

classic fast ferries

the NOT-SO super
supers



farewell
to DUTCH VOSKHODS

but first...



DUTCH OPERATOR Connexxion closed down its Fast Flying Ferry hydrofoil service as planned on December 31, 2013. As a thank you for the years gift everybody rode free on this last day. The reason for the closure is to be found in the cut of subsidies for the hydrofoil service by the province of North Holland from the New Year.

The Velsen-Zuid (IJmuiden)–Amsterdam route was introduced in 1998. The present fleet of four Voskhod 2M hydrofoils is younger than this, however. Three were delivered by Morye in the Ukraine in 2002, *Karla*, *Catharina-Amalia* and *Rosanna*, and the other, *Klaas Westdijk*, in 2007. All but the latter, which the company intends to keep for the time being, was put on the market some time ago.

Since April 1998 in the region of four million passengers have ridden on the hydrofoils between Velsen and central Amsterdam.

From January 1, commuters and others are now reduced to using the Connexxion bus

service. The bus ride between the former FFF landing point at Velsen-Zuid and Amsterdam Central station takes 45-50 minutes, including twenty-four intermediate bus stops. These may be seen as an advantage or disadvantage depending on who is looking. The hydrofoils covered the 13 nautical mile route in 36 minutes – which does

Above : *The hydrofoil service between Velsen and Amsterdam came to an end on December 31, 2013*
/ THEO BAKKER photo

Right : *Last call at Amsterdam by Catharina-Amalia on New Year's Eve*
/ THEO BAKKER photo



classic
fast
ferries

THE ORIGINAL PERIODICAL ABOUT THE HISTORY OF HYDROFOILS, HOVERCRAFT, CATAMARANS AND SURFACE EFFECT SHIPS, THEIR BUILDERS AND OPERATORS WORLDWIDE.

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www.classicfastferries.com
classicfastferries@gmail.com

COVER : CONNEXXION RAN ITS LAST HYDROFOIL SERVICE ON THE LAST DAY OF 2013 . PHOTO: THEO BAKKER.

not reflect the speed of which the Voskhods are capable of travelling at but rather the speed restriction impelled on the hydrofoils on the Noordzeekanaal since some years. Before this the scheduled travel time on the hydrofoils was 27 minutes.

The current basic timetable for the bus offers a service every 30 minutes during the day Monday–Friday, less frequent on the weekend.

According to reports, there are negotiations going on since some time with another company to restart the service. Details have yet to be confirmed and we will revert to the subject in due course, but it is understood that a revival might include a new call at Velsen-Noord across from Velsen-Zuid on the Noordzeekanaal. **cff**



Above : The fourth Voskhod in the fleet, Klaas Westdijk entered service in 2007 /THEO BAKKER photo



Above : Voskhod 2Ms Karla, Rosanna and Catharina-Amalia together at Velsen-Zuid for the last time on December 31, 2013 /THEO BAKKER photo

This photo : ... and on a much happier day nearly ten years earlier, at the naming ceremony of the three hydrofoils on March 10, 2004 /MARK VAN RIJZEN photo



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THE SWEDISH SR.N6

Above : A rare photo of SR.N6-016 at Malmö in the summer of 1967
/ ALF ARVIDSSON photo

aT THE TIME OF the hydrofoil catching on in the Straits of Oresund (*CFF October 2013*), the hovercraft industry wanted a piece of the cake too.

In June 1967 a British Hovercraft Corporation SR.N6 hovercraft, also known as the Winchester class, was shipped as deck cargo from the United Kingdom to Sweden to operate several test routes across the Oresund. A BHC demonstrator, the vessel, SR.N6-016, had been launched in late 1965 and used on trials in February and March 1966 across the English Channel by Hoverlloyd pending the delivery of the operator's own pair of SR.N6s for the Ramsgate-Calais, France route.

The first Winchester hovercraft appeared in 1964 and was basically a stretched version of the SR.N5 Warden from 1963. The Mark 1 SR.N6 had a length overall of 14.8 m and a payload of 38 passengers. In a later enlarged version of the Winchester, these figures were increased to 18.3 m and 55 passengers.

