



The Meridian

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PORTLAND SETS NEW RECORDS

In April 2017 Richard Drax, Member of Parliament for South Dorset, opened the cruise ship berth extension at Portland Port. At the opening Richard Drax commented on how the £3 million extension would boost tourism to the benefit of the local economy as well as the Port.

This has indeed turned out to be the case with the arrival of the largest ship ever to berth at Portland. The Norwegian Breakaway, which arrived on the 25th April 2018, weighs 146,000 tons and is one of the world's largest cruise ships. It brought 4,000 passengers to Portland for the day, most of whom left the ship on arranged excursions or took the free shuttle buses provided by the Port to the neighbouring resort of Weymouth. The visit provided a new test of the Port's passenger handling capabilities with the arrival of 70 excursion buses. All went smoothly, with everyone reaching their intended destinations and most importantly returning to the ship before she sailed in the evening. The Norwegian Cruise Line voted the visit a great success and more visits are booked for 2019.



**Chris Langham, Chairman of Portland Port,
with Richard Drax, MP for South Dorset**

OUR FOUNDER DIES AT 93



John Langham, who founded Langham Industries in 1980, passed away peacefully at the age of 93 on 26th April 2017.

See the back page for the obituary, as published in the Daily Telegraph on Tuesday 11th July 2017.



The Norwegian Breakaway

The growth of cruising continues worldwide and especially at Portland where passenger numbers grew 12% in 2018 to 39,000. In 2019 all records will be shattered again with 60,000 passengers scheduled to arrive on 45 ships. Once again some very large ships like the Norwegian Breakaway will visit thanks to the new berth extension. It is estimated that cruise ship passengers will bring over £3 million to the local economy in 2019.

SPOTLIGHT ON TRIDAN ENGINEERING

Tridan Engineering was initially established to provide machining services to local industries back in 1968 and became part of Langham Industries in 1989 after falling into administration. Since then the company has grown and prospered by expanding into new industries and markets. This has been accompanied by a corresponding investment in the latest CNC machines and training to meet the demand for highly complex and accurate machining.

In particular, Tridan has targeted the aerospace and defence industries whose demands for accuracy can be readily met by Tridan unlike many less well-equipped engineering companies. The move into aerospace started in 2007 when Tridan achieved AS 9100 accreditation, the aerospace quality management standard. Armed with this standard, great efforts have been put into building new relationships with potential customers. The process has been a case of evolution rather than revolution as aerospace customers are understandably cautious and obsessed with quality.

In the last three years the slow entry into aerospace has taken off with Tridan becoming one of only four preferred machining suppliers to MBDA Missile Systems, a world leading European defence company. This coveted position came after initially competing with 500 other companies around the world to win successive contracts of increasing complexity. In recent years Tridan has also become a key supplier to Bombardier by winning many parts on their new 'C' Series civil aircraft. This aircraft is now in service and sales are building especially since the aircraft joined the Airbus family in a recent deal between the two companies.

The success of Tridan comes primarily from the skills of the employees and the management at Tridan are passionate about developing all staff to the very best of their abilities. Their flagship apprenticeship programme was devised ten years ago to overcome the skills shortages that prevail in

engineering. Already, fourteen employees have completed their apprenticeship with one now promoted to a management position. Three apprentices are currently enrolled with more being recruited this year.

Tridan has also invested heavily in the latest plant and equipment to meet the needs of their demanding customers most cost effectively. In 2018, over £1 million has been invested in three more CNC machines including a Yamazaki 5 axis machining centre equipped with a robotic Pallettech loading system. This machine can run for 16 hours unmanned whilst it fully machines up to 6 different components, making Tridan super competitive whilst retaining extreme accuracy.



**Yamazaki 5 Axis Machining Centre
with Pallettech loading system**

Managing Director, Paul Hawkins, says that the next three to five years will be critical to the future growth of the business. The aim is to continue to grow in the space and defence markets whilst taking advantage of opportunities that may arise as work returns to the UK from offshore.

THE FIRST DEDICATION CEREMONY AT PORTLAND

Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ships are regular visitors to the Port but on 2nd August 2018 Portland Port was honoured to be the host port for the dedication ceremony of RFA Tiderace. In a half hour ceremony attended by the ship's sponsor



RFA Tiderace

Lady Anita Lister, the head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Commodore Duncan Lamb and crew, the RFA Chaplain, the Reverend Mike Hills, welcomed the new tanker to the naval service.

Under cloudless skies a reception for 80 dignitaries and guests was held to mark the occasion and was followed by tours around the ship. RFA Tiderace is the second of four new Tide class ships which are designed to provide fuel for the HMS Queen Elizabeth and the rest of her battle group. The 39,000 ton ship has state of the art refuelling equipment and can refuel two ships simultaneously at the astonishing rate of 800 tons of fuel per hour. In addition the ships are expected to conduct naval operations in their own right using helicopters and specialist boarding teams.

STONE MARINE SERVICES TO THE RESCUE

In June 2018 Stone Marine Services was invited to inspect 'the Clyde's last and Britain's finest turbine excursion steamer' in order to assist the Friends of the TS Queen Mary in their mission to restore and safeguard its future.

