It was announced from Dubai, UAE, on 7th November 2013 that Britain’s new global shipping port had welcomed its first scheduled vessel, *MOL Caledon* from South Africa.

After more than a decade of planning and construction across three square miles of development, DP World London Gateway deepsea port is now open, providing British exporters and importers with an efficient way to ship globally, at, it is claimed, less cost.

*MOL Caledon* was welcomed by DP World Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem with Vice Chairman Jamal Majid Bin Thaniah and Group CEO Mohammed Sharaf and Chairman of MOL Liner Junichiro Ikeda. Shipper representatives included JFH Hillebrand MD David Mawer and Chingford Fruit MD Gavin McNally, together with other senior executives.

London Gateway is located closer to major population centres of London, Birmingham and Manchester than other ports that are capable of handling the world’s biggest ships. The new port will reduce transport costs for exporters and importers by reducing millions of trucking miles from supply chains.

The port also provides 21st Century infrastructure for shipping lines that are building bigger ships. DP World, with more than 65 marine terminals across six continents, including new developments, built Britain’s new port for today’s ships and the ships of the next generation. Known as ‘ultra large container ships’ (ULCS), they are up to 400 metres loa and can carry over 18,000 TEU.

The first scheduled ship to berth at the port, operated by MOL Liner, received exports and delivered containers carrying a variety of cargo, including fruit and automotive parts, which will be distributed across the country. *MOL Caledon* is part of the South African Europe Container Service (SAECS) which is made up of a consortium of shipping lines including MOL, Maersk, DAL and Safmarine.

Junichiro Ikeda, Chairman of MOL Liner, visiting London Gateway, commented, “I am delighted to be here on this historic day at the opening of DP World’s London Gateway. We believe that the new port through its modern facilities and convenient links to the business community, will provide us the perfect platform to continue the efficient and reliable services MOL is committed to offering its UK customers. The conditions at London Gateway, like draft and tides also give us the opportunity to grow further through the introduction of bigger ships and a further expansion of our network. It’s a promising new port for a great country.”
Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Chairman, DP World, added, “We are proud and pleased to be able to contribute to the UK economy by building and operating this state-of-the-art modern infrastructure that will support trade growth far into the future. This is the first port to be built in the UK in a generation and so there is nothing else like this in the country. From today, shipping lines can now bring the world’s largest ships closer to key UK markets and reduce the costs of transportation. At the same time, global businesses can make their supply chains more efficient. It’s a real pleasure to be able to stand side by side with MOL on this historic day.”

Simon Moore, CEO London Gateway, said, “We are pleased to be able to start our first scheduled services today. It’s taken many years of hard work to achieve this milestone, delivered on time and on budget. It’s a huge day for the team here, but we remain focused on delivering what we set out to achieve, reduced supply chain costs and more reliability for importers and exporters.”

Leading importers and exporters from across the UK were in attendance at a ceremony held on the quayside on 7th November at London Gateway whilst the ship was being loaded. Chingford Fruit, one of the largest importers of fresh fruit from South Africa, uses MOL’s services to the UK and the company’s MD Gavin McNally, concluded by saying, “We ship thousands of tonnes of fruit into the UK for some of the most demanding retailers. We are always exploring opportunities for improvements to our already high levels of efficiency and I believe that London Gateway has the potential to deliver that for us. Therefore it’s great news to see the first MOL ship dock at London Gateway.”

From JFH Hillebrand, a leading logistics company, its MD David Mawer reflected, “We ship thousands of containers into the country every year and we ensure the goods are moved quickly and efficiently, as that’s what our customers need. We are pleased that London Gateway is now operational so that we can use world-class infrastructure to help us increase reliability and efficiency.”

London Gateway is now operating with its first berth open. When fully developed, the port will operate six berths, with a total of 24 quay cranes and will be able to handle 3.5 million TEU a year.

Freight trains moved cargo to the Midlands and further afield from the date of inauguration, 7th November using London Gateway’s new rail terminal. It is understood that over 30% of the containers moving through the port are planned to go by rail. The state-of-the-art terminal can handle the longest trains in the UK. DB Schenker Rail UK and Freightliner are both providing rail services to the new port.
Thousands of new jobs have been created in the construction sector during the past ten years at the site. According to a study by Oxford Economics, once fully operational, London Gateway will create 36,000 jobs and contribute £3.2 billion to UK GDP annually.

About DP World
DP World has a portfolio of more than 65 marine terminals across six continents (as at August 2013), including new developments underway in India, Africa, Europe, South America and the Middle East.

Container handling is the company’s core business and generates more than three quarters of its revenue. In 2012, DP World handled more than 56 million TEU. With its committed pipeline of developments and expansions, capacity is expected to rise to more than 100 million TEU by 2020, in line with market demand.

At its flagship Jebel Ali facility in Dubai, DP World has been voted Best Seaport in the Middle East for 19 consecutive years.

Photo Caption:
First ship 1
New straddle carriers at DP World London Gateway Port.

First ship 2
Britain’s new global shipping port DP World’s London Gateway, on 7th November welcomed its first scheduled vessel, MOL Caledon from South Africa. The ship, pictured alongside the quay, is operated by MOL Liner.