

Times



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Coverstory

On six consecutive Sundays, Wagenborg transported six gigantic transformers from Veendam to Ter Apelkanaal, drawing considerable interest from local residents.



Wagenborg transported six heavy transformers from Veendam to Ter Apelkanaal. Thanks to tight planning, careful route preparation, and close coordination with residents and municipalities, the transportation went safely and smoothly. Wagenborg demonstrated not only logistical expertise but also commitment to the local community and attention to quality of life issues during complex transportation, as CEO Egbert Vuursteen witnessed on-site, above, during a chat with crane operator Pieter Nienhuis.

The environment in mind

Our environment is changing. Sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly. Climate change, geopolitical tensions, technological developments, and societal shifts demand adaptability, collaboration, and responsibility. Especially in times like ours, it is crucial to remain mindful of what connects us – with each other, with our customers, and with the region in which we operate.

At a family business like Wagenborg, this comes naturally. As the largest private employer in the North of the Netherlands, we feel responsible for the people who live and work here, for the nature that surrounds us, and for the future we shape together. Our primary focus is actions, not words. That's why this edition of TIMES focuses on keeping "the environment in mind."

I recently witnessed the transportation of six enormous transformers from Veendam to Ter Apel. An impressive operation that combined technology, precision, and environmental communication. What struck me most was a conversation with a resident who explained how important it is for our company to be visible and approachable. "We watched your preparations taking place weeks in advance. Everything was meticulously organised. It gives us confidence in a successful outcome," he said. Those words resonate because that's precisely what 'caring for the environment' is all about.

In this edition of TIMES, you can read how we fulfil that responsibility. From balancing nature conservation and shipping in a UNESCO area to the innovative CO₂ carrier and the EasyMax 2.0 – a ship that demonstrates that sustainability and efficiency can go hand in hand. From sponsoring local initiatives to personal stories from colleagues in unique workplaces around the world.

We are investing in sustainable technology, but above all, in people. In training, in collaboration, and in connection, because ultimately, it's the people of Wagenborg who make the difference. Their dedication, commitment, and craftsmanship ensure that we can continue to build smart logistical solutions, reliable services, and a liveable region.

I hope you enjoy reading this. Ideally, you'll be inspired to make a difference yourself.

Egbert Vuursteen





HOW ROYAL WAGENBORG AND METSÄ GROUP ARE SHAPING SUSTAINABLE MARITIME LOGISTICS

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE TOGETHER

Royal Wagenborg and Metsä Group have signed a new long-term contract in 2025. An initiative that stands out in a world filled with logistical and geopolitical uncertainties. Yet, for both parties, it was a logical step. This new contract is about more than securing shipping capacity; it's a joint commitment to reinforce supply chain resilience, boost efficiency and champion sustainability.

The new agreement is deeply rooted in decades of close cooperation between the two companies. Their long-standing collaboration was officially recognized as a partnership in 2023, reflecting shared goals around reliability, sustainability, and operational excellence. Together, Wagenborg and Metsä are working to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of maritime transport, proving how lasting trust and a shared vision can create meaningful results. The latest contract builds on this foundation, marking both a celebration of their history together and a bold commitment to the future.

We spoke with two key figures from Metsä Group about this enduring relationship and their ambitious goals for the future: Veli-Matti Passinen, Vice President of Logistics and Marko Korhonen, Vice President of Maritime Logistics. They share insights into why this partnership is crucial for navigating global challenges, how it supports their ambitious sustainability targets, and what makes the collaboration with Wagenborg so effective.

Metsä Group is a Finnish forest industry company that operates in international markets. The photo shows two employees among the immense trees. The Group produces renewable wood-based products such as pulp, paperboard, tissue papers, sawn timber and other engineering wood products from 100% traceable and renewable northern wood. Metsä Group's parent company is Metsäliitto Cooperative, owned by over 90,000 Finnish forest owners - foto via Metsä Groep.



MARKO KORHONEN

Vice President Maritime Logistics, Metsä Group

- With Metsä for 6 years
- Responsible for sourcing global maritime logistics capacity
- Passionate about driving sustainability in the supply chain



VELI-MATTI PASSINEN

Vice President Logistics, Metsä Group

- With Metsä for 7 years
- Responsible for logistics at the Group level
- Motivated by tackling logistic needs through sustainable practices

Metsä Group has partnered with Wagenborg for decades. What makes this collaboration so enduring?

Veli-Matti: “Our partnership is built on a foundation of shared values: reliability, sustainability, and a focus on long-term efficiency. Our relationship dates back decades and has evolved alongside Metsä’s growth in the global pulp and paperboard markets. We select partners we trust, and Wagenborg has consistently delivered reliable transport services tailored to our specific needs. Their fleet and infrastructure are well-suited for the trade routes that are vital to our business.”

Metsä recently signed a new long-term contract despite global uncertainties. What was the strategic thinking behind this decision?

Marko: “The decision reflects strategic foresight and a commitment to continuity in a volatile environment. Global logistics have become more fragile due to disruptions, rising fuel costs, and geopolitical tensions. By extending our relationship with a trusted provider like Wagenborg, we secure predictable shipping capacity and gain cost control. Importantly, Wagenborg’s commitment to reducing CO₂ emissions supports our own climate goals. For Wagenborg, the agreement ensures a steady volume of cargo from a major industrial client, which supports fleet utilization and revenue stability. It also provides a solid foundation for them to invest in greener vessels and new technologies, knowing there is long-term demand. The agreement also deepens a decades-long partnership, reinforcing trust and opening doors for future collaboration in logistics innovation and strengthened relationship.”

“This collaboration isn’t just about moving goods—it’s about transforming maritime logistics into a climate-smart system.”



Sustainability is clearly a key priority. The partnership established in 2023 sets an ambitious shared goal to reduce CO emissions per ton-mile by 30% by 2030, using 2021 as the baseline. Do you believe this target is realistic?

Veli-Matti: "Sustainability is in our hearts. Metsä is owned by forest owners who work close to nature every day. This partnership helps us accelerate our transition to more sustainable products. Thanks to this joint target, we have a systematic approach and can focus on the long term to tackle global warming."

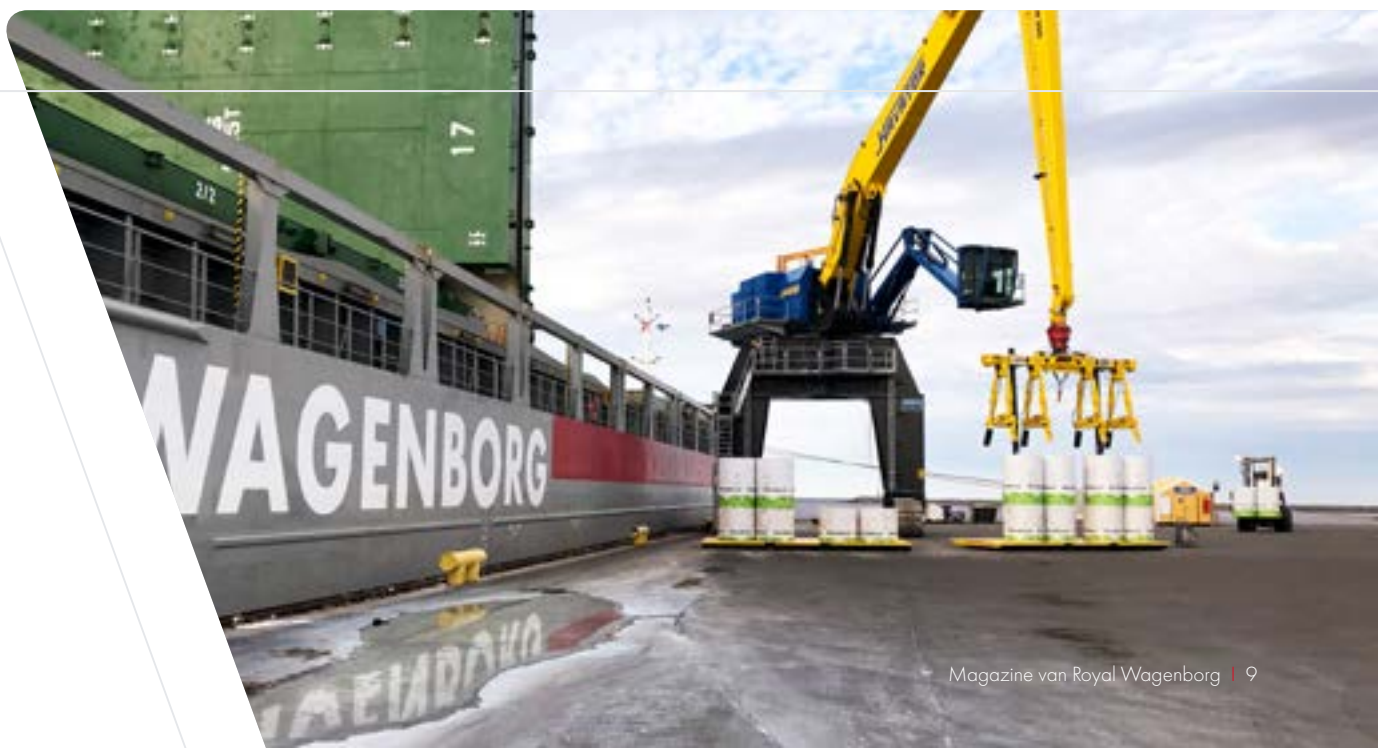
Marko: "The goal is ambitious, but we believe it is realistic if both companies continue their current path of innovation and collaboration. There are several reasons for optimism. Our long-term partnership provides the stability needed to invest in greener technologies. Wagenborg is already actively upgrading its fleet with more energy-efficient vessels and exploring alternative fuels like biofuels and methanol. We are also using digital tools for route and cargo optimization to reduce fuel consumption. With both companies committed to science-based climate goals and joint monitoring, we have the transparency and accountability needed to succeed."

What concrete steps have you already taken together to reduce CO emissions?

Marko: "We formalized our shared 30% reduction goal in 2023, using 2021 as the baseline. Since then, Wagenborg has taken further steps to modernize its fleet, focusing on energy efficiency. We are also implementing data-driven emissions tracking systems to measure performance and identify opportunities for improvement. On our side, Metsä is centralizing its marine and port logistics. This allows for better coordination, which leads to fewer empty voyages and directly lowers emissions. It's a combination of technological upgrades and smarter, more integrated planning."

How does this partnership help address the broader challenges in the logistics sector, such as fuel reliance and supply chain fragmentation?

Marko: "The logistics sector faces complex challenges, but our collaboration tackles many of them head-on. To address fossil fuel reliance, we have our joint emissions reduction goal and a focus on fleet modernization. To counter supply chain fragmentation, we are creating an integrated system with Wagenborg's support. The long-term nature of our contract enables co-investment in new technologies and



“Trust builds over decades, and renewing our contract reflects mutual confidence in operational excellence and shared values.”



alternative fuels, which might otherwise be too costly. This collaboration isn't just about moving goods—it's about transforming maritime logistics into a climate-smart system."

Veli-Matti: "We know the business is not always easy, which is why we chose to play this long-term game together. We will surely face challenges; black swan events sadly keep happening. But together, we will be able to tackle them. We can just pick up the phone and find solutions together. This is a key part of the collaboration."

What have been some moments where the partnership with Wagenborg has really made a difference for Metsä?

Marko: "The partnership has proven its value on many occasions, typically during supply chain crises, of which we've had more than enough in the last couple of years. During port congestions, strikes, and even the Baltimore bridge collapse, we have worked together with Wagenborg to find ways to keep our supply chain intact. This has enabled us to continue serving our customers in all situations. This resilience in the face of disruption has been the showcase for a true partnership."

Finally, what is your personal outlook on the future of this collaboration?

Veli-Matti: "For me, this partnership is a forecast of fruitful results. We have been working together for years, putting in a lot of effort and achieving results together. It's in the interest of both companies to continue this, and I am confident in our shared ability to face whatever comes next."

Marko: "I am confident that there are still many stones to be turned for better efficiency, where we can share the benefits and enhance sustainability at the same time. We are looking towards further optimizing vessel capacity and putting an even greater focus on port performance. This partnership is a cornerstone of our sustainability strategy, and it's very fulfilling to see the actual improvements we accomplish together."



New Weser Bridge successfully installed

This summer, in Stolzenau, Germany, Wagenborg slid the 1,650-ton Weser Bridge into place with precision measured in centimetres. Wagenborg specialists used pontoons, SPMTs, and jacking systems to position the steel structure over the Weser River in a safe and controlled manner.

Wagenborg opens Great Lakes season

Wagenborg's Emsborg opened this year's shipping season on the American Great Lakes with its first arrival in Hamilton. As a long-standing player in this region, Wagenborg continues to underscore its strong position in transatlantic logistics and sustainable maritime connections.



Contribution to THOR

Wagenborg successfully loaded both the topside and jacket for the THOR Offshore Wind Farm in Denmark. With seagoing pontoons, Wagenborg is supporting HSM Offshore in this, the largest Danish wind project yet created. THOR will offer a significant contribution to sustainable energy production for over a million households.

