thames Luxury Ch	1429
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr.	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	842
7(-)	Thames Leisure	708
8(7)	George Wheeler L.	544
9(8)	Blue Funnel Cruises	538
10(-)	Solent & Wightline	470

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	4382
2(2)	Catamaran Cruisers	2742
3(3)	Windermere Lake Cr.	2736
4(4)	Salter Bros	1954
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(6)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1626
7(8)	French Brothers	1506
8(7)	Solent & Wightline	1288
=9(-)	Crown River Cruises	1095
=9(9)	Woods River Cruises	1095

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's last trip on the Thames, on 16 October, was cancelled so that she could leave early for the Bristol Channel but she became stormbound at Weymouth and didn't reach Penarth till the evening of the 20th so missed two days' sailings on the Bristol Channel. She ran successfully on 21-22 October and arrived back in Glasgow on the 23rd. The office at Penarth has closed and the work will in future be carried out by the Glasgow office.

Mr Tony Cager, the BALMORAL's bosun for the past 12 years, died in the early hours of 28 October. He had organised a party aboard the ship in Bristol to mark his 30th wedding anniversary and had tried to break up a fight involving the disc jockey. The disc jockey has been charged with murder.

THAMES

London River Services has advertised for an operator to run commuter and tourist services between Wandsworth, Festival Pier and Mast House Terrace Pier on the Isle of Dogs.

White Horse Fast Ferries After the company run by the Lay brothers went into receivership, the Tilbury ferry was continued by sister company Lay Construction, but on 13 October, crews refused to work unless they were paid money owed to them by White Horse. After negotiations with local councils, the Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co agreed to run the service for a trial period of three months and the service resumed on 24 October.

City cruises Since 19 October, boats on the Westminster-Tower-Greenwich service have been calling at Waterloo; the service runs at 40-minute intervals this winter, with the first boat leaving Westminster at 1020.

Westminster Passenger Services Association The winter service to Greenwich runs from 12 November to 24 March, with boats leaving Westminster every 40 minutes from 1040 to 1520.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Sailings to Kew and Hampton Court finished for the winter on 28 October.

SOUTH COAST

Solent & Wight Line Cruises On 9 October, the SOLENT CAT was hit by a distress flare accidentally fired from a yacht. The crew extinguished it and no-one was injured.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR VITESSE carried 97 916 passengers on her Poole-Cherbourg trips for Brittany Ferries and only two had to be cancelled. The service will be repeated next year from 21 May to 29 September. The COMMODORE CLIPPER will offer a service from Portsmouth to Cherbourg on Sundays from 14 July to 8 September, at 1030 from Portsmouth and 1730 from Cherbourg (except on 25 August when the outward journey is via Guernsey).

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart line Cruises, Exmouth Bird-watching cruises on the Exe estuary are scheduled for various dates during the winter. Next summer, coastal bird-watching day cruises are scheduled for 8 June and 6 July to Beer, and 29 June and 14 September to Brixham.

Dart Pleasure Craft As last winter, the DART EXPLORER is scheduled to make one-hour cruises from Dartmouth during the winter, generally daily except Mondays and Fridays. Sailings from Totnes to Dartmouth are offered on some Tuesdays.

Torpoint Ferry The PLYM was towed to Falmouth in September for refit.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

C J Barbeary, Ilfracombe The QUEEN OF CORNWALL has been advertised for sale. She was built to run from Padstow, but has been at Ilfracombe since 1977.

NORTH WEST

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co has bought the Guernsey-Herm launch LADY DOROTHY to run a winter service. From November to March, she makes return trips from Glenridding to Howtown at 1030 and 1330. Operators on Coniston, Derwentwater and Windermere already offer winter trips.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN did a return trip from Douglas to Dublin on 26-29 October.

MISCELLANY

The WALDSTÄTTER was broken up last summer on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland where she had operated since 1911. She was built in 1905 as the paddle steamer BEN JONSON for the London County Council's service on the Thames, and was rebuilt as a propeller-driven motor vessel in 1949.

TRIP OUT

December 2001

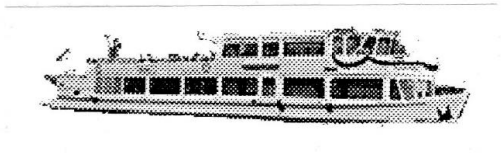
Winter used to be the season when pleasure boats and excursion ships would be laid-up and would be refitted before another summer season. Now, many boats are busy with Christmas parties, Santa cruises and other trips: boats run in London, on the lakes and many other waterways, the WAVERLEY has Christmas cruises and, thanks to changes in the passenger certificate rules, short sea trips are available from Bournemouth. These developments are partly because people nowadays have more leisure time and more money to spend than previous generations, while global warming has helped by giving us milder winters.

This year's outbreaks of foot and mouth disease have caused problems for some boat operators, mainly in inland areas, but tourism in other areas has benefited, and many coastal towns have seen an increase in visitors. September's terrorist attacks in America have had a big impact on international tourism but, if people are reluctant to make long air journeys, more British people will be spending holidays nearer home.

Geoffrey Hamer

THAMES

Campion Launches, Greenwich, have bought a vessel from Germany. LA VISURGIS was built in 1977 for service on the Danube, later moving to Nienburg on the River Weser near Hannover ("Visurgis" is the Latin name for the Weser). She was delivered in November along the continental waterways to Dordrecht in Holland and was towed from there to London in early December. She is 115 ft long and could carry 350 passengers in Germany.



SOUTH COAST

Wightlink In a complex financial restructuring, Wightlink has been bought by its managers from CINVen who bought the company from Sea Containers in 1995.

The Dorset Belles The POOLE BELLE did very well in October's fine weather and sailings continued into November. Half-hour trips from Bournemouth are due to continue at weekends and in school holidays through the winter. One-hour "Santa cruises" from Poole Quay are advertised at weekends from 8 to 23 December and on the 24th.

L G Marsh, Swanage, plans to retire and has offered the business, with the two boats, for sale.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR VITESSE was at Southampton for refit from 7 to 21 November. The fast service is suspended from 6 to 31 January. Poole services resume on 22 March and continue to 28 October. From 20 May to 29 September, both fast ferries are used and schedules are similar to last year's: the CONDOR VITESSE runs from Poole at 0730 to Cherbourg and at 1355 to St-Malo via Guernsey or Jersey, and the CONDOR EXPRESS sails to Guernsey and Jersey from Weymouth at 0730 and from Poole at 1610.

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 4 was chartered at Le Havre on 3 November for the start of the Jacques Vabre transatlantic yacht race. She then carried out berthing trials in Rouen and at Ouistreham, the port of Caen, as Emeraude Lines are considering running winter excursions between these ports.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's 2002 season extends from 23 March to 2 November. Sailings are daily (except Sundays) from 29 April to 5 October, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the early and late season. On Saturdays 25 May, 1 and 8 June, there are two trips (0630 and 1345 from Penzance); on Saturdays from 15 June to 31 August, she leaves Penzance at 1100 and St Mary's at 1500; on all other dates, sailings are at 0915 from Penzance and 1630 from St Mary's. Day return fares are unchanged at £32, or £35 in July and August.

MISCELLANY

The small Scottish cruise ship LORD OF THE GLENS is moored in London near Canary Wharf from 16 October to 10 May as a hotel and restaurant. Cabins cost from £94 a night. She returns to run weekly cruises on the Caledonian Canal next summer, then in the autumn offers cruises between La Rochelle and Bordeaux on the west coast of France.

 © G P Hamer 6 December 2001

TRIP OUT

January 2002

The 2002 season for many operators will begin in March as Easter is early, with Good Friday on 29 March. There will be an additional two-day Bank Holiday on 3-4 June to mark the Queen's golden jubilee, replacing the usual late-May Spring Bank Holiday.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The Heritage Lottery Fund has given first stage approval for a further £3 million grant to complete the WAVERLEY's rebuild; if confirmed, the work will be carried out next winter. Last year, the WAVERLEY carried around 150 000 passengers and the BALMORAL carried 71 000. The WAVERLEY's season begins at Easter on the Clyde and follows the usual pattern, but with an extended visit to the Western Isles on 3-14 May, and ends on the Thames in mid-October. Vouchers giving £5-worth of travel for £4 (minimum purchase is ten vouchers) are on sale as usual, until "two weeks after our national timetable is issued."

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat Trips in the city run daily from 9 February to 24 November; cruises to Bishopthorpe are advertised to run daily from 23 March to 29 September.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Afternoon cruises from Rochester and Chatham run on Sundays from 30 June, daily except Mondays and Saturdays from 12 July to 8 September, and on 10, 26 and 31 August. Special trips include Strood-London on 4 May, a cruise from London to Putney on the 5th, London-Strood on 6 May, the Medway sailing barge match on 18 May, upriver cruises to New Hythe on 25 May, 10 August and 26 October, Thames Estuary cruises on 15 June, 3 August and 14 September, Southend on 22 June and 17 August, round Sheppey on 13 July, Whitstable on 24 August and 28 September, a cruise to meet the WAVERLEY on 13 October, and the last cruise of the season, to Stangate Creek, on 27 October.

Adventuress Cruises, Broxbourne The ADVENTURESS and LADY OF LEE VALLEY are advertised to make a variety of public trips between 10 March and 24 October; on 2-4 August the ADVENTURESS runs trips from Ware. In a new venture, the 12-passenger SOLILOQUY will run trips on the Thames from Lechlade in Gloucestershire, and in 2003 a 50-passenger boat will be based there, offering public and charter trips.

Catamaran Cruisers A new 115-ft 390-passenger trimaran is due to be delivered in the spring, and will be used for a new series of 50-minute multilingual sightseeing cruises from Westminster, similar to trips already running from Embankment and Waterloo.

Salter Bros Next summer's services follow the same pattern as last year's: Oxford-Abingdon runs from 18 May to 29 September, Reading-Henley from 25 May to 15 September, Marlow-Henley and Marlow-Windsor from 20 May to 13 September (except Bank Holidays and 3-5 July), and Windsor-Maidenhead and Windsor-Staines from 20 May to 13 September (except Bank Holidays).

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The David Abels shipyard in Bristol has debts of nearly £500 000 and is threatened with closure following a dispute with the Gosport company. The SPIRIT OF GOSPORT was delivered late and needed additional work so the ferry company has refused to pay for a second ferry which is under construction.

Red Funnel Ferries A reduced two-ship car ferry service runs from 5 January to 14 February while the ships are refitted.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The local authority for the Manche Département in France wants to develop services to the Channel Islands and is to invite tenders from operators to run from Granville, Portbail, Carteret and Diélette. The only present operator, Emeraude Lines, reduced services from Carteret and Granville last year, and has ceased serving Portbail and Diélette.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The Glass Bottom Boat Co, Torquay, began operating from Torquay and Goodrington last season. The vessel was built by Offshore105 at Wadebridge and has a certificate for 28 passengers.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's 2002 schedule covers the period from 8 March to 23 December, showing sailings from Bideford and, until 12 November, Ilfracombe.

G P Hamer 7 January 2002

TRIP OUT

February 2002

Waverley Excursions Captain Graeme Gellatly, master of the WAVERLEY since 1997, has resigned to fill a post as a pilot in south Wales.

THAMES

City Cruises Tower Bridge is closed for repairs from 7 January to 16 February, so City Cruises are running a ferry service between St Katharine's Pier and Butler's Wharf, daily between 0730 and 0930, 1200 to 1500, and 1600 to 2200, at a fare of £1.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island will be open to the public this year from 23 March to 13 October, two weeks longer than last year.

Wightlink On the Fishbourne service, all five ships are scheduled to run at peak times, with intervals of 25 minutes between sailings; the crossing time can be up to 1 hour and 5 mins as ships wait for berths at Fishbourne, as happened last summer when a five-ship service was run. Last year, Wightlink carried a record 1.15 million cars, with increases on both routes; the number of passengers on the Ryde service increased by 5.32%.

Red Funnel Ferries Red Funnel Towage has been sold to Howard Smith, Southampton's other tug company, owned by the Australian company Adsteam. The Southampton Co had run tugs since 1885

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Département de la Manche has advertised that it wants to charter two fast craft carrying at least 200 passengers to run from Portbail, Carteret, Diélette and Granville to the Channel Islands; they have also advertised for an operator to run the craft under a seven-year contract.

Condor Ferries will this year be allowed to carry cars between St-Malo and Guernsey, so the CONDOR 10 will return to run from St-Malo to Jersey and Guernsey in place of the CONDOR 9. The CONDOR 10 was built in 1993, but last ran to the Channel Islands in 1994, and has since had charters in Europe and New Zealand, before spending the last two years laid-up in Tasmania.

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 5 went to Concarneau on the south coast of Brittany for her first refit, arriving there on 9 January.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Dartmouth-Totnes sailings operate daily from 23 March to 31 October.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Worcester Steamer Co The PRIDE OF THE MIDLANDS and SEVERN TRAVELLER have been bought by Mr R Tomlinson and Mr C Winwood who trade as the New Worcester Steamer Co. They will continue to offer charter trips on the Severn.

Brayford Waterside Cruises, Lincoln, have bought the RIVER QUEEN from YorkBoat and renamed her BRAYFORD BELLE. She is too large to pass through the 'Glory Hole' bridge under Lincoln High Street, so cruises run from Brayford Pool along the Fossdyke Canal.

NORTH WEST

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA will run this year from 1 March to 31 October.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The acquisition of the LADY DOROTHY will allow increased services this summer. From 29 March to 7 April and from 4 May to 29 September, there will be a three-boat service with nine daily departures from Glenridding and eight from Pooley Bridge; from 8 April to 3 May and from 30 September to 3 November, two boats will be in service.

Keswick Launch Co Mr N J Hill has arranged a charter trip on 16 February to visit all the lake's landing stages.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE is off for refit from 19 January to 11 February; the LADY OF MANN runs from Heysham on Mondays to Thursdays and from Liverpool at weekends, while the BELARD and EUROPEAN MARINER have been chartered for freight from Heysham. The LADY OF MANN is due to make day trips to Douglas from Llandudno on 19 and 21 May, from Warrenpoint on 20 May, from Fleetwood on 22 May, and from Whitehaven on 23 May. On 21-23 May, she also offers a long day trip from Douglas to Llandudno, Fleetwood or Whitehaven.

G P Hamer 5 February 2002

TRIP OUT

March 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY went into dry dock at Greenock on 18 February. Captain Kit Lee will be rejoining the company and will share command of the ships with Captain Colledge.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich The ORWELL LADY will offer a three and a half hour afternoon cruise to Harwich on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 29 March to 30 September, and also on Easter Monday, and Mondays from June to September.

THAMES

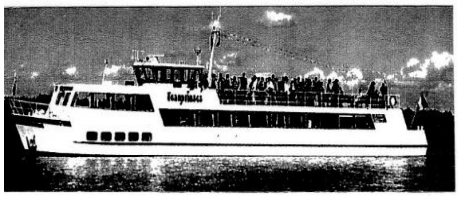
Southend Water Pleasure The DUCHESS M and her business between Southend and the Medway have been offered for sale for £125 000.

Campion Launches The newly-acquired LA VISURGIS is to be renamed LONDON ROSE. Campion's Greenwich-Barrier service, operated since 1985, will be combined with the Westminster-Greenwich service from 1 April and the LONDON ROSE will run from Westminster. The Campions will continue their Sunday evening cruises from Greenwich.

Collins River Enterprises A new 124-ft catamaran has been built by NQEA in Australia. The HURRICANE CLIPPER was delivered to Tilbury aboard the cargo ship EDAMGRACHT in January. She can carry 220 passengers.

Catamaran Cruisers The new trimaran is being built by Richards at Great Yarmouth, who built Crown River Cruises' SARPEDON last year. The new sightseeing boat is costing £1.2 million.

Thames Cruises have bought the FEANPRINSES from Princenhof Rondvaardij of Eernewoude in north Netherlands. She was built in 1986, is 112 ft long and could carry 260 passengers. Her name means "Fen Princess" in the local Frisian language. She arrived in London in February and is apparently to have an additional saloon on her upper deck.



Thames Speed Ferry Co The two catamarans used unsuccessfully for a service to Chelsea last year have been offered for sale for around £200 000 each.

Westminster Passenger Service Association The Westminster-Greenwich service will run half-hourly as usual and from 1 April, hourly sailings will continue from Greenwich to cruise through the Thames Barrier, leaving Greenwich at 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500 and (in June, July and August) at 1600.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE offers her usual trips to Cowes on Tuesdays from May to September, and cruises to the Hamble River on various dates. Cruises to the Beaulieu River run on 29 May, 12 June, 28 July, 11 August, and 8, 11 and 22 September, and there will be a 6-hour four rivers cruise on 13 June, 25 July, 25 August and 12 September.

Blue Funnel Cruises The LEISURE SCENE has been sold for the charter trade in London and was delivered in February. She was built at Poole in 1985 and has been based at Southampton, apart from the summer of 1994 when she ran from Poole.
The Dorset Belles The POOLE BELLE is making a special trip on 1 June from Poole, Bournemouth and Swanage via Brownsea Island to Yarmouth and Buckler's Hard. On Wednesdays this summer, the day trip from Poole, Swanage and Bournemouth to Yarmouth will be extended to land at Buckler's Hard.

WEST OF ENGLAND
Plymouth Boat Cruises Trips to Calstock run as usual this season, starting on 5 May.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Bristol Ferry Boat Co have bought THE BELLE from Brayford waterside cruises of Lincoln. She has been refitted and painted silver and maroon, and renamed ELIZABETH.
Bristol Packet One-hour City Docks trips run at weekends from March to October and daily in school holidays. Afternoon river trips run on Sundays from Easter and on most days during school holidays. One-way trips to Bath are scheduled for 25 May, 8 June, 13 July, 24 August and 13 September. Avon Gorge cruises are on 4 and 19 May, 3 and 22 June, 23 July, 2, 3, 16, 17 and 31 August, and 14 September.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS
Symonds Yat Boatmen's Organisation The JACQELINE D, built in 1982 but recently out of service, has been refurbished to run with the LADY CHARMAINE and LADY ELIZABETH.
Severn Leisure Cruises The CONWAY CASTLE makes day trips to Worcester on 11 and 20 June, 9, 11 and 18 July, and 1 and 20 August, and to Tewkesbury on Wednesdays from May to September.
Stourport Steamer Co The MISS JASON has been advertised for sale for £70 000.

NORTH WEST
Mersey Ferries The rebuilt ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY (ex MOUNTWOOD) ran trials on 21 February and should return to service at Easter. The ROYAL DAFFODIL went to Manchester on 24 February for her annual refit, leaving the WOODCHURCH on the ferry service.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE returned to service on 11 February. The LADY OF MANN was laid-up on 25 February, and from 28 February the SUPERSEACAT THREE took over the Liverpool-Douglas trips and reopened the Liverpool-Dublin service.

MISCELLANY
The SOUTHSEA was towed from Newport on 17 February and, after a spell at Plymouth, is due in Portsmouth around 9 March.

G P Hamer 7 March 2002

TRIP OUT

April 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY ran as scheduled at Easter and resumes on 3 May to visit the Western Isles. She runs on the Bristol Channel from 24 May to 16 June, then returns to the Clyde; she is on the South Coast from 6 to 26 September, then on the Thames till 14 October. The BALMORAL makes her first public trip, to Ilfracombe with the WAVERLEY, on 26 May; she then goes to the Irish Sea until 11 June, the Firth of Forth, then the Thames and Sussex till 9 July; the main Bristol Channel season is from 12 July to 22 September, with a visit to the South Coast on 16-18 August for the Tall Ships event at Portsmouth; she goes to the Clyde for the weekend of 27-30 September. A final weekend on the Bristol Channel, on 18-21 October, could be by either ship, depending on plans for the WAVERLEY's rebuild. Amongst new ports of call are new piers at Southwold and Woolwich.

NORTH EAST

Bark Endeavour, Whitby The BARK ENDEAVOUR, a two-fifths scale replica of Captain Cook's ENDEAVOUR, was launched by Parkol Marine at Whitby on 2 March. She is 44 ft long, powered by twin screws and will offer sea trips for up to 35 passengers. Her owner, Mr C Jenkinson, was a trawler skipper at Scarborough.

THAMES

New ten-year contracts for services from the London piers began on 1 April, and there have been several changes to services. The service from Westminster to Greenwich and the Barrier is now run by Campion Launches, Crown River Cruises, Westminster Party Boats and George Wheeler Launches; Thames Cruises' contract has not been renewed and their boats are now used solely for charters. Crown River Cruises and Westminster Party Boats continue to run the "circular" trips from Westminster, but these now call at Festival, Embankment, Bankside, London Bridge City and St Katharine's Piers.

Collins River Enterprises now trade as Thames Clippers. Since 1 April, services have been extended to Masthouse Terrace on the Isle of Dogs and run at weekends as well.

Campion Launches The LONDON ROSE has a certificate for 247 passengers and entered service on 31 March.

Capital Pleasure Boats are the new operators of the LEISURE SCENE, which has been bought from Blue Funnel Cruises of Southampton. She has been renamed GOLDEN JUBILEE and is based at Temple Pier, running charters and evening disco cruises.

Catamaran Cruisers The new trimaran is named HYDROSPACE DELTA and entered service on 1 April. The Embankment-Tower-Greenwich service now also calls at Waterloo and Bankside, but no longer calls at St Katharine's; departures from Embankment as far as the Tower are half-hourly from 1030 to 1500 and at 1600, but only alternate sailings continue to Greenwich.

J & R Shearing The HENLEY, owned by the family since 1977, has been sold to Mr E Langley, owner of the steamer STREATLEY. This is only the second change of ownership in the 106-year history of the HENLEY which was owned by Salters till 1977. She will continue to run from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries Condor and the parent Commodore Shipping Co are to be sold after being in the control of the Norman family since the 1960s. The buyer would be expected to continue the company's existing trade.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Day trips to Torquay are being offered on Mondays from May to September. Afternoon cruises eastwards to the "Jurassic Coast" will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays in June, July and August. Trips to local carnivals are scheduled for 26 July to Teignmouth, 15 August to Dawlish and 24 August to Topsham.

Mevagissey Ferries The CHRISTINA JANE had new owners last season and was renamed HANNIBAL JAMES. She is based at Mevagissey and runs from 1 May to 30 September, making up to six round trips a day to Fowey.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG is being chartered as usual for trips from Clevedon, sailing to Gloucester and back on 14 and 15 July, and to Steep Holm, with the BRISTOL QUEEN acting as tender, on the 16th.

Bristol Packet The last of this year's trips to Bath is on 21 September, not on the 13th as given in the last issue. An additional Avon Gorge cruise is advertised for 6 July.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips are scheduled to Tewkesbury on 8 June, 31 August and 14 September, and to Sharpness on 9 June, 14 July and 22 September.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The off-peak ferry service now cruises towards New Brighton and is advertised as a "river explorer cruise"; the first cruise leaves Liverpool at 1000 and calls at Seacombe at 1030, Woodside at 1040 and returns to Liverpool at 1050; the cruises run hourly to 1500 on Mondays to Fridays, and to 1800 at weekends.

Anderton Boat Lift The lift between the Trent & Mersey Canal and the River Weaver was reopened on 26 March after a £7 million restoration. British Waterways has converted a 56-ft maintenance boat to carry 56 passengers on trips through the lift. The craft has been named EDWIN CLARK after the engineer who designed the lift which first opened in 1875.

Wyre Borough Council The Fleetwood to Knott End ferry, suspended last season, was reopened on 29 March, operated by Wyre Waste Management. The service will continue to 2 November.

MISCELLANY

The SOUTHSEA was towed into Portsmouth on 9 March.

G P Hamer 8 April 2002

TRIP OUT

May 2002

NORTH EAST

D Munro, Doncaster, is the new operator of the WYRE LADY which has been owned by Alan Oliver since 1978. Special early morning trips will be offered in June so that passengers can buy drinks while watching World Cup football matches on TV on board.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is being chartered as usual by the RSPB for bird watching cruises: seven trips between 19 May and 6 July for puffins, and eight in August and September for shearwaters.

EAST ANGLIA

C Spraggons, Harwich, has sold the Shotley and Felixstowe ferry to Mr David Baines who also runs trips from Harwich in a lifeboat carrying 12 passengers. The ferry service resumed at Easter and runs at weekends till May, and will then be daily through the summer.

THAMES

Absolute Pleasure Boats The ERASMUS, bought from the Netherlands, has arrived in London and is to join the ROYALTY in the charter trade. She was built 1975 as the KARLSBERG for service in Germany on the Rhine, and later operated as a party boat in Rotterdam. She is 123 ft long and could carry 500 passengers on three decks.

Catamaran Cruisers Following the reduction in the Greenwich service and the introduction of the HYDROSPACE DELTA, the ABERCORN is laid up this season.

SOUTH COAST

Solent & Wight Line Cruises Two new vessels have been ordered from South Boats of East Cowes at a total cost of £1 million. They will be 52-ft catamarans carrying 160 passengers and will be similar to the ALI CAT and SOLENT CAT, with glass fibre hulls and an aluminium superstructure. The first is due in May for the associated Blue Funnel Cruises at Southampton, and the second should be delivered two months later.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Département de la Manche has chosen a vessel to operate from Granville to the Channel Islands, but has not found a vessel to run from Diélette, Carteret and Portbail. The MARIA GALANTA was built in 1990, is 304 gross tons and 127 ft long, and carries 200 passengers at 30 knots; she has run in the Caribbean and in the French islands of St-Pierre & Miquelon off Canada. She is to be shipped across the Atlantic ready to enter service in July.

WEST OF ENGLAND

D A Ridalls, Dartmouth The service to Dittisham now also calls at Greenway to take visitors to the gardens, once belonging to Agatha Christie but opened to the public this year by the National Trust. Three 12-passenger boats are now used on the service which runs every 20-30 minutes.

Torpoint Ferry The TAMAR had her three-yearly refit at Falmouth earlier this year. The order for three new 73-car ferries is expected to be placed in September with delivery in 2004. They will be financed by a 20-year leasing deal, but will continue to be operated by the Joint Committee of Cornwall County Council and Plymouth City council.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN is again due to be chartered by Açor Line for inter-island services in the Azores from July to September, her fourth season there.

G P Hamer 7 May 2002

TRIP OUT

June 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY was delayed on her way from Scotland to the Bristol Channel and, after sheltering at Belfast and Wicklow, arrived on 26 May; on that day, the BALMORAL had sailed from Bristol, Clevedon and Penarth to Ilfracombe, and returned to Penarth where passengers changed to the WAVERLEY for Clevedon. There were further cancellations in the next three days. The WAVERLEY continues on the Bristol Channel till 15 June and has a cruise from Milford Haven the following day before returning to Scotland. The BALMORAL proceeded to North Wales and made a first call at Mostyn on 28 May.
The Heritage Lottery Fund has approved a grant to complete the rebuilding of the WAVERLEY. The work is due to be carried out between next October and June 2003. The PSPS is applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £375 000 towards the cost of new engines and other improvements to the BALMORAL.

THAMES

Southend Water Pleasure The DUCHESS M operated some short trips from Southend earlier this season, but has now been sold, so her trips to Whitstable, Queenborough and Strood will not operate this year. She was built as the Gosport ferry VESTA and has since operated in London and Newcastle before coming to Southend in 1996.
Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The Tilbury ferry has been suspended since 10 April while the ownership of the assets of White Horse Fast Ferries is settled. The DUCHESS M has been bought from Southend Water Pleasure to run the ferry, and the pier at Gravesend is also being acquired. The ferry service is to due to resume this month.
Thames Leisure The WILLIAM B' has been lengthened and is now similar to her sister, Woods River Cruises' SILVER BONITO, which was lengthened in 1996.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries A fourth catamaran, to be named RED JET 4, has been ordered at a cost of £2.6 million. She will be built by North West Bay Ships in Tasmania and will be 128 ft long and carry 277 passengers. She is due in Southampton in May 2003.
The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL visited Dordrecht, Holland, for the steam event on 24-26 May. Further trips away from the Solent are scheduled for 20-22 July to Shoreham and 19-25 August to Weymouth. Bookings for these and for her Solent cruises are handled by Blue Funnel Cruises at Southampton.
United Motor Boats, Christchurch The HEADLAND QUEEN has been fitted with a saloon and, if it is a success, her three sisters will also have them. Last year, the firm bought the MERRY WIDOW, a wooden launch built in 1922 and used on Derwentwater till 1979, but now limited to 12 passengers.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft has bought the PLYMOUTH VENTURER from Plymouth Boat Cruises and has renamed her DART VENTURER. The PLYMOUTH BELLE, which has run at Dartmouth since 1985, has gone to Plymouth Boat Cruises in part-exchange. A new service by the EDGCUMBE BELLE runs from Dartmouth to Greenway on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 23 March to 5 October.

P Scott, Brixham The BRIXHAM BELLE was sold after the 2000 season and has reportedly gone to Gibraltar. A Torquay-Brixham service is now operated jointly with the WESTERN LADY vessels, using the GIRL ALISON and TORBAY PRINCESS, formerly run by the Ould family. The BRIXHAM BELLE II normally offers a day cruise from Torquay and Brixham to the River Dart, landing at Dartmouth.

Western Lady Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY III and IV are both in service between Brixham and Torquay as usual, but the service is now run jointly with Mr Scott, with up to 21 sailings daily in each direction; the smaller vessels berth in the inner harbour at Torquay while the WESTERN LADY vessels continue to use Princess Pier.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Packet has bought a Belgian waterbus named BAGHEERA. She was built in 1973 and has apparently operated in Amsterdam, Switzerland and Belgium. She is a typical glass-roofed Amsterdam vessel and will be able to operate as far as Bath.

Number Seven Boat Trips, Bristol, is a new operator in the City Docks, with the NUMBER SEVEN, a converted lifeboat from the cable-laying ship MERCURY.

Cardiff Cats are offering an evening coastal cruise on Fridays, passing through Cardiff Bay Barrage lock and along the coast past Penarth.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN operated her excursions in May, including two fully-booked day trips from Llandudno to Douglas.

G P Hamer 8 June 2002

TRIP OUT

July 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY arrived back in Glasgow on 18 June after her Bristol Channel sailings. The BALMORAL made the first trip from the newly rebuilt pier at Southwold on 21 June, and has also used the new pier at Woolwich.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The DUCHESS M resumed the Gravesend-Tilbury ferry on 10 June. The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS is running her usual programme of excursions and charters from Gravesend, Tilbury, London and Southend.

Thames Cruises The FEANPRINSES has been renamed THAMES PRINCESS and her refit was completed in June. Contrary to earlier reports, she has not been fitted with an additional saloon

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Mr Phillips' PRINCESS FREDA is not in service this season, and is laid-up at Twickenham. The service to Kew and Hampton Court is run by the five remaining boats.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR 9 has been sold to a Mexican operator, California Speed, and renamed CORTEZ; she is now running between La Paz and Topolobampo on the Pacific coast of Mexico. She was built in 1990 to run from Weymouth to the CI, and has since had spells away on charter as well as running excursions from Torquay in 1995 and 1996; for the past five seasons, she has been running from St-Malo to the CI, the service now taken over by the CONDOR 10.

WEST OF ENGLAND

J Bolus, Torquay The PRIDE OF THE DART suffered a steering problem and hit rocks off Kingswear on 28 June. She was carrying 27 passengers from Torquay to Dartmouth. The DART EXPLORER and one of the Dartmouth Castle launches took off the passengers. The PRIDE OF THE DART was later towed off the rocks and beached at Kingswear then taken to a boatyard at Galmpton on the River Dart.

S S Jamieson, Torquay, is running the MARGARET ANN, previously operated from Torquay until 2000 by Mr R H E Cord.

Dart Pleasure Craft has bought the BALTIC STAR from Dart River Cruises. The former NEW FORESTER at Southampton has been based at Baltic Wharf, Totnes, since 1999, and will continue to be based there. As well as charters, she is making public trips from Totnes to Greenway.

St Mary's Boatmen's Association Two new boats have been ordered from Kingfisher Boats of Penryn near Falmouth to replace the BUCCANEER and KINGSLEY II next year. They will be similar to the KINGFISHER OF ST MARY'S and SAPPHIRE, built by the same yard in 1995 and 2000.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The business, with the EDWARD ELGAR and OLIVER CROMWELL, has been advertised for sale. The owner, Mr G Thompson, plans to retire. The cruise business started in 1993, but Mr Thompson previously ran Torbay Seaways.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN left Liverpool for the Azores on 27 June.

MISCELLANY

The London restaurant ship HISPANIOLA (ex MAID OF ASHTON) has been bought by City Cruises. She was towed to Ipswich in April for a refit, before returning to her old mooring above Charing Cross bridge in June. She is now open again as a restaurant and bar.

The former Danish train ferry SJÆLLAND has been towed to Tilbury and is seemingly to be used as a static restaurant and bar.

The PRINCE ALBERT, the former Yugoslav passenger ship laid-up in Liverpool since 1999, has been sold and is apparently to be converted to a showroom for furniture, and to sail around the coasts of the UK and the United States.

G P Hamer 4 July 2002

TRIP OUT

August 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY suffered a breakdown between Dunoon and Rothesay on 27 July when radius rods in her starboard paddle wheel were damaged. She was towed to Greenock and resumed service the next day after repairs. The BALMORAL will be on the South Coast on 16-18 August for the tall ships event at Portsmouth. The WAVERLEY begins her South Coast sailings on 6 September.

THAMES

Catamaran Cruisers The ABERCORN has been sold to the Murphy family and is expected to be used for charter trips in London.

Capital Frogs A fifth craft, named DESDEMONA, has joined the fleet. She broke down on 9 July off the Houses of Parliament and had to be towed to Lambeth fire brigade pier where passengers disembarked.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink One of the car ferries is offering a cruise from Ryde and Portsmouth Gunwharf to see the tall ships' parade of sail on 18 August; the fare is £30 including a packed lunch.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL offers cruises around the Isle of Wight on 10 August and 1 September.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Département de la Manche has postponed plans to open services to the Channel Islands. The MARIA GALANTA had been chosen to run from Granville, but her delivery from St-Pierre and Miquelon off Canada has been delayed. The French authority has published a new invitation to tender for the charter of two fast craft to start running next summer.

Condor Ferries The Commodore and Condor companies have been sold by the Norman family to the companies' management and ABN Amro for around £150 million, with money borrowed from the Royal Bank of Scotland. The new owners intend to run the business as before. The COMMODORE CLIPPER made her first Portsmouth-Cherbourg trip on 14 July; the trips on subsequent Sundays are reportedly all fully booked. The 'CLIPPER's service is suspended for her refit from 9 to 22 September. The winter service, from 1 November, is similar to last year's, with a catamaran running from Weymouth twice weekly, on Mondays and Fridays.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III made extra trips to St Mary's on 27 July when the helicopter service suffered a breakdown, and on the 29th when the island's airport was closed by fog.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's charters from Clevedon on 14-16 July were cancelled at short notice, seemingly because of poor advance bookings.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co After the LADY OF MANN returns from her summer charter in the Azores, she is scheduled for Douglas-Dublin sailings on 25 and 28 October (a public holiday in Ireland), then from 5 November operates Liverpool-Douglas sailings at weekends.

G P Hamer 8 August 2002

TRIP OUT

September 2002

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY has an evening charter from Belfast on 2 September on her way to Weymouth to begin her South Coast sailings on the 6th.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The estuary cruise scheduled for 14 September has been replaced by a single trip from Strood to London.

Salter Bros The WARGRAVE had a major refit last winter to make her more suitable for charters, and now has a steel saloon and a black hull.

SOUTH COAST

J P Adams (Chichester Harbour Water Tours) The WINGATE II has been sold to the Lagan Boat Co and is now running in Belfast as the JOYCE TOO. Mr Adams continues to run the WINGATE III.

WEST OF ENGLAND

D Gold (River Explorer), Dartmouth The QUEEN OF HELFORD is running to Totnes, in opposition to Dart Pleasure Craft, with a single fare of £2. When tides are unsuitable, she offers one-hour cruises from Dartmouth also at a fare of £2.

Falmouth Pleasure Cruises, run by Mr J Pill, is now the owner of the PRINCESSA. She offers 2-hour cruises from the Prince of Wales Pier to the Helford River at 1100 and 1430.

G H Pill, Falmouth The TUDOR PRINCE is laid-up and is for sale for £30 000. She was built by Blackmores at Bideford as the TORBAY PRINCE and ran from Torquay, Harwich and Pembroke Dock before going to Falmouth in 1982. With the sale of the PRINCESSA, Mr G H Pill now runs just the St Mawes ferry and has four boats available, the ADRIAN GILBERT, MAY QUEEN, NEW PRINCESS MAUD and QUEEN OF FALMOUTH (the former MAID OF BUTE and MAID OF THE FORTH which is back at Falmouth after a brief spell at Plymouth). Mr Pill has advertised the St Mawes ferry with the four boats for sale for £400 000.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III suffered engine trouble on 10 August and her sailing on the 12th was cancelled; she resumed on the afternoon of the 13th. She made an extra trip on 30 August when St Mary's airport was again closed by fog; this was apparently the eighth extra trip this year.

NORTH WEST

City Centre Cruises, Manchester The restaurant boat L S LOWRY has been offered for sale for £90 000.

Windermere Lake Cruises In a list of England's most popular attractions in 2001, compiled by the English Tourism Council, the company is ranked ninth amongst those charging visitors: the company carried 1 241 918 passengers, an increase of 5.9% compared with 2000.

MISCELLANY

The National Trust's visiting figures for 2001 show that St Michael's Mount had 188 803 visitors (compared with 185 674 in 2000) and Brownsea Island had 96 905 (91 584).

The former Yugoslav passenger ship PRINCE ALBERT, laid-up in Liverpool since 1999, left under tow on 15 August for Ipswich where she arrived four days later.

G P Hamer 3 September 2002

TRIP OUT

October 2002

The summer season which is now drawing to a close has brought typically British changeable weather but, after several good summers in recent years, it is generally seen as a poor summer. A wet July was followed by a dull August, but September was warmer and sunnier than average. The impact of the weather on the excursion trade is probably less than it used to be as many operators rely more on charters and party bookings.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY arrived at Weymouth at 0700 on 4 September after doing an evening charter from Belfast, and began her south coast sailings on the 6th. With fine weather, there have been few alterations to sailings and they have been well supported. On 11 and 14 September, she was on charter. She arrived on the Thames on the 27th and made her first trip from the new Southwold pier on 2 October. On the 3rd, she suffered a breakdown in her starboard paddle wheel off Canvey Island and had to be towed to Tilbury by the tug SUN SUSSEX. She resumed on the 5th after repairs. The BALMORAL completed her Bristol Channel season at Tenby on 22 September, then went to the Clyde for four days' sailings before returning to Bristol. An announcement of which shipyard will complete the WAVERLEY's rebuild this winter is still awaited.

THAMES

On days when the London Underground has been on strike, a morning and evening service has been operated between central London and Docklands using vessels of Catamaran Cruisers and City Cruises.

Adventuress River Cruises, Broxbourne The ADVENTURESS's owner, Mr K Oliver, is transferring his business to Lechlade and she left the River Lee in September for the upper Thames.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Two boats, the HENLEY and COCKNEY SPARROW, are continuing sailings to Kew and Hampton Court until the end of October.

Cotswold River Cruises, Lechlade The ADVENTURESS will be lengthened by about 20 feet this winter to give an open deck forward. From next April, she will offer 35-minute cruises, two-hour cream tea and supper cruises, occasional three-hour cruises to Kelmscot and charters from Lechlade.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries Fast craft services from Weymouth are to be extended to Saint-Malo twice weekly from 15 October to 16 December.

Isle of Sark Shipping Co is proposing to order a catamaran which would carry 250 passengers and 50-60 tons of cargo. The new craft would replace the BON MARIN DE SERK and the TRIDENT VI which is chartered in summer from the Trident Charter Co. The cost is estimated as £1.6 million.

WEST WALES

Thousand Islands Expeditions, St David's The business, including the 46-passenger SEAL BAY and two 12-passenger rigid inflatable boats, has been advertised for sale. The business was established in 1975, but the owner wants to concentrate on building the rigid inflatable craft.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

G H Rose & Son (Avon Boating), Stratford The DUCHESS has been advertised for sale for £25 000.

Leicester Boat Co The DUKE OF BRIDGEWATER is now run by Swan Line Cruisers of Fradley Junction, but continues to run from Leicester. Contact details for the Leicester trips are unchanged.

Maritime Leisure Cruises, Boston, last winter bought the DEVON BELLE II from Plymouth and she was renamed BOSTON BELLE and fitted with a saloon. She had previously run from Westminster, Dartmouth and Plymouth as the DUKE OF EDINBURGH. The BOSTON BELLE offered public trips from Boston on Wednesdays and Sundays, while the MYSTERE has made public and charter trips from Wisbech up the River Nene or to the Wash.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The daytime service changed to a new schedule on 30 September, and the cruise goes upriver towards Eastham rather than towards the river mouth.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The winter service runs from 27 October to 6 April: three sailings run daily from Glenridding to Howtown, with two continuing to Pooley Bridge.

Windermere Lake Cruises Winter schedules from 28 October to 11 April have eight daily services between Bowness and Ambleside, and four daily trips between Lakeside and Bowness. From 6 January to 14 February, the Lakeside service runs only at weekends.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN returned to Liverpool on 4 October after her summer charter in the Azores.

G P Hamer 7 October 2002

TRIP OUT

November 2002

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's figures.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	City Cruises	2003
2(2)	Woods River Cruises	1692
3(3)	Thames Luxury Ch	1429
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(9)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	749
9(8)	George Wheeler L	544
10(-)	Dart Pleasure Craft	443

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	4382
2(2)	Catamaran Cruisers	2742
3(3)	Windermere Lake Cr	2736
4(4)	Salter Bros	1954
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1638
7(7)	French Brothers	1506
8(6)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1398
=9(9)	Crown River Cruises	1095
=9(9)	Woods River Cruises	1095

Waverley Excursions The second phase of the WAVERLEY's rebuilding is being carried out at the George Prior yard at Great Yarmouth. Bad weather curtailed her trips on 8-9 October when she missed calls at Clacton and Harwich, and again on the 10th when she went to the Medway instead of Margate. Her last Thames sailing, on 14 October, advertised to a "mystery destination", would have taken passengers to Yarmouth, but was cancelled because of the weather, and she sailed light to Yarmouth on the afternoon of the 14th, ready for work to start the next day. The BALMORAL therefore made the Bristol Channel trips on 18-21 October, but with the last sailing finishing at Bristol instead of Milford Haven.

THAMES

In London, winter schedules began on 28 October and there are no services to Kew and Hampton Court, or the Thames Barrier.

Woods River Cruises In August, the SILVER BONITO began running 45-minute sightseeing trips from Waterloo which are offered with a ride on the 'London Eye' at a combined fare of £19.50. There are six trips a day, in winter at weekends and during school holidays.

Catamaran Cruisers are running from Embankment and Tower to Greenwich this winter with a three-boat service at weekends and a limited two-boat service in the week; there are also hourly circular cruises from Waterloo and Embankment.

City Cruises' winter services are every 40 mins from Westminster and Waterloo to Tower and Greenwich.

Thames River Services, formerly Westminster Passenger Services Association, are this winter running from Westminster to Greenwich every 40 minutes. Boats in use recently have been the CHAY BLYTH, GREENWICH BELLE, LONDON ROSE and SARPEDON.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE is offering a 4½-hour Solent cruise with an optional Christmas lunch on 8 December, as well as several evening cruises in November and December.

Solent & Wight Line Cruises The ALI CAT has been chartered to Red Funnel who have chartered her for the winter to Caledonian MacBrayne to run between Gourock and Dunoon. She arrived on the Clyde by 13 October and entered service on the 21st; until 3 April, she runs from Mondays to Fridays making round trips from Gourock at 0650, 0750 and 1745.
The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL is offering "santa" cruises on 7 and 14 December, and Christmas lunch cruises on 8 and 15 December.
The Dorset Belles are again offering short trips from Bournemouth at winter weekends and during school holidays. There will be "santa" cruises from Poole Quay on 7-8, 14-15 and 21-24 December, and 1½-hour cruises from Poole on 26 December and 1 January.

CHANNEL ISLANDS
Condor Ferries Next season's fast services from the UK are similar to this year's. Poole services run from 4 April to 29 October and the full two-craft service is from 19 May to 28 September when there is also a Poole-Cherbourg service. The COMMODORE CLIPPER will again make Sunday trips from Portsmouth to Cherbourg but for a longer season, from 25 May to 14 September.
Emeraude Lines have dropped winter services to Guernsey (except for the Christmas period) because competition from Condor has made them unprofitable. They continue to run a winter service between St-Malo and Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND
Dart Pleasure Craft are offering winter one-hour cruises from Dartmouth daily except Mondays and Fridays, with occasional trips to Totnes. The DART EXPLORER and BALTIC STAR will be used for the winter sailings.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Bristol Ferry Boat Co Trips run all year between Hotwells and the City centre every day and between Temple Meads and the City centre at weekends. Commuter services on Mondays to Fridays run between Temple Meads, the City Centre and Hotwells between 0720 and 0900, and between 1610 and 1810.
Cardiff Cats are running from Mermaid Quay to the Barrage on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during the winter. Trips will run daily from 14 December while the sailing ship ENDEAVOUR is in Cardiff.