When the SR.N6 demonstrator arrived in southern Sweden in June 1967 the pair of Westermoen PT.20B hydrofoils that had been operated between Helsingborg/Landskrona, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark since only a couple of years were about to give up. The hovercraft was leased for a trial period of 49 days by established Swedish operator Linjebuss International which had successfully been operating car ferries on the short cross-Oresund route between Helsingborg and Helsingør since the early 1950s. All hovercraft crew were British. Having followed the development of the hovercraft in the UK and in particular the coming of the large car-carrying SR.N4 Mountbatten class to be introduced across the English Channel by, first, Seaspeed and later Hoverlloyd, Linjebuss' parent company Rederi AB Svea, based in Stockholm, saw a potential in

introducing hovercraft as an alternative to the existing conventional ships plying the waters of the Baltic Sea.

Marketed as LB Hoverservice, the SR.N6-016 was introduced alongside the car ferries, however using different landing points at each end. Crossing time was a mere six minutes; the trip was over almost before it had begun! To better utilize the craft, another longer route was also tested, that of the PT.20Bs', Helsingborg-Copenhagen. Only a few trips were carried out however before the operator decided to concentrate on the Helsingborg-Helsingør route and that between Helsingborg and the nearby island of Ven.

The hovercraft would operate a morning roundtrip to Ven and two more in the afternoon. For the rest of the day, until 21:00, the hovercraft was being used mainly on the H-H run, operating what is best described as a commuter service with departures every 15 minutes. However a sightseeing trip Helsingborg-Helsingør-Ven-Helsingborg was also operated in the afternoon. In addition promotional trips were made, including to Malmö, offering the public short rides in the Oresund.

As planned, the SR.N6-016 stayed in the Oresund until early August 1967, following which it was taken to Iceland and later to Finland before returning to the UK. The vessel saw a number of charters until sold in 1976 to the Egyptian Navy.

Unlike the hydrofoil, the early hovercraft did not catch on in the Oresund. It was not until 1984 that the fully amphibious hovercraft would return to the area, however, this time it would stay on for ten years.

A full story about this operation appeared in the May 2004 *CLASSIC FAST FERRIES*. **cff**

ONE FAST FERRY TYPE not overly represented in these pages in the past is the surface effect ship, SES. Further to the November 2013 *CFF* in which we looked at the world's largest civil hydrofoils, in this issue we sketch the history of the two largest passenger surface effect ships built, the Westamarin SES 4000.

In principal a cross over between a catamaran and a fully amphibious hovercraft, the surface effect ship is not new. Also referred to as the rigid sidewall air-cushion vehicle (ACV) or hovercraft, it dates back to the 1960s.

In late 1987 JKL Shipping, based in Oslo, announced it had placed an order with Westamarin for two 37.8m SES 3800 surface effect ships, of which preliminary details had been revealed earlier in the year, to be delivered in spring 1989. The craft were to carry 400+ passengers and be introduced between Gothenburg, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark. With a service speed of 48 knots, the 140 nautical mile route was to be completed in approximately 3 hours.

While the SES 3800 was the first surface effect ship designed and built by Westamarin, which is probably best known for its range of Westamaran catamarans, by the time the two vessels were delivered the yard had already some experience with these types of craft as in 1987-88 it fitted out a pair of Jet Rider 3400 SESs, the hulls of which had been built in Sweden by Karlskronavarvet. At the time both shipyards were part of the Swede Ship group. The Jet Riders were a GRP sandwich construction whereas the Westamarin design was built entirely in aluminium.

Bottom : One of two built, Westamarin SES 4000 surface effect ship Super Dane on builder's trials in 1989
/ WESTAMARIN photo



THE not-so SUPER supers





Left : Super Swede alongside at Westamarin in Mandal, Norway / WESTAMARIN photo

On the final vessels some changes had been made in comparison to the initial design, including an increase of the length overall to 40m. Contradictory to this, a low density seating for 309 passengers had been chosen. The designation was at the same time altered to SES 4000.

The first SES 4000, *Super Swede*, entered service on the Gothenburg–Copenhagen route on June 16, 1989. Marketed as Fast Ferries, the operating company, Interscandic Line, had also leased the pair of Jet Rider 3400s, originally ordered by another Norwegian company for a domestic service, from JKL Shipping and introduced them across the Straits of Oresund.

