

SEPTEMBER, 2010

VOLUME XXVII, # 8

Thursday September 23, 6:00 PM – **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A REVISED DATE!**
At the Community Church Assembly Room, 40 E. 35th Street, New York, NY:

VOYAGING ACROSS THE SEAS WITH P&O-ORIENT LINES

THEODORE W. SCULL

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and the Orient Line were two of the most storied steamship lines in British maritime history. While both lines originally focused on serving the British Empire and immigration to Australia and New Zealand, their ships also started calling at North American ports in the mid-1950s as the then-merged P&O-Orient Lines.

Our speaker, Ted Scull, made a first P&O booking on ORIANA 40 years ago last month, and it turned out to be a bit of a near-disastrous non-starter. Two years later, he sailed from San Francisco to Sydney on P&O ORSOVA, a three-week trans-Pacific voyage. He found Australia and Australians very much to his liking, and eventually married an Aussie.

In the late 1970s, he became a lecturer for P&O aboard ORIANA, CANBERRA and SEA PRINCESS (ex-KUNGSHOLM) and in the next six years made 16 voyages, mostly segments of the long ocean voyage between Southampton and Sydney. This period represented the final days of true ocean travel, other than on the short North Atlantic route. We will hear about those experiences and his last P&O voyage as a journalist aboard the new ORIANA in 1995.



(Ted Scull collection)

ADDRESS:

PO Box 384
New York, NY 10185-0384

NEXT MEETINGS:

Friday, Oct. 29; Thursday, Nov. 18; Wednesday, Dec. 15 – Holiday Party and John-Maxtone-Graham lecture on **FRANCE / NORWAY**

E-MAIL:

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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, Marjorie Dowman. Opinions expressed are those of the author only and not of the PONY branch or THE PORTHOLE.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

This month, "Arrivals and Departures" takes a new form reminiscent of the "Shipping Mails" column that appeared in the New York Times and the Herald Tribune for many decades until the 1970's. Do you remember when that was the first column you read in the morning paper?

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)
GRANDE MARINER	Toronto	New York	Great Lakes/Hudson River	Ted & Suellyn Scull
QUEEN MARY 2	Capetown	New York	World Cruise	Dick Faber
QUEEN MARY 2	Southampton	New York	Transatlantic	Dick Faber
NORWEGIAN GEM	New York	New York	Caribbean Cruise	Dick Faber
ZEPHYR	New York	New York	Hidden Harbor Cruise	Marge Dovman
ARIA	Venice	Amsterdam	European Rivers	Alan & Mary Borthwick
NORWEGIAN EPIC	Southampton	New York	Transatlantic	Larry & Mary Levine Chuck & Cathy Crawford

In addition, the WSS PONY cruise to Canada and New England on QUEEN MARY 2 sailed from New York on July 1. Onboard were members Ralph & Marie Adamson, Victor & Nancy Eichorn, Bruce & Marilyn Gallacher, Walter Gay, George & Harriet Rubin, Connie Weininger, Edith Dunfec, Bard Hatry & Marlyn Riccitelli & Elizabeth Hatry, Dick Faber, and Bill Miller (as lecturer). If you were on the cruise and were not mentioned here, please notify The Porthole for inclusion in next month's Arrivals and Departures.

WELCOME ABOARD

A warm welcome to Robert Hofmann and Oscar Olson. Welcome again to rejoining Hans & Karen Segboer.

SEPTEMBER MEETING DATE CORRECTION

Due to overbooking at the Community Church, the previously announced meeting and program scheduled for Friday, September 24 at 6:00 PM has been moved to Thursday, September 23 at 6:00 PM.

CHANGING THE WATCH

As some of you know and others have suspected, your editor is leaving the bridge. After many years of involvement with The Porthole, including 26 as editor, I have decided that it's time to relax and pay some attention to other areas of my life, although I will continue to review the meetings and other events. (Not to worry, my health is fine.) It has been a time-consuming but fun and interesting period, and I thank all those who lent a hand over the years in creating what I hope was a readable and informative newsletter. In particular, my thanks to Bob Allen for standing in as "staff editor" these many months, including the current September issue.

Bob will be taking over as editor with the October issue, and he will keep those shipshape issues coming. You may contact him by e-mail at oceanvoyag@aol.com. Unelectronic types (like me) may continue to use the post office box address.

It's been fun. Thanks for reading.

Marge Dovman

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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.