NORTH WEST
Coniston Launch The winter timetable runs from 4 November to 21 March and has hourly trips from Coniston calling at Waterhead and Brantwood.

G P Hamer 6 November 2002

TRIP OUT

December 2002

As the Waverley organisation is given yet more lottery money, we can only marvel at the Lottery Fund's generosity. This latest grant is remarkable as it will not be spent on the paddle steamer, but on the BALMORAL which is not being preserved or restored, but modernised. What Waverley Excursions really need to modernise is their publicity which is always late and shoddy. The WAVERLEY's Bristol Channel sailings this year were poorly supported because advertising was not distributed till after the trips had begun. Already, this month schedules and fares have been published for some of next year's excursion programmes, including the KINGSWEAR CASTLE's, but Waverley Excursions have produced nothing - even their own internet site still has last summer's timetable.

I should like to wish all readers a happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant of £759 419 to pay for new engines and other work on the BALMORAL.

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat will run daily trips from 8 February to 23 November; cruises to Bishopthorpe run from 12 April to 28 September.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Next season, afternoon cruises are offered daily (except Mondays and Saturdays) from 11 July to 7 September, and on 4, 5 May, 29 June, 26 July, and 23, 25 and 30 August. Special sailings include Thames Estuary cruises on 3 May and 13 September, "wharfs, creeks and jetties" on 17 May, the Medway sailing barge match on 24 May, cruises to Sheerness on 7 June, 26 July and 30 August, Southend on 21 June, 19 July and 9 August, upriver cruises to New Hythe on 28 June and 2 August, London on 5-7 July with a trip to Putney on the 6th, round the Isle of Sheppey on 16 August, Whitstable for the WAVERLEY on 27 September, a cruise to meet the WAVERLEY on 4 October, a 20th anniversary cruise on 8 November and a bird watching cruise on 9 November.

Thames Clippers The HURRICANE CLIPPER is running trips from Gravesend and Woolwich to Canary Wharf and Savoy Pier (near Embankment) on 30 November, 7 and 14 December.

Lower Lea Project is now known as the Lea Rivers Trust. The waterbus PRIDE OF LEE still runs public and charter trips on the River Lea and Regent's Canal.

Salter Bros have proposed running "park and ride" services into Oxford from Godstow and Redbridge.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE's programme for 2003 has been published and shows a variety of public trips from 14 May to 30 September. There are fewer trips to Cowes, but the five-hour cruise to the Beaulieu River is scheduled for 17 dates, and a six-hour three-rivers cruise on seven dates, as well as trips to the Hamble River, Ryde and Spitbank Fort.

Red Funnel Ferries The car ferry service will be reduced to a two-ship schedule from 4 January to 20 February, and from 3 to 20 March. The company is reported to be planning to lengthen the three car ferries to increase capacity.
Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The service was suspended from 15 November for refit and the BRAMBLE BUSH BAY was towed to Southampton on the 16th for dry-docking. She was due to resume by mid-December.

CHANNEL ISLANDS
Emeraude Lines Last summer, the NORMANDIE EXPRESS carried 24 313 passengers from Granville and 24 738 from Carteret, and is said to have broken even financially. She was the only vessel running to the Channel Islands from Normandy.

WEST OF ENGLAND
The RSPB is organising bird watching cruises from Exmouth on ten dates from 18 January to 2 March (though some are already sold out). The vessel used in recent years has been Mr Scott's BRIXHAM BELLE II.
Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth, offer bird-watching cruises in the TUDOR ROSE on various dates throughout the winter, as well as "Santa" cruises on 22 and 23 December. All-day wildlife cruises are advertised for 17 May and 6 September, landing at Brixham, and 24 May and 13 September, landing at Beer.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Bristol Packet The BAGHEERA is offering City Docks cruises at weekends this winter.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS
Endeavour Trent, Nottingham The NOTTINGHAM PRINCESS hit Trent Bridge in Nottingham during an evening cruise on 15 November. The 130 passengers were taken off, two of them with minor injuries.

MISCELLANY
The former Mersey ferry EGREMONT was towed from Salcombe to Penzance for a refit in November. She has been at Salcombe since 1976, used as a base by the Island Cruising Club.
The former Isle of Wight ferry CAMBER QUEEN which ran to Fishbourne from 1961 to 1984 is now known to have been broken up in Portugal about four years ago after running there as the MIRA TROIA. Her sister FISHBOURNE sank in 1985 off northern Cyprus.

G P Hamer 8 December 2002

TRIP OUT

January 2003

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY is due to return to service in mid-June on the Clyde, and should visit the South Coast, Thames and Bristol Channel in September and October. The BALMORAL's season should start with the Festival of the Sea at Leith on 23-26 May, and her Bristol Channel season will start in mid-July.

THAMES

Salter Bros Public sailings are increased this year, and a boat is based at Wallingford from 27 May to 19 September, offering short trips at weekends, an afternoon trip to Abingdon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and a day trip to Reading on Mondays and Fridays (except 25 August). The last regular services between Abingdon and Wallingford were in 1973 and between Wallingford and Reading were in 1974. Other services follow the pattern of recent years: Oxford-Abingdon runs from 17 May to 28 September, Reading-Henley from 24 May to 21 September, Marlow-Henley and Marlow-Windsor from 19 May to 19 September (except 26 May, 2-4 July and 25 August), and Windsor-Maidenhead and Windsor-Staines from 19 May to 19 September (except 26 May and 25 August).

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink On the Fishbourne service, all five ships are scheduled to run on Fridays from 18 April to 31 October, Mondays 21 April and 5 May, and on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from 24 May to 7 September; a four-ship service runs on other days. On the Yarmouth route, all three ships are used from 17 March to 31 December.

Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The BRAMBLE BUSH BAY was towed back from Southampton on 14 December after her refit, and the service resumed on the 17th.

Pindar is a printing and publishing company which owns the former North Sea trawler HATHERLEIGH, converted for corporate entertainment. She was built in 1961 as the SUFFOLK PUNCH and was later used for oil rig stand-by work before being bought by Pindar in 1993. She is 105 ft long and now has Class V and VI certificates for 150 passengers. She is based at Southampton's Ocean Village and sometimes visits London and other ports on charters.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's 2003 season runs from 31 March to 1 November, with sailings daily (except Sundays) from 7 April to 25 October, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the first and last weeks of the season. There are two trips on Saturdays 24 and 31 May, and on other Saturdays from 17 May to 30 August, the Penzance departure is at 1100. On other days, she leaves Penzance at 0915 and St Mary's at 1630, except on Wednesdays in August when as an innovation the morning sailing is at 0800 to give more time ashore. Day return fares have been reduced to £30, while a period return is £75.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Manchester Ship Canal Cruises are scheduled for 17-18, 21-22 and 31 May, 1, 5, 14-15, 21-22 and 28-29 June, 2-3, 12-13 and 26-27 July, 2-3, 16-17 and 30-31 August, 6-7 and 13-14 September and 11-12 October - a total of sixteen round trips (the sailing from Manchester on 6 June is a private charter).

Liverpool Duck Tours The company has gone into liquidation after heavy losses in the two seasons since the it was formed. The management are trying to find buyers for the business.

Windermere Lake Cruises Summer services run from 12 April to 2 November and follow the usual pattern.

Coniston Launch Summer services run from 22 March to 2 November, with hourly sailings around the northern half of the lake, and three trips a day around the south of the lake.

MISCELLANY

A large section of Brighton's West Pier collapsed into the sea on 29 December. The pier had been closed since 1975 and was last used by steamers in 1956.

G P Hamer 8 January 2003

TRIP OUT

February 2003

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL's new engines are being built by Grenaa Motorfabrik in Denmark; gearboxes are being supplied by a German company, and propellers will come from Singapore. They are due to be delivered at the beginning of May, and installed before her season starts on 23 May on the Firth of Forth.

THAMES

Since 6 January Westminster Pier has been closed from Mondays to Fridays because of repair work on Westminster Bridge which is expected to last for five months. Boat services used Embankment Pier in January, but now use Waterloo. At weekends, Westminster Pier is open as normal.

Thames Luxury Charters As usual, THE GEORGIAN from Maidenhead is spending the winter offering charters in London, and is based with the other members of the fleet at Butler's Wharf below Tower Bridge.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The RED FALCON was refitted at Falmouth in January, and was followed by the RED EAGLE which arrived there on 24 January. The RED OSPREY will be dry-docked in March in Southampton.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's 2003 programme includes Southampton-Newhaven on 23 May, a cruise from Newhaven on the 25th, Newhaven-Southampton on 26 May, Solent cruises on 13 July, and 6 and 7 August, Southampton-Poole on 13 August, a cruise from Poole on the 15th, Poole-Weymouth on the 16th, cruises from Weymouth on the 21st and 22nd, Weymouth-Southampton on 24 August, a cruise to Swanage Bay on 6 September, and a cruise round the IoW on 7 September. There will be "Santa" and Christmas lunch cruises in December, as well as cruises for the maiden arrival and departure of Cunard's new QUEEN MARY 2 on 12 December and 12 January. For bookings, contact Blue Funnel Cruises, except for the trips on 13-16 August which are organised by a firm called Glajd UK.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The new National Maritime Museum Cornwall is now open in Falmouth. A car park for 400 cars is being built at Ponsharden in Penryn, and a boat service is proposed from there to the museum.

Plymouth Boat Cruises plan to run a service between Phoenix Wharf and Saltash next summer.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company has been running a helicopter service from Hartland Point on Fridays and Mondays since 6 January while the OLDENBURG is off for her annual refit.

Cardiff Cats The SAPPHIRE has been fitted with a removable roof so that she can share winter services with the CYGNET.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Three-hour wildlife cruises are scheduled for 30 and 31 May, and 1 June. On Sunday afternoons from 27 July to 7 September, there will be 1½-hour cruises into Liverpool Bay, leaving Liverpool at 1330 and 1530.

Liverpool Duck Tours Following the company's liquidation, the former managing director has set up a new company which will lease the two craft and plans to resume operations on 13 February.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN will be running her usual programme of excursions this year: from Llandudno to Douglas on 10 and 12 June, from Fleetwood on 11 June and from Whitehaven on 13 June; on the last three dates, there will also be a long day trip from Douglas to the mainland. Day return fares are £22 from Llandudno and Whitehaven, or £26 from Fleetwood. Tickets are available from the company's Douglas office or local travel agents.

G P Hamer 4 February 2003

TRIP OUT

March 2003

Back in June 2000, I reported that the government's White Paper on the alcohol licensing law proposed requiring boats to be licensed to serve drinks in the same way as pubs and restaurants ashore. The Licensing Bill is now being debated in parliament: ships on international voyages, trains, planes and hovercraft are still exempted, but other ships and boats will need a drinks licence issued by a local authority. This procedure will mean extra work and expense for boat operators, as well as for local authorities, but it's hard to see any benefits. Boats' safety is already checked every year, while no single local authority can consider the behaviour of passengers aboard a boat which is likely to move between different authorities' areas (rivers are often used as boundaries so opposite banks may be controlled by different authorities). An amendment, tabled by Lord (Ambrose) Greenway, would exempt boats with certificates for fewer than 100 passengers, thus reducing the burden on smaller operators, but this would only create more anomalies. It would be much more sensible to treat ships the same as trains and planes, rather than add yet more unnecessary and expensive bureaucracy.

Geoffrey Hamer, London W4

NORTH EAST

Wear Cruises, run by a Mr Michael Dodds, started trips from Sunderland in 2001 with the waterbus LOMOND MAID, originally the BELLE ISLE on Windermere. She was renamed BROKAELA after the owner's daughters Bronya and Mykaela.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again being chartered for seabird cruises by the RSPB: puffin cruises will be on 24 May, 7, 14, 22 and 28 June, and 5, 6 and 12 July; skua and shearwater cruises are scheduled for 30 and 31 August, 6, 7, 13, 20 and 28 September, and 4 October.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises Afternoon cruises to Harwich will leave Ipswich at 1400 at weekends and Bank Holidays from Easter to September, and on Wednesdays in June, and Wednesdays and Fridays in July and August. Shorter morning cruises to Pin Mill are offered only on Sundays in July and August. Bookings for these are taken by Ipswich Tourist Information Centre.

THAMES

T W Taylor, Wallasea Island, will not be operating the ferry to Burnham-on-Crouch or any river trips this year.

Capital Pleasure Boats have bought the BRUNEL from Crystal & Silver River Cruises, and she will join the GOLDEN JUBILEE, based in central London for charters.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Département de la Manche has agreed to charter two fast catamarans for services to the Channel Islands. The SALTEN, from Norway, will run from Portbail, Carteret and Diélette to Gorey, St Peter Port, Sark and Alderney, and the AREMITI 3, from French Polynesia, will run from Granville to Carteret. Both are Fjellstrand designs: the 115-ft SALTEN was built in 1997 and has propellers, while the 131-ft AREMITI 3 was built in 1994 with water jets (the different propulsion systems are required because of the nature of the small tidal harbours to be used by the SALTEN). The charters will run for five years. The operating company is to be chosen by tender.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Dartmouth-Totnes sailings run daily from 1 April to 2 November. A service from Dartmouth to Greenway runs on Wednesdays to Saturdays from 5 March to 4 October, and there are occasional trips from Totnes to Greenway. Two-hour coastal cruises are scheduled for 3, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 24, 28 and 31 May, 4, 9, 13, 23, 28 and 30 June, 3, 5, 12, 20, 24 and 30 July, and 2, 4, 7, 17, 19 and 26 August.

Plymouth Boat Cruises The new service from Saltash will run from April to October, with the first trips at 1000 from Saltash and 1045 from Plymouth (Phoenix Wharf), with subsequent trips from Plymouth at 1130, 1230, 1345, 1415 and 1530, returning from Saltash 45 minutes later. Trips to Calstock run on various dates from 13 April to 24 September.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company have published the OLDENBURG's schedule from 28 March until 1 November; about two-thirds of the sailings are from Ilfracombe and the rest from Bideford. Fares are unchanged, with a day return costing £25.

Bristol Packet Afternoon trips to Beese's Tea Gardens run on Sundays from Easter to September, and river trips are also offered from Mondays to Fridays in school holidays. One-way trips to Bath are scheduled for 7 June, 19 July, 16 August and 13 September. Avon Gorge cruises will run on 26 April, 10, 24 and 26 May, 21 June, 26 July, 7, 9, 23 and 25 August, 6 and 20 September, and 4 October.

Pride of Bath On 20 July last year, a fire started in a barbecue aboard the PRIDE OF BATH. The passengers and crew disembarked safely but the vessel was off service till October for repairs.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises The business was offered for sale last summer, but was not sold and the two vessels will continue to offer cruises on the River Severn this year. The EDWARD ELGAR has now been offered for sale for £400 000, with delivery next October.

NORTH WEST

Liverpool Duck Tours have resumed under a new name, The Yellow Duckmarine. The craft's names and telephone number are unchanged.

TRIP OUT

April 2003

Waverley Excursions published this year's timetable in mid-March. The WAVERLEY is due to return to service on 14 June on the Clyde and runs there till 31 August, then on the South Coast from 5 to 25 September, the Thames until 13 October, and the Bristol Channel on 17-20 October. The WAVERLEY was due to meet the KINGSWEAR CASTLE in the Medway on 4 October, but a trip to Clacton has been advertised for this date. The BALMORAL's re-engining will be carried out in Bristol. She is due to start her season in the west of Scotland, and will not be visiting the Firth of Forth as originally planned. She visits the Western Isles from 23 to 27 May and continues around the Irish Sea as usual. She is on the Sussex Coast on 26-27 June, then on the Thames, returning to the South Coast on 15 July. Her Bristol Channel season eventually starts on 18 July and goes on to 18 September, and she then runs on the Clyde from 20 to 29 September. There are no calls at Sandown, but the WAVERLEY calls at Ryde.

NORTH EAST

Castle Line of York The business has been sold to new owners who trade as Yorkcruise. The DUCHESS OF YORK continues to run between York and Acaster Malbis.

EAST ANGLIA

Searles Sea Tours, Hunstanton A former US Army amphibious craft was renamed WASH MONSTER by Searles and carried 12 passengers, but has now been rebuilt to get a certificate for 60 passengers. The firm also runs the catamaran SEA LION and a 12-passenger ex-army DUKW.

THAMES

French Brothers will be basing a boat at Wallingford this season.

Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co The PINK CHAMPAGNE has been offered for sale for £80 000.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Département de la Manche will operate the AREMITI 3 from Granville to St Helier, not to Carteret as stated here last month.

Jersey has withdrawn Emeraude Lines' exclusive right to carry cars on the St-Malo route because of delays in paying harbour dues. The agreement was due to continue till December 2004, but Condor are now allowed to carry cars between Jersey and St-Malo.

Emeraude Lines The company's excursion vessels at St-Malo and Granville have been sold to a new company controlled by Naviland who run excursions on the west coast of France through subsidiaries including Navix and Compagnie des Iles. Emeraude Lines will retain a 24% share in the new company. Emeraude Lines' predecessors began operating from St-Malo around 100 years ago, and first served the Channel Islands in 1969. They will now concentrate on the services from St-Malo to Jersey and Guernsey run by the SOLIDOR 4 and 5. The NORMANDIE EXPRESS has been sold for service in the Pacific between Tahiti and Moorea as the MOOREA EXPRESS, and was shipped to New Zealand aboard the container ship ALBLASGRACHT. She had served the Channel Islands from Granville and Carteret for the past four seasons.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Balcomb Boats, St Mawes The ALOUETTE has been sold to a new operator, Toby Budd, who trades as Cornwall Ferries; he plans to continue running the trips from St Mawes.

WEST WALES

S Crockford, Tenby The CATALINA OF TENBY has been advertised for sale for £185 000.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester 45-minute trips, normally in the QUEEN BOADICEA II, run daily from 29 March to 31 October. Longer trips in the KING ARTHUR include Sharpness on 1 June, 13 July, 3 August and 21 September, and Tewkesbury on 7 June, 26 July, 23 August and 20 September.
Severn Leisure Cruises will not be running the restaurant boat SILVER SALMON this year and she has been advertised for sale for £105 000.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Sea Containers plans to sell the Steam Packet Co, described as "highly profitable", in order to reduce debts. The catamaran DIAMANT from Dover began running from Liverpool on 6 March, but her sailings were disrupted by the weather and mechanical problems, and she was replaced on the 24th by the SUPERSEACAT TWO, now transferred from Italian to British registry. The SUPERSEACAT TWO is expected to share this summer's fast services to the island with the SEACAT ISLE OF MAN. The LADY OF MANN will be making an evening charter cruise round the island on 24 May to raise money for the preservation of the MANXMAN; tickets can be booked through the Steam Packet Co's Douglas office.

G P Hamer 3 April 2003

TRIP OUT

May 2003

EAST ANGLIA

Broads Tours, Wroxham The QUEEN OF THE BROADS has been lengthened and rebuilt with an upper deck; she is now 80 ft long and can carry 170 passengers.

THAMES

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Services to Kew and Hampton Court resumed on 7 April

Thames Luxury Charters THE EDWARDIAN has been transferred from the Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co and is now based in London.

London Waterbus Co (Regent's Canal) The service runs daily from 1 April to 26 October, then at weekends in winter. Day trips are scheduled to Limehouse on 21 June, 12 and 26 July, 16 August and 20 September, to Hillingdon on 2 August and 13 September, and to and from Brentford on 6 and 7 September.

French Brothers The new trips from Wallingford will run from 24 May to 14 September, with a morning trip downstream to Goring on Mondays and Wednesdays, and upstream to Shillingford on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, followed by 2-hour and 45-minute cruises in the afternoon.

SOUTH COAST

Solent & Wight Line Cruises The charter of the ALI CAT to Caledonian MacBrayne for the Gourock-Dunoon service has been extended for a further year until March 2004.

Russell Marine, Mudeford The business has been taken over by Captain Paul Derham, a former officer with P&O Cruises whose family used to run the Mudeford ferry. He will continue to run the ferry, as well as cruises to the Needles in the catamaran JOSEPHINE.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth A new vessel, to be named PRIDE OF EXMOUTH, is being built by Voyager Yachts at Millbrook and is due in service in June; she is costing £300 000, and will be 65 ft long and carry up to 260 passengers.

P Scott, Brixham, has bought the former LOCHMOR from Ireland. She ran for Caledonian MacBrayne from Mallaig to Eigg, Muck, Rum and Canna between 1979 and 2000. She is to be renamed TORBAY BELLE and will be rebuilt to carry 250 passengers, with a restaurant, two bars, a dance floor and a 120-seat sun deck.

D Gold, Dartmouth The QUEEN OF HELFORD has been advertised for sale for £79 000. Mr Gold bought her in 2001, but has been unable to get a ticket office on the Embankment at Dartmouth, so has been unable to compete with Dart Pleasure Craft.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The new owners of the ALOUETTE (see last issue) are under the same ownership as the King Harry Ferry. They have also won the contract to run a service to the new National Maritime Museum Cornwall from Ponsharden in Penryn and the Prince of Wales Pier. Four traditional wooden boats have been bought, the BLACK SWAN, BUCCANEER and KINGSLEY II from the Isles of Scilly and the MARINER (ex SKYLARK) from Brixham, and the service is due to start on 2 June.

St Mary's Boatmen's Association The two new vessels being built by Kingfisher Boats at Penryn will be named MERIDIAN and OSPREY OF ST MARY'S. Three older launches have been sold to Cornwall Ferries.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Public trips from Weston to Steep Holm in Mr Woolls' BRISTOL QUEEN are scheduled for three to five dates a month from 5 April to 14 October.

G P Hamer 1 May 2003

TRIP OUT

June 2003

Waverley Excursions The fitting of the BALMORAL's new engines began on 4 May, but she was not ready till the 26th, so the sailings in Scotland on 23-27 May were cancelled. She left the Bristol Channel on 27 May, arriving in Glasgow the next day in time for her first passenger sailing, an evening charter, followed by a day cruise to Ailsa Craig on the 29th. The WAVERLEY's rebuild is on schedule and she was due to carry out sea trials on 4 June and to sail to Glasgow on 9 June.

THAMES

Thames Clippers have won the contract to run between the new Millbank Pier, serving the Tate Britain gallery, Waterloo and Bankside, serving the Tate Modern. The HURRICANE CLIPPER has been repainted with spots designed by Damien Hirst, and opened the service on 23 May. The journey takes 18 minutes and the service runs daily between 1000 and 1718, with sailings every 40 minutes. The HURRICANE CLIPPER is used for commuter services to Docklands in the morning and evening, but the daytime service to Docklands is now run by the two smaller catamarans.

Capital Frogs, originally London Frog Tours, is now trading as London Duck Tours. The booking telephone number is unchanged.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The new RED JET 4 was delivered from Tasmania aboard the cargo ship EGMONDGRACHT and arrived in Southampton on 9 May. After trials, she is due to be named by yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur at Cowes on 18 June, before entering service.

The Isle of Wight Pleasure Boat Co, Cowes The SOUTHERN BELLE which was bought from Plymouth in 2000 has been offered for sale by brokers for £75 000.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Hugo-Express is the marketing name chosen the new service from Normandy. The contract to run it has been awarded to a subsidiary of Connex who already run buses in Normandy and on Jersey. The AREMITI arrived at Cherbourg from Tahiti on 16 May aboard the cargo ship EDAMGRACHT. She will be renamed MARIN-MARIE, the pseudonym of a French painter (1901-87), and the SALTEN will be the VICTOR HUGO after the French writer (1802-85). The services are expected to start in July.

WEST OF ENGLAND

S S Jamieson, Torquay, has sold the MARGARET ANN after running her for one season. Mr Jamieson has bought the SOLENT PRINCESS, originally the ISLAND QUEEN on Guernsey-Herm and later used for Portsmouth Harbour cruises by Gosport Ferry.

K J Bridge, Plymouth The DEVON BELLE II, introduced last summer, previously ran on Loch Ness as the ROYAL PRINCESS.

C Toms & Son, Polruan, have built a 10-car ferry for the Bodinnick service, to replace the last of the unpowered ferries. The new vessel is 118 ft long and is named GELLAN, derived from the names of two members of the Toms family, Allen and Angela. The firm is also having a new 48-passenger vessel for the Fowey-Polruan service.
Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth, began running trips from the National Maritime Museum Cornwall in mid-May in the BLACK SWAN. The MARINER, bought from Brixham, is being renamed LADY JULIA. The new service from Ponsharden to the Museum is due to start this month.
St Mary's Boatmen's Association The new OSPREY OF ST MARY's was delivered in May and is similar to the KINGFISHER OF ST MARY'S and SAPPHIRE which were also built by Kingfisher Boats at Falmouth. The "Osprey" carries 93 passengers, with covered accommodation for 35 of them.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
M Woolls, Weston-super-Mare In addition to the trips to Steep Holm for the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust, the BRISTOL QUEEN makes day trips to Cardiff on 2, 14, 16 and 29 June, 15 and 29 July, 14 and 31 August, and 11 September. On most other days until 7 September, there is a one-hour cruise to Brean Down, with departure times varying according to tides.
Cardiff Bay Cruises bought the CANBERRA QUEEN from Mr Woolls and also run the 12-passenger DAFFODIL on trips from Mermaid Quay. A 59-ft 50-passenger catamaran restaurant boat is being built by Steel-Kit near Aberystwyth.

NORTH WEST
Bithells Boats, Chester, have taken over the business of E Bramston. The EARL GROSVENOR, limited in recent years to 12 passengers, has been rebuilt and is now fully enclosed; she has been renamed THE EARL. Trips are offered from both Bithells' and Bramston's landing stages.

MISCELLANY
The SOUTHSEA was towed from Portsmouth to Southampton in April and is now berthed in the River Itchen at Northam. Plans for her future are disputed by the River Avon Historic Vessel & Navigation Trust of Bristol, and the MV Southsea Society.

G P Hamer 5 June 2003

TRIP OUT

July 2003

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's rebuild was completed on schedule and she sailed from Great Yarmouth to Glasgow via Aberdeen, returning to service on the Clyde on 14 June. The BALMORAL is currently on the Thames after completing her Irish Sea sailings, and is due to open the Bristol Channel season on 18 July.

NORTH EAST

NEXUS - Tyne & wear PTE Three-hour river cruises in the PRIDE OF THE TYNE from South and North Shields are advertised for Sundays 29 June, 3 and 24 August, 28 September and 7 December. There are also shorter cruises with children's entertainment.

EAST ANGLIA

Herbert Woods, Potter Heigham (Broads Tours) The PRINCESS MARY has been sold and is now at Falkirk. She was the oldest and largest of the traditional launches in he fleet, and in recent years had been based at Potter Heigham.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The Tilbury ferry was suspended in early May after the DUCHESS M suffered a breakdown. She was re-engined and returned to service on 21 June.

Thames Cruises The THAMES PRINCESS has been fitted with an additional saloon on her upper deck.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The RED JET 4 was named on 18 June, and made special trips for invited guests on the next three days, including a trip round the IoW on 21 June, probably the first round the island trip by a Red Funnel vessel since the BALMORAL's excursions in 1968. The RED JET 4 was due into regular service on 23 June. Because of her greater capacity, the timetable was amended by cancelling round trips from Southampton at 0710 and 1745 on Mondays to Fridays, so that the service can be run by two craft instead of three. The company is considering running fast service between Southampton and East Cowes if a suitable landing stage can be built.

Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's cruise round the IoW on 7 September is fully booked, so an additional one was scheduled for 6 July.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The new service between Ponsharden and the new maritime museum was opened on 23 June. Cruises from St Mawes are at 0920 with a coffee and pastry, 1120 with a glass of pimms, and at 1810 with a gin and tonic.

Balcomb Boats, St Mawes As well as selling the ALOUETTE to Cornwall Ferries, Mr Balcomb has also retired from running the ferry to Place. He ran boats on the Thames from the early 1970s until 1989 when he moved to Cornwall and started running trips from St Mawes. The Place ferry started in 1991.

Mylor Boat Hire has taken over the ferry from St Mawes to Place, and the season has been extended to run from April to October, with crossings every half hour.

NORTH WEST

Sovereign Cruises, Northwich, is no longer trading. The AQUARIUS OF ANDERTON has been sold to run on the Shropshire Union Canal from Market Drayton, and the former Dutch barge SOVEREIGN II is apparently no longer running as a passenger vessel.

Bithells Boats, Chester The two boats taken over from Mr Bramston, THE EARL (previously EARL GROSVENOR) and the LADY EDWINA GROSVENOR, now have certificates for 58 passengers, after being limited to 12 in recent years.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN has again been chartered to Açor Line; she left the Mersey on 25 June and is due to run in the Azores from 1 July to 28 September, her fifth season there.

G P Hamer 5 July 2003

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL began her Bristol Channel season on 17 July with an evening charity cruise from Clevedon.

EAST ANGLIA

The Albatros Project The Dutch cargo ketch ALBATROS (built in 1899) carried cargoes across the North Sea until 1996 and was then converted for educational and other charters by her owner, Captain Tom Brouwer. As well as longer cruises from her base at Wells, she offers day trips for up 36 passengers from Wells, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Chatham and Portsmouth.

D Baines, Harwich Mr and Mrs Baines are moving to Scotland, but hope to hand over the Harwich-Shotley-Felixstowe ferry to a new owner, Mr A Sage, after this season.

THAMES

Southend Water Pleasure The owner, Mr M Johnson, did not operate last year after selling the DUCHESS M, but has now resumed trips from the foreshore with the DEVON BELLE II, bought from Plymouth.

London Borough of Greenwich The JAMES NEWMAN was badly damaged by fire, believed to be arson, on 13 July. A £5000 reward is being offered for information about the culprits. Repairs will be put out to tender and are expected to take four months.

Thames Luxury Charters have bought the former Tilbury ferry MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT and renamed her THAMES SWIFT, though she is not actually a fast craft ('Trip Out 2003/04' is in error). She has been used for tendering visiting cruise ships including the HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS which was in London on 12-14 July.

Chas Newens Marine, Putney, is an long-established business hiring out launches for rowing and other events. This year, the larger INTERCEPTOR has been acquired and can be chartered for up to 28 passengers. Mr Newens is also a part-owner of Crown River Cruises, based in central London.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink is operating a catamaran from Lymington to Cowes (Thetis Wharf) during Cowes Week from 2 to 8 August, with six round trips a day, starting from Lymington at 0730, and finishing with a 1900 departure from Cowes. The return fare is £12. On 8 August, the ST CLARE is making an evening cruise from Ryde to the Cowes Week firework display at a fare of £40. Wightlink is considering running a summer car ferry service from Portsmouth to Ryde, with cars (but not lorries or coaches) unloaded via a pontoon. This would relieve present congestion at Fishbourne.

Red Funnel Ferries The car ferries are to be lengthened by 31 ft and have the passenger accommodation raised by 9 ft so that an additional car deck can be installed. The contract has gone to the Remontowa yard at Gdańsk which built Wightlink's ST CLARE, and the RED OSPREY is due there next October, to be followed by the RED FALCON in January and the RED EAGLE in the autumn of 2004.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Hugo Express A naming ceremony for the two catamarans was held in Cherbourg on 9 July, but services were unable to start in July owing to certification problems. The VICTOR HUGO began running to Guernsey on 2 August and her first trip to Alderney is due on the 7th, but the MARIN-MARIE is not expected to start her service from Granville before mid-August. The Guernsey agents are Alderney Shipping.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The new PRIDE OF EXMOUTH was delivered to Exmouth in July.

Western Lady Ferry Service Stagecoach Devon bus drivers held a series of one-day strikes from 8 July, and the WESTERN LADY vessels ran extra services to carry passengers between Torquay and Brixham.

Torpoint Ferry On 7 July, the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee announced that the contract to build three new ferries had been awarded to Ferguson Shipbuilders of Port Glasgow. They will each carry 73 cars and will be delivered between October 2004 and June 2005. The yard won the £15 million contract against bids from Appledore, Poland, the Netherlands and Norway.

K J Bridge, Plymouth The DEVON BELLE II, bought from Scotland, spent only a year at Plymouth and has been sold to run from Southend. Mr Bridge has bought the MARGARET ANN from Torquay.

Cornwall Ferries acquired the Falmouth - St Mawes ferry and fleet of four boats from Mr G H Pill on 18 July. Mr Pill and his father had run a variety of boats from Falmouth over the years and took over the St Mawes ferry in 1991. Other members of the family still run the PRINCESSA and river trips under the K&S Cruises name. The four ferries will be repainted light blue with dark blue stripes. Between 21 July and 29 August, the Falmouth to St Mawes ferry will *be extended to run on weekday evenings, with the last crossings at 2130 from Falmouth and 2200 from St Mawes.

St Mary's Boatmen's Association The new MERIDIAN was delivered to Mr J Phillips in July.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Bickerline, Worcester, was taken over in the spring by Mr Kurt Tarrach. The MARIANNE continues to offer 45-minute river trips under the Bickerline name.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Sea Containers announced on 15 July that the Steam Packet Co had been sold on 30 June to Montagu Private Equity Ltd for £142 million. Services are expected to continue unchanged till at least next winter. The LADY OF MANN began running in the central Azores in July. From 16 to 23 July, she ran alone attempting to serve the whole archipelago as the company's other ship, the GOLFINHO AZUL, had her certificate withdrawn; the GOLFINHO AZUL was then allowed to resume, but is restricted to the central islands, so the LADY OF MANN has been making the longer runs to the outer islands.

G P Hamer 6 August 2003

TRIP OUT

September 2003

In 1936, when the QUEEN MARY made her maiden transatlantic voyage, her departure was witnessed by a fleet of excursion ships. As well as local ships, the QUEEN OF THE CHANNEL went round from the Thames and the BRITANNIA came from Bristol. Next winter sees the maiden sailing of the QUEEN MARY 2 from Southampton and owners of local excursion vessels are taking bookings for trips to view her. If the new liner arouses as much public interest as her predecessor, there will be some lucrative business for boat owners.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions After completing her Clyde season on 31 August, the WAVERLEY went to Belfast for an evening charter on 1 September before heading for the south coast. Her Southampton sailings will be from the Western Docks, not as advertised earlier.

EAST ANGLIA

The VIKING SAGA, built in 1947 to run from Clacton, and subsequently running on the Clyde then from Tenby until 1998, has returned to service, offering trips from Maldon.

THAMES

Thames Clippers have bought the SERCO D 9, the sister of the SKY CLIPPER and STORM CLIPPER. All three were built in 1991-92 at Cowes to run in London for the Riverbus Partnership, and after its failure were sold to Serco Denholm for service in the naval bases at Portsmouth and Plymouth. The SERCO D 9 was originally named CONRAD CHELSEA HARBOUR.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The Lymington-Cowes service, introduced for Cowes Week, continued until 25 August.

Red Funnel Ferries For the Southampton Boat Show, one of the RED JETs will run between Southampton and Gosport from 12 to 21 September. There will be eight round trips a day, starting from Southampton at 0745, and with the last from Gosport at 1930, taking 35 minutes. The return fare is £12.

The Dorset Belles Last season's trips to Buckler's Hard have not operated this year. A 4-hour cruise to the "Jurassic Coast" beyond Swanage has operated three times a week. Swanage sailings are daily till 7 September, then on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays; IoW trips are advertised for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, but ran most days in summer.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 4 is to be chartered to the government of Senegal to run from Dakar to Ziguinchor, replacing LE JOOLA which sank with heavy loss of life in September 2002. The SOLIDOR 4 will run with the German-owned HANSE JET, and both vessels are due to operate in west Africa from October until March 2005. The service from St-Malo to Jersey and Guernsey will be maintained by the SOLIDOR 5 alone from 8 September and the company's plans for next summer are unknown.

Hugo Express The VICTOR HUGO made the first trip from Granville to Jersey on 10 August, and she is now covering all the company's routes. The MARIN-MARIE, originally intended for the Granville route, may enter service in September.
Trident Charter Co, Guernsey The TRIDENT VI ran aground in fog off Herm on 23 August at around 2300. Her 179 passengers were taken off and returned to Guernsey by the HERM TRIDENT V. The TRIDENT VI refloated after two hours and returned to Guernsey. She later went to the yard at St Sampson for survey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Cornwall County Council's public transport timetable is this year published as a single booklet, instead of five, but still includes timetables for the county's ferries.
Stuart line Cruises, Exmouth The weekly day trip to Torquay this year also serves Brixham. The new PRIDE OF EXMOUTH has replaced the MAID OF EXMOUTH which has gone to Plymouth. Birdwatching cruises on the Exe estuary are advertised for 26 dates between 22 November and 22 March.
J Bolus, Torquay The PRIDE OF THE DART did not return to service after running aground in June 2002. She has been replaced by the GUARDWELL, bought from Ullapool.
Paignton Pleasure Cruises Mr Bewley has introduced a new SPARKLE carrying 12 passengers. The previous SPARKLE has been bought by Mr Lane and renamed BAY PRINCESS. He has also bought the ISLAND ROSE from Keyhaven which has been renamed ISLAND PRINCESS.
D Gold (River Explorer), Dartmouth The QUEEN OF HELFORD has gone to Plymouth after two unsuccessful seasons on the Dart.
K J Bridge, Plymouth The MARGARET ANN had only a brief stay at Plymouth and has gone to Dumbarton where her new owner apparently plans to use her privately. Mr Bridge has bought the MAID OF EXMOUTH. She previously ran from Plymouth in the late-1980s as the WESTMINSTER BELLE before going to Poole then Exmouth.
Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry have acquired the QUEEN OF HELFORD from Dartmouth.
K&S Cruises, Falmouth The TEMPTRESS has also been offering a daily two-hour cruise from St Mawes, leaving at 1130.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co In the Azores, the LADY OF MANN was due to return to her own schedule on 26 August after a month replacing the GOLFINHO AZUL.

MISCELLANY

The National Trust's visiting figures for 2002 show that St Michael's Mount had 215 106 visitors, an increase of 14% over 2001, and Brownsea Island had 105 938, an increase of 9%.

G P Hamer 3 September 2003

TRIP OUT

October 2003

The summer of 2003 has been noted for hot sunny weather, with the highest temperature ever recorded in the UK (on 10 August in Gravesend), and most excursion boat operators have had a good season. Fortunately, rainfall last winter was above average so there was no drought, and no problems of dried-up rivers closed to navigation.

As the 2003 season draws to a close, at least one operator is already advertising excursions next summer. We should congratulate Stuart Line Cruises whose 2004 wildlife day trips were advertised last month. Other operators should take note.

Geoffrey Hamer, London W4

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings as scheduled on 5 September and they have been well supported. Eastbourne Pier can no longer be used as the landing stage was damaged by the BALMORAL earlier this year. There is no longer a berth available at Folkestone so the WAVERLEY called at Dover instead. The BALMORAL ended her season in Glasgow on 29 September and sailed to Bristol for her winter lay-up.

EAST ANGLIA

Suffolk Cruises, Woodbridge, is a new company which has bought the waterbus EDWARD ALAN JOHN, last used at Snape. She runs on the River Deben from Ferry Quay at Woodbridge.

THAMES

Campion Launches The LONDON BELLE has been sold to a new operator for the charter trade in London. She had been owned by Mr Campion since 1985 and became well established on the Greenwich-Barrier service, but has seen little use this year.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY has left for conversion in Gdańsk. A two-ship car ferry with intervals of up to two hours between sailings was advertised from 23 September. As a temporary replacement, the Norwegian car ferry NORDHORDLAND has been obtained and renamed BERGEN CASTLE. She is a double-ended car ferry built in 1976 for service in the Bergen area, and measures 1220 gt; she is 217 ft long and could carry 480 passengers. She was due in service in early October, to allow a revised three-ship service to resume.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The freight services of Commodore will in future be run under the Condor Ferries name, and the Commodore name will disappear. Its history goes back to 1947 when Commodore Cruises was founded, initially running excursions with converted Fairmile naval launches. The RED COMMODORE was chartered to run between Guernsey and Sark in September 1947, and the company ran the Guernsey-Sark service until 1969 before concentrating on cargo services and its Condor offshoot.

Hugo Express The VICTOR HUGO ended Alderney trips in September. They are due to resume in April, but the company intends to continue services to Jersey and Guernsey through the winter.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Exeter City Council The Topsham ferry was suspended in the summer because the ferryman was off work with a knee injury. The Council was hoping to find a temporary replacement so that the service could resume on 4 October.

Stuart line Cruises, Exmouth, has advertised three wildlife day trips for next summer, on 22 May to Brixham, and on 12 June and 25 September to land at Beer. The fare is £12.

Cornwall Ferries The new service from Ponsharden to the Maritime Museum has carried 35 000 passengers, but has been unable to operate at low tide. The company wants a dredged channel to Ponsharden so that the boats can run a full service. The LADY JULIA has been advertised for sale for £34 750.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co has reported a 50% increase in day trippers on the SCILLONIAN III this year.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co is now also offering Avon Gorge cruises. The MATILDA makes occasional two-hour cruises through the Gorge. The ELIZABETH offered trips in the summer from the Avon Valley Country Park at Keynsham.

Cardiff Bay Cruises The new restaurant catamaran was launched on 2 September and carried out trials on the 18th on the Dyfi estuary north of Aberystwyth.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The WOODCHURCH is to be refitted and re-engined this winter in Birkenhead. The work was due to start in October and is apparently to cost £3.5 million.

Foulridge Canal Cruises As well as running the MARTON EMPEROR from Foulridge, trips are also run from Barden Mill in Burnley in a 50-ft 36-passenger narrowboat named BARDEN BROOMSTICK.

Coniston Launch will run daily services this winter, weather permitting, but with no trips on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1 to 23 December and from 5 January to 10 February.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN's charter in the Azores was due to end on 30 September. From 4 November to the end of the year, she will run between Liverpool and Douglas daily, instead of at weekends as in recent winters. If this increased winter service is a success, it will continue into 2004.

G P Hamer 2 October 2003

TRIP OUT

November 2003

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions. The totals for Thames Luxury Charters now include the Maidenhead fleet which is under the same ownership.

		GROSS TONNAGE
1(1)	City Cruises	2003
2(3)	Thames Luxury Ch	1815
3(2)	Woods River Cruises	1692
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(7)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(8)	Thames Leisure	708
8(6)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(9)	George Wheeler L	544
10(10)	Dart Pleasure Craft	443

		PASSENGER CAPACITY
1(1)	City Cruises	4382
2(3)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(2)	Catamaran Cruisers	2884
4(4)	Salter Bros	1954
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(-)	Thames Luxury Ch	1583
7(7)	French Brothers	1506
8(8)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1468
9(6)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1388
=10(9)	Crown River Cruises	1095
=10(9)	Woods River Cruises	1095

THAMES

Hire Cruisers (Maidstone) The business, owned for the past 25 years by Mr Malcolm Evans, has been sold to a new owner, Mr Tony Cheeseman who will continue to run the KENTISH LADY II.

Southend Water Pleasure The DEVON BELLE II, bought from Plymouth last winter, has been offered for sale for £36 950.

London Borough of Greenwich The JAMES NEWMAN, damaged by fire in July, was repaired by Richards at Great Yarmouth. The work was expected to cost over £300 000.

Thames Clippers Transport for London is giving a subsidy of £3 million over the next ten years, and a further £1 million of private sponsorship has been promised over the next five years. These grants have allowed the purchase of the SERDO D 9 which is to be renamed STAR CLIPPER.

Greenwich Marine is the name of the new owners of the LONDON BELLE, bought from Campion Launches. She is actually based at Westminster and used for charter trips.

SOUTH COAST

J P Adams (Chichester Harbour Water Tours) In October, the business was taken over by a new owner. The WINGATE III offers occasional two-hour bird watching cruises during the winter.

Red Funnel Ferries Last September's Southampton-Gosport RED JET service is to be repeated during the Christmas shopping season, running at weekends from 8 November, then daily from 20 December to 4 January (except the 25th and 26th). From 3 November, a free trial service has been running at peak commuter times from East Cowes to connect with RED JET services from Cowes.

White Horse Ferries Hythe Pier was seriously damaged on 1 November at about 1830 when it was hit by the dredger DONALD REDFORD, leaving a gap of about 80 ft. Fortunately, there were no people on that section of the pier, though the ferry was busy. The ferry has since operated from the nearby Hythe Marina.

Hamble - Warsash Ferry The ferry, previously run by Blue Star Boats, has new owners.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines announced on 2 October that is was being placed in administration after losing 2 million euros this year because of competition from Condor and the reduced value of sterling. A French court has allowed the company to continue trading for three months whilst a buyer is sought for the company. The SOLIDOR 5 was arrested at St Helier on 6 October for unpaid harbour dues, but was released two days later and continued in service. Besides the SOLIDOR 5, the company owns the SOLIDOR 2, laid-up in south America, and the SOLIDOR 4 which is due to start a charter in Senegal, west Africa.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft The BALTIC STAR or DART EXPLORER will offer one-hour harbour cruises from Dartmouth during the winter daily except Mondays and Fridays.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Maritime Leisure Cruises, Boston The MYSTERE has been advertised for sale with her business at Wisbech for £95 000.

NORTH WEST

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The winter service runs from 3 November until April, with three daily round trips from Glenridding to Howtown, two of them continuing to Pooley Bridge.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN arrived in the Mersey on 5 October after her charter in the Azores. She returned to service on the 24th from Douglas to Dublin, and is now running daily between Liverpool and Douglas.

