**ANOTHER FIRST FOR PORTLAND PORT**

In a season of firsts the cruise ship, the AIDAstella, made her inaugural call to Portland Port on Friday the 17th of May. On board the AIDAstella was a contingent of over 2000 German passengers, all of which were keen to disembark and explore, whether it was via mini bus to Portland Castle, shuttle busses to Weymouth town or excursion coaches all over Dorset and beyond, some as far as Bath.

The AIDA Stella herself is new to the cruise industry; she only entered service 2 months ago. She stands at 14 decks high and is of Nordic design. To accommodate for the German passengers on board Portland Port provided 4 German translators, providing local tourist information, all of which enjoyed their time meeting and greeting the passengers as they disembarked. Bettina Collins, one of the translators said; “Its an enjoyable experience being able to welcome all these passengers to Weymouth and Portland, I think it is important to make them feel at home and ensure that they have a good understanding of all the fantastic local things on offer here”.

Once the large contingent of cruise passengers reached Weymouth it took very little time before they started to explore all the shops in and around the town centre. Local businesses around Weymouth and Portland would have welcomed the additional takings achieved by the travelling cruise passengers and can expect more of the same throughout the rest of the summer season, as there are more cruise calls at Portland Port this year than ever before. More recently, the Discovery made her second call to Portland Port this season to round off a very successful month.

Whilst observing operations from the quayside Ian McQuade, commercial manager, said; "Portland Port has been delighted with the start to the new cruise season and the arrival of the AIDAstella is a very important first for us. 2013 will now see 19 calls and over 20,000 passengers visit the port" before joking "though it seems with some reports the numbers are even higher. That is something we are working on for the future".

This is not the last that Portland Port will see of the AIDA Stella this summer as she will return another three times before cruise season is finished, with even more calls planned for 2014 and 2015 respectively. This will come as welcome news to local businesses from both Weymouth and Portland who will enjoy the additional numbers that Portland Port and the AIDA Stella bring to the town.

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**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**For more information or images please contact Jack Brooke at Portland Port on 01305 825368 or email** **j.brooke@portland-port.co.uk**

Previously a naval dockyard for over 150 years, Portland Harbour is now a thriving and successful commercial facility. It still maintains a close relationship with the past through its ongoing contract to support the RFA, as well as being home to the activities of Global Marine and Portland Bunkers International. It has over 4,000 acres of water at depths of up to 15m (C.D.); and provides vessel services from long term lay-ups to brief maintenance calls, luxury cruise liner docking facilities to industrial cargo shipments.

The tariff and general Portland Harbour Authority information can be viewed at <http://www.portland-port.co.uk/>

M/F

Portland Port has over 2,000 metres of alongside berths and 11.6 metres (C.D.) depth of water at the deepest alongside berth.

Berthing for vessels up to 300 metres (subject to Harbour Master's approval).

11 designated anchorages are within the 2,000-acre inner harbour. Six designated anchorages are within the 2,500 acre Outer Harbour.

A width of 210 metres and depth of over 12.6 metres (C.D.) at the entrance of the harbour mean that there are few vessel beam, lock, or air draft restriction.

***Photographs***

The attached photos were taken by Geoff Moore of Dorset Media – Photographic Services:

<http://www.dorsetmedia.co.uk/>

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-Nothe Fort Victorian Artillery Brigade

-AIDAStella alongside

-AIDAStella departing

-Stuart Cave – Portland Town Crier

-Arial Shot, AIDAStella

**ENDS**