

DECEMBER, 2010

VOLUME XXVIII, # 11

Wednesday December 15, 2010 at 6:00 PM - Seaport Museum New York, 12 Fulton Street, NYC

FRANCE/NORWAY: A Book Talk by John Maxtone-Graham at the Seaport Museum New York

John Maxtone-Graham, author of numerous well-researched books on ocean liners, will give a talk on his latest work, FRANCE/NORWAY, published this month by W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London.

She debuted here in New York in February 1962 as the S.S. FRANCE, the French Line's final passenger liner, replacing the retired S.S. LIBERTE and S.S. FLANDRE in transatlantic service. While a stunning-looking liner on the outside, her metallic interiors disappointed many ship aficionados. For those who sailed in her, however, she maintained the unmistakable French Line atmosphere, superb food and polished French service.

By the early 1970s, she was losing money. The French Line withdrew her in September 1974 and laid her up at Le Havre. In 1979, Knut Kloster, owner of Norwegian Cruise Line, bought the liner and turned her into the S.S. NORWAY, returning her to service as a cruise ship in May 1980 sailing mostly out of Miami. She operated until a May 25, 2003 boiler explosion killed eight crew members and injured 17. She was sold for scrapping in India in 2006 and was fully dismantled two years later.

Following the talk, John Maxtone-Graham's book will be available for sale. A reception will follow.

Please note that this program is sold out.



s.s. FRANCE departing New York on August 17, 1972

(Bob Allen)

ADDRESS:

PO Box 384
New York, NY 10185-0384

E-MAIL:

wsspony@gmail.com

NEXT MEETINGS:

Friday, January 28; Friday, February 25; Thursday, March 24;
Friday, April 29; Friday, May 20; Friday, June 24

WEB SITE:

www.worldshipny.com

THE PORTHOLE, published by the Port of New York Branch, World Ship Society, welcomes original material for publication. Address to the editor, Bob Allen, at oceanvoyag@aol.com or via the PONY mailing address.

SHIP'S LOG

OCTOBER MEETING:

Our October meeting was dedicated to Queens afloat and ashore, starting with the announcement of our plans for the January 13th sailing of Cunard's three current QUEENS. Then Ted Scull took the quarterdeck with a short speech of appreciation for the "Queen from Queens," Marge Dovman, on her retirement after 26 years of editing The Porthole.

Ted also being the speaker of the evening, he was introduced by his wife, Suellen, with some biographical anecdotes. Ted, who had traveled to England for the naming of the new QUEEN ELIZABETH (no following numerals), noted that he would compare the new vessel with the QUEEN VICTORIA, although he also made some comparisons with the QUEEN MARY 2. While most of the photos were Ted's, some were supplied by Peter Knego and others came from British members Bill Mayes, Ann Haines and David Templar.

Stating his preference for the ELIZABETH early on, Ted gave some specifics: the QUEEN ELIZABETH is slightly larger than the VICTORIA, while sharing the same hull design, which is similar to other Carnival hulls.

We were then treated to a photographic tour of the ship, on which there seemed to be more differences than similarities: The built-up, square stern, as compared with the QUEEN VICTORIA's stepped-down one; the Commodore Club's being larger than that on the QM2; the more enticing and attractive Winter Garden compared with the QM's. Todd English seems to have run its course; the QUEEN ELIZABETH's special restaurant is The Veranda.

Among the similarities are the libraries, pretty much the same, and the Royal Court Theatre, a copy of the VICTORIA's, complete with boxes.

Memorabilia, including the QE2's bell, is spread around, with a bust of Queen Elizabeth (the person) and copies of portraits of the royals to remind one of the ship's national origin. Murals and posters evoke shipboard life of past days afloat. Ted found the Lido fairly attractive, unlike on many other ships.

Having concluded this virtual tour, Ted and companions were off to photograph the QUEEN ELIZABETH's maiden sailing, which they did from Calshot, further downstream. A sunset shot of the QUEEN ELIZABETH closely trailed by the historic excursion boat WAVERLY ended this extremely interesting and welcome program.