MISCELLANY

The former paddle steamer TATTERSHALL CASTLE, used as a pub in London since 1982, closed on 21 September and has gone to Great Yarmouth for a major refit at the George Prior yard. For the delivery voyage, she was loaded onto a barge. She is due to reopen in London next April.

G P Hamer 6 November 2003

TRIP OUT

December 2003

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Water Tours The new owners of the business (see last issue) are Adam and Angela Shaw.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines On 20 November, the commercial court in St-Malo announced that the company had been sold to Sogestran, a French inland waterway transport company which also owns Finist'mer who run three excursion vessels to the Breton island of Ouessant. Two other bids had been received, one from France and one from Jersey. The SOLIDOR 4 is being offered for charter (a charter in Senegal was cancelled), and the SOLIDOR 5 will continue to run from St-Malo to Jersey; Guernsey sailings have been suspended for the winter and the new owners have not decided whether they will resume next year.

Hugo Express The MARIN-MARIE was finally ready to enter service in October after repair work on her hulls, but she was damaged during trials at Granville on 28 October. Repairs were expected to take a further two weeks.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Philip Leisure Group, Dartmouth One of the ferry's shafts broke on 20 November and the paddle wheel fell into the river. The wheel was recovered by divers and the ferry was off for repairs for about a week.

K J Bridge, Plymouth The MAID OF EXMOUTH, bought last summer, has been placed on the market for £48 000.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's 2004 season runs from 29 March to 6 November, with sailings daily (except Sundays) from 7 April to 30 October, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the first and last weeks of the season. On Saturdays 29 May and 5 June, there are two round trips, and on other Saturdays from 12 June to 4 September, the Penzance departure is at 1100. On other days, she leaves Penzance at 0915 and St Mary's at 1630, except on Wednesdays from 4 August to 4 September when, as last year, the morning sailing is at 0800 to give day trippers more time ashore. Day return fares will be £32, while a period return is £78.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co has decided to sell the COUNTESS, a former Broads launch built in 1895 and in recent years limited to 12 passengers.

Cardiff Bay Cruises The new restaurant catamaran is named SEREN Y BAE ("Star of the Bay" in Welsh).

Cardiff Cats Since 15 November, Penarth sailings have used a new landing stage opposite the Custom House at the Penarth end of the Barrage. A new landing stage will open next year on the River Taff near the Millennium Stadium.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Next year's Manchester Ship Canal cruises will be on 24-25 April, 22-23 May, 6 and 22-23 June, 3-4, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25 and 31 July, 1, 4-5, 14-15 and 21-22 August, 4-5, 11-12, 14-15 and 18-19 September, and 2-3 October; in each case, there is a Liverpool to Salford sailing on the first day and one from Salford to Liverpool the next day (the odd sailing on 6 June is from Salford). Gift vouchers for these cruises are on sale this month for £28 and bookings open on 2 January.

G P Hamer 5 December 2003

TRIP OUT

January 2004

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY is due to start her season on the Clyde at Easter and visits the Western Isles from 30 April to 9 May. She visits the Bristol Channel from late-May to mid-June, and the South Coast, Thames and Bristol Channel as usual in September and October.

NORTH EAST

Nexus - Tyne & Wear PTE To reduce losses, evening services are being reduced, and the ferry will finish at 2100 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The landing stage at North Shields is being replaced at a cost of £1.2 million, and the new pontoon and bridge are due to be ready in April. A new ferry is being considered to replace the SHIELDSMAN in 2005.

THAMES

The 'London Eye' is closed for maintenance from 5 to 30 January and no boats are calling at Waterloo Pier during this time.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust This year's programme of special sailings includes a new cruise from Whitstable past Herne Bay on 31 July. Other special trips are a cruise into the Swale on 1 May, Thames Estuary cruises on 15 May and 11 September, the Medway Barge Race on 29 May, cruises to Sheerness on 12 June, 24 July and 28 August, Southend on 19 June, 10 July and 7 August, London to Putney on 26 June, London-Strood on 27 June, cruises up the Medway to New Hythe on 17 July and 18 September, a "wharfs, creeks and jetties" cruise on 14 August, round the Isle of Sheppey on 21 August, an 80th birthday cruise on 23 October and a bird watching cruise on 24 October. Short afternoon cruises on the Medway run on many dates as usual.

London Borough of Greenwich The Woolwich ferry manager, Mr Deeks, was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours for "services to transport in London."

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries A reduced two-ship car ferry service runs from 3 January to 12 February. An hourly three-ship service then runs until Christmas, with the BERGEN CASTLE taking the place of one of the regular ships until 2 April. The more intensive service with some services at 50-minute intervals is not advertised this year, presumably because of the increased capacity of the RED OSPREY and RED FALCON.

White Horse Ferries, Hythe Repairs to Hythe pier were completed in time for normal ferry services and the pier train to resume on 6 January. The cost was met by the owners of the dredger which hit the pier on 1 November.

Derham Marine, Mudeford The JOSEPHINE has been running cruises from Hythe Marina to view the QUEEN MARY 2 during her inaugural visit to Southampton.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The fast ferry service is suspended from 6 January to 1 February. The Weymouth service is daily from 1 April to 31 October, and Poole is served from 2 April to 30 October. The full service with two vessels running daily from both Weymouth and Poole, and a daily service from Poole to Cherbourg for Brittany Ferries, runs from 24 May to 3 October. The COMMODORE CLIPPER, now advertised as the "CLIPPER", continues to run all year to Guernsey and Jersey; she makes a round trip from Portsmouth to Cherbourg on Sundays from 30 May to 12 September.

Hugo Express Repairs to the MARIN MARIE after her accident took longer than expected and services were suspended in November. The VIGO HUGO restarted services on 12 December after being fitted with extra safety equipment to allow her to run after dark in winter.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council has decided to withdraw its subsidy to the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry, run for the past two years by Wyre Waste Management.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE is off service for a month from 6 January and additional passenger accommodation will be added. The work is being done by Northwestern Ship Repairers at Birkenhead and is costing £1.5 million.

G P Hamer 7 January 2004

TRIP OUT

February 2004

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL was dry-docked at Sharpness in January.

THAMES

Salter's Steamers Summer timetables are very similar to last year's. All services run from 22 May to 26 September (Marlow-services do not run from 30 June to 2 July and Windsor services do not run on Bank Holiday Mondays). Timings of the Wallingford services, introduced last year, have been adjusted and the sailing to Abingdon will be in the morning, returning in the afternoon, instead of an afternoon round trip. The MARATANA has been bought from Hobbs; she is very similar to the JEAN MARGUERITE.
Hobbs & Sons, Henley, have bought THE WATERMAN from Cruise & Dine of Wargrave. The MARATANA has been sold to Salters.

SOUTH COAST

For the maiden voyage of the QUEEN MARY 2 from Southampton on 12 January, special cruises were offered by Wightlink's ST CLARE, the RED OSPREY and the SHIELDHALL. Amongst excursion vessels attending were the BOURNEMOUTH BELLE, ISLAND PRINCESS, MAID OF POOLE, OCEAN SCENE, POOLE BELLE, SOLENT CAT, SOLENT SCENE, SPIRIT OF GOSPORT and WIGHT SCENE.

Brownsea Island is open to the public this year from 27 March to 31 October.

Marina Water Tours, Brighton The COMMODORE is being replaced by a 50-passenger catamaran to be named VOYAGER.

Wightlink From 1 November to 4 January, one of the catamarans ran at weekends from Ryde to the Ocean Village at Southampton. Last year, the company carried 5.7 million passengers and 1.22 million cars, showing an increase over 2002.

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE's cruise programme from 19 May to 31 October has been published. Cowes day trips are offered on Tuesdays from 20 July to 7 September. There are six-hour cruises on 15 July, 29 August and 9 September, and more frequent five-hour cruises to the Hamble, Beaulieu River or to view the QUEEN MARY 2.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY returned to Southampton on 3 January after her rebuilding in Poland and was back in service on the 8th. The RED FALCON is now in Gdansk undergoing her conversion. Last year, the company carried 2.86 million passengers and 454 000 cars, increases of 4.6% and 7.1% over 2002.

The Dorset Belles The FLAMBORIAN has been sold and sailed to Exmouth. She was acquired from Bridlington in 1998, but has been laid-up since the 2000 season when she ran from Weymouth.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines The SOLIDOR 5 went to Cherbourg on 22 January for her annual refit. The service is being maintained by the SOLIDOR 4 which has apparently been renamed ALINE for her intended charter in Senegal.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth, have bought the FLAMBORIAN which was delivered to Exmouth from Weymouth on 18 January under her own power. She is to be rebuilt, but is not expected to return to service until 2006. Next summer, day trips to Torquay and Brixham will be on Wednesdays; on Tuesdays and Thursdays, there will be a cruise to the "Jurassic Coast", landing at Sidmouth in alternate weeks.

K Lane, Paignton The 1997-built DART PRINCESS was sold last year to Jacobite Cruises of Inverness and renamed JACOBITE SPIRIT. She is being replaced by a new DART PRINCESS which was built last summer at Padstow and then fitted out in Paignton.

Dart Pleasure Craft Dartmouth-Totnes sailings will run on 6 March and then daily from 1 April to 31 October. The Greenway service runs from 3 March to 9 October. Two hour lunch-time coastal cruises from Dartmouth are advertised for 79 dates between 2 May and 6 September.

Mevagissey Ferries The service from Fowey will run from 26 April to 30 September, with three to six trips a day.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Public day trips from Weston to Steep Holm on Mr Woolls' BRISTOL QUEEN are scheduled for 21 dates from 18 April to 2 October.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co carried 651 000 passengers and 176 000 vehicles in 2003, compared with 649 000 and 173 000 in 2002. During the BEN-MY-CHREE's refit, the LADY OF MANN has been running from Heysham on Mondays to Thursdays and from Liverpool at weekends. Her weekend Liverpool service continues to 23 February. Her special day excursions are scheduled for Fleetwood on 15 June, Llandudno on 16 and 18 June, and Whitehaven on 17 June.

G P Hamer 4 February 2004

TRIP OUT

March 2004

NORTH EAST

W Shiel, Seahouses The GLAD TIDINGS VII has joined the fleet. She is 38 ft long, with a hull from Cygnus Marine of Penryn, Cornwall, which was fitted out at Seahouses. She is a dual-purpose vessel and is being used for catching crabs and lobsters in winter.

Richardson and Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again being chartered by the RSPB for puffin cruises on 23 and 29 May, 5, 13, 26 and 27 June, and 3 and 11 July, for skua and shearwater cruises on 21 and 28 August, 4, 11, 12, 19 and 26 September, and 3 October.

THAMES

RG (Passenger Launches) Ford closed the ferry to its Dagenham works on 30 January, claiming that it was used by just over 200 passengers a day. The three catamarans are to be offered for sale.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry has ordered a new SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH from VT Halmatic of Portchester. She will be similar to the SPIRIT OF GOSPORT but with a saloon and bar on the upper deck for excursion work. She is due in May 2005. An earlier order for a SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH from Abels of Bristol was cancelled, and the partly-completed ferry has been laid-up in Bristol since a dispute in 2001.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's programme includes Southampton-Shoreham on 17 July, returning on the 20th, Southampton-Weymouth on 14 August, cruises from Weymouth on the 19th and 20th, Weymouth-Southampton on 22 August, and cruises round the island, to Swanage Bay and to view the QE2 and QUEEN MARY 2. Tickets for public trips are sold by Blue Funnel Cruises at Southampton.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Lines now trades as Emeraude Jersey Ferries. Until 31 March, sailings are daily except Tuesdays and Wednesdays. From 1 April to 30 September, there will be two round trips daily, at 0915 and 1815 from St-Malo, and at 0830 and 1730 from St Helier, with extra services on peak days.

Isle of Sark Shipping Co A new ship is to be ordered, probably from a Turkish yard, for delivery in the autumn of 2005.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Calstock Ferry & Motor Launch Co The GLORIA is making trips to Weir Head on 14 April, 2 May, 27 June, 28 July and 10 September. Trips to Morwellham, giving up to two and a half hours ashore, run on many dates, and there are occasional afternoon trips to Saltash.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The service was suspended for refit from 8 to 23 February. The company is hoping for EU funding towards a replacement ferry

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's timetable has been published for 27 March to 30 October and, as last year, two-thirds of sailings are from Ilfracombe, and the rest from Bideford. The day return fare will be £28 and a period return £42.

Bristol Packet Cruises down the Avon Gorge are scheduled for 3, 15 and 29 May, 12 June, 10, 11, 25 and 30 July, 25 and 28 August, 11 and 25 September, 9 and 23 October, and 20 November. One-way trips to Bath are on 12 June, 17 July, 7 August and 4 September. Lunchtime and afternoon trips to Beese's Tea Gardens or the Chequers Inn, Hanham, are on Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter to September, and on most days in the school summer holidays.

Bristol Ferry boat Co Avon Gorge cruises in the MATILDA are scheduled for 16 and 31 May, 13 and 27 June, 11 and 25 July, 8 August, 12 September and 10 October; all last two and a half hours.

Cardiff Cats The new landing stage on the River Taff in the city centre opened on 29 February. Five trips a day run from the city centre to Mermaid Quay and the Barrage, taking 30 minutes each way. Services are at weekends till mid-March, then daily.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN finished her winter service on 23 February and is now laid-up in Liverpool. The SUPERSEACAT TWO resumed service on 26 February. The LADY OF MANN will be making evening round-the-island charity cruises on 29 May (for the Alzheimer's Society) and 30 May (for the Manxman Preservation Society); tickets are £18, including a buffet meal, and can be booked with the Steam Packet Co's Douglas office. The SEACAT ISLE OF MAN will make an evening cruise on 23 June to mark the tenth anniversary of her first arrival in the island.

MISCELLANY

The Greek owned car ferry ILLYRIA was broken up in Turkey last year. She was built in 1964 for MacBraynes as the HEBRIDES, then ran from 1986 to 1990 as Torbay Seaways' second DEVONIUN. As the ILLYRIA, she ran between Italy and Albania until 1999, and has since been laid-up in Greece.

G P Hamer 4 March 2004

TRIP OUT

April 2004

Waverley Excursions The season's timetables were published in March. The WAVERLEY runs on the Clyde at Easter, then visits the Western Isles from 30 April to 10 May, and continues on the Clyde till 16 May. She is on the Bristol Channel from 20 May to 13 June, then on the Clyde till 30 August. She is on the South Coast from 3 to 24 September, then on the Thames till 11 October, has another south coast trip on the 12th, and ends her season on the Bristol Channel on 15-18 October. The BALMORAL starts on 26 May when she sails on the Bristol Channel with the WAVERLEY, then has a variety of sailings round the Irish Sea till 13 June. On 15 June, she has a Swansea-Ilfracombe-Padstow trip, then an afternoon cruise from Mevagissey on the 18th, and south coast sailings till 22 June, trips on the Thames till 12 July, and another south coast trip on the 13th. Her Bristol Channel season is from 16 July to 20 September, and she ends her season on the Clyde as usual, on 23-27 September.

EAST ANGLIA

J White, Felixstowe Ferry, has retired from running the ferry across the River Deben. Since 1 April, it has been run by the Felixstowe Ferry Boat Yard.

A Sage, Harwich, has taken over the ferry service from Mr D Baines. Essex and Suffolk County Councils are each giving £10 000 a year for the next three years towards the ferry's running costs. The service resumes at Easter and will at weekends till the daily service starts in May.

THAMES

Services from Westminster to Kew, Richmond and Hampton Court, and cruises to the Thames Barrier started their season on 5 April.

Thames Clippers The commuter service is extended to Greenwich on Mondays to Fridays from 5 April for a six-month trial; four morning trips start from Greenwich, and there are two calls in the evening.

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Conservancy has been awarded £1.27 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund for environmental projects, including the introduction of a 50-passenger solar-powered vessel built in Switzerland. The vessel will offer trips from Itchenor and Emsworth.

White Horse Ferries, Hythe The master of the dredger DONALD REDFORD which struck Hythe Pier last November has been sentenced to eight months in jail for being in charge of the ship whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Solent Party Ship Cruises is a new company which has bought a Portuguese ship for charter trips from Southampton. The FAROL DE VILAMOURA was built in 1983 as the PRINZESSIN KAROLINE and did duty-free excursions from Travemünde on the Baltic coast of Germany, and later ran from List on the North sea coast of Germany as the PALUCCA before going to the Algarve. She measures 213 gross tons, is 99 ft long, and is advertised to carry 180 passengers. She has been renamed PRINCESS CAROLINE and is based at the Ocean Village.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The SOLIDOR 5 stayed in Cherbourg after her refit whilst her ownership and the cost of her refit were disputed. She will not return to service from St-Malo and is to be replaced by the HOVERSPEED GREAT BRITAIN, leased from Hoverspeed for one year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Plymouth Boat cruises Trips to Calstock run on 12 April, and on 41 dates from 17 May to 26 September. The Plymouth-Saltash service runs daily from April to October.

Aqua Cab, Falmouth, run a water taxi service on the river Fal. This summer, a new ferry service will run between Mylor and Falmouth (Prince of Wales Pier). From 28 May to 31 August, the boat will leave Mylor hourly from 0930 to 1630, and Falmouth half an hour later.

Cornwall Ferries The QUEEN OF FALMOUTH has been re-engined and rebuilt with a large new wheelhouse; her hull is now pale blue. The KINGSLEY II has been advertised for sale for £60 000.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises The EDWARD ELGAR and OLIVER CROMWELL are continuing to offer a programme of cruises on the River Severn and Gloucester & Sharpness Canal from Gloucester.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council decided on 15 March to keep the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry for another summer season. It will be operated by Wyre Waste Management, as in the past two seasons.

G P Hamer 6 April 2004

TRIP OUT

May 2004

Waverley Excursions After her Easter Clyde sailings, the WAVERLEY went to Milford Haven for dry docking. She returned to service on 30 April, sailing from Glasgow to Oban.

NORTH EAST

B Clarkson, Whitby, bought the FIONA MARIA from Barra in February. She was the SOLENT PRINCE, used for Portsmouth Harbour trips by Gosport Ferry, then ran between Barra and South Uist. She has been renamed ESK BELLE after the River Esk which joins the sea at Whitby, and will replace the SKYLARK.

Yorkcruise now trades as Waterline Cruise & Dine. The DUCHESS OF YORK continues to run to the 'Ship Inn' at Acaster Malbis.

THAMES

RG (Passenger Launches) Ford has agreed compensation for their workers who used the Dagenham ferry which closed in January; each of the 240 regular passengers will receive £2000, and a minibus will operate for those who have no alternative transport.

Colliers Launches have bought the PRINCESS FREDA, laid-up since 2001. Built in 1926, nearly all her active life has been spent on the upriver service from London. She will be rebuilt before returning to service, probably on charters or short trips.

London Waterbus Co The service between Camden Lock and Little Venice runs daily till 30 September, then on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in October, and at weekends in winter. There are day trips to Limehouse on 17 and 31 July, 14 August and 18 September, to Hillingdon on 24 July and 4 September, and to Horsenden Hill on 10 July and 7 August.

French Brothers Sailings from Runnymede, Windsor and Maidenhead follow the usual pattern. The service to Hampton Court runs on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 28 June to 2 September. A boat is again based at Wallingford, offering public trips from 22 May to 12 September; on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, there is a return trip to Goring with a cruise from there, and on other days, there are non-landing cruises.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne Cruises to Beachy Head run daily from 1 May to 30 September as usual. Evening cruises leave Sovereign Harbour Marina at 1815. Special trips include cruises to Birling Gap on 6 and 20 June, 4 and 25 July, 29 August and 12 September, and a "summer solstice sunrise special" departing at 0345 on 21 June.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy The new electric boat is named SOLAR HERITAGE. She is a 46-ft catamaran, built by MW Line in Switzerland.

Wightlink The ST CLARE is offering an evening cruise to Cowes Week fireworks from Portsmouth and Ryde on 13 August at a fare of £40.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED FALCON returned to service in April after rebuilding.

Derham Marine, Mudeford Trips to Yarmouth with three hours ashore are scheduled for 8 and 23 June, 7 and 22 July, 5 August, and 4 and 19 September.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Hugo Express As well as services from Granville, Carteret and Diélette, there are trips on some dates by the VICTOR HUGO from Cherbourg to Alderney and Guernsey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The National Trust is building a landing stage to serve Trelissick Garden on the River Fal near the King Harry Ferry. It is due to open in August, and will be served by boats from Falmouth, St Mawes and Truro.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth A day trip along the canal to Exeter is scheduled for 28 May. Wildlife day cruises are scheduled to Brixham on 22 May, to Beer on 12 June, 23 July and 25 September, and to Seaton on 6 August, all giving two hours ashore (additional trips have been added since the programme was advertised last autumn).

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips are scheduled to Tewkesbury on 22 May, 12 June, and 11 and 25 September, to Sharpness on 15 May, 11 July, 19 September and 9 October, and to Saul on 3 and 4 July.

D Page, Hampton Loade A new ferry entered service in April. It was built of wood at Blists Hill Victorian Museum and was partly funded by a £17 000 grant from the Environment Agency.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL DAFFODIL has been off service for engine repairs and is not expected to resume till 20 May. The Manchester Ship Canal cruises on 24-25 April were cancelled.

The Mill Hotel & Restaurant, Chester The restaurant boat operated on the Shropshire Union Canal is named L'EAU-T CUISINE and was built by Falcon Engineering at Whitchurch in 2001; she carries 60 passengers and has a propeller and rudder at each end so does not need to turn round.

G P Hamer 5 May 2004

TRIP OUT

June 2004

This is the last issue of this newssheet to be prepared in Chiswick as I will shortly be moving to Norwood Green which is beside the Grand Union Canal slightly further from central London. Please use the address below for correspondence.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL returned to service on 26 May as scheduled, spending a day on the Bristol Channel with the WAVERLEY before heading to Northern Ireland. She now has a Polish deck crew and Latvian catering staff, all apparently English-speaking.

NORTH EAST

Tyne Leisure Line Three-hour public trips are advertised for Sundays from 21 March to 31 October, and Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to September.

Robinsons Hire Cruisers, Dewsbury, have ceased trading and the CALDER LADY is laid-up awaiting sale.

THAMES

Essex Marina, Wallasea Island, has reopened the ferry to Burnham-on-Crouch which was suspended last year. The LADY ESSEX II has been bought from the previous operator, Mr Taylor, with the help of grants from local authorities. Sailings run at weekends from 29 May, and there are also weekday cruises to view seals off the river mouth, and trips up the Crouch.

R P Mahony (White Cliffs Boat Tours), Dover The SOUTHERN QUEEN's trips now run from the Clock Tower at Dover Marina in the Western Docks. Public trips run at weekends from April to October and daily from June to August.

Lee Valley Boat Centre has taken over the PRIDE OF LEE from Lea Rivers Trust, and she will run from Broxbourne with the LADY OF LEE VALLEY. Special trips include a Broxbourne-Ware evening trip with fish and chips on 6 August, and trips from Ware on 7 and 8 August.

Thames Rivercruise, Reading Trips to Beale Park have this year been extended to Goring and also call at Pangbourne.

Magna Carta Steamship Co The LORD OF THE HIGHLANDS, used for cruises in the west of Scotland for the past two seasons, is currently based at Tower Pier and is being advertised as a hotel. She makes short cruises downriver for lunch and dinner.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne, have bought a 47 ft Watson class lifeboat which has been restored to offer trips from Sovereign Harbour as the FORMER RNLB THE ROBERT. During her active service from 1960 to 1991, she was stationed at Broughty Ferry, Baltimore, Lytham St Annes and Beaumaris, and saved 46 lives.

Gosport Ferry Falkland Islands Holdings has bought a 21.6% share of the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Co which owns Gosport Ferry. The purchase is claimed to be a long-term investment.

Wightlink Last summer's FASTCAT service from Lymington to Cowes is being repeated for Cowes Week. From 7 to 14 August, there will be eight return trips a day, starting from Lymington at 0715 and +finishing with a midnight departure from Cowes.
Red Funnel Ferries The company has been bought from J P Morgan International Capital Corporation, owners since December 2000, by its management with finance from the Bank of Scotland.
The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL visited the "Dordt in Stoom" steam festival at Dordrecht in the Netherlands on 14-16 May. When she arrived there during the night of 13/14 May, the tug assisting her capsized near Dordrecht and the tug skipper was drowned.

WEST OF ENGLAND
P Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) The TORBAY BELLE entered service at the beginning of June. She can now carry 250 passengers and runs from Torquay and Brixham to Dartmouth. On Tuesdays and Sundays, she has an evening wildife cruise for the Living Coasts aviary at Torquay.
Fal Pleasure Cruises The ENTERPRISE boats now also offer sailings from St Mawes to Truro, and call at the "Smuggler's Cottage" at Tolverne. The boats will also call at Trelissick Garden when the new landing stage opens in August.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Messing About on the River, Bristol, is a new company which has bought the RIVER PRINCE from Newark. Originally the MARINA on the Norfolk Broads, she has been renamed RIVER PRINCESS. She is based at Hanham and runs to Keynsham and Bristol; charter trips can go as far as Bath.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS
Linda Cruising Co, Cosgrove The ELIZABETH OF GLAMIS has a new owner who trades as Cosgrove Narrowboat Co. Occasional public trips run from Cosgrove Wharf and from Milton Keynes (Campbell Park).

MISCELLANY
The former paddle steamer TATTERSHALL CASTLE was towed back to her mooring on the Embankment in London on 19 May after her £4.75 million conversion at Great Yarmouth. Many original features, including the paddle wheels, have been removed and her appearance has suffered.
The theatre ship FITZCARRALDO, formerly a Norwegian ferry, is again offering theatrical performances around the coasts, visiting Portsmouth, Dover, Chatham, Leith, Orkney, Shetland, Liverpool and other places.

G P Hamer 4 June 2004

TRIP OUT

July 2004

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY struck an underwater object off the Mull of Kintyre on 20 June. After a hull inspection, she completed her day trip and charters on the next two days, but the MCA then restricted her to sailing in daylight in winds less than force 3 until she was dry-docked. Sailings were suspended and she sailed to the nearest available dry dock, at Birkenhead, arriving on 25 June. After bottom repairs, she returned to Glasgow on 2 July for an evening charter, and resumed scheduled trips the next day. From 23 July, the ships will use a new berth in Glasgow at Pacific Quay on the south bank near the Glasgow Science Centre. The BALMORAL successfully completed her day trip to Padstow on 15 June. She arrived on the Thames on 23 June. She was unable to make her first call at Maldon on 2 July; the 200 passengers booked went by road to Brightlingsea to join the ship.

NORTH EAST

NEXUS - Tyne & Wear PTE Three-hour cruises from South Shields to Newcastle are scheduled for Sundays 25 July, 8 August, 5 and 19 September, 3 and 17 October, and 5 December. Shorter river cruises with children's entertainment are on Wednesdays from 4 August to 1 September.

EAST ANGLIA

National Trust, Orford Ness The landing stage at Orford Ness was closed for emergency repairs on 9 June and the site was closed to the public. It was expected to reopen on 10 July.

Brightlingsea Harbour Commission reopened a ferry to Point Clear, St Osyth, in May. It apparently last ran in 2002. A new 12-passenger vessel, the COMMUNITY REACH, entered service in July. The service runs on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays till 30 September, and every day from 17 July to 5 September.

THAMES

R G (Passenger Launches) The three vessels used on Ford's Dagenham ferry which closed in January have found new owners. The TWIN STAR II has gone to the Lake District.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Boats resumed calling at Putney in June, and also serve Waterloo as well as Westminster.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Wildlife cruises scheduled to land at Beer on 23 July and 25 September, will instead land at Seaton.

Mountbatten Water Taxis, Plymouth The owner has introduced a new vessel, the SPIRIT OF PLYMOUTH, offering excursions and charters under the name Sound Cruising.

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry The QUEEN OF HELFORD has been renamed TAMAR BELLE, but retains the union flags painted on the sides of her hull by her previous owner at Dartmouth. The previous TAMAR BELLE, the former LOOK AHEAD II at St Mawes, has been sold for service at Tewkesbury.

K J Bridge, Plymouth The MAID EXMOUTH has been renamed DEVON BELLE V.

Cornwall Ferries The cruises from St Mawes advertised last season are not being offered this year.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Telstar Cruisers, Tewkesbury, have bought the TAMAR BELLE from Plymouth. She has been renamed AVON BELLE II and is used on trips to Twyning.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The £4-million refit of the WOODCHURCH was completed in June. She was due to return to service on 3 July, sailing to Manchester with the ROYAL DAFFODIL.

Keswick Launch Co has bought the former Dagenham ferry TWIN-STAR II. She sailed from London to Workington, taking a week, and was then lifted onto a trailer for the road journey to Keswick where she arrived on 17 June. Low water levels in the lake delayed her launching, but she is due to run this summer under a new name. She is the largest vessel on the lake.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN completed her special excursions on 15-17 June, but was unable to berth at Llandudno on 18 June and the day trip to Douglas was cancelled. She left the Mersey on 25 June for her summer charter in the Azores and is due back in October.

G P Hamer 7 July 2004

TRIP OUT

August 2004

I recently made my first trip in the TORBAY BELLE, now in her first season as an excursion ship since being rebuilt from Caledonian MacBrayne's LOCHMOR.

Her hull is dark blue, with the legend "Dartmouth Day Cruise". The funnel, at the after end of the upper deck, is also dark blue with a shield emblem bearing the letters "CPS" (the owners are Carol and Peter Scott). There is a large saloon taking up the full width of the main deck, carpeted and panelled in wood, with a bar on the starboard side forward. Tables and chairs can be rearranged for evening trips and charters. The foredeck is not normally open to passengers. Toilets are at the forward end of the saloon. The open deck aft has rows of fixed blue plastic seats. There is no passenger accommodation on the lower deck where the LOCHMOR's saloon was situated. Stairs lead up from the after deck to the "sun deck" which has more blue seats, and a bar behind the wheelhouse. Both bars offer a full range of drinks, including tea and coffee served in china mugs. The owners' brochure advertises sandwiches and cream teas, but I didn't see any sign of these. She has class V and VI certificates for 250 passengers and five crew, and a class VI(A) for 50 passengers. The sea was calm so it was not possible to judge the TORBAY BELLE's sea keeping qualities.

She is the largest vessel owned and based in Torbay since the DEVONIUN (ex HEBRIDES). The TORBAY BELLE is a splendid addition to the local excursion fleets and I hope she is a success.

Geoffrey Hamer, London

NORTH EAST

Daniel Munro Cruises, Doncaster, has formed a new company, Sprotbrough Riverboat Ltd, to run the WYRE LADY. She continues to operate as before and contact details are unchanged.

THAMES

Capital Pleasure Boats have bought a 180-passenger vessel on the continent; she is due in service in London in the autumn and will be renamed JUBILANT.

Thames Rivercruise, Reading The DEVON BELLE operated at Hampton Court during the annual Flower Show from 6 to 11 July, running a ferry service from the station along with Turk's boats and Mr Langley's HENLEY.

Cotswold River Cruises, Lechlade The ADVENTURESS's season ends on 3 October , then from November to March, she will be moored at the Swan Hotel, Radcot, as a function room. Trips from Lechlade will resume on 20 March 2005.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The complex legal dispute over the cost of repairing the SOLIDOR 5 continues. A court has allowed the owners of the vessel to seize fuel from the HOVERSPEED GREAT BRITAIN as payment (the catamaran cannot be seized as she is not owned by Emeraude Jersey Ferries). The Hoverspeed craft has continued to run from St-Malo to Jersey, while the SOLIDOR 5 is laid-up at St-Malo.

WEST OF ENGLAND

P Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) The TORBAY BELLE is based at the Haldon Pier, Torquay. Her day trip to the Dart leaves at 1100, calls at Brixham at 1130, cruises off Dittisham, lands at Dartmouth for two hours and gets back to Brixham and Torquay around 1700; evening cruises operate most days. The BRIXHAM BELLE II, TORBAY PRINCESS and the interest in the Torquay-Brixham ferry have been sold to the Western Lady Ferry Service.

Western Lady Ferry Service The BRIXHAM BELLE II has been renamed TORBAY PRINCESS II and runs with her near sister TORBAY PRINCESS between Torquay's inner harbour and Brixham, while the WESTERN LADY III and IV continue to run between Princess Pier and Brixham.

K Lane, Paignton The RIVIERA ROSE was renamed RIVIERA PRINCESS last year.

Mountbatten Water Taxis, Plymouth The new SPIRIT OF PLYMOUTH was built by the owner and is 60 ft long, with a Class V certificate for 143 passengers. She has a saloon with a bar, and an open deck above. She offers Dockyard cruises from the Barbican, and charters.

Torpoint Ferry The first of the new ferries was launched at Port Glasgow on 3 August and named PLYM II. She is due to enter service in December.

Helford River Boats have introduced a new 12-passenger catamaran named OCEAN WAVE. She makes six trips a day linking Helford, Helford Passage, Trebah and Glendurgan Gardens, and can also land passengers on request at the Budock Vean Hotel.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Sunday sailings were scheduled for 13 June, 18 July and 5 September, leaving Penzance at 0900 and St Mary's at 1700.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co opened a ferry service across the harbour from ss GREAT BRITAIN to Capricorn Quay on 16 July. The boat runs in the mornings and evenings on Mondays to Fridays, and in summer in the daytime every day.

Messing About on the River, Bristol The RIVER PRINCESS is scheduled to make a public day trip from Hanham to Bath on 28 August.

Cardiff Cats A commuter service from Penarth to Cardiff is due to start on 9 August, with three morning trips to the city between 0700 and 0920, and three afternoon trips between 1630 and 1920.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA made a trip from Douglas and Laxey to Ramsey on 25 July, her only visit to Ramsey this year.

G P Hamer 6 August 2004

TRIP OUT

September 2004

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings as scheduled on 3 September.

THAMES

Thames Clippers have bought the former Dagenham ferry TWIN-STAR. After refitting, she entered service in mid-August on the ferry service from the Hilton Docklands to Canary wharf. Her capacity is now 120 passengers.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne, have won an award from the Transport Trust for restoration work on the SOUTHERN QUEEN and WILLIAM ALLCHORN.

Ross Boat Trips, Brighton, offer sea cruises and angling trips from the Marina. The ROSSANN carries 30 passengers and the THRESHER carries 24.

Arundel Boatyard now runs the river trips previously run by Skyark Cruises. The ARUNDEL CASTLE offers hourly river cruises, and the 28-passenger AMBERLEY CASTLE runs to Amberley, leaving Arundel at 1015 and 1330, with one hour ashore in Amberley.

Red Funnel Ferries A RED JET ran a service from Gosport to Cowes between 7 and 13 August for Cowes Week. From 11 to 19 September, there will be a service from Gosport to Southampton for the Southampton Boat Show, with eight or nine round trips a day, the first from Southampton at 0615 and the last sailing from Gosport at 2030.

Brownsea Island Ferries want to run the MAID OF THE HARBOUR from Weymouth on cruises as far as Portland and St Alban's Head. A row has broken out with Weymouth Council which wants the trips to operate from the Pleasure Pier while the owners want a berth in the harbour by the Pavilion.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Hugo Express The MARIN-MARIE has been off service after a major engine breakdown in early August. From 3 September, she was due to be replaced by the chartered LOCMARIA 56, a similar fast catamaran which in July and August runs to Belle-Ile off southern Brittany.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The new landing stage at Trelissick on the River fal was officially opened on 18 August by Matthew Taylor, MP for Truro.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Three-hour bird-watching cruises are scheduled for 29 dates between 13 November and 13 March.

K Lane, Paignton The BAY PRINCESS (previously Mr Bewley's SPARKLE) has been offered for sale for £55 000.

P Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) The TORBAY BELLE has been advertised for sale by brokers for £295 000.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bath City Boat Trips offer cruises downstream from Pulteney Weir in the 56-passenger AVON EMPRESS, the smaller CLEOPATRA and the 12-passenger SWAN. Hourly public trips leave from just below the Weir.

Boats at Bristol The MERCURY has been joined by another converted lifeboat, the TAURUS, which was apparently originally on the CANBERRA.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Evesham River Cruises has been formed by Mr Doug Payne to run the EMPRESS which has been bought from Telstar Cruisers of Tewkesbury. The EMPRESS was built for the Norfolk Broads and was then at York before going to Tewkesbury in 2000. Public trips run from Evesham Lock upstream to the Riverside Restaurant and Bridge Inn at Offenham.

NORTH WEST

Welsh Canal Holiday craft, Llangollen The THOMAS TELFORD is to be sold after the season, and has been advertised for £34 500.

Mersey Ferries The WOODCHURCH was renamed SNOWDROP on 19 August, becoming the third Mersey ferry of that name. The first ran from 1884 to 1906, and the second from 1910 to 1936. All three ships, originally built for Birkenhead Corporation, have now been rebuilt and renamed with names from the Wallasey Corporation fleet.

G P Hamer 6 September 2004

TRIP OUT

October 2004

The summer of 2004 will be remembered for changeable weather and showers which were often heavy. Rainfall was higher than normal, but temperatures and sunshine were still average.

The lack of settled fine weather may have kept some day trippers at home, but police at Ilfracombe had to deal with drunken day trippers from South Wales on a couple of occasions in August. Excessive drinking has been a feature of many pleasure steamer services since Victorian times, but the behaviour of Welsh visitors to Ilfracombe seems to have evolved: the local paper on 19 August reported that "The normal routine involves the men visiting charity shops and dressing up as women, before a pub crawl round the town". I can't find any mention of this "normal routine" in advertisements for the BALMORAL's trips, but perhaps future books on the history of Bristol Channel sailings will explain it for us.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's south coast sailings were affected by the weather and were cancelled on 13, 14, 21 and 23 September, while she was confined to the Solent on the 11th, 12th and 18th. Her Thames season was due to start from Dover on 24 September, but passengers were taken by bus to join her at Whitstable. The BALMORAL was delayed by bad weather en route from the Bristol Channel to Scotland, and after her Clyde sailings, returned south for a charter to follow the start of the Global Challenge round-the-world yacht race at Portsmouth on 3 October.

NORTH EAST

A&G Passenger Boats, Sheffield As well as the converted barge A39, the APOLLO is leased from Apollo Canal Cruises of Shipley, and offers afternoon cruises to Tinsley Locks in summer.

Sheffield Canal Co has ceased trading and the PRINCESS MARY sank at her mooring during the summer. She was raised by British Waterways but is unlikely to return to service. Built in 1919, she ran from York, Runnymede and Mirfield before going to Sheffield in 1990.

EAST ANGLIA

The Albatros Project During the past season, the ketch ALBATROS offered day trips from Ipswich, Great Yarmouth, Wells-next-the-Sea, Chatham, Portsmouth, Folkestone and Southend, while longer cruises were scheduled to Oostende, Amsterdam, Kiel and Brest. During a day cruise from Southend on 22 August, a 75-year-old man who had asked to climb the mast slipped and fell to his death.

THAMES

London Bridge City Pier is closed for maintenance from 4 to 25 October. Westminster Pier is closed on Mondays to Fridays from 4 October to March, and boats will use Embankment or Waterloo Piers.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The minesweeper HMS GRIMSBY struck the DUCHESS M on 29 September at about 0200, causing considerable damage, and also slightly damaging the PRINCESS POCAHONTAS, as they were moored overnight at West Street Pier, Gravesend. The Tilbury ferry service has been suspended.

Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) Summer sailings to Kew and Hampton Court ended on 26 September; Mr Langley's HENLEY will continue running to Kew and Hampton Court till the end of October, while King Cruises plan to run sailings to Kew at weekends until Christmas, weather and circumstances permitting.

SOUTH COAST

Blue Funnel Cruises The new catamaran has entered service as the ASHLEIGH R, named after a member of the Rayment family who own both Blue Funnel and Solent & Wight line Cruises. She is a similar in layout to the ALI CAT and SOLENT CAT, but is smaller and has dark blue rather than white hulls.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The company has been sold by ABN Amro to Royal Bank of Scotland, the company's management is not expected to change.

Hugo Express The MARIN-MARIE's engine breakdown was on 29 July (not early August as stated in the last issue); she is not expected to return to service till January. The LOCMARIA 56 was chartered for a month from 3 September to run from Granville. Winter services are limited to weekend trips from Granville to Jersey and the VICTOR HUGO will be used.

WEST OF ENGLAND

K J Bridge, Plymouth The DEVON BELLE V has been sold little more than a year after arriving in Plymouth from Exmouth where she was the MAID OF EXMOUTH. As a replacement, the ALOUETTE has been bought from Cornwall Ferries.

Cornwall Ferries The NEW PRINCESS MAUD has been advertised for sale. The ALOUETTE has been sold; she was bought from Balcomb Boats of St Mawes before the 2003 season but does not seem to have been used by Cornwall Ferries.

Helford River Boats The owners, Simon and Tina Walker, are offering the business for sale; as well as the ferry services, there are moorings and a beach kiosk.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

J Barbeary, Ilfracombe, has ordered a new boat from Gemini Workboats of Colchester. To be named ILFRACOMBE PRINCESS, it will be a 46-ft glass-fibre catamaran, carrying about 100 passengers on two decks, and will replace the QUEEN OF CORNWALL, built to run from Padstow but owned by the Barbeary family since 1977.

NORTH WEST

Coniston Launch The two launches are to be converted to electric power this winter, with solar panels and batteries. Winter trips are daily till 30 November, from 26 December to 9 January and from 14 February, and run from Wednesdays to Sundays at other times.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN returned to Liverpool on 2 October after her charter in the Azores. She will return to service on 22 October with a Douglas-Dublin sailing.

TRIP OUT

November 2004

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions. The only significant change is the introduction of Blue Funnel Cruises' new ASHLEIGH R.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	City Cruises	1887
2(2)	Thames Luxury Ch	1815
3(3)	Woods River Cruises	1692
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(9)	George Wheeler L	544
10(10)	Dart Pleasure Craft	443

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	3890
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(3)	Catamaran Cruisers	2527
4(4)	Salter's Steamers	2000
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(6)	Thames Luxury Ch	1583
7(9)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1548
8(7)	French Brothers	1506
9(8)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1468
=10(=10)	Crown River Cruises	1095
=10(=10)	Woods River Cruises	1095

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's only call at Southwold on 6 October was cancelled by the weather and passengers were taken by bus to Harwich. The sailing to Dover on 11 October and the next day's south coast trip were cancelled as the WAVERLEY was stormbound at Tilbury till 12 October; she called at Southampton for fuel and was then stranded at Weymouth on 13-15 October, before getting as far as Mount's Bay, but was unable to round Land's End to get to the Bristol Channel. The BALMORAL was recommissioned to run on 16-18 October, doing a return cruise to the Gower on the last day, instead of a single trip to Milford Haven. The WAVERLEY eventually rounded Land's End and, after taking on fuel at Milford Haven, reached Glasgow on 19 October.

NORTH EAST

NEXUS - Tyne & Wear PTE Plans to build a new ferry to replace the SHIELDSMAN in 2005 have been postponed to 2006.

Wear Cruises, Sunderland, is offering the BROKAELA for sale for £37 000.

THAMES

Services in London changed to winter schedules on 1 November: cruises to the Thames Barrier and trips to Richmond and Hampton Court have finished, and other services are reduced.

Catamaran Cruisers The HYDROSPACE BETA has been returned to Paris where she has regained her previous name of JULIETTE GRECO (the name of a singer). She had spent about eight years in London.

King Cruises, Westminster, has bought the GREENWICH BELLE from George Wheeler Launches. She will be rebuilt to be used mainly for charters and will be renamed ARCADIAN PRINCESS. She was built by Toughs at Teddington for the Thames Motor Boat Co which was later taken over by George Wheeler Launches.

French Brothers The GAIETY is being offered for sale by tender.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The Falkland Island Holding Co has made a takeover bid for the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Co, offering £35 a share. The Falkland company already owned 26.6% of the ferry company.

Isle of Wight Council The ferry was due to be towed to Southampton on 18 October for a refit which was due to take two weeks. A replacement passenger service was provided by a launch.

Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The BRAMBLE BUSH BAY is to be off service for a refit from 8 November for about three weeks, and the service will be suspended. She will be towed to Southampton for docking.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR 10 was damaged whilst berthing at St Helier in high winds on 24 October, and was out of service for a few days for repairs. Next year's services are similar to this year's. The fast ferry from Weymouth is suspended from 8 to 31 January and runs every day from 24 March to 31 October. Poole is served from 25 March to 31 October, while the full two-vessel service, including a daily Poole-Cherbourg service for Brittany Ferries, runs from 23 May to 2 October. The COMMODORE CLIPPER does a Portsmouth-Cherbourg trip on Sundays from 17 July to 11 September - ten trips compared with 16 this year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft As usual in winter, one-hour harbour cruises from Dartmouth are offered daily except Mondays and Fridays, by the DART EXPLORER or BALTIC STAR.

Torpoint Ferry Two of the three ferries were out of action for a time on 23 October owing a gale-force winds and a high tide.

Isle of Scilly Steamship Co has introduced the SWIFT LADY, a 35-knot launch, to carry cargo and mail to the off-islands

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bath City Boat Trips The 12-passenger SWAN capsized below Pulteney Weir on 14 October. The ten passengers were rescued.