Initially three journeys were timetabled by the SES 4000s, but with only one of the vessels available at season's start

one roundtrip was made by *Super Swede*, leaving Gothenburg at 08:00 and Copenhagen at 20:30. Scheduled trip time was 3 ½ hours. The second craft, *Super Dane*, was planned to appear on the route from July 24.

Two levels of service were offered. Tourist Class on main deck seating 251 and VIP Class in a smaller cabin on upper deck behind the wheelhouse for 58 passengers. Both saloons had a mix of traditional rows of seats and plush group seating in bright colours around tables, the latter particularly evident on main deck, designed and delivered by renowned Norwegian seat manufacturer Georg Eknes Industrier.

Below : A rare capture of Super Swede while underway in 1989. Sister ship Super Dane never entered service with Fast Ferries on the Gothenburg–Copenhagen route / LENNART RAMSVIK photo



Below, inset : Having been transferred to the West Coast of the United States in 1992, Super Swede entered service between San Diego, California and Ensenada in Mexico as Super Mexico. It is seen here underway at the US end in April 1993 / GEORGE SCHNEIDER photo

Bottom : Super Mexico alongside at San Diego in November 2002 / GEORGE SCHNEIDER photo



However, the route came to a premature halt already three weeks into the service when *Super Swede* suffered a starboard engine failure on July 7. This is not to say that the operation went smoothly up until then. Repeated problems involving the SACM diesel engines resulted in several cancellations, and *Super Dane* was never actually delivered as a decision was taken on July 20 to withdraw the service altogether until the mechanical problems were solved.

Passengers already booked on *Super Swede* were transferred to Fast Ferries' Jet Rider service between

Helsingborg, Sweden and Copenhagen and taken from/to Gothenburg by coach.

At the end of August Interscandic Line went into liquidation and also the two Jet Riders were grounded.

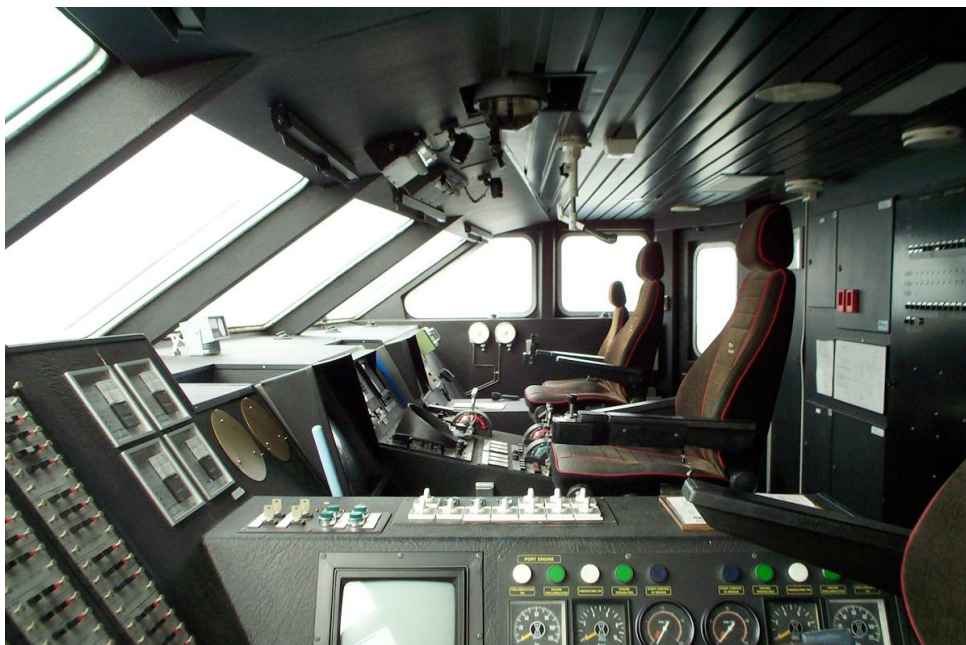
Following modifications to the machinery on the SES 4000s, trials carried out by Westamarin during the winter of 1989-90 proved that these had solved the earlier problems and the vessels were put on the market. Both craft would however remain laid up at the Mandal shipyard for another two or so years.



