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BURGESS MARINE TO BUILD NEW EMERGENCY BERTHING BARGE FOR WIGHTLINK

UK-based specialist marine engineering and repair company Burgess Marine has further expanded its portfolio by securing a contract from South Coast UK ferry operator Wightlink to build a 22m Emergency Berthing Barge.

The barge will be prefabricated by Burgess Marine in nine modules at its facilities in Dover, and completed onsite in Portsmouth. Burgess Marine set-up a new operation in Portsmouth Naval Base at the beginning of 2009, comprising offices and workshops, within the BVT operation, as part of the TEAM PORTSMOUTH initiative. The barge will be used by Wightlink to support its existing infrastructure on the company's various cross-Solent ferry operations, which include conventional services between Portsmouth and Fishbourne and Lymington-Yarmouth, as well as its FastCat services linking Portsmouth and Ryde.

The Wightlink berthing barge, which has been designed by well-known UK naval architects Hart Fenton, is part of the ferry operator's £57m investment in its fleet and shore-side terminals, which includes building two new catamaran ferries for the Portsmouth-Ryde service and jumboising two of its Saint-class vessels on its Portsmouth-Fishbourne run. Meanwhile, Wightlink has taken delivery of the first two of three new passenger/car ferries for its Lymington-Yarmouth service from Croatian shipbuilder Kraljevica Shipyard; *Wight Light* and *Wight Sky*.

The Croatian newbuildings will replace the three ageing C-class vessels that currently maintain this service.

Commenting on the Wightlink contract, Burgess Marine's Managing Director, Nicholas Warren said: 'I'm thrilled to have won such a major contract with a Portsmouth based company so soon after formalising our local presence. We've worked hard with BVT Surface Fleet (formerly Fleet Support Ltd) for many years on the fast ferry refit market and this is a great step forward. Barge fabrication perfectly fits both our facilities and expertise.'

The Wightlink barge is the third major contract to be awarded to Burgess Marine as a direct result of the BVT-Burgess TEAM PORTSMOUTH alliance, the first being the major conversion and upgrade of the fast ferry InCat 050, which will enter service on the Irish Sea for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co Ltd as *Mannaman* in the spring of 2009, and the second being awarded primary sub-contractor status with regards to the main engine overhaul work on the Wightlink fleet, for and on behalf of BVT Surface Fleet.

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