Bristol Packet The Avon Gorge cruise scheduled for 20 November has been cancelled because of maintenance work on the lock. Cruises in the City Docks are offered at weekends in winter.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Next year's Manchester Ship Canal cruises are scheduled for 7-8, 11-12, 14-15 and 28-29 May, 8-9 and 25-26 June, 6-7, 9-10 and 26-27 July, 6-7, 10-11 and 20-21 August, and 3-4, 10-11, 17-18 and 24-25 September.

Coniston Launch Work on converting the RANSOME to solar power began in November, while the RUSKIN maintains the winter service. The RANSOME is due to be completed in December and the RUSKIN will be converted in the new year.

MISCELLANY

The George Prior repair yard at Great Yarmouth has closed owing to lack of work. In recent years, the yard had carried out major refits of the WAVERLEY and TATTERSHALL CASTLE.

TRIP OUT

December 2004

THAMES

King Cruises, Westminster The trial winter weekend service to Kew finished in November following sparse passenger numbers.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink In a dispute over pay and working hours, the RMT Union is balloting its members over possible strike action.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED EAGLE is to be rebuilt in Gdańsk, like the RED FALCON and 'OSPREY, at a cost of £2.5 million. She will be away from December till March. A two-ship service will operate to East Cowes between 16 December and 23 March, and again from 4 to 11 April. The BERGEN CASTLE, which was used last winter, is laid-up.

Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The BRAMBLE BUSH BAY was towed to Southampton on 8 November for her refit, and returned on the 30th. The Sandbanks ferry service resumed on 1 December.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The HOVERSPEED GREAT BRITAIN has been renamed EMERAUDE GB. She is still owned by Hoverspeed and registered in Folkestone.

Hugo Express The French local authority behind the service, the Conseil Général de la Manche, is ending the present management contract with a subsidiary of Connex, following a series of mechanical problems with the craft. Tenders have been invited for a new operator to run the two craft for a five-year period from 1 April. Until then, Hugo Express will continue to run a weekend service from Granville to Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB is running avocet cruises on the Exe estuary between 25 October and 12 March. There are cruises of 3 to 4 hours from Exmouth or Starcross on eleven dates and shorter trips from Topsham on ten dates. This is the first year the RSPB has run these trips from Starcross and Mr Rackley's MY QUEEN made the first on 14 November. Advance booking is essential as the trips are likely to be fully booked.

Plymouth Boat Cruises have advertised the TOTNES CASTLE for sale for £120 000.

Torpoint Ferry The first of the new ferries, the PLYM II, left Port Glasgow under tow on 2 December and was expected to take five days to reach Plymouth. The second was launched on 31 August and named TAMAR II. The LYNHER II is due to be launched this month.

Cornwall Ferries The ferry between Falmouth and St Mawes is running on Sundays this winter, supported by a subsidy from the County Council.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The business has been sold for £750 000 by Graham Thompson to a Mr Richard Clements who had previously worked in the catering industry. Mr Thompson, who is now retiring, started the business in 1993 and had previously owned Torbay Seaways. The EDWARD ELGAR will be used for 3-hour Christmas lunch cruises from Gloucester from 7 to 24 December, taking up to 42 passengers; the fare, including a 4-course lunch, is £25. During the summer, the two vessels will offer 2, 4 and 6-night cruises as before.

Lincoln Boat Trips The BRAYFORD BELLE is being advertised for sale for £115 000.

NORTH WEST

Windermere Lake Cruises The winter timetable runs from 1 November to 18 March with eight trips daily between Bowness and Ambleside, and four trips daily between Bowness and Lakeside; from 10 January to 18 March, Lakeside services are at weekends only.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The Liverpool-Dublin service, operated since 1997, will not resume next year. The island is expected to be served by one fast ferry next summer, covering Liverpool, Dublin and Belfast routes, while the BEN-MY-CHREE continues to run from Heysham. The LADY OF MANN will be used for the TT Race traffic, and is expected to return in the autumn.

G P Hamer 7 December 2004

TRIP OUT

January 2005

Many operators will be starting their summer sailings early this year because Easter is early (Good Friday is 25 March). Various events will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, including an International Festival of the Sea at Portsmouth from 30 June to 3 July.

Geoffrey Hamer

NORTH EAST

Yorkboat The business was sold in November by John and Denise Howard to Zeus Capital, an investment company from Manchester. The business was started as White Rose Cruises in 1977 by Mr Howard's father, and later expanded by taking over Hill's Boatyard.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich Afternoon cruises off Harwich run on 26 and 28 March, then on Saturdays and Sundays from 30 April to 25 September (except 21 May, and 2 and 30 July), and on Wednesdays and Fridays in summer.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The 2005 programme has been published and longer trips include Sheerness and Swale cruises on 26 March and 24 September, Thames Estuary cruises on 30 April, 26 June and 10 September, cruises to New Hythe and Darnet Ness on 21 May and 3 September, the Medway Barge Race on 28 May, round Sheppey on 11 June, Southend on 18 June, and 16 and 30 July, a Sheerness cruise on 2 July, Whitstable to off Herne Bay on 6 August, London and Putney on 12-14 August, wharfs, creeks and jetties on 20 August, a "Medway Nelson and Trafalgar cruise" on 27 August, a bird watching cruise on 29 October and an end-of-season cruise on 30 October.

Absolute Pleasure Boats The business has been advertised for sale for the rather unrealistic price of £1.5 million.

Capital Pleasure Boats The purchase of a vessel from Germany (see August issue) has fallen through because of difficulties getting a British passenger certificate.

Magna Carta Steamship Co The Scottish cruise ship LORD OF THE HIGHLANDS, which was based in London for part of last summer, has been sold and has gone to offer cruises in the Galapagos islands.

Great River Journeys is a new company formed by Keith French who has left French Brothers, the firm he founded with his two brothers in 1978. Trips will be offered from Wallingford as far as Reading and Henley.

Salter's Steamers Public services for 2005 follow last year's pattern except that Wallingford-Abingdon runs on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, and Wallingford-Reading on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The season is from 21 May to 25 September (with a few exceptions). Afternoon trips from Oxford upstream to Godstow are scheduled for 30 May, 27 June, 25 July and 29 August; because of low bridges, only the firm's smaller boats can be used.

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Conservancy The solar-powered catamaran SOLAR HERITAGE introduced last year was not actually new, but was built in 2002 to run on Lake Neuchâtel for Expo-02.

Gosport Ferry Falkland Islands Holdings finally gained control of the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Co in December. The new owners say they will continue to operate the service as before.

Red Funnel Ferries To try to avoid forecast bad weather, the RED EAGLE left early for Gdańsk and arrived there on 17 December to begin her conversion; her sailings on 14 and 15 December were consequently cancelled.

Solent Party Ship Cruises, Southampton The PRINCESS CAROLINE has been advertised for sale for £650 000.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Amongst coastal trips this year are trips to carnivals at Teignmouth on 29 July and Dawlish on 18 August, and wildlife day cruises on 14 and 15 May, 11 June and 10 September.

Torpoint Ferry The new PLYM II arrived in Plymouth from Scotland on 5 December. After trials, she made her first crossing with cars on 23 December.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The service will be suspended from 24 February to 3 March while the vessel is refitted. The company is to order a new ferry to replace the present vessel in 2006. It will carry 34 cars, compared with a current capacity of 23.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's summer schedule has been published and, as last year, around two-thirds of sailings are from Ilfracombe and the remainder from Bideford.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council Lancashire County Council has agreed to finance a new boat which is due in service next summer. Running costs for the next ten years will covered by the two councils, and the service will continue to be operated by Wyre Waste Management.

G P Hamer 9 January 2005

TRIP OUT

February 2005

Waverley Excursions The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has published its report into the WAVERLEY's accident on 20 June when she hit rocks off the island of Sanda near Campbeltown. The ship's crew and management were blamed for inadequate planning, amongst other failings. The master was criticised for calling coastguards on a mobile phone, rather than the radio, in order to try to avoid media attention.

NORTH EAST

Tyne Leisure Line Three-hour public cruises, leaving at 1200, run on Sundays from 13 March to 30 October, and on 13 and 27 November, and 4 and 18 December, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to September. Advance booking is required.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co As well as the usual trips to London and Southend, the PRINCESS POCAHONTAS is making two special trips, on 16 July for the Thames Sailing Barge Match, and on 14 August to the forts in the estuary.

Thames Leisure Fire broke out on the MIYUKI MARU on 13 January as she was off Chatham on her way from London for her annual refit. The two crew moored her, and a fire-fighting tug and fire engines put out the blaze which badly damaged her saloons. She is expected to go to Great Yarmouth for rebuilding.

Canal Cruises, Mytchett The trips on the Basingstoke Canal are run this season by John Cale Canal Cruises. The MERLIN runs with three 12-passenger boats, including this year the 54-ft MAYFLY, built in the style of an inspection launch.

SOUTH COAST

Edwards & Co, Hayling Island Langstone Harbour Board plans to increase the annual charge for using the ferry pontoons from £900 to £13 260. The operators say the service will have to close unless the charge is reduced.

Red Funnel Ferries In 2004, the company's passenger traffic increased by 2.55% and the number of cars carried increased 5.76%.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL makes the first public cruise of her 50th anniversary year on 30 April, and has special trips for the Naval Review and International Festival of the Sea at Portsmouth from 26 June to 4 July, and Cowes week in August. A visit to the Clyde is planned for 11-31 July, and she goes to Weymouth from 13 to 23 August. Bookings for public trips are taken by Blue Funnel Cruises at Southampton.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The charter of the EMERAUDE GB (ex HOVERSPEED GREAT BRITAIN) ends this month and she will be replaced by her sister SEACAT FRANCE.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The FLAMBORIAN, bought last winter and expected to be refitted to resume service in 2006, has been placed on the market again.

Dart Pleasure Craft Dartmouth-Totnes sailings run daily from 24 March to 30 October. Two-hour coastal cruises run on 52 dates from 1 June to 27 August. The Dartmouth-Greenway service runs on Wednesdays to Saturdays from 24 March to 8 October, but is reduced to two trips each day, leaving Dartmouth at 1130 and 1430.
Fal Pleasure Cruises From 28 March to 30 April, there will be a limited service to Truro, with sailings from Falmouth at 1030 and 1430; the full service starts in May.
Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's season runs from 21 March to 5 November, with sailings daily (except Sundays) from 8 April to 24 October (but with no Tuesday sailings before 24 May), and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the early and late season. On Saturdays 28 May and 4 June, there are two round trips, and on Saturdays from 23 July to 3 September, the Penzance departure is at 1100. On other days, she leaves Penzance at 0915 and St Mary's at 1630, except on Wednesdays from 13 July to 31 August when, as last year, the morning sailing is at 0800 to give day trippers more time ashore. The day return fare is £35.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips are scheduled to Sharpness on 15 May, 17 July, 18 September and 9 October, and to Tewkesbury on 21 and 30 May, and 10 and 24 September.

NORTH WEST

Welsh Canal Holiday Craft, Llangollen The THOMAS TELFORD is being replaced by a new vessel of the same name.
Boatel Party Cruises, Chorley The business has been sold by Mr Shaun Smith to Mrs Shirley Mcguinness, who has previous experience in the entertainment business. The ROYAL SOVEREIGN is to be joined by THE MARY M, built in 1991 for the Roland Botel at Burscough. Contact details for Boatel Party Cruises are unchanged.

MISCELLANY

The SOUTHSEA, laid-up at Southampton, was towed down the River Itchen on 18 January to a temporary berth, but there now seem few options for her future other than a sale for scrap.

G P Hamer 6 February 2005

TRIP OUT

March 2005

NORTH EAST

B Clarkson, Whitby, has bought the DIANA S from Portsmouth. She was sailed to Whitby in December, and has been renamed ESK BELLE II and repainted with a yellow hull. She replaces the SKYLARK and the ESK BELLE, bought last year, and is the largest passenger vessel based at Whitby for at least 40 years.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again being chartered by the RSPB, with puffin cruises on 15 and 21 May, 11, 12 and 26 June, and 2 and 9 July, and skua and shearwater cruises on 3, 4, 10, 18, 24 and 25 September, and 1 and 2 October.

THAMES

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne The LADY OF LEE VALLEY offers various public cruises, including Sunday lunch and cream tea cruises. On 5 August, she makes an evening single trip to Ware, and offers trips from Ware on 6 and 7 August. The PRIDE OF LEE is used for short cruises from Broxbourne.

Thames Clippers The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has published its report into an accident on 2 May when a mooring bollard was torn from the STAR CLIPPER as she was berthing at St Katharine's Pier, killing a passenger waiting on the pier. Poor welding of the bollard and the crew's mooring procedure were blamed.

London Duck Tours A skipper has been fined for causing a collision between the DESDEMONA and TITANIA last year; fortunately no passengers were injured.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open to the public this year from 12 March to 30 October.

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne, plan to use only the WILLIAM ALLCHORN and the 12-passenger FORMER RNLB THE ROBERT this season, and the SOUTHERN QUEEN is being offered on bare-boat charter for the season. This year's special trips include cruises to the Seven Sisters and Birling Gap on 5 and 19 June, 3 and 24 July, 28 August, and 11 September, and a "summer solstice sunrise cruise" at 0345 on 21 June.

M G Pearce, Portsmouth The DIANA S has been sold for service at Whitby.

Gosport Ferry The steelwork of the new SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH was built by Remontowa in Poland and the vessel was towed to Portchester for fitting out. She will be relief ferry and will take over the excursion programme from the SOLENT ENTERPRISE which is expected to be sold. One of the 1966-built QUEENs will continue in service and the other will be cannibalised for spare parts.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's visit to the Clyde has been confirmed and she is due to leave Southampton on 11 July for Greenock. She offers various cruises from both Greenock and Glasgow before getting back to Southampton on 31 July.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The chartered SEACAT FRANCE has been renamed EMERAUDE FRANCE and replaced the EMERAUDE GB in February.

WEST OF ENGLAND

D McCabe, Topsham, has sold the SEA DREAM II and plans to sail a trawler across the Atlantic. The new owner of the business is a Mr Steve Garrett who plans to continue running the service to Turf Locks.

Philip Leisure Group, Dartmouth The ferry broke from its guide cables in a gale at about 1140 on 13 February and drifted down river. The crew managed to moor to a buoy and the passengers were taken off by other boats; the next day, the ferry was towed to the slipway so that vehicles could be unloaded, and resumed service on 15 February.

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry All Dockyard cruises from Mayflower Steps will call at Cremyll, providing a service from the Barbican to Cremyll and allowing passengers on the Dockyard trip to visit Mount Edgcumbe.

Mevagissey Ferries The service to Fowey runs daily from 25 April to 1 October, with three to six round trips daily.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co has signed a letter of intent with Pendennis Shipyard of Falmouth for a new ferry. The vessel is costing £3 million and will replace the present one in 2006.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Packet Avon Gorge cruises are advertised for 21 and 29 May, 5 and 18 June, 2, 16, 17, 30 and 31 July, 14, 16, 28 and 29 August, 11 and 25 September, and 29 October. One-way trips to Bath are offered on 12 June, 10 July, 7 and 27 August, and 18 September. Afternoon trips to Beese's Tea Gardens run on Sundays from Easter to September, and river trips run most days in the school summer holidays.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

D & S Coging, Peterborough, have sold the business to a Mr R Currell and the KEY FERRY has been renamed MANDOLIN, though the business still trades as Key Ferry Cruises.

G P Hamer 7 March 2005

TRIP OUT

April 2005

Waverley Excursions Timetables were published in March. The WAVERLEY starts her season on 29 April and runs on the Clyde and in the Western Isles till 22 May. From 25 May to 19 June, she is on the Bristol Channel before returning to the Clyde for the summer. She is on the South Coast from 2 to 22 September then on the Thames to 10 October, and is due to finish on the Bristol Channel on 14-17 October. The BALMORAL starts from Bristol on 25 May, sailing to Lundy with the WAVERLEY, then runs on the Irish Sea till 20 June, on the South Coast 24-28 June, on the Thames 1-17 July, on the South Coast on the 19th, then on the Bristol Channel from 22 July to 19 September, and finishes on the Clyde on 22-26 September.

THAMES

B Murphy The ABERCORN was destroyed by fire in March during a refit at Denton Slipways, Gravesend. Built by Salters at Oxford in 1925, she was one of the series of steamers built for Mears of Richmond to run upriver services from London. She was converted to diesel in 1948 and was rebuilt several times during a varied post-war career, passing to her last owners, the Murphy family, in 2002.
Capital Pleasure Boats has bought the SOLENT ENTERPRISE from Gosport and will use her for charters as the SUNDANCE. She arrived in London around the end of March and joins another former Solent vessel, the GOLDEN JUBILEE, originally Blue Funnel's LEISURE SCENE.
Westminster Passenger Service (Upriver) now trades as Thames River Boats. Sailings to Kew and Hampton Court resumed on 19 March.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT ENTERPRISE was advertised for sale by brokers for £225 000 and promptly sold for service in London. Originally the GAY ENTERPRISE, she had operated excursions on the Solent for 34 seasons and acted as relief Gosport ferry.
Red Funnel Ferries The RED EAGLE returned from rebuilding in Gdańsk in March and was in service by Easter. There are cruises for the Naval Review on 28 June in the RED EAGLE (fare £80) and RED JET 4 (£110) and the RED EAGLE also has an evening cruise (£85).
White Horse Ferries has threatened to close the Southampton-Hythe service following an increase in the annual business rates charge for Hythe Pier from £1460 to £12 257.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries The ALINE (ex SOLIDOR 4) has been chartered to Iscomar for service between Ibiza and Formentera as the PITIUSA NOVA. The dispute over the cost of refitting the SOLIDOR 5 seems to have been settled and the charter of the SEACAT FRANCE (now EMERAUDE FRANCE) has ended; the SOLIDOR 5 was due to take over on 6 April.

Hugo Express The five-year contract to run the services has been awarded by the Département de la Manche to Société Morbihannaise de Navigation, which already runs local passenger services from St-Malo and on the west coast of France. The new company took over on 1 April and will use the marketing name of Manche Iles Express (the Hugo Express name belongs to the previous operator, Connex).

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Special canal trips are scheduled for 17 June from Exmouth to Exeter, 18 June from Exeter to Exmouth, and 16 July from Exmouth to Exeter and back.

Plymouth Boat Cruises The Plymouth-Saltash service will be worked jointly with Mountbatten Water Taxis/ Sound Cruising and will include calls at Mountbatten. The new service was inaugurated by the SPIRIT OF PLYMOUTH on 1 April.

Torpoint Ferry The TAMAR II replaced the old TAMAR in March. The PLYM and TAMAR have been sold for scrapping at Esbjerg, Denmark. The third new vessel, the LYNHER II, is due in service in August.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The present vessel, due to be replaced in 2006, has been advertised for sale for £150 000.

Padstow Harbour Commissioners The BLACK TOR is being replaced by a new ferry, but will be retained for charter trips on the Estuary.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Three-hour wildlife cruises on the Mersey and into the bay are scheduled for 18 August, and 1 and 15 September.

Vale Royal Cruises, Northwich The former Dutch barge SOVEREIGN II which operated on the River Weaver till 2002 is returning to passenger service and is advertised as the BIG DUTCH BARGE. Two-hour afternoon cruises are on Sundays from April to September and up to six days a week in the summer.

Coniston Launch Conversion of the RUSKIN to solar electric power was completed in March, and both boats were in service at Easter using electric propulsion.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN's excursions include visits to Troon, where she was built, and Barrow, as well as Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Llandudno: she does Douglas-Troon on 20 May, returning the next day; day trips to and from Fleetwood on 22 and 24 May, Whitehaven on 23 May, Barrow on 25 May and Llandudno on 26 May; evening cruises from Douglas round the island are on 28 and 29 May. The SEACAT ISLE OF MAN will be operated between Liverpool and Dublin by a new company, Irish Sea Express, and the SUPERSEACAT TWO will cover the Steam Packet's fast services this season. To carry Northern Irish passengers to the TT Races in June, P&O's fast catamaran EXPRESS is being chartered on 1-3, 7, 11 and 12 June for Larne-Douglas sailings; she normally runs from Larne to Cairnryan and Troon.

MISCELLANY

The SOUTHSEA has been sold to Danish ship breakers and left Southampton on 13 March for her final voyage under tow. She arrived at Esbjerg on the 16th and work of demolishing her has started.

TRIP OUT

May 2005

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY was dry-docked at Greenock from 24 March to 25 April and opened her season as planned on 29 April.

NORTH EAST

Nexus A new ferry to replace the SHIELDSMAN in 2007 has been ordered from VT Halmatic of Portchester for £1 817 000. Short 40-minute cruises from South Shields have been introduced, leaving at 1115 and 1415 on Thursdays and Sundays.

B Clarkson, Whitby The ESK BELLE has been sold for service at Seahouses after one season at Whitby.

Waterline Cruise & Dine, York, have bought the RIVER KING from Shrewsbury and will offer hourly sightseeing trips. She previously operated in York in the rival YorkBoat fleet.

EAST ANGLIA

Brightlingsea Harbour Commission The ferry runs from 30 April to 2 October. In addition to the ferry service to Point Clear, St Osyth, there are three trips daily (at 1100, 1330 and 1600) to East Mersea Stone.

Broads Tours, Wroxham The BELLE OF THE BROADS, a 65-ft 120-passenger two-decked vessel entered service last year.

THAMES

Thames Clippers has bought two catamarans which were built in 2001 for a proposed service from Belfast. Named ANTRIM RUNNER and DOWN RUNNER, they did not enter service and subsequently went to Nigeria for use in the oil industry. They are very similar to the larger HURRICANE CLIPPER which was built by the same Australian yard.

Chas Newens Marine, Putney, has been fined £4800 plus £4000 costs for making charter trips in the INTERCEPTOR in 2003 when she did not have a valid passenger certificate.

Great River Journeys, Wallingford The three boats bought by Keith French's new company are the BERTRAM ROSE and DELTA ROSE from City Cruises, and the GLEN FALLOCH from Loch Lomond.

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Conservancy The SOLAR HERITAGE offers year-round trips from Itchenor. From 23 July to 26 August, there are public trips on most days from Emsworth.

Gosport Ferry The summer excursion programme for the new SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH starts on 22 May and is similar to the SOLENT ENTERPRISE's sailings in recent seasons: there are cruises to see liners at Southampton, to the Hamble or Beaulieu Rivers, six-hour "three rivers" cruises (some with an optional cream tea, basket meal or roast lunch), and trips to Cowes, Ryde or Spitbank Fort.

Solent Party Ship Cruises, Southampton As well as charters, the PRINCESS CAROLINE this year offers a monthly public jazz cruise.

Derham Marine, Mudeford The JOSEPHINE offers cruises to the Needles on some Fridays, and day trips to Yarmouth on Wednesdays 13 and 27 July, 10 and 24 August and 7 September.

I A & I M Robertson, Weymouth The White Motor Boats business has been sold to P & S Compton.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The FLAMBORIAN has been sold and the new owners are to convert her to a houseboat, berthed in Paris. Built in 1938, she ran from Bridlington as the BOYS OWN and FLAMBORIAN until moving to the south coast in 1998; she ran from Poole and Weymouth, but did not operate from Exmouth.

Sound Cruising has effectively taken over Plymouth Boat Cruises and now runs the PLYMOUTH BELLE and PLYMOUTH PRINCESS. Plymouth Boat Cruises, established in 1982, has sold the TOTNES CASTLE to Ullswater. Sound Cruising was Mountbatten Water Taxis and the owner, Mr D Stevens, built the SPIRIT OF PLYMOUTH last year. This season's excursion programme is similar to Plymouth Boat Cruises' in 2004, with Dockyard cruises, Plymouth-Saltash sailings and Calstock trips.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The order for a new ferry from Pendennis Shipyard has been confirmed, but it seems the hull will be built in the Netherlands and fitted-out in Falmouth.

Padstow Harbour Commissioners The new ferry is named BLACK TOR II, is 53 ft long and carries 64 passengers.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

J Barbeary, Ilfracombe The QUEEN OF CORNWALL has been sold for service from Tenby. Originally at Padstow, she had spent 28 seasons at Ilfracombe, but is being replaced by the new catamaran ILFRACOMBE PRINCESS.

WEST WALES

S Crockford, Tenby, has bought the QUEEN OF CORNWALL which has been renamed ISLAND CRUISE. She replaces the CATALINA OF TENBY.

NORTH WEST

Welsh Canal Holiday Craft, Llangollen The new THOMAS TELFORD entered service in March. She is 72 ft long and carries 57 passengers.

Budgie Boats, Lancaster, began operating a service on the Lancaster Canal between Lancaster and Carnforth last August with the MILLENNIUM SWIFTSURE. In December, the THOMAS TELFORD was bought from Welsh Canal Holiday Craft of Llangollen and has been renamed SWALLOW. The Carnforth-Lancaster service runs once daily till 30 October, taking three hours each way with calls at Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank. The company also hires bikes and organises rail and bus excursions.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co have bought the TOTNES CASTLE from Plymouth. She was built for the River Dart Steamboat Co as the BERRY CASTLE, had a spell on the Medway as the GOLDEN CORMORANT in 1974-75, then returned to the Dart as the TOTNES CASTLE before moving to Plymouth in 1985. She will sail to Whitehaven, then be taken by road. She will be renamed LADY WAKEFIELD and is due in service in the autumn.

G P Hamer 7 May 2005

TRIP OUT

June 2005

For the 65th anniversary of the evacuation from Dunkerque in 1940, 51 "little ships" sailed from Ramsgate to Dunkerque on 26 May. Three passenger vessels took part: the CORONIA from Scarborough, the PRINCESS FREDA from Richmond and the DEVON BELLE from Reading. The ps PRINCESS ELIZABETH which is permanently berthed in Dunkerque also took part in the commemorative events.
Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL's refit was completed late and she was not ready to start her season on 25 May. The WAVERLEY was stormbound on her voyage from Scotland on that date; the BALMORAL took the WAVERLEY's sailing on the 26th, and the WAVERLEY began her Bristol Channel sailings on 27 May. Both ships were cancelled because of the weather on 28 May, but the BALMORAL was able to commence her season on 29 May from Northern Ireland.

NORTH EAST
Calder Valley Cruising, Hebden Bridge, has new owners, Sharon Pickard and Philip Roberts, who trade as Bronte Boats. The horse-drawn SARAH SIDDONS has been replaced by a new 58-ft 53-pass motor vessel named VERDOPOLIS.

EAST ANGLIA
Broads Tours The PRINCESS ROYAL has been sold to Cardiff Cats. She was the last wooden-hulled launch in the fleet.

THAMES
Capital Pleasure Boats The SOLENT ENTERPRISE was renamed SUNDANCE in May.
Colliers Launches The PRINCESS FREDA has been rebuilt with a steel saloon, but retains her traditional appearance. She visited Dunkerque for the 65th anniversary.
Parr Boat Hire, Kingston The veteran EM has been sold and converted for private use.
London Waterbus Co Day trips on the Regent's Canal to Limehouse are scheduled for 16 and 30 July, 13 August and 17 September.
Steamship Streatley Mr E Langley has sold the STREATLEY to Keith French's Great River Journeys. Originally in Salters' fleet, she was restored to steam ten years ago, and has since operated charters on the non-tidal and tidal Thames. Mr Langley still runs the HENLEY in London.
Great River Journeys, Wallingford, has bought the STREATLEY and will use her for charters and some public trips on the non-tidal river.

SOUTH COAST
Gosport Ferry The new SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH was named on 11 May. Fares on the ferry were increased on 1 June: a return is now £1.80 instead of £1.60.

D & P Faithfull, Portsmouth, have introduced the FAITHFULL SERVANT, built last year by Kingfisher Boats at Falmouth. She is 50 ft long and can carry 109 passengers. She operates Portsmouth Harbour trips with the EXONIA and Butchers' boats (Mr Pearce no longer operates in this service).
R C Greenslade, Poole The ALICE-MARIE has been advertised for sale for £35 000. Originally the GAY QUEEN at Rothesay, she came to Poole in 1989 and has been used mainly for trips to Wareham.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Cardiff Cats has bought the PRINCESS ROYAL from Broads Tours. She was delivered by road to Portishead and repainted before arriving in Cardiff on 31 May. She will run with the CYGNET and SAPPHIRE.

NORTH WEST
Traws Pleasure Cruises, Trawsfynydd The MARED has been sold for service on Loch Tay and renamed GLEN LYON.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN completed her special excursions between 20 and 29 May as scheduled. She is again chartered by Açor Line and is scheduled to operate in the Azores from 19 June to 16 September.

MISCELLANY
The converted Fairmile GOLDEN GALLEON which operated from Great Yarmouth until about 2000 is lying derelict at Reedham on the River Yare. The Broads Authority wants to break her up before she sinks. Restoration to active service has been estimated to coat £500 000.

G P Hamer 4 June 2005

TRIP OUT

July 2005

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL is due to make an additional call at Southwold on 14 July, the only call there this year. There will be no calls at Eastbourne again this year: the WAVERLEY's call on 22 September has been cancelled.

NORTH EAST

Tyne Leisure Line has bought the BROKAELA from Wear Cruises. Originally the BELLE ISLE on Windermere, she served Loch Lomond as the LOMOND MAID, before going to Sunderland in 2001. She is offering a two-hour cruise upriver to Ryton on Sunday afternoons until 30 October, then on 13 and 27 November, and 4 and 18 December. These are the first excursions this far up the Tyne for many years.

Wear Cruises, Sunderland The owner, Mr Michael Dodds, has given up, blaming steep increases in mooring charges at the marina.

THAMES

For the Teddington River Festival on 17 July, the steamboat STREATLEY is due to offer short public trips.

Thames Clippers The ANTRIM RUNNER and DOWN RUNNER have been renamed MOON CLIPPER and SUN CLIPPER (though it's not clear which is which). The SUN CLIPPER is running a new hourly service between St Katharine and Waterloo. Another new service, between Canary Wharf and Royal Arsenal Pier in Woolwich via Greenwich began on 27 June

Thames Leisure The MIYUKI MARU returned to London in June after being rebuilt at Great Yarmouth following her fire at Chatham in January.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink has been sold to Macquarie, an Australian merchant bank, for £230 million. For Cowes Week, a fast catamaran service will again operate from Lymington to Cowes from 30 July to 4 August, and the ST CLARE is making a cruise to the fireworks on 5 August at a fare of £42.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Undercliffs Nature Reserve, English Nature is offering free cruises in the PRIDE OF EXMOUTH from Seaton to Lyme Regis on 22 and 23 July, and 3 and 4 September. Places should be booked through Stuart Line Cruises.

Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER II was launched at Port Glasgow on 8 June. She is due to be completed in late August but will remain in Scotland till December. The last of the old ferries, the LYNHER, is due to be taken out of service on 6 July, and a two-ship service will then operate so that the slipways can be rebuilt in turn.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co Avon Gorge cruises in the MATILDA are scheduled for 15 dates between 2 May and 2 October.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

The Ashby Trip, Sutton Cheney The Rose has been joined by the 72-ft 56-passenger narrow boat BOSWORTH LADY. A new canal/rail trip is being offered on six Sundays in conjunction with the Battlefield Line Railway.

NORTH WEST

Budgie Transport, Lancaster, are offering a trip on Thursdays from Carnforth to Tewitfield, the northern limit of the Lancaster Canal.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN left the Mersey on 16 June for her summer charter in the Azores.

MISCELLANY

Two of the trimarans built for White Horse Fast Ferries have been sold after being laid-up at Gravesend since 2000. The DANIEL QUILP and WILKINS MICAWBER have gone to Inverness Dolphin Cruises.

G P Hamer 6 July 2005

TRIP OUT

August 2005

Waverley Excursions The Marine Accident Investigation Branch published its report on 29 July into the incident on 18 October when the BALMORAL's propellers touched rocks off the Gower Peninsula. The accident was similar to the one in June 2004 when the WAVERLEY touched rocks near Campbeltown, and Captain Kit Lee, who was in command on both occasions, has left the company. A fuel surcharge of £1 is being added to all adult tickets sold from 8 August.

NORTH EAST

Nexus 40-minute cruises from South Shields at 1115 and 1415 will continue on Thursdays and Sundays until 15 September.

Yorkshire Waterway Tours, Boroughbridge, began running trips on the River Ure in North Yorkshire in 2003. The FRIVOLITY is 57-ft long and carries 40 passengers.

EAST ANGLIA

Suffolk Cruises, Woodbridge The EDWARD ALAN JOHN has been advertised for sale for £49 750.

THAMES

Thames Clippers The ANTRIM RUNNER is now the SUN CLIPPER, and the DOWN RUNNER is the MOON CLIPPER. Both are in service and carry 138 passengers.

Thames Executive Charters The JOHN HARRIOTT offers a commuter service from Chelsea Harbour and Cadogan Pier to Embankment and Blackfriars. On 18 July, the service was extended, with a morning sailing from Putney at 0730 by the HENLEY, chartered from Mr E Langley.

SOUTH COAST

Edwards & Co, Hayling Island A proposed increase in landing charges is to be phased over three years, so the ferry will continue to operate for at least the next year.

Red Funnel Ferries One of the RED JETs will again run a service between Gosport and Southampton for the Southampton Boat Show from 16 to 25 September.

Hurst Castle Ferries The HAVEN ROSE has been offered for sale at the end of the season for £17 950.

The Dorset Belles The company, Croson Ltd, run by Peter Lamb since 1996, has been sold to the group which runs Parkstone Bay Marina, but continues to trade separately as The Dorset Belles. There are more short trips this season, and the Isle of Wight trip is offered only once a week, on Wednesdays.

Parkstone Bay Watersports runs a 35-ft 23-passenger speedboat named SHOCKWAVE from Bournemouth Pier, and now shares the Dorset Belles' booking office.

L G Marsh, Swanage, has handed over the business to his son Roger. The MAID OF SANDBANKS has been sold to Mr S MacKinnon of Elgol on the Isle of Skye and renamed MISTY ISLE (the new owner is seemingly not connected to the MacKinnons who run the BELLA JANE from Elgol). The Marsh family now runs only a 12-passenger boat named PRECIOUS on short trips from Swanage.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Isle of Sark Shipping Co The BON MARIN DE SERK has been re-engined and refitted at a cost of £440 000. The SARK VENTURE is also to have a major refit. The company has lost the contract to carry cargo to the island of Brecquou, owned by the Barclay brothers. A new cargo vessel is being built for Sark, and the three vessels will be able to handle all traffic to Sark without the need to charter the TRIDENT VI from the Trident Charter Co. The Sark company has been 100% owned by the island since last autumn and the Drake family who were previously part-owners have now left the company; management of the ships has been awarded to Alderney Shipping.

WEST OF ENGLAND

K&S Cruises, Falmouth The former St Mawes ferry NEW PRINCESS MAUD was sold last July by Cornwall Ferries to Mr George Pill, the previous owner of the St Mawes ferries. This season, she is running Helford River Cruises with K&S Cruises' fleet.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Sunday day trips are scheduled for 7, 14 and 21 August. A double trip (0630 and 1345 from Penzance) is scheduled for 27 August.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

J Barbeary, Ilfracombe The new ILFRACOMBE PRINCESS was delivered in July. She replaces the QUEEN OF CORNWALL which left for Tenby in December.

Lundy Company is advertising an evening cruise from Bideford on the Rivers Torridge and Taw on 21 August. On 4 September, there is an extra day trip from Bideford, giving six hours ashore, at a special fare of £20.

Bath City Boat Trips The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has published a report into last October's capsizing of the 12-passenger SWAN. The boat is said to have been overloaded and unstable. The firm says they will now only use larger boats with MCA certificates and the SWAN has been sold.

WEST WALES

S Crockford, Tenby The CATALINA OF TENBY was sold in October and is now at Plymouth.

Caldey Boat Service The IOLAIRE was also sold to Plymouth last winter, leaving eight boats on the service to Caldey Island.

G P Hamer 6 August 2005

TRIP OUT

September 2005

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL was holed on 24 August and started taking water whilst off service at Swansea (her sailing had been cancelled by the weather). She was pumped out and went to Sharpness to be dry-docked, resuming service on 28 August. The WAVERLEY left Greenock on 29 August and reached Weymouth on the 31st, ready to start her south coast sailings as scheduled on 2 September.

THAMES

All three ferries from Ford's Dagenham service which closed in January 2004 have found new operators: the TWIN STAR in London, the TWIN-STAR II on Derwentwater and the TWIN-STAR III at Falmouth.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Strood Pier was closed on 9 August and sailings have been switched to Rochester. An extra trip will run on 22 October upriver to view a Nelson parade at Wouldham.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The MCA withdrew the passenger certificates of all four catamarans at midday on 18 August owing to concerns about the company's safety procedures. Apparently, two engine room fires on the OUR LADY PATRICIA on 12 and 13 May had not been reported to the authorities. The ASHLEIGH R and SOLENT CAT were chartered to run to a revised timetable. The MCA issued three-month certificates for the FASTCAT RYDE and 'SHANKLIN at 1800 on 19 August and they resumed service at 1945.

R C Greenslade, Poole, has sold the ALICE-MARIE to run in Cornwall.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries All three fast ferries suffered mechanical problems in August, and the CONDOR EXPRESS ran on three out of four engines for most of the month with delays of up to four hours.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Greenway Ferry Service has bought THE SWAN from Maidstone and taken over the Dartmouth-Greenway service from Dart Pleasure Craft. THE SWAN also offers one-hour evening cruises from Dartmouth, Greenway and Dittisham with champagne and strawberries, and evening trips to land at the 'Maltster's Arms' in Tuckenhay on Bow Creek.

Sound Cruising, Plymouth, are operating the CATALINA OF TENBY, previously run from Tenby by Mr S Crockford.

Fish 'n' Trips, Plymouth, offers angling cruises from Phoenix Wharf in the IOLAIRE, previously running from Tenby to Caldey Island.

N Fox, Plymouth, is the new owner of the WESTON MAID which continues to run to Cawsand.

Fal Pleasure Cruises The ENTERPRISEs sail from Falmouth to Trelissick and Malpas or Truro. The MOYANA runs from St Mawes at 0915, 1215 and 1630 to Trelissick, Tolverne and Malpas or Truro.

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne, have bought the ALICE-MARIE from Poole to replace the CORNISH BELLE.

Falmouth Passenger Boat Co is the name used by George Pill who is running cruises to the Helford River with the NEW PRINCESS MAUD in conjunction with K&S Cruises and in competition with the PRINCESSA run by his brother, John Pill. Following complaints of obstructing other boats, threatening behaviour, shouting and swearing, George Pill and his son George have been banned from setting foot on the Prince of Wales Pier for one year. The dispute was even reported in 'The Times' (on 19 August).
Twinstar Cruises, Falmouth, is a new company associated with John Pill which has bought the TWIN-STAR III from the Thames. She runs from the Prince of Wales Pier at 1100, 1300 and 1435 to Trelissick, and has been fitted with a bar for charter trips.
W R Dunn, Penzance The MERMAID was sold two years ago to A Thomas & V Hersey who continue to operate cruises and angling trips from Penzance.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
J Barbeary, Ilfracombe Before the arrival of the ILFRACOMBE PRINCESS on 23 July, the BAY PRINCESS from Paignton was chartered, but she was back at Paignton in August.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS
English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The EDWARD ELGAR will again offer Christmas lunch cruises for up to 40 passengers. The cruises will run from 12 to 23 December at a fare of £29.

NORTH WEST
Wyre Borough Council The new ferry is being built by Mustang Marine at Pembroke, but delivery has been delayed by problems.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co A fuel surcharge of £2 per single passenger journey has been imposed.

MISCELLANY

The former passenger ship PRINCE ALBERT has been converted at Ipswich into a showroom for Pedley Furniture International and renamed HARMONY II. Originally in Yugoslavia, she came to the UK in 1987, but spent years laid-up at Tilbury then Liverpool.

The BEAUPORT which ran for British Channel Island Ferries in 1992-93 has been sold for scrap after running between Trinidad and Tobago since 2000. Built as the PRINCE OF FUNDY in 1970, she served Brittany Ferries as the PRINCE OF BRITTANY then REINE MATHILDE.

The Greek EXPRESS OLYMPIA which served the Channel Islands as the EARL GRANVILLE has also gone for scrap. Built in 1973 as the VIKING 4, she was owned by Sealink from 1981 to 1990.

G P Hamer 7 September 2005

TRIP OUT

October 2005

The summer of 2005 has brought generally fine weather, with above average temperatures in England and Wales. I suspect that after a succession of warm summers, people's expectations have changed, but few boat operators can complain about this summer's weather.

Geoffrey Hamer

The 2003 Licensing Act controlling the sale of alcohol comes into effect on 24 November. Boats were exempt from the licensing laws, but will need a licence from that date, the same as a pub or restaurant ashore.

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY had a successful spell on the south coast, in generally fine weather. She called at Dover, instead of Folkestone on 22-23 September. When she arrived in London on the 23rd, Tower Bridge could not be opened and the WAVERLEY had to use Greenwich; the fault was repaired the next day. The BALMORAL completed her Bristol Channel sailings on 18 September, the trip to Tenby on the 19th being cancelled. She made her final weekend's trips on the Clyde, then returned to Bristol to lay-up.

THAMES

Thames Clippers The company developing the Battersea Power Station site, Parkview International, has chosen a partnership of Thames Clippers and Red Funnel to run fast catamarans from central London to the site when it opens in 2009.

Crown River Cruises Two new sightseeing boats are being built in the Netherlands for use on the circular cruises from Westminster. They are being built by Tinnemans at Maasbracht and will be 112 ft long and carry 250 passengers.

Thames River Boats Regular sailings from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court finished for the season on 25 September. Mr Langley's HENLEY will continue running to Kew this month and the Colliers will run at weekends to Kew or Hampton Court.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The BERGEN CASTLE is being offered for sale by brokers, with a closing date for offers of 14 October.

Mudeford Ferry The JOSEPHINE is advertised for cruises from Hythe to view the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 and QUEEN MARY 2 on 23 April and 30 October, and from Lymington to Cowes Week fireworks on 4 August.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

South Coast Cruises, St Helier, ran the PRIDE OF THE BAY which was sold after the 1999 season to become the BRISTOL QUEEN at Weston-super-Mare. She was replaced by the catamaran SEAWAYS EXPRESS from Torquay which was renamed SOUTHERN BAY ROSE. She was built as the CONDOR KESTREL in 1985 for tendering at Sark, then ran from Torquay from 1991. Cruises along the south coast of Jersey last about two hours.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB is offering bird watching cruises on the Exe from Exmouth, Starcross or Topsham on 15 dates from 18 November to 1 March.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Three-hour bird watching cruises are scheduled for 24 dates from 13 November to 13 March.

G H Wheaton Ltd, Torquay The NOMAD has not operated this year and is now for sale for £19 500.

J Bolus, Torquay The LADY CABLE, built in 1924, was donated to the Turning Point Heritage Trust last year after being laid-up for several years. The Trust wants to preserve her as a monument to the evacuation of Dunkerque in 1940.

Dart Pleasure Craft The winter service of the Kingswear ferry is to be reduced, and there will be no crossings after 1900 or on Sundays. Local people have objected because the alternative ferry run by South Hams District Council offers no shelter for foot passengers.

Greenway Quay & Ferry Service The National Trust acquired the lease of Greenway Quay in February and took over the Greenway-Dittisham ferry. Since 1 April, the ferry has been run by Will and John Ford and it is they who have bought THE SWAN (see last issue).

Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER, the last of the old ferries, was sold to the same Danish breakers as the PLYM and TAMAR, and towed to Esbjerg to be scrapped. There have been delays in refurbishing the ferry slipways, and the work is now due for completion in February when the LYNHER II should enter service.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The hull of the new ferry was due to leave Holland on 7 October on a barge for Falmouth where it will be fitted-out by Pendennis Shipyard.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council The new ferry was delivered in September, but delays in certification and crew training mean the service will not start before mid-October. The vessel has not yet been named.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The LADY OF MANN has been sold to Saos Ferries who operate in the North Aegean area of Greece. She returned to Liverpool from her charter in the Azores on 23 September and is due to be handed over this month. The weekend services from Liverpool to Douglas in November and December will be scheduled for the SUPERSEACAT TWO.

G P Hamer 6 October 2005

TRIP OUT

November 2005

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	City Cruises	1887
2(2)	Thames Luxury Ch	1815
3(3)	Woods River Cruises	1692
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(-)	Capital Pleasure B.	554
10(9)	George Wheeler L	458

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	3890
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(3)	Catamaran Cruisers	2198
4(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
5(4)	Salter's Steamers	1672
6(6)	Thames Luxury Ch	1583
7(7)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1548
8(8)	French Brothers	1506
9(9)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1468
10(10)	Crown River Cruises	1095

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's Thames sailings were completed as scheduled but the last sailing, on 10 October, was from Tilbury to Whitstable instead of Dover: with Southend Pier closed, the small number of passengers did not justify the charges for using Dover. She had an uneventful trip to the Bristol Channel where her weekend sailings were successful. On the 16th, she couldn't call at Lundy so made a cruise round the island. The final sailing, on the 17th, was cancelled by the weather, but the WAVERLEY was able to return to Glasgow. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has carried out a preliminary examination of the BALMORAL's accident on 24 August: there will be no further inquiry, but Waverley Excursions has been recommended to improve the training of its officers and develop an appraisal system.