Above : *The hardly overworked Super Dane was renamed Super USA and entered service alongside Super Mexico between San Diego and the Mexican port of Ensenada in 1993. In this December 1997 view both SES 4000s are seen laid up at San Diego hoping for a new lease of life*
/ GEORGE SCHNEIDER photo

Below : *Five years on, in November 2002, Super USA remains unemployed and tied up pierside at San Diego. Exteriorwise both craft seemed well looked after (see colour photo of Super Mexico on page 7)*
/ GEORGE SCHNEIDER photo





Length overall
40.0m
Beam
12.6m
Draught, loaded
2.2m
Tonnage
551 grt
Main engines
2 x SACM M7 UD 33 V 16
Propulsion
2 x Liaaen Speed Z CPZ controllable
pitch propeller
Speed, max
52 knots
Speed, service
45 knots
Passengers
309

WESTAMARIN **SES 4000**

Above + Right : Everything is still in place in the wheelhouse of Super USA at the time of the photographer's visit at San Diego harbour, circa 2005
/ ROBERT HOGG photo



GO WEST

Super Swede and *Super Dane* were transferred to the United States in late 1992 to operate with Coast Line Cruises. During the voyage across the Atlantic high seas was experienced and the engines were reportedly thrown from their mounts on one or both vessels. The hulls and superstructure did not suffer any damage.

Renamed *Super Mexico* and *Super USA* respectively, the craft eventually went into service between San Diego, California and Ensenada in Mexico, a trip taking in the region of 2 hours. Marketed as Ensenada Express, the service was a co-operation between the US operator, a Mexican company and Westamarin.

Due to mechanical troubles which, according to reports, the builder and owner could not resolve satisfactorily, this too proved a rather short-lived operation and the vessels were laid up at San Diego.

In May 1996 the United States District Court Southern District of California announced both surface effect ships were to be sold by public auction. The minimum bid

accepted was USD 500,000. It would appear neither was sold at that time.

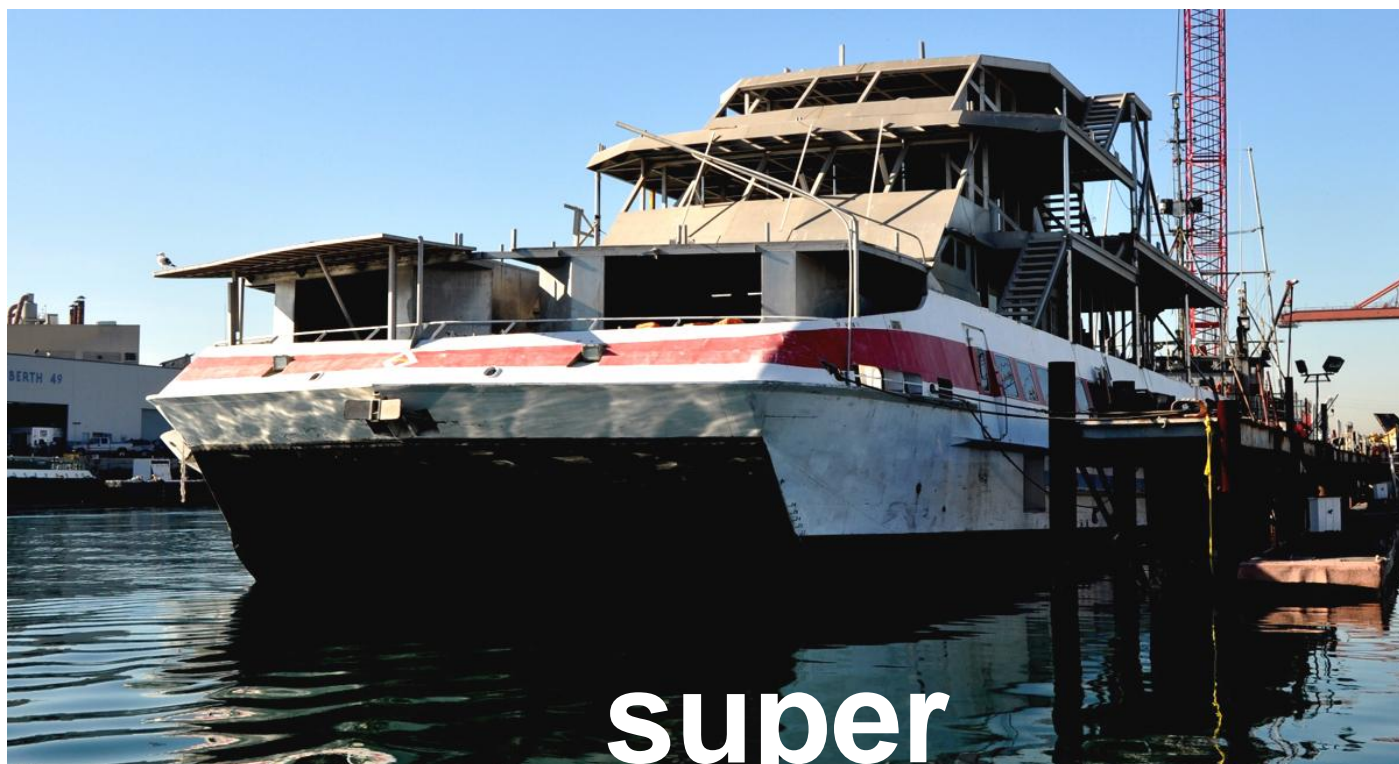
In 2002 Hydro Lance Corporation presented ideas for a conversion of the vessels to HARTH technology. This included adding a lower deck integrating the original structure and raising the craft on struts.

