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Keel laying ceremony marks the birth date of new ships for Scilly

PRESS RELEASE



A ceremony attended by dignitaries has marked the official 'birth date' for the two new ships which will serve the Penzance to Isles of Scilly route for the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group (ISSG).

This significant milestone in the build process has been recognised for centuries as the official 'birth' of any new ship and is an important point in time for the Scillonian IV passenger ferry and the cargo vessel, Menawethan.

Invited guests attended Piriou's shipyard in Vietnam on November 6th to officially mark the moment, while dignitaries from Britain and France were all present. British Ambassador to Vietnam, Iain Frew, attended the ceremony, along with British Consul General, Ms. Alexandra Smith and her French Counterpart, Mrs Emmanuelle Pavillon-Grosser.

Dignitaries were accompanied by senior management from both shipbuilder Piriou and ISSG. As part of the occasion, a coin was laid in the keel of the vessel, which is a shipbuilding tradition. The ceremony is designed as a kind of blessing, bringing good fortune to the ship and its crew.

Ian Howard, MBE TD, Chair of ISSG said: *"It was an honour to attend this special moment in the build of our two new vessels. I would like to extend my thanks to the entire team here at Piriou, who are providing the skills and technical expertise to build these new ships for the Isles of Scilly.*

"I also want to express my gratitude to all our partners and stakeholders who have contributed to this project. Your support and enthusiasm have been essential in driving us forward."

Judith Piper, Chief Financial Officer at ISSG added: *"Witnessing the work being carried out first-hand really brings to life the level of skill and precision that goes into building a modern-day vessel.*

"Our new vessels have been specifically designed to serve the route between Penzance and the Isles of Scilly. They will improve passenger experience and significantly increase capacity and reliability".

Modern construction methods mean that ships are now built in blocks, whereas in the past ships were literally built from the keel up. The ceremony is now recognised as the point at which blocks are joined together. This ceremony follows the 'steel cutting' ceremony for the new ships, which took place earlier in the year.

Sebastien Dupont, Managing Director for Civilian Vessels Newbuilding at Piriou Group, said: *"I want to highlight the spirit of cooperation that drives our team and partners. Every member of our staff, from engineering to production, works with passion and dedication to ensure that Scillonian IV and Menawethan are built to the highest standards. This project is the result of collective effort and a shared vision, and I am confident that we will deliver vessels that we can all be proud of."*

Jean-Pascal Roche, General Manager of Piriou Vietnam added: *"We have a very strong working relationship with ISSG and are very pleased with the progress on these new ships. Working closely with our client to understand their requirements and the ultimate use of the new vessels, means that we can ensure that when they are brought into service, they meet expectations.*

This special ceremony brings together invited guests from Great Britain, France and Vietnam. It is this spirit of collaboration which stands us in good stead for the remainder of the project."

The ships are being built alongside each other, to ISSG's detailed specifications, by Piriou's expert teams of engineers and fabricators. The build is being overseen in Vietnam by ISSG project managers, Chris Lingham and Peter Broad, who have relocated to Vietnam for the duration of the project.

[Link to download photos](#) – Copyright ISSG

A propos des nouveaux navires

The Scillonian IV will carry 600 passengers, a 24% uplift on the number carried by her predecessor. The ship features anti pitch and roll technology, meaning journeys will be much more comfortable for passengers. A specially designed Hull Vane® will also help reduce emissions significantly, when travelling at 16knots.

The new freight vessel will also include a range of improvements on the current vessel, including a much-enhanced cargo capacity and an improved capacity for perishable, chilled and frozen goods, meaning that supplies can be transferred between the mainland and the islands more reliably all year round. The freight vessel will incorporate a lounge with comfortable accommodation for 12 passengers.

A propos de ISSG

The Isles of Scilly Steamship Group has been serving the transportation needs of the Isles of Scilly since 1920. Set up by locals, the company initially provided the first regular scheduled services between Penzance and the Isles of Scilly.

With headquarters in Penzance, the company today employs more than 200 people, based in West Cornwall and the Islands, and operates a small fleet of aircraft under its Skybus airline. With its air and sea operations working in tandem, the Group provides a reliable transport solution, helping to keep one of the UK's most remote communities connected. www.islesofscilly-travel.co.uk

About PIRIOU

Since 1965, PIRIOU has designed, built, maintained and repaired all types of vessels, both civilian and military, up to 120m. First French privately owned group in shipbuilding and ship repair, PIRIOU is well established internationally with shipyards in Asia, Africa, the Indian Ocean and Europe. PIRIOU employs more than 1,400 people in its various subsidiaries around the world, half of them in France. In its ship repair yards, PIRIOU is the technical partner close to its customers, capable of major dockings as well as vessel conversions. And with nearly 600 ships built and delivered worldwide, PIRIOU relies on its internal design capabilities and R&D to offer its customers ever more efficient and environmentally friendly new vessels. www.piriou.com

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