Waterstad leaves Wagenborg Fleet

After years of loyal service, Wagenborg has sold its tugboat Waterstad and transferred it to a Norwegian company. The sale of Waterstad aligns with Wagenborg's strategic focus. The towing market is constantly evolving, and this evolution demands innovation, flexibility, and operational excellence. Wagenborg is investing in fleet modernisation, allowing it to continue offering customers the best possible service by exploiting a modern and powerful fleet of tugs with a bollard pull of up to 80 tons. Wagenborg is looking to the future with confidence.

THE TRANSPORTATION OF TRANSFORMERS

Thinking **big** means checking even the **smallest details**

Transporting six 312-ton transformers from Veendam to Ter Apelkanaal was not only a logistical masterpiece, but also an exercise in listening, explaining and coordinating. Technical precision incorporating human manageability.



Pekale mayor Pekela Jaap Kuin



In the Pekela local authority, looking out for the local environment was a literal assignment, as the cargo was carried through the streets, past gardens and over a historically important bridge. What began as apprehension and unease developed into trust and respect.

We are not doing that

When Jaap Kuin, the local mayor, heard about the plan to drive a 312-ton cargo through his local authority, his initial reaction was to say firmly, “We are not doing that”, he recalls. “The planned route passed straight through a neighbourhood with old houses and a historical village entrance. I first needed to confirm that there was no viable alternative. My constituents are my priority.” But instead of refusing to compromise, all parties involved entered into consultations.

During a busy residents’ assembly, many questions were asked, concerns were raised, and suggestions were offered. Eventually, it was

The six transformers transported from Veendam to Ter Apelkanaal were built by Royal Smit transformers and commissioned by TenneT, the Dutch national grid operator. Each transformer weighs approximately 312 tons and will be used in the new high-voltage substation in Ter Apelkanaal. This substation, equipped with the new transformers, will distribute power to 100,000 households – a vital component in the improvements being made to the Dutch electricity grid. This extension to the network will enable TenneT to more efficiently process and distribute renewable energy to companies and households in the northern Netherlands.





“I told the project leader he had forgotten the public entertainment permit. That’s how big of an impact it had!”

decided to place vibration sensors on the houses along the route. *“This gave people confidence”, Kuin explains. “Residents realised that their concerns were being addressed. Best of all: the sensors did not go off once during the transportation process.”*

The mayor thought it was important to move the cargo during the day. *“That way, we can keep the situation safe, visible and manageable. We keep everything transparent”, he says. With a wink, he adds, “I told Bert, the project leader, that he had forgotten one of the permits; the public entertainment permit. That’s how big of an impact it had!”*

Mist, steel and precision

For Bert Maathuis, project leader, and Rob Reefman, project engineer, the adventure began early Sunday morning. The mist still hung over the country lanes as the 312-ton colossus began to roll on its journey of over 30 kilometres.

“In this kind of operation, literally everything needs to fit together”, Bert explains. “From the strength of the bridges and the radius of every bend to the time slot in which we are allowed to travel. No roads here are built for this kind of load. You need to be creative and double-check everything.”

Rob adds, *“It’s not just about what is being transported. You are driving past houses, over narrow lanes with ditches on either side and right through the centre of villages. We have to measure, calculate and test the entire route, sometimes up to a hundred times, to be certain that everything goes according to plan.”*

On the front page of the NRC national newspaper

The transformer transportation did not go unnoticed. *“We were on the front page of the NRC”, Bert says, proudly. “NOS, (the national broadcaster) RTL News, SBS, national newspapers: They all reported on the story. Not just because it was such a huge cargo, but*





because it symbolises the transition to renewable energy. This is needed to future-proof the Dutch energy grid, and that was clearly noticed."

The national attention had not been expected. "We were trying to travel under the radar with this operation", Rob replies. "Early Sunday morning, preferably with a little rain: that was our ideal scenario. But yeah, it still ended up being big news."

The modular trailer: A project within a project

This part of the operation was more complex than any other. Not just because of the length of the route, but due to the necessity of using a boiler bridge (a.k.a. tank bridge), which had to be rented from the Collett company in the UK. "That bridge is almost a project in itself", Bert explains. "They cost millions, only specialised personnel can work with them, and every detail has to be perfect."

Even internally, running the project was intensive. For six weeks, dozens of people were concentrated on their part of the project: drivers, operators, organisers and engineers. "The technology involved is impressive, but it's the people who get the job done", Rob says. "Without them, nothing moves."



A vibration sensor was installed on Jacob Wieske's house. Standing on the pavement outside his house, he looked on in amazement as the transformers rolled past. "Yes, wonderful, wonderful! I think it's fantastic. I even had a vibration sensor on my house, but I was not worried. The weight distribution was good, and the guys knew what they were doing – this was not their first time. I think it's great that a company from Groningen can do this. A bit chauvinistic of me, but true!"





Driver Johan Schoneveld: "We have so much experience with these kinds of trips and, behind the scenes, we have a lot of experts preparing what is needed. The MAN truck in front is in constant communication with the one behind and with the operators. It all runs like a well-oiled machine."

Experience makes the difference

Driver Johan Schoneveld has been a Wagenvorg employee for nearly 40 years, alongside Erik Kooij, who has been working for us for a similar period. Johan drives one of the two biggest powerhouses Wagenvorg owns.

Is it stressful to drive such a load? Not really, Johan says, calmly. "We have so much experience with these kinds of trips and, behind the scenes, we have a lot of experts preparing what is needed. The MAN truck in front is in constant communication with the one behind and with the operators. It all runs like a well-oiled machine."

Asked whether the trucks need serious maintenance after transporting such a heavy load, he reacts with a smile.

"Nope, they are then just getting into their stride."

Members of the public watching from the roadside do add extra pressure, he says. "As long as everyone stays behind the barriers, everything is fine. The only point of stress was by the snack bar in Mussel. There were so many people in the street that we could not get around the bend. If you see children, you have to be extra alert, as they can suddenly step forward without warning."

From grumbles to appreciation

Mayor Kuin looks back with respect. "I have a lot of appreciation for the manner in which Wagenvorg, TenneT and Royal Smit carried out this project. Careful, professional, transparent. Those characteristics radiate confidence."

"I have a lot of appreciation for the manner in which Wagenvorg, TenneT and Royal Smit carried out this project."



“We have shown that transporting a heavy load can go hand in hand with care for people and their local environment.”

Evaluating the transportation of the first transformers led to one suggestion: Spectators should be kept further away from the road. During the transportation of the following transformers, this suggestion was implemented. *“These are little things, but important to keep the public safe”, Kuin says. “I grumbled about the project at first, but now feel pride. If you take the needs of residents into account, you receive support. That is exactly what happened here.”*

For Bert and Rob, support is possibly the greatest reward. *“We haven’t just transported*

transformers”, Rob says. “We have shown that transporting a large and heavy load can go hand in hand with care for people and their local environment. That is heavy work with a light footprint.” Bert agrees. “Not a single scratch, no damaged roads, no damaging vibrations. That’s what makes it worthwhile.”

We started the project with reservations, but ended it with mutual respect. Respect for the technical precision, of course, but mainly for the precision shown by the people involved.



Every day, Wagenborg Passenger Services ships sail between the mainland and the islands of Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. A short crossing, but a special journey right through a UNESCO World Heritage site.





Focusing on the environment: Wadden Sea World Heritage

The entire Wadden Sea has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2014. It is the largest uninterrupted tidal system in the world. Nowhere else can you find such a dynamic landscape with habitats shaped by wind and tides. The sandbanks and mudflats at low tide alternate with changing currents at high tide, creating a shifting and vibrant environment. For this reason, international collaboration is underway to preserve this unique and characteristically variable area for future generations.

At Wagenborg, we have the honour of calling the Wadden Sea our workplace. Every day, Wagenborg Passenger Services ships sail between the mainland and the islands of Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. A short crossing, but a special journey right through a UNESCO World Heritage site. A place where crossings carry great responsibility. That's why we are constantly looking to the future, investing in sustainable solutions.

Building ships with the Wadden Sea in mind

In February 2025, we signed a contract with shipbuilder Next Generation Shipyards in Lauwersoog for a new express service vessel: the Wadden Ferry. The design of this vessel is fully tailored to the unique conditions of the Wadden Sea. For example, it features a draft of only 80 centimetres and a new type of water jet. The result is lower fuel consumption.

The three engines meet the strictest exhaust standards and minimise harmful emissions. This not only results in economical operation but also contributes to a further reduction in CO₂ emissions. The Wadden Ferry emits

less than half the CO₂ per sailing compared to the current ship, the MS Fostaborg. Moreover, the Wadden Ferry will carry more passengers (75 compared to the current 48). This reduces emissions per passenger even further to less than 30% compared to the current express service. The ship is designed for biodiesel and to be relatively easily converted to fully electric propulsion in the future. This marks the next step towards sustainable and future-proof sailing.

Dark where it can be dark

Safety is always our starting point. In the ports, we ensure that passengers can travel safely, even at night. Lighting plays a key role in this. At the same time, the Night of the Night, on Saturday, October 25, 2025, made us realise that, on the Wadden Sea, darkness has value in itself. Thanks to previous discussions with the Interreg North Sea Project DARKER SKY and the Masterplan Donkerte (Darkness) Lauwersoog, we have realised the impact of port lighting, including our own, on the surrounding area.

Safety is always our starting point. In the ports, we ensure that passengers can travel safely, even at night. Lighting plays a key role in this. At the same time, the Night of the Night, on Saturday, October 25, 2025, made us realise that, on the Wadden Sea, darkness has value in itself.



WPD Director Jieskje Hollander: *"This evening showed us what we take away when everything is illuminated. The Wadden Sea is special because it can still be truly dark here. We must continuously be aware of this. Conscious choices must be made about how we keep the environment in mind as we develop for the future."* That evening, together with Rijkswaterstaat and SPIE, we turned off all the lights around the ferry terminal for the first time. It made a world of difference; attendees could even see the Milky Way from the terminal. This was a first small step towards positive change. We are currently studying long-term strategies for reducing light production.

Listening to the Islands

At Wagenborg, caring for the environment also means listening to residents of the area. That's why we launched customer panels on Ameland and Schiermonnikoog this year, because who understands what's happening better than the islanders themselves?

In these panels, residents discuss our services and the accessibility of their island. Jieskje: *"This isn't a one-time meeting, but a regular way to stay in touch with islanders. We won't just listen; we plan to take practical steps based on what we hear. Together, we ensure that the ferry service continues to meet the wishes and needs of the island community."*

The panels bring together diverse groups of people, from entrepreneurs and healthcare workers to nature lovers and village representatives. This is how we build a ferry service that's not just about water, but also about mutual trust.

Everyday beauty

Sailing through World Heritage sites is something to be proud of. It requires craftsmanship, dedication, and respect for the environment. It also means going the extra mile every day to get it right. For our passengers, for the islands, and for the area that connects us: the Wadden Sea.



Photo: Paul Poels



Wouter Wakker

Barge Master

Workplace: Tromsø, Norway

“I saw the Northern Lights with my own eyes”

“I was lucky enough to have been chosen to carry out a special transport with HEBO Maritime Services. Large bridge sections had been manufactured in Stettin, Poland, for the construction of an 870-meter-long bridge in Tromsø, Norway. We loaded these sections onto large pontoons in Poland and transported them to Norway, using our tugboats Waterman and Waterland. It took eight days. Everything went smoothly, and the bridge sections arrived safely and undamaged.

Each section of the bridge weighs 900 tons. During installation, I had to ensure the barge remained level by using ballast, as the procedure involved lifting a considerable amount of weight. It was wonderful to see that enormous bridge taking shape section by section. We were up in the far north; I'd never been in the Arctic Circle before. When I arrived on September 8th, it was still a pleasant twenty degrees Celsius, and the water was so smooth you could see your own reflection. The surroundings? Truly magnificent. Stunningly beautiful scenery; the mountains, the fjords, and I even got to see the Northern Lights. Luckily, we finished just in time, as when I left on September 25th, the winter snows were beginning to fall.

It struck me that the local people had been waiting for a new bridge for about ten years. Soon, they won't need to take a half-hour detour anymore. When we installed the bridge sections, many people stood on the shore watching and practically cheering with joy. I'll never forget that image. This project has truly been my all-time favourite.”

SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

How 'Carbon Destroyer 1' supports Project Greensand

In a world racing to reduce CO₂ emissions, innovative partnerships are redefining what's possible in maritime logistics and offshore energy. One of the most ambitious examples is Project Greensand, led by INEOS Energy. This pioneering initiative in the Danish North Sea marks Europe's first full-scale Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) value chain — from capturing industrial CO₂ to safely storing it beneath the seabed. At the heart of this operation lies a new class of vessel: Carbon Destroyer 1, designed, built and operated by Wagenborg and Royal Niestern Sander. Together, these partners are setting a new benchmark for scalable, reliable and sustainable CO₂ transport by sea.



For INEOS Energy, CCS is strategic. “We need to take the right steps to decarbonise without destroying the industry in Europe to stay competitive. This is a key challenge and we believe CCS is the right solution”, says Mads Weng Gade, CEO of INEOS Energy. “Project Greensand is not just a Danish project; it’s a blueprint for industrial decarbonisation across Europe. We needed partners understanding logistics at scale and complexity who could translate this into dependable operations — and Wagenborg delivered.”

