



ENSURING PORT'S BEST INTERESTS

Aberdeen Harbour Board's ongoing programme of familiarisation briefings for key influencers continued this month, with visits including a Scottish Government Minister and the board of transport partnership, Nestrans.

Both included a trip by launch, tour of the Marine Operations Centre and a briefing by Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, who explains: *"It is vital for the Board, port users and the area's economy that key influencers are aware of the harbour's important role, the continuing development of facilities, services and new opportunities, and the issues faced."*

"The visits are designed to help ensure that the port's best interests are taken into account when relevant third parties are making plans and taking decisions."

The presentations to Stewart Stevenson, MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, and the Nestrans' representatives, led by Deputy Chair, Eddie Anderson, highlighted the harbour's role and record-breaking performance; international traffic; recent investment in facilities and projects underway and in planning; and future prospects.

A number of concerns were also raised by the Board, relating to plans for a wind farm in Aberdeen Bay which would create a navigational hazard for shipping; planning issues and conflicting land uses adjacent to the port; surface access to the port area; and aspects of the UK Government's current Ports Policy Review.

Continuing busy times

A busy start to the second half of 2007 means that activity at Aberdeen Harbour is ahead of the same time in 2006 which went on to be another record year. Strong half-year traffic saw 2,463,219 tonnes of cargo handled (January-June 2006 – 2,496,381 tonnes). While the number of vessels fell 3% to 3,997, the tonnage again topped 11.3 million gross tonnes, as in 2006.

Harbour Board Operations Director and Harbour Master, Captain Ray Shaw, said: *"Building on the port's record performances of recent years, the continuing high level of activity in most sectors further encourages our expansion of facilities."*

Shipping figures were influenced by fewer fishing vessels using the port and NorthLink's two passenger/freight ferries being temporarily out of service for upgrades. More than 58,000 passengers sailed on the ferries.

Tonnages of shellfish and industrial fish both showed increases, while white fish landings were down more than 50% at 1,676 tonnes.

The successful introduction of the export of logs in 2006 has been followed through with a further seven shipments, adding up to 18,120 tonnes, in the first half of this year.

Exports of oilfield equipment to numerous locations in West Africa increased by 45%, with 33 vessels loading. Reflecting the port's hub role in oilfield exports, there are now three scheduled West African services, as well as ad-hoc charters.

Increasing paper work!

The tonnage of wood pulp shipments arriving at Aberdeen Harbour in the first eight months of this year for paper mills in North-east Scotland has increased by more than a third, compared with the same timescale in 2006.

With an established track record in handling pulp, Aberdeen has now also attracted cargoes previously imported through other east coast ports, with the total topping 86,000 tonnes between January and August, up 34%.

Eucalyptus wood pulp from Chile is now being redirected via transshipment at the port of Flushing, in The Netherlands, to Aberdeen for International Paper, Inverurie, with around 12 shipments so far. Deliveries are expected to continue at two or three a month.

Swedish pulp is also being imported for the Arjo Wiggins mill, Aberdeen.

Rod Palmer, Operations Director for Sea Route Port Services, agent for the shipments, said: *"We have worked hard to attract the additional tonnage to Aberdeen, proving the benefits of cost savings and the efficiency of the package developed with the Harbour Board."*

Traditional imports of mixed hardwood pulps from the USA and elsewhere also continue – including the largest single shipment yet to the port. This month, the *Happy Rover* delivered 10,725 tonnes from Wilmington, USA, for International Paper, beating the previous record of 9,550 tonnes.

Board seek new members

The Harbour Board are seeking applications to fill three vacancies for non-executive members who will help shape the future of the port at a time of record activity and continuing development.

Applicants are required to have a keen interest in the harbour and a track-record in their profession or other activities, with ideally experience in one or more areas – management of harbours or shipping; trade and industry in North-east Scotland, preferably including freight or maritime transport; and the Scottish legal sector.

The closing date for applications is 12 October, with the remunerated appointments effective from 1 January, 2008, for an initial term of three years, in accordance with the Guide to Good Governance for Trust Ports.

As an independent trust authority responsible for the administration and maintenance of the port, the Board have nine non-executive and three executive members.

With further major projects underway or at the planning stage, the Board have a five-year development and maintenance budget of more than £40 million for works at the port which handles more than 5 million tonnes of cargo annually.