THAMES

A fire on Southend Pier during the night of 9/10 October destroyed the railway station at the seaward end and adjacent cafés and shops. The pier has been closed till further notice.

Campion Launches, Greenwich, have bought another boat from the Netherlands. The AVONTUUR IV ("adventure" in Dutch) from Willemstad south of Rotterdam was built in 1988, is 128 ft long and can carry 250 passengers on three decks. The Dutch owners ceased operations in September and the AVONTUUR IV arrived in London on 16 October. The veteran VISCOUNT has been sold to Mr E Langley, owner of the HENLEY, after eleven seasons with the Campion family.

London Waterbus Co (Regent's Canal) The glass-fibre WATER BUFFALO has been withdrawn from service and is for sale for £26 000.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The East Cowes service is reduced to a two-ship service from 7 January to 10 March while the ships are refitted; the hourly three-ship service runs for the rest of 2006.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Jersey Ferries now trades as Emeraude Ferries. The SOLIDOR 5 continues to run all winter between St-Malo and Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The hull of the new ferry arrived from Holland on 11 October on a barge.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's 2006 season runs from 3 April to 5 November, with sailings daily except Sundays (and Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-6 April and 24 October to 2 November). A special schedule operates from 27 April to 1 May for the world pilot gig championships. There are two round trips on Saturdays 27 May and 3 June. A longer day trip, leaving Penzance at 0800, is offered on Wednesdays in July and August, and a shorter trip (1100 from Penzance, 1500 from Scilly) on Saturdays from 29 July to 2 September.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Cats A new landing stage has been built in the River Taff at Bute Park near Cardiff Castle. The CYGNET has made trial calls, but regular trips have not started.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Details of next year's Manchester ship Canal cruises have been published. The trips operate on 42 dates from 6 May to 24 September, with 21 trips from Liverpool and 21 from Salford. The fare is £30 including return by bus.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co announced on 19 October that it had been bought by the Australian Macquarie Bank, which already owns Wightlink, for £225 million; the existing management will continue. The company had been owned by Montagu Private Equity since June 2003. The LADY OF MANN has been renamed PANAGIA SOUMELA after a monastery to the west of Thessaloniki, and left the Mersey on 22 October for Greece. Irish Sea Express, which chartered the SEA EXPRESS I from the Steam Packet for a Liverpool-Dublin service, ceased trading on 11 October after apparently incurring losses of £100 000 a week.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA's certificate has been extended and next season she will offer trips from Douglas to Ramsey, Castletown and Port St Mary, and occasional trips on the west coast of the island between Peel and Port Erin.

MISCELLANY

The MCA is imposing a remeasurement of vessels' passenger capacities. In the past, an average passenger was assumed to weigh 10 st (64 kg); the weight was increased to 75 kg and all vessels that were assessed on the old figure will now have to have their stability reassessed or have their passenger capacity reduced.

TRIP OUT

December 2005

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY will operate on the Clyde at Easter, and visit the Western Isles between 28 April and 2 May, and will then be dry-docked before going to the Bristol Channel, as usual. After her September and October sailings on the south coast and Thames, she returns to Glasgow for trips on 13-15 October to mark the 60th anniversary of her launch. The BALMORAL starts her season in May on the south coast and has a possible charter in June in Rotterdam in connection with the Volvo Ocean yacht race. She then sails on the Thames and Irish Sea before starting her Bristol Channel season on 21 July.

THAMES

Southend Pier was partly reopened on 1 December. The first mile of the pier is open to limited numbers of visitors, with trains running to a temporary station so that visitors can view the fire damage.

Salter's Steamers Services in 2006 run from 20 May to 22 September, and follow a similar pattern to last season.

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Ship Canal Trust The new vessel is named RICHMOND after the Duke of Richmond, and has been operating since March for private parties between Chichester and Donnington.

Wightlink The timetable for the Lymington route has been revised from 31 October till Christmas, to allow refitting of the ships: a three-ship services operates on Fridays only, and otherwise only two ships are needed.

Red Funnel Ferries The BERGEN CASTLE has been sold and renamed STELLA under the Korean flag. She was bought in 2003 to cover while Red Funnel's ferries were rebuilt, but was used only during the winter of 2003/04. The company introduced a new fare structure on 28 November; vehicle fares include up to four people and prices vary according to the level of advance bookings (as with most cross-channel ferries).

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries Next year, Poole sailings run from 6 April to 30 October. The CONDOR VITESSE again runs from Poole to Cherbourg for Brittany Ferries, from 22 May to 1 October. The COMMODORE CLIPPER makes a Portsmouth-Cherbourg round trip on Sundays from 23 July to 5 September.

Emeraude Ferries The SOLIDOR 5 was withdrawn for urgent repairs on 21 November and sailed to St-Nazaire for dry-docking. Sailings are suspended till at least 19 December.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth All-day wildlife cruises to the jurassic coast are scheduled for 14 May, 10 June and 9 September.

Dart Pleasure Craft Devon County Council and South Hams District Council are to pay a subsidy so that the Kingswear passenger ferry continues to run in the evenings and on Sundays in winter.
Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER II is due to be towed from the shipyard at Port Glasgow in January and should be in service at the end of the month.
Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth, joined with other operators to carry out stability tests on nine boats on 15 November using volunteers who were offered beer and pasties as a reward.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council Introduction of the new Knott End ferry has been delayed again, and is now expected next year.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Between 10 January and 23 March, the BEN-MY-CHREE will operate return trips from Douglas to Liverpool on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, with a crossing time of 4 hrs 15 mins, replacing daytime sailings to Heysham.

G P Hamer 7 December 2005

TRIP OUT

January 2006

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat Sightseeing trips in the city run daily from 4 February to 26 November; cruises to Bishopthorpe run from 1 April to 30 September.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The KINGSWEAR CASTLE begins her season at Easter. As well as afternoon and evening cruises, special trips in 2006 include Thames Estuary cruises on 23 April, 15 July and 16 September, cruises upriver to New Hythe on 29 April and 9 September, cruises off Sheerness on 7 May, 1 July, 12 August and 21 October, into the Swale on 20 May, off Tilbury on 27 May, the Medway Barge Race on 3 June, "wharfs, creeks and jetties" on 24 June, Southend on 8 and 22 July, and 19 August, Whitstable on 29 July, off Shoeburyness on 5 August, round Sheppey on 26 August, a bird watching cruise on 15 October, and a final afternoon cruise on 22 October. There are no sailings to London scheduled this year.

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne The LADY OF LEE VALLEY has a variety of public cruises from Broxbourne. On 4 August, there is an evening trip to Ware, returning by coach, and trips are offered from Ware on 5 and 6 August.

Thames Clippers The service to Woolwich Arsenal has been poorly supported and has run at a loss, despite subsidies. Unless more subsidies can be arranged, it will end on 27 January, six months after it started.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island will be open to the public this year from 25 March to 29 October.

Wightlink The ST FAITH went to Falmouth for refit in November and three other ferries are expected to go there this winter. The RMT union is holding a ballot over a possible strike after the company has announced redundancies and a reduction in the Portsmouth-Fishbourne service.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED FALCON and RED OSPREY are both scheduled to visit Falmouth for refit this winter.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Ferries On 8 December, the company's staff were told that the SOLIDOR 5 would not be returning to the service which would be suspended till at least the end of February. The SOLIDOR 5 has apparently been chartered for service in Italy. The owners are considering the future of the service which has lost EUR 8 million (£5.5 million) in the past two years.

Manche Iles Express The Granville-Jersey service runs at weekends in winter, with daily sailings during school holidays between 18 February and 5 March.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Short cruises from Dartmouth run on most days in winter, except in January.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's summer schedule runs from 18 March to 28 October. The day return fare is £29.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Away2eat, Birmingham The restaurant boat business closed on 28 October "due to regrettable and sudden financial circumstances".

Cathedral City Cruises, Lincoln The business, established for 21 years, has been offered for sale.

NORTH WEST

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA's 2006 season runs from 1 April to 29 October.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE will not, after all, run to Liverpool this winter, because of repair work on the Liverpool landing stage. The BEN-MY-CHREE will run to Heysham, and Liverpool sailings will be maintained by a fast ferry: during the SUPERSEACAT TWO's overhaul this month, the SEA EXPRESS I will be used. The BEN-MY-CHREE will be refitted between 7 and 20 March and will be replaced by a fast ferry, with a chartered ship for freight.

G P Hamer 9 January 2006

TRIP OUT

February 2006

NORTH EAST

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again being chartered by the RSPB for seabird cruises: there are seven puffin cruises between 20 May and 2 July, and eight skua and shearwater cruises between 3 September and 7 October.

THAMES

It now seems unlikely that the landing stages on Southend Pier will be available for use next summer.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS is due to make special cruises on 29 May to off Southend for the Air Show, and on 16 July to the forts in the estuary.

Capital Pleasure Boats have bought the BALTIC STAR from Dartmouth and are to rename her GOLDEN STAR. Brokers have advertised the BRUNEL (for £85 000) and SUNDANCE (£245 000) for sale.

Thames Clippers The Woolwich service is to continue on Mondays to F+ridays, with temporary support from Greenwich Council. The last Saturday sailings were on 22 January.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH's excursion programme extends from 1 May to 4 November, with cruises to the Hamble or Beaulieu River, six-hour three-rivers cruises, and day trips to Cowes or Ryde.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL begins her season with Solent cruises on 13 and 14 May. She visits Shoreham on 20-22 May and Weymouth on 12-20 September, and is provisionally booked to sail from Dartmouth on 9-10 July for the start of a tall ships race from Tor Bay. There are trips for the start of a leg of the Volvo Ocean yacht race on 2 June and for Cowes Week on 2-4 August, and a cruise round the Isle of Wight on 4 June.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Ferries The SOLIDOR 5 arrived in Napoli on 12 January and will operate this summer to the Eolian islands for SNAV; she will be renamed DON FRANCESCO. It is not clear when or if Emeraude will resume operations from St-Malo to Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Day trips to Exeter are advertised for 6 May, 5 June and 18 August. Day trips to local carnivals are to Teignmouth on 28 July, Dawlish on 17 August, and Topsham on 26 August.

Dart Pleasure Craft The BALTIC STAR went to London in December. Originally the Southampton-Hythe ferry NEW FORESTER, she came to the River Dart in 1999 and was based at Baltic Wharf, Totnes, before joining Dart Pleasure Craft's fleet in 2002. The Dartmouth-Totnes service runs daily from 1 April to 29 October (except on Fridays 7 and 28 April, and 6, 13 and 20 October). Two-hour coastal cruises at lunchtime are scheduled for 54 dates from 28 May to 31 August.

Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER II arrived in Plymouth this month, and is due to enter service on 11 February.

Mevagissey Ferries The service runs daily from 24 April to 1 October, with up to six round trips a day from Mevagissey to Fowey.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Packet Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 7, 8 and 9 April (as part of celebrations for the 200th anniversary of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's birth), and on 21 further dates until 15 October. There are day trips to Bath on 28 May, 25 June, 23 July, 27 August and 24 September.

Bristol Ferry Boat Co A new 50-passenger vessel, named BRIGANTIA after a Celtic goddess, is being built by Abels Shipbuilders in Bristol. She is due in service in March.

Bath City Boat Trips The AVON EMPRESS and CLEOPATRA were torn from their mooring by flood waters on 2 December and became wedged under Churchill Bridge. They were recovered but the 'EMPRESS suffered some damage.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips are advertised to Tewkesbury on 20 May, 17 June and 2 September, and to Sharpness on 14 May, 16 July and 10 September. There are afternoon trips to Saul Junction on 28 May, 18 and 25 June, and 9 July.

G P Hamer 6 February 2006

TRIP OUT

March 2006

Waverley Excursions have published timetables for the season, except for the BALMORAL's Thames sailings in June and July which need to be changed because of the closure of Southend Pier's landing stage. Southend Pier is expected to be available for the WAVERLEY in September. The WAVERLEY is on the Bristol Channel from 26 May to 17 June and has a cruise from Milford Haven on 18 June. She returns from Scotland to sail on the South Coast from 1 to 21 September, then on the Thames till 8 October, and closes her season on the Clyde on 14-15 October. The BALMORAL has an afternoon cruise from Bristol on 8 April as part of the "Brunel 200" celebrations (fare £35 including dinner). Her season starts on 26 May on the South Coast and unusual ports of call are Bridport on 1 June and Rye on the 8th. She is on the Irish Sea from 7 to 18 July then on the Bristol Channel from 21 July until 10 September when her season ends.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The name of the new vessel is to be SPIRIT OF THE TYNE, chosen in a newspaper poll; in second place was Dolly Peel, a 19th century South Shields character whose statue overlooks the Tyne.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich Afternoon cruises to Harwich run most weekends from Easter to 1 October, also on Wednesdays from June to September, and on Fridays in July and August.
R Cooper, Harwich, has restored the BRIGHTLINGSEA, built for the LNER's Harwich-Felixstowe service in 1925 and withdrawn from the service in the mid-1990s. She is due to offer harbour cruises from Harwich this summer.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne Special trips include cruises to Birling Gap on 4 and 18 June, 2 and 23 July, 27 August and 10 September, and a summer solstice sunrise cruise at 0345 on 21 June. The SOUTHERN QUEEN, though offered for bareboat charter, was in service from Eastbourne last season with the WILLIAM ALLCHORN.
Chichester Harbour Conservancy The SOLAR HERITAGE offers trips from Emsworth from 1 July to 10 September. Trips run all year from Itchenor, but must be booked in advance.
Mudeford Ferry Day trips to Yarmouth are scheduled for 1, 16 and 30 June, 14 July, 14 August, and 12 and 27 September.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Ferries plans to resume a service from St-Malo to Jersey in April with a passenger-only fast catamaran.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth A day trip to Torquay is scheduled for Saturday 1 April; day trips to Torquay and Brixham run on Wednesdays from 17 May to 27 September. Cruises to the "Jurassic Coast" are on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from June to September, landing at Sidmouth on certain dates.
Western Lady Ferry Service One of the WESTERN LADY vessels is for sale for £47 950.

Sound Cruising, Plymouth The CATALINA OF TENBY, which ran at Plymouth last season, has been sold to Jacobite of Inverness and will be renamed JABOBITE LEGEND.
Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER II entered service on 10 February.
Calstock Ferry & Motor Launch Co Trips to Weir Head, the highest navigable point on the Tamar, are scheduled for 2 May, 27 June, 28 July and 10 September.
Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Additional day trips will operate on Sundays in August.

BRISTOL CHANNEL
Bristol Ferry Boat Co Public Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 27 dates from 8 April to 22 October; some include a cream tea, supper or champagne.
Flat Holm Project Public trips from Barry, giving three hours on the island, are on various dates from 25 March to 31 October.

NORTH WEST
Mersey Ferries The Liverpool landing stage used by the ferries sank in bad weather on 2 March. It had already been closed and no one was on it. Daytime river cruises continue to run from Seacombe and Woodside, but commuter services are replaced by a bus from Seacombe to connect with trains in Birkenhead. Three-hour bird watching cruises into Liverpool Bay are scheduled for 7 and 21 August, and 15 September.
The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool, have bought a third DUKW craft, one of two which were used unsuccessfully for trips in Glasgow
Budgie Transport, Lancaster The Carnforth-Lancaster service runs daily from 12 April to 1 October (except 24-28 April), then at weekends in October, and daily 21-29 October.

G P Hamer 7 March 2006

TRIP OUT

April 2006

Waverley Excursions Full schedules were published in March. The BALMORAL sails on the Thames from 17 June to 2 July, but cannot call at Southend, though some trips from Tilbury have a connecting bus from Southend. The BALMORAL has a trip from Eastbourne on 30 May, sailing from Sovereign Harbour, not the pier.

NORTH EAST

Tyne Leisure Line now trades as River Escapes, and the three vessels have been renamed: the BROKAELA is the RIVER ESCAPES COVENTINA; the CATHERINE is the RIVER ESCAPES LATIS; the ISLAND SCENE is the RIVER ESCAPES FORTUNA (all are named after Celtic or Roman goddesses). The firm's contact details are unchanged. Afternoon river trips, downstream in the 'FORTUNA and upstream in the 'COVENTINA, run on most Sundays till 29 October, and on most Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to September.
Apollo Canal Cruises, Shipley, are reported to have gone bankrupt.

EAST ANGLIA

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Steam Packet Co was formed in 2003 to run the SOUTHERN BELLE, built in 1928 for service at Plymouth. She has been refitted and is due in service this season on trips to Berney Arms and Reedham.

THAMES

Thames Clippers The service between Waterloo and St Katharine's, introduced last summer, will not be resuming this year.
Thames River Boats Sailings from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court are due to resume on 8 April.
Thames Luxury Charters have bought the ERASMUS from Absolute Pleasure Boats. She arrived in London in 2002 from Rotterdam, but has been used very little. She will be used for charters by her new owners.

SOUTH COAST

At a meeting on 31 March, Bournemouth Council decided to spend £210 000 on repairing the pier landing stages so that they can continue to be used by the Dorset Belles and Waverley Excursions.
Wightlink In a dispute over pay, staff have voted for an overtime ban starting on 14 April and a series of 24-hour strikes.
Red Funnel Ferries The RED FALCON struck the ramp at Southampton as she was arriving at 1550 on 10 March. Nine passengers were injured and both the ship and ramp were damaged. A revised one-ship service operated from berth 25 in the Eastern Docks by the RED OSPREY until the RED EAGLE returned from overhaul. Red Funnel's terminal reopened on 2 April, and the full three-ship service resumed on the 5th. The master and mate of the RED FALCON have been suspended while the cause of the accident is investigated.

The Dorset Belles The POOLE BELLE has been sold to a new operator on the Firth of Forth: Forth Boat Tours plan to rename her FORTH BELLE and run trips from South Queensferry. She was the newest and biggest of the three BELLEs and was generally used for the Isle of Wight trips.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The catamaran COTE DES ISLES, laid-up in Cherbourg for the past four years, has been sold for service in the Comores islands in the Indian Ocean. She operated from France to the Channel Islands from 1997, initially as the BRITTANIA.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Cats A new commuter service from Penarth to Cardiff city centre was due to start on 3 April.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Ferry services from Liverpool resumed on 9 March, using the Isle of Man landing stage, but services are suspended when it is being used by the SUPERSEACAT TWO.

The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool The craft bought from Glasgow is the C R QUACKINTOSH, but will be renamed before entering service.

Wyre Borough Council The new Knott End ferry is finally due to enter service on 10 April.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE was refitted on the Mersey between 20 March and 2 April. The SUPERSEACAT TWO ran from Heysham with a chartered cargo ferry.

G P Hamer 6 April 2006

TRIP OUT

May 2006

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY entered service at Easter and visited Oban from 28 April to 2 May, but bad weather delayed her return to the Clyde till 4 May. She entered dry dock at Greenock for her annual survey on the 5th, and returns to service on 26 May on the Bristol Channel. The BALMORAL sailed on 8 April as part of the "Brunel 200" celebrations, then went to Sharpness for dry docking.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The steelwork for the SPIRIT OF THE TYNE was built by Intervak at Harlingen in the Netherlands and launched on 3 April. She is 82 ft long and resembles the Gosport ferry SPIRIT OF GOSPORT. She left under tow on 6 April to be fitted-out by VT Halmatic at Portchester, and is due on the Tyne in the autumn. Short cruises on the river will run on Thursdays and Sundays, from South Shields at 1115 and 1415, from May to September.

EAST ANGLIA

A Sage, Harwich The ferry to Shotley and Felixstowe runs from 14 April to 1 October at weekends and Bank Holidays, and daily from 1 May to 11 September.

Brightlingsea Harbour Commission The ferry service runs from 29 April to 1 October at weekends and Bank Holidays, and daily from 21 July to 1 September.

THAMES

Essex Marina, Wallasea Island The LADY ESSEX II is being replaced by the AN IASGAIR (Gaelic for "the fisherman"), previously used for dolphin cruises on the Moray Firth. She was built in 1981, is 34 ft long and can carry 40 passengers. She has been renamed LADY ESSEX III, but the start of this season's ferry service has been delayed by work on the landing stage at Burnham-on-Crouch.

Chris Cruises, Hampton Court The LADY CHRISTINE has been sold and taken to Chester. She was originally the JOSEPH PRIESTLEY on the Kennet & Avon Canal, then the AVON QUEEN in Bristol, before going to Hampton Court in 1985.

Thames Steamers The steamboat ALASKA will be offering hourly public trips from Henley on 27 and 28 May, and 15 and 16 July, and from Bourne End on 29 May. She will be offering half-hourly trips at the IWA rally at Beale Park on 26-28 August.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne The business has been offered for sale, but the boats are operating this season.

Wightlink The RMT union suspended a threat of an overtime ban and strikes, following a new pay offer from the company.

The Dorset Belles The season had started by early May, with the BOURNEMOUTH BELLE offering trips to Brownsea Island and Swanage.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Emeraude Ferries claim that a passenger-only service to Jersey will resume on 15 May, but no further details have been announced.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth An additional day trip to Torquay and Brixham is advertised for Saturday 17 June.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The new ferry was lowered into the water on 19 April after being fitted-out in Falmouth. The old ferry made its last crossings on 1 May, and the service was suspended till the 9th, when the new ferry is due in service.

NORTH WEST

Bithells Boats, Chester, have bought the LADY CHRISTINE from Hampton Court. She is advertised to make two-hour cruises on Saturdays and Sundays at 1200 and 1430.

Mersey Ferries A temporary landing stage will be brought into use at Liverpool this month, but a permanent replacement will take around 18 months to build.

Wyre Borough Council The new Knott End ferry entered service on 10 April. The service is operated by Wyre Marine Services, under the same ownership as Wyre Waste Management.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SUPERSEACAT TWO was off service for repairs on 10-12 April and her sailings were taken by the SEA EXPRESS I.

MISCELLANY

The MANXMAN, lying derelict at the Pallion shipyard in Sunderland, has been damaged by thieves who stole parts from her engine room and caused it to be flooded during the night of 27/28 April. The shipyard has suggested she will be broken up, unless enthusiasts can raise the money to buy her and move her.

G P Hamer 8 May 2006

TRIP OUT

June 2006

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY left Greenock on 22 May after dry-docking and arrived in Avonmouth the next day. She re-entered service on the 26th. The BALMORAL left the Bristol Channel on 24 May for Weymouth. Her sailing on the 26th was cancelled by the weather and she entered service the next day. She is not allowed to use Swanage Pier, so bus connections have been provided to Bournemouth. The company has written to local authorities around the Clyde asking each for £10 000; the increased costs of fuel and insurance are blamed for the financial crisis.

NORTH EAST

Bithell Boats, York The long-established Chester operator has commenced trips on the Ouse from a new pontoon at King's Staith. The RIVER KING has been chartered from Waterline Cruise & Dine, and the PRINCE CHARLES has been taken by road from Chester to York.

THAMES

Crown River Cruises The two new boats for the circular cruises were completed in May and delivered from the yard at Maasbracht to Vlissingen where they waited for suitable weather for the North Sea crossing. The SAPELE (seemingly named after an African hard wood) is owned by Crown River Cruises, and the MERCURIA is owned by Westminster Party Boats. They are similar in appearance to the SARPEDON, but narrower, and are powered by Schottel propellers.

French Brothers The hull of the STEPHANIE ELIZABETH, built in the 1980s but never completed, has been advertised for sale.

Thames Steamers The ALASKA will be offering trips at the Teddington River Festival on 18 June, instead of the STREATLEY which ran there last year.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink plans to order two new ships to replace two of the present Lymington-Yarmouth ferries. The new ships will have similar dimensions, but carry more vehicles. Delivery would be in the spring of 2008.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's visit to Shoreham on 19-22 May was cancelled by the weather. Bookings for a cruise from Dartmouth on 9 July are being taken by Dart Pleasure Craft, but a cruise the next day for the start of a tall ships' race is fully booked.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Isle of Sark Shipping Co have ended the summer charters of the TRIDENT VI and the Sark service is being maintained by the BON MARIN DE SERK and SARK VENTURE.

Emeraude Ferries announced on 19 May that it had been unable to find a suitable vessel to reopen the Jersey service, so the 49 staff will be redundant.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service have bought the GUARDWELL from the Bolus family and renamed her RIVIERA BELLE. She runs from Torquay (Princess Pier) at 1115 to Dartmouth, continuing on Wednesdays to Saturdays to Greenway, and gets back to Torquay at 1800. The GUARDWELL was originally a Customs launch and then a passenger vessel at Ullapool, before going to Torquay in 2003.

Dart Pleasure Craft The boats' turnover in 2005 was £1.44 million (a 5% increase over 2004) and the operating profit was £39 000.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth, have bought the 12-passenger EBENEEZER SCROOGE, previously used in London by White Horse Fast Ferries. She will operate trips between Falmouth, St Mawes, Helford Passage and Mylor. The company has taken over the ferry from St Mawes to Place, previously run by Mylor Boat Hire, and the service to Mylor run by Aqua Cab.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Cats The commuter service ended on 31 May after running for two months. There are now twice daily trips from the new Bute Park landing stage near Cardiff Castle at 1230 and 1630, but calls are dependent on water levels in the river.

NORTH WEST

Bithell Boats, Chester The LADY CHRISTINE, bought from Hampton Court, has been renamed THE JACKIE after the late Jackie Leach MBE, a city guide who was passionate about the river. THE EARL has been sold, apparently to the River Severn. The company has started running trips in York (see above).

Mersey Ferries The new temporary Liverpool landing stage opened on 23 May and the ferries were able to resume their full schedules.

Budgie Transport, Lancaster The Lune Aqueduct at Lancaster has been closed since March because of leaks and is not expected to reopen till 17 July. In the meantime, boat trips are running from Carnforth to Hest Bank and to Tewitfield.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SEACAT DIAMANT has been chartered from Sea Containers for the TT Races. She arrived on 24 May and operates from Heysham and Liverpool from 30 May to 12 June. The EXPRESS is also being chartered from P&O for Larne-Douglas sailings.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA is making a trip to land at Castletown on 17 June, apparently the first passenger sailing there for over 100 years.

G P Hamer 7 June 2006

TRIP OUT

July 2006

A fascinating era has ended, with the withdrawal of the last 'Fairmile B' launches, the WESTERN LADY III and IV from Tor Bay. In the second world war, 650 of the these sleek 112-ft launches were built with petrol engines to give a speed of up to 20 knots. A few dozen were converted for passenger work. They were tried on the Clyde (the ULSTER LADY in 1950), the Mersey (the WALLASEY BELLE in 1950), and in the Channel Islands where the Commodore Shipping Co first used them in 1948, but became most familiar in the south and east of England, where they served Falmouth, Torquay, Bournemouth, Brighton, Southend and Great Yarmouth, amongst other places. With little saloon space, they were ideally suited to excursions on fine summer days. Gradually, they succumbed to old age, as well as the decline in our traditional seaside resorts. After the withdrawal of the GOLDEN GALLEON at Great Yarmouth, only the WESTERN LADY vessels were left, crossing between Torquay and Brixham every summer from 1947 to 2005: they were always smartly turned out and were a credit to their owners. Tor Bay won't be the same without them and they will be missed.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL was chartered in Calais to be open to the public on 3-5 June, moored with historic ships celebrating 200 years of maritime history. She ran a successful trip from Rye to London on 8 June, then went to Rotterdam for a charter in connection with the Volvo Ocean round-the-world yacht race. She then returned to the Thames and is now on the Irish Sea.

NORTH EAST

B Clarkson, Whitby The SKYARK was sold and is now used for angling trips at Scarborough, carrying up to 12 passengers.

EAST ANGLIA

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Steam Packet Co The SOUTHERN BELLE is now in service. She runs to Berney Arms via Burgh Castle on Mondays and Fridays (leaving Yarmouth at 0930, 1145 and 1430) and on Wednesdays (at 1100 and 1430), and to Reedham via Burgh Castle, Berney Arms and Polkeys Mill on Tuesdays and Sundays (at 1000 and 1430). Evening cruises are offered in July and August on Wednesdays and Fridays. The owner is Mr "Tug" Wilson.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Trips to Southend planned for 8 and 22 July are being replaced by non-landing cruises to view the pier. It is hoped that repairs will be completed by 19 August when the KINGSWEAR CASTLE is due to land there.

Crown River Cruises The SAPELE and her sister, Westminster Party Boats' MERCURIA, entered service in June on the circular cruises from Westminster to St Katharine's. They can carry 248 passengers.

SOUTH COAST

The Solent Steam Packet The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant of £279 500 for restoration work on the SHIELDHALL.

Wightlink The OUR LADY PATRICIA has been withdrawn from service and is reportedly to be sold for scrap. Special evening cruises are being advertised for the Cowes Week fireworks on 4 August from Ryde and Portsmouth in the ST CLARE or in one of the Yarmouth ferries from Lymington, both at a fare of £44. The Lymington-Cowes catamaran service offered in Cowes Week in recent years is not being repeated, but there is a special bus service from Yarmouth to Cowes for Lymington passengers.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Western Lady Ferry Service The two WESTERN LADY vessels are laid-up this year, at Galmpton, and are unlikely to be used for passenger carrying again. The Torquay-Brixham service is being maintained by the TORBAY PRINCESSes, from the North Quay in Torquay.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The ADRIAN GILBERT has been sold and the KINGSLEY II is temporarily running on the St Mawes ferry this summer. A new 60-ft 100-passenger wooden ferry has been ordered from Cockwells of Ponsharden for delivery in 2007.

NORTH WEST

'Tunnel Top', Preston Brook This pub by the Bridgewater Canal is the base for the TUNNEL TOP II, renamed around 2001 from CHESHIRE LADY (listed on page 109 of 'Trip Out 2005/06'). She is open for lunch at her moorings from Mondays to Fridays, makes a lunch cruise on Sundays, and is available for charter.

Wyre Borough Council The new vessel carries the name WYRE ESTUARY FERRY. She has been out of service for over a month with problems with her propulsion units. A substitute bus service is being operated.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE is making a round-the-island cruise on 15 July.

MISCELLANY

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £1 861 000 to the Medway Queen Preservation Society to rebuild the ship's hull and decks.

The Fund has also awarded £23 600 to a Trust which wants to restore the MARY GORDON, a 52-ft wooden launch, built in 1898 as an electric launch, and last used to carry passengers in the 1960s at Lincoln. She is currently on land beside the Fossdyke near Lincoln.

The PLYMOUTH EXPLORER has been broken-up by Kew Bridge in London after being laid-up for several years. She was built in 1966 as the VIKING 66 for the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry, and went to Plymouth around 1990, then to London in 1999.

G P Hamer 6 July 2006

TRIP OUT

August 2006

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY ran aground briefly at Girvan on 7 August; 715 passengers disembarked and the ship sailed to Ayr for inspection; she was undamaged and resumed the next day. She will be unable to call at Swanage in September; the Dorset Belles will provide connections between Swanage and Bournemouth on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

EAST ANGLIA

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Steam Packet Co The current timetable has sailings to Berney Arms on Wednesdays and Fridays at 1145 and 1415, and to Reedham via Berney Arms at 1030 and 1430 on Tuesdays and Sundays. Evening cruises are at 1845 on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Chelmer Cruises now trade as Paper Mill Lock Cruises. Contact details for the VICTORIA remain unchanged.

THAMES

Southend Water Pleasure The DEVON BELLE has been sold and taken by road to Oban. She came to Southend in 2003, having previously operated from Ullapool, Fort Augustus and Plymouth.

George Wheeler Launches, Westminster, is ceasing operations and the three boats are being sold. The ROSEWOOD has been handed over to Thames Cruises, following a complex court case after George Wheeler Launches ended their previous partnership with Thames Cruises in 2002 and formed a new consortium to run the Westminster-Greenwich service. The company was formed by George Wheeler in 1946; he died in 1956 and the business was run by Albert Ellis until he died in 1996 when it passed to his son-in-law Alan Reed who is now retiring.

Thames River Services George Wheeler Launches' share of the Westminster-Greenwich service is being taken over by the other three operators (Campion Launches, Crown River Cruises and Westminster Party Boats) who have formed a new company, Thames River Cruises Ltd, to buy the CHAY BLYTH and HOLLYWOOD which are continuing to run to Greenwich. The Campions' AVONTUUR IV has been used to replace the ROSEWOOD.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Devon County Council and South Hams District Council are to continue a subsidy for the Dartmouth-Kingswear passenger ferry for the next two years, whilst the long-term future of the service is being studied.

Ducks and Drake, Plymouth, is a new operator of tours in amphibious ex-army DUKWs. Trips start from the Guildhall and last one hour, entering the water from a slipway in Coxside, opposite the Barbican.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The "park-and-float" service from Ponsharden now goes to Custom House Quay and boats no longer serve the National Maritime Museum.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Bay Cruises A new 24-passenger boat for taxi and commuter services is being built by RKL Engineering at Taffs Well.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council The WYRE ESTUARY FERRY is still out of service.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SUPERSEACAT TWO has a faulty gearbox; four sailings were cancelled on 25-26 July for repairs, and she has since been running on three out of four engines, with increased crossing times.

G P Hamer 8 August 2006

TRIP OUT

September 2006

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY arrived at Weymouth from Greenock and began south coast sailings on 1 September. On the 2nd and 3rd, the weather prevented her from going outside the Solent.

NORTH EAST

A & T Douglas, Seahouses, bought the ESK BELLE from Whitby and renamed her SOVEREIGN IV. She offers cruises round the Farne Islands and charters for divers. The owners already had smaller boats used for diving charters.

EAST ANGLIA

Suffolk Cruises, Woodbridge, have ceased trading and the EDWARD ALAN JOHN has been sold. She is now THE LADY SANDEL at Coleraine in Northern Ireland.

R Cooper, Harwich The BRIGHTLINGSEA has not entered service this season and has been undergoing a refit at Woodbridge. She was due to offer short trips at Woodbridge on 9-10 September, but these have been cancelled.

THAMES

Southend Pier reopened on 5 August, allowing visitors to get to the landing stages and lifeboat station. The first passenger vessel to call was the KINGSWEAR CASTLE on 19 August.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co Kent and Thurrock Councils have agreed a new contract to maintain the Gravesend-Tilbury ferry for the next two years.

SOUTH COAST

Hurst Castle Ferries The HAVEN ROSE has been sold to Falmouth. Originally the MEDINA MIST at Cowes, she became the MAID OF BROWNSEA at Poole before going to Keyhaven in about 1990.

Brownsea Island Ferries Bird-watching cruises in Poole Harbour, organised with the RSPB, are scheduled for 19 November, 10 December, 21 January, 18 February and 4 March. An evening cruise to the Purbeck Coast is advertised for 16 June 2007.

Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The service will be suspended from 30 October for about three weeks while the BRAMBLE BUSH BAY has her two-yearly refit.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB is chartering vessels for avocet cruises on the River Exe from Exmouth, Starcross or Topsham on 21 dates between 25 October and 3 March.

Dart Pleasure Craft The KINGSWEAR BELLE was damaged by a fire which broke out during the night of 28/29 August. Repairs are expected to take over a month.

Sound Cruising, Plymouth Trips to Morwellham, taking six hours, including two hours ashore, were advertised for 14 dates this season, with the last one on 17 September. There have also been occasional two-hour cruises to the River Yealm and three-hour coastal cruises to Whitsand Bay.

Ducks and Drake, Plymouth The trips in ex-army DUKWs are now expected to start in late September.
K&S Cruises, Falmouth, has bought the ADRIAN GILBERT from Cornwall Ferries and renamed her PRIDE OF FALMOUTH.
A P & E R Newman, Tolverne The ALICE-MARIE has been renamed QUEEN OF THE FAL and has been running between Falmouth and Tolverne with the CORNISH BELLE. The ALICE-MARIE was originally the GAY QUEEN at Rothesay and is a near-sister of Cornwall Ferries' QUEEN OF FALMOUTH which was originally the MAID OF BUTE at Rothesay.
G H Pill, Falmouth The NEW PRINCESS MAUD, used last season, seems to have been sold and has been replaced this year by the HAVEN ROSE from Keyhaven. Helford River cruises are offered from the Prince of Wales Pier.
J Pill (Falmouth Pleasure Cruises) The former Dagenham ferry TWIN-STAR III has been rebuilt with an upper deck, new wheelhouse and twin funnels. She has been used for Helford River cruises as well as the PRINCESSA.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS
Bickerline, Worcester, has ceased trading.
New Worcester Steamer Co now trades as River Severn Cruises. THE EARL has been bought from Bithells of Chester to run 45-minute river trips.
River Severn Ferry Company, Stourport, owned by a Mr Phil Evans, is a new operator who bought the LADY JULIA from Falmouth in 2005. She has reverted to her previous name of SKYLARK II and entered service last July. She offers short trips, linking Lickhill Manor, Allen's and Redstone caravan parks with Stourport, and makes day trips to Worcester on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
'River King', Shrewsbury The RIVER KING was sold in 2005 and returned to York after four seasons at Shrewsbury. There have been no trips from Shrewsbury since.

NORTH WEST
Wyre Borough Council The ferry is being repaired and is expected to resume this month.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The PANAGIA SOUMELA (ex LADY OF MANN) entered service in Greece on 8 August. The SEA EXPRESS I has been refitted and will return to service around 11 September, replacing the SUPERSEACAT TWO which still has mechanical problems.

G P Hamer 6 September 2006

TRIP OUT

October 2006

The summer of 2006 was another good one. After a wet May, the weather in June and July was better than average, though August was unsettled, with most places getting less sun and more rain than usual. Both July and September were the warmest in living memory. Few boat operators can complain about the weather this season.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's sailing from Worthing on 4 September was cancelled by the weather. Her south coast sailings were curtailed on the 19th, and she sailed light from Southampton to Tilbury on the 20th, thus missing calls at Worthing and Dover. She began her Thames sailings on 22 September at Whitstable

EAST ANGLIA

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit is proposing to reopen a summer ferry service across the River Alde at Slaughden near Aldeburgh as part of the Suffolk coastal path. The ferry is believed to have closed 40 years ago.

R Cooper, Harwich The BRIGHTLINGSEA was open to the public at Woodbridge on 9-10 September. When her refit is complete, the owners hope to run some winter lunch cruises, before a full season at Harwich in 2007.

THAMES

Octoply, Woolwich The company, registered in 2004, has advertised charter trips using the former Clyde car ferry SOUND OF SCARBA, and a commuter service from Woolwich and Greenwich to Tower Pier, but have not started operating yet.

Thames River Boats A limited service from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court is due to continue till 29 October.

The Floating Boater, Little Venice The veteran narrow boat LAPWING is being sold, and has been advertised for £58 500.

Cotswold River Cruises, Lechlade The owner, Mr Ken Oliver, has this year been appointed as chief executive of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust which aims to restore the canal. The ADVENTURESS has been used for charters but has not offered any public trips this year.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries A new timetable for the RED JETs will be introduced on 12 November, with departures from both Southampton and Cowes at 15 and 45 minutes past each hour (instead of 00 and 30) in order to give better connections with trains to and from London.

Solent & Wight Line Cruises At weekends from 19 August to 10 September, one of the JENNY boats ran a "park and ride" service in Portsmouth from the Continental Ferry Port to Gunwharf Quays, with a connecting bus between a car park and the boat in the ferry Port.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Manche Iles Express A third vessel for the service has been ordered from a French yard for delivery next year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III's 2007 season runs from 26 March to 3 November, with sailings daily except Sundays (and Tuesdays and Thursdays 27 March - 5 April and 23 October to 1 November). A special schedule operates on 4-7 May for the world pilot gig championships. There are two round trips on Saturdays 26 May and 2 June. A longer day trip, leaving Penzance at 0800, is offered on Wednesdays in July and August, and a shorter trip (1100 from Penzance, 1500 from Scilly) on Saturdays from 28 July to 1 September. There are also sailings every Sunday in August.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Tarka Cruises, Appledore, is to cease trading, and the ferry to Instow and river cruises in the NEPTUNIA II will cease. The owner is also closing his café and gift shop, and blames declining visitor numbers and rising costs. The ferry had operated since at least the 1850s.

Cardiff Bay Cruises hope their new 30-passenger fast catamaran will be completed later this year and will offer a regular service between Cardiff and Penarth.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Willowtree Narrow Boat Trips, Greenford The business has been advertised for sale for £95 000. The WIND IN THE WILLOWS is offering public and charter trips for Christmas, from 14 to 23 December.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council Repairs to the WYRE ESTUARY FERRY are now expected to continue into November.

Coniston Launch Services run daily till 3 December, from 26 December to 7 January, and from 10 February, and otherwise run at weekends only.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SEA EXPRESS I returned to service on 11 September, replacing the SUPERSEACAT TWO.

G P Hamer 5 October 2006

TRIP OUT

November 2006

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	City Cruises	1819
2(2)	Thames Luxury Ch	1815
3(3)	Woods River Cruises	1692
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(9)	Capital Pleasure B.	603
10(10)	George Wheeler L	458

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	3679
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(3)	Catamaran Cruisers	2198
4(6)	Thames Luxury Ch	1833
5(4)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(5)	Salter's Steamers	1672
7(7)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1548
8(8)	French Brothers	1506
9(9)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1348
10(10)	Crown River Cruises	1343

Waverley Excursions After a successful spell on the Thames, the WAVERLEY left Tilbury on 9 October and reached Glasgow on the 11th, after calling at Weymouth for bunkers. She made three trips on the Clyde on 14-15 October to mark the 60th anniversary of her launching.

THAMES

Hire Cruisers, Maidstone The KENTISH LADY II is running a "park and sail" service on Saturdays from 18 November to 23 December, leaving Allington hourly from 0900 to 1600, and returning from Maidstone hourly from 1030 to 1730.

Catamaran Cruisers The multilingual sightseeing cruises now run all year from Westminster, with none from Embankment; languages on the recorded commentary now include Russian and Mandarin Chinese.

Thames Clippers A majority share in the company is now held by AEG Europe (Anschutz Entertainment Group) which is developing the Millennium Dome, to be reopened next year as "The O2". Six additional 220-passenger catamarans are to be introduced next year to offer more frequent services and to serve the Dome.

SOUTH COAST

Ross Boat Trips, Brighton, have taken over the business of Marina Water Tours, with the COMMODORE II and VOYAGER, thus giving a fleet of four passenger boats (plus one carrying 12 passengers).

Gosport Ferry It seems that there will be no programme of public excursions next year, though the SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH will still be available for charters.

Wightlink has announced details of the two new ferries to be ordered for the Lymington service. They will have similar dimensions to the present ships, with a length of 205 ft, and will carry 360 passengers and 65 cars. The contract is expected to go to a yard in Croatia, with delivery due in 2008.

Isle of Wight Council The Cowes floating bridge was off service for a refit from 29 October to 4 November. A passenger launch ran a free service for pedestrians.

WEST OF ENGLAND

G H Pill, Falmouth The NEW PRINCESS MAUD, used for Helford River trips in 2005, was sold to Sea Life Surveys of Tobermory and renamed SULA MHOR. She was built in 1950 for the St Mawes Steam Tug & Passenger Co, and spent most of her life on the ferry between Falmouth and St Mawes. The new owners offer wildlife cruises and also have two 12-passenger boats.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III was diverted to Falmouth on 19 October, after heavy seas prevented her from entering Penzance.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Avon River Cruises, Bath, is a new operator, using the restaurant boat SILVER SALMON, previously on the Severn at Worcester. Public and charter trips go as far as Bristol.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Next year's programme of public trips has been published. There are day trips to Tewkesbury on 12 and 26 May, 23 June, 22 September and 6 October, and to Sharpness on 16 June, 15 July and 9 September.

NORTH WEST

Bithell Boats, Chester, are advertising two-hour afternoon jazz cruises in the LADY DIANA on Sundays from 15 October to 25 March.

Mersey Ferries Morning commuter services from Woodside ended on 27 October, following low usage, and the morning service now runs from Seacombe every 20 minutes, instead of half-hourly. The first call at Woodside on Mondays to Fridays is at 1020. Evening commuter services are still half-hourly with calls at Woodside till 1835, but the last two crossings from Liverpool, at 1845 and 1905, are to Seacombe only. The 2007 programme of Manchester Ship Canal cruises has been published and again shows an increase, with 25 sailings from Liverpool and 25 from Salford.

The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool The DUKW acquired from Glasgow was named WACKER QUACKER 08 on 12 October.

Wyre Borough Council Lancashire County Council has withdrawn its subsidy for a winter ferry service, so the WYRE ESTUARY FERRY is not expected to resume service till next year.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE will offer Christmas sailings from Douglas to Dublin on 23 and 30 December, returning overnight. Two fast ferries will be used next summer, with the SUPERSEACAT TWO serving Liverpool, and the SEA EXPRESS I serving Liverpool, Dublin and Belfast.

G P Hamer 8 November 2006

TRIP OUT

December 2006

NORTH EAST

River Escapes, Newcastle Public trips are advertised for Sundays from 11 March to 28 October, and on 11 and 25 November, and 2 and 16 December, as well as most Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to September. On each date, there is both a three-hour cruise to the river mouth at 1200 in the RIVER ESCAPES FORTUNA and a two-hour upriver cruise at 1230 in the RIVER ESCAPES COVENTINA.

YorkBoat Trips run daily in 2007 from 3 February to 2 December; the cruise to Bishopthorpe runs from 31 March to 30 September.