Marge Dovman



Funnel and Grill Room structure on QUEEN ELIZABETH



Wintergarden on QUEEN ELIZABETH

(Ted Scull)

NOVEMBER MEETING:

Our treasurer, Alan Borthwick, gave us a cruise program from a somewhat different perspective. Introduced by his wife, Mary, Alan is a veteran sea traveler who can boast of spending almost 600 nights afloat. He likes to see what goes on behind the cruise scenes, and even at times to join in the action. In a PowerPoint program of his own travel photos, we were taken along on several of Alan and Mary's voyages. We saw, of course, photos of the ship or boat and some of the local scenery. But the bulk of the pictures concentrated on Alan's "extracurricular" activities.

He cast off with a French canal cruise on the 18-passenger river barge CAPRICE, owned by a subsidiary of Grand Circle Travel. Being in France, Alan was interested in the source of the bread, and so one day he became a one-man bread-buying expedition. As far as exploration went, only the galley was open to passengers.

Next we boarded the riverboat RIVER ARIA - one of those long vessels that ply European waterways, also run by GCT. Here everything was tightly controlled, and "behind the scenes" was off limits. However, Alan volunteered to join a group of visiting folk dancers.

Then he took us aboard the coastal vessel ARTEMIS, built to GCT specifications, for an Adriatic cruise. In contrast, on this ship Alan could go wherever he wanted, including the bridge. He got to run up the pilot flag, and one day, inquiring of the hotel manager about why the ship was serving imported (American) olives instead of locally grown ones (Answer: Passengers expect it.), he was invited on another shopping expedition - not only for olives but for other produce as well. He also got an engine room tour.

On we went to the exploration ship ANDREA (ex Norwegian coastal steamer HARALD JARL), which had been reconfigured from a 400-passenger ship to one with a capacity of 105. With its impressive Antarctic scenery, the area merited more photographic attention than on most of the other cruises, and a Zodiac landing brought Alan and Mary into contact with penguins and seals. Here there was an open bridge, and the Borthwicks were able to tour the engine room, galley and even the staff dining room.

A cruise aboard ROTTERDAM (V) was the occasion for an engine room tour, reached by elevator - Alan's first encounter with a sea-going lift. Here and on the ROTTERDAM (VI) he showed us a couple of legendary HAL passengers, "Kissing Annie" and "Bobaloo."

And finally, learning that his round-Australia VOLENDAM cruise would be making a number of first calls, Alan decided he'd like to observe the ceremonies, which he and Mary did - several times. He (and we) was amused at the variations in the spelling of "VOLENDAM" by the various port officials. Alan left us in Sydney, with he and Mary visiting the Harbor Bridge and the opera house.

For this view of a slightly different sort of cruise activities, Alan received a copy of John Maxtone-Graham's book "NORMANDIE."

Marge Dovman



After enjoying a 34-day voyage on the VEENDAM, Alan and Mary Borthwick watched the Holland America liner cruise past the Sydney, Australia opera house. (Alan Borthwick)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)
REGENT MARINER	Rome	Istanbul	Eastern Med Cruise	Myrna & Rob Rubin
QUEEN MARY 2	New York	New York	Transatlantic (round trip)	Peter & Eileen Langenus
QUEEN MARY 2	Southampton	New York	Transatlantic	Ted & Suellyn Scull
MERCURY	Baltimore	Baltimore	SE US / Bahamas Cruise	Bob Allen & Rob Rothberg
VEENDAM	Valparaiso	Buenos Aires	Around Cape Horn	Carol Miles & Mario De Stefano
VEENDAM	Valparaiso	Buenos Aires	Around Cape Horn	Dan Vaccaro

Feel free to email photos taken on your cruises to The Porthole for possible inclusion in "Arrivals and Departures."



Celebrity Cruises' MERCURY in Charleston, SC on November 22, 2010

(Bob Allen)

PLEASE SEND YOUR STORIES AND PICTURES!