For further information and an application form, please access www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk or write to: Ian Jessiman, Board Secretary, Aberdeen Harbour Board, 16 Regent Quay, Aberdeen AB11 5SS

Big increase in scallop landings

There has been a large rise in scallop landings at Aberdeen Harbour this year, with over 70% more boats – 242 in total – in the first seven months, compared to the same period in 2006. The tonnages of scallops jumped almost 75% to more than 1,140 tonnes, with value up 49% at around £1.4 million.

Captain Danny Stroud, an Assistant Harbour Master, commented: "The closure of a scallop fishing area off the west coast to larger vessels has seen boats working this side, and there has also been an increase in the fleet. This season, Aberdeen is also the closest port to most of the scallop fishing areas to the south and prices in the North-east are better than elsewhere in the UK.

"Most of the boats will have moved on by next month for Irish and west coast waters, with prospects here for 2008 seen as much the same as this year."

*January-July also saw a slight increase in tonnages of industrial fish – blue whiting – landed at Aberdeen, with the value rising 47.5% to more than £1 million.

Telford anniversary visit

Around 80 members and guests of the Institution of Civil Engineers from the UK and overseas visited Aberdeen as part of a Scotland-wide tour marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Telford.

The eminent engineer's major contribution to the development of Aberdeen Harbour included the middle section of the North Pier, constructed between 1810 and 1816.

The visit, hosted by the Aberdeen Association of Civil Engineers and supported by the Harbour Board, included the North Pier and lunch at the Aberdeen Maritime Museum where Telford's drawings, as well as engineering artefacts, were on display.

The engineer's legacy is also recognised in the modern development of the port, with Telford Dock named after him.

Relocating war memorial

With the combination of safety and security requirements within the busy port resulting in a war memorial at Blaikies Quay no longer being in a public area, the Harbour Board are responding to a request to relocate it.

The plan is to move the memorial, which commemorates dock workers, to Pocra Quay before this year's Armistice Day.

Sailing into history

This summer saw the 100th anniversary of great naval occasions in Aberdeen Bay which attracted huge crowds of people in the city.

On 8 July, 1907, 46 Royal Navy destroyers and four scout ships stopped in the bay, in the largest gathering of warships ever seen there, before continuing south.

They were followed by six ships of the Channel fleet which anchored between 10-13 July during which various civic events were held. Railway companies laid on special excursions to Aberdeen and there were boat trips for thousands of sightseers. Sailors paraded; massed bands from the fleet played in the Duthie Park; King's College defeated officers on the cricket pitch; Deeside Golf Club won by eight matches to nil and the Royal Northern Club held a ball! Crewmen bought fresh Aberdeen fish before sailing!

Uncovered by Eddie Aitken, the Harbour Board's Surveyor, in researching his interest in visiting warships, the information, along with photographs, has been passed to Aberdeen Maritime Museum, as has his research into Royal Naval Reserve drill training ships at the port.

He is continuing his search for a painting of the Channel Fleet visit which was last heard of when sold by a local gallery.

TV times

The port's key role in the oil and gas industry was featured at the recent international Offshore Europe exhibition in Aberdeen in an interview with Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, broadcast on the show TV network and to a worldwide audience on web TV.

Caspian traffic continues

Aberdeen Harbour's export role in the oil and gas industry includes shipments to the Caspian Sea region, with more than 6,200 tonnes sent by various routes in the first six months of this year.

Exports in September have included 2,600 tonnes of pipe despatched by forwarder and logistics services company, Panalpina, on behalf of Oil States for delivery to Azerbaijan Operating Company via the Black Sea port of Poti, Georgia, and onward overland transportation.

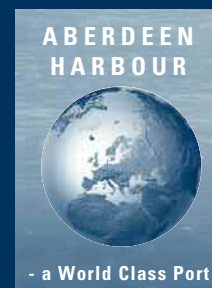
Open door at Roundhouse

The port's landmark Roundhouse was a popular addition to the city's annual *Door's Open Day* earlier this month, with people queuing up to visit and almost 400 viewing the facility.

For more than two centuries as the Navigation Control Centre, it controlled the arrival and departure of hundreds of thousands of vessels, as well as movements in the port, but was not accessible by members of the public. The Roundhouse was succeeded last year by the nearby Marine Operations Centre.

Awards sponsorship

The Harbour Board are again a supporting sponsor for the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce's annual Northern Star Business Awards. With a record number of entries in 10 categories, the awards, recognising business achievement in North-east Scotland, are being presented at a gala dinner this month.



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