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May  
2004

# CLASSIC *FAST* FERRIES

SAS: The Hovering Years

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# Hydrofoils enter service on new airport feeder routes in Italy

*Alimare is to introduce RHS 140 Spargi across the Strait of Messina from Reggio airport this month /ALIMARE photo*

Alimare, a newly formed company based in Reggio Calabria in the very south-west of Italy, has acquired an ex-Australian Rodriquez RHS 140 hydrofoil, *Spargi*, from Sicilian fast ferry operator Ustica Lines and is to introduce it on routes across the Strait of Messina later this month.

Keeping its name but having been repainted in Alimare colors, the 125-seat hydrofoil will act as a year-round airport shuttle between Aeroporto dello Stretto, located just south of Reggio, and

Messina and Taormina in Sicily. The airport itself was temporarily closed in March this year for reconstruction and scheduled to reopen on April 21, however, this date had to be pushed and consequently so was the introduction of the RHS 140 service delayed which was to coincide with the reopening of the airport. As this issue closed for press, a final date for the reopening/inauguration had yet to be confirmed.

Alimare will also be employing another, larger hydrofoil previously part of the Ustica fleet this



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NEWS AND ARTICLES ABOUT CIVIL HYDROFOILS, HOVERCRAFT & CATAMARANS ■  
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**COVER PHOTO** : AP1-88/100 HOVERCRAFT LOMMEN ON THE PONTOON AT MALMÖ PRIOR TO  
COMMENCEMENT OF SERVICE IN 1984 /TIM TIMOLEON photo

summer on a longer route linking the airport and the Eolie Islands. A seasonal service, the 170-seat vessel, RHS 160 *Calarossa*, will be operated from June 15 to September 15. Inter-island connections will also be offered.

Scheduled journey times are 18 minutes to Messina, 40 minutes to Taormina and 1 hour 50 minutes to the Eolie Islands. At the airport the hydrofoils operate to/ from a point about 900m from the terminal building where a free bus transfer will be available. The hydrofoil timetable has been composed to coordinate with flight arrivals and departures, for instance, it will leave Messina 55 minutes prior to take-off.

Originally named *Curl Curl*, the RHS 140 had been ordered by Port Jackson & Manly Steam Ship Company for its Sydney–Manly route and was shipped from the Rodriguez shipyard to Australia in 1972. It operated on Sydney harbor until 1991 following which it returned to Italy in February 1992 having been purchased by Rodriguez's operating company Aliscafi SNAV. The vessel never entered service with this operator however, but was sold on to Ustica Lines in 1995 which introduced it between the islands of Lampedusa and Linosa off Sicily's south coast.

*Calarossa* was built in 1974 as *Lilau* for Far East Hydrofoil in Hong Kong and following ten years with them was later



operated in Italy, the Caribbean and Spain before being acquired by Ustica Lines in 1996 and introduced between Trapani in south-west Sicily and the Egadi Islands. It has since been used also elsewhere on the company's route network.

More recently, as more and larger vessels have been added to the Ustica fleet, both hydrofoils had been at the company's maintenance base in Trapani standing by as reserve craft. ■

*Alimare will be operating two Rodriguez hydrofoils on routes across the Strait of Messina and to the Eolie Islands this summer. The Airport–Messina shuttle will be working year-round*  
/ALIMARE photo



*RHS 160 Calarossa, pictured here in Ustica Lines colors last year, will be introduced by Alimare in June on longer routes linking the airport at Reggio and the Eolie Islands* /DANIELE ALLETTO photo

# France – Channel Islands Update

*Emeraude Jersey Ferries' JumboCat 60m catamaran Solidor 5 laid up at Cherbourg on April 18, 2004 / JACQUES LEGANGNEUX photo*



Further to our report in the October 2003 CFF, *Victor Hugo* reentered service, as planned, in April. The Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 35m catamaran was acquired from a Norwegian operator by Le Conseil Général de la Manche at the end of 2002 and introduced between Normandy and the Channel Islands by Connex/Société de Navigation de Normandie last August.

This season the 199-seat vessel is being operated from Diélette and Cherbourg on alternate days to the Channel Islands of Alderney and Guernsey. Trip times are 60 minutes for both Diélette–Guernsey (St. Peter Port) and Guernsey–Alderney, 45 minutes Diélette–Alderney and 70–75 minutes between Cherbourg and Alderney.

The other catamaran acquired by CGM, in 2003, FlyingCat 40m *Marin Marie*, has

entered service further south and is operating out of Granville to Jersey and Guernsey.

