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SURPRISE VISITOR STARTS PORTLAND PORT CRUISE SEASON EARLY

Portland Port's cruise season got off to a surprise early start on Monday with the arrival of the Cruise and Maritime Voyages vessel Marco Polo. Her return to the UK from her previous cruise to South America and the Amazon river was delayed by adverse weather conditions last week which meant that the Marco Polo could not make it back to her turnaround port of Bristol in time to start her next cruise but instead had to head to Portland.

The 22,000 tonnes, 176m long Marco Polo had 650 passengers on board when she arrived and later sailed with over 750 passengers heading for a cruise to the "Land of the Northern Lights". The Marco Polo has visited the port once before way back in 2007 when she was operated by Norwegian Cruise Lines. Things have changed a lot at Portland Port since her last visit and this year she will be the first of 25 cruise ships visiting the port.

General Manager (Commercial), Ian McQuade said "last minute calls like the visit of the Marco Polo are, by their nature, planned at very short notice which means a lot of work for all involved. In addition to the passengers and all their baggage the ship also needs to offload waste from the previous cruise and then resupply and replenish its stores. With the excellent support of the entire Portland work force we were able to get the Marco Polo on her way to northern waters".

It is not the first time that Portland Port has been used by Cruise and Maritime Voyages as an emergency turnaround port in this way. Back in January 2015 the port undertook a similar operation for the ship Azores.

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