We know that many of you have great stories about your cruises, maritime interests, collections and other topics of interest to WSS PONY members. To contribute to the Porthole, just contact Bob Allen at a meeting or via email at oceanvoyag@aol.com. If possible, please send stories in Microsoft Word format. Hardcopy stories should be mailed to the WSS P.O. Box.

THREE QUEENS ARE COMING!

Mark your calendars for Thursday, January 13, 2011. On that day, the three reigning Cunard QUEENS will sail together from the Port of New York against the brilliant lights of the skyline. Join Seaport Museum New York and WSS-PONY and witness an historic "Cunard Royal Rendezvous" in New York Harbor: QUEEN MARY 2, QUEEN VICTORIA and the brand new QUEEN ELIZABETH, together for the first time. "The Most Famous Ocean Liners in the World" will rendezvous in front of the Statue of Liberty amidst a spectacular, world-class Grucci fireworks show. **Reservations required. Please call 212.748.8786. \$40 Members / \$50 Non-Members (does not include food & drinks – concession stand will be open for purchase of snacks and beverages).** A flyer for this event is included with this month's Porthole. Please respond early to avoid disappointment.



The new QUEEN ELIZABETH departing Southampton, England on her maiden voyage in October, 2010

(Ted Scull)

YOUR DAILY PROGRAMME

SEAPORT MUSEUM NEW YORK, www.seany.org Contact via email reservations@seany.org or call 212-748-8786. **Decodence Tours** (the continuing exhibit about the French Line's spectacular NORMANDIE of 1935) December 4, 8 & 15, 1:00, 2:00 and 2:30 PM at 12 Fulton Street. **This exhibit closes on February 13, 2011.** **Alfred Stieglitz New York** - tours of the photo exhibit, December 4, 8, 15 & 18, 1:00, 2:00 and 2:30 PM at 12 Fulton Street. Guest curator Bonnie Yochelson will host a special tour on December 18 at 2:00 PM. **This exhibit closes on January 9, 2011.** Contact Seaport Museum New York for details on tour and event times, pricing and reservations.

VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca For information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca. **January meeting** will be on Wednesday January 12, 2011. Ellen Ramsay will be presenting Part II of **London's Historic Waterways**. Ellen will present a digital show of her recent trip to London. She will discuss and show images of the London Canal Museum and the National Maritime Museum as well as slides of the HMS BELFAST and the reconstructed GOLDEN HINDE. Meetings are held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue (Kitsilano Point).

NEW SOUTH WALES WSS: For information, contact PO Box 495, Grosvenor Place 2000, New South Wales, Australia. The next meeting is on December 16, and the program is "My Year in Ships" by Peter Plowman.

SHIP NEWS

SPLENDOR IN THE MORASS

Approximately 12 hours after departing Long Beach, CA on Sunday November 7 for a Mexican Riviera cruise, Carnival Cruise Lines' CARNIVAL SPLENDOR (2008, 113,323 grt) suffered an embarrassing and potentially dangerous engine room fire. Although the fire was quickly extinguished, the vessel was left adrift, with emergency generators providing only lighting and minimal services. Food quickly spoiled and sanitation systems failed, creating an extremely unpleasant atmosphere for 3,299 passengers and 1,167 crew on board. Engineers were unable to restart the propulsion units, so Carnival hired oceangoing tugs to tow the crippled ship to San Diego, where she arrived on Thursday November 11. During the 3-day tow, packages dropped from Coast Guard rescue helicopters kept passengers and crew supplied with bottled water and cold food items. CARNIVAL SPLENDOR will be out of service for repairs until January 16, 2011. In addition to having their transportation costs reimbursed, passengers on the ill-fated cruise will receive a full refund, and a free future cruise.