Further south still and to the west new faces are appearing in the Brittany port of St. Malo. Established operator Emeraude Lines is now known as Emeraude Jersey Ferries following financial trouble and the subsequent take-over by Sogestran toward the end of last year. Moreover, Emeraude's flagship Kværner Fjellstrand JumboCat 60m *Solidor 5* delivered in 2000 is currently grounded in a shipyard at Cherbourg in a disagreement about who, the former or present owners, are to pay for the vessel's engine maintenance costs. It is believed the dispute will not be solved any time soon.

Planned to replace *Solidor 5* on the St.Malo–Jersey route in time for the Easter holiday was Incat 74m wave-

piercing catamaran *Hoverspeed Great Britain* leased from Sea Containers, but the introduction of this was delayed as some modifications needed be carried out on the vessel, likewise in Cherbourg, before it could use the berth at St. Malo. Slightly renamed *Great Britain* the 450-passenger 80-car wavepiercer should have now entered service.

*P&O Ferries has sub-leased Incat 91m wavepiercing catamaran Max Mols from Mols-Linien renamed it Caen Express and introduced it on the English Channel between Portsmouth and Caen. It is seen here arriving at Ouistreham on April 4 / JACQUES LEGANGNEUX photo*

## & D E V E L O P M E N T S



Emeraude's other catamaran, Westamaran 5000CF *Aline*, built by Westamarin in 1987 and acquired by Emeraude in 1999 and until recently named *Solidor 4*, was used on the route in February and March when it suffered an engine failure. Even with this fixed the vessel's capacity of 302 passengers and 40 cars is not adequate during the high season.

With no Emeraude services operating from late March, Condor Ferries, Channel



*The newly refurbished FlyingCat 40m Marin Marie at Cherbourg in July last year. It has since entered service out of Granville / JACQUES LEGANGNEUX photo*



*FlyingCat 35m Victor Hugo reentered service last month and is seen arriving at St. Anne harbor on Alderney in the evening of April 16 / JACQUES LEGANGNEUX photo*

Islands' oldest fast ferry operator, was granted a permission to operate between Jersey and St. Malo carrying cars, which the company had hitherto not been allowed, from April 2. Allocated to the route is *Condor 10*, another Incat 74m wavepiercer, delivered by the Tasmanian yard in 1993.

On a related note, P&O Ferries added a sub-leased Incat Tasmania 91m wavepiercing catamaran from Danish operator Mols-Linien to its cross-Channel routes last month. Linking Portsmouth and Caen, in Normandy, the wavepiercer has been named *Caen Express* by P&O but continues to carry also its Danish name

*Max Mols*. The vessel was originally delivered as *Cat Link IV* to another Danish operator, Scandlines Cat-Link, for operation across the Kattegat in 1998, and has since seen service in as diverse places as between Canada and the United States in 2000 and Sweden and Latvia in 2002. ■

*Condor Ferries' Incat 74m wavepiercing catamaran Condor 10 departing St. Malo in July 2002. A slightly modified corporate logo has since been introduced by the operator / JACQUES LEGANGNEUX photo*





## Numbers no more on Dutch Voskhods

The three Morye Voskhod-2M hydrofoils delivered to Dutch operator Connexion Fast Flying Ferries in 2002, *Voskhod 604*, *Voskhod 605* and *Voskhod 606* have been renamed *Karla*, *Catharina Amalia* and *Rosanna*.

The vessels were given their proper names in a ceremony held at Velsen on March 10. The naming ceremony was arranged in cooperation with the Province of Noord-Holland, which is the granting commission for the Velsen/ IJmuiden–Amsterdam hydrofoil service, and amongst the invited guests were the minister of Verkeer and Waterstaat Karla Peijs, vice chairman of the board of Connexion directors Rob van Holten and representatives of the Ukraine where the Voskhods were manufactured.

Two of the hydrofoils have been named after present day females, the aforementioned minister of V&W, *Karla*, and the daughter of Prins Willem Alexander and Maxima Zorrequita, *Catharina Amalia* whereas *Rosanna* was the niece of engineer Thomas Madison, one of many British men involved in the building of the Noordzeekanaal between IJmuiden and Amsterdam and whom Connexion FFF wished to honor, including *Rosanna* who only lived to be 15.