Edwin de Vries, managing director
Wagenborg Offshore, (left) and Mads
Weng Gade, CEO INEOS Energy





After the construction of the main ship, the Carbon Destroyer 1 was transported to the dock location of Wagenborg in the port of Delfzijl. Here, the vessel continued outfitting and commissioning for her CO₂ transport duties.

The Carbon Destroyer 1 is the physical link in this chain — a purpose-built CO₂ carrier connecting emitters in Denmark with storage fields in the Danish North Sea. Once operational, the ship will transport captured CO₂ from industrial sites to the former Nini oil field, where it will be injected 1,800 meters below the seabed. Over time, the project will scale to store up to eight million tonnes of CO₂ annually, proving that maritime CCS can be both safe and commercially viable.

Engineering carbon neutral logistics

The Carbon Destroyer 1 is based on Wagenborg's proven EasyMax general cargo vessel design, modified for liquid CO₂ transport. The 150-meter vessel features insulated and pressurized cargo tanks developed with Belgian specialist Geldof, allowing CO₂ to be carried in a semi-liquid state at -30°C and seven bar pressure.

"Technically, this ship pushes boundaries in every direction", says Fokke Jan Botke, director of shipyard Royal Niestern Sander. "We built a vessel that meets offshore-class standards, integrates advanced tank technology and operates with minimal environmental footprint. It's an engineering challenge that unites shipbuilding, offshore operations and climate innovation in one design."

Niestern Sander's shipyard in Delfzijl has long been known for building complex vessels for the offshore energy market. With the Carbon Destroyer 1, the shipyard demonstrates its capability to adapt maritime technology for next-generation energy transition needs.

"It's an engineering challenge that unites shipbuilding, offshore operations and climate innovation in one design."



“This collaboration proves that decarbonisation is a supply chain challenge, not a single-sector one.”

Overcoming industry barriers

For industrial decision-makers across Europe, CCS remains a topic surrounded by both promise and uncertainty. Many organizations face regulatory ambiguity, investment hesitancy and concerns about long-term liability. As Edwin de Vries, Director of Wagenborg Offshore, explains: *“Our clients are eager to act but cautious to commit. They want certainty — in safety, cost, and scalability. That’s where operational excellence and maritime reliability come in.”*

Wagenborg’s role in Project Greensand extends beyond ship operations. The company acts as a technical and logistical integrator, ensuring that every tonne of CO₂ can be safely handled, shipped, and injected within tight environmental standards. *“By making the transport phase transparent, repeatable, and verifiable, we lower the perceived risk for emitters”,* adds Edwin. *“That’s how you turn CCS from a one-off experiment into a dependable service.”*

Addressing concerns: safety, transparency and value

Safety and environmental stewardship are at the core of the project. Every phase — from capture to injection — is subject to monitoring, certification and third-party verification under the EU’s CCS framework.

“Transparency is non-negotiable”, says Mads. *“Public confidence is built on evidence. Every molecule we capture and store must be traceable, measurable and accountable.”* For industrial players, the practical value lies in scalability. The Carbon Destroyer 1 is not a prototype, but the first of a repeatable class. Wagenborg’s modular ship design allows future vessels to be adapted for different storage sites, payloads, or transport ranges — reducing costs per tonne as the network expands.

To European climate impact

While Project Greensand is Danish-led, its ripple effects are European. The CO₂



“We’re showing the world that it can be done, safely and responsibly.”

transported to the North Sea originates from emitters across the continent and the technologies enabling this process — from storage systems to transport vessels — are developed across borders. *“This collaboration proves that decarbonisation is a supply chain challenge, not a single-sector one”,* says Fokke Jan. *“Each partner contributes its own expertise — and the result is stronger than any one company could achieve alone.”*

For the Northern Netherlands, where Niestern Sander and Wagenborg are based, the project also represents a new industrial era. Building ships for the energy transition positions the region as a European hub for green maritime technology. *“We’re not just exporting ships”,* says Edwin. *“We’re exporting climate capability.”*

A model for scalable CCS

Project Greensand’s success lies in proving that CCS can operate safely at industrial scale — and that maritime transport can play a decisive role in connecting dispersed emitters with offshore storage. The Carbon Destroyer 1 demonstrates how existing maritime expertise can be retooled for climate impact, bridging the gap between

innovation and implementation. As Europe seeks to meet its 2040 and 2050 climate targets, scalable CCS will become indispensable. Projects like Greensand provide both a technological and a psychological breakthrough — turning abstract commitments into tangible, measurable action. *“We’re showing the world that it can be done, safely and responsibly”,* concludes Mads. *“Now the task is to scale it.”*

The road ahead

For Wagenborg, Niestern Sander and INEOS Energy, the journey does not end with the first voyage. Plans are already underway to expand the Carbon Destroyer concept into a fleet, connecting new emitters and storage hubs across Europe. *“We see this as the start of a new logistics segment”,* says Edwin. *“A maritime bridge between industry and climate goals.”*

From a shipyard in Delfzijl to the depths of the North Sea, the Carbon Destroyer 1 embodies the practical side of the energy transition — engineered precision, operational reliability, and cross-border cooperation. In doing so, it shows how industrial decarbonisation is not only possible, but scalable — one voyage at a time.





Scan the QR, watch the series and see how we're shaping the future.

Join us on an exclusive behind-the-scenes journey as Wagenborg builds Europe's first CO₂ carrier – the Carbon Destroyer 1. From keel laying to delivery, this playlist captures every milestone of this groundbreaking project.

How to build a CO₂ carrier?

- Episode 1: it can be done
- Episode 2: tradition meets future
- Episode 3: a pioneering project
- Episode 4: shaping the future in close cooperation
- Episode 5: a flurry of activity for Carbon Destroyer
- Episode 6: dynamic positioning



The launch and christening of Carbon Destroyer 1 marks a significant breakthrough for Project Greensand and carbon capture and storage in the EU. On May 14, 2025, Lady Catherine Ratcliffe, the ship's godmother, performed the traditional naming ceremony at the tanker's launch at the Royal Niestern Sander shipyard in the Netherlands. From left to right: Mads Weng Gade, Sir Jim Ratcliffe (CEO INEOS), Lady Catherine Ratcliffe, Egbert Vuursteen and Edwin de Vries.







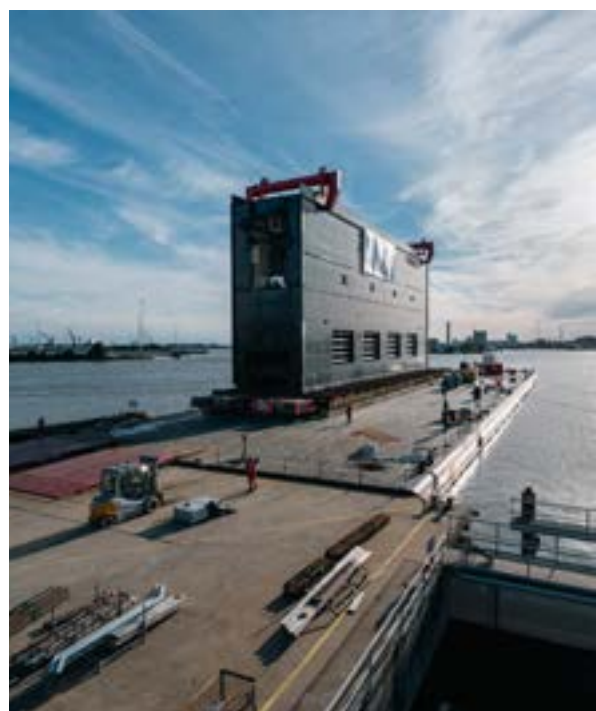
MASTERCLASS TRANSPORT

Wagenborg's contribution to the expansion of the lock complex in Brunsbüttel

In the world of maritime logistics, some projects reset the boundaries of technology and cooperation. The transportation of the three immense lock gates for the new, fifth lock in Brunsbüttel, Germany, is a project of this kind. With a transport weight of more than 3,000 tons per gate and each door measuring 48 meters in length, 9.5 meters in width, and 24 meters in height, this is definitely a project where brainpower, innovation, expertise, and teamwork are combined.

The gates' journey began in early 2025 in Emden, where Wagenborg removed the gates from the production facility using 136 axle lines of Self-Propelled Modular Transporters (SPMT's). This impressive operation, carried out over three days, marked the first stage of a logistical masterpiece. After being moved out, the gates were temporarily stored next to the water. There, they received some finishing touches. In autumn 2025, the first gate was moved onto a pontoon, using SPMTs. The nearly 24-meter-high gate was fully secured onto a steel structure, after which the tugboats

With the assistance of the Matador 3 and the Hebo Lift 10, the lock gate was carefully unloaded under Wagenborg's supervision at the Wagenborg terminal in Eemshaven.





Thanks to careful execution of the complex ballast calculations, the pontoon, with a total weight of over 3,000 tons, was transported safely from Emden to Eemshaven.

Waterland and Waterstraat transported it across the Eems River to Eemshaven. Here, thanks to a deeper draft, the gate could be lifted into the water with the help of two gigantic floating cranes. There it was secured to two custom-made stability pontoons. Wagenborg's floating crane, Triton, assisted as a tailing crane to stabilise the entire structure.

Soon, (at the time of writing, it is the beginning of December,) the first gate will depart on the final leg of its journey, being towed 120 nautical miles to Brunsbüttel. If all goes to plan, the gate will arrive before Christmas. The other two gates will follow the same route in a few months time.

Technical challenges and innovations

The transportation of these gigantic lock gates was preceded by years of preparation and precision engineering. *"The biggest challenge? I would say the transportation from the production facility to the quay. We had never before connected 136 axle lines",* Project manager Wouter Siemerink explains. *"It is always a kick to see a plan come together, especially when the challenge is so great. The cooperation between the different Wagenborg departments, the towing service, heavy transport, the agency, and storage and transhipment is crucial for this project to succeed."*

A successful RORO-operation

Wouter also described the Roll-on/Roll-off (RORO) operation in the port of Emden as one of the project's

The operation emphasised the expanding role Wagenborg is playing in complex infrastructure projects.



“The cooperation between the different Wagenborg departments, the towing service, heavy transport, the agency, and storage and transhipment is crucial for this project to succeed.”

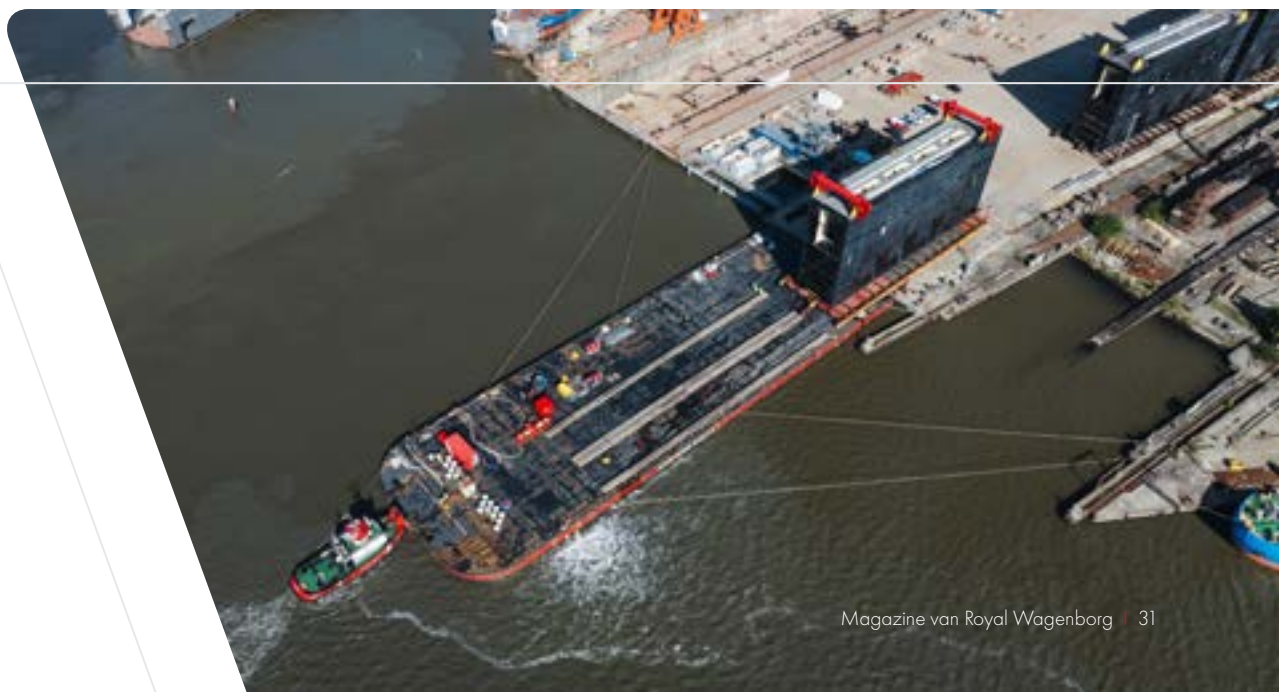
high points. This involved complex ballast calculations being made before the operation could begin to ensure the stability of the pontoons during loading and towing. The lock gate had to be rolled onto Wagenborg Barge 10 with utmost precision. This seaworthy pontoon, 100 meters long and 33 meters wide, created a stable base for the heavy cargo.