The Inspection showed that the TS Queen Mary's boiler room, shaft lines and steering gear, as well as the equipment from the wheel house, had been stripped out and the originally installed Thomas Reid deck machinery was widely lost. In further meetings with the vessel's naval architect, Stone Marine Services will compile its future requirements for the propulsion, deck machinery and steering gear and assist the trust in developing its service strategy.



TS Queen Mary

The TS Queen Mary was built in 1933 and for over 40 years she was particularly associated with day excursions direct to the Firth of Clyde from Glasgow city centre. Having bought the vessel with the intention to turn it into a maritime museum, the Glasgow City Council sold it on in the early 80's after plans fell through. The Queen Mary subsequently made her way to London where she was refitted for her new role as a restaurant and bar on the Thames.

When Westminster Council would not renew the lease for her berth in 2009 the ship was sold on and her survival hung in the balance. Finally, in 2015, the Friends of TS Queen Mary were able to take the vessel into their hands and bring her back to her home waters in Glasgow, Scotland. The charity has widespread support, celebrity patronage and maritime experts amongst its trustees. Stone Marine Services have recently made a donation to manufacture a new window for the promenade deck.

ALL CHANGE AT STONE FOUNDRIES

In March 2018 an agreement was signed with Aeromet International to sell the Stone Foundries aerospace business. This will allow the Stone Foundries business to be combined with Aeromet's sand foundry at Sittingbourne to create one competitive UK aerospace sand foundry. As the market for aerospace sand castings has contracted, especially since the recession when Stone Foundries' largest customer, Hawker Beechcraft went bankrupt, the large Charlton site has become unviable and rationalisation was necessary. Moving plant and obtaining fresh approvals for all the parts to be transferred to Sittingbourne is a big undertaking and so production will continue through 2018 at Charlton. All employees who wish to transfer will be offered jobs at Sittingbourne and so a strong team will be retained to make a success of this important combination of the last two remaining aerospace sand foundries in the UK.



The Managing Director of Stone Foundries, John Townsend, will oversee the combination of the two foundries as well as continue to run Stone Foundries' motorsport castings business. In June 2018 John was presented with a silver salver by the Chairman to mark an astonishing 48 years service with Stone Foundries after joining as an apprentice pattern maker in 1970.

OUR FOUNDER DIES AT 93

John Langham, who has died aged 93, was a successful marine industrialist and an expansive Dorset landowner.

Langham Industries, the company he founded when he was in his mid-fifties after a long career in marine engineering, began as a designer and manufacturer of ships' propellers. It embarked on a bold expansion in 1996 with the purchase of the 150 year old naval base at Portland in Dorset when it fell to defence spending cuts; the sheltered deep-water harbour was developed into a successful commercial port accommodating cruise ships and cargo vessels as well as continuing to provide services for the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It also served as a sailing venue in the 2012 Olympics.

John Michael Langham was born in Lincolnshire on January 12 1924. His father was a farmer, but lost his farm in the depression and moved the family to Dorset, where he found work selling animal medicines. John was educated at Bedford School and won a scholarship to Queens' College, Cambridge, to read Mechanical Sciences; a high spirited undergraduate, he enjoyed rugby and rowing and took a "gentleman's" Third.

In 1944 he joined the Navy, training at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast before serving as a sub-lieutenant in the cruiser *Mauritius*. On demobilization he found a job with J Stone & Co of Deptford, then the world's largest maker of ship propellers.

In due course the company became part of a wider conglomerate, Stone Platt, and Langham rose to be managing director of its marine division; he was appointed CBE for services to exports in 1976. But by the end of that decade Stone Platt was in financial trouble, and Langham took the gamble in 1980 of borrowing as much money as he could to buy out the propeller business and create Langham Industries.

Two more former Stone companies, a light alloy foundry and a manufacturer of aircraft rivets, were added to the Langham portfolio in 1982 and other acquisitions followed. In later years the group expanded its marine service interests as far afield as Singapore and Namibia.

It was also in 1980 that Langham bought Bingham's Melcombe, a Dorset agricultural estate with a Grade I listed manor house dating from 1554, a 14th century gatehouse and gardens laid out by the architect Geoffrey Jellicoe. Langham applied his energies with equal passion to building his business empire and running his estate - though his family sometimes worried that he would spend longer supervising the raking of the gravel on the drive than on closing the next deal.

He added neighbouring parcels of land whenever they came up for sale, creating an agricultural enterprise of some

2,500 acres - on which one of his ventures was the planting of a small vineyard. Chalk soil, a south-facing aspect and a favourable micro-climate provided an excellent *terroir* for chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier grapes, and in recent years John's son, Justin, developed the winery to produce a successful range of English sparkling wines.

Langham was a shrewd entrepreneur with firmly held beliefs, but there was also a softer side to him. He quietly helped many people in difficulties, and supported numerous charitable causes. He also loved animals, and caused local controversy by banning hunting on his estate. His political views evolved from supporting Harold Wilson's Labour government in the Sixties to becoming a keen Thatcherite in the Eighties and eventually an avid supporter of the Referendum Party and UKIP, festooning his manorial gates with purple and yellow placards at election time.

He married Betty Morley in 1949. She survives him, with their two sons and a daughter. Their elder son Christopher took over the running of Langham Industries.

John Langham, born January 12 1924, died April 20 2017



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