

VISIT REPORT - ISLE OF WIGHT 25 APRIL 2013

Michael Minton

On Monday 15th October 2012 Kerry Jackson, Marketing Manager for Wightlink Ferries, gave a highly informative presentation on the history of the company and the developments at Lymington with the introduction of new car ferries. They had embarked on a major modernisation programme in 2007. A great deal of design work and tank testing on hull design led to the ordering of 3 purpose-designed vessels being built at Kraljevica in Croatia which were launched from 2008, the *Wight Light*, *Wight Sky* and *Wight Sun*. They can carry 65 cars and 360 passengers each with loading on the garage and mezzanine decks; being just 1 metre wider and 4 metres longer, but with no increase in wash they have an additional 36% capacity. Customer experience is much improved. They were introduced in March 2009. Due to new regulations at a narrow passing point it is now difficult to get back to a half-hourly service, but an improved timetable has been introduced and there is a high level of satisfaction from customers using the new vessels.



Kerry offered the club 25 free tickets for a return voyage to Yarmouth which members and guests enjoyed on 25th April 2013. The weather was not promising earlier, but during the trip despite starting in a heavy fog the sun came out during the morning on the Isle of Wight. Everyone considered the vessel a great improvement on the previous ferries.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT FERRY

The passenger decks was well laid out with excellent seating and observation at both ends which provided panoramic view across the Solent. There was a self serve café with a good range of snacks and drinks. The staff were exceptionally friendly and helpful.



Members were free to enjoy the delights either of Yarmouth, or a walk or ride an open-top bus to the Needles. Lunch was arranged in the 17th century Bugle Inn in the centre of the town and it served a splendid range of home cooked recipes plus real ales.

PROBUS MEMBERS ENJOYING LUNCH

The return trip was again bright and sunny until the fog returned as we approached Lymington having had a great few hours in good company. Michael who organized the trip thanked Kerry for this excellent opportunity to experience this new vessel which had been the subject of considerable concern to the harbor authorities