Two of the original FFF Voskhods, *Annemarie* and *Archimedes*, remain with the operator and are for sale while a third was sold in Malaysia last August. The sole Polesye hydrofoil, *Meteor II*, is likewise still owned by the company and available for purchase. ■

newz  
& DEVELOPMENTS

Decorated with flags and yellow and red and blue balloons Connexion Fast Flying Ferries' three eye-catching Voskhod-2Ms were finally named in a ceremony at Velsen on March 10 / MARK VAN RIJZEN photo, both



# A new season for north and east Adriatic operators



MAIN PHOTO: Marinteknik Verkstads 41MPV Dora can be found in the north Adriatic operating between the Istrian peninsula and Venice / TOP LINE photo



The 41m monohull originally entered service between Italy and Greece with Kvarner Express in 1990 and is seen here leaving Brindisi for Corfu in July 1992 / TIM TIMOLEON photo

Slovenian operator Top Line, based in Portoroz, and Croatian operator Atlas residing in Dubrovnik have signed a five-year contract to join forces in operating fast ferries in the Dalmatian archipelago between Split and Dubrovnik. Atlas has been operating Kometa and Kolkhida hydrofoils for nearly forty years while Top Line introduced a pair of Kolkhidas previously operated in Canada in the north Adriatic between Portoroz and Venice in the summer of 2002.

Last year Top Line operated the Kolkhidas, *Adriatic Joy* and *Venice Carnival*, from early May to mid-June when the Italian authorities required voyage data recorders be installed in the vessels. Considering the cost for this and also new competition arriving in the area the operator decided against continuing on the route with the hydrofoils, instead repositioning the craft to Dalmatia having been chartered by Atlas as one of its own hydrofoils had suffered an engine failure and needed to be substituted.

So as not to lose out on the Istria/Venice market, Top Line teamed up with two other operators, Venezia Lines and Commodore Cruises. Venezia Lines introduced a pair of Cirrus CIRR 120P surface effect ships built in Norway in 1990, *San Frangisk* and *San Pawl*, in May 2003 on a

seasonal service linking seven ports in Croatia and Slovenia and Trieste and Venice in Italy. Commodore has a Marinteknik Verkstads 41m monohull *Dora*, originally delivered by the Swedish yard to Kvarner Express in 1989 as *Iris* and introduced the following year in the south Adriatic between Paxos and Corfu in Greece and Brindisi in Italy.

Also last year Top Line decided to change the propellers on *Venice Carnival* by which its fuel consumption dropped by more than 20% while speed increased from 36.5 to 41.5 knots. Very pleased with the results the shafts and propellers on *Adriatic Joy* have now likewise been changed and the first test run was to begin as this issue closed for press.

The company's involvement in the north Adriatic with Commodore and *Dora* continues this season also. ■



Two former Norwegian fast ferries that were imported to Sweden last year are currently being prepared for service this summer in the country's south-east.

Built by Westermoen Hydrofoil for Fosen Trafikklag in 1973 and the last Westamaran 86 catamaran to operate a scheduled service in Norway, *Kongsbussen* was acquired by a Swedish company and arrived in Stockholm in April 2003. At the end of the year it was sold to another company, Bornholm Line, and transferred to Skillinge, a small fishing village in the south, for rebuilding and upgrading to trade on an international route. Yet to be refurbished and renamed at the end of last month, the Westamaran is to enter service on June 1 between Simrishamn and Allinge on the Danish island of Bornholm. Three daily return crossings are scheduled until August 31, when the seasonal service stops, with a fourth evening roundtrip being added in July. Operational hours (in July) will be from 0800 to 2130, the single journey takes 60 minutes and cost SEK 140 adult, SEK 90 child or SEK 110 for senior citizens. The route has been served on a seasonal basis by a variety of companies and catamarans in the past, however not during the last couple of summers.

Also at Skillinge in late April being extensively rebuilt to meet Swedish regulations was *Fjellstrand 26m* monohull *Vitaskär*. Built in 1982 as *Øydronningen* this had been operated in north Norway by Saltens D/S and Ofotens og Vesterdaalens D/S before being acquired last October

by Haglunds Shipping and taken to Sweden. The monohull will enter service further up the coast between the mainland and the island of Hanö in August.

At the other end, so to speak, Polish operator Zegluga Gdanska will be running a Kolkhida hydrofoil, *Delfin IV*, between Poland and Bornholm from July 3 to August 29. *Delfin IV* will make one daily roundtrip to Nexø from Ustka on

Monday, Saturday and Sunday, from Darlowo on Tuesday and Friday and from Kolobrzeg on Wednesday and Thursday. Trip times are 2½ hours from Ustka and two hours from Darlowo and Kolobrzeg.