EAST ANGLIA

The GOLDEN GALLEON was broken-up at St Olaves in November after lying derelict at Reedham for about six years. A converted Fairmile, she had operated as a passenger vessel from Great Yarmouth from 1951 till about 1999.

R Cooper The former Harwich-Felixstowe ferry BRIGHTLINGSEA, built in 1925, is advertised to do lunch cruises on the River Deben from Woodbridge or Felixstowe Ferry from 8 to 24 December, but limited to 12 passengers.

THAMES

Thames Clippers The six new 220-passenger catamarans are being built by Aimtek (formerly NQEA) in Australia, with four due next May, and the other two in September. They will similar to the HURRICANE CLIPPER.

Capital Pleasure Boats The BRUNEL has been sold and has apparently gone to the upper Thames.

Thames Cruises have advertised the HURLINGHAM for sale.

Salter's Steamers Next season's public services run from 19 May to 23 September and follow the same pattern as this year's.

White Horse Boats, Devizes The KENAVON VENTURE and her business have been advertised for sale by the owners, Ian and Sue Sharp.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries For part of the day on 27 November, the fast service was reduced to an hourly frequency as the RED JETs 1, 3 and 4 were off service for refit or repairs. The car ferries operate a reduced two-ship service from 13 January to 9 March, then a third ship makes limited sailings until 30 March, after which, the full hourly three-ship service operates until 26 October.

Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The BRAMBLE BUSH BAY was towed to Southampton for refit. Her return was delayed by bad weather and the service was still suspended on 5 December.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries Next year's sailings follow the usual pattern, with services from Poole from 2 April to 29 October. The CONDOR VITESSE again does a daily Poole-Cherbourg trip for Brittany Ferries from 21 May to 30 September. The COMMODORE CLIPPER makes a Portsmouth-Cherbourg trip on Sundays from 15 July to 9 September.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth All-day wildlife cruises are provisionally scheduled for 15, 19 and 20 May, 23 and 24 June, and 1 and 2 September; Exeter Canal trips will be on 25 May, 10 June, 9 July and 6 September.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The present HIGHER FERRY is to be replaced by a new vessel in 2009 when the present ferry will need major hull renewal work. A design contract has been awarded to the Pendennis Shipyard at Falmouth. The propulsion system has not been decided, but it will not be driven by paddle wheels like the present cable-guided ferry.

Fal Pleasure Cruises The MOYANA has been sold and taken by road to Ilfracombe. The new owner's plans are not known.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Cornwall County Council is considering a scheme to replace the SCILLONIAN III and cargo vessel GRY MARITHA with a single ship which would be owned by the Council and leased to the Steamship Co.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's 2007 season is from 24 March to 30 October. On Saturdays from 14 July to 25 August, there are two trips, with an early departure at 0830 from Ilfracombe (except 18 August which is from Bideford), allowing day trippers about seven hours ashore.

NORTH WEST

Bithell Boats, Chester The LADY EDWINA GROSVENOR has been sold and delivered to Exeter. She had operated at Chester since 1982, though was limited to 12 passengers for some years. She had previously run in the Isles of Scilly as the KINGSLEY then at Falmouth as the EVELINA IV.

Wyre Borough Council The Knott End ferry may resume in January.

G P Hamer 6 December 2006

TRIP OUT

January 2007

Waverley Excursions Financial results for 2005 show an operating profit of £145 265 for the WAVERLEY and a loss of £138 869 for the BALMORAL, with an overall loss of £291 003 after adding overheads and office costs. Results for 2006 are expected to be better. This year, the WAVERLEY visits the Western Isles from 4 to 13 May, then goes to the Bristol Channel. She returns to the Clyde for a special trip on 16 June to mark her 60th anniversary. Her sailings follow the usual pattern on the Clyde, South Coast and Thames, and she ends her season on the Clyde on 13-14 October. The BALMORAL's sailings follow the usual pattern, with a visit to the Clyde in September.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The new SPIRIT OF THE TYNE's delivery was delayed by bad weather, but she finally arrived under tow on 18 December. She is due in service in the spring and will replace the SHIELDSMAN.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE, 60 years old this year, is again being chartered by the RSPB for seabird cruises: there are eight puffin cruises between 26 May and 1 July, and eight skua and shearwater cruises between 1 September and 6 October.

EAST ANGLIA

Topsail Charters, Maldon A programme of public day trips aboard sailing barges is offered on various dates from Maldon, Ipswich, Brightlingsea, Tilbury and London. Trips last from two to 11 hours, and cost from £15 to £50, including meals.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust The steamer's 2007 programme was published in December. Day trips include cruises off Sheerness on 7 April, 11 August and 13 October, Thames Estuary cruises on 14 April, 14 July and 1 September, a cruise into the Swale on 28 April, cruises up to New Hythe on 5 May and 15 September, a cruise to Shoeburyness on 12 May, the Medway Barge Race on 26 May, Southend on 9 June, 21 July and 25 August, a cruise towards Warden Point on 23 June, a cruise to Canvey Island on 30 June, Whitstable on 28 July, a "wharfs, creeks and jetties" cruise on 4 August, round Sheppey on 18 August and a bird-watching cruise on 6 October. Afternoon and evening cruises run on many dates, as usual.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS is making special trips for Southend Air Show on 28 May and the Thames Sailing Barge Match on 21 July.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open to the public this year from 24 March to 28 October.

Wightlink has awarded a contract for all eight car ferries to be refitted in Portsmouth Naval Base this winter and each winter till 2009/2010.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED EAGLE contacted the tanker barge HUMBER ENERGY in fog on 21 December. There were no injuries and no significant damage.
Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The service resumed by 11 December after the BRAMBLE BUSH BAY had returned from overhaul.

CHANNEL ISLANDS
Manche Iles Express The new vessel is being built by Gamelin at La Rochelle and will be 121 ft long and carry 270 passengers.
Compagnie Corsaire, Saint-Malo, plans to start a passenger-only service to Jersey next summer with a new 200-passenger vessel, reportedly being built in Australia. The company was established in 2003 to take over the local trips from St-Malo and Granville previously run by Emeraude Lines.
HD Ferries is a new operator which has advertised a fast ferry service between Jersey, Guernsey and St-Malo, with the chartered catamaran INCAT K3, used in 2006 by Acciona Trasmediterranea in Spain. It was built in 1998 and carries 400 passengers and 100 cars at 38 knots. Services are due to start in March.

WEST OF ENGLAND
Mevagissey Ferries The Mevagissey-Fowey service runs daily from 1 May to 1 October, with three to six round trips daily.

NORTH WEST
National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA runs daily from 1 April to 31 October from Coniston and Brantwood. On Saturdays, she calls additionally at Monk Coniston at the northern end of the lake.

MISCELLANY
On the Clyde, the KENILWORTH is on the market, having been replaced by a new vessel, the SEABUS, built by Voyager Yachts in Millbrook, Cornwall. The KENILWORTH was built in 1936 as the HOTSPUR II and operated on the Southampton-Hythe service until going to Scotland in 1979.

G P Hamer 6 January 2007

TRIP OUT

February 2007

NORTH EAST

YorkBoat has been bought by Bithell Boats of Chester for a total of £2 million, with £1.25 million paid initially and the rest in stages over six years. Yorkboat had been owned for the past two years by an investment company from Manchester. Bithells began running in York last summer and moved the wooden PRINCE CHARLES from Chester. The RIVER COUNTESS will be moved to Chester; she came to York in 1985 as the COUNTESS OF YORK, having previously run on the Thames as the WINDSOR I, WINDSOR CROWN then ABINGDON BELLE.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich Afternoon cruises to off Harwich run on 7 and 8 April, then most weekends from 28 April to 30 September, and on Wednesdays from June to September and Fridays in July and August. Call the Tourist Information Centre for bookings.

R Cooper is looking for additional finance to complete the restoration of the BRIGHTLINGSEA to passenger carrying, and says he may have to sell her if unsuccessful. She can carry 12 passengers but needs additional work to get a passenger certificate.

THAMES

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne Both boats offer public trips from Easter. The LADY OF LEE VALLEY offers a single trip to Ware on 3 August and runs hourly trips from Ware on 4 and 5 August, returning to Broxbourne on the evening of the 5th.

Capital Pleasure Boats has bought the ROSEWOOD and plan to rename her GOLDEN MOTION. She previously ran for George Wheeler Launches between Westminster and Greenwich, and passed to Thames Cruises last year, but was not used by them.

Cotswold River Cruises, Lechlade Public afternoon cruises to Buscot are scheduled for four Sundays, and there are four Wednesday day trips to Kelmscott.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The two new Lymington-Yarmouth ferries are being built at the Kraljevica shipyard in Croatia. Total cost is around £13 million. There was an engine room fire on OUR LADY PAMELA at Portsmouth on 2 February.

Red Funnel Ferries All three car ferries are being overhauled at Portsmouth this year.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL visits Portsmouth Steam Fair on 12-13 May and Weymouth from 11 to 19 August, with cruises from Weymouth on the 17th and 18th. Solent cruises from Southampton are offered on various dates from 21 April, and there is a cruise round the island on 23 June. Tickets should be booked through Blue Funnel Cruises.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Totnes sailings run daily from 1 April to 28 October. Two-hour coastal cruises run on 66 dates from 16 May to 2 September

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Away2eat, Birmingham The restaurant boat which ceased running in October 2005 is due to resume this year under new owners.

NORTH WEST

Bithell Boats, Chester, have taken over YorkBoat and are also starting trips on the Severn in Shrewsbury. The Bithells business has been owned by Brian Clarke since Bob Adamson retired in 2002, and will run nine boats this year, three in Chester, five in York and one in Shrewsbury. The RIVER COUNTESS is being moved from York to Chester and will be renamed THE JACKIE, replacing the former LADY CHRISTINE from Hampton Court which ran at Chester as THE JACKIE last year and will this year be renamed again and moved to Shrewsbury.

Mersey Ferries Services were suspended after the damaged SEA EXPRESS I was moored at the landing stage on 3 February, and could not resume till 1400 on the 5th.

Budgie Transport, Lancaster The Carnforth-Lancaster service runs at Easter then daily (except Sundays) from 5 May to 29 September. Carnforth-Tewitfield trips run at Easter, on Fridays from 15 June to 31 August and on Sundays from 6 May to 28 October. Cruises from Garstang are operated on certain dates.

Foulridge Canal Cruises Public trips are limited to ten Sundays this year, with a morning trip southwards through Foulridge tunnel and an afternoon cruise northwards.

Wyre Borough Council Resumption of the Knott End ferry service is now expected in the spring.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SEA EXPRESS I collided with the Greek bulk carrier ALASKA RAINBOW whilst approaching Liverpool in fog on 3 February. She starting taking water and was towed to the landing stage where all 274 passengers and 20 crew were safely disembarked. She was towed into Birkenhead Wet Basin on 5 February and her vehicles were unloaded. The Liverpool-Douglas service has been suspended and traffic will be diverted to the BEN-MY-CHREE at Heysham.

G P Hamer 6 February 2007

TRIP OUT

March 2007

Waverley Excursions Summer timetables have now been published for all areas except the Bristol Channel. The WAVERLEY runs in Scotland from 4 to 20 May and from 16 June to 27 August. She is on the south coast from 31 August to 20 September, then on the Thames till 7 October, and has a final weekend on the Clyde on 13-14 October. The BALMORAL runs around the Irish Sea from 26 May to 13 June, with a trip from Mostyn on 12 June. She is on the south coast on 19-22 June, then on the Thames, with visits to Sussex on 10-11 July, and to the North East on 13-15 July, with sailings from Scarborough, Whitby, Hartlepool, Sunderland and Amble. She has another south coast trip on 17 July before going to the Bristol Channel, and visits the Clyde on 20-24 September.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The SPIRIT OF THE TYNE made a trial trip to Newcastle on 22 February and an evacuation test with 100 volunteers on the 26th. A naming ceremony was performed by Princess Anne on 1 March.

THAMES

Capital Pleasure Boats The ROSEWOOD is to be renamed GOLDEN FLAME, not GOLDEN MOTION as originally intended. She is being rebuilt, with a saloon and bar on the upper deck.

Thames River Boats Sailings to Kew and Hampton Court are due to resume on 31 March.

Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN visited Lowestoft in January for refit.

SOUTH COAST

The SOUTHSEA BELLE, which operated on Portsmouth harbour trips till 2003, has been offered for sale for £9500 by her owner, Mr M G Pearce. She was built in 1928 as the FOLKESTONE BELLE and spent many years on the Hayling Island ferry service. She took part in the evacuation of Dunkerque in 1940.

Gosport Ferry Despite suggestions that no public excursions would be offered this year, the SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH will offer a limited programme from 4 June to 12 September, though there are no weekend trips. There are 6-hour "three rivers" cruises, 5-hour cruises to the Hamble River, Southampton Docks or the Beaulieu River, and day trips to Cowes. Basket meals can be ordered in advance for the longer cruises.

Mudeford Ferry The JOSEPHINE is making day trips to Yarmouth on 4 and 20 June, 5 July, and 17 September.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The INCAT K3 was dry-docked in Gibraltar and renamed HD1. She left on 17 February and called at St-Malo, St Helier and St Peter Port on the 19th before going to Portsmouth for modifications. She will be open to the public at St-Malo on 12 March, St Peter Port on the 13th and St Helier on the 14th. The service between Guernsey, Jersey and St-Malo is due to start on 15 March.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth, plan to offer cruises to view the container ship MSC NAPOLI aground, with the first scheduled from Sidmouth on 8 April.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service Trips from Dartmouth to Greenway resume on 7 March, and the RIVIERA BELLE is due to start her trips from Torquay to Dartmouth and Greenway at Easter.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust St George's Island off Looe was left to the Trust by the late Miss Babs Atkins in 2004, and it is now open to the public from Easter to September.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The new wooden boat for the St Mawes service is now expected in the spring of 2008. She is being built locally by Cockwells on traditional lines.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The old KING HARRY FERRY was sold to Pendennis Shipyard who built her replacement. She broke from her moorings at Falmouth on 11 February and drifted to St Mawes where she ran ashore. She was towed back to Falmouth undamaged. The owners have not decided on her future role.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Packet Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 20 dates from 11 April to 20 October. One-way trips to Bath are offered on five Sundays.

Pride of Bath The ANTOINETTE is being advertised for sale for £45 000.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council The Knott End ferry is now due to resume on 26 March.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE is making morning round trips from Douglas to Birkenhead at weekends from 3 to 18 March, instead of her scheduled Heysham sailings. The SUPERSEACAT TWO is expected to operate the Liverpool service from 23 March. P&O's EXPRESS is to be chartered on 2 June for a sailing from Troon to Douglas for the TT Races.

MISCELLANY

The Italian GIUSEPPE D'ABUNDO has gone to India for scrap. She was built as the ANTRIM PRINCESS and served the Isle of Man as the TYNWALD from 1986 to 1990.

G P Hamer 8 March 2007

TRIP OUT

April 2007

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's Bristol Channel sailings run from 26 May to 9 June, with visits to Lundy on 3, 6 and 7 June. On 10 June, she cruises from Milford Haven around the Pembrokeshire Islands. The BALMORAL's Bristol Channel timetable is still awaited.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The SHIELDSMAN broke down on 29 March and the service was suspended till the 31st, with a replacement bus service, because the SPIRIT OF THE TYNE was still not ready, and the PRIDE OF THE TYNE was off for refit.

EAST ANGLIA

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Steam Packet Co The SOUTHERN BELLE's 2007 programme includes trips from Yarmouth to Reedham on Sundays and Tuesdays, on the River Yare to Cantley on Thursdays in July and August, and shorter cruises to Breydon Water; there are trips between Reedham and Oulton Broad on Saturdays in July and August.

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners The ferry to Point Clear and East Mersea runs at weekends from 7 April to 30 September, and daily from 19 July to 5 September. At other times until 28 October, crossings can be booked in advance.

THAMES

Essex Marina The LADY ESSEX II is being rebuilt and is due to return to service with the LADY ESSEX III. The Wallasea Island to Burnham ferry resumes on 6 April, using a new pontoon at Burnham's town quay; last year, the service had to use Burnham Marina. Seal and wildlife cruises also resume on 6 April.

Thames Executive Charters The Putney commuter service now calls at Wandsworth Riverside Quarter, a new residential development with a pontoon landing stage, as well as Chelsea Harbour and Cadogan Pier. Sailings are run by the JOHN HARRIOT, apart from the 0730 from Putney and 1820 from Blackfriars which are run by a bigger boat, usually Mr Langley's HENLEY or VISCOUNT.

Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co The veteran BELLE, based at Maidenhead since 1981, is being offered for sale.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The pontoon at Gosport, owned by the Borough Council, needs replacing at an estimated cost of £3 million. The council cannot afford the cost, and neither the ferry company nor Hampshire County Council is willing to pay.

Wightlink has confirmed that construction of the two new Lymington-Yarmouth ferries will start soon at Kraljevica in Croatia. The start of construction was delayed awaiting approval by the government which owns the yard. The ships are expected to enter service in July 2008.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The HD1 entered service on 15 March, but suffered delays through engine trouble, while all sailings on the 18th and 19th were cancelled by the weather.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co has taken over Boats at Bristol and their MERCURY and TAURUS to give a total fleet of eight boats. Public cruises down the Avon Gorge are scheduled for 18 dates between 9 April and 21 October.

Cardiff Bay Cruises The CANBERRA QUEEN has been sold and is apparently no longer used as a passenger boat.

Cardiff Cats The boats are being painted yellow this year.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

ShrewsburyBoat (Bithell Boats) THE JACKIE from Chester has been renamed SABRINA (after the Severn's Celtic goddess) and was craned into the Severn at Shrewsbury on 13 March. She is due to start running half-hour trips at Easter.

NORTH WEST

Wyre Borough Council The Knott End ferry resumed on 26 March

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The TOTNES CASTLE is to be renamed LADY WAKEFIELD by Princess Alexandra on 17 April at Glenridding Pier.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SUPERSEACAT TWO returned to service on 23 March. To replace the SEA EXPRESS I, the EMERAUDE FRANCE is being chartered. She left Tilbury, where she had been laid-up since December 2005, on 28 March. Captain Hamish Ross, the company's managing director, is to retire at the end of June after 11 years; the new chief executive is Mr Mark Woodward, an accountant.

G P Hamer 3 April 2007

TRIP OUT

May 2007

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL's Bristol Channel programme has now been published and shows sailings from 19 July to 17 September.

NORTH EAST

A&G Passenger Boats, Sheffield The lease of the APOLLO is not being renewed and there are no public trips this year. A new vessel to carry around 65 passengers is under construction and is due in service later this year.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS started taking water on 4 April whilst operating on the Tilbury ferry. The passengers were disembarked safely but the engine room was partly flooded. She was taken out of service for repairs, and the ferry service was suspended as the DUCHESS M was also off for refit.

Hire Cruisers, Maidstone Three-hour cruises through Farleigh Lock to Teston run weekly from 16 May, on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

Thames River Services The summer schedule runs from 2 April to 28 October, with boats from Westminster to Greenwich every half hour from 1000 to 1600, and at 1630 and 1700 in June, July and August. Sailings to the Barrier have changed and now leave Westminster at 1030 and hourly to 1430.

Thames Executive Charters have acquired the fast catamaran CABOT which ran briefly in London in 2001, but has since been idle. She has been refitted and will be used on the commuter service to Chelsea, Wandsworth and Putney.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Isle of Sark Shipping Co The contract to manage the ships, held by Alderney Shipping since August 2005, has been awarded to Ship & Fly, a Guernsey company which specialises in transporting cars to and from the mainland.

Compagnie Corsaire, St-Malo The new vessel has been launched in Australia and named JACQUES CARTIER after the sailor from St-Malo who made exploratory voyages to North America in the 16th century. The vessel is 125 ft long and will carry 200 passengers at 28 knots. She will be transported to France and is due in St-Malo in June ready to start the new service to Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Grand Western Horseboat Co, Tiverton The owners Mr and Mrs Brind have retired and the business has passed to their son Philip and his wife, who have adopted the name Tiverton Canal Co.

Western Lady Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY IV has been sold for private use, but the WESTERN LADY III is still for sale. The TORBAY PRINCESS and TORBAY PRINCESS II have this year been renamed WESTERN LADY VI and VII.

K Lane (Paignton Pleasure Cruises) The ISLAND PRINCESS has been sold to Sea Life Surveys of Tobermory and arrived in Oban on 9 April. She was originally the ISLAND ROSE of Hurst Castle Ferries and had run at Paignton since 2003. She has been renamed SULA BEAG.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service have bought the TYPHOON, the former Guernsey-Herm boat which has been at Torquay since 1999, and renamed her TORQUAY BELLE, and the Brixham angling boat BONNIE BOYS which has become the BAY BELLE. Trips will be offered from both Torquay and Brixham.

Sound Cruising, Plymouth There are trips to Calstock on 27 dates and trips to Morwellham on 23 dates from 12 April to 6 October. The programme also includes two-hour cruises to the River Yealm and, on 8 July, 12 August and 2 September, there are three-hour coastal cruises.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Sow Valley Cruises, Great Haywood, have ceased trading and the MILFORD STAR has been sold for service from Macclesfield.

Maritime Leisure Cruises, Boston, have bought the MARIANNE, previously operated from Worcester by Bickerline. She is being rebuilt and is due to enter service in May on the River Ouse from Ely.

NORTH WEST

Freedom Boats, Macclesfield, have bought the MILFORD STAR. One-hour public trips are offered, generally on alternate Sundays.

Mersey Ferries The temporary pontoon used at Liverpool last year reopened on 30 April at the Pier Head close to the old stage which sank.

G P Hamer 2 May 2007

TRIP OUT

June 2007

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her Bristol Channel sailings with a trip from Cardiff on 25 May, berthing in the Roath Basin, and made a first trip from Newport's redeveloped Penmaen Wharf on 1 June. The BALMORAL began her season on 26 May with a day trip from Whitehaven to Douglas as scheduled. Llandudno Pier needs repairs and cannot be used by the BALMORAL. The schedule from 5 to 13 June has been revised and bus connections are provided from Llandudno to Menai Bridge.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The new SPIRIT OF THE TYNE finally entered regular passenger service on 27 May.

EAST ANGLIA

Broadland Passenger Craft, Wroxham The owners have decided to sell the BROADLAND EXPLORER and retire from the passenger business.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS returned to service on 15 May after repairs. The Tilbury ferry also resumed in May after the DUCHESS M had completed a prolonged refit.

City Cruises The skipper of the MILLENNIUM OF PEACE, Mr Micky Reed, was attacked by two drunken passengers whilst the boat was alongside Tower Pier on the evening of 2 June. He died in hospital and two men have been charged with murder.

Great River Journeys will not be running trips from Wallingford this year, and only the steamer STREATLEY will be in service, operating charters from a base near Henley.

SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries announced on 6 June that the company had been bought by Infracapital Partners LP, part of the Prudential Group. Red Funnel has now had four owners in ten years; since 2004, it had been owned by HBOS (Halifax and Bank of Scotland) and the company's management. The company will continue with the same management.

The Dorset Belles now trade as Dorset Cruises. Sailings are similar to last year's, with an Isle of Wight trip from Poole, Swanage and Bournemouth on Wednesdays only, daily trips from Poole to Swanage and Bournemouth, and from Bournemouth to Poole and Brownsea Island, and a Bournemouth-Swanage service daily except Wednesdays.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, Saint-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER is due to enter service on 29 June and will offer two round trips to St Helier daily, leaving St-Malo at 0845 and 1700, and leaving Jersey at 0945 and 1745; a third trip will be offered on certain afternoons.

HD Ferries The HD1 touched the COMMODORE GOODWILL at St Helier on 11 May and the HD1's captain was subsequently sacked.

Manche Iles Express The new vessel is named TOCQUEVILLE after the 19th-century writer and politician Alexis de Tocqueville.

WEST OF ENGLAND

S S Jamieson, Torquay, has bought the HERM CLIPPER from Guernsey. Mr Jamieson already owns the SOLENT PRINCESS which was originally the ISLAND QUEEN on the Guernsey-Herm service.

P & C Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) have bought the CORNISH BELLE from Falmouth.

Mevagissey Ferries The HANNIBAL JAMES has been replaced by the 40-ft 50-passenger BESSIE JAMES, delivered in May from the Procharter yard at Wadebridge, who also built the previous vessel.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG berthed at Appledore Quay on 18 May for an evening charter in aid of a local church.

NORTH WEST

D W & D G Jones, Beaumaris The CERISMAR TWO is offering RSPB cruises to Puffin Island, lasting an hour and a half, at 1130, 1315 and 1500 on 10 and 16 June, and 4 and 14 July; tickets will be sold on Beaumaris Pier.

Wigan Boats is a new operator which is introducing the ROMANCE, a new 58-ft boat to carry 40 passengers, from Appley Bridge on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal near Wigan. Public and charter trips start in July.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co For the TT Races, the STENA CALEDONIA was chartered for Heysham-Douglas sailings on 2-4 and 9-11 June. The EXPRESS was chartered from P&O for sailings from Larne and Troon to Douglas.

G P Hamer 6 June 2007

TRIP OUT

July 2007

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL offered cruises from Whitehaven on 15-17 June as part of the local maritime festival where she was advertised as "the fabulous Edwardian cruise ship."

THAMES

At the Thames Traditional Boat Rally, to be held in Henley on 21-22 July, short trips will be offered by the steamers ALASKA and WINDSOR BELLE.

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The Gravesend-Tilbury ferry will operate on Sunday 8 July between 0700 and 1600 at a special fare of £4 return, for people watching the Tour de France cycle race which passes through Gravesend.

Thames Clippers The new catamarans being built in Australia have not been delivered yet. The service to the O2 (formerly the Millennium Dome) started in June, from Waterloo via London Bridge City, taking 28 minutes each way; Waterloo departures are hourly from 1000 to 0100, with extra night services when events are taking place in the O2.

London Waterbus Co, Little Venice Day trips are scheduled to Limehouse on 14 and 28 July, and 8 September, and to Greenford on 22 September.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne The business was sold in May by Christopher Laycock to Jason Foster. The season started late, but the WILLIAM ALLCHORN was due to start in June, with the SOUTHERN QUEEN following this month.

Arundel Boatyard has sold the AMBERLEY CASTLE and bought a 39-ft boat from Scotland which has been renamed SEA CREST; she was the LADY LENNOX but her history is not known.

Portsmouth Harbour Tours D & P Faithfull have ceased operating daytime trips around the harbour, and are instead concentrating on the night ferry to Gosport and charter trips. J Butcher & Sons still run the trips from the beach at Southsea, but it is not clear if they will continue the trips from Portsmouth Hard.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, St-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER was built by Strategic Marine at Henderson in Western Australia. She was loaded aboard a cargo ship which left the port of Dampier on 1 July and is due in St-Malo on 25 July. The start of the new service to Jersey has been delayed until 1 August.

HD Ferries The company is considering extending the service from Guernsey via Alderney to Cherbourg. The H D 1 made a trial call at Alderney on 21 June.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Exeter cruises The SOUTHERN COMFORT has been replaced by the LADY EDWINA GROSVENOR from Chester which has been renamed KINGSLEY, the name she carried in the Isles of Scilly until 1975. Trips to Double Locks leave Exeter Quay hourly from 1130 to 1530.

Devon Princess Cruises is the trading name of the new owner of the DARTMOUTH CASTLE, previously operated by Dart Pleasure Craft. She is reportedly running from Torquay to the River Dart.

Western Lady Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY III has been sold to Alistair Oliver and Colin Beach who propose to run her from Swanage. They plan to offer a programme of farewell trips in Torbay on 16-22 July.
F M Clynick, Falmouth, sold the Flushing ferry last September to a Mr Hudson who continues to run the MIRANDA.

NORTH WEST
Wigan Boats The new ROMANCE is due to make her first trips on 8 July, with public cruises from Appley Bridge at 1200, 1300 and 1500.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The EMERAUDE FRANCE made a round-the-island cruise on 5 July, and the BEN-MY-CHREE will do one on 14 July.

G P Hamer 5 July 2007

TRIP OUT

August 2007

Heavy rain and flooding in July brought a suspension of navigation on several rivers, with the Severn, Warwickshire Avon and Thames all being badly affected. River levels are now returning to normal and boat services are getting back to normal.

Waverley Excursions After her sailings on the Thames and in North East England, the BALMORAL began her Bristol Channel sailings on 19 July.

NORTH EAST

T Machin, Scarborough The start of the CORONIA's season was delayed. During her refit in Hull, replating was found to be necessary. She has been prevented from running to Whitby this year after the MCA has restricted her to going no more than 15 miles from Scarborough - the trip to Whitby is 17 miles.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE makes trips to Scarborough on Fridays from 29 June to 7 September.

EAST ANGLIA

A Sage, Harwich The local authorities have agreed to continue subsidies for the Harwich-Shotley-Felixstowe ferry till the end of the 2008 season.

THAMES

Thames Executive Charters The CABOT has entered service on the commuter service from Putney and Chelsea with the JOHN HARRIOTT. There are now four morning sailings from Putney and seven from Chelsea, but still only three evening sailings from Blackfriars. The 0730 from Putney and 1820 from Blackfriars are still operated by a larger, traditional boat, usually Complete Pleasure Boats' HENLEY or VISCOUNT.

SOUTH COAST

Kingfisher Cruises, Littlehampton, run the FREEDOM, a former Norfolk Broads cabin cruiser, which was limited to 12 passengers until this year but now has a certificate for 28. Trips operate from Littlehampton and Arundel.

Blue Funnel Cruises The JENNY R is running trips from Buckler's Hard this summer, replacing Beaulieu Enterprises' waterbus SWIFTSURE which has been withdrawn. During Cowes Week, from 4 to 11 August, the ASHLEIGH R is running from Lymington to Cowes, leaving Lymington at 0700, 0915 and 1915, and leaving Cowes at 0800, 1800 and 2030.

I & P Thomas, Yarmouth, run a 10-passenger boat in the harbour, and last year bought the larger TEMPTRESS from K&S Cruises of Falmouth; a converted naval pinnace, she had operated at Falmouth from 1993 till last year, and entered service from Yarmouth in August. She offers trips to the Needles or Cowes.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, Saint-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER arrived in St-Malo on 27 July aboard the cargo ship ANNEMIEKE, and entered service to Jersey on 4 August.

Manche Iles Express The TOCQUEVILLE entered service on 13 July.

HD Ferries announced on 16 July that the HD1 would operate to Alderney and Cherbourg on Mondays and Fridays from 30 July. On the 23rd, the Alderney service was cancelled because one of the vessel's water jets is damaged and her speed is reduced; she is now due to run to Cherbourg only on Mondays and Fridays, with a journey time from Guernsey of 1 hour 45 minutes. On 28 July, the HD1 was damaged in a collision with the CONDOR EXPRESS in St Helier, and was off service till the evening of 4 August. She made her first trip to Cherbourg on 6 August.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The PRIDE OF EXMOUTH will be offering trips from Seaton on 14 August. She continues to offer trips from Sidmouth to view the container ship MSC NAPOLI.

Western Lady Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY III operated her farewell cruises but carried few passengers, except for an evening cruise on 19 July on charter to the Torquay Museum Society which carried 100 passengers. She subsequently left for Poole.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service Trips from Torquay and Brixham are now advertised jointly with Mr S S Jamieson. The SOLENT PRINCESS continues to offer one-hour cruises from Torquay, and the SHEPHERD LASS is used mainly for angling trips. The TORQUAY BELLE, BAY BELLE and HERM CLIPPER run a Torquay-Brixham service with up to 16 sailings a day. The RIVIERA BELLE offers day trips from Brixham and Torquay to Dartmouth and, on Wednesdays to Saturdays, Greenway.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG was chartered to carry 150 cyclists from Swansea to Ilfracombe on 2 July during an nine-day cycle ride around the Bristol Channel organised by the charity Sustrans.

NORTH WEST

Fairbourne Railway has bought a 12-passenger boat to run on the summer ferry across the estuary at Barmouth, already served by two independent operators.

Mersey Ferries Bookings for the Manchester Ship Canal cruises are reported to be 20% higher than last year. Two additional trips have been scheduled for 1 and 2 October.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The EMERAUDE FRANCE will offer day trips to and from Whitehaven on 8 August, with departures from Douglas at 0600 and 1830, and from Whitehaven at 0815 and 2100. The day return fare is £20 and the crossing will take an hour and a half.

G P Hamer 6 August 2007

TRIP OUT

September 2007

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings as scheduled on 31 August.

EAST ANGLIA

R Cooper The BRIGHTLINGSEA began running cruises from Harwich in August, and normally offers two-hour harbour cruises at 1230, 1430 and 1630, but she is still limited to 12 passengers.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co has been fined £18 000 plus costs after the DUCHESS M was found to have carried around 100 passengers on a ferry crossing on 30 August 2006, when her certificate is for 60 (the figure in 'Trip Out 2007/08' is out of date).

Catamaran Cruisers are to cease all sightseeing trips from 1 October. The two restaurant boats, the NATICIA and SYMPHONY, will continue to run in London, trading as Bateaux London. Catamaran Cruisers was established in 1968 and introduced the SUERITA; in 1984, the company began regular services from Charing Cross (now Embankment) Pier, and was taken over by French group Sodexho in 1992. The fate of the six sightseeing boats and the service from Embankment to Tower and Greenwich is not known.

Thames Executive Charters are advertising evening trips from Putney, Wandsworth and Chelsea to the O2 Dome when events are being staged there; the fare of £25 includes a glass of champagne.

SOUTH COAST

Fairmile Classic Cruises is the trading name of the new owners of the WESTERN LADY III at Swanage. She offers coastal cruises, lasting an hour and a quarter, at 1100, 1230, 1400, 1530 and 1700, daily except Tuesdays when there is a day trip to Yarmouth, leaving Swanage at 1000 and leaving Yarmouth at 1550. The Swanage Railway sells combined tickets for a return trip from Norden to Swanage and a trip on the WESTERN LADY III.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The service was suspended again from 19 to 25 August because the Jersey authorities withdrew the HD1's ramp permit.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB is offering a programme of winter bird-watching cruises on the Exe Estuary from 10 November to 6 March, with two cruises from Exmouth and 12 from Starcross in the MY QUEEN, and 12 shorter trips from Topsham in the SEA DREAM II.

Plymouth City Council is to spend £1 million on a new pontoon landing stage for boats which currently use Phoenix Wharf and the Mayflower Steps. The new pier will be at Commercial Wharf, between the two existing landings.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Trips from Seaton on 14 August were cancelled by the weather. The PRIDE OF EXMOUTH is now due to run trips from Seaton on 8 September. Bird-watching cruises from Exmouth are scheduled for 22 dates from 8 November to 9 March.

Devon Princess Cruises The DARTMOUTH CASTLE is run by Mr M D Barrow, who previously ran the DEVON PRINCESSes. She is advertised for charter from Torquay, Brixham and Exmouth, and offers winter bird-watching cruises from Exmouth, on 17 dates from 10 November to 9 March.

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry A broken pipe caused the PLYMOUTH SOUND's engine room to become flooded during a trip to Saltash on 13 August. She was towed to Cremyll where the passengers disembarked, and soon returned to service after repairs.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Bay Cruises The new vessel is named HYDRO 1 and is 32 ft long. A service is advertised between Mermaid Quay, Cardiff Castle and Taff's Mead.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The OLIVER CROMWELL is due to offer Christmas lunch cruises from 11 to 22 December at a fare of £22.

D Page, Hampton Loade The village was badly damaged by flash floods on 19 June, and ferry was suspended until next spring.

T Sandham (Handsam Boat Co), Evesham The HANDSAM TOO was badly damaged in the July floods and will be off service till next summer. The owner has bought the 12-passenger SWIFTSURE, previously used on the Appledore-Instow ferry, as a replacement.

NORTH WEST

The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool, has bought a fourth DUKW, previously used in Glasgow as the CLYDE MCQUACKY. Rebuilding will take about a year.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The charter of the EMERAUDE FRANCE has ended and she left the Mersey on 5 September for Tilbury.

MISCELLANY

The nightclub TUXEDO PRINCESS (ex CALEDONIAN PRINCESS) is to close and the owners plan to redevelop the quayside. The ship may reopen at a new location.

G P Hamer 5 September 2007

TRIP OUT

October 2007

The past summer will be remembered for the rain in the first half of the summer, with East Anglia suffering most in May, Yorkshire in June, and Worcestershire and Oxfordshire in July. The resulting floods hit many boat operators on England's rivers, and depressed the tourist trade everywhere. Temperatures were overall average but cooler than the warm summers of the last few years. It will have been a difficult summer for most excursion operators, especially those relying on casual trade rather than charters and party bookings.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's south coast sailings were well supported. The last day's sailings, on 20 September, were cancelled by the weather and she went straight to Tilbury, with the trip from Dover on the 21st also cancelled. Bad weather also led to the cancellation of her sailings from Margate on 25 September, and from Harwich and Clacton on the 27th

NORTH EAST

Nexus The SHIELDSMAN ran with the two newer ferries on 30 September to carry crowds attending the "Great North Run", but these were expected to be her final trips before being sold.

THAMES

Catamaran Cruisers made their last sightseeing trips on 30 September.

Thames Clippers have taken over the service from Embankment to Tower and Greenwich previously run by Catamaran Cruisers. Since 1 October, the Clippers use Embankment instead of Savoy Pier, and Tower instead of St Katharine's, and services go to Greenwich every 40 minutes during the daytime; journey time from Embankment is 34 minutes, with calls at Bankside, London Bridge City, Tower, Canary Wharf, Greenland and Masthouse Terrace. The initial contract with London River Services is for six months but the Clippers hope to get a ten-year agreement for the service next spring. Peak commuter services also call at Blackfriars, and some services go to Woolwich Arsenal. The first four new vessels arrived in the UK from Australia in September, and are named CYCLONE CLIPPER, MONSOON CLIPPER, TORNADO CLIPPER and TYPHOON CLIPPER.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island Ferries Bird-watching cruises around Poole Harbour in conjunction with the RSPB are scheduled for the mornings of 28 October, 18 November, 16 December, 13 January, 10 and 24 February, and 9 March; evening cruises to the Purbeck coast are advertised for 24 May and 14 June 2008.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries Sailings were again suspended after an inspection of the HD1 in St-Malo on 11 September and were allowed to resume on the 14th. The service will be suspended for the winter from 6 November to 19 March.

Manche Iles Express A naming ceremony for the TOCQUVILLE was held at Carteret on 13 September, two months after her entry into service.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Torpoint Ferry The PLYM II was taken out of service on 14 September for a refit, and a reduced two-vessel service will operate for about four weeks. The PLYM II was towed to Falmouth on 17 September for dry-docking.

King Harry Steam Ferry Co The old ferry replaced in 2006 has finally left Falmouth under tow for Southampton.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The island was closed to visitors from 22 September to 4 October after a stomach virus made 54 visitors and residents ill.

Avon River Cruises, Bath The SILVER SALMON will be based in Bristol for charters from November to April, but will return to Bath for the summer season.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

The local authority at Matlock plans to open a summer ferry across the River Derwent between Derwent Gardens and Lover's Walk.

Telstar Cruisers, Telstar The owner, Dave Garfitt, plans to sell the business after a very bad season. Passenger numbers on the trips to Twyning fell by 50% and flooding led to the cancellation of 31 days' trips.

NORTH WEST

Traws-Sailing, Trawsfynydd, have revived trips on the lake with the Dutch waterbus GLEN LYON from Loch Tay which has been renamed PRYSORWEN. She had previously operated at Trawsfynydd as the MARED. She offers one-hour cruises on the lake in summer.

Shropshire Steamboat Co, Ellesmere, introduced a 12-passenger steamboat named LADY KATHERINE on the lake near the Denbighshire border. Trips will run at weekends until Christmas.

Mersey Ferries Additional Manchester Ship Canal cruises have been scheduled for 13 and 14 October "due to demand".

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has published its report into the collision between the SEA EXPRESS I and ALASKA RAINBOW on 3 February. The owners of both ships and the Mersey Docks & Harbour Co all share blame.

MISCELLANY

The HARMONY II (ex PRINCE ALBERT) was in London from 22 to 28 September, berthing alongside HMS BELFAST with an exhibition of the furniture manufactured by her owners. Originally built as a passenger and cargo ship in Yugoslavia, she came to the UK in 1987 and operated charters before being laid-up at Tilbury then Liverpool. She has been rebuilt and re-engined at Ipswich.

G P Hamer 4 October 2007

TRIP OUT

November 2007

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(2)	Thames Luxury Ch	2049
2(1)	City Cruises	1887
3(3)	Silver Fleet	1692
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(6)	Catamaran Cruisers	735
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(9)	Capital Pleasure B.	746
10(-)	Thames Cruises	405

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	3890
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(3)	Catamaran Cruisers	2198
4(4)	Thames Luxury Ch	1873
5(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
6(6)	Salter's Steamers	1672
7(7)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1548
8(8)	French Brothers	1506
9(9)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1348
10(-)	York/ChesterBoat	1319

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's sailing from Southwold on 3 October was cancelled by the weather. She completed her Thames sailings on 7 October and left Tilbury for the Clyde the following morning, called at Weymouth for bunkers, and arrived in Glasgow on the 10th. She finished her season with Clyde sailings on 13-14 October.

NORTH EAST

Bronte Boats, Hebden Bridge, will cease operations at the end of this year, and the VERDOPOLIS will be transferred to a new business in Leeds, Leeds City Cruisers, and renamed BLACK PRINCE. The owners will also run a waterbus service in Leeds, starting next March.

T Machin, Scarborough, has collected a petition with 12 000 signatures to protest at the MCA's ruling that the CORONIA can no longer do trips from Scarborough to Whitby. The Yorkshire MEP Edward McMillan-Scott is to present it to the prime minister.

EAST ANGLIA

Maritime Leisure Cruises, Ely The MARIANNE offers Christmas lunch and afternoon tea cruises on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays until 23 December.

THAMES

Silver Fleet (Woods River Cruises) The SILVER BONITO is now owned by the London Eye Company, and is used solely for their sightseeing trips from Waterloo Pier, though she is still operated by Woods and based at their pier at Wapping. The SILVER DOLPHIN has been sold and is expected to leave London early next year after completing her final charters in December.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink A third new ferry for the Lymington route has been ordered from the Kraljevica shipyard in Croatia and is due to be completed in November 2008, entering service early in 2009. The names of the three ships have been announced as WIGHT LIGHT, WIGHT SKY and WIGHT SUN.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The HD1 ended her season on 5 November and is due to go to Portsmouth for repairs.

WEST OF ENGLAND

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne The QUEEN OF THE FAL has been advertised for sale for £65 000 and the owners plan to replace her with a smaller vessel.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III will run from 17 March to 1 November 2008, sailing on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays early and late in the season, and daily (except Sundays) from 18 April to 18 October. A double trip operates on Saturdays 24 and 31 May, and there are extra trips on 2-5 May for the world pilot gig championships. As usual, on Wednesdays in July and August, the Penzance departure is at 0800 to give day trippers more time shore. Sunday trips are on 15 June and 24 August, and the annual 14-hour pelagic bird-watching cruise is on 10 August.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Grebe Canal Cruises, Tring The business, including two passenger boats, hire boats, a boatyard, shop and café, has been offered for sale for £850 000.

Endeavour Trent, Nottingham The NOTTINGHAM PRINCESS has been joined by the NOTTINGHAM PRINCE, built in 1998 as the INSPIRATION 2000 and intended for service in Leeds. She is 85 ft long and was refitted on the Trent to carry 60 passengers.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Next year, Manchester Ship Canal cruises are offered on 65 dates from 20 April to 19 October. The fare is £33 (including return by bus) and tickets can be booked now.

Lancaster Canal Packet Boats The SWALLOW will be based at Lancaster next season, with three trips weekly to Carnforth, one weekly trip from Carnforth to Tewitfield, and shorter cruises from Lancaster on other days. The MILLENNIUM SWIFTSURE, which was leased from British Waterways, does not appear in plans for 2008.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Fast ferry services are suspended from 5 November till next March, and the BEN-MY-CHREE will run alone through the winter (apart from her refit in February). She will operate to Birkenhead (Twelve Quays) on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 November, leaving Douglas at 0800 and leaving Birkenhead at 1400; the crossing time is 4 hrs 15 mins.

G P Hamer 6 November 2007

TRIP OUT

December 2007

EAST ANGLIA

R Cooper, Harwich The BRIGHTLINGSEA is advertised to make three-hour Christmas dinner cruises from Harwich daily from 9 to 24 December.

THAMES

Ducks and Drake, operators of DUKW trips in Plymouth, have applied to operate in London, leaving from North Greenwich Bus Station and travelling on the Thames to the Isle of Dogs.

King Cruises, Westminster The GREENWICH BELLE has been off service being rebuilt, and will be renamed KING EDWARD before returning to service.

Thames Clippers The last two new craft are named AURORA CLIPPER and METEOR CLIPPER, and carried out trials at Brisbane in November. A new timetable was introduced on 12 November, combining the O2 service with the Greenwich service. Craft run every 15 minutes for most of the day from Embankment and Waterloo, via intermediate piers including Tower and Greenwich, to the O2 (the Dome); morning and evening services continue to Woolwich Arsenal. The company's base and offices are now at Trinity Buoy Wharf, at the mouth of the River Lee, opposite the O2.