ANCHOR AWAY

On November 29, an inebriated passenger on Holland America Line's RYNDAM (2004, 55,819 grt) released the ship's stern anchor while the vessel was underway between Costa Maya, Mexico and Tampa, FL. Rick Ehlert, 44, was charged by the FBI with attempting to "damage, destroy, disable or wreck a vessel." According to the FBI and Holland America, the deployment of the anchor could have caused serious damage. After the incident, RYNDAM's captain sounded the general alarm and mustered all passengers, but fortunately the vessel and her 1,950 passengers and crew were unharmed. If convicted, Elhert faces up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000.

NEW SHIP ON THE HORIZON FOR CROSIERES DE FRANCE

CDF Croisieres de France, the French market subsidiary of Royal Caribbean International, has announced the sale of its sole ship, BLEU DE FRANCE (1981, 37,307 grt, ex-HOLIDAY DREAM, SUPERSTAR AIRES, SUPERSTAR EUROPA, EUROPA). In her place, CDF will obtain a larger replacement. She is another RCI-owned vessel, PACIFIC DREAM (1990, 47,427 grt, ex-ISLAND STAR, HORIZON). PACIFIC DREAM will be renamed L'HORIZON, a variation on her 1990 name when she was introduced as Celebrity Cruises' first newly-constructed ship. Although unconfirmed at this time, the new owner of BLEU DE FRANCE is apparently Saga Cruises, which reportedly has been interested in acquiring the vessel for at least 10 years. BLEU DE FRANCE will continue operating under charter to CDF until mid-2012.



BLEU DE FRANCE, docking in New York as EUROPA in 1989, has been sold by CDF. (Bob Allen)



PACIFIC DREAM will replace BLEU DE FRANCE. She is seen here as HORIZON. (Bob Allen collection)

ROYAL CARIBBEAN REVITALIZATION

Royal Caribbean International has announced the revitalization of RADIANCE OF THE SEAS (2001, 90,090 grt) and SPLENDOR OF THE SEAS (1996, 69,130 grt). Both vessels will follow the latest trends in on-board facilities such as extra-tariff restaurants, flat-screen TV's, WI-FI, additional balcony cabins and concierge lounges for their most loyal repeat passengers. Even one of Royal Caribbean's newest ships, OASIS OF THE SEAS (2009, approximately 223,000 grt), will soon be retrofitted with a Starbucks coffee shop and the "Dreamworks Experience," a program of 3D movies in the main theatre. OASIS already features 21 restaurants, 10 of which charge a fee and 11 included in the cruise fare.

PHILADELPHIA, PA TO CLOSE CRUISE TERMINAL

The historic Port of Philadelphia's cruise terminal on the Delaware River will close next year. Following two cruises scheduled for May 2011 – down from a peak of 35 in 2006 – the Port will auction off the gangplanks, x-ray machines and other gear. The terminal building, which cost the Port nearly \$21 million to renovate, may be leased to expanding retailer Urban Outfitters. Perhaps the demise of the Port of Philadelphia is due to some unfortuate geography. The expanding Port of New York and New Jersey is just 100 miles north on 1-95, and the Port of Baltimore is 100 miles south on the same highway. The Port of Baltimore has grown tremendously in recent years, including first ever year-round departures from the port on the CARNIVAL PRIDE in 2009.

GAMBLING ON THE SS UNITED STATES?

On November 30, the S.S. United States Conservancy unveiled a proposal to convert the UNITED STATES (1952, 53,329 grt) into a floating casino. The developers orignally intended to move the ship to New York, but this latest proposal would make the 58-year-old, 990-foot-long liner part of a riverfront complex in Philadelphia, where the first casino opened in September. The historic liner, inactive since November 1969, was saved from the scrapyard by Philadelphia philanthropist Gerry Lenfest. Lenfest donated 5.8 million dollars to the Conservancy, which used the funds to purchase the ship form owner Norwegian Cruise Lines/Genting Hong Kong. Dan McSweeney, executive director of the Conservancy, stated that he is still seeking investors who might support moving the ship to her former home port of New York.



