



PRESS RELEASE: Red Wheel plaque marks pioneering ferry technology at Lymington

A pioneering chapter in British maritime history has been commemorated with the unveiling of a National Transport Trust (NTT) Red Wheel plaque at Wightlink's Lymington ferry terminal. The plaque recognises the MV Lymington, which became the first British vessel to use the innovative Voith Schneider propulsion system when she entered service in 1938.



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Built by William Denny of Dumbarton for the Southern Railway's Lymington-Yarmouth crossing, the 275-gross-tonne vessel introduced a technology that combined propulsion and steering in a single system. Using a series of vertically mounted blades, the Voith Schneider propeller enabled a vessel to manoeuvre with exceptional precision – including the ability to turn within its own length.

The technology had been developed by Austrian inventor Ernst Schneider and trialled on Lake Constance in the 1920s before being adopted for a range of vessels, including German minesweepers. Its successful application aboard *Lymington* helped establish the system in Britain, and Voith Schneider propulsion subsequently became an important feature of vessels requiring precise manoeuvring.

The *Lymington* served the Yarmouth route through both peace and the Second World War. By the early 1970s, however, increasing demand meant the vessel was too small for the service. She was sold by British Rail Sealink and subsequently operated on the Firth of Clyde under the name *Sound of Sanda*.

More than 85 years after the *Lymington* pioneered the technology, Voith Schneider propulsion remains at the heart of Wightlink's ferry operation. The system is still used on all of Wightlink's car ferries operating on both the Lymington-Yarmouth and Portsmouth-Fishbourne routes, providing the precise manoeuvrability needed to operate safely and efficiently in the confined waters of the ferry terminals.

The plaque was officially unveiled by Richard Muir Beddall, Vice President of the National Transport Trust, in the presence Captain Sam Mitchell, Wightlink Head of Fleet and a number of guests from Lymington and the NTT, marking the contribution of the pioneering vessel and its technology to Britain's transport heritage.

Speaking at the unveiling, Jerry Swift, Deputy Chairman of the National Transport Trust, said: "National Transport Trust Red Wheels are all about celebrating Britain's rich and fascinating transport history, and through that lens looking to the future. MV Lymington was a pioneer that demonstrated that look into the future and we are delighted to be able to mark her importance to the development of marine safety."

Wightlink's Head of Fleet Operations Sam Mitchell said: "The story of *Lymington* is a fascinating part of our maritime heritage, but what makes it particularly special for Wightlink is that the technology she introduced to Britain is still very much in use today.

"Voith Schneider propulsion helps our crews manoeuvre safely and precisely in the waters around our terminals. It's wonderful to see this Red Wheel plaque recognising the importance of that innovation and *Lymington*'s place in British maritime history."

The Red Wheel is now on display at Wightlink's Lymington Terminal, providing passengers and visitors with a permanent reminder of a pioneering technology that helped shape modern maritime operations in Britain.

The National Transport Trust Red Wheel scheme celebrates locations and achievements that have played an important role in Britain's transport history. Find out more here:

www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk

The National Transport Trust

Founded in 1965, (as the Transport Trust), the National Transport Trust is the UK's only national charity established to promote and encourage the preservation and restoration of Britain's unique transport heritage in all its forms – by air, land (road and rail) and water (sea and inland). The Trust is managed within a very streamlined structure, with the Board of Trustees representing the wider interests of the nation, for whose benefit the Trust exists.

Help us to help them

In order to help the UK's the preservation movement the Trust depends on its members and therefore encourages all those who share our aims to join us. Membership of the Trust is open to private individuals and affiliated organisations. You can help us to help others too; become a member, donate to the trust or you might even consider leaving the trust something in your will. This last part is vital to our work, see here for more: [National Transport Trust legacies](#)

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