SOUTH COAST

Wey & Arun Canal Trust The ZACHARIAH KEPPEL is to be replaced by a new 60-ft 50-passenger electric boat. It will be named WIGGONHOLT, and sponsored by the Wiggonholt Association, which works for the preservation of rural Sussex and takes its name from the hamlet of Wiggonholt.

Gosport Ferry Gosport Borough Council has announced plans to spend £3 million on replacing the Gosport pontoon.

Sailing Barge Kitty, Southampton Public six-hour cruises are scheduled for ten dates from 5 May to 13 September, at fares from £30 to £40.

Solent Party Ship Cruises, Southampton The PRINCESA CAROLINA is offering public harbour cruises from 7 to 10 December to view the cruise ship QUEEN VICTORIA.

Fairmile Classic Cruises, Swanage The WESTERN LADY III is scheduled to make afternoon bird watching cruises on 28 May and 18 June for Durlston Country Park.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, Saint-Malo The Jersey service is due to resume for the season at Easter.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The bus company Stagecoach has announced plans for a Torquay-Brixham service using two 144-passenger fast catamarans. The service would start in 2009 and would supposedly run all year.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co has ordered a new ferry from the Pendennis Shipyard in Falmouth. Costing £4 million, it will carry 36 cars and will pull itself along steel cables (the present vessel uses the cables for guidance but has paddle wheel propulsion). The hull will be built by Ravestein in the Netherlands and towed to Falmouth for fitting out, with entry into service due in June 2009.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Flat Holm Project The mainland base moved from Barry to Cardiff before the 2007 season. THE LEWIS ALEXANDER runs from the Channel View Leisure Centre near the mouth of the River Taff in the Grangetown district of the city.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Crown Inn, Handsacre This pub on the Trent & Mersey Canal near Rugeley is the new home of the CANAL EXPLORER, previously at Anderton in Cheshire. She offers public and charter trips, including 'Santa cruises' in December.

NORTH WEST

'Canal Explorer', Anderton, has been sold and has gone to Staffordshire.

MISCELLANY

The Italian car ferry GIGLIO ESPRESSO II arrived in Turkey for scrap in September. She was built in 1959 as Red Funnel's CARISBROOKE CASTLE and served the Isle of Wight before going to Italy in 1974, subsequently serving the islands of Ischia, Capri, Giglio and La Maddalena.

Also heading for the Turkish breakers is the ISCHIA, built in 1948 as the Thames excursion ship ROYAL SOVEREIGN. She ran to Southend and Margate until 1965, then spent the 1966 season at Great Yarmouth, before being sold to Townsend Ferries who had her converted to carry lorries from Dover. She went to Italy in 1973 and was rebuilt to carry passengers as well as vehicles, serving Elba then Ischia.

G P Hamer 5 December 2007

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY visits the Western Isles of Scotland from 2 to 6 May, then the Bristol Channel from 24 May to 8 June. After her Clyde season, she visits the South Coast from 5 to 25 September, then the Thames till 12 October, and ends the season on the Clyde on 18-19 October. The BALMORAL is due to start on the Irish Sea on 24 May and her programme follows a similar pattern to recent seasons'. Full timetables are due in March.

NORTH EAST

River Escapes, Newcastle Public trips to the river mouth in the RIVER ESCAPES FORTUNA and upriver in the 'COVENTINA are scheduled for Sundays from 9 March to 26 October, and on 9 and 23 November, and 7 and 14 December, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from June to September.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again being chartered by the RSPB: there are nine puffin cruises between 25 May and 19 July, and eight skua and shearwater trips between 30 August and 5 October. Bookings open in March.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Public sailing are advertised from 3 May to 26 October, and include day trips to Southend on 14 June, 26 July and 9 August, to Whitstable on 19 July, and round the Isle of Sheppey on 23 August.

Thames Clippers The Port of London Authority has imposed a 12-knot speed limit on the river in central London, which has led to delays on some of the Clippers' services. There have also been disruptions caused by mechanical problems and crew shortages.

Salter's Steamers Services run from 17 May to 21 September and follow the same pattern as last season's. For the first time since the 1970s, through tickets are available for the journey between Oxford and Staines at £50.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink On the Lymington route, a reduced two-ship service operates from 3 January to 13 March.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY was dry-docked at Portsmouth in November, and the 'EAGLE and 'FALCON will follow, under a contract covering the ships' overhauls for the next three years. A reduced two-ship car ferry service operates from 13 January to 9 March, and from 10 to 23 November.

Mudeford Ferry Day trips to Yarmouth are scheduled for 9 and 23 June, 8 July and 19 September.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries Poole services run from 21 March to 27 October when two vessels are needed for the Poole and Weymouth routes. The full schedule runs from 19 May to 28 September when the CONDOR VITESSE also makes a daily Poole-Cherbourg trip for Brittany Ferries. The COMMODORE CLIPPER makes a Portsmouth-Cherbourg sailing on Sundays from 25 May to 7 September, but is off service for overhaul from 1 to 14 July.

Trident Charter Co, Guernsey An application to run a rival Guernsey-Sark service has been rejected by the Guernsey authorities

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Trips by canal to Exeter are scheduled for 13 May, 12 and 29 June, 12 July and 10 September. All-day wildlife and geology cruises are advertised for 10 May, 7 June and 6 September.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's 2008 schedule shows passenger sailings from 29 March to 28 October. On Saturdays from 19 July to 23 August, there is a double trip, with a long day trip from the mainland, and a morning sailing from Lundy and an afternoon sailing from Ilfracombe for staying visitors.

Bristol Packet Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 32 dates from 30 March to 25 October. Trips to Bath are on 18 May, 22 June, 27 July, 24 August and 21 September.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Brindley's of Stone The business is being offered for sale as a going concern for £60 000.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The two fast ferries are to receive traditional Manx names: the SEA EXPRESS I will be the SNAEFELL (the sixth in the company's history) and the SUPERSEACAT TWO will be the VIKING (the second).

G P Hamer 7 January 2008

TRIP OUT

February 2008

NORTH EAST

Leeds City Cruisers is to start operating on 21 March with the BLACK PRINCE, formerly the VERDOPOLIS of Bronte Boats. A waterbus service will link Clarence Dock, Brewery Wharf, Asda head office (for staff only) and Victoria Bridge (for Leeds station). There are evening dinner cruises and Sunday lunch cruises.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich Afternoon cruises to Harwich run on 22 and 24 March, 20 and 26 April, on most weekends and Bank Holidays from May to September, and also on Wednesdays in June, and Wednesdays and Fridays in July and August.

THAMES

City Cruises have bought the HYDROSPACE ALPHA and 'GAMMA from Catamaran Cruisers. The "ALPHA" entered service between Westminster and Greenwich on 2 February. The MILLENNIUM CITY was holed on 25 January by Westminster Bridge when returning from the evening 'showboat' cruise; the passengers were taken off and she was pumped out and the hole temporarily patched. The MAYFLOWER GARDEN suffered engine trouble off Hastings on 28 January whilst being sailed to a shipyard. The Hastings lifeboat towed her to the Sovereign Harbour at Eastbourne; she was subsequently towed by a tug and they were reported on 2 February at Cowes.

Cruise London is a new operator which has bought the PRIDELA from Catamaran Cruisers. She will be used for charters in London.

Silver Fleet (Woods River Cruises) The SILVER STURGEON visited Ramsgate for refit in January.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open to the public this year from 15 March to 2 November.

Gosport Ferry The SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH's cruise programme has been published, showing cruises on 40 dates, generally Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 27 May to 24 September, including the Beaulieu River (5 June, 21 July, 4 and 20 August, and 2 and 17 September), Southampton, the Hamble River, Cowes and Ryde.

Wightlink The first of the new Lymington ferries, the WIGHT LIGHT, was launched at Kraljevica in Croatia on 26 January. The WIGHT SKY is being built alongside her and is due for launching at the end of March. They are due to be sailed by Wightlink crews to the UK in June, ready to enter service in July.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL's summer excursion programme runs from 25 April to 11 November, and includes a cruise round the Isle of Wight on 14 June, and a visit to Weymouth from 16 to 24 August.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Manche Iles Express Summer schedules from Carteret are from 5 April to 30 September and from Diélette from 1 April to 26 September, serving Jersey, Guernsey, Sark and Alderney. Granville-Jersey services run all year, and also serve Sark and Guernsey in summer.

NORTH WEST

Wigan Pier The heritage attraction at the pier, 'The Way We Were', closed on 20 December, and the buildings are to be redeveloped. One of the three boats, the KITTYWAKE, has new owners who trade as Kittywake Canal Cruises and offer public and charter trips from the 'Orwell' pub at Wigan Pier. The two electric boats, the EMMA and NETTA, were offered for sale by Wigan Council last autumn.

Wigan Boats The business, established last year with the newly-built ROMANCE, has been advertised for sale for £125 000.

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA runs from 20 March to 31 October.

G P Hamer 6 February 2008

TRIP OUT

March 2008

Waverley Excursions Timetables have been published for the WAVERLEY's Bristol Channel sailings from 24 May to 8 June, but full details of the BALMORAL's sailings are still awaited.

NORTH EAST

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE will not be permitted to make trips to Scarborough this year, as the MCA is limiting her to trips up to 15 miles from her departure point; the same rule prevented the CORONIA from sailing from Scarborough to Whitby last year.

EAST ANGLIA

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners The ferry runs from 21 March to 2 November.

THAMES

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne The LADY OF LEE VALLEY offers various public trips from 2 March to 23 December. She does trips to and from Ware on 1-3 August.

City Cruises have bought all three of Catamaran Cruisers' HYDROSPACE vessels. The HYDROSPACE DELTA entered service in February with red hulls. The MAYFLOWER GARDEN is being rebuilt and lengthened at Portland.

King Cruises, Westminster The KINGWOOD has been sold to River Thames Boat Hire, established by waterman Colin Bullock. She will continue to operate to Kew and Hampton Court, while King Cruises will concentrate on the charter trade with the KING EDWARD (ex GREENWICH BELLE).

Thames Clippers All six of the new vessels were in service in February.

Thames River Boats Trips from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court resume on 15 March.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Devon Princess Cruises The advertised programme of winter bird-watching cruises from Exmouth has not been operating, and the DARTMOUTH CASTLE has apparently been laid-up this winter.

Dart Pleasure Craft Dartmouth-Totnes sailings start on 16 March, then run daily from 20 March to 2 November. Coastal cruises run at lunchtimes on most days from 5 May to 7 September. Hourly trips from Dartmouth to Dittisham are advertised, as well as trips to Greenway. On Fridays, some Dartmouth-Totnes services call at Greenway to allow people to do a return trip from Totnes to Greenway.

Sound Cruising, Plymouth Trips to Calstock run from 13 April to 25 October and there are 19 trips to Morwellham. Cruises to the River Yealm run on 13 dates from 10 May to 6 September, and there are three-hour cruises to Whitsand Bay on 22 June and 6 and 19 July.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Pride of Bath The PRIDE OF BATH has been bought by Strawberry Field Catering and is to be renamed PENNY LANE. She will continue to offer charters from Bath.

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust, Bradford-on-Avon The BARBARA MCLELLAN offers public trips from 21 March to 31 October. There is a four-day publicity trip to and from Devizes on 18-21 April (passengers can travel for a donation to the Trust), and public day trips to Bath on 14 June, 9 August and 6 September.

WEST WALES

Caldey Boat Service The new boat built last year at Dartmouth is named FOAM.

NORTH WEST

Coniston Launch The business was taken over on 1 February by Douglas and Gillian Hodgson, from the family that owns the Keswick Launch Co. Coniston Launch was established in 1992 by Gordon and Margaret Hall who have now handed over to the Hodgsons. Contact address is now the same as Keswick launch Co.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Fast ferry sailings on 1 and 2 March were cancelled as the Liverpool landing stage was not ready, and the BEN-MY-CHREE sailed to Birkenhead instead. The VIKING (ex SUPERSEACAT TWO) has been repainted with a black hull and is due to resume scheduled services to Liverpool on 8 March.

MISCELLANY

The cargo ship DOLPHIN 1 sank on 7 November between Turkey and Northern Cyprus, with the loss of two of her ten crew. She had been built in 1958 as the Mersey ferry ROYAL DAFFODIL II, and was sold in 1977 to Greece where she was rebuilt as a car ferry to serve the island of Kea. She became the DOLPHIN 1 in 1994 and was converted to carry containers. The picture is from the Turkish newspaper 'Hür Haber'.

The Manxman Steamship Co has abandoned a scheme to preserve the MANXMAN on the Mersey after the port owners had stated that they did not want the ship. She is still at Sunderland and an American organisation is said to be interested in acquiring her.

G P Hamer 7 March 2008

TRIP OUT

April 2008

Waverley Excursions Full timetables for both ships were published in mid-March. The WAVERLEY starts her season with a visit to the Western Isles on 2-6 May and, after dry-docking, is on the Bristol Channel from 24 May to 8 June. After her Clyde season, she is on the South Coast from 5 September, then the Thames from 26 September to 12 October, and a final Clyde weekend on 18-19 October. The BALMORAL is on the Irish Sea from 24 May to 9 June, has a cruise from Milford Haven on 14 June, Swansea and Ilfracombe to Padstow on the 15th, then sails on the South Coast from 21 June and the Thames from 27 June to 13 July. She visits North Wales and Liverpool again on 16-21 July for a Tall Ships event, then serves the Bristol Channel from 23 July to 22 September. She is on the Clyde on 26-27 September, then follows the QE2, visiting Cork on 1 October, Liverpool on the 3rd, Northern Ireland on the 4th and the Clyde on 5 October. The BALMORAL is advertised to sail from Llandudno on eleven dates, but the pier suffered further damage in March gales and seems very unlikely to be repaired this year. On the Bristol Channel, no landings are advertised at Steep Holm, so there are no landings by tender, ending a practice of generations of Bristol Channel pleasure steamers which landed passengers at Lynmouth, Clovelly, Lundy and other places by small boats.

EAST ANGLIA

The BROADLAND EXPLORER which ran from Wroxham for Broadland Passenger Craft until last year, has been offered for sale by her owners for £80 000.

Maritime Leisure Cruises, Ely The MARIANNE, introduced last summer, is to be replaced by the PRINCE CHARLES from York.

National Trust, Orford Ness Because of work on Orford Quay, the start of the season is delayed. Orford Ness will be open to the public on Saturdays from 3 May to 25 October, and daily except Mondays and Sundays from 1 July to 27 September.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink has ordered two new catamarans for the Ryde service from FBMA of Cebu in the Philippines. They will be 134 ft long, with 260 seats under cover and an open upper deck with seating. Their speed will be 20 knots and Wightlink describe them as "purpose-built to better cope with the punishing weather conditions experienced on the route." Delivery is due for the summer of 2009. Wightlink also plans improvements to the Fishbourne ferries and terminals, with double-deck loading of vehicles, and a new "brand identity" and logo.

I & P Thomas, Yarmouth The TEMPTRESS is being replaced by the JOYBELLE (on page 109 of 'Trip Out 2007/08'), which previously ran from Teignmouth but was out of use last year. She will be renamed TEMPTRESS II.
Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Co The service will be suspended for about eight weeks from 22 September so that repair work can be carried out on both slipways. The BRAMBLE BUSH BAY will be refitted at the same time.

CHANNEL ISLANDS
Condor Ferries The CONDOR VITESSE hit a jetty at St-Malo on 22 March and was damaged. She has gone to Portsmouth for repairs, and the CONDOR EXPRESS has been running from Weymouth, with Poole sailings cancelled.
Compagnie Corsaire, St-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER is due to resume her service to Jersey on 4 April.
HD Ferries The HD1 was due to resume on 20 March, but she was not ready, despite over four months off service. All Easter services were subsequently cancelled. The first sailing was then due on 28 March, but was cancelled, and the service finally restarted on 29 March.

NORTH WEST
Mersey Ferries Three-hour bird-watching cruises into Liverpool Bay are scheduled for 13 and 14 August, and 24 September, and there will be special trips on 3 October for the final visit of the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2.

IRISH SEA
Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE's dry-docking, due on 1 April, was delayed so that she could sail to Heysham that day instead of the VIKING. The BEN-MY-CHREE arrived in Birkenhead on 2 April, and will be off service for two weeks. The ro/ro cargo ship TRIUMPH has been chartered to run from Heysham, while the VIKING will operate passenger services from both Heysham and Liverpool. The STENA CALEDONIA will again been chartered for the TT races, sailing from Heysham and Belfast to Douglas from 31 May to 2 June and on 7-9 June.

G P Hamer 4 April 2008

TRIP OUT

May 2008

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY visited Oban and the Western Isles from 2 to 6 May, and will be drydocked before her next sailings, on the Bristol Channel, on 24 May.

NORTH EAST

Leeds City Cruisers The start of the new service has been delayed and the waterbus service and dining cruises are due to start this month.

A&G Passenger Boats, Sheffield The new vessel, originally advertised for last year, is now due in June.

EAST ANGLIA

R Cooper, Harwich The BRIGHTLINGSEA is again running trips from Harwich this season, but is still limited to 12 passengers.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS maintained the Tilbury ferry for six weeks till 16 April while the DUCHESS M was off for refit. The 'POCAHONTAS then went for her own overhaul and the service had to be suspended for five days until the DUCHESS M was ready. The 'POCAHONTAS is due to start her excursion programme on 14 May and visits Southend for the Air Show on 26 May.

City Cruises The VISCOUNT, of Complete Pleasure Boats, is being chartered to operate between Westminster and the Tower, apparently for the next two months.

Thames Clippers Schedules were revised on 15 March and daytime services between Embankment, Greenwich and the O2 now run every 20 minutes, instead of every 15 minutes.

Turk Launches have leased the SILVER DOLPHIN from Silver Fleet for this year, and she is now based at Kingston.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink There was an engine room fire in the OUR LADY PAMELA on 15 April. The 85 passengers and crew disembarked at Ryde and the fire was put out. The WIGHT SKY was launched in Kraljevica on 12 April. A fuel surcharge of 20p per passenger and £1.50 per car is to be introduced on 9 May.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, St-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER is scheduled to run daily till 30 September with a daily round trip from St-Malo to Jersey. On Thursdays and Saturdays, there are additional sailings allowing a day trip from St Helier to St-Malo.

HD Ferries Sailings to Cherbourg have been abandoned because of low bookings (last year's Cherbourg trips averaged ten passengers). The trips to Cherbourg on Fridays (and Mondays from 16 June) have been replaced by direct trips from Guernsey to St-Malo.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Torpoint Ferry The TAMAR II was taken out of service on 2 May for refit at Falmouth, and a reduced service will operate for about four weeks.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The cargo ship GRY MARITHA has been out of service for repairs since 7 April, and the SCILLONIAN III has been carrying cargo. She made extra trips on Sundays 20 and 27 April. The company has also chartered a landing craft named SEVEN SINS. The SCILLONIAN III makes her annual 14-hour "pelagic" bird-watching cruise on 10 August, leaving Penzance at 0500 and cruising south west of Scilly (fare £95).

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co Public Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 17 dates from 24 May to 23 October, and Sunday afternoon cream tea cruises to Beese's Tea Gardens operate on seven dates.

Flat Holm Project Public day trips from Cardiff are scheduled for 97 dates from 15 March to 24 October. Sailing times depend on tides, and departure times vary from 0745 to 1515; passengers have about three hours ashore on the island.

Cardiff Cats The SAPPHIRE's hull and engine were in a poor condition and she was taken away to be broken up in April. Originally a tender on the liner KUNGSHOLM, she came to Cardiff from Paignton in October 2000. One of her sisters from the KUNGSHOLM still runs in Cardiff as the CYGNET. Trips up the River Taff to Cardiff city centre have ceased, and the boats run only on the bay from Mermaid Quay and Penarth.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Avon Leisure Cruises, Evesham The SPIRIT OF FREEDOM ON AVON has been joined by a 40-passenger stern-wheeler named AVON PADDLER and the 12-passenger AVON SPIRIT.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE returned to service on 14 April after her refit. The SNAEFELL (ex SEA EXPRESS I) returned to Douglas on 24 April after being repainted, like the "BEN" and VIKING, with black hulls; she is due to resume service on 9 May. Heysham schedules are amended by up to two hours on some dates because of silting of the approach channels.

OBITUARY

The death was reported in March of Mr R Balcomb who had owned passenger boats on the Thames and at St Mawes in Cornwall. He was a partner in the F&B Boat Co which began running trips from Walton-on-Thames in 1970 and later had a fleet of boats at Kingston which included the PRINCESS MARINA (now at Reading) and YARMOUTH BELLE. He moved to Cornwall in 1989 and ran trips from St Mawes until his retirement.

G P Hamer 8 May 2008

TRIP OUT

June 2008

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY was dry-docked at Greenock on 7 May, and a problem was discovered in her port paddle shaft. The wheel and shaft were removed and she left the dry dock on the 16th to await their repair. The BALMORAL has made some of the WAVERLEY's Bristol Channel trips. The BALMORAL's trips on 24-27 May, the WAVERLEY's from 29 May to 3 June, and the BALMORAL's on 5-9 June have been cancelled. The first two weeks of the WAVERLEY's Clyde sailings were subsequently cancelled as well, and she is due to resume on 26 June. The BALMORAL is being chartered by ITV Wales for a programme, with visits to Liverpool, Menai Bridge and Caernarfon on 10-12 June, Swansea and Barry on 16-17 June and Fishguard on the 19th. The BALMORAL's sailings in North Wales in July and October have been revised because Llandudno Pier cannot be used.

NORTH EAST

Nexus Three-hour afternoon cruises to Newcastle are scheduled for alternate Sundays from 15 June to 21 September.

YorkBoat have taken over some of the trips formerly run by Waterline Cruises. There is a service from Naburn Lock (at 0930) and Acaster Malbis (0945) to York at weekends from 22 March to 28 September, returning from York at 1600; this also operates on Thursdays in school holidays. There are also lunch and dinner trips from York on Thursdays to the 'Ship Inn' at Acaster Malbis.

EAST ANGLIA

Waveney River Tours, Oulton Broad The season extends from 19 May to 19 October. There are no trips to Berney Arms or Beccles this year, and the longest public trip is a three-hour cruise on Wednesday afternoons.

THAMES

City Cruises The three "HYDROSPACE" craft acquired from Catamaran Cruisers have been renamed CITY ALPHA, CITY DELTA and CITY GAMMA.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink Delivery of the new Lymington ferries has been delayed, and the WIGHT LIGHT and WIGHT SKY are not expected to enter service until September or October.

Red Funnel Ferries To reduce fuel costs, some late-night ferry crossings and lunch-time fast catamaran services have been withdrawn.

Fairmile Classic Cruises, Swanage The WESTERN LADY III visited Portland in mid-May to take part in the comedy film 'The Boat that Rocked' about a pirate radio station in the 1960s, due for release next year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne, have bought the CHAMPION and AVON BELLE II from Tewkesbury. The CHAMPION has been offered for sale for £10 000, but the AVON BELLE II has been refitted and renamed LOOK AHEAD II, the original name she carried when she ran from St Mawes.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The "park and float" service from Ponsharden to Custom House Quay runs on Mondays to Fridays from 26 May to 30 September. The new St Mawes ferry is due to be launched on 10 July.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The GRY MARITHA returned to service on 20 May.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Cardiff Bay Cruises now trade as Aquabus. The HYDRO 1 runs every hour between Cardiff Castle, Taffs Mead, Clarence Embankment, Channel View, Barrage South, Barrage North, Sovereign Quay and Mermaid Quay. The SEREN Y BAE continues to offer restaurant cruises and charters.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SNAEFELL is scheduled to make day trips to and from Whitehaven on 18 June and 1 July, and Fleetwood on 2 and 30 July. The company announced on 19 May that it had purchased the 302-ft INCAT 050 to replace the VIKING. She was built in 1998 and had been chartered by the US military since 2001. She will be refitted to carry 800 passengers and 200 cars.

G P Hamer 4 June 2008

TRIP OUT

July 2008

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's return to service was delayed to 1 July, then again to 3 July. She re-entered dry dock on 13 June, the port paddle wheel and shaft were put back on 29 June, and she left dry dock on 2 July, ready to return to service the next day. The BALMORAL is unable to call at Ramsgate or Folkestone, and sailings on 7 and 8 July will call at Whitstable instead; on 17 July, she makes an additional trip, from Liverpool to Menai Bridge. Her cruises from Cork to view the QE2 are on 2 October, not the 1st as previously advertised.

NORTH EAST

Leeds City Cruisers The BLACK PRINCE finally entered service on 14 June and the regular morning and evening waterbus service began on the 17th.

THAMES

London Borough of Greenwich One of the Woolwich ferries will be cruising through Tower Bridge on 19 and 20 July; the trips are normally offered annually as a charity cruise.

Catamaran Cruisers All six boats withdrawn last autumn have been sold - the three HYDROSPACEs to City Cruises, the CHEVENING to Thames Cruises, the PRIDELA to new operator Cruise London, and the VALULLA to another newcomer to the Thames charter trade.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The third new Lymington ferry, the WIGHT SUN, was launched at Kraljevica on 28 June.

Blue Funnel Cruises During Cowes week, 2-9 August, there will be a Lymington-Cowes service, with departures from Lymington at 0700, 0915 and 1915, and from Cowes at 0800, 1800 and 2030.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The PRIDE OF EXMOUTH will be offering short trips from Seaton on 5 July and 24 August. Winter bird-watching cruises on the Exe estuary are scheduled for 20 dates from 15 November to 9 March 2009.

Dart Pleasure Craft The KINGSWEAR BELLE's certificate has not been renewed and she needs to be replaced by a new vessel. She was originally the HERM TRIDENT II in Guernsey, and has operated the Dartmouth-Kingswear ferry since 1989.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth The BUCCANEER has been sold to the River Severn Ferry Co of Stourport. She had spent five years at Falmouth, after long service in the Isles of Scilly. The service from Custom House Quay to St Mawes currently runs only at weekends (when the Ponsharden service does not operate).

The new St Mawes ferry was launched in June (correcting the last issue), and will be named DUCHESS OF CORNWALL by the Duchess on 11 July when the Duke and Duchess are due to travel from St Mawes to Falmouth on the new boat. The picture is from the owners.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

River Severn Ferry Company, Stourport, has bought the BUCCANEER from Falmouth in order to take over the service from Tewkesbury to Twyning on the River Avon, previously run by Telstar Cruisers. Cathedral City Cruises, Lincoln The CITY OF LINCOLN is not operating this year and is for sale.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SNAEFELL is making a day trip from Belfast to Peel on 13 August. Round-the-island cruises from Douglas are scheduled for 12 July in the BEN-MY-CHREE and 16 August in the SNAEFELL. The VIKING has been running on three engines after a gearbox fault in mid-June, and her Liverpool-Douglas crossing time was extended to three hours; the faulty gearbox is due to be replaced on 3 July. The INCAT 050 left Hobart, Tasmania, on 20 June via Suez for Portsmouth where she is due in mid-July to begin her refit.

OBITUARY

Mr Tony McGinnity, who died in June, will be remembered in pleasure steamer history for operating the ps CONSUL in 1963-64. He was a director of P & A Campbell Ltd in the late-1970s, and continued acting as a shipbroker, surveyor and consultant until his final stay in hospital.

G P Hamer 3 July 2008

TRIP OUT

August 2008

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL ran in North Wales on 16-20 July but the cruise on the 21st to view the tall ships' parade was cancelled. She began her Bristol Channel season on 23 July.

THAMES

Reeds River Cruises has been formed by brothers Dave and Steve Reed who are the new owners of the VALULLA from Catamaran Cruisers. She is being used for charters in London.

Chris Cruises, Hampton Court, have ceased trading and the WESTERN BELLE has been sold for service on Ullswater. She arrived on the Thames from Dartmouth in 2000.

SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Conservancy One-hour cruises from Emsworth on the SOLAR HERITAGE run every day from 1 July to 5 September, at times that vary with the tides.

Wightlink The FASTCAT RYDE was off service on 28-31 July and the SOLENT CAT was chartered from Solent & Wight Line Cruises. The OUR LADY PAMELA is reported to have been withdrawn from service. The WIGHT LIGHT completed her trials in Croatia in July and achieved a speed of 12.39 knots. She is due to reach the UK in early September after sailing via Palermo, Gibraltar and Vigo.

I & P Thomas, Yarmouth The JOYBELLE, though initially advertised as the TEMPTRESS II, has not been renamed. As well as cruises to the Needles, she is advertised to make trips to Buckler's Hard.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries has been sold by the Royal Bank of Scotland to Macquarie, the Australian investment group which already owns Wightlink and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The SOUTHERN ANGLER has been sold to Tiger Charters who continue to use her for angling trips from Exmouth. Originally the NORTHERN ANGLER at Fleetwood, she operated from Poole until going to Exmouth in 1995.

A & D Smith (Silverline Cruises), Plymouth, have been given a contract to run a service from the Mayflower Steps to Royal William Yard, part of the old naval dockyard being redeveloped. A 12-passenger vessel named TRANSPORTER is normally used.

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne The LOOK AHEAD II is operating the service this season, and the QUEEN OF THE FAL is laid-up awaiting a buyer after only two seasons' service on the Fal.

J Pill (Falmouth Pleasure Cruises) The TWIN-STAR III is laid-up this year and is for sale for £165 000. The cruises to the Helford River are operated, as usual, by the PRINCESSA.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Shipyards in France, Spain, Italy and Germany are interested in building a new passenger and cargo ship to replace the SCILLONIAN III and GRY MARITHA. The ship would be ordered by a route partnership and the operator would be chosen by tender. The quay at St Mary's would be extensively rebuilt and extended.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The OLIVER CROMWELL is apparently no longer economic and is to be converted to a static hotel and restaurant. She is making a two-night "swan song" cruise to Sharpness on 26-28 September. The EDWARD ELGAR is offering Christmas lunch cruises from 11 to 23 December.

Boat Inn, Stoke Bruerne Mr Jack Woodward, the owner, died on 18 May at the age of 83. The pub, and the passenger boat INDIAN CHIEF, are now run by his son, Andrew, who is the fourth generation of the family to run the pub.

Key Ferry Cruises, Peterborough, have ceased operating and the MANDOLIN is for sale with or without her business. The owner, Mr R Currell, is to introduce a 12-passenger "luxury" boat under the trading name of Poshboatz.

NORTH WEST

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co have bought the WESTERN BELLE from Hampton Court. She arrived at Maryport in July and will be taken overland to Ullswater.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The VIKING was damaged at Liverpool landing stage on 1 August, and was off service till the 3rd. The INCAT 050 arrived in Portsmouth on 17 July after a delivery voyage from Tasmania via the Suez Canal, Malta and Gibraltar. She is to be converted from a military transport by Burgess Marine at Portsmouth.

MISCELLANY

The TUXEDO PRINCESS was towed down the Tyne from Gateshead to North Shields on 27 July and is now being towed to Greece. She was built in 1961 as British Railways' CALEDONIAN PRINCESS and her career included a spell on the Channel Islands service. She was sold for static use in 1981 and became well-known as a nightclub on the Tyne. There is no news of her new owners' plans.

The Philippine ferry MARY THE QUEEN has reportedly been sold for breaking in India. She was built in 1972 as the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co's MONA'S ISLE and was sold in 1995 for service in the Philippines.

G P Hamer 7 August 2008

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL has had a poor season on the Bristol Channel with numerous bad-weather cancellations. The WAVERLEY finished her Clyde season on 1 September. Her journey south was delayed by gales and, after sheltering at Rosslare then in Lyme Bay, she arrived in Southampton on 5 September (her sailing that day from Weymouth was cancelled).

NORTH EAST

A&G Passenger Boats, Sheffield The new vessel is named LB HARDFEET and was delivered on 2 March from Thorne to Sheffield where she was to be fitted out.

THAMES

Thames Cruises A passenger of the HURLINGHAM died on 17 August after falling between a pier and the boat on an evening charter.

SOUTH COAST

Wey & Arun Canal Trust The new electric boat WIGGONHOLT is to be built by Colecraft Engineering of Long Itchington in Warwickshire. Delivery is due in December.

Wightlink The WIGHT LIGHT left the shipyard in Kraljevica on 15 August for Split, then set off on the 17th via Livorno and Gibraltar, reaching Lymington on 1 September after a smooth trip. The WIGHT SKY is due to follow in September. The company has given more details of plans for the Fishbourne ferries. The ST CECILIA and ST FAITH are to be lengthened by 40 ft and have an upper car deck in place of the present passenger saloon, with extra passenger accommodation above that. High-level car ramps would be needed at Portsmouth and Fishbourne.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED JET 1 has been chartered, with a Red Funnel crew, to Stagecoach for a Brixham-Torquay service.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The twice-weekly direct services between Guernsey and St-Malo were withdrawn from 1 September. Two days later, the company announced that all services would be suspended from 8 September, blaming the "general economic slowdown" and high fuel costs. They claim the service will resume in 2009, but that seems unlikely and there are reports that the HD1 will run in the Bahamas next year.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB is offering its usual programme of winter bird-watching cruises on the Exe Estuary from 14 November to 1 March, with two cruises from Exmouth and seven from Starcross in the MY QUEEN, and eight shorter trips from Topsham in the SEA DREAM II.

Stagecoach The bus company has chartered the RED JET 1 for a trial service between Torquay and Brixham from 29 August to 27 September. Advertised as Bayfast, services start from Brixham at 0650 (Mon-Fri), 0830 (Sat) or 0920 (Sun), with hourly departures during the day, until the last trip at 1925 from Brixham and 1950 from Torquay. Crossing time is 15 minutes and fares are £4 single or £6 return.

Cornwall Ferries, Falmouth During the tall ships regatta on 10-13 September, the ferry from Custom House Quay to St Mawes and the Ponsharden service will also call at Falmouth Docks.
K&S Cruises, Falmouth, on 10-12 September will run every half hour from the Prince of Wales Pier to Falmouth Docks. On 13 September, several operators' boats will do a cruise to see the "parade of sail" at a fare of £40.
A P & E R Newman, Tolverne During the tall ships regatta, the LOOK AHEAD II will run 45-minute harbour cruises from Falmouth (Custom House Quay) instead of the service to Tolverne.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Fuel surcharges were increased on 1 September, from £2.50 to £5 per passenger.

MISCELLANY

The TUXEDO PRINCESS which was towed from the Tyne in July (see last issue) has been delivered to ship breakers in Turkey.

The remains of the paddle steamer RYDE at Binfield, Isle of Wight, are to be broken up and holiday homes are to be built on the site. The steamer's engines may be retained on display. The RYDE was taken there in 1970 and opened as a nightclub with the MEDWAY QUEEN. Both ships eventually became derelict.

The Medway Queen Preservation Society is to give the contract to build a new riveted hull for the ship to David Abels of Bristol.

G P Hamer 6 September 2008

TRIP OUT

October 2008

Most people will want to forget the miserable summer weather of 2008. England and Wales suffered wet, windy and unsettled weather, especially in the peak holiday months of July and August. Only boat operators relying on party bookings and charters will have been unscathed. High fuel prices have also made life difficult. Everyone will be hoping for a better summer in 2009, and some operators are already advertising special trips for next summer.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings on 6 September, but bad weather confined her to the Solent on the 6th and 7th. Sailings on 9 and 11 September were cancelled and she couldn't call at Bournemouth on the 10th. Silting and the poor condition of Bournemouth Pier led to the cancellation of evening calls on the 16th and 18th and both calls on the 21st. She hit Yarmouth Pier on the evening of 14 September, and calls were cancelled till the 20th. She went light to Worthing on the 15th but, before passengers could embark, a bollard came away from pier and the sailing had to be abandoned. The sailing on the 17th was cancelled because of an engine fault. She sailed from Dover to London on 26 September.

The BALMORAL completed her Bristol Channel season on 22 September then sailed on the Clyde on 26-28 September. Her trips to view the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 at Cork, Liverpool and Belfast on 2-4 October were all cancelled, and she remained on the Clyde to do cruises to view and escort the QE2 on 5 October, then headed for lay-up in Bristol.

THAMES

London Borough of Greenwich Since 1 October, the Woolwich ferry has been run by Serco, with Transport for London (which owns the ships and terminals) paying £10.7 million over the 18 months until 31 March 2010.

Thames Executive Charters have bought the TWIN STAR III from Falmouth and she arrived in London in September. She was built for Ford's Dagenham ferry service which closed in January 2004.

SOUTH COAST

J Butcher & Sons, Portsmouth The COLIN JAMES has been advertised for sale for £58 000.

Wightlink The WIGHT SKY left Kraljevica on 16 September, called at Gibraltar on 25-26 September and arrived off the Isle of Wight on 1 October. She berthed in Portsmouth the next morning.

Sailing Barge Kitty, Southampton The KITTY has been advertised for sale with her charter business for £260 000.

Brownsea Island Ferries Bird-watching cruises, organised with the RSPB, are scheduled for 1 and 16 November, 14 December, 11 January, 1 and 15 February, and 15 March in Poole Harbour, and on 30 May and 13 June along the Purbeck coast.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries The HD1 has been laid-up at Newhaven and is for sale for €12.5 million (about £9.7 million).

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth, have already advertised special trips for 2009: to Exeter on 3 May, 17 June, 1 July, 29 August and 13 September, and all-day coastal wildlife and geology cruises on 16 May, 13 June and 12 September.

Stagecoach The trial Torquay-Brixham service carried about 25 000 passengers. The RED JET 1 has returned to Southampton.

K Lane (Paignton Pleasure Cruises) has bought the SOLENT PRINCESS from Mr Jamieson of Torquay and renamed her ISLAND PRINCESS. Originally the ISLAND QUEEN on the Guernsey-Herm service, she was owned by Gosport Ferry before going to Torquay.

J Pill (Falmouth Pleasure Cruises) The TWIN STAR III has been sold after three seasons in service at Falmouth. She was laid-up this summer. Mr Pill has continued to run the PRINCESSA.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Foxton Boat Services no longer run the horse-drawn VIXEN, but the VAGABOND has continued to run trips.

NORTH WEST

British Waterways has invited tenders to run a waterbus service on the Peak Forest Canal between Whaley Bridge and Bugsworth.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The VIKING was dry-docked at Belfast for repairs between 15 and 18 September, but no sailings needed to be cancelled.

MISCELLANY

Demolition of the Italian restaurant ship "Concord" began at Salerno in September after a long dispute between the owner and the local authority. She was laid-down in Germany in the First World War as a minesweeper, but was completed in 1919 as the passenger steamer HÖRNUM. In April 1922, she was sold to the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Co and renamed ST ELIAN for summer excursions from Liverpool and Llandudno to Menai Bridge, Blackpool, Holyhead, Bardsey Island, etc. She was sold to Italy after the 1927 season, becoming the PARTENOPE, then the ISCHIA from 1949, and continued in service in the Golfo di Napoli till about 1970, still steam powered. She was put on the beach at Salerno and opened as a restaurant/bar.

G P Hamer 7 October 2008

TRIP OUT

November 2008

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions. The major change is the omission of Catamaran Cruisers following the sale of their sightseeing boats. Since the summer, Capital Pleasure Boats have sold the SUNDANCE. When she entered service on the south coast in 1971 as the GAY ENTERPRISE, she was the largest new coastal excursion vessel built for twenty years. After 38 seasons on the Solent and Thames, her active career has come to an end.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	Thames Luxury Ch	2049
2(2)	City Cruises	1439
3(4)	Waverley Excursions	1428
4(3)	Silver Fleet	1414
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(9)	Capital Pleasure B.	746
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	675
9(10)	Thames Cruises	405
10(-)	River Escapes	349

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	3621
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(4)	Thames Luxury Ch	1873
4(5)	Waverley Excursions	1750
5(7)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1548
6(8)	French Brothers	1506
7(9)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1348
8(6)	Salter's Steamers	1327
9(10)	York/ChesterBoat	1319
10(-)	Crown River Cruises	1058

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY completed most of her Thames sailings, but calls at Clacton on 27 September, Margate on the 30th and Southwold on 7 October were cancelled because of the weather. She had an uneventful voyage back to the Clyde, calling at Weymouth for bunkers. Her final trip, from Glasgow on 19 October, was curtailed by the weather, and she turned back after Greenock.

EAST ANGLIA

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners The ferry service carried 16 000 passengers this year is said to have "more or less" broken even.

THAMES

Capital Pleasure Boats The SUNDANCE has been sold to a Danish buyer who apparently plans to use her as a houseboat. She was built at Brightlingsea as an excursion vessel for the Solent and relief Gosport ferry. Originally named GAY ENTERPRISE, she became the SOLENT ENTERPRISE in 1979, and came to London in 2005.

Salter's Steamers The MAPLEDURHAM has been laid-up this year. She and the CLIVEDEN, also idle, were the two largest vessels in the fleet.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The Lymington-Yarmouth service is reduced to a two-ship service from 3 November until Christmas, with departures every 45 minutes, instead of half-hourly. A naming ceremony was held aboard the WIGHT LIGHT on 30 October and guests were taken for a cruise, but the date of her entry into service has not been announced.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED EAGLE and RED FALCON will both offer evening cruises on 11 November for the final departure of the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, to Dubai.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry Three-hour bird-watching cruises up the Tamar from Saltash are scheduled for nine dates between 15 November and 8 March.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co Only one shipyard responded with an offer to built the new ship, so Cornwall County Council, on behalf of the Route Partnership, has advertised a second time. The new ship, 256 ft long and carrying 600 passengers, has a similar profile to the present ship and delivery is now expected in 2012. Next year, the SCILLONIAN III will run from 30 March to 31 October, sailing on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays early and late in the season, and daily (except Sundays) from 13 April to 3 October. A double trip operates on Saturdays 23 and 30 May, and there are extra trips between 30 April and 3 May for the world pilot gig championships. On certain dates, sailing times vary because of the tides, with the morning trip from Penzance as early as 0830 or as late as 1045, instead of the usual 0915.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

English Holiday Cruises, Gloucester The EDWARD ELGAR is offering Christmas lunch cruises from 11 to 23 December. The OLIVER CROMWELL has some jazz evenings, but remains moored during these.

NORTH WEST

T Ellis, Llandudno, plans to retire and the GORGEOUS GUSSIE is for sale for £9950.

Mersey Ferries This year's Manchester Ship Canal cruises carried over 20 000 passengers which is claimed to be a record.

Lancaster Canal Packet Boats At weekends from 1 November to 21 December, the new KINGFISHER is offering one-hour trips from Barton Grange Marina near Preston.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The two fast ferries have finished for the winter after the Liverpool trip on 2 November. The VIKING is not scheduled to sail again and is being replaced by the INCAT 050 which is still being converted at Portsmouth. She is to be renamed MANANNAN after the Celtic god of the sea; the name has not been used previously by the Steam Packet Co.

G P Hamer 5 November 2008

TRIP OUT

December 2008

Waverley Excursions Outline plans for 2009 are similar to schedules of recent years, but the BALMORAL's season is shorter. Both ships are due to visit Belfast in mid-August for a tall ships event.

NORTH EAST

T Machin, Scarborough, has launched an appeal to raise £130 000 to pay for replating of the CORONIA's hull, carried out in 2007. The owner has published a book about her (see below). The CORONIA has also been offered for sale by brokers for £250 000.

THAMES

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Public sailings are advertised from 11 April to 25 October 2009, and include day trips to Southend on 4 and 18 July, and 15 August, round the Isle of Sheppey on 25 July, a cruise off Shoeburyness on 1 August, and to Whitstable on 22 August.

Hire Cruisers, Maidstone A "park and sail" service operates from Allington to Maidstone on Saturdays from 15 November to 20 December.

Thames Luxury Charters plan to reduce the size of the fleet and several vessels have been offered for sale - the ELIZABETHAN (at £1.5 million), BELLE (£150 000), THE GEORGIAN (£450 000), PINK CHAMPAGNE (£105 000) and SOUTHERN COMFORT MISSISSIPPI (£295 000).

Salter's Steamers 2009 public services run from 23 May to 20 September, and follow the usual pattern.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The WIGHT LIGHT and WIGHT SKY have carried out various trials at Lymington but cannot enter service till Lymington Harbour Commissioners are satisfied. Wightlink want the new vessels in service in January, before the present ferries' certificates expire.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The new pontoon at Plymouth's Barbican was officially opened on 13 November. It is situated between the Mayflower Steps and Phoenix Wharf which will no longer be used by the boats.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service are attempting winter trips between Torquay and Brixham with up to eight round trips at weekends and "selected days" until 23 December. The boats are limited to 12 passengers and the return fare is £7.50.

Dart Pleasure Craft took over Mr D A Ridalls' Dartmouth-Dittisham service in April. The two 12-passenger boats, CHAMPION and WARRIOR, have retained their red livery.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's passenger sailings are from 28 March to 27 October 2009. On Saturdays from 18 July to 22 August, there are two round trips to provide a second sailing for staying visitors.

Cardiff Cats Since 1 November, the boats have been using the Cardiff Pierhead pontoon instead of Mermaid Quay.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Severn Leisure Cruises, Upton-upon-Severn The CONWAY CASTLE has been advertised for sale by brokers for £375 000. She has several public cruises this month.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Manchester Ship canal cruises are scheduled for 55 dates from 25 April to 18 October 2009. The fare is £35, including return by bus.

