

Cruise & Maritime Voyages' Astoria has kicked off the 2019 cruise season at the Port of Poole in Dorset, UK.

Set to call frequently throughout 2019 and 2020, the 160-metre-long Astoria was one of the first cruise ships to sail from the Poole's new South Quay berth when it opened in May 2018. The £10 million (US\$13 million) deep-water quay can accommodate cruise ships of up to 220 metres in length that carry more than 1,000 passengers. It was built during the last phase of the Poole Harbour Commissioners' seven-year expansion project, which was one of the biggest port developments on the UK's south coast in recent years.

"Cruise & Maritime Voyages' Astoria was a frequent visitor to the port in 2018 and we're delighted that we'll see her return for 2019 and hopefully for many more years to come," said Jim Stewart, CEO for Poole Harbour Commissioners.

This year, the port will also help the Royal British Legion commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in Normandy, France. Fred. Olsen Cruise Line's Boudicca will arrive in the port on 4 June and participate in various events before crossing the English Channel and arriving in Normandy on 6 June. At 205.47m in length, the MV Boudicca will be the largest cruise ship to call at Poole Harbour to date.

Commenting on the season ahead, Mr Stewart went on to say *"It's an exciting time for the port. As we head into our second cruise season, we are honoured to have been selected to be part of the Royal British Legion 'Voyage of Remembrance' for Normandy Veterans, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day. The Boudicca will be in the port on 4th June to take part in commemorative events before crossing the English Channel and arriving in Normandy, on 6th June, exactly 75 years after the D-Day Landings".*

"Her arrival is also representative of our progress in putting Poole on the map as a hub for cruise ships. With bookings in place for 2020 and 2021 we plan to triple the number of cruise ships docking in Poole".