During the past three seasons another Polish company, KZP, Kolobrzaska Zegluga Pasazerska, has operated another Kolkhida, *Delfin I*, between Kolobrzeg and Nexø, but it has been indicated that this will not return to the route this year. ■

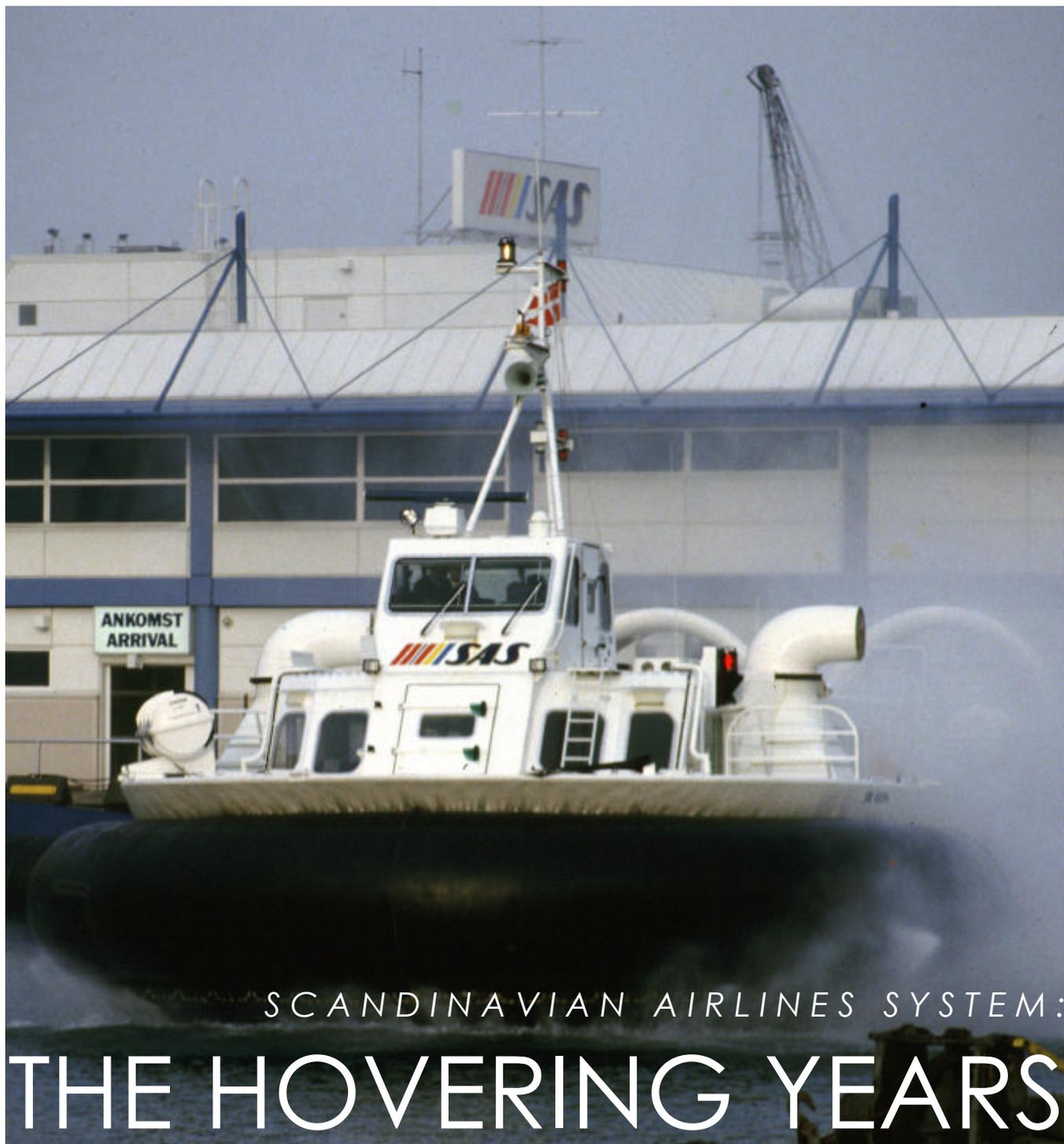
**A B O V E :** Being prepared for service in south-east Sweden and Denmark at the end of last month were *Fjellstrand 26m* monohull *Vitaskär* (left) and *Westamaran 86* *Kongsbussen* /TIM TIMOLEON photo

**B E L O W :** *Zegluga Gdanska's* Kolkhida hydrofoil *Delfin IV* alongside at Nexø, Bornholm in July last year /LINUS ANDERSSON photo



It's an unbelievable twenty years ago this June that Dampskibsselskabet Øresund, DSØ, and Scandinavian Airlines System, SAS, introduced a pair of British Hovercraft Corporation AP1-88/100 hovercraft on a new cross-Øresund airport feeder service linking Malmö, Sweden and Copenhagen Airport, Denmark.

*AP1-88/100 Liv Viking taking off at Malmö on a nice summer's day. Compare this view to the one on page 14 / TIM TIMOLEON photo*



It is almost equally hard to believe that ten years have now passed since the last service on the route by hovercraft was operated.

