Of cargos and people

Multiplicity of exchanges

PLATE 04

Reference points

Freight traffic (2010)

- Channel area: 332 435 888 tons
- French side: 194 850 108 tons
- English side: 137 585 780 tons

Main types de freight transport (2010)

- Liquid bulk (oil and hydrocarbons)
- Containers
- Ro-Ro / Lo-Lo

Passengers traffic (2010)

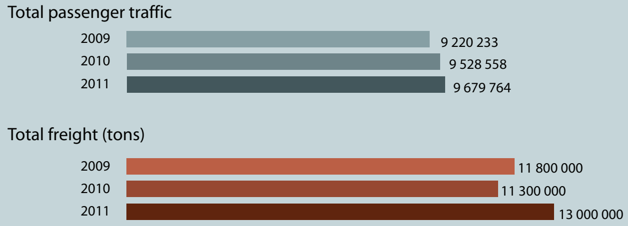
- Channel area: 33 229 296 passengers
- French side: 16 966 296 passengers
- English side: 16 263 000 passengers

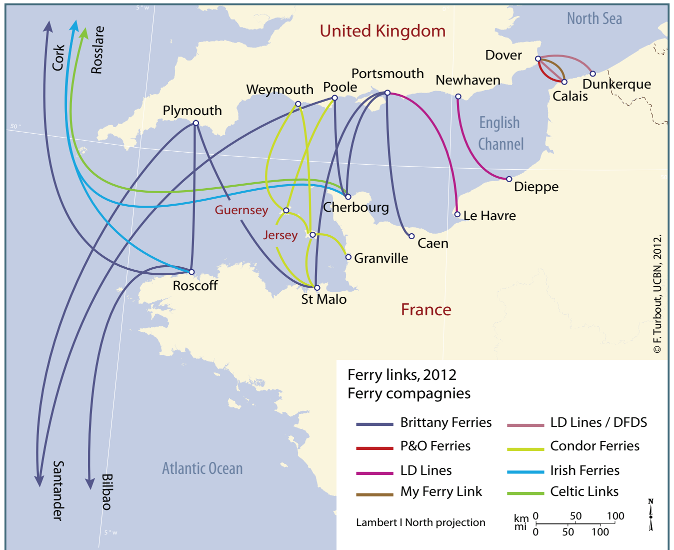
Ferry routes (2012)

- 7 ferry companies operating in the Channel area.
- 130 crossings each day.
- 12 regulared routes crossing the Channel area.
- 7 regular crossings to the Channel Islands, 4 regular routes to Ireland and 3 to Spain.

Photo : G. Milledrogues, 2007.

Channel Tunnel - Freight and passengers traffics (2009-2011)



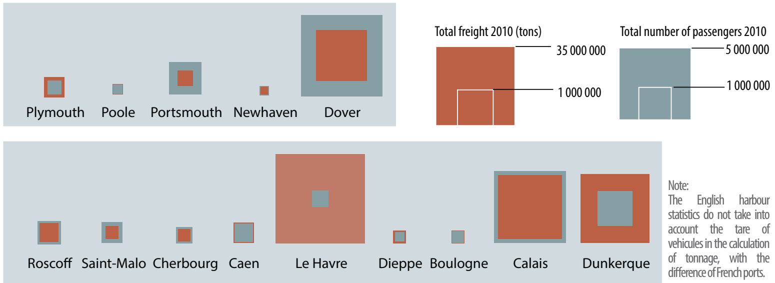


The Cross-Channel lattice of services provided by ferry companies has changed greatly over the last fifteen years or more. Some companies have disappeared from the Channel (Hoverspeed, Stena Line, Sally Line, and, more recently, Sea France), whereas others have gone from strength to strength (Brittany Ferries). Some companies have ceased services on some routes, concentrated their activities on targeted geographical areas (P&O in the Dover Strait), or opened up new links to Ireland and Spain, for example. Other operators have revived routes that had lain dormant (LD Lines), or have grouped together to make a better stand against competition (DFDS and LD Lines in the Dover Strait).

