

**STARTS****PORTLAND WELCOMES AZORES IN FROM THE COLD: A SURPRISE START TO THE 2015 CRUISE PROGRAMME**

The 2015 cruise season at Portland Port started earlier than expected this year with the arrival of the Azores at the end of February. Bad weather on her previous cruise dictated the change to her original itinerary but this made Portland Port an attractive alternative. With minimal notice Portland Port, with the assistance of local stevedoring company Paisley Plant Hire and also Southampton based SCH, was able to turn around the ship, its 60 tonnes of stores and accumulative 840 passengers in around 9 hours ensuring that the Azores was well underway to Norway on the same day. Ian McQuade, General Manager – Commercial, commented; “It was a great effort by all concerned and we were delighted to be able to help Cruise and Maritime Voyages passengers on their way to see the Northern Lights. We do not handle many turnaround calls here at Portland Port but this proves, even at short notice, what we can do”

Royal Caribbean Lines ‘Serenade of the Seas’ was originally planned to be the first call of the 2015 season at Portland. The 294m vessel is making her inaugural call to Portland and the cruise team at the port are already making the necessary preparations to make sure that her first visit is the second successful call of this years cruise programme. Portland Port, for a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, will see another increase in passenger throughput and will continue to lead the way as the leading cruise destination in the South West of the UK. 2015 will see a 5% increase on last years passenger throughput with over 26,000 expected to visit Portland and its whole host of attractions, global landmarks and, of course, the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of the Jurassic Coast, Stonehenge and Bath. Further inland passengers are treated to the rolling green hills, country homes and picturesque villages, a true reflection of quintessential England. Passengers visiting Portland often like to tick ‘Stonehenge’ off their bucket lists so many cruise lines factor this into their excursion options when visiting Portland.

Portland is also welcoming more ships for the first time this year with vessels such as; AIDA cruise lines ‘AIDAbella’ and Costa Cruises ‘Luminosa’. The port will also, for the first time, handle a Norwegian Cruise Lines ship. The Norwegian Star will be visiting the port bringing a record number of passengers in a transit call through Portland, with approximately 2,350 passengers expected to be on board. Amongst all this excitement we will also be welcoming both of Crystal Cruises prestigious cruise ships as the line celebrates their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of sailing the globe. All of this sets up 2015 to be another exciting year at Portland Port UK.

**ENDS**

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For more information or images please contact Jack Brooke at Portland Port on 01305 825368 or email [j.brooke@portland-port.co.uk](mailto:j.brooke@portland-port.co.uk)

*Photo – The arrival of the Azores into Portland Harbour – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

**Notes to Editors:**

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 almost 2,500 hectares 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 cruise schedule for 2015 can be seen and downloaded here:

<http://www.portland-port.co.uk/cruise/cruise-calendar>

The tariff and general Portland Harbour Authority information can be viewed at

<http://www.portland-port.co.uk/>

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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 1,015 hectare inner harbour. Six designated anchorages are within the 1,436 hectare 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**