The hovercraft idea had come about as SAS wanted a direct and exclusive link for, mainly, business air travelers flying into or out of Copenhagen Airport, which is located at Kastrup next to the Øresund, and continuing on to or coming from Malmö. Hitherto, the most popular connections between the two points had been either a combination of hydrofoil or catamaran and coach transfer between the fast ferry terminal at Copenhagen and the airport, operated by DSØ and its Swedish counterpart SFL, or a through bus from downtown Malmö to the airport via the Limhamn–Dragør ferry. A third possibility was SAS's Twin Otter shuttle, but this had become less attractive with people traveling from/to Malmö and southwest Sweden with the relocation in the early 70s of the city's airport to Sturup some thirty kilometers from downtown Malmö.

pass through security controls and board their flights right away at the airport – and vice versa.

While the DSØ/SAS concept was new, air cushion vehicles were not entirely new to the area as twelve years earlier a pair of 270-seat Vosper Thornycroft VT.1 semi-amphibious ACVs had been briefly operated between Malmö and Copenhagen by a Swedish company, Centrumsvävarna, in the summer of 1972. A few years later, in 1978, a company made up of a group of fast ferry officers announced it intended to introduce an airport shuttle between Copenhagen Airport and Malmö using a fleet of four 60-seat hovercraft. These plans never eventuated.

AP1-88 – TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The new fully amphibious AP1-88 first was announced toward the end of 1980. The prototype, designated AP1-88/80 and altering somewhat from the initial design drawings, was



AP1-88/100 Lommen about to leave the pontoon at Malmö on a crew training trip prior to the service being introduced in June 1984 / TIM TIMOLEON photo

Both the fast ferry/bus transfer and through bus options were relatively time consuming. With the hovercraft alternative the terminal-to-terminal journey time was cut from between sixty-five and ninety minutes to 35–40 minutes as the hovercraft was able to travel up onto the runway at Kastrup via a ramp – although it did not go all the way to the terminal building. Also, travelers now could check in already at the hovercraft in Malmö, where an entire airport of sorts was built, including checking their luggage right through to their final destinations without having to worry any more about it as well as

completed in 1982 and entered commercial service with Hovertravel on its Ryde–Southsea/Portsmouth route the following year.

Developed by British Hovercraft Corporation, based in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, the new design was to take the hovercraft to the next level, as compared to the then most widely used but ageing type, the SR.N6 Winchester, by, for example, being of a welded marine aluminum construct and powered by four Deutz air cooled marine diesel engines (two for lift and two for propulsion) rather than the riveted aircraft light alloy and single gas turbine of the former.



This meant a heavier but also more robust vehicle, lower production and running costs as well as reduced noise level thanks to the diesel engines and twin ducted propellers.

With a length overall of 21.4m, beam of 10.1m and up to 90 plus seats in its ferry role, passenger capacity on the AP1-88 was more than twice that of the SR.N6. Also contrary to the SR.N6, the AP1-88 featured a raised wheelhouse, among other things. Passenger access was through a door either side at the very rear of the superstructure.

The order for the two Danish craft was placed by DSØ in May 1983. Due for delivery in the spring the following year, these were the second and third production AP1-88/100s, with the first acting as a BHC demonstrator and the pair of pre-production AP1-88/80s before it having gone to Hovertravel. On the production craft the overall length was increased by 3m to 24.5m and the beam to 11m, it featured a larger cockpit and also a number of technical and structural modifications were adopted.

A relatively low-density accommodation was



*A B O V E : Activity in, around and on top of one of the DSØ/SAS AP1-88/100s. The sign on the cockpit window says you must wear soft shoes / ASI EUROPE photo*

*L E F T : Svalan prior to commencement of the Copenhagen Airport-Malmö service and being renamed Freja Viking / TIM TIMOLEON photo*



**A B O V E :** *The hovercraft terminal at Malmö included all things necessary to be worthy the name of an international airport, although compact*  
/ TIM TIMOLEON photo

**B E L O W :** *Both craft on the opening day on June 14, 1984 having been officially (re)named Freja Viking and Liv Viking by Sweden's Princess Christina*  
/ TIM TIMOLEON photo

opted for by SAS, with a total of 81 EuroClass and tourist class seats in a single SAS DC-9-style passenger cabin. Also equipped were a galley and two washrooms. For passengers' checked baggage a system with detachable luggage containers carried aft on the deck on either side of the cabin was chosen.

At Malmö a 1,845 sq.m two-storey terminal building was erected on the quay in only six months. In addition to the facilities required to be granted the status of an international airport, albeit compact, this featured a small duty-free shop, a Scanorama lounge for EuroClass and First Business Class travelers and a restaurant for everybody else.