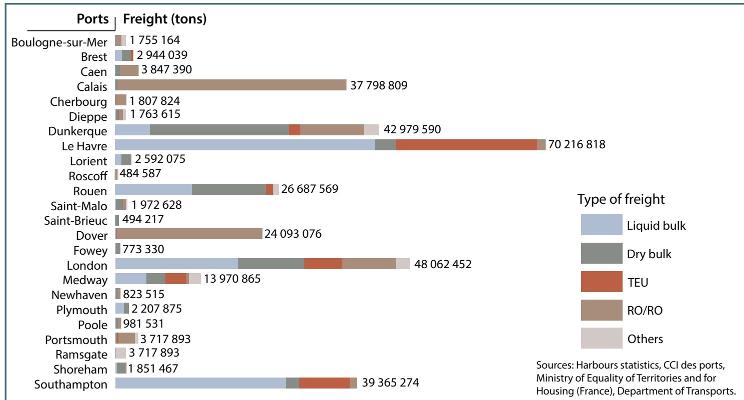
To these frequent changes to the Cross-Channel seascape should be added a new dimension that has transformed services links coast to coast during the summer season: the development of fast ships. Each year, from April to October, they enable the central Channel crossing to be made in four and a half hours.

For further information: http://atlas-transmanche.certic.unicaen.fr

Cross-Channel freight and passengers from main ports, 2010



Sources: Harbours statitics, CCI des ports, Ministry of Equality of Territories and for Housing (France), Department of Transports.



Sources: Harbours statistics, CCI des ports, Ministry of Equality of Territories and for Housing (France), Department of Transports.

© F. Turbout, UCBN, 2012.

The Channel is one of the busiest corridors of maritime traffic in the world. After entering the Channel it usually continues on beyond the Strait – only a small proportion of it drops anchor at the various ports within the Channel itself.

In 2010, 333.4 million tons of freight passed through the various ports of the area and some 33.2 million passengers travelled on one of the cross-Channel ferry companies.

Freight transport largely focuses on four ports – of which the two busiest (Le Havre in France and Southampton in England) account for 33% of cross-Channel freight traffic between them. Major disparities in terms of tonnage transported between ports, stem from both the type of freight transported and the specialisation of the port in question. Accordingly, all of the ferry ports see transits of between one and four million tons of freight a each year - with the exception of Calais and Dover which registered between 25 and 37 million tons of freight in 2010. The goods transported are mainly petroleum and gas products and, more generally, liquid bulk cargo. Containers (44.3 million tons) and Ro-Ro traffic (94 million tons) need to be added to this total. Solid bulk cargo is dominated by cereals, whilst agricultural products lie in fourth place.

However the Channel ports are not just concerned with trading, and for centuries have also been points of arrival and departure for travellers. 17 million passengers have been counted on the French side and a little over 16 million on the British side. Some 91,000 people on average cross the Channel each day. More than 70% of these passengers pass through Dover and Calais, with the Dover-Dunkirk and Portsmouth-Caen lines proving the next most popular. On average, 120 ferry rotations take place on a daily basis on the twelve regular cross-Channel lines. Many of these are concentrated around the Strait where the fierce competition has created a make-or-break situation for companies vulnerable in the face of economic uncertainly. LD Lines has gradually taken the lead in the central Channel area, while Brittany Ferries remains dominant in the Western Channel with 40 years of service already in this stretch of the sea.

Traffic using the Channel Tunnel is steadily picking up, with 9.6 million passengers and almost 13 million tons of freight passing through in 2011.

The sheer volume of goods and people crossing this maritime zone every day underlines the great importance of this economic and trading axis within the immediate hinterlands of the major European capitals of London and Paris.

In the future, technological developments remain crucial and unavoidable as does the opening up of new maritime routes, the growing global competition, all of which is likely to impact on the character of this maritime corridor.