The operation progressed without a hitch, partially due to the efforts of the tugboat Waterstad, which kept the pontoon in a stable position. *“This kind of transportation demands absolute workmanship”,* says Siemerink. *“We had, of course, made precise calculations beforehand and thought through every detail,*

but just imagine what transporting such an enormous gate actually entails. Our colleagues carried out the plan absolutely perfectly!”

Teamwork and expertise: The key to success

The success of this project is down to the close cooperation between all parties involved. *“Teamwork, expertise, precision and professionalism: typical Wagenborg characteristics”,* he says. The operation emphasised the expanding role Wagenborg is playing in complex infrastructure projects. By combining specialised machinery with operational excellence, the company produces safe and reliable logistical solutions.





**“We are creating a balance
between current profitability
and long-term continuity.”**



CFO JANNEKE HERMES ON COURSE, CONTINUITY, AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

“Strategic connection is Wagenborg’s strength”

Since the beginning of this year, Janneke Hermes has been the new CFO of Royal Wagenborg. Thanks to her background in the energy sector, she brings a fresh perspective to the role of finance in the evolving maritime and logistics landscape. For Janneke, financial leadership isn’t just about returns, but about making connections: between people, markets, and generations.

From steel to strategy

“What primarily attracted me was the diversity”, says Janneke. “Ships, ferries, cranes, tugboats, and terminals. Everything large and powerful – that captures the imagination. But above all, the idea of strategic connection. Instead of the much-discussed strategic autonomy, I believe in strategic connections. Wagenborg is unique thanks to its broad portfolio and the wealth of knowledge and expertise available. I find this broad logistics role meaningful.” The family culture also played an important role in her choice. “The feeling of building something together, of history and innovation going hand in hand – that suits me. It’s special to be part of an organisation where the generations of expertise and knowledge are palpable.”

From energy transition to logistical link Janneke previously worked in the energy sector and sees clear parallels. *“Both sectors are orientated towards clients active in the chemical, energy, and industrial sectors. I bring with me knowledge of sustainability and the role of energy hubs, such as Eemshaven. This helps Wagenborg further strengthen its position as a logistical link in a changing energy market.”*

That experience is valuable now that Wagenborg is active in new markets such as CO₂ storage and transportation. *“My background helps us position such transitions not only technically, but also financially and strategically.”*



A healthy balance sheet as a foundation Janneke speaks of a “financially stable and resilient Wagenborg”. In recent years, a large portion of company debt has been repaid. *“Thanks to ambitious policies, we’ve increased our financial flexibility. The shipping market is, of course, cyclical – the sector experiences periods of lower returns – but our other business units provide balance. This makes us less dependent on a single activity.”* She calls this diversification between activities a strategic advantage: *“It allows us to spread risks and seize opportunities. That’s financial resilience in practice.”*

Investing in the future

Major investments are planned for the coming years, including the new generation of EasyMax 2.0 vessels and further improvements to our equipment to improve sustainability. *“Such advances require substantial resources”,* says Janneke. *“The challenge is to finance these investments without losing sight of short-term practicalities. At the same time, it is precisely these investments that increase our future value.”* Every decision is carefully considered. *“Sustainable investments must produce returns, directly or indirectly. We are creating a balance between current profitability and long-term continuity. Financial vigilance remains fundamental in this regard.”*

The CFO as a strategic partner

As CFO, Janneke looks beyond the figures. *“With an investment of tens of millions, it’s not just about returns, but about strategic fit: does it align with our course, our customer value, and our identity?”*

“Numbers are important, but the story behind them is more important. Why we invest, what it yields – that’s what it’s all about.”



“Diversification makes us resilient. Less dependent on a single activity, better prepared for fluctuations.”

My role is to identify opportunities and risks and ensure clear decision-making.”

Sustainability is playing an increasingly important role in this. “We’re not just looking at emission reduction, noise reduction, or circularity. We also focus on social aspects, for example, safety and well-being. Only projects that meet both our financial and sustainability criteria will proceed.” This aligns with the expectations of customers and financiers. “Customers are explicitly asking for quieter or cleaner equipment. Financiers value a green strategy because it strengthens our future viability. Sustainability is therefore not just a moral, but also an economic choice.”

Learning from uncertainty

The maritime sector is sensitive to geopolitical fluctuations. Janneke: “We keep our debt low, build up buffers, and focus on activities in which we truly excel. Diversification also helps us: as one market struggles, another performs better. We know that good years will come again.” She draws a clear lesson from recent disruptions, such as inflation and persistent pressure on trade tariffs. “Long-term relationships with customers and suppliers are invaluable. In difficult times, you can rely on each other. Trust is a form of capital that is at least as important as money.”

Leadership with connection

Janneke describes her leadership style as open and collaborative. “I am curious about what drives people. I like to offer space to develop and encourage learning. Sharing knowledge leads to better decisions. I prefer to connect disciplines rather than draw boundaries.”

She considers raising awareness within the organisation essential. “By involving employees in our strategy and demonstrating how their work contributes to the impact Wagenborg is making on the world around us, personal investment develops. This way the organisation grows collectively.”

Learning, improving, looking ahead

What drives Janneke is progress. “I don’t like repetition. I want to learn, improve, and take a step forward every day. That applies to me personally and to Wagenborg. I’d love for Wagenborg to be financially robust in five years, a leader in its segment in sustainability, and continually learning. If we improve even a little every day, progress will become autonomous. Collectively, we achieve more than we can alone. For 127 years, our company has used its connections to fuel innovation. If we continue to do that – sharing knowledge, investing, collaborating – we’ll remain a reliable, sustainable partner for decades to come.”

THE POWER OF SPONSORSHIP

Investing in people connections

For Royal Wagenborg, sponsorship means much more than just making a financial contribution. It's a way to invest in people, ideas, and the communities in which the company operates. It's about genuine commitment. Whether it's supporting sports, arts & culture, encouraging young talent, fostering innovation, or contributing to sustainable initiatives, Wagenborg views sponsorship as an opportunity to make a real impact and strengthen connections. Three initiatives Royal Wagenborg is proud of are highlighted below.





Wagenborg colleagues Bert Landman & Karst van der Leij

In 2026, Wagenborg will participate, for the second year running, in the Alpe d'HuZes, an event in which participants cycle or walk up the Alpe d'Huez to raise money for cancer research. This time, ten colleagues will travel to France to conquer the mountain.

A personal mission

For Karst van der Lei and Bert Landman, our two team members participating for the second year in a row, Alpe d'HuZes is so much more than an athletic challenge; it's a personal mission.

"Everyone knows someone who has beaten cancer, is battling it, or has been lost to it", says Bert. "That makes it personal and emotional. Last year, we had barely returned home when someone texted: 'Are we going again next year?' That says everything about how special this event is."

Karst adds: *"It does take a lot of effort, you know. You're not just off cycling for a week. The preparation is intense. You need to be on the bike for a few hours, several times a week. As the event nears, that rises to half the day or even all day. It is worth it, though. The goal is so important."*

The power of perseverance

Last year, Karst and Bert both cycled up the mountain three times. *"The first two times were relatively easy, but the third time was very tough,"* Bert recalls. This year, Karst has raised the bar even higher. *"I'm aiming for four to six. Last year, I also wanted to do four, but the weather was too bad. People were arriving at the bottom with hypothermia. This year we're hoping for better weather."*

Support from all sides

The support the team receives is heartwarming. *"Last year, Wagenborg paid for our accommodation, provided pool cars, and donated our registration fee",* says Bert. *"We can count on Wagenborg again this year. That's really nice, because it takes a lot of time and money. My family, for example, came along. That makes it extra special, but it's not cheap."* Karst emphasises how special it is to see so many people contributing: *"Not just friends, family, and acquaintances, but also suppliers and customers. Everyone contributes. Something good to know: 100 percent of the proceeds go to research."*

A rollercoaster of emotions

The Alpe d'HuZes is not only physically demanding, but also an emotional rollercoaster. *"There are volunteers and participants everywhere, each with their own story."* For Karst, the loss of his sister-in-law is a personal motivator: *"She left my brother and their son behind. You carry that with you when you cycle up that mountain."* Bert shares a similar story: *"My mother died of cancer in 2013, and cancer also took my best friend. Her son was two at the time. That gives you extra motivation to keep going."*

Stronger Together

Despite the tough times, good feelings prevail. *"You leave as colleagues and come back as friends",* says Bert. *"Last year we raised almost 40,000 euros. That's what you do it for. It's wonderful to see so many people want to contribute. It's also good to know that every little bit helps. Hopefully, we'll raise a lot of money again this year!"*



+

**Bert Landman en
Karst van der Lei**

Alpe d'HuZes



**Pieter Smit**

Director of the Art Month
Foundation

**Ameland Art Month - Bringing the community together**

"Ameland Art Month is an event close to my heart. It all began 30 years ago and has since become a household name. It began as a strategy to extend the tourist season on the island of Ameland. At the time, I was director of the tourist office. We proposed organising a weekend of exhibited art, but the idea was initially met with some scepticism. 'Do you really think people will come to Ameland for modern art?' they asked me. My answer was simple: give us five years and 2,500 guilders a year, and we'll see. The results speak for themselves. Our modest experiment has become a month-long event that attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Art opens your eyes

Art Month is a unique experience. During the previous edition, visitors were able to admire art at 45 locations across the island – from churches and museums to hotels and nature reserves. Works by around 70 artists, primarily from the Baltic Sea region, such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Latvia, were the focus of this year's Art Month. The theme was "PERSPECTIVE." This year's concept suggests that by engaging in conversation with others and looking at subjects from different angles, you can learn to see things in a new light. That's exactly what art does: it opens your eyes to new ideas and insights.

What makes Art Month so special is that it's much more than just art; It's an event that brings the community together. We have a fringe programme with concerts, literary evenings, workshops, film screenings, and choir performances. The great thing is that once people have visited once, they often return. Art Month now attracts approximately 7,000 visitors each year. That's a huge boost for the local economy.

More than financial support

The support of the business community, including Wagenborg Passenger Services, is indispensable. Without sponsorship, Art Month simply couldn't exist. This isn't just about financial support; it's about the willingness of businesses to contribute ideas and offer practical help where needed. Whether it's a truck that has to be taken on the boat at the last minute, or a hotel stay for a volunteer that's offered free of charge, it's the collective effort that makes Art Month possible. It creates connections, not only between visitors and the art, but also connections on and with our island itself.

Not an art expert

To be candid, I have more affinity for people than for art. I'm not an art expert, although I can certainly find some works beautiful. The art I find the most appealing is often not what sells quickly. It's a matter of perspective, I think. Next year will be my last year as director of Art Month, and that coincides with the 30th anniversary. We're all going to make it something special, so come along and visit our beautiful island in November 2026 to enjoy all the natural and artistic beauty we have to offer!"





DelfSail, trots van de regio

"With between 300,000 and 500,000 visitors, DelfSail is the largest multi-day public event in the North of the Netherlands. DelfSail features unique tall ships, both historic and modern vessels, all on display in the port of Delfzijl. The DelfSail Foundation aims to organise this maritime event once every five years. The last edition took place in 2024. We are currently facing the challenge of deciding when the next edition should take place. 2029 is the obvious choice, but we need to calculate whether we will be able to fill the port at that time, and to check whether government departments and sponsors will again be willing to contribute financially.



Gerard Beukema

Chairman of the Board
of the DelfSail
Foundation

Participating vessels

Concentrating on the ships, we saw a shift in the number of participating vessels in 2024. Some vessels opted for commercial advantage and sailed in groups. In addition, Russia maintains many beautiful tall ships that we have welcomed to previous events, but due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, they were not welcome in 2024. As there may again be fewer ships available in the future, we are investigating how we can secure enough vessels, perhaps by participating as part of another event. In 2029, for example, a sailing competition will take place along the ports in the North Sea region. This might offer interesting opportunities for us, and we are currently assessing the possibilities.

Enormous Impact

DelfSail has an enormous impact on the region. During the last event, more than 100,000 visitors from outside the province attended. This not only provides an economic boost, but also makes the people here very proud. Everyone wants to be there and to contribute. Each time we host DelfSail, hundreds of regional residents volunteer to help during the four days of the event and the preparations are largely carried out by volunteers.

Wagenborg has been involved in DelfSail for over thirty years. This is incredibly important. Wagenborg supports DelfSail financially. In addition, CEO Egbert Vuursteen is DelfSail vice chairman. The fact that the CEO of such a large international company is so closely involved in the event helps develop contacts with other regional parties. Wagenborg is genuinely committed to this event and to the region. I often hear Egbert Vuursteen say, "I'm a true Delfzielster*." You don't usually hear that kind of thing from the heads of large multinationals in our region. They're far less personally connected.

Enjoy

Organising DelfSail is a huge challenge every time. We all really look forward to those four days. When the time finally comes and I hear positive feedback and see people enjoying themselves, it makes me feel good. After the event is over, people talk about it for years and already look forward to the next event. That's what makes it all worthwhile."

The Wagenborg terminal in Eemshaven is the logistical heart of many offshore wind projects, as seen here with Van Oord's Boreas and Aeolus vessels.



