



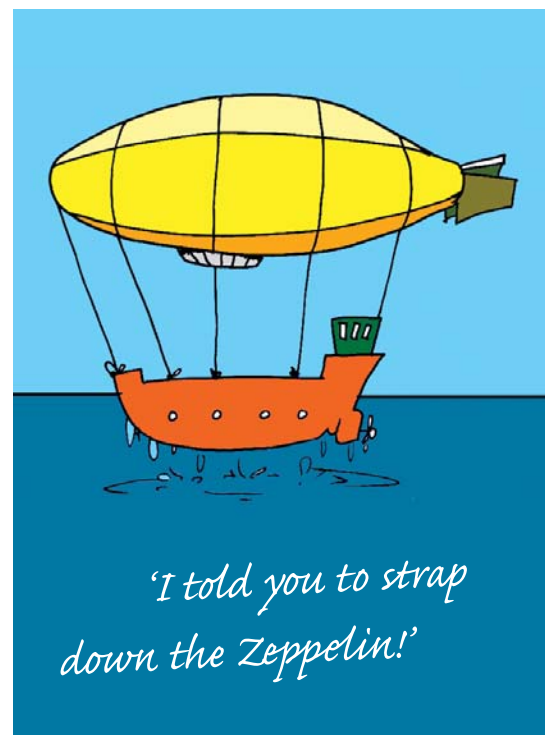
The lightest transport ever!

Airship strapped down to Dock Express 10

The front cover photo of Dockwiser Magazine often represents record-setting transports. This issue is no exception, although it depicts a record of a very different kind. Only a few months after making the world's largest and heaviest move with BP's 59,500-ton floating production platform Thunder Horse, Dockwise engineers faced another interesting challenge: how to transport the lightest cargo ever encountered in company history.

Under contract for NYK-Hinode Line Ltd. of Tokyo, Dockwise transported a zeppelin from Italy to Kobe, Japan. The initial plans called for the airship to fly from Europe to Japan over Russia. This plan was cancelled when terrorists brought down two Russian airplanes near Moscow. As an alternative, it was decided to transport the airship by sea. After careful consideration, however, it became clear that this challenging transport required special arrangements. Dockwise offered the solution. The zeppelin measured 75 by 20 metres, and it completely filled the dock of the transport vessel Dock Express

10 during the voyage. Because the zeppelin was transported in airborne condition, it was strapped down through a connection at the nose cone and at various strong points on the aluminium and carbon fibre frame. This was to prevent the airship from moving (or actually taking off) during transport. The actual weight in air represented a total of 700 kilograms. The zeppelin was filled with non-flammable helium, and it was kept under pressure during the 29-day voyage. The zeppelin was built by ZLT Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik GmbH & Co. KG in Friedrichshafen, Germany.



'I told you to strap down the Zeppelin!'

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The Dock Express 10 transporting the lightest cargo ever.



▲ Aluminium and carbon fibre frame to prevent the zeppelin from moving.

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Wind sensitivity

What may seem like a piece of cake compared to the extremely heavy transports Dockwise is used to handling, was actually quite an engineering challenge. First, because of the wind sensitivity of the zeppelin, the maximum wind allowed for loading was five knots. Further, to protect the zeppelin from the wind during transport, empty containers (26x40' and 6x20') were stacked on the dock-walls of the vessel. For loading, a mast truck was used to drive the zeppelin onto the vessel.

Halfway through the procedure, the airship was connected to the ship with sea-fastenings. The forward engine gondolas and stabilizers were then removed, as planned for transport. Earlier removal was not possible, as the zeppelin tended to become airborne

without them. With the gondolas removed, the seafastening was finalized, and the mast truck was secured to the vessel's deck.

Despite the Tsunami off Sumatra, Indonesia (December 26, 2004), the voyage was calm and uneventful. Twenty-nine days later, the Dock Express 10 safely arrived in Kobe.

The NYK zeppelin will be part of a large initiative of the Japanese government to attract more tourists to Japan. The 'Yokoso Japan' or 'Welcome to Japan' zeppelin will be an important ingredient in the recently launched 'Visit Japan Campaign'. With this project, Dockwise seems to have developed a new reputation as a light transport specialist; a new contract has been signed to transport another airship for diamond-mining company De Beers Group of South Africa.



Zeppelin strapped down with aluminium fibre frames to vessel's deck and dockwall (portside).