

FERRY FOCUS REPORT 33

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P&O/STENA LINE

P&O/Stena Line's Dover-Calais service was suspended for 48 hours in late August due to the French fishermen's blockade of the port of Calais. Three ferries were transferred to the longer Zeebrugge route to maintain a token service and the *P&O/Stena Provence* and the *P&O/Stena Canterbury* were laid up off Deal. Sailings on the Zeebrugge service have been reduced since July 1st, as *European Seaway* is now offering additional sailings on the Calais service.

SEAFRANCE

Seafrance suffered several cancellations and minor delays in early September due to refuelling problems in the port of Calais due to the French fuel blockade. All ex-Dover sailings were running approximately one hour late. Seafrance is due to transfer its main reservations and administration operations from its present offices at the Eastern Docks to newer and larger offices at Old Park, Whitfield.

NORFOLKLINE

At the end of September Dover's latest ferry company, Norfolkline, is due to introduce a second ferry, *Midnight Merchant*, on the Dover-Dunkerque West service. This is a sister ship to the existing *Northern Merchant*. Both ferries are undergoing minor modifications so that they can use more suitable berths at Eastern Docks. Traffic is steadily growing and it seems likely that competition will increase among the three companies using the port:- Norfolkline, P&O/Stena and Seafrance.

HOVERSPEED

At the end of June Hoverspeed management made the long-awaited decision to withdraw the two elderly hovercraft, the *Princess Anne* and the *Princess Margaret* at the end of the season and to replace them with two Seacats.

The *Seacat Danmark* entered service on the 18th August and was joined, on the 1st October by the *Seacat Great Britain*, transferred from the Folkestone-Boulogne service for the winter.

....in with the new

Two pictures contributed by Terry Sutton



The final hovercraft departure was on the evening of 1st October and the hoverpad at Dover is to be redeveloped for the construction of an additional Seacat berth.