Boreas mobilised in Eemshaven

Last autumn, Eemshaven was the scene of an impressive feat of maritime logistics and collaboration. Van Oord's largest offshore wind installation vessel, the Boreas, was demobilised here for the Hollandse Kust West (Dutch Coast West) project, where it will install monopiles in the North Sea. A crucial moment was the placement of a massive pile-driving hammer. Wagenborg's tugs manoeuvred the hammer with millimetre precision onto a pontoon alongside the Boreas, after which it could be safely hoisted aboard.


Gao Dayong

Master Ebroborg
Workplace: Saint Lawrence
Seaway

“The ships are lifted more than 168 meters”

“About once a year, I sail through the St. Lawrence Seaway. The St. Lawrence Seaway is a congested waterway with a limited draft of 8 meters. In the winter, the Seaway closes due to ice formation. We were on board the Ebroborg, en route from Milwaukee to Glasgow. Between Montreal and Lake Erie, you encounter a total of 15 locks, each 24.4 meters wide. This is how the ships are gradually lifted over 168 meters!

I’ve been working at Wagenborg for 14 years now. Wagenborg values professionalism, safety, and the well-being of the crew. I’m proud to be part of the team. I started as a cadet, became third mate, second mate, first mate, and finally captain. Each role has provided me with valuable skills and experience. The best part of my job as captain is the responsibility for the safety of the crew and the ship. I also enjoy leading a team and navigating through different seas and ports.

I’ve always been fascinated by navigation at sea and exploring many of the world’s most diverse places. The choice to become a seafarer was therefore a logical one. One of my most memorable trips was a visit to a port in Ungava Bay, Canada, where the unique natural landscape and sudden weather changes left a deep impression on me.”

Photo competition

AN EYE FOR THEIR SURROUNDINGS. OUR WAGENBORG COLLEAGUES CERTAINLY HAVE THAT! WE ASKED THEM TO SUBMIT PHOTOS THAT BRING THIS THEME TO LIFE IN AND AROUND THE PLACES WE WORK. THE RESULT? A COLLECTION OF BEAUTIFUL ENTRIES. HERE ARE THE WINNING PHOTOS!



Jeroen Remminga

Stevedore
Wagenborg Stevedoring

In October, the cruise ship Disney Destiny, built by Meyer Werft, was moored for completion at the Wagenborg terminal in Eemshaven. During this major project, our stevedoring, agency teams, tugboat crews, and crane operators demonstrated their craftsmanship and flexibility.

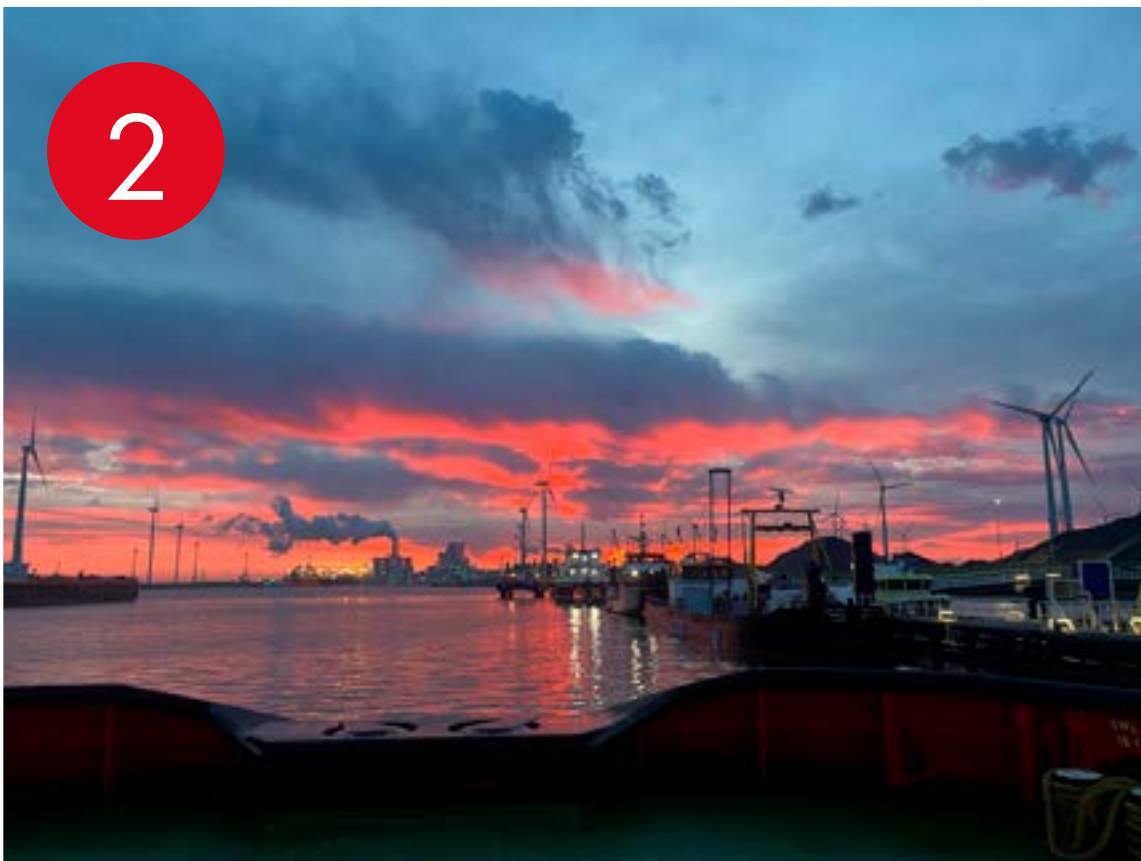




WINNER



2



+

André Rox
Tug boat captain
Wagenborg Towage

3



+

Meike Emmelkamp
Communications advisor
Wagenborg Nedlift



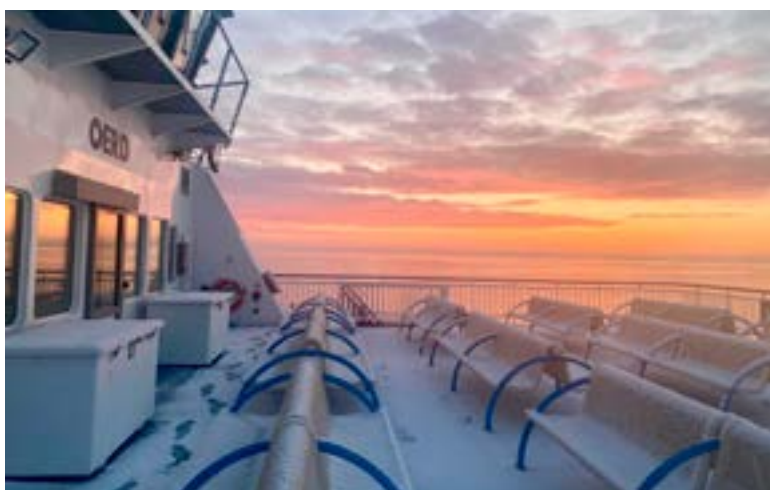
Honorary mentions



+

Hendrik A. Beukes

Master mv Volgaborg
Wagenborg Shipping



+

Maud Hendriks

Customer and Concessionary Affairs Manager
Wagenborg Passenger Services



+

Fokko Snitjer

Logistics Coordinator
Wagenborg Stevedoring

“Looking at the maritime manufacturing industry in the North of the Netherlands, things are going quite well at the moment.”





The future of the maritime manufacturing industry in the North of the Netherlands

The maritime manufacturing industry in the North of the Netherlands is a significant sector. With an annual turnover of €1.28 billion and employing 8,730 people at 2,600 companies, it is a driving force in the regional economy. This sector is deeply rooted in our history, yet also fully committed to the future. Fokke Jan Botke, director of the Royal Niestern Sander shipyard, shares his vision of current market conditions and of the challenges and promising opportunities that lie ahead.

Well-filled order books and a strong foundation

Fokke Jan has a positive attitude: *"Looking at the maritime manufacturing industry in the North of the Netherlands, things are going quite well at the moment."* The facts support this view. The order books for the next three to four years are well-filled, providing security not only for the Northern shipyards themselves but also for the extensive network of suppliers essential to the sector. This stable foundation is crucial for future investment, as, despite full order books, the industry in general is under pressure.

Challenges on an international playing field

The biggest challenge is the tight labour market. Finding enough skilled workers requires constant effort. *"We are currently compelled to work with a lot of temporary workers. This is an unfortunate necessity"*, explains Fokke Jan. *"We are doing everything we can to find and retain people, for example, with German-language campaigns to attract skilled workers from the border regions. We are also investing in training new talent, such as four Ukrainian employees who are learning the trade through the company school."*

The biggest challenge is the tight labour market. Finding enough skilled workers requires constant effort.



Fokke Jan Botke (director of the Royal Niestern Sander shipyard): "I've been in the business for a long time and wouldn't want it any other way." - photo: Cees Verkerk.

Furthermore, the shipyards in the North of the Netherlands operate on an international playing field, where countries such as China and India subsidise their shipyards and load the dice in their own favour. "You need to realise that competing by offering the lowest price is not a winning strategy for the long term, and that you therefore have to find other ways to stay relevant. We do this by working with respect for people and the environment, predictably and reliably, and by delivering quality", Fokke Jan explains. Proven reliability and the delivery of high-quality, innovative, complex vessels are the characteristics that distinguish the region. "That doesn't mean, of course, that we don't also strive to work as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible."

Automation and digitalisation: the key to success

To work as efficiently as possible, shipyard processes are continuously being analysed and optimised. In this regard, automation and digitalisation are essential. A tangible example is the transition from paper blueprints to iPads on the work floor. The iPads provide welders and supervisors with direct and instant access to all necessary information, providing significantly greater insight by displaying parts in 3D, for example, including dimensions, materials, and weight. This simplifies the job. The Northern shipyards are collaborating on this and utilising the expertise of specialists such as FerrolIT.

Another promising development is a joint trial with a welding robot, planned to begin shortly. This robot can weld 90 percent of a ship's side casings. This project, a collaboration in which the shipyards collaborate with educational institutions and engineering firms like

"Competing by offering the lowest price is not a winning strategy for the long term."



“We consciously choose to collaborate with other Northern companies. This strengthens the regional ecosystem.”

Conoship and DEKC. This collaboration not only ensures a more efficient working method but is also useful in a changing labour market. Fokke Jan: *“The robots not only ensure that we need fewer welders, but also make the sector more attractive to a new generation of technicians interested in robotics and automation.”*

Political Attention and Regional Attachment

The maritime manufacturing industry is on the Dutch political agenda, both locally and nationally. Marja van Bijsterveldt is the special envoy for the sector in the Dutch Cabinet. Her focus is on the implementation of an agenda focused on the maritime sector's challenges and opportunities, under the slogan: *“No Guts, No Dutch Glory,”*. The increased visibility this brings is invaluable, sparking interest among potential employees and opening doors to subsidies for innovation, making ambitious projects financially feasible.

The sector is a key component of ‘Nij Begun’ (in dialect: ‘new beginnings’), the programme working towards regional recovery and a safe, healthy, and sustainable future for the Northern Dutch provinces of Groningen and North Drenthe. This recognition underlines the importance of the manufacturing industry to the region's economic and social prospects. The power of collaboration: stronger together. The maritime companies in the North of the Netherlands realise that they are stronger working together. This belief is reflected in the Groningen Maritime Board, an organisation which facilitates collaboration between the companies. In the fields of digitalisation and welding robots, companies also work together. Furthermore, the shipyards have a joint company school, the Metal & Shipbuilding Institute. (MSO), and campaign together to generate interest in this field. The collaboration extends to suppliers, or *“co-builders,”* as Fokke Jan prefers to call them. *“Naturally, we consider price and quality, but if they are even remotely*





comparable, we consciously choose to collaborate with other Northern companies. This strengthens the regional ecosystem and ensures that crucial knowledge and expertise remain locally available."

Opportunities through sustainability and innovation

Due to the energy transition, Fokke Jan sees an increasing demand for the conversion and renovation of existing vessels. For example, Niestern Sander recently made a Fugro vessel methanol-ready, and the installation of Wind Assisted Propulsion is planned. The knowledge and expertise gained from these retrofit projects can also be applied to new construction. A good example is the latest generation of EasyMax vessels, which offer fuel-flex capabilities. We collaborated with shipping company Wagenborg to develop the EasyMax in-house. Fokke Jan emphasises the unique strength of this synergy: *"We, as a shipyard, are part of a shipping company, allowing us to be truly open with each other."* This transparent collaboration also led to a unique solution for the CO₂ carrier currently being built for INEOS.

The shipyard of the future

What does the future look like? Fokke Jan doesn't have

to think long about that: *"We're going to automate and digitise, so we can continue to do the work here with the available workforce. In a decade, we expect productivity to have doubled. Then we'll be building ships that can sail CO₂-neutrally with half the man-hours."*

The focus is not only on the construction and operational phase, but on the entire life cycle. Sustainability also means considering the end of a ship's lifespan. *"Can the ship be taken apart again once it ceases sailing, and can we reuse the components?"* This circular approach is becoming increasingly important in the design and construction process.

With a combination of craftsmanship, innovation, and collaboration, the sector is ready to embark upon a sustainable and prosperous future. How about Fokke Jan? He's eager to continue contributing, because the sector's strength lies not just in the numbers, but also in the pride and passion of the people who work there. *"It's such a wonderful profession. You really create something together, and when you see a ship like that launch... It's so enormous, and it then sails all over the world. I've been in the business for a long time and wouldn't want it any other way."*

"I've been in the business for a long time and wouldn't want it any other way."