Docking arrangements was in the form of a purpose-built floating pontoon placed alongside the quay/terminal onto which the hovercraft would park for passenger exchange.

At Kastrup, apart from the aforementioned ramp between the Øresund and runway, a likewise purpose-built fully equipped maintenance base was established.

#### IN AND OUT OF SERVICE

The two craft, initially named *Lommen* and *Svalan*, made their delivery trips from Britain to Denmark under their own power. *Lommen* departed Cowes on April 30, 1984 and completed the journey to Kastrup in five days traveling along the coastlines of the Dutch and German West and East Frisian Islands and via the Kiel Canal, whereas *Svalan*, which left on May 22, was taken on a more northerly route around the Jutland peninsular and still managed to make the trip in only four days.

On arrival in Denmark a crew training program, of which indeed the delivery trips had been part, was immediately initiated. These were experienced DSØ/SFL hydrofoil and catamaran crews.

The hovercraft service was officially opened by Princess Christina of Sweden on June 14. Prior to this the vessels had been renamed *Liv Viking* and *Freja Viking* by SAS thus blending in with the naming of its aircraft. Where BHC



had somewhat left the aviation industry way of thinking as far as the AP1-88 was concerned and looked upon the new design more as a marine vehicle, for SAS, perhaps not entirely surprising, it was all very much an airline route.

Revenue service on the 14 nautical mile route was inaugurated the following day. Initially up to ten flights were operated in each direction between 07:30 and 22:10 on weekdays, but the times and number of services were altered several times during the running-in.

Some hick-ups were experienced not long after the service had been introduced. For

*DSØ's Rodriguez PT.50 hydrofoil Springerer (left), built in 1967, got the honor of filling in for the hovercraft when these had to be pulled out of service for mechanical reasons a few weeks into the new airport feeder service*  
/TIM TIMOLEON photo



instance, concerns were expressed by the Danish nature conservancy association and members of the environmentalists organization Greenpeace and others about the noise level and routing of the hovercraft which, it was felt, were too high and close to the bird and seal colonies on the small island of Saltholm situated approx. half-way between Denmark and Sweden. Following discussions between SAS/DSØ and the Minister for the Environment an agreement to partially reroute was reached at the beginning of July.

Then at the end of the month some mechanical trouble related to a vibration problem started to appear resulting in both hovercraft being pulled out of service for six weeks and replaced by one of DSØ's hydrofoils, a Rodriguez PT.50 delivered in 1967. A Westmaran 95 catamaran would later take over from the PT.50. Since obviously none of these could operate into the airport itself a small harbor just next to it had to be used with passengers being transferred by coach to/from the terminal building.

**SAS SVÄVARFÖRBINDELSE FRÅN MALMÖ CENTRUM  
DIREKT TILL KÖPENHAMN/KASTRUP F.O.M. 15 JUNI 1984.**  
Incheckningstid: 20 min före avgång.  
Tel.: 040/741 72.  
OBS! Endast i samband med direkt anslutning till internationell  
reguljär flygresa från/till Kastrup.

	SA								
Avg Malmö	0821	0823	0825	0827	0829	0831	0833	0835	0837
Ans Köpenhamn (Kastrup)	0740	0830	0910	1035	1310	1620	1720	1900	2015
	0835	0910	1030	1120	1350	1715	1810	1940	2025

1) MÅ, T, Tu, F, LÅ, SÅ 2) MÅ, T, Tu, F, SÅ

**Tidtabell för Svävaren.**

3:e utgåvan  
p.f.o.m. 29/9 1984.

**SAS**  
The Businessman's Airline



# SAS : THE HOVERING YEARS

One of the advantages with operating hovercraft eyed by SAS at an early stage was that these can travel in almost any climatic condition – including ice, as opposed to hydrofoils and catamarans. Little did anyone know that the winter of 1984/85 would prove the worst in the area in years with temperatures dropping to well under  $-15\text{ C}$ , and stay there, resulting in the Øresund eventually freezing over grounding the other fast ferries for months and presenting difficulties also for the conventional ferries to maintain a scheduled service.

However, it was not entirely a picnic for *Liv Viking* and *Freja Viking* either. For instance, before the sea got totally frozen over ice generated by the spray would quickly build up on the craft in the low temperatures, and at times the craft had to be de-iced after each crossing. Another problem was traveling over

rough ice with sharp edges which would shorten skirt finger life considerably.

