

THE BLUE RIBAND - after SS UNITED STATES

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In Log Book of January 2007, pages 67-70, H.R. Pell gave an overview of the Blue Riband of the Atlantic. He finished his article with SS UNITED STATES, which took the award in 1952 and kept it

until her withdrawal in 1969. When you only take into account the real ocean liners this is correct, but in fact the story of the Blue Riband did not end then. After the end of the regular transatlantic shipping services several attempts were made to obtain the Blue Riband, or more substantial, the Hales Trophy.

In 1985, Richard Branson (creator of the Virgin Group) made his first attempt to make a record crossing of the Atlantic. The voyage was a failure, his boat sinking off Land's End, but his second attempt the following year brought him recognition and publicity. He crossed the Atlantic in his boat VIRGIN ATLANTIC CHALLENGER II in a time of 3 days 8hr. 31min. compared with the fastest east-



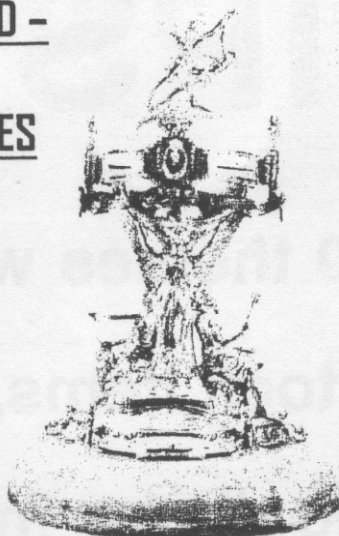
Condor 10 - sistership of Hoverspeed Great Britain

ward crossing of SS UNITED STATES of 3 days 10hr. 40min. But he was denied the Blue Riband by the trustees of the award because he had broken two rules of the competition - he had stopped to refuel and his vessel did not have a commercial maritime purpose.

In 1990 the Sea-Containers Group (Hover-

Last fastest crossings (eastwards)

Date		Ship	Time	Speed
7 July 1952	US Line	United States	3 dy 10 hr 40 min	35.59
26 June 1986	Virgin	Virgin Atlantic Challenger II	3 dy 8 hr 31 min	36.54
24 June 1990	Hoverspeed	Hoverspeed Great Britain	3 dy 7 hr 54 min	36.97
10 June 1998	Buquebus	Catalonia	3 dy 9 hr 55 min	38.85
20 July 1998	Scandlines	Cat-Link V	2 dy 20 hr 9 min	41.28



The Hales Trophy

speed Ltd) had fast ferries built for the cross-Channel traffic. These were catamaran ferries of the Seacat type. Delivery of the Hoverspeed GREAT BRITAIN by the builders (Incat, Hobart, Tasmania) was made via the Pacific, Panama Canal and New York. This enabled arrangements to be made to challenge the existing transatlantic crossing record.

The catamaran departed from the Ambrose light location near New York on 20th June 1990 and arrived at Bishop's rock lighthouse on 23rd June, having averaged 36.97 knots in the course of a record journey of 3 days 7hrs. 54 min. This time the record was acknowledged and the Hales Trophy was transferred to the offices of the Sea-Containers Group. The ship was used on the Portsmouth-Cherbourg service, later on the Folkestone-Boulogne run. Now she sails in Greece as SPEEDRUNNER I.



Seacat Isle of Man built as Hoverspeed France - sistership of Hoverspeed Great Britain

In June 1998 this trick was repeated by the CATALONIA of the Spanish Buquebus company, built by the same company. She sailed from New York to Ceuta at a speed of 38.85 knots. She was used in the service between Mallorca and Barcelona. Now she seems to run the routes Cairnryan - Larne/Troon - Larne for P&O Irish Sea.

Only one month later this record was already broken by the CAT-LINK V of the Danish Scandlines with a speed of 41.28 knots, which meant a crossing in less than 3 days. The CAT-LINK V now is sailing as MASTER CAT for Master Ferries between Kristiansand, Norway and Hanstholm, Denmark. As far as I know, the Hales Trophy is currently in the offices of Scandlines in Copenhagen.

It is unlikely that there will be new passenger services across the Atlantic, but the last record trials indicate that the Blue Riband may not be complete history yet.