Robert Boelens

Captain

Workplace: the Wadden Sea,
the Netherlands

“The Wadden Sea never fails to amaze”

“You might think you’d become indifferent to it if you sailed here every day, but to me that hasn’t happened. The Wadden Sea is different every day. The tides constantly reshape the landscape—what’s open water now becomes a sandflat filled with channels and birds in just six hours. That makes sailing here unique.

I’ve been navigating the route between Holwert and Ameland since 1998. Before that, I worked offshore, but the Wad is a world of its own. Here, you’re always dealing with currents, winds, and shallow waters. Every crossing is a different experience. Sometimes the water is high and calm; other times, the wind howls across the deck, and docking becomes a delicate operation.

The most mesmerising moment of the day? Early in the morning, when the sun rises over the Wadden Sea. In February, with clear winter skies, it’s breathtaking. When you see seals resting at low tide, with birds foraging on the sandflats, you realise just how special this place is.

The most impressive experience I’ve ever had was during the storm of 2013—force 12, hurricane-strength gales. Such weather is extremely rare here. We couldn’t dock as the bridge was shaking. You never forget something like that.

For me, the Wadden Sea isn’t just a workplace—it’s a living ecosystem. A place that breathes and changes. You have to get to know it and must always respect it. If you do, it will give you something beautiful in return, every single day.”

The Nassauborg is specially equipped for the demanding transportation of subsea cables. Having three static tanks—optionally four—the vessel can safely transport cables with an outer diameter of up to 18.5 meters, thanks to an adjustable inner diameter MCD cable. This flexibility makes the Nassauborg ideally suited for transporting various offshore subsea cables.





The Nassauborg as a hub in the energy transition

Wagenborg recently used the Nassauborg to transport subsea cables from Greece to the Netherlands. This unique project underscores the collaboration between Wagenborg departments. Paul Bakker of Wagenborg Projects & Logistics discusses the technical challenges and the close working relationships between the various Wagenborg disciplines in this unique field.

From steel to electricity

"It all started in 2015", says Paul. "That's when we developed our first cable tanks. We've since developed a solid track record transporting cables for clients like DEME, Van Oord, and Seaway." Over the years, a potent hub for these activities has emerged in Delfzijl and Eemshaven. "This is where expertise, manpower, storage & transshipment capacity, and accessibility all come together", Paul explains. Many cable manufacturers and wind projects are located in Northwestern Europe, making this an ideal base. We can respond quickly, as we have the right facilities and people nearby. This creates a situation where everything comes together to serve our customers effectively, from loading to unloading, all done with our own vessels, staff, and equipment.



“Our strength lies in not only supplying the ship, but managing the entire process.”

A special journey with the Nassauborg

A recent project stood out: transporting cables from Greece to Amsterdam with the Nassauborg. “This was a great example of flexibility”, says Paul. “We had to work closely with our colleagues in Shipping to convert the ship, dock it, and prepare it for the voyage. Thanks to excellent cooperation, we succeeded. This shows what we can do as a group.” The Nassauborg’s wide holds made it ideal for cable transport. “Sometimes it’s literally a matter of a meter more or less. With The Nassauborg, we were able to meet the customer’s requirements exactly.”

Empathising with the client’s world

“In our world, it’s not just about technology. Above all, it is about understanding the environment in which you work. Every client has their own safety regulations, quality standards, and working methods. Cable transport brings together diverse worlds: from shipping to offshore. The trick is to integrate these worlds seamlessly. A client should know their standards will be met from start to finish. This requires adaptability, forward thinking, and empathy with the client’s practices, whether the client is a cable manufacturer in Greece or a wind farm operator in Scandinavia.”





**Scan the
QR code
and see the
Nassauborg
in action!**



Building sustainable connections together

Subsea cable transport is a vital link in the energy transition. “We don’t lay the cables. Our task is to ensure they are available at the right time and in the right place”, says Paul. “From the factory to the cable layer, we connect all the links in the chain.” In a world where every component is specialised and expensive, this is a complex puzzle. “Our challenge is to use our vessels, crew, and resources to organise the availability of cables as efficiently as possible and ensure that the cables arrive undamaged. In this way, we contribute

indirectly, but significantly, to the realisation of sustainable energy.”

Proud of the project team

Paul concludes with a smile: “What makes me proud is the commitment of the entire team. From the engineers to the project managers and the crew on board, everyone feels responsible for the project’s success. We do that well at Wagenborg. We care about each other, the client, and the environment.”

“Attention to the environment also means knowing what matters to your customer.”

Over the years, the Wagenborg terminal in Eemshaven has developed into a strong hub for cable logistics. A private quay, agency, expertise, manpower, storage & transshipment capacity, and other equipment bring the things needed together.



“What distinguishes us is our ownership of all our facilities.”



DIRECTOR PETER ZWEEPE EXPLAINS HOW COOPERATION, OWNERSHIP AND A SHARP EYE FOR OPPORTUNITIES ARE THE KEYS TO GROWTH.

From harbour to horizon: Wagenborg is building sustainable connections

Having been awarded the prestigious DEME Nordlicht (Northern Lights) I & II project, Wagenborg has strengthened its pivotal position in offshore wind logistics in the North of the Netherlands.

From the multipurpose terminals in Delfzijl and Eemshaven, Wagenborg offers bespoke services in loading and unloading, project cargo and offshore. Safety, in the broadest possible terms, is always the order of the day. New challenges, such as sustainability in all ports and in their surroundings, offer many new insights and opportunities.

Flexible and future-orientated

"What distinguishes us is our ownership of all our facilities," Peter Zweepe explains. "Our terminals, warehouses and quays either belong to us or are long-term lease holdings. This gives us flexibility and independence. We don't need to consult with third parties and can offer our clients a guaranteed birth."

This level of independence is unique in the

North of the Netherlands. Wagenborg Stevedoring has terminals in both Delfzijl and Eemshaven, each with their own character. *"Delfzijl's strength lies in bulk and break-bulk goods. Eemshaven specialises in project cargo, cruise projects and offshore wind. Together they form a powerful logistical hub, operated using our own personnel, cranes, forklifts and equipment."*

One Wagenborg, one team

Within Wagenborg, different specialities run seamlessly together. *"In projects such as Nordlicht, the strengths of our group are on display", Peter says. "Our in-house towing, agencies, cranes, heavy-haulage, and loading and unloading divisions all complement each other. We speak the same language and understand each other's needs. This means Wagenborg*

DEME Nordlicht I & II: strength in cooperation

Wagenborg is providing DEME with the terminal facilities needed to support the Nordlicht I & II-project, a large, German offshore wind project. In Eemshaven, DEME has acquired a quay guarantee for 520 meters of quayside for the transhipment of parts for the offshore installation ships. The components needed will be shipped by Wagenborg barges using the "just-in-time" approach, while Wagenborg shipping agents will handle the shipping. The project illustrates the integral strength of Wagenborg: multiple disciplines working together to provide clients with effective and completely coordinated logistical solutions.

can be a reliable partner to our clients and we can offer them a total solutions package."

Internally, Wagenborg is constantly working on improvements and cooperation. "What we do on the quayside has a direct influence on the wider logistics. This makes effective communication with our colleagues and with external stakeholders crucial."

Regional responsibility

Peter feels responsible for the environment in which he grew up and now works. "Our terminals are situated right next to the Natura 2000 nature reserve, and in Delfzijl alongside the urban centre, so we have to be very careful with the local environment. We take the needs of residents into account, work safely with heavy machinery and are





conscientious in our use of lighting and movement of ships. We always develop solutions which are both operationally and socially responsible." He emphasises that proactive cooperation with government departments and educational establishments is essential. "We recently received a visit from the mayor and senior councillors from the Het Hogeland local authority. We also receive visits from local school pupils and students from several colleges." Peter explains. "People invited to visit us here can see with their own eyes what we do and the responsibilities attached to our activities. This creates understanding and trust, strengthening our bonds with the area in which we work."

Looking to the future

The offshore wind market continues to grow, but erratically. "We see that some tenders have not been applied for, as the business model is not profitable without subsidies," Peter explains. "This makes the market fickle and less predictable. For this reason, we need to remain agile. We need to stay abreast of political, economic and technological developments. What is apparent today may be different tomorrow. As an organisation, we need to anticipate change. Thanks to this unpredictability, we need to stay three steps ahead."

Peter: "Curiosity and spotting opportunities. This entrepreneurial spirit is deeply rooted in our DNA. We don't wait for work to come to us, we go out and find it!"

Peter Zweepe: water clerk to administrator to director

Peter Zweepe (Delfzijl, 1981) began his career in the Eemshaven port as a water clerk (quayside administrator). In this role, he literally worked between the ships and the quay. During the following years, he broadened his experience, working in the fields of road and intermodal transport, forwarding, and commerce, giving him in-depth, insider knowledge of the logistical chain. Eventually, he was drawn back to his origins: The dynamism, the people and the entrepreneurial spirit of the docks appealed to him the most.

"Trade is in my soul", says Peter. "I usually say 'Yes,' before I know how to solve a problem. I then make sure it succeeds." His career is characterised by curiosity, decisiveness and entrepreneurship. "These characteristics are not just mine; they are those of Wagenborg itself."



The Wagenborg terminal in Eemshaven has previously been used for the construction of several offshore wind farms. A private quay, agency for open and transshipment capacity, and other equipment bring essential services together.



“Amongst the elephants at Wildlands Adventure Zoo”

“We are employed to move things safely from A to B. That’s our job. We could be in a football stadium or between giant wind turbines, but this time we were amongst the elephants at Wildlands Adventure Zoo. My colleague, Gert Nijland, and I assisted with the exchange of two male elephants between zoos, as part of the European Species Conservation Programme. Timber the Elephant was moved from Emmen to Eindhoven, and a day later, Yadanar arrived from Heidelberg, Germany.

The fact that the cargo was a live animal made this a special case. The keepers had trained Timber, weighing over 4,000 kilos, so well that he could walk backwards into the container on his own. We could tell that this wasn’t just a normal job for the keepers. For them, it was a big event and an emotional moment, as Timber had been raised in Emmen zoo. Once he had been secured, we carefully lifted him out of the elephant enclosure with the 80-ton truck.

The next day, it was Yadanar’s turn. We hoisted him into the enclosure in a large moving crate. When Yadanar arrived, Gert and I were able to watch how the big elephant reacted to his new enclosure. It was wonderful to be a part of that, and it’s truly impressive to see such large animals up close.

The challenge of this job was mainly the young elephant’s behaviour. Yadanar was very active and moved around a lot in his moving crate. Fortunately, everything went well as everyone worked together effectively. That’s what ultimately makes our work truly rewarding.”



Rodney van der Molen

Crane operator

Workplace: Wildlands Zoo

Emmen



Scan the QR code and travel with Bas!

AT SEA WITH BAS BUCHNER

A journey focused on technology and care for people and the environment

When Bas Buchner retired as MARIN's director at the end of 2024, he received a special gift from Royal Wagenborg: a sea voyage aboard the Oranjeborg. For Bas, maritime expert and Programme Director for Unmanned Maritime Operations at the Royal Dutch Navy, it was a journey of reflection, of technology, and of humanity. Read his report here and watch the videos he made.





Day 1

In Belfast, I board the Oranjeborg for a voyage to Amsterdam, via Sheerness. I'm so excited! I receive a warm welcome from Captain Bauke Noorman and his crew. From the bridge, I see the Titanic Museum and the famous Harland & Wolf shipyard. The Titanic was built at this shipyard, as was the floating production platform, the Schiehallion FPSO, on which I previously worked.



Day 2

'Safety first' is applied thoroughly at Wagenborg. The day begins with a comprehensive safety tour by helmsman Thijmen Kobussen. He explains that the Oranjeborg is a ROLO. Even as a Delft shipbuilder, I had to look it up: ROLO stands for 'Roll On – Load Off', because the paper rolls on board can be loaded and unloaded either via a stern ramp or with a special side loader. This time, she's transporting over 7,000 tons of paper rolls from Canada, via Belfast and Sheerness, to Amsterdam. In Belfast, unloading is performed using the side loader, a complex combination of a large swing door, vertical lifts, and horizontal

conveyor belts. It's amazing to see how the helmsmen work together to ensure the unloading process runs smoothly and without major disruptions.

Thanks to a small cruise ship moored behind us in Belfast, we're not able to depart after unloading. We will have to wait until tomorrow evening. The crew remains cheerful: "You shouldn't worry about things you can't control." My lesson: a ship is just a small part of a large machine with all sorts of interesting parts.





Day 3

Today, I get a wonderful tour from second engineer Bren Roijenga: past the two main engines, through the couplings and gearbox to the propeller shaft and the shaft generator. There are three generators, separators, filters, turbochargers, cooling and lubrication systems, freshwater generators, numerous pumps, and a control room. Finally, you have the hydraulic steering gear, situated above the rudder. The engineers have to keep everything running synchronously, even at sea: kudos!

It also makes me think again about the challenge of the maritime energy transition: this isn't an electric car, this is a floating power plant. It also motivates me more to work together earnestly towards the emission-free engine room of the future.