Instead, *Super Mexico* was acquired by a private individual with the intention to rebuild it into a yacht or possibly diving craft. A work which was indeed begun but never completed. The vessel sank while berthed in the backwaters of Long Beach in 2009, for reasons unknown, but was subsequently raised and currently sits on the Cerritos Channel side of Terminal Island.

The last confirmed report we have of *Super USA* dates back to around 2005 when the vessel was still idling alongside at San Diego.

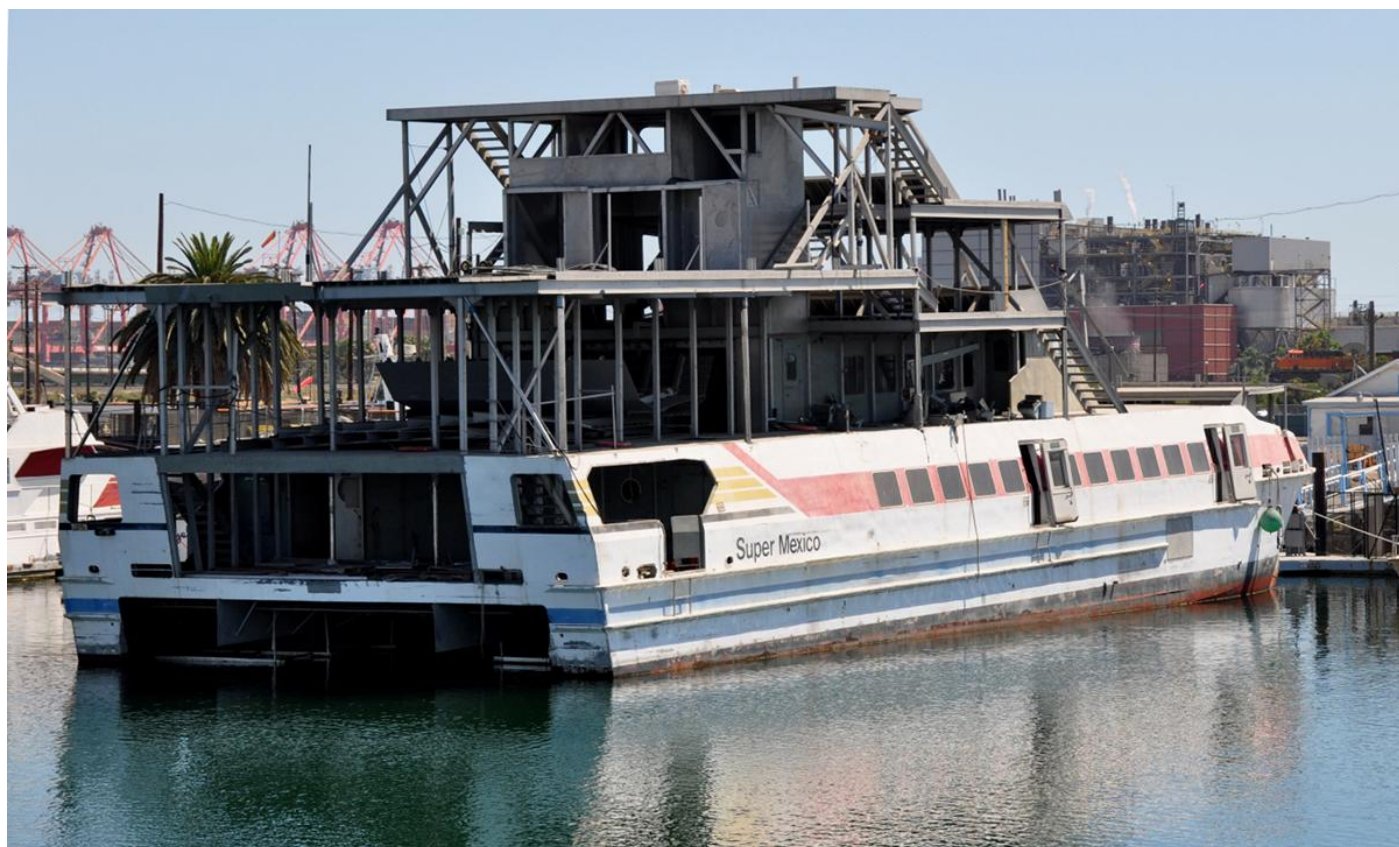
Undoubtedly, these two impressive surface effect ships are among the most under-utilized fast ferries ever completed. **cff**