## THIRD CRAFT

Unusually for the area, similar although not quite as harsh winter weather conditions would occur during the following years and it became clear that in order to secure a reliable service all year round a third craft was needed. This was acquired in September 1988 and entered service in early 1989. Contrary to *Freja Viking* and *Liv Viking* which had been built to DSØ/SAS order, this, *Idun Viking*, was the first AP1-88/100 off the production line, likewise in 1984, which, apart from acting as a demonstration craft for BHC, had seen service in British Columbia, Canada with HoverWest during Expo '86 in Vancouver as *Expo Spirit*.

ABOVE : *Liv Viking* arriving at Malmö on a late (and freezing!) afternoon crossing – or flight, to use SAS terminology – from Kastrup / TIM TIMOLEON photo

RIGHT : *Idun Viking* being inspected at Malmö after having hit a breakwater and grounded in September 1989 / TIM TIMOLEON photo



The following year it was leased to a Norwegian company, Hovertransport, which introduced it in the Oslofjord in April 1987 serving Oslo Fornebu airport and other points on the fiord. Originally to have been a one-year lease, the service came to a halt in November and the craft returned to BHC.

Some months into its Øresund career *Idun Viking* made the headlines as approaching Malmö harbor late at night on September 4, 1989 it hit a breakwater head-on and grounded. None of the crew or 53 passengers was severely injured, and all were rescued and taken ashore by a conventional ferry which was also just arriving at Malmö on a crossing from Copenhagen. The hovercraft was lifted off the breakwater two days later and brought to Malmö for inspection.



ABOVE: The Marinteknik Verkstads 33m catamaran *Ørnen*, delivered in 1986, was transferred from DSØ's Copenhagen–Malmö run to the airport route in 1992 thus foreshadowing what was to come / TIM TIMOLEON photo



LEFT: *Freja Viking* and *Idun Viking* at the maintenance base at Kastrup. The airport has direct access to the sea / TIM TIMOLEON photo

#### COMPETITION AND HOVERCRAFT PHASE-OUT

Also in 1989 DSØ/SAS faced new competition as a newly formed company, Fast Ferries, introduced a JetRider 3400 surface effect ship designed and built in Sweden and Norway by Karlskronavarvet and Westamarin between Malmö and the small harbor at Kastrup previously used by DSØ/SAS. Although not really an airport shuttle, Fast Ferries' weapon was its much lower fares and also, contrary to the hovercraft, anybody could travel on the JetRider whether they were flying or not. This competition lasted for only three months though as Fast Ferries' parent company ran into financial difficulties and the service was closed toward the end of August.

In 1991 another company, Bornholmer Pilen, likewise operated between Malmö and Kastrup for a few months using a Westamarin 3700 catamaran before transferring its activities to the more lucrative and user-friendly Malmö–Copenhagen route.

With *Idun Viking* having joined the other two AP1–88s only in 1989, a somewhat unexpected development occurred at the end of 1992 as one

of the Swedish built Marinteknik 33m catamarans, *Ørnen*, delivered to DSØ in 1986, received new seating and SAS logos on the outside and was transferred from the Copenhagen–Malmö route to the airport service. To accommodate the catamaran at the airport a new pier was built next to the hovercraft ramp and maintenance base. Soon becoming first-choice vessel, this was the beginning of the end for the three AP1–88s on the route, for two years later, in August 1994,

A pair of Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamarans, *Kraka Viking* and *Sifka Viking*, were introduced in 1994 putting to an end ten years of hovercraft operation between Copenhagen Airport and Malmö / TIM TIMOLEON photo



they were made redundant with the introduction of a pair of 168-seat Fjellstrand single-deck FlyingCat 40m catamarans, *Kraka Viking* and *Sifka Viking*.

The AP1-88s however remained laid up at Kastrup for another three years before being acquired by Hovertravel in mid-1997. *Idun Viking* was rebuilt to Hovertravel requirement and entered service, keeping its name, on the only 4 nautical mile 10-minute Ryde-Southsea crossing, operated by the company since 1965, already during the following year.

*Freja Viking* was put in storage, along with *Liv Viking*, in the Isle of Wight for the time being but the former emerged as *Island Express* toward the end of 2001 having been completely rebuilt including re-engined with MTU water cooled diesels for propulsion in place of the original Deutz air cooled ones and is now designated AP1-88/100S. Work on *Liv Viking* should now be in progress.

*Island Express* continues to be operated across the Solent whereas *Idun Viking* has moved to somewhat more demanding surroundings and can now be found in the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan. Acquired by F H Bertling two years ago, the craft sailed under its own power from the Isle of Wight on August 24, 2002 to Oostende, Belgium where it was loaded onto a ship to be transported to its final destination, incidentally, along with another AP1-88, a passenger/cargo AP1-88/300, previously operated as a supply vessel in Angola, Brazil and

Peru by ASI Europe. A company engaged in hovercraft operations for the gas and oil industry, ASI has offices in Wales, the Isle of Wight and Kazakhstan. The conditions and temperatures *Idun Viking* (and its staff!) has to put up with in the north-east part of the Caspian Sea varies between -40 and +40 degrees C. It is currently based in Tengis.