Day 4

In the evening, we depart Belfast. The pilot boards, and Captain Bauke Noorman indicates that he prefers to be in control of the ship, with the pilot offering advice. We depart in reverse, out of the harbour. As soon as there is room, the ship is effectively turned around, using the combination of the bow thruster fore and the tugboat aft, positioning us to leave the harbour bow-to-sea, without needing a tugboat. At the end of the channel, the pilot tender is already waiting to pick up the pilot. We're on our way to Sheerness, a good two days' sail away. Out onto the boundless sea...





Day 5

Shall we broach upon a difficult subject? Seasickness. It's a sensitive subject in my family. My father, a sailor, really suffered from it, especially in the engine room. He even lost his teeth while vomiting. The family has always joked that a big fish is swimming around somewhere with my father's teeth.

Today, the Irish Sea is calm and sunny. I discuss the maintenance and painting work on board with the bosun. That has to be continuous on a moving ship in the aggressive sea climate of sun, wind and

salty seawater. In the evening, a pod of dolphins approaches our bow, and the sun sets over the sea. It creates a beautiful and peaceful scene. In the middle of the first night, we reach Land's End. I decide to finish a four-hour watch with Second Officer Thijmen. He shows me how he uses radar, ECDIS, and AIS to navigate safely and avoid collisions.



Day 6

These past few days on the Oranjeborg have made me reflect on something I knew conceptually, but which you only truly understand once at sea: the world and its prosperity depend on shipping, and therefore primarily on the commitment and professionalism of the crews on board, the pilots, the VTS operators, and the people of the Coast Guard and SAR (Search & Rescue) organisations. 24/7, 365 days a year. They all deserve our attention and respect!

I get up at 4:00 a.m., at the start of Jasper's watch. It's already getting light again. We are now in the traffic separation scheme in the Strait of Dover. This narrow strait is gradually becoming busier. After the narrow passage at Dover, we cross the traffic separation scheme directly towards the White Cliffs of Dover. Captain Bauke Noorman himself comes onto the bridge for this purpose. After that, we find a spot to anchor.





Day 7

Today we sail the Oranjeborg from Margate to Sheerness. At 6:00 a.m., I go back to the bridge to check on Jasper. Even though we're not sailing, the watches continue. "Anchor watch," in this case: will the ship stay where it is, or is the anchor perhaps starting to drag? Are other ships coming dangerously close?

At 2:00 p.m., we weigh anchor. During a shower of rain, the pilot comes aboard with a fast tender, and we begin our journey across the Thames. We approach the fort and the port of Sheerness. Just before entering the harbour, we make a U-turn, right in front of the only remaining berth. Then, the bow thruster and tugboat gently push us in front of a floating pontoon and a bulk carrier moored behind it. It's a bit like a game of Tetris, but on a larger scale.

Day 8

All good things must come to an end, and so ended my voyage on the Oranjeborg. For a week and a half, I shared the cabin of the "Apprentice." And that's how it felt. I was allowed to walk along, chat, watch, and eat with the crew. I was part of their work whilst sailing and at rest.

In the port of Sheerness, the unloading continues, hours on end. At 11 p.m., the hold is empty, but we can't leave yet, as we've been told there is no pilot available. When the pilot boards the next morning at 10:00 a.m., he tells us he had been available the previous night. The men just laugh it off.

We depart. Off the coast near IJmuiden, a Dutch pilot comes aboard. He expertly guides us, despite the glare of Christmas tree lights, into the harbour and the lock, and via the North Sea Canal to Beringhaven. The captain himself expertly steers us ashore, so that by 2:00 a.m. the ramp can be lowered, ready for unloading, which begins again at 7:00 a.m.

This is the morning I bid the crew farewell, which is a new experience. I wish them a safe voyage. On the back deck, I briefly recall the words of former Dutch Prime Minister Piet de Jong: "For some people, the coast is the end of the country, for others, the beginning of the world."





The “fuel-flex” EasyMax 2.0 exemplifies progress in the North of the Netherlands: innovation, craftsmanship, and common sense in one design.



EasyMax 2.0 – Certainty in a changing world of maritime logistics

For logistics managers, whose working day consists of balancing delivery reliability, costs, and sustainability, predictability is key. The global logistics chain is buckling under the pressure of stricter emissions regulations, fluctuating fuel prices, and customer demands for CO₂ reduction. To help in this complex situation, Wagenborg offers a concrete solution: the 'fuel-flex' EasyMax 2.0.

"We build vessels that offer our customers continuity in an uncertain world," says Theo Klimp, Fleet Director at Wagenborg. "The EasyMax 2.0 combines proven operational performance with flexibility in fuel choices. This offers future-proofing for the vessel, and for our customers too."

Continuity in transport, control over emissions

The EasyMax 2.0 was developed for shippers who require reliable, sustainable tonnage within their supply chain. While many vessels today still rely on a single type of fuel, the EasyMax 2.0 design offers a 'fuel-flex' concept. Upon delivery, the ships will run on (bio) MGO, but they are prepared for conversion to LNG, methanol, or ammonia – without compromising their cargo hold capacity. This enables Wagenborg to provide its customers with a suitable solution in a world where environmental expectations are ever-increasing.

"The logistics world wants certainty, not experiments", says Theo. "We build on proven technology, but in such a way that we can effortlessly switch to cleaner fuels as soon as they become economically and

technically feasible." For the supply chain, this means guaranteed availability of ship space and lower CO₂ emissions.

Efficiency in every detail

The EasyMax 2.0 builds on the successful first generation of EasyMax ships, which are among the most efficient general cargo ships in the world. For shippers, this translates into significantly better transport sustainability without sacrificing service reliability. *"Our customers operate in supply chains where downtime immediately costs money", says Theo. "That's why we build ships that not only sail efficiently but also perform predictably."*

Reduced risks, increased predictability

The energy transition brings uncertainty. New regulations may accelerate the obsolescence of existing vessels, while new technologies are not yet fully proven. With the EasyMax 2.0, Wagenborg is opting for risk management through modularity. The vessels can be technically adapted to tomorrow's fuel market without losing today's availability. This prevents

On October 9, 2025, the keels for six new EasyMax 2.0 vessels were laid down at the shipyard. This marks the formal start of construction for this innovative new series within the Wagenborg fleet. From left to right: Kris Klasens (production manager for new construction), Udo Borger (new construction inspector), Alwin Huisman (project manager), and Leon Bokeloh (surveyor) - photo: Guus van der Linde



customers from having to switch logistics partners when legislation changes. This is a significant advantage in a time when supply chains are vulnerable. “Our fleet strategy revolves around long-term reliability”, Theo explains. “Not only for ourselves – we build a vessel for at least 30 years – but also for our customers. Anyone sailing with Wagenborg today knows that their CO₂ footprint will continue to decrease in the coming years, without any operational surprises.”

Regional strength, global relevance

The EasyMax 2.0 is not only a technological masterpiece but also a showcase for the Northern maritime ecosystem. The EasyMax 2.0 series is being built at the Royal Niestern Sander shipyard in Delfzijl, which is part of the Wagenborg Group. Design,

construction, and operation are thus combined into a single integrated chain – all within a kilometre of each other. This local cluster guarantees short lines of communication, craftsmanship, and continuous knowledge exchange between the shipowner, shipbuilder, and suppliers. The result: vessels that meet the demands of modern logistics and the sustainability goals of shippers worldwide. “We combine the famous Groningen practicality with high-tech shipbuilding”, says Theo. “We don’t just talk about sustainability; here we build it. Our customers appreciate our down-to-earth approach.” This is how Wagenborg combines operational flexibility with technical progress, delivering what the market needs most: certainty in a changing world. “At Wagenborg, we call this ‘working together to make sustainability happen’”, concludes Theo.

The modular concept means our fleet will be ready for methanol, LNG, or ammonia.


Frank Groeneveld

Team leader IRATA Level 3


Workplace: Port Elizabeth, South Africa

“We regularly saw dolphins and turtles swimming by”

“One of the most extraordinary worksites I’ve ever visited was in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. There, we were conducting the five-yearly inspection of the Saipem 12000, a sixth-generation ultra-deepwater drillship, which measures almost 230 meters in length. This installation is so enormous, it is awe-inspiring when you first arrive. It was a major project, involving large components, towering heights, and heavy equipment. Everything had to be carefully planned and adapted to ensure it ran safely and efficiently.

The conditions were beautiful. We worked with a view of the sea and regularly saw dolphins and turtles swimming by. These are moments when you pause to reflect on where you are—you go to places you would never normally have the opportunity to visit.

Many projects involve intensive effort. As Team Leader IRATA Level 3, I am responsible for on-site coordination. I am the client liaison, and I oversee safety. I also directly contribute to the implementation. The combination of management tasks and practical work suits me well, as it ensures that my work remains varied. I’ve been working at Wagenborg for 32 years now. Through a friend, I heard many stories about adventurous, diverse, and challenging projects. That appealed to me. When I’m away from home, in the evening, I have a cup of coffee, watch a movie, or call my girlfriend and daughter, Ninte. I miss them, of course, when I’m away from home for a long time, but this work—with these people, in such varying locations—remains wonderful.”



“We combine existing expertise in offshore logistics, heavy transport and steel construction with a strong port infrastructure in Delfzijl and Eemshaven.”



PORTLANDS CAMPUS GRONINGEN

Building a circular future for the North Sea

TOM THOMSON
Manager
Decommissioning

Tom Thomson (born in Germany, raised in Twente) has been the Decommissioning Manager at Wagenborg for almost a year. Before that, he spent almost three years working at the Wagenborg shipyard, where he was responsible for commercial projects. His career has been characterised by entrepreneurship, energy, and curiosity. *"Pioneering energises me",* he says.

"Decommissioning is new territory: everyone knows it has to be done, but no one knows exactly how to do it. That makes it exciting."

MARLOES PALS
Learning &
Development Advisor

Marloes Pals has been working at Wagenborg since 2023. She is committed to helping colleagues, teams, and Wagenborg as an organisation to develop. *"Certain skills and competencies are important now, but the world around us is changing, and employees' needs and desires are changing,"* she explains. *"As a Learning & Development Advisor, I respond to current developmental needs and anticipate future needs."*

With the establishment of the Portlands Campus Groningen, Wagenborg is joining forces with several regional partners to position the North of the Netherlands as a knowledge and innovation centre for Decommissioning & Restoration (D&R). Decommissioning Manager Tom Thomson explains how Wagenborg is building a sustainable future for the offshore industry and creating new opportunities for the region through this collaboration.

Decommissioning: a new offshore phase

Decommissioning is the safe removal and dismantling of installations that are no longer in use. Not entirely coincidentally, this is a logical next step in Wagenborg's offshore strategy. *"A huge market for decommissioning will emerge in the Southern North Sea in the coming years",* says Tom Thomson, Decommissioning Manager at Wagenborg. *"We combine our existing expertise in offshore logistics, heavy transport, and steel construction with a strong port infrastructure in Delfzijl and Eemshaven. With this infrastructure, we are fully able to support operators in the dismantling of their installations."*

Collaboration is the foundation of the Portlands Campus Groningen

To realise this ambition, Wagenborg recently signed a letter of intent with regional partners, including Arcadis, Well Gear, and the Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij (NAM), to establish the Portlands Campus Groningen. The goal is to combine knowledge, innovation, and capacity to further develop decommissioning in the North of the Netherlands.

Arcadis operates globally as a consultancy and engineering firm. Well Gear specialises in the decommissioning of oil and gas installations. NAM is already decommissioning natural gas



Wagenborg is coordinating a complex heavy-lift operation to dismantle the topside of the G 14-B platform in the North Sea. The topside, weighing approximately 1,000 tons, was safely transported to Delfzijl on one of Wagenborg's pontoons.

installations in Groningen. "Each party brings specific expertise, from environmental technology to logistics and construction. Together, we can offer a complete package to the market", explains Tom.

The campus will also be an incubator for education and research. "By collaborating with educational institutions such as the University of Groningen (RUG), Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Hanze), and the three vocational (MBO) colleges, Drenthe College, Noorderpoort, and Alfa College (known collectively as DNA), we want to train a new generation of specialists who can work here in the region."

Innovation, sustainability, and circularity

The Portlands Campus Groningen focuses not only on dismantling, but also on reuse and sustainability. "Where possible, we want to reuse materials and give installations a second life, for example, as a hydrogen platform or service station", says Tom. "That's not only environmentally responsible, but also economically viable: reuse is cheaper than new construction."

In addition, Wagenborg is researching new methods for cleaner and more efficient dismantling, with safety and environmental protection as central priorities. "The greatest innovation opportunities lie in the processing of contaminated materials. Figuring out how we can break them down faster, more safely, and in a more circular manner."

"By offering opportunities for retraining and regional collaboration, we strengthen our position as an offshore hub."



“Where possible, we want to reuse materials and give installations a second life.”

Positive impact on the quality of life in the region

The campus will be a major driver of employment and therefore good for the quality of life in the North of the Netherlands. *“It’s a completely new industry, with great potential for jobs and knowledge development”,* says Tom. *“By also offering opportunities for retraining and regional collaboration, we strengthen our position as an offshore hub, aligning well with the ambitions of this region.”*

For Wagenborg, the plans fit seamlessly into its broader vision of sustainable growth. *“We are*

a family business with strong roots in the region. What we develop here must have value for the surrounding area. Economically, socially, and of course, ecologically.”

