

Mercy Ships supporters raise £145,000 as charity turns 40

Mercy Ships celebrated its 40th anniversary with a London ball attended by founders Don and Deyon Stephens.

The event — staged at a venue close to Trafalgar Square, attended by more than 300 supporters of the hospital ship charity and which generated £145,000 (\$193,000) — was marked by a special message from UK Prime Minister Theresa May, who was attending the G7 summit in Canada at the time.

Even Virgin Group magnate Richard Branson contributed to the evening by donating a holiday at his private retreat in South Africa's Sabi Sands Game Reserve for inclusion in the evening's fundraising live auction.

But the star attraction was the presence of Don and Deyon Stephens, who took the opportunity to meet up again with Ann Gloag, co-founder of the Stagecoach passenger transport group, and who funded the purchase of the 16,572-gt hospital vessel Africa Mercy (built 1980).

Speaking to TradeWinds, Don Stephens said he wanted to "express his personal gratitude and appreciation to the greater world of shipping" for the Mercy Ships Cargo Day, an annual fundraising event that has raised \$1m for the



STAR SHOWING: Mercy Ships founders Deyon (left) and Don Stephens (right) with businesswoman and philanthropist Ann Gloag, who funded the purchase of the Africa Mercy

Photo: Geoff Garfield

organisation in its first two years.

Don Stephens said the Cargo Day, in which TradeWinds is a partner, was proving to be one of the charity's most significant annual functions.

Mercy Ships UK executive director Lea Milligan described it as "an incredible initiative", which pulls together so many parts of the shipping industry "that have a passion to see lives changed".

Milligan said: "One million dollars — let's make it six."

Mercy Ships UK chairman Henry Clarke said during the dinner: "It is such a thrill to see the lame walk, the blind see, the unloved

loved, and the hopeless live in hope of healing and opportunity."

He then read a message from the UK prime minister.

"I am very happy to give my personal support to Mercy Ships," Theresa May wrote. "I would like to thank and encourage the many volunteers, including from the UK, for their contribution to make the world a better and healthier place."

Don Stephens talked about how Gloag took him by surprise at a meeting several years ago by offering to buy the Africa Mercy, and maybe the new ship — coming soon — should be named the Ann Global Mercy rather than just Global Mercy.

Don Stephens said the much larger, 37,000-gt newbuilding, which is costing \$178m, is under construction at Tianjin Xingang Shipyard in China and is scheduled to set sail for Africa in late 2019 or the first quarter of 2020.

"We look to the next 40 years because it will be even greater than the past," he said.

During the evening's live auction, £10,000 (\$13,200) was bid for flights and a holiday for four in Bali, donated by Greek-controlled and London-based Helikon Shipping Enterprises, which controls a fleet of bulkers.



CHINA COSCO SHIPPING: Moved into its new Shanghai headquarters this month

Photo: Bob Rust

China Cosco Shipping uproots on the quiet

The world's largest shipping company has moved its headquarters — and did it quietly.

Portuguese cabinet staff were surprised to learn recently that a member of its country's government had been scheduled to visit a vacant Shanghai office, where China Cosco Shipping used to be.

Ana Paula Vitorino, Portugal's minister of the sea, had just got back to town after accepting Chi-

na's newly created title of Global Ocean Ambassador in the port island of Zhoushan, when Portuguese diplomats discovered just in time that Cosco was no longer in its old headquarters conveniently around the corner from her room at the Peninsula Hotel.

Vitorino's UK counterpart, minister for shipping Nusrat Ghani, had visited Cosco chairman Xu Lirong just a week before at Co-

sco's stylish but increasingly cramped headquarters near the city's international cruise terminal.

Cosco had inherited the modern riverside offices from Xu's former company, China Shipping Group (CSG), after Cosco absorbed CSG and moved its headquarters from Beijing.

Ghani was to be the last dignitary to call there, and Vitorino was

the first at its newly completed home — miles upstream on the other side of the Huangpu River — whose construction was announced soon after the merger.

The change of address had been announced on the main Cosco website, but a Cosco official told TradeWinds that no festivities were held to inaugurate the new headquarters and none are scheduled.

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