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NOW THERE'S A **super** STRUCTURE

Above + Below : As recently as a year ago, in January 2013, *Super Mexico* was still around at Long Beach, California. Or was it indeed? Having been stripped of everything making it a surface effect ship, or even ferry, and with this out-of-control and unfinished superstructure added to it, the only things giving the vessel away are the colour scheme and the name which is still to be found on the sides. The vessel suffered a submersion in 2009 and was raised, but it is understood that no further work has been carried out since. / GEORGE SCHNEIDER photo, both



The oldest and newest Voskhod at the time at the Connexxion Water maintenance yard at Velsen-Noord. Evident is the cosmetic differences and, more importantly, the upgrading of the design on Klaas Westdijk, which was introduced on Connexxion's first three Voskhod 2Ms that the company ordered from Morye in 2001

/ MARK VAN RIJZEN photo

GO?

WHERE DID IT

ONE OF THE VOSKHOD hydrofoils acquired on the second hand market and introduced on the Velsen– Amsterdam route in 1998 was *Annemarie*. Originally sporting the national colours of The Netherlands of white, blue and red, the vessel was repainted in the unmistakable Connexxion two-shades of green to blend in with the three new Voskhod 2Ms. Seeing only limited service since the newbuildings arrived in 2002, *Annemarie* was laid up at Velsen and put up for sale. Although refurbished and re-engined, no buyer was found – except for the new engine, which was sold off about a year ago.

The rest of the ageing *Annemarie* was sold as scrap metal.

Right: Past its prime, *Annemarie* is being put onto the water at Velsen to go to the scrappers last year
/ MARK VAN RIJZEN photo



last but not least ...

THE WHISPER OF snow

Our special correspondent and photographer in Como in northern Italy, Jacopo Memo, has done it again.

Photos of a hydrofoil, or any fast ferry, in snow are rare, and so we could not resist this beautiful capture, which has an almost solemn atmosphere to it.

Seen here is RHS 150SL *Freccia delle Valli* exchanging passengers at Tremezzo on Lake Como last February.

We wish all readers a peaceful and prosperous 2014 and hope *CLASSIC FAST FERRIES* will bring you many moments of reading pleasure.

/ JACOPO MEMEO photo