The UNITED STATES at her pier on the West Side of Manhattan in the 1950's.

(Bob Allen collection)

SHIP OF THE MONTH



r.h.m.s. AMERIKANIS (ex-KENYA CASTLE)

(Bob Allen collection)

<p>Owner: Chandris Lines, Piraeus Original owner: Union Castle Line, London Builder: Harland & Wolff, Belfast Rebuilder: Ambelaki, Piraeus Route: Cruising; Bermuda, Caribbean, Europe Service speed: 16 knots</p>	<p>Dimensions: 576' x 74.1' x 19,904 grt Passenger capacity: 860 Maiden Voyage (as KENYA CASTLE): April 4, 1952 Maiden Voyage (as AMERIKANIS): August 8, 1968 Last Voyage: October, 1996 Demise: Scrapped, Alang, India 2001</p>
---	---

Originally built as part of a trio for Union Castle Line's around-Africa service, KENYA CASTLE and her sister ships RHODESIA CASTLE and BRAEMAR CASTLE were modest cabin class vessels, each with a capacity for 526 passengers. They were built in the early 1950's when liner travel seemed to have a bright future. Due to the advent of economical long distance air travel within 10 years, however, these ships were obsolete by 1966. BRAEMAR CASTLE was scrapped that year, followed by RHODESIA CASTLE in 1967. The third sister was luckier: she was purchased that same year by Greek-owned Chandris Lines for summer transatlantic service between Haifa, Piraeus, Naples, Lisbon and New York, as well as winter cruising. Chandris rebuilt her in Piraeus as a true luxury liner, r.h.m.s (Royal Hellenic Mail Ship) AMERIKANIS, at a cost of almost \$10 million, nearly double the projected budget. She arrived in New York in August 1968 with members of the Chandris family as the only passengers. Cruising initially from New York to Bermuda, she then made longer voyages to the Caribbean in winter. She quickly developed an excellent reputation for luxurious cruises with superb cuisine at reasonable prices, and remained in permanent cruise service. Despite the recent demise of Zim Lines and their Haifa – New York service, Chandris wisely did not try to fill that void with potentially money-losing transatlantic voyages. In an era when new, purpose-built cruise ships featured small cabins, discos, show lounges, and metallic, airport-like décor, AMERIKANIS was a truly unique vessel. She boasted marble paneling from the same quarries that had supplied the Parthenon, two dining rooms (one even with a kosher kitchen), a wide-screen cinema, two swimming pools, and long promenade decks. An unusual feature was a drive-in garage/baggage room that was designed for easy conversion into a hospital or convention/exhibit hall. Chandris was founded as a line that mostly carried immigrants on long line voyages with some off-season cruising, but the popularity of AMERIKANIS marked the beginning of its success as a major cruise operator. AMERIKANIS continued cruising for Chandris Lines (later Chandris America Lines, then the budget-market Chandris Fantasy Cruises) until 1996. In 1989, Chandris launched Celebrity Cruises as its upscale cruise division, which became a huge success and was purchased within eight years by cruising giant Royal Caribbean. The trailblazer AMERIKANIS ended her days in layup at Piraeus, too old and small to compete in the industry that she helped grow. She was scrapped in India in 2001, at age 49.

OFFICERS

Chairman: Carol Miles
 Vice Chairman: Marjorie Dovman
 Membership Sec'y: Tom Rinaldi
 Branch Sec'y: Roxanne Almond*
 Treasurer: Alan Borthwick

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bob Allen
 Richard Faber
 Doug Friedlander*
 David Hume*
 David Powers*
 George McDermott*
 J. Fred Rodriguez*
 Ted Scull*
 David Sykes*
 Dan Vaccaro

COMMITTEE HEADS

Program: Ted Scull*
 Finance: Alan Borthwick
 House: J. Fred Rodriguez*
 Membership: Tom Rinaldi
 Newsletter: Bob Allen
 Nomination/Recruit: George McDermott*
 Special Events: Dan Vaccaro

* = past chairman