#### FIXED LINK KILLED THE CAT

The DSØ/SAS Malmö-Copenhagen Airport service was altogether discontinued in 2000 coinciding with the opening of the fixed link between Denmark and Sweden. With a new high-speed rail service connecting downtown Malmö and the airport via the new bridge/tunnel every twenty minutes and using only 21 minutes for the journey compared to the 40 minutes used by the catamarans and bus transfer, there was no longer a market for a seaborne service. The two FlyingCats were subsequently sold for operation in Mexico and shipped from Copenhagen in January 2001.

The white and blue SAS hoverport building in Malmö still stands (as do the maintenance facilities at Kastrup) and is currently being used by various long distance coach operators. In fact it is the only one left of once several ferry terminal buildings dotted along the quay that have all been demolished one by one with the demise of all ferry services running between Malmö and Copenhagen. ■



**B E L O W :** *Heading for the future... of sorts... The fixed link between Denmark and Sweden which opened in 2000 meant goodbye to the seaborne airport feeder service, and soon also the rest of the fast ferries operating across the Øresund*  
/TIM TIMOLEON photo



ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE : ASI EUROPE



*Idun Viking* was sold by Hovertravel to F H Bertling in August 2002 and shipped to Kazakhstan (right) where it is currently operated in the Caspian Sea by ASI Europe (above + top) . Conditions here are a bit different from those experienced by the craft while in the Solent . . .





**Rebuilt and renamed** *Island Express*, the former *Freja Viking* entered service with Hovertravel in late 2001. It is seen here arriving at Southsea in September 2002. *Matthew Davies photo*

**Keeping its name, Idun Viking joined Hovertravel's other AP1-88s across the Solent in 1998**  
*Edward Brian-Davis photo*



*Liv Viking* is the last of the DSØ/SAS trio to be refurbished to Hovertravel standards. Here it is still laid up on the Isle of Wight in September 2002. *Matthew Davies photo*

# Catamarans on France's Atlantic coast

Three catamarans not previously reported on here in *CFF* are those of French operator SMN, Société Morbihannaise de Navigation.

The 194-seat *Gourinis*, a Fjellstrand Alumaran 165, was originally built for Norwegian operator Saltens Dampskibsselskab as *Bortind* in 1979 and acquired by Compagnie Morbihannaise et Nantaise de Navigation in 1987.

*Dravanteg* carries 182 passengers and was built in France in 1991 by Naval Aluminium Atlantique in Saint-Nazaire.

Both catamarans are normally operated out of Quiberon on Brittany's Atlantic coast to the islands of Houat and Hoëdic. Crossing times are between 30 to 40 minutes to Houat and 60 minutes to Hoëdic via Houat.

The third catamaran in the SMN fleet, *Locmaria 56*, is a FlyingCat 40m delivered in 1998 by Kværner Fjellstrand's Singapore yard. The 376-seat vessel is being operated during the summer months to the bigger island of Belle-Ile-en-Mer from either Quiberon or Lorient further up the coast. Transit times are 20 minutes and one hour respectively. ■



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*Pictured alongside at Quiberon and Lorient in March this year are NAA catamaran Dravanteg (above) and Fjellstrand Alumaran 165 Gourinis, both of which immaculately kept by SMN*  
/MATTHEW DAVIES photo, both

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when the classic fast ferries were **news**

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: WHEN

Bergen, Norway

: WHERE

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: WHO

: WHY

**A classic fast ferry line-up in a classic fast ferry port! Pictured alongside at Bergen in the early 1980s are Westamaran 86 catamarans *Fjordtroll* and *Fjordglytt* belonging to Fylkesbaatane i Sogn og Fjordane, FSF, and *Øygar* owned by Øygarden og Sotra Rutelag. Behind this is Bergen Nordhordland Rutelag's Fjellstrand 31.5m catamaran *Lygra*. In the right front corner is half of a Westermoen S75 monohull, *Solundir*, also in the FSF fleet.**

**A lot has changed since this picture was taken with *Fjordtroll* and *Fjordglytt*, the latter of which was the first W86 built, in 1971, having been sold in Sweden in 1989 and 1995 respectively. The former *Fjordglytt* is still active with the Swedish operator, however not as a fast ferry. The monohull was sold in 1990. W86 *Øygar* was acquired by Hardanger Sunnhordlandske D/S in 1986 and sold to another Norwegian company in 1995 which continues to operate it on chartered tourist excursions on the fiords.**