

Felixstowe passes 70m teu milestone

The port of Felixstowe passed another milestone today (21 August) when it handled the 70th millionth teu since container operations began at the port in the mid-1960s.

The landmark container was loaded aboard the 13,800teu *MSC Bettina* by Patrick McLoughlin, UK Secretary of State for Transport, driving a huge container crane under the guidance of one of the port's crane driving instructors.

Clemence Cheng, Chief Executive Officer of Hutchison Ports (UK), owner of Port of Felixstowe, said: "Passing this latest milestone underlines the port of Felixstowe's position as the Port of Britain and highlights its long record of achievement. Felixstowe has been the UK's leading container port for over 30 years and we have the pleasure of having the Secretary of State for Transport celebrating this achievement with us today.

"Our continued commitment to investment has ensured that we have the capacity to support the economic growth of this country, and the equipment and operational excellence to provide our customers with a fast and efficient service."

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: "I'm proud to help celebrate this milestone for the port – 70 million containers is a truly staggering amount and is a testament to the important role Felixstowe continues to play in driving growth.

"Shipping and maritime are big business for the UK – the sector is already worth up to £14bn per year to the economy and, most importantly, it is steadily growing.

"The Greenwich Meridian makes us, quite literally, the centre of the shipping world and our central time zone means we can do business with both sides of the world in one day. Our rich maritime history, supported by key financial services and a productive partnership between government and industry, has helped make shipping a real success story for Britain – the volume of goods coming through UK ports has tripled in the past ten years.

"It is fitting for Felixstowe to reach this landmark in the run up to London International Shipping Week, when the shipping world's attention will be focused on us. Shipping is an engine for growth and we want to ensure the UK builds on its position as a global leader."

He said that as a critical piece of national infrastructure, the port of Felixstowe has a key role to play as the UK moves towards economic recovery. While at the port the Secretary of State met with key players in the logistics industry and users of the port.

The event comes shortly after the opening of the port's new North Rail Terminal, co-financed by the European Union Trans-European Transport Network, which will double rail capacity at the port, promote the use of rail for container freight, ease congestion on roads and reduce the environmental impact from HGVs.

The port of Felixstowe handled a record 3.7 million teu in 2012, over 40% of all containers moved through UK ports.