OUR NEW WEBSITE

On August 13, 2010, WSS PONY unveiled its rejuvenated website, brilliantly designed by Clara Miller. The site includes the following headings: Meetings & Activities, PONY Cruise Schedule, Featured Articles / Essays, Harbor Happenings, PONY Resources and The Porthole Newsletter – in color! You'll also find member photos, blogs and much more. Take a look for yourself at www.worldshipny.com and you'll agree that we can all enjoy a world-class website!

THE BAZAAR IS COMING AT A NEW TIME OF YEAR

Don't miss the annual Ocean Liner Bazaar on Saturday October 2, from 10:00 AM through 2:00 PM. As usual, it will be held at the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium, 417 East 61st Street (between First and York Avenues). Dealers will display and offer for sale ocean liner memorabilia including models, deckplans, prints, brochures, china and other exciting ephemera!

YOUR DAILY PROGRAMME

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org Contact via email reservations@southstseaport.org or call 212-748-8786. **Mini-cruise aboard the tugboat W.O. DECKER:** Thursdays through Sundays, until October. **Lunch Tour aboard the tugboat W.O. Decker:** Saturday, 9/18 at 10 AM – 2 PM. **Public Sails aboard the schooner PIONEER:** Tuesdays through Fridays at 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM; Saturdays and Sundays at 1-3 PM, 4-6 PM and 7-9 PM; **Sip & Sail Wine Cruises aboard the schooner PIONEER:** Thursdays at 7PM. **Decodence Tours** (the continuing exhibit about the spectacular French Line's NORMANDIE of 1935): at 12 Fulton Street. **Monarchs of the Sea: Celebrating the Ocean Liner Era** continues at the Walter Lord Gallery, 209 Water Street. Contact the Seaport for details on tour and event times, pricing and reservations; cruises depart Pier 16.

PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP www.liberty-ship.com Contact via email john.w.brown@usa.net or call 410-558-0646 for information or 410-558-0164 for tickets. **Living History Cruises** on the historic Liberty Ship S.S. JOHN W. BROWN from Baltimore, MD: Saturday, 10/16; Port visit in Providence, RI: Saturday, 9/25.

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. The Vancouver, BC local branch of WSS will have its next meeting on Wednesday, October 13; the program will be announced at a later date. Meetings are held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue (Kitsilano Point).

WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE www.WorkingHarbor.org Contact via email John@WorkingHarbor.org or call 212-757-160 for tickets and information. The mission of the Working Harbor Committee is to strengthen the awareness of the Harbor of New York and New Jersey's history and vitality today and its opportunities for the future. Their next cruise will explore Brooklyn's Maritime Past & Future: Tuesday, 9/14 at 6 PM, departing Pier 16 on the excursion vessel **ZEPHYR**.

SHIP NEWS

The TITANIC is back in the news. RMS Titanic Inc., the Atlanta-based salvage company with rights to TITANIC, visited the wreck in August on the expedition ship JEAN CHARCOT. Their intention is to document the sunken White Star liner using sophisticated 3-D imaging and explore the entire wreck site, some of which has yet to be examined. They plan to launch the virtual TITANIC on the internet in time for the 100th anniversary of the sinking on April 15, 1912. This expedition included archeologists from the US National Park Service, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution of Massachusetts.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth has agreed to name the latest Cunarder, which will be, appropriately, the QUEEN ELIZABETH. The ceremony will take place in Southampton, England on October 11, the day before the new liner's maiden voyage. Her Majesty has a long history of christening Cunarders – she launched CARONIA in 1947 (while still Princess Elizabeth), QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 in 1967 and QUEEN MARY 2 in 2004. In addition, as a 10-year-old girl, she visited the new QUEEN MARY with the Royal Family just before her Maiden Voyage in 1936. (QUEEN MARY was christened by her grandmother in 1934, and QUEEN ELIZABETH by her mother in 1938.) QUEEN ELIZABETH will be a slightly larger sister ship to the QUEEN VICTORIA of 2008 and both ships share the "Vista" class platform, developed by the Carnival Corporation for use on vessels of Carnival, Costa, Holland America and P&O in addition to Cunard. Public spaces have been rearranged and tailored to achieve the Cunard style on both the VICTORIA and the ELIZABETH; a two-deck ballroom, Midships Bar and extensive library are just a few of the signature Cunard rooms which give these ships a distinctive character. