

NOVEMBER, 2017 VOLUME XXXIV, # 10

OCEAN LINER SUNSET

By Ted Scull

Friday, November 17, 2017 – 6:00 PM

At the Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan

Ted will take us on a half-dozen voyages aboard ships that represent the end of their type: passenger-container ship, Royal Mail Ship, colonial liner, liner converted to cruising, and a pair of Atlantic liners.

First, we will venture from Buenos Aires on a 26-day, northbound voyage to Brooklyn aboard Ivaran Lines' super-comfy, 86-passenger-container ship, AMERICANA. Intended to be the first of a new breed of combo-ship, and officially classified as a scheduled passenger vessel, she attained priority access to congested Brazilian ports.

Next, we're aboard the Royal Mail Ship ST. HELENA, living on borrowed time as her namesake island's brand-new airport located deep in the South Atlantic finally opened to regular air service from South Africa after a long delay due to severe wind shear. The RMS represented the very last of the long-distance mail ships and served the island with everything it required, except fuel. Ships built to serve colonial empires slowly disappeared as one possession after another declared independence. Using the British India liner SS KARANJA as an example, Ted will introduce us to people who had to pull up stakes in East Africa and find another home.

Regency Cruises was a major operator of second-hand ships until it declared bankruptcy. On this journey, we will follow the REGENT SEA, converted from Swedish Americas Line's GRIPSHOLM of 1957, on a cruise to the Mayan ruins of Belize, Honduras, and Belize.

Lastly, we will cross the Atlantic, starting with the Polish Ocean Lines' STEFAN BATORY, the final, regularly scheduled ship to operate on the St. Lawrence River route. Traveling aboard her provides insights into the era of simple, affordable accommodations on a well-run national flagship. The program will conclude our journey with the S.S FRANCE, built to undertake 50 crossings a year, with no consideration of ever cruising. Ted's beloved French Line served as his first taste of ocean travel in 1958, and the sudden disappearance of the CGT left a big hole in his heart.

Following the program, Ted's new book *Ocean Liner Sunset* will be available for sale along with the first two of the trilogy: *Ocean Liner Odyssey* and *Ocean Liner Twilight*.



s.s. FRANCE in mid-Atlantic

(Ted Scull)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings: January 26, February 23 (programs TBA); Annual Ocean Liner Bazaar, November 18; Holiday Party, December 9.

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



SAVANNAH at Baltimore, MD on May 21, 2011

(Bob Allen)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
CRYSTAL SERENITY	Seward	New York	Northwest Passage	Bob Brown	08/17

MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

CONTACT THESE INSTITUTIONS BY EMAIL OR PHONE FOR CURRENT EVENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org or 212-748-8600.

MYSTIC SEAPORT www.mysticseaport.org or 860-572-0711.

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 Per their website, monthly meetings have been eliminated for the foreseeable future.

NEW SOUTH WALES WSS: Meetings are held at the Uniting Church Complex in Lord Street, Roseville. Contact the branch at PO Box 215, Strathfield, New South Wales 2135, Australia for additional information.

MERSEYSIDE WSS: Meetings are held at The Seafarer's Centre, Cambridge Road, Crosby L22 1RQ. Contact the Mersey Log editor for more information at johnthomas23@gmail.com or 01244 34702.

THE NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL, INC. www.ssjeremiahobrien.org or liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP www.ssjohnwbrown.org or 410-558-0646. Visit or sail on the World War II vintage Liberty Ship, based in Baltimore, MD. Contact for dates and more information.

NEW YORK WATER TAXI, www.nywatertaxi.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises departing from both South Street Seaport Pier 17 and Pier 84 at West 44 Street. Hop on – hop off service throughout New York Harbor is offered as well. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

CIRCLE LINE DOWNTOWN, www.circlelinedowntown.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises on the ZEPHYR from April to December, and aboard New York Water Taxi from January to March, departing from Pier 17, South Street Seaport.

CIRCLE LINE, www.circleline42.com or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44 Street.

NEW YORK WATERWAY, www.nywaterway.com or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises.

THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM www.lighthousemuseum.org or 718-390-0040 – **PLEASE NOTE NEW PHONE NUMBER!** Contact for schedule of cruises and other events.

THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE www.workingharbor.com or 212-757-1600. Cruises to both remote and well-travelled parts of New York Harbor - the Hudson River to view tugboat races, Gowanus Bay and Erie Basin in Brooklyn, and a circumnavigation of Staten Island.

THE NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION, www.noblemaritime.org or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY.

THE BAZAAR IS COMING

The annual Ocean Liner Bazaar will take place on Saturday, November 18, 2017. As usual, it will be held at the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium, 417 East 61st Street, Manhattan, 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM.

IT'S PARTY TIME!

The WSS-PONY Holiday Party will be at Café Arte on Manhattan's West Side, on Saturday December 9. Please see the flyer included with this month's Porthole for details.

A SEASON FOR RENEWAL

Membership Renewal forms are included with this month's Porthole, following the party flyer. Please renew as soon as possible, to avoid missing any of the nautical fun planned for 2018!

SHIP'S LOG - OCTOBER

SHIP'S LOG will return in the December issue of The Porthole.

REMEMBERING ALAN BORTHWICK

A memorial service for Alan Borthwick, a long-time PONY Branch member, Board member and Treasurer, will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 10:30 AM in the Christ Chapel at Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Drive (between 120th and 122nd Streets) in Manhattan.

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Cruise on Holland America Line's MS PRINSENDAM

Amsterdam to Barcelona

September 21 – October 5, 2017

By David G. Hume

On September 19, 2017 we took an overnight flight to Amsterdam, in preparation for boarding Holland America Line's *Prinsendam* on a fourteen-night cruise to Vlissingen (Flushing), Antwerp, Brest, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Santander, Lisbon, Gibraltar and Barcelona. The *Prinsendam* had been built in 1988 as the *Royal Viking Sun* for Royal Viking Line. The *Royal Viking Sun* was sold to the Cunard Line in 1994 and initially kept its original name. However, in 1999 it was transferred to another Carnival Corporation subsidiary, Seabourn Cruise Line as the *Seabourn Sun*. In 2002, it was further transferred to Holland America Line, when it received its present name.

The *Prinsendam* is 669 feet long and has a gross tonnage of 38,100. It accommodates 835 passengers and has a crew of 499. The ship is registered in Rotterdam. Although it is a small ship by modern day standards, it looks like a big ship from the waterline and from the vantage points on Decks 12 and 13.

We arrived in Amsterdam one day before the ship was scheduled to depart. We stayed one night at the Movenpick Hotel, which is conveniently located adjacent to the cruise terminal. While in Amsterdam we took a tram to the Van Gogh Museum.

Early the next morning, the *Prinsendam* docked at the cruise terminal. We could see the its stern from our hotel window. At about 10:00 AM, we went to the cruise terminal to check in and get a boarding number. We received boarding number 2 and were told that all those with this number would board at about 12:30 PM.

Shortly before noon, we checked out of the hotel and walked to the cruise terminal. We dropped off our luggage with a baggage master on the ground floor and took the escalator to the terminal waiting room. As we arrived, we could see that group number 2 had just been called, so we went directly aboard the ship and found our stateroom on Deck 6, Main Deck.

Our stateroom was a standard two-person ocean view cabin. We had a small walk-in closet, which could accommodate only one of us at a time. Two robes and an umbrella were provided for our use. Although many cabins on the ship had full bathtubs, our bathroom only had a shower. We had a love seat which could be converted into a third berth. The door to the bathroom was a sliding door, which closed at one end, but was slightly open at the other end. There was a floor to ceiling mirror between the bathroom door and the door to the walk-in closet. There was another mirror over the desk. A corner cabinet contained a television and a refrigerator.

Our stateroom had a large rectangular window. There was a one-foot wide sill between the window and the inner wall of the cabin. This space was closed off by another window which was approximately five feet across by four feet high. It was attached on the right by a piano hinge and on the left by a lock. We had never seen such an interior window before and inquired why it was there. We were told that it was to decrease noise from outside the cabin. We asked the steward if it could be removed and he summoned an engineering officer. The officer said that it would be difficult to remove the window, but he unlocked it so that we could open it at any time.

After lunch in the Lido Market restaurant on Deck 11, we explored the ship. The *Prinsendam* has a wraparound teak promenade deck on Deck 7, Lower Promenade Deck. Four circuits equal one mile. There are padded deck chairs along both sides of this deck. In addition, at the stern, there are several rows of deck chairs which are covered by the overhang of Deck 8, the Promenade Deck.

At the forward end of the Lower Promenade Deck is a stairway leading up to an observation platform on Deck 8 and there is another stairway from Deck 8 to a second observation platform on Deck 9, Upper Promenade Deck. For those in the suites on Deck 10, Verandah Deck, there is a private observation platform just below the bridge. There is yet another forward observation platform on Deck 13, Observation Deck.

The main restaurant, La Fontaine Dining Room, is located aft on Deck 7. It looks out over the Lower Promenade Deck on three sides. A second part of the La Fontaine Dining Room is located forward of the main restaurant on the starboard side. We were told that this restaurant was for fixed seating diners, while the main restaurant was for open seating diners. However, there were many fixed seating diners assigned to the main dining room. My impression was that the forward part of the La Fontaine Dining Room served as the equivalent of the Odyssey Restaurant on the SS *Rotterdam* of 1959 and was reserved for passengers in the suites.

We found the food and service in the La Fontaine Dining Room very good, although we sensed that the integration of the fixed seating passengers and the open seating diners presented a challenge to the wait staff.

Forward of the dining room on the starboard side of Deck 7 is the Ocean Bar, which opened onto the Atrium at the forward end. In this room, the Ocean Quartet played rock and roll hits.

On the port side of Deck 7, just aft of the Atrium, is the Pinnacle Restaurant. This room is visually stunning, with many impressionist paintings adorning the red walls. There is an extra charge of \$35 for this restaurant on most nights. On two nights the room was converted into Le Cirque, with a special menu for an extra charge was \$49.

On Deck 8, the aft most room on the starboard side is the Explorer's Lounge. This room has a circular staircase leading down to the forward part of the La Fontaine Dining Room on Deck 7. A pianist and a violin player played classical music on most nights.

Opposite to the Explorer's Lounge on the port side of Deck 8 is the Casino. As you head forward from the casino you will find the small Java Bar and Café, which has a large screen television showing sporting events. From the Java Bar and Café, you can walk into the Oak Room, with book cases, easy chairs and a fireplace. The fireplace was not in use.

Forward of the Oak Room on the port side of Deck 8 is Explorations Café, which has a well-stocked library and computers. Any refreshments have to be obtained from the Java Bar and Café.

A small gift shop is located on the port side of Deck 8, just aft of the Atrium. The purser's desk, called Guest Services, is along the aft wall of the Atrium. Here each day you could get printed copies of the Time's Digest (with different versions for America, England and Germany) and crossword puzzles.

At the forward end of Deck 8 is the Showroom at Sea. The entertainment provided in this room is similar to what is provided on the larger Holland America Line ships, although on a smaller scale in some instances.

A unique feature of this ship is the two launderettes, one on Deck 6 and one on Deck 10, which are free of charge.

Another specialty restaurant, Canaletto, is on Deck 11, Lido Deck, aft of the Lido Market. There is a charge of \$15 for this restaurant.

There are two pools on the ship. One is on the aft end of Deck 9, Upper Promenade Deck. The other is located midship on Deck 11, Lido Deck. There was no water in the pool on Deck 9 during our cruise, but the two adjacent hot tubs were in use. The pool on Deck 11 was heated and did see limited use. This pool is fairly small. It reminded me of the midship pool on the original *Pacific Princess*.

At the forward end of Deck 12, Sports Deck, is the Crow's Nest. This lounge overlooks the bow and, because it is located above the bridge, does not have curtains drawn over the windows at night. A piano player provided entertainment in this room during the evenings. During the day, it was a wonderful place to read a book or just sit and watch the sea.

There are only two stairwells on the ship, one by the Atrium and one by La Fontaine Dining Room, and each has two elevators.

Of interest to ocean liner enthusiasts, the aft stairwell has several oil paintings of Holland America Line ships by Stephen Card. For instance, there is a painting of the prior *Prinsendam*, which entered service in 1973, on the landing between Decks 6 and 7. There is a model of the prior *Prinsendam* in a case in the lobby of the aft stairwell near the entrance to the Explorer's Lounge on Deck 8. There is a larger model of the *Royal Viking Sun* in a case on the lobby of the forward stairwell on Deck 11.

After our late afternoon departure from Amsterdam, we sailed overnight to Vlissingen. Upon arrival in Vlissingen, we took a motor coach to Middelburg, where we had a walking tour of the city. Middelburg was the second headquarters of the Dutch East India Company. The restored City Hall is an impressive example of post-Renaissance architecture.

We left Vlissingen in early afternoon and sailed up the Schelde River to Antwerp, where we docked in the center of town later that day. Many passengers headed out to explore the city that evening, but we decided to get an early start the next morning. Our first place to visit was the Red Star Line Museum located near the banks of the Schelde about a half a mile from the ship. This museum has an observation tower with good views over the river and the city. We then took a bus to the Central Station, an architectural tour-de-force dating from 1905. From here, we walked slowly back to the ship with brief stops at Rubens House, dating from the early 1600s and Our Lady's Cathedral, dating from the 1350s.

We sailed from Antwerp in late afternoon and spent a day at sea on our way to Brest in France. There were some mild swells during this part of the journey, which caused the ship to pitch and occasionally experience a modest roll. The ship handled the sea very well and we were surprised to hear some passengers moan about the rough seas. All I could think of was that they had not seen anything near rough.

We arrived in Brest early the next morning. Here we opted to take a tour to the town of Morlaix and the Chateau de Kerjean. Morlaix is noted for a colossal viaduct, dating to Roman times, that traverses the city. Of further interest, however, is a bar/restaurant named SS Norway, with a stylized picture of the bow of the ship as part of its sign. From Morlaix, we were driven to the Chateau de Kerjean. The large stone chateau dates from 1550 and many of the rooms contain furniture that is several hundred years old. The kitchen looks just as it may have centuries ago.

After a late afternoon departure from Brest, we sailed to La Rochelle, where we docked at 10:00 AM. The port of La Rochelle has two distinctive medieval towers on each side of the entrance to the harbor. In this port, we decided to take a tour to the town of Saintes and La Roche-Courbon Castle. In Saintes, we saw the restored Roman Arch of Germanicus and the Cathedral



The elegant PRINSENDAM is Holland America Line's smallest ship, with an intimacy much appreciated by her loyal following. (David Hume)

of St. Pierre. We did not see the Roman amphitheater. From Saintes, we were driven to La Roche-Courbon Castle. This castle was originally built in 1475 and has been updated and modernized through the years. The current owners still reside there, so the second floor was not included in the tour. The first floor contains many traces of the original decoration. There is evidence of a moat that once surrounded the castle. A pleasant outdoor café near the gate of the castle offers pastries, ice cream and wine. A small souvenir shop is in the gate house.

We left La Rochelle at 8:00 PM and sailed overnight to Bordeaux, where we docked at 10:00 AM. The late morning arrival allowed the passengers to be on deck as we sailed up the Garonne River and under the Pont d'Aquitaine, a large suspension bridge, and the Pont Jacques Chaban-Delmas, reportedly the largest lift bridge in Europe. The 361-foot center span of this bridge can be raised 174 feet to let ships pass under. We docked near the picturesque Place de la Bourse. We decided to explore the city on foot and by tram, for which we bought a twenty-four-hour pass. We visited the Cathedrale Saint Andre and its freestanding bell tower, Tour Pey-Berland. The cathedral was unique in that it has an entrance on the side of the long nave, rather than at one end. We next went to the Musee des Beaux Arts and viewed the art works in both wings. We also saw the

opera house, the Grand Theatre, and the nearby Monument aux Girondins, a tall column with a statue of “Liberty Breaking Its Chains” on the top. There are several medieval defensive gate towers still standing in the city and we saw Porte Cailhau and Grosse Cloche, which, as its name suggests, has a large clock. On our second day in Bordeaux, the new Peace Boat, *Ocean Dream*, docked just astern. This ship had originally been Carnival Cruise Line’s first newbuild, the *Tropicale*, which entered service in 1981. In late morning, we sailed back down the Garonne on our way to Santander in Spain.

When we reached Santander, we took a tour to Bilbao to see the Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry. This architectural marvel contains several galleries for temporary art exhibitions. The museum has a very limited permanent collection of art, among which are eight large steel pieces by Richard Serra in the museum’s largest gallery. The museum is noted for its soaring steel and stone interior and its titanium clad exterior, which was designed to represent fish scales.

After departing from Santander, we had a day at sea before a two-day stop in Lisbon. We docked at a new port facility in the Alfama district. On our first day in Lisbon, we were joined by the *Celebrity Eclipse* and the *Costa Mediterranea*.

We decided to visit Sintra. We took a taxi to the Rossio Station and boarded a train to Sintra. In Sintra we took a bus to the Pena Palace on a hill overlooking the town. We toured the palace and then walked to the remains of the Moorish Castle on an adjoining hill. On our bus ride back to town, we got off in the historic center for a tour of the National Palace of Sintra. A short bus ride brought us back to the train station. We interrupted our return to Lisbon with a stop in Queluz to visit the 18th century Palace of Queluz.

On our second day in Lisbon the *Navigator of the Seas* docked astern. After a late breakfast, we visited the Se Cathedral and a portion of the Castle of Saint George.

The *Prinsendam* sailed from Lisbon in mid-afternoon. We passed under the suspension bridge, Ponte 25 de Abril, and saw the Belem Tower on way down the Tagus River to the sea.

We enjoyed another day at sea before we reached Gibraltar. Across the dock from us was the Noble Caledonia ship, Island Sky, which had originally entered service as the Renaissance Eight in 1992. We opted to stroll through Casemates Square and Main Street on our way to visit the Botanic Gardens, near the entrance to the cable car up to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar.

We had a final day at sea before we arrived in Barcelona, where we disembarked. The Freedom of the Seas was docked in front of the *Prinsendam*. As we left the port on the bus to the airport, we saw *Thompson Celebration*, formerly Holland America Line’s *Noordam* of 1984, preparing to dock.

SHIP NEWS

VIRGIN VOYAGES UNVEILED: Start-up cruise line Virgin Voyages celebrated the keel laying of their first, unnamed ship on October 31. The 110,000-ton vessel is being built at the Fincantieri Sestri Ponente Yard in Italy, and when completed in 2020 will make her maiden voyage from Miami to the Caribbean. Cruise line owner Sir Richard Branson and CEO Tom McAlpin announced that the new ship will be “adult by design,” or adults only, based on feedback from potential passengers and travel agents. Two additional vessels will join the fleet in 2021 and 2022, with European itineraries a future possibility as well.



Virgin Voyages’ first vessel, when completed in 2020, will be an adults-only “boutique” cruise ship.

(Virgin Voyages)

PORT OF NEW YORK TO ENLARGE CRUISE FACILITIES: There's excellent news for those who love to cruise from the Port of New York. Both the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal in Red Hook and the Manhattan Cruise Terminal on the West Side will be modernized and enlarged to accommodate more vessels. Ports America was selected to operate both facilities in May 2017, with the contract extending through 2029, and have agreed to invest a total of \$38.5 million at both terminals. \$17.2 million is already in place to fund the Brooklyn terminal expansion, consisting of a new berth, a passenger viaduct, new gangways and improved wireless connectivity. In Manhattan, negotiations are in progress to renovate and reactivate the south side of Pier 92 as a fifth slip for cruise ship traffic. In recent years, the pier has been used exclusively for non-maritime activities such as trade shows and exhibitions. In late October, the AIDAdiva was shifted to Pier 92 during an extended cruise call, becoming the first ship to use the facility in many years.

EXPEDITION CRUISE ON A CLOUD: Silversea's original vessel, the 18,000-ton SILVER CLOUD, was rebuilt into an ice-class expedition vessel at the Palumbo Malta Shipyard. The two-month construction project included structural strengthening of the hull for cruising through ice, installation of a skeg at the stern to protect the propellers from ice while reversing, and a bulbous bow to improve hydrodynamics. A prefabricated aluminum observation lounge structure was fitted, and new tenders and Zodiacs were installed. There was a major renovation of mechanical systems throughout the ship, and all glass on board underwent maintenance, reglazing, reinforcement and/or redesign to suite her new role. In addition, many public areas received cosmetic refurbishment. SILVER CLOUD will accommodate 260 passengers in non-polar regions, which will be reduced to 200 in polar regions, matching the ship's Zodiac capacity. Her post-renovation expedition cruise season starts in South America and Antarctica in mid-November.



SILVER CLOUD will appear with a black hull and red stripe as an expedition ship; a spacious new observation lounge was constructed for the renovation. (Silversea Cruises)

DREAM SHIP: WORLD DREAM was handed over to Genting's Dream Cruises, with her maiden voyage scheduled for November. The 151,300-ton, 3,376-passenger vessel is the 44th cruise ship built at Meyer Werft in Germany. In addition to the usual facilities found on a modern mega-cruise ship, WORLD DREAM carries a small deep-sea submarine. The vessel can dive 200 meters below the sea's surface, offering a breathtaking excursion for 4 passengers. WORLD DREAM will join sister ship GENTING DREAM in the rapidly growing Chinese market, and will be based in Hong Kong during her first season.



WORLD DREAM will cater to the Chinese market; the Zouk Night Club is typical of her interior design. (Meyer Werft and Dream Cruises)

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