Shaping the future of energy

With the Portlands Campus Groningen, Wagenborg is taking an important step in its mission to future-proof its offshore activities. Tom: *“Decommissioning is literally clearing out the past to make room for the future. This requires collaboration, knowledge, and a pioneering mentality.”*

Marloes Pals on learning, connecting, and looking ahead

Marloes Pals, Learning & Development advisor, works for Wagenborg, contributing to the development of the Portlands Campus Groningen. From her perspective, the axis of this initiative is combining what already exists: strong educational infrastructure, existing knowledge, and years of experience in the region, to make something new. *“So much is already available”,* says Marloes.

“The main thing now is to bring that knowledge, expertise, and energy together and to share what we know with each other.” Marloes is currently

brainstorming with the educational institutions and will soon do so with the affiliated commercial parties. This way, she stays close to the action, knows what the market and society demand, and what expertise the region has to offer. She believes the Portlands Campus is an inspiring example of collaboration where no one gets left behind. *“We are pioneering together and learning from each other to create an environment in which the North of the Netherlands can become an authority in this field. From the first sketch to the final implementation.”*

Since the 1990s, Wagenborg's ships have been regular visitors on the Saint Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. One of their ships passes through the locks at Montreal.





Local strength within a global network

Wagenborg operates in an international market, yet remains firmly rooted in the regions in which it operates. Local offices are a vital link in this process, translating global logistics expertise into customised solutions that meet the needs of local customers and communities.

By combining local presence and commitment with a strong international position, Wagenborg builds lasting relationships, strengthens its reputation, and delivers on its promise: working together on smart, safe, and future-proof logistics.

Montréal as a gateway to North America

Marco Renzelli heads Wagenborg's Montréal-based commercial and operational office in North America. *"This local presence provides direct access to a strong network of customers and suppliers, delivering customised solutions with operational expertise. Although Wagenborg is already well-known within the Canadian shipping and industrial sectors, the team is actively working to strengthen its reputation with leading players in the forestry, steel, grain, and mining industries. As a member of the Shipping Federation of Canada, the office also maintains close contacts with government agencies, positioning Wagenborg as a reliable and solution-orientated partner in a competitive and volatile market."*

Spain: a strategic hub for Southern Europe and Northwest Africa

José Luis Guerra is Managing Director in Seville and represents Wagenborg in Southern Europe. *"From offices in Spain and Gibraltar, our team provides operational and financial support as owner-agent, broker, and loss adjuster. We ensure efficient and safe cargo handling, bunkering operations, and emission control services. Although Wagenborg is not yet an established name in the region, we are actively working to increase its visibility through presentations, events, and client visits. Small gestures such as calendars and merchandise contribute surprisingly effectively to this effort."*

Helsinki as a trusted link in Northern Europe

From Helsinki, Wagenborg has been serving the Finnish and Baltic markets for almost 40 years, through Helsinki Chartering. Led by Jari Järvi (until March 2026) and Lennart Meyer (starting April 2026), the office provides commercial support and local market knowledge. *"Finnish clients benefit from direct access to Wagenborg's modern, ice-strengthened fleet, with a team that speaks the language and understands regional working methods. In a time of geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty, the team actively seeks partnerships with smaller shippers to consolidate volumes and position sustainable maritime shipping as an attractive option."*

Malmö as a strategic hub for industrial maritime shipping

From Malmö, Bengt Meuller leads Wagenborg Sweden, with a clear focus on chartering, operations, and business development. *"Our office serves as Wagenborg's eyes and ears in Sweden, managing both the Lo-Lo fleet and the Ro-Ro system, with the vessels Baltic and Bothniaborg. Thanks to our local presence, our team has built strong, long-term client relationships. In a market where cost savings are paramount, Wagenborg continues to distinguish itself through reliability and service. Through client visits, trade fairs, and university partnerships, we are further strengthening our brand awareness—with the goal of sustainable growth and a strong network in the Swedish maritime sector."*

THAMESBORG GROUNDING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

Strength through cooperation in the Arctic

When the Thamesborg ran aground in the Franklin Strait in the Canadian Arctic on September 6th, Wagenborg faced a major challenge. We needed to arrange a rapid search in a remote and vulnerable area, with due regard for both people and the environment. Thanks to international cooperation, with essential expertise and experience in polar waters, a highly complex problem was solved, avoiding casualties and pollution.

Wagenborg regularly sails round-trips between China and Canada, carrying contract cargo. These voyages often take place via the Panama Canal, but, as the shorter Northwest Passage is navigable in the summer, that is the route then taken. On August 18th, the Thamesborg departed the Chinese port of Lianyungang with a cargo of anodes destined for Canadian industry, taking the Northern route.

Grounded

After a successful first leg of the voyage, the Thamesborg ran aground on September 6th in the Franklin Strait, in the heart of the Canadian Arctic.

Reasons for the grounding are, as yet, unknown. It was soon confirmed that the ship was stable, the crew safe, and no pollution had been caused. A water inspection confirmed that the fuel tanks and cargo holds were intact. However, several ballast tanks had been damaged, making the ship's buoyancy insufficient to refloat. Wagenborg immediately notified the Canadian Coast Guard and Transport Canada, engaging external salvage experts to refloat the Thamesborg.

Time

The operation was challenging. Given the remote location, vital equipment and





The salvage plan consisted of three phases. With the help of the Thamesborg's crew, approximately 5,000 tons of cargo were transferred to the Silver Copenhagen, one of the contracted vessels specifically selected for this operation, due to its deck cranes and minimal draft. – Photo via Canadian Coast Guard.

vessels were not readily available. Moreover, time itself was a major challenge as winter was approaching, and no one was eager to consider a scenario in which Thamesborg would have to overwinter in the frozen Arctic. Wagenborg and excellent local salvage experts worked closely to develop a salvage plan within a reasonable timeframe. This plan was deemed “logical and appropriate” by leading experts and focused on safety, environmental protection, and the controlled refloating of the ship. The closest and most suitable vessels and equipment were in Europe, and these were contracted to carry out the salvage operation.

The salvage operation

The salvage plan consisted of three phases. With the help of the Thamesborg's crew, approximately 5,000 tons of cargo were transferred to the Silver Copenhagen, one of the contracted vessels specifically selected for this operation, due to its deck cranes and minimal draft. The icebreaker MSV Botnica sailed to the site with all the equipment needed to refloat the Thamesborg safely. Specialised generators and ballast water pumps were removed from the Thamesborg's ballast tanks. On October 8th, the Thamesborg was successfully refloated. No injuries. No pollution. The result of international cooperation and expertise.

Experience in the Arctic

Wagenborg has a long and successful track record in the Arctic and in ice navigation. Since



The ship was stable, the crew safe, and no pollution had been caused.



2016, the company has completed more than 50 logistical transits through the Northwest Passage in close cooperation with Canadian vessels. Even with extensive experience, each voyage is prepared as carefully as the first, utilising the latest charts and weather forecasts, powerful navigation systems, maintaining a controlled speed, and deploying experienced Canadian ice navigators. Despite all precautions, this incident demonstrates that natural hazards will always be a factor at sea, and that Wagenvorg continues to learn and strengthen its leading role in sustainable Arctic shipping. The extensive investigation into the cause of the grounding will contribute to Wagenvorg's continuing success.

A focus on the environment

The Arctic is one of the world's most vulnerable ecosystems. Wagenvorg

consciously chooses an approach that prioritises care for nature and community. Every step is coordinated with our Canadian partners to minimise risks. To ensure survival, especially in challenging conditions, safety precautions and environmental protection are our top priorities.

Moving forward together

After successfully refloating, the Thamesborg set sail under its own power for the Canadian port of Baie Comeau to unload its remaining cargo. The ship is to be repaired once an appropriate shipyard has been chosen. The incident demonstrates that Wagenvorg navigates not only ships, but also challenges – with an emphasis on people, the environment, and collaboration. In the Arctic and beyond, one truth holds true: we advance better working together.

Wagenvorg consciously chooses an approach that prioritises care for nature and community.



Wagenvorg Rows with Maritime Talent

During the Muiden–Pampus–Muiden rowing race on Terschelling, the WBS Wagenvorg sloop rowing team from the Maritime Institute “Willem Barentsz” (MIWB) was clearly recognisable with its Wagenvorg sloop and windbreakers bearing the distinctive Wagenvorg flag. Wagenvorg supports the women’s rowing club’s team in maintaining contact with maritime talent. Many members are doing internships at Wagenvorg or are currently serving as officers in the fleet. This helps maintain strong bonds with future seafarers.

Sustainability in practice

Wagenvorg has invested in ‘greening’ its crane fleet. Three additional electric-powered XCMG cranes were purchased. Also, two Spierings AT6 eLift cranes were purchased. Thanks to the innovative eLift system, the cranes can operate completely emission-free. These cranes combine the power required for demanding projects with the ability to operate emission-free and quietly, which is invaluable in urban or other sensitive environments.



Titel

Hier komt nog een tekst

On May 10, 2025, regular passengers Marin Visser (pictured) and Arjan Iemhoff placed a coin to the new express service. This ceremony officially marked the start of construction on the new Wadden Ferry, which will strengthen the connection between Ameland and Holwert.



The new Wadden Ferry: a ship designed with the local environment in mind

The speaker is Izak van Rhijn, Head of Technical Services at Wagenborg Passenger Services. He has worked at Wagenborg for almost 25 years and is now involved in the construction of the vessel for the new express service between Ameland and Holwert: the Wadden Ferry.

"The connection to Ameland is more than just a line on the map", says Izak. "For many islanders, it's how they get to work, to school, and to visit family. Keeping that connection open, reliable and future-proof is a responsibility we take seriously. This new ship is an important step in that direction."

Next Generation Shipyards: a specialised shipbuilder

According to Izak, choosing Next Generation Shipyards as the ship's builder was a logical choice. "We were looking for a shipyard that was not only technically strong but could also understand our way of working. NG Shipyards is a company with a forward-looking vision. They think about today, but also about tomorrow. They have previously worked on vessels for the Dutch Pilotage Service and the offshore industry, including the sustainable pilot tender Mira and its sister ships, all Pilotage Service's innovative M-class tenders.



“We’re keeping the name a secret until the naming ceremony on January 7th.”

Besides being a progressive, new-build shipyard, NG also operates as a repair yard. In that field, we have a long-standing and positive relationship. Our express service vessels always go to Lauwersoog for their scheduled maintenance. Even in the event of a sudden mechanical defect, we can always count on them to resolve the problem, often the same day, ensuring that the vessel is quickly back in service. They are an authorised dealer for Hamilton Jet and Volvo Penta and have extensive in-house expertise.

The above, coupled with their experience, makes them a logical partner for us. The collaboration is pleasant: the lines of communication are short, and they are proactive. If something needs to be done, they are ready to get

involved. That’s valuable in our sector.”

Furthermore, the collaboration also contributes to the local economy. “NG Shipyards collaborates with subcontractors in the North of the Netherlands. This means we’re not only investing in the ship, but also in regional employment and craftsmanship. It’s great to see that a project like this not only strengthens the connection with Ameland, but also the connection with the environment in which the ship is being built: with consideration for the people who sail, work, and depend on it.”

Technically, the Wadden Ferry is a progressive design. “A draft of 80 centimetres, an efficient waterjet, and engines that meet the strictest emission standards. We’ll



Scan the QR and watch the construction of the Wadden Ferry!



soon emit less than 50% of the CO₂ per full voyage produced by the current vessels on the express service. We're also building in the capacity to switch to biodiesel or even fully electric sailing in the future."

An investment in the community

One thing that makes the project special is community involvement. We invited regular passengers to lay the coin on the ship, a long-standing tradition for a safe voyage. Marin and Arjan, two Ameland residents who travel daily on the express service, obliged. We also sent out an open invitation, allowing enthusiasts to register to attend. This coin laying ceremony clearly demonstrated how important the connection is in the daily life of Ameland.

The ship's name also came from the community. We didn't come up with it ourselves, but organised a campaign where everyone could propose names. This

resulted in a total of 386 entries. Ultimately, a jury (consisting of journalist and presenter Afke Boven as jury chair, Wagenborg CEO Egbert Vuursteen, Ameland Museums Foundation director William Beijgaard, Wagenborg Passenger Services former employee Marrit Waaksma, professional cyclist Bauke Mollema, Ameland councillor Theo Faber, and author, anthropologist, and public historian Anne-Goaitske Breteler) selected a name that connects the past with the future. But we're keeping the name a secret until the naming ceremony on January 7th.

With the Wadden Ferry, Wagenborg is investing not only in technology but also in people, accessibility, and the region. A ship built with the local environment in mind that, with a new name and a familiar Ameland feel, will further strengthen the connection with the island.

NG Shipyards collaborates with subcontractors in the Northern Netherlands. This means we invest not only in the ship itself, but also in employment and craftsmanship in the region.

Ready to broaden your horizons?

Come aboard!

Do you also want to contribute to our impressive, international, and groundbreaking projects? We've been pushing boundaries and getting the job done for over 125 years. Help us build the future. Discover your opportunities at werkenbijwagenborg.com and find the vacancy that's right for you!

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