**CRUISE SEASON BEGINS**

Thursday the 9th of May saw Portland Port's cruise season officially begin with the first cruise call of what will be a record breaking summer.

It was the first visit to Portland Port for German cruise operator Transocean with their ship the Astor and their relatively small contingent of almost 500 passengers were more than satisfied with what Weymouth and Portland had to offer. Whilst some of them embarked on tours of the Jurassic Coast or of the Wessex Countryside and Corfe Castle, others were whisked off to Weymouth by the shuttle bus service organised by Portland Port. The crew were also pleased with what Portland Port had to offer and commented on how smooth the overall operation was. These are just a few of the factors that lead to Portland Port winning Cruise Insight~~s~~ Magazines “Most Improved Destination” award last year, an award that recognised the hard work of the team at Portland Port to make the port an attractive addition to any cruise itinerary.

The Astor was not the only cruise vessel due to arrive on that day. A significantly larger cruise ship, the AIDAstella, was also scheduled to call at Portland Port but owing to an unfavourable weather forecast predicting gusts of gale force 9 winds it was rescheduled to Friday, the 17th May. Whilst perhaps not similar in size, it will also be AIDAstella’s first call to Portland Port.

Ian McQuade, General Manager (Commercial) commented "it was great to get the new cruise season underway with the inaugural call of the Astor. It was a shame that the AIDAtella had to change her plans but we are delighted that she was able to reschedule her call and will now be visiting us on Friday. This year is an important one for Portland Port with regards to the cruise market and we are looking forward to welcoming 20,000 passengers to this beautiful part of England".

**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**For more information or images please contact Jack Brooke at Portland Port on 01305 825368 or email** **j.brooke@portland-port.co.uk**

*In recognition of the Astors first call plaques were exchanged between Ian McQuade, General Manager (Commercial) for Portland Port and the Captain of the Astor (Pictured).*

*The Astor alongside and departing (Pictured)*

Previously a naval dockyard for over 150 years, Portland Harbour is now a thriving and successful commercial facility. It still maintains a close relationship with the past through its ongoing contract to support the RFA, as well as being home to the activities of Global Marine and Portland Bunkers International. It has over 4,000 acres of water at depths of up to 15m (C.D.); and provides vessel services from long term lay-ups to brief maintenance calls, luxury cruise liner docking facilities to industrial cargo shipments.

The tariff and general Portland Harbour Authority information can be viewed at <http://www.portland-port.co.uk/>

M/F

Portland Port has over 2,000 metres of alongside berths and 11.6 metres (C.D.) depth of water at the deepest alongside berth.

Berthing for vessels up to 300 metres (subject to Harbour Master's approval).

11 designated anchorages are within the 2,000-acre inner harbour. Six designated anchorages are within the 2,500 acre Outer Harbour.

A width of 210 metres and depth of over 12.6 metres (C.D.) at the entrance of the harbour mean that there are few vessel beam, lock, or air draft restriction.

**ENDS**