BOOKS

'Scarborough's Coronia' has been written and published by Tom Machin, owner of the present CORONIA. It is very well illustrated and covers the excursion vessels that have served Scarborough since 1935, when the first CORONIA (later to become the BOURNEMOUTH QUEEN then QUEEN OF SCOTS) was built. Copies can be ordered from Mr Machin at 33a Throxenby Lane, Scarborough, YO12 5HN, for £7.95, including postage and packing.

G P Hamer 4 December 2008

TRIP OUT

January 2009

NORTH EAST

River Escapes, Newcastle Public cruises, downriver in the RIVER ESCAPES FORTUNA (at 1200 for three hours) and upriver in the 'COVENTINA (1230 for two hours), will be offered on Sundays from 8 March to 25 October, and on 15 November and 20 December, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 June to 29 September.

YorkBoat Sightseeing trips will run daily from 7 February to 29 November. Cruises to Bishopthorpe run at weekends from 2 May to 27 September.

EAST ANGLIA

Reedham Ferry The ferry was towed to Oulton Broad on 6 January for a refit which is expected to take about a month. The ferry service is suspended during the refit.

THAMES

Essex Marina, Wallasea Island The business has been advertised for sale for £90 000. The LADY ESSEX II is out of use and needs a a lot of work including a new engine; she is available for £1500.

City Cruises The former Gosport ferries FERRY QUEEN and VITA have been advertised for sale for £89 500 each. They were laid-up in 2008 following the introduction of the three "HYDROSPACE" vessels bought from Catamaran Cruisers.

Thames Luxury Charters THE GEORGIAN, normally based at Maidenhead, is based in London this winter.

Chris Cruises, Hampton Court The owner, Mr Tom Anders, died on 26 December after a long illness. He ran the LADY CHRISTINE (sold in 2006 and now at Shrewsbury) and the WESTERN BELLE (sold in 2008 and destined for Ullswater).

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink On the Lymington route, the two-ship service with sailings every 45 minutes is scheduled to continue until 24 May. Wightlink is still awaiting approval for the use of the new ships at Lymington.

Red Funnel Ferries A two-ship car ferry service is running throughout the winter, from 1 November to 26 March, with departures every hour and a half. The full three-ship service, with hourly sailings, runs from 27 March to 30 October. From 12 January for about three weeks, the car ferries will use berth 25 in Southampton's eastern docks to allow work on the Red Funnel's terminal.

Dorset Cruises The BOURNEMOUTH BELLE and DORSET BELLE have both been advertised for sale by brokers, at £165 000 and £150 000, respectively.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries has published schedules to the end of September. Poole services start on 2 April and two vessels are needed from 3 April for the Poole and Weymouth routes. The CONDOR VITESSE makes a daily Poole-Cherbourg trip for Brittany Ferries from 18 May to 27 September, but Channel Island fast ferry services are reduced, with no Tuesday sailings outside the peak season (15 July to 7 September). The COMMODORE CLIPPER makes a Portsmouth-Cherbourg sailing on Sundays from 24 May to 6 September.

Manche Iles Express The limited winter service from Granville to Jersey is suspended from 5 January to 6 February, then runs daily until 22 February during French school holidays; sailings continue on alternate weekends till 29 March.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Mevagissey Ferries The service is scheduled to run daily from 27 April to 1 October, with three to six round trips to Fowey each day.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

D Page, Hampton Loade The ferry did not resume after flood damage in June 2007 and the owner is considering selling if a new owner can be found.

NORTH WEST

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co The timetable has been published up to 31 January 2010, with a one-boat service in winter, a two-boat service from 28 March to 27 September and from 24 October to 1 November, with a third boat from 23 May to 6 September when there are nine return trips every day.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE was due to be dry-docked from 6 to 9 January to repair propeller damage, but the work had to be postponed and will now be done on 9-13 January. The VIKING will be used for Douglas-Heysham passenger sailings; the weekend trips to Birkenhead will go to Heysham because she cannot use the berth at Birkenhead, and the Liverpool landing stage is unavailable. Summer fast ferry services to Liverpool are from 27 March to 1 November. Belfast is served from 5 April to 27 September, and Dublin from 10 April to 7 September.

G P Hamer 8 January 2009

TRIP OUT

February 2009

NORTH EAST

Nexus The SHIELDSMAN has been sold for static use as a bar at Port Solent on Portsmouth Harbour. She was handed over on 16 January and is expected to be delivered this month.

Richardson & Simpson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE is again chartered by the RSPB. Puffin cruises are scheduled for 23 May, 6, 7, 13, 20 and 28 June, and 4 and 11 July.

EAST ANGLIA

Orwell River Cruises, Ipswich The ORWELL LADY offers afternoon cruises to off Harwich at weekends from Easter to September and on Wednesdays from June to September, and on Fridays in July and August. Sunday morning cruises off Pin Mill run in July and August. Tickets are sold by the Tourist Information Centre.

THAMES

Lady Essex, Wallasea Island The report in the last issue that the business is for sale should have referred to the Lady Essex, and not the Essex Marina.

City Cruises From 6 April, a new summer timetable will have sailings from Westminster, Waterloo and Tower to Greenwich every 35 minutes (instead of 40 minutes last season), with extra boats between Westminster and Tower.

Thames River Services The summer timetable from Westminster to Greenwich runs from 5 April to 1 November, with half-hourly services to Greenwich, and five trips a day continuing to the Thames Barrier.

Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN visited Lowestoft in January for refit.

Thames Executive Charters The TWIN STAR III has been renamed WYNDHAM GRAND, after a hotel at Chelsea Harbour.

SOUTH COAST

Brownsea Island is open to the public this year from 14 March to 1 November.

Edwards & Co, Hayling Island The local authorities have increased their annual operating subsidy to £34 000 for 2009/10, and are also paying for new engines for the vessel.

Gosport Ferry The summer cruise programme runs from 9 June to 9 September, with cruises to the Beaulieu or Hamble Rivers, or Southampton Docks, and trips to Ryde, Cowes and Spitbank Fort.

Wightlink The CAEDMON made her final trips on 21 January, before her certificates expired, and is now laid-up at Portsmouth awaiting sale. The WIGHT SUN was handed over by her Croatian builders before Christmas and is due to start her delivery voyage to the UK in March. Wightlink hopes the first two new ships will be allowed to enter service from Lymington before 13 March when the CENRED's and CENWULF's passenger certificates expire.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY has been repainted with an all-over yellow and blue advertisement for IKEA who are opening a new furniture store in Southampton; the ship will carry this for a year.

The Solent Steam Packet The SHIELDHALL will offer 18 public trips between 13 May and 20 September, including round the IoW on 20 June and 19 September, a visit to Weymouth from 2 to 15 July and to Poole from 17 to 24 August.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft Totnes sailings run daily from 1 April to 1 November (except for 2, 9, 16 and 23 October), with a few calls at Greenway to allow a return trip from Totnes to Greenway. Coastal cruises run on various dates from 24 May to 30 September. Dartmouth-Dittisham trips run from 4 March to 1 November.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The service is suspended until around 25 February for work on the slipways to prepare for the new ferry. The new ferry was transported in January on a barge from the Ravestein yard in the Netherlands to Falmouth where she will be fitted out ready to enter service in June.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Flat Holm Project Day trips from Cardiff Bay are offered on 101 dates from 5 March to 29 October, giving three hours ashore.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Extra trips operated for the Mersey visit of the aircraft carrier HMS ARK ROYAL on 15-19 January.

MISCELLANY

The hull of the former Thames passenger vessel ABERCORN is being offered for sale for £15 000. The superstructure, which was gutted by fire in March 2005, has been removed, and the hull is lying at Hoo on the River Medway.

The former Clyde steamer QUEEN MARY, berthed in London as a bar/restaurant since 1988, has closed and will apparently be moved.

Two of the former Red Funnel ferries in Croatia have been sold for scrap. The NEHAJ (ex COWES CASTLE) and LOVRJENAC (ex NORRIS CASTLE) had operated in Croatia since 1994. The SIS (ex NETLEY CASTLE) is still in service there.

G P Hamer 4 February 2009

Waverley Excursions Timetables have been published for the WAVERLEY's Scottish sailings, but details of other sailings are still awaited.

NORTH EAST

Nexus The SHIELDSMAN left the Tyne on 15 February for the south coast. She suffered engine trouble off Great Yarmouth in the early hours of the 17th and was escorted into port.

THAMES

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne, offers the usual programme of public trips. The LADY OF LEE VALLEY has a single trip to Ware on 1 August, and does hourly trips from Ware the next day.

Cruise London The PRIDELA was renamed PRIDE OF LONDON in February. She was originally the PRIDE OF GREENWICH and was renamed PRIDELA in 1985 by Catamaran Cruisers. She was bought by her present owners in December 2007.

London Waterbus Co, Little Venice Day trips are scheduled to Limehouse on 4 and 18 July, 15 August and 5 September, and to Greenford on 13 June, 1 August and 12 September.

French Brothers Short trips from Windsor run daily from 14 February to 1 November, then at weekends till 6 December. The Runnymede-Windsor service runs on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 18 April to 13 September, the Maidenhead-Windsor service is daily (except Mondays and Sundays) from 2 June to 28 August, and the service from Runnymede to Hampton Court runs on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 22 June to 3 September. The steamer NUNEHAM has public sailings between Staines and Windsor on 20 May, 8 August and 6 September at a single fare of £35, and also offers lunch and tea cruises on five dates.

Thames Steamers The ALASKA will offer 50-minute public trips from Bourne End on 23-25 May and 29-31 August, and from Henley on 18-19 July, at a fare of £10.

SOUTH COAST

The Office of Fair Trading is to carry out a market study of Isle of Wight ferry services, following a complaint from the island's MP, backed by a petition.

Wightlink The WIGHT LIGHT and WIGHT SKY finally entered service from Lymington on 25 February, replacing the CENRED and CENWULF; but the CENRED returned to service for one trip on the 26th when the WIGHT SKY had a fault. Foot passengers were offered free trips the following weekend.

Dorset Cruises Trips from Bournemouth are due to resume on 9 April. There are no regular trips to the Isle of Wight; for the past three seasons, the day trip to Yarmouth has been offered on Wednesdays.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

HD Ferries announced on 16 February that they would not resume this year. The service was suspended on 8 September after two unsuccessful seasons, and the HD1 is laid-up at Newhaven awaiting a buyer.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Sound Cruising, Plymouth Trips up the Tamar to Calstock or Morwellham run from 4 April to 27 October. Coastal trips to the River Yealm are on 13 dates from 9 May to 6 October.

Fish 'n' Trips & Plymouth Hoe Cruises The DEVON BELLE V continues to offer Dockyard cruises from the Hoe in summer, but is under the same ownership as the angling boat IOLAIRE. A third boat, the RONNOCH MOR (Irish for "giant mackerel"), also offers angling trips, carrying 28 passengers.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Day trips from Weston to Steep Holm in Mr Woolls' BRISTOL QUEEN are scheduled for 21 dates from 11 April to 18 October.

Bristol Packet Avon Gorge cruises are scheduled for 30 dates from 21 March to 30 October. Day trips to Bath are on 14 June, 26 July, 23 August and 27 September.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Severn Leisure Cruises, Upton-upon-Severn The CONWAY CASTLE has public trips to Tewkesbury on Wednesdays from 6 May to 30 September, and to Worcester on 11 June, 16 July, 11 August and 3 September. Afternoon tea cruises are available on many Tuesdays and Thursdays from 28 April to 6 October, and lunch cruises run on some Sundays.

Bancroft Cruisers, Stratford The GRACE DARLING is being replaced this year by the 52-passenger RITA ELLEN.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Day trips have been announced from Belfast to Peel on 25 July, from Fleetwood to Douglas on 18 August and from Whitehaven to Douglas on 19 August.

MISCELLANY

The former turbine steamer QUEEN MARY has been advertised for sale by brokers for £154 950. She must be moved from her present mooring in London.

G P Hamer 4 March 2009

TRIP OUT

April 2009

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's boilers need extensive work, and her Western Isles sailings, scheduled for 1-5 May have been postponed to run from 29 May to 2 June. She is on the Bristol Channel from 6 to 20 June, then has a cruise from Milford Haven on the 21st before returning to the Clyde. She is on the South coast from 4 to 24 September, then on the Thames till 11 October, with a final weekend on the Clyde on 17-19 October. The BALMORAL begins her season at Bristol on 17 June for a "two ships day" with the WAVERLEY. She is on the Irish Sea on 19-24 June, then on the South Coast on 26-29 June, with a special cruise on the 27th, the 60th anniversary of her launch. She is on the Thames until 12 July. Her Bristol Channel season is from 16 July to 10 September, with a gap from 13 to 18 August when she returns to the Irish Sea for a tall ships event at Belfast, and a cruise on 17 August from Menai Bridge round Anglesey.

THAMES

King Cruises, Westminster, have advertised their business, including the ARCADIAN KING EDWARD (ex GREENWICH BELLE) for sale for £375 000.

Thames River Boats Sailings from Westminster to Kew and Hampton Court resumed on 4 April.

Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN arrived back in London on 13 March after her refit in Lowestoft.

SOUTH COAST

Allchorn Pleasure Boats, Eastbourne Trips are due to resume in May. As a special offer, from 11 to 22 May, the fare for the Beachy Head trips will be £5 instead of £9.

Ross Boat Trips, Brighton A new 60-passenger catamaran, to be named ROSSANN, is due in service this year.

Kingfisher Cruises, Littlehampton, ceased operating last autumn, and the FREEDOM has been sold.

Edwards & Co, Hayling Island The service was suspended for about a week from 23 March, while the PRIDE OF HAYLING was fitted with new engines

Wightlink The new Ryde catamarans are to be named WIGHT RYDER I and II. The first was launched on 30 March at Cebu in the Philippines. They are expected to enter service in the autumn. After continual delays to the new Lymington ships, a revised timetable was introduced on 9 March and, until 24 May, sailings will be hourly. The WIGHT SUN left the shipyard at Kraljevica on 28 March and is now on her way to the UK. The CENWULF went to lay-up at Marchwood on 4 March, joining the CAEDMON which arrived there on 4 February. The CENRED remained on stand-by and was in service on 12 March, replacing the WIGHT LIGHT, but sailed to Marchwood on 13 March. All three are believed to have been sold to the Danish breakers Smedegaarden who have advertised them for sale.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Compagnie Corsaire, St-Malo The JACQUES CARTIER is due to resume her Jersey sailings on 10 April.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Trips from Sidmouth are on various dates, starting on 4 May. Day trips from Exmouth to Torquay and Brixham start on 4 June and are normally on Thursdays.

P & C Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) The CORNISH BELLE has been sold to the Lagan Boat Co of Belfast and will be renamed MONA. She was built at Mevagissey in 1951 as the QUEEN OF THE FAL, and became the CORNISH BELLE at St Ives in 1963; she returned to the River Fal in the 1990s, and went to Brixham in 2007. The name MONA has been used in the past by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co: four vessels of that name served between 1832 and 1938.

N Fox, Plymouth The service to Cawsand is due to resume on 10 April.

Torpoint Ferry The LYNHER II will be off service for about a month from 3 April and will be dry-docked at Falmouth.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Bristol Ferry Boat Co Avon Gorge cruises, some with champagne or a pasty, are advertised for 37 dates from 5 April to 25 October.

Cardiff Cats are reintroducing coastal cruises after a break of four years; the trips will run on Friday evenings this summer.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Merseytravel is considering cost cuts which could include taking one of the three vessels out of service.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The SNAEFELL resumed on 27 March, making the first trip of the season to Liverpool. The VIKING has been advertised for sale by brokers.

G P Hamer 5 April 2009

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY is due to be dry-docked at Greenock later this month, and the BALMORAL will go to Sharpness.

NORTH EAST

Nexus Afternoon cruises from South Shields to Newcastle run on alternate Sundays from 24 May to 27 September; tickets must be bought in advance. The SHIELDSMAN finally completed her delivery voyage to Portsmouth on 13 April and is now moored near Portchester. The new owner is apparently a lorry driver from Southampton who won the money on a horse race and hopes to convert her to a floating restaurant.

EAST ANGLIA

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Steam Packet Co The SOUTHERN BELLE ran at Easter. From May to September, she has cruises to Breydon Water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays at 1145 (also at 1400 in July and August). Other trips in July and August are on Mondays at 1130 and 1415 to Berney Arms with time ashore, on Wednesdays to Oulton Broad (1015 from Yarmouth, 1345 from Oulton Broad), and evening barbecue cruises on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners The ferry runs regularly at weekends from Easter to 27 September and daily from 18 July to 1 September; at other times until 1 November, crossings must be booked.

THAMES

Transport for London is to spend £1.5 million on extending Tower Pier; the work is due to be finished in 2011.

City Cruises The MAYFLOWER GARDEN returned to London in April after being rebuilt at Portland. She has not been lengthened, but now has an open top deck with a forward wheelhouse. On the return voyage, on 17 April, she broke down off Selsey and had to be towed into Portsmouth Harbour by Selsey lifeboat.

Thames Executive Charters During the Chelsea Flower Show, from 19 to 23 May, additional services will operate in the daytime between Chelsea (Cadogan Pier) and Embankment.

Thames Rivercruise, Reading, has bought the 70-passenger waterbus LADY CAROLINE which previously ran on a lake at Thorpe Park near Staines.

Cotswold River Cruises, Lechlade, was taken over in April 2008 by First Estates Management who run a marina in Lechlade. The ADVENTURESS continues to be used for charter trips.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The WIGHT SUN called in Gibraltar from 7 to 9 April and reached Lymington on 14 April after a 3071-mile voyage from Kraljevica.

Pindar Maritime The converted trawler HATHERLEIGH was sold last August and sailed to Scarborough in March. The new owners are considering opening her as a museum.

Sailing Barge Kitty is now based at Maldon, Essex, after several years on the Solent.

WEST OF ENGLAND

S S Jamieson, Torquay, has sold the HERM CLIPPER to Greenway Ferry. Mr Jamieson continues to run the SHEPHERD LASS from Torquay. Greenway Quay and Ferry Service has bought the HERM CLIPPER and a 100-passenger boat which has been renamed CHRISTIE BELLE.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Hampton Loade Community Trust has been formed to take over the ferry across the Severn which had been suspended since the floods of June 2007. Bridgnorth District Council has given a grant of £5000. The service resumed on 25 April and now runs every weekend.

NORTH WEST

Foulridge Canal Cruises The CITY OF LINCOLN, bought from Cathedral City Cruises last year, will offer regular trips from Barden Mill near Burnley.

Cumbria County Council The Windermere ferry is suspended from 20 April to 23 May while the MALLARD is overhauled.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The MANANNAN was on trials in the Solent on 1 May and was due to leave Portsmouth on 8 May. The voyage has been postponed because of the weather forecast, and she is now expected in Douglas on 11 May. She is due to enter service on 22 May. She has black hulls and is registered in Douglas. The company will not be chartering any passenger vessels for the TT race traffic, but the VIKING has been dry-docked, so that she can resume service if needed.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA begins her season on 24 May with a cruise to Derbyhaven Bay to view work on extending the island's airport.

G P Hamer 8 May 2009

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY went into drydock at Greenock on 18 May (under tow because work on her boilers was not completed), and came out on the 26th, ready to enter service as scheduled on 29 May. Her Oban sailings were completed successfully. The BALMORAL was drydocked at Sharpness in May. She will call at Worthing instead of Shoreham on 28 June.

THAMES

Woolwich Ferry The JAMES NEWMAN has gone to Hull for a refit and arrived there on 10 May.

SOUTH COAST

Wey & Arun Canal Trust The new WIGGONHOLT was craned into the water at Loxwood on 27 April and a naming ceremony was held on 9 May.

Wightlink The WIGHT SUN entered service on 20 May, replacing the WIGHT SKY which had a hydraulic fault. Currently advertised Lymington schedules have hourly sailings on most days, with a slightly increased frequency at peak times.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED JET 1 and 2 have been sold to Caspian Mainport, an Irish company working in the oil industry in the Caspian Sea. They were renamed CM JET 1 and 2 and loaded aboard the cargo ship LA ROCHELLE which sailed on 14 May to St Petersburg. Red Funnel has bought the catamaran BO HENGY from Bahamas Ferries for about £2 million; she was built in the USA in 1999, is 209 gt, 115 ft long, and can carry 177 passengers at 35 knots. She has been renamed RED JET 5 and is due in service in July.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Dart Pleasure Craft A trial service from Dartmouth to Stoke Gabriel will run on Mondays and Tuesdays from 25 May to 30 June; times vary with tides, but there are two round trips each day taking 45 minutes each way.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The new ferry is due to arrive from Falmouth on 15 June and will enter service within weeks.

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne The QUEEN OF THE FAL is returning to service this season after being laid-up last year. There are four trips daily between the 'Smugglers Cottage' at Tolverne and Falmouth (Custom House Quay only). Mr Newman has also bought the TEMPTRESS from K&S Cruises (the boat which ran from Yarmouth in 2006-07); she has been renamed SKYLARK but will be laid-up this year.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Day trips this year are to Tewkesbury on 16 May and 15 August, and to Sharpness on 6 June and 6 September.

NORTH WEST

The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool The fourth DUKW has entered service with the name NELSON.

Cumbria County Council The Windermere ferry returned to service after her refit on 18 May, earlier than expected.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The MANANNAN arrived in Douglas on 11 May and over the next few days carried out berthing trials at Liverpool, Belfast, Heysham and Dublin. She entered regular service to Liverpool on 22 May. The VIKING has been chartered to the government of the Azores and is due to operate in the islands from 21 June to 30 September.

MISCELLANY

The former Yugoslavian passenger ship HARMONY II, which first came to Britain in 1987 as the PRINCE ALBERT, is this year based at Bristol. She offers cruises for up to 12 passengers, but is available for static social functions for up to 150.

G P Hamer 3 June 2009

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY reached Avonmouth on 4 June, and completed most of her Bristol Channel sailings. She returned to the Clyde on 23 June. She was blown against Dunoon Pier and damaged her port paddle box on 26 June; she sailed back to Glasgow, but the evening cruise was cancelled along with all sailings until 4 July. Largs Pier will be unavailable until 27 July because of rebuilding work; bus connections will operate to Fairlie Quay or Ayr. The BALMORAL entered service on 17 June on the Bristol Channel and then headed for the Irish Sea, followed by visits to the South Coast and Thames.

NORTH EAST

Dream Achievers, Shipley, is owned by the charity Bradford Motor Education Project, and has this year taken over the narrow boat APOLLO, which had previously run from Shipley for Apollo Canal Cruises. She is available for charter trips, but the charity hopes to get funding for a waterbus service.

THAMES

Havengore, London The former PLA survey vessel HAVENGORE is now operated by Venues of Distinction Ltd of Cirencester and offers charters from St Katharine's Dock in London for up to 40 passengers. She was built in 1956 and carried Sir Winston Churchill's coffin along the Thames in 1965. She will be visiting Cowes Week in August.

Thames Clippers Extra services ran on 9-11 June during a strike on London Underground. On weekends when there are events in The O2 and the underground station there is closed, the Clippers will run a service to The O2 from East India Pier on the other side of the river, with departures every 5-7 minutes from 1700 to 2030 and from 2200 to 0015.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The FASTCAT SHANKLIN ran aground off Ryde on 21 June at 1800 whilst avoiding yachts. She was refloated at 1935 and there was no damage to the craft or injuries to passengers. The OUR LADY PAMELA has been sold and has been towed to Marchwood.

Blue Funnel Cruises During Cowes Week, from 1 to 8 August, a Lymington to Cowes service will run, with three round trips daily.

Dorset Cruises Isle of Wight trips are being offered this summer again, with a weekly day trip from Swanage and Bournemouth to Yarmouth; they were initially advertised to run on Wednesdays, but they are now scheduled for Tuesdays from 7 July.

Blue Line Cruises, Poole, has bought the TORBAY BELLE and she was delivered to Poole on 1 June. She has entered service with the SOLENT SCENE and will be renamed JURASSIC SCENE. Originally Caledonian MacBrayne's LOCHMOR, she ran from Mallaig until 2000, and was rebuilt as the TORBAY BELLE in 2003/04.

Fairmile Classic Cruises, Swanage, were bankrupt last September and the WESTERN LADY III was laid-up at Poole. She has now returned to Devon after less than two years absence.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Teign Ferry The operator, Mr Trout, has announced he will withdraw in the autumn. The ferry is owned by Teignbridge District Council and has been run under contract to Mr Trout since October 1998. The Council has proposed selling the ferry.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service has bought the WESTERN LADY III. She was handed over on 22 June and delivered to Brixham on the 25th. She will be refitted at Fowey, before returning to service in late-July on the trips from Torquay to Dartmouth under her new name of THE FAIRMILE. The CHRISTIE BELLE was previously the DAN II on Milford Haven; she has been rebuilt with an upper passenger deck, increasing her passenger capacity from 50 to 100. Trips are being offered on certain dates from Dartmouth, Greenway and Dittisham to Sharpham Vineyard, for a cheese and wine tasting.

P & C Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) The TORBAY BELLE has been sold after five seasons' service from Torquay and Brixham.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The old ferry made her final crossings on 7 June, and the service was then suspended for work on the slipways and cables. The new ferry arrived from Falmouth on 15 June. An open day was held on 1 July and the new vessel is now in service.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Number Seven Boat Trips, Bristol, have bought the FREEDOM, a 28-passenger converted cabin cruiser which previously ran from Littlehampton.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The MANANNAN made a fully-booked trip round the island on 30 June, and another has been scheduled for 29 July. The VIKING's charter in the Azores has been delayed so that side doors for vehicles can be fitted, and she is now scheduled to enter service there on 11 July and continue till 27 September.

OBITUARY

Mr Robert Hale, who ran boats from Poole Quay until retiring in 2001, died on 6 June at the age of 77.

G P Hamer 7 July 2009

TRIP OUT

August 2009

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY resumed calling at Largs as scheduled on 27 July. The BALMORAL began her Bristol Channel season on 16 July, but has missed several days' sailings because of bad weather.

NORTH EAST

T Machin, Scarborough The CORONIA had a charter from Great Yarmouth on 29 June, taking a party from the energy company E.On to view the offshore wind farm. She was built in Yarmouth in 1935 and it was her peacetime base until 1950.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHANTAS has been off service for about two weeks after an engine breakdown. They hope to resume running soon.

City Cruises The FERRY QUEEN and VITA have been sold, reportedly to become houseboats, and left London in July. They were both built for the Portsmouth-Gosport ferry service and came to London in the mid-1970s.

SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The WIGHT RYDER I and II arrived at Portsmouth on 12 July aboard the cargo ship BBC GEORGIA. They have since been making trials, but entry into service is not expected before September. On the Lymington route, a three-ship service is scheduled from 17 July to 2 November, with sailings generally at 40-minute intervals.

Red Funnel Ferries A naming ceremony for the RED JET 5 was held at Cowes on 21 July and she was in service on the 29th.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service The WESTERN LADY III was refitted at Polruan and returned to service as THE FAIRMILE on 31 July with an evening cruise in Tor Bay for invited guests and a renaming ceremony. On 1 August, she offered six free trips from Torquay and Brixham, taking a total of 1000 people, then made her first trip to Dartmouth on the 2nd.

Dart Pleasure Craft A service between Dartmouth and Stoke Gabriel is running on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays. Times are dependent on tides and tickets must be booked as capacity is limited to 12 passengers.

A & D Smith (Silverline Cruises), Plymouth The SILVER CREST is offering public trips in conjunction with Tamar Cruising. Last year, a service ran to the Royal William Yard, but it has ceased; the 12-passenger TRANSPORTER is chartered for military service.

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry Cruises to the River Yealm and trips to Calstock are scheduled for various dates, and are generally operated by the Smiths' SILVER CREST.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The VIKING's departure for the Azores was delayed successively by the work of fitting a side door, an accident to an officer and repairs to a crack in a fuel tank. She finally left Liverpool on 23 July, but had to put into Falmouth for repairs to her bow. She finally arrived in Ponta Delgada on 1 August and is due to enter service on the 5th, over six weeks later than originally planned.

MISCELLANY

The Egyptian-owned SARA 3 has gone for breaking in India. Built in 1974 as Sealink's ST EDMUND, she ran between Poole and the Channel Islands as the ROZEL in 1989-91, and then sailed on the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

G P Hamer 5 August 2009

TRIP OUT

September 2009

Waverley Excursions and the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society faced a crucial season after heavy losses over recent years. Surprisingly, the programme of sailings, their advertising and the ships' catering were similar to previous years'. Their only hope for better results was the chance of good weather and a lack of mishaps. Sadly, the gamble has not worked, and the season's financial results are certain to be way below expectations. Barring a miracle or a millionaire benefactor, the BALMORAL's trips next week will surely be her final sailings, and the WAVERLEY's future is rather uncertain. We must hope that at least limited Clyde sailings are still possible in future summers.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The BALMORAL has missed many days through bad weather and the WAVERLEY's Ayr sailings have also suffered. The BALMORAL visited Northern Ireland on 13-15 August, but the trip from Peel to the "parade of sail" on the 16th was cancelled, as was the WAVERLEY's day trip from Ayr. The BALMORAL did a cruise round Anglesey on 17 August. From 25 August to 4 September, the BALMORAL lost seven whole days' sailings. The WAVERLEY finished her Clyde season on 1 September and left Fairlie that night for Weymouth; she had to shelter off Ireland before going round Land's End on 4 September, and her South Coast sailings that day were cancelled.

NORTH EAST

B Clarkson, Whitby The SKYLARK II has been sold and taken by road to Liverpool. The ESK BELLE II continues offering trips from Whitby, with the occasional visit to Staithes. The next trip to Staithes is on 9 September.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co The PRINCESS POCAHONTAS returned to service on 21 August after engine repairs were completed.

Thames Steamers The Queen travelled on the ALASKA to Bray on 20 July to witness part of the annual "swan upping" ceremony.

SOUTH COAST

Isle of Wight Council proposes to hand over responsibility for the island's roads to a private company under a 25-year Private Finance Initiative scheme. A new floating bridge for Cowes would be included in the scheme.

I & P Thomas, Yarmouth The JOYBELLE has been advertised for sale by brokers for £34 000. She has continued to offer trips from Yarmouth to the Needles this season.

Dorset Cruises Day trips from Swanage and Bournemouth to Yarmouth are due to continue on Tuesdays until 29 September.

Blue Line Cruises, Poole Since 8 August, "Jurassic Coast" cruises have been offered on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, usually in the JURASSIC SCENE, leave Poole at 1330 and Swanage at 1430, cruising to Dancing Ledge, and returning to Swanage at 1600 and Poole at 1700. Trips to Swanage operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays as before.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The RSPB has a programme of 15 avocet cruises on the Exe estuary from 1 November to 28 February, using either Mr Rackley's MY QUEEN from Starcross and Exmouth, or Mr Garrett's SEA DREAM II from Topsham.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Winter bird-watching cruises are scheduled for 14 dates from 31 October to 13 March.

P & C Scott (Brixham Belle Cruises) are not operating any trips this season following the sale of the TORBAY BELLE. The kiosk at Brixham is the booking office for the BRIXHAM BELLE III, a 30-passenger boat offering angling trips and cruises around the bay, skippered by Barrie Setchfield.

Torpoint Ferry Fares, and tolls for the Tamar Bridge, are to be increased by 50% in December, the first increase since 1994.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company Two additional trips have been scheduled from Bideford on 6 and 20 September at a reduced day return fare of £25.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Crown Inn, Handsacre The CANAL EXPLORER seems to have operated here only briefly in 2007-08. The pub has since been refurbished for new owners, while the boat is laid-up.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries On 20 October, the QUEEN MARY 2 is visiting the Mersey and hourly cruises will run from Seacombe in addition to the normal hourly service from Liverpool, Seacombe and Woodside.

The Yellow Duckmarine, Liverpool, has bought the SKYLARK II from Whitby. She entered service on 10 August as the SKYLARK, making 40-minute trips around the docks, leaving from Albert Dock.

MISCELLANY

The former Severn ferry SEVERN PRINCESS is to be restored on dry land beside the Wye in Chepstow. She was brought back to Chepstow from Ireland in 1999, but efforts to restore her to working order failed, and she was moved to her new permanent site under Brunel's railway bridge in April.

G P Hamer 4 September 2009

TRIP OUT

October 2009

The summer of 2009 brought average but unsettled weather to most areas, with a dry June being followed by a very wet July; August brought more rain to the North West but most of England and Wales was drier than average, while September had some good spells of fine weather.

Geoffrey Hamer

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY began her south coast sailings on 5 September. She sailed from Poole on the 7th, but was unable to return there in the evening and spent the night and the next day at Weymouth, with her sailing cancelled because fuel had not been delivered. On 10-12 September, Portsmouth Harbour was unavailable as Wightlink were running extra sailings to Ryde (with chartered vessels) so the WAVERLEY berthed in the Continental Ferry Port, with passengers taken there in the SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH. The weather prevented calls at Bournemouth on the 15th and 16th, and she was unable to berth at Worthing on the 24th en route to Dover.

The BALMORAL completed her sailings on 5-10 September with no weather disruption, and is now laid-up in Bristol. Her 2009 passenger numbers were apparently 9% less than in 2008, for a significantly shorter season.

EAST ANGLIA

'Viking Saga', Maldon 40-minute trips operate each weekend until 25 October, at times that vary with tides.

THAMES

Woolwich Ferry The ERNEST BEVIN arrived in Hull on 9 September for a refit.

City Cruises The FERRY QUEEN and VITA, which were sold and left London in July, are at Grimsby where the VITA is being converted. The FERRY QUEEN has been offered for sale again for £38 000.

SOUTH COAST

Gosport Ferry The service to Royal Clarence Marina at Gosport, operated by the SOLENT PRINCE under contract to Berkeley Homes, ceased on 21 August.

Wightlink The WIGHT RYDER I and II were named in a ceremony on 17 September and were shown to the public at Portsmouth on the 25th and 26th. The Portsmouth-Ryde timetable changed on 21 September, with the crossing time advertised as 22 minutes instead of 18. The new vessels entered service on 29 September. The FASTCAT SHANKLIN has returned to service when one of the 'RYDERs has a technical problem. The OUR LADY PAMELA has been towed to Esbjerg where she is to be scrapped.

Brownsea Island Ferries Bird-watching trips in conjunction with the RSPB are scheduled for 8 November, 6 December, 31 January, 14 and 28 February around Poole Harbour, and 12 June 2010 to the Purbeck coast.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Manche Iles Express The VICTOR HUGO hit rocks on Alderney on 13 September after calling en route from Diélette to Guernsey. The 59 passengers had to spend the night on Alderney before being taken to Guernsey the next day. The VICTOR HUGO was later towed from Alderney to Cherbourg for repairs.

WEST OF ENGLAND

The trust running Morwellham Quay on the Tamar was put into administration on 22 September following the withdrawal of financial support by Devon County Council. The site will remain open in October, but the future is uncertain.

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Trips to Exeter are scheduled for 7 May, 6 and 20 June, and 6 July 2010.

Greenway Quay and Ferry Service The RIVIERA BELLE has been advertised for sale for £78 000.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The old paddle-driven ferry was towed to Noss Marina on 18 September and has been broken-up by a local firm. The new ferry stranded on the Dartmouth slipway on 23 September and the service had to be suspended for the afternoon until the ferry floated on the tide.

Tamar Cruising & Cremyll Ferry Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Council awarded the contract to run the Cremyll ferry to Sound Cruising after a tendering process. The new operators would use the PLYMOUTH BELLE, replacing the NORTHERN BELLE which has run the service since she was built in 1926 (not 1929 as stated in 'Trip Out 2009/10'). Tamar Cruising have run the service since 1985. After legal advice and complaints from Tamar Cruising, the councils withdrew the decision and there will be a new tendering process, while Tamar Cruising continue running the service. Sound Cruising claim to have spent £40 000 refitting the PLYMOUTH BELLE with new seats, ticket machines and TVs.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company As part of celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of the Landmark Trust's taking over Lundy, the OLDENBURG is visiting Gloucester for the first time since 2001, and will be open to the public on 31 October. Sailings from Sharpness to Gloucester on 29 October and Gloucester-Sharpness on 1 November are advertised; the fare is £20, including return by coach.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The VIKING has been sold to Hellenic Seaways. She made her last trip on charter in the Azores on 27 September and arrived in Setúbal on the Portuguese mainland on the 30th. The BEN-MY-CHREE runs alone from 2 November between Douglas and Heysham, with sailings to Birkenhead on Saturdays and Sundays, and return trips to Dublin on 19/20 and 27/28 December.

ISLE OF MAN

Laxey Towing Co The KARINA is advertised to make trips on 10 and 11 October.

G P Hamer 5 October 2009

TRIP OUT

November 2009

This month, as usual, brings the 'Trip Out' list of the UK's ten largest excursion operators, arranged by gross tonnage and passenger capacity. Figures in brackets are last year's positions.

	GROSS TONNAGE	
1(1)	Thames Luxury Ch	2049
2(2)	City Cruises	1769
3(3)	Waverley Excursions	1428
4(4)	Silver Fleet	1414
5(5)	Windermere Lake Cr	916
6(8)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	757
7(7)	Thames Leisure	708
8(6)	Capital Pleasure B.	472
9(9)	Thames Cruises	405
10(-)	Dart Pleasure Craft	394

	PASSENGER CAPACITY	
1(1)	City Cruises	4347
2(2)	Windermere Lake Cr	2905
3(3)	Thames Luxury Ch	1958
4(4)	Waverley Excursions	1750
5(5)	Blue Funnel/ Solent	1632
6(6)	French Brothers	1506
7(7)	Dart Pleasure Craft	1348
8(8)	Salter's Steamers	1327
9(9)	York/ChesterBoat	1242
10(10)	Crown River Cruises	1058

Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY's Thames sailings were completed successfully, and she returned via Weymouth to the Clyde, arriving on 13 October. She had four days of public trips, ending by escorting the QUEEN MARY 2 on the 19th. She was chartered on 21 October to carry guests to the launch of HMS DEFENDER at Govan.

NORTH EAST

Sprotbrough Riverboat The WYRE LADY offered trips from Doncaster to Sprotbrough and Conisbrough on Sundays from 2 August to 6 September.

EAST ANGLIA

Waveney River Tours, Oulton Broad The ENCHANTRESS is being offered for sale for £49 000.

THAMES

British Waterways and the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation are seeking an operator for a waterbus service on the River Lee between Limehouse and the Olympic site at Stratford in east London.

Turk Launches The SILVER DOLPHIN, leased for two seasons from Woods River Cruises, has been sold to Sweeney's Cruises for service on Loch Lomond. She was due to sail up the east coast to Scotland this autumn.

SOUTH COAST

The Office of Fair Trading has announced that, after a study of Isle of Wight ferry services, it will not refer them to the Competition Commission. There are, however "concerns around passenger satisfaction that the ferry operators should address."

Wightlink The FASTCAT RYDE and 'SHANKLIN are in the process of being sold for service on the Bristol Channel.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED FALCON was off service for repairs and a reduced two-ship service operated from 8 to 16 October.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Manche Iles Express A limited winter service operates from Granville to Jersey, with daily trips during French school holidays, but otherwise only on alternate weekends. One of the vessels is to be sold and only two will run next summer.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co took over the lease of the Penzance dry dock on 1 September. The GRY MARITHA was dry-docked in October. Next year, the SCILLONIAN III will run from 27 March to 30 October, sailing on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays early and late in the season, and daily (except Sundays) from 26 April to 2 October. A double trip operates on Saturdays 29 May and 5 June, and there are extra trips between 29 April and 3 May for the world pilot gig championships. On Saturdays from 17 July to 28 August, sailings are at 1030 from Penzance and 1500 from St Mary's, instead of the usual 0915 and 1630. Controversy over mainland facilities for the proposed new ship continues. Plans to enlarge the present quay in Penzance have provoked strong objections, and Falmouth has offered an alternative base.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Severn Link is the name of a company formed by Chris Marrow to promote an Ilfracombe-Swansea service. The service is advertised to start next spring, using the FASTCAT RYDE and FASTCAT SHANKLIN.

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Mrs Rendell has resigned as secretary and the new contact is Mrs J Wilson.

Aquabus, Cardiff, is to build a new vessel, 69 ft in length, to carry 140 passengers.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Fleet Inn, Twyning, has ceased running a ferry across the Avon. The nearest crossing point is two miles downstream at Tewkesbury.

Tewkesbury Boat Co The TJALK OF TEWKESBURY ceased operating after the 2008 season and is now being converted for private use.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The VIKING was delivered to Greece in mid-October and has been renamed HELLENIC WIND.

MISCELLANY

The former Clyde turbine steamer QUEEN MARY has been sold and is to be a 45-bedroom hotel and restaurant at La Rochelle on the west coast of France. She is to be moved from her London mooring on 9 November.

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Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY is due to visit Oban next year from 28 May to 1 June.

NORTH EAST

Leeds City Cruisers The BLACK PRINCE and her business have been advertised for sale for £130 000.

YorkBoat The RIVER KING has returned to service with YorkBoat. She had been sold out of the fleet in 2001 and ran in Shrewsbury before returning to York in 2005 in the ownership of Waterline Cruise & Dine.

THAMES

Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co Special trips next season are to Chelsea Flower Show on 29 May, and Southend Air Show on 30 and 31 May, and there are cruises to follow the Thames Sailing Barge Race on 3 June and to the forts in the estuary on 18 July.

Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust Public sailing are advertised from 24 April to 17 October, and include cruises off Shoeburyness on 19 June, to the Kentish Flats wind farm on 4 July, and round the Isle of Sheppey on 14 August, and day trips to Southend on 22 July and 5 and 19 August and to Whitstable on 28 August.

Silver Fleet (Woods River Cruises) is to build a new pier on the berth formerly occupied by the QUEEN MARY, and the company's fleet will be based there from 2011. Meanwhile, the company has moved to new offices in central London.

JGF Passenger Boats, Walton-on-Thames, have acquired the PINK CHAMPAGNE and SOUTHERN COMFORT MISSISSIPPI from the Maidenhead Steam Navigation Co.

SOUTH COAST

Edwards & Co, Hayling Island The ferry service will be suspended from 14 December to 4 January.

Gosport Ferry The SOLENT PRINCE is for sale for £72 500. Built as the FINGAL OF STAFFA, she was later the JENNY ANN at Cowes.

Wightlink The Lymington service was suspended on 4 November after the crew failed an MCA safety drill. The service was allowed to resume if the ferries were accompanied by a "rescue" craft and the vessels of Solent & Wight Line Cruises were chartered over the next four days to accompany the ferries. The FASTCAT SHANKLIN was used on occasions in November when the WIGHT RYDERs had faults; she is now in the shipyard at Portchester while the FASTCAT RYDE is the standby vessel. The Fishbourne service was reduced from 17 November as both the ST CLARE and ST FAITH had problems.

Red Funnel Ferries Next year, the car ferries offer an hourly three-ship service from 26 March to 31 October.

Dorset Cruises have bought the QUEEN OF THE FAL and will rename her DORSET QUEEN. Originally the GAY QUEEN at Rothesay, she ran from Poole as the ALICE-MARIE from 1989 to 2005 before going to Cornwall. She will be used mainly for charters on Poole Harbour, including trips to Wareham.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries The CONDOR 10 is being refitted at Portsmouth and the CONDOR EXPRESS is running from St-Malo, while the CONDOR VITESSE maintains the twice-weekly service from Weymouth.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Teign Ferry The ferry was suspended on 1 November when Mr Trout withdrew after running the service since 1998. Teignbridge District Council is offering a 15-year contract to run the service; the closing date for operators to apply is 10 December.

A P & E R Newman, Tolverne, have sold the QUEEN OF THE FAL to Dorset Cruises.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co As controversy over the mainland terminal for the Isles of Scilly service continues, Charlie Cartwright, who briefly served as chief executive of the Steamship Company in the 1990s, now proposes to run an alternative service with a 367-passenger gas-turbine catamaran. The CLOUD X is for sale in Florida, and has been laid-up for over two years; she seems to have operated for only six months since being built in 2002.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Avon Leisure Cruises, Evesham The AVON PADDLER is for sale for £27 500. She was built to resemble a Mississippi stern-wheel steamer and originally operated on a lake at Longleat Safari Park.

Brindley's of Stone has ceased trading and the AQUARIUS is for sale. In five years, she made 800 dinner cruises on the Trent & Mersey Canal, carrying 18 323 passengers.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries Manchester Ship Canal cruises are scheduled for 50 dates from 29 April to 26 September. The fare is £36, including return by bus.

Ullswater Navigation & Transit Co Services were suspended during the November floods, but have now resumed from Glenridding and Howtown; Pooley Bridge pier is still closed.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Bookings are now open for sailings in 2010. The fast ferry service from Liverpool runs from 6 March to 31 October. Belfast sailings run from 31 March to 26 September, and Dublin is served at Easter, then from 1 June to 6 September.

MISCELLANY

The QUEEN MARY was towed from London on 9 November and is now berthed in Tilbury Dock.

The SUNDANCE (ex SOLENT ENTERPRISE, GAY ENTERPRISE) has been converted to a luxurious houseboat in Denmark and is now for sale for Kr 17 million (about £2 million).

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