

Cruise Britain heads to Portsmouth

Cruise Britain members assembled in Portsmouth June 21-22 for the association's annual summer gathering, which this year focussed on exploring the path towards a sustainable future.

The event, which is hosted by a different member port each year, started with a glimpse of what Portsmouth has to offer tourists, with attendees invited to embark Britain's first iron-hulled, armoured battleship HMS Warrior. A private guided tour of the 162-year-old ship at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard was followed by a meal onboard – courtesy of sponsor SCH Cruise & Passenger Services – and networking.

The two-day event was rounded off with a tour of Portsmouth harbour by boat.

Chair of cruise Britain and commercial director at the Port of Tyne, Kate O'Hara, said of the decision to host the event in Portsmouth, 'We're delighted to be hosted here at one of our regional member ports. It gives our members the opportunity to see a different area in operation and it's a fantastic venue to support our growing programme of member meetings.'

She went on to add that 'It's exciting there a number of cruise ports and cruise lines who will host future events.' Cruise Britain has held several summer gatherings onboard cruise ships in the past, giving members the chance to explore cruise line brands. Next year's host port is yet to be revealed.

Andrew Williamson, passenger operations manager, Portsmouth International Port said on hosting the event, 'This event for Cruise Britain been three years in the making!'

He added, 'We're excited to be showcasing our attractions, for instance, HMS Warrior. It's good to be coming back together.'

The association named its newest member during the event: Yarmouth, Isle of Wight.

Cruise Britain's conference programme on Wednesday included a panel discussion on the topic of sustainability involving cruise lines. Moderated by Seatrade Cruise News and Seatrade Cruise Review deputy editor Holly Payne, the panel opened with representatives of Ambassador Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Group and Saga Cruises delivering a presentation on their brand's latest developments.

Head of Marine Operations for Saga, Tuula Aer, focussed on future fuels, while Ambassador's COO Nick Hughes described the environmental credentials of the line's first ship, Ambience. Adam Sharp, director of destination development at Royal Caribbean Group addressed the challenge of the IMO's Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) coming into force 2023 for ships trading internationally, and highlighted the importance of collaboration among cruise lines, ports and service providers.

The complexities of introducing shore power were highlighted by Royal Haskoning's Ben Challier, maritime BDM and Charlotte Goodman, senior air quality consultant in 'OPS: An overview – challenges, costs and the European approach,' followed by UKI lead, shipping markets & zero carbon solutions at LLOYD Register, Matt Treadwell, who delved into legislation applicable to cruise lines on the road to decarbonisation.

Port director Mike Sellers shared Portsmouth's 20-year 'master plan' to become 'the UK's first zero emission port,' followed by ORCA's head of partnerships Steve Jones who explained that the charity provides training free of charge to cruise operators on ways to prevent whale strikes.

In keeping with Cruise Britain tradition, two newer members were invited to present during the regular

Getting to Know You session: new harbour master and CEO at Dartmouth, Paul Britton, outlined his plans for the future of the port following an introduction to Inchape Shipping Services by Andy Hogg.

Work is currently underway to extend Portsmouth's cruise terminal that on completion will be a 100% carbon neutral facility with the ability to generate power from solar panels. It will have a sky garden for views across the port, a new walkway from the current terminal to the new check-in area, interior living walls, an expansive baggage hall and an exclusive cruise lounge. According to the port's head of engineering, Steve Watkins, 1m² of living wall extracts 2.3kg Co₂ in one-year and provides 1.7kg of oxygen. The eco-friendly name badges issued by the port were filled with seeds, designed to be planted after use.

Event sponsor Cruise and Passenger Services (CPS), part of the Independent Port Handling group, is the UK's most extensive provider of cruise ship services for vessels calling in the UK. Among its services are valet parking for around 300 cruise ship calls every year at Southampton, Liverpool, Portsmouth and Oban in Scotland, ensuring the safe keeping of some 75,000 cars while passengers are away.

In addition, CPS provides port handling services, including mooring, stevedoring and baggage handling, for some of the world's leading cruise ship operators calling in UK at ports such as Southampton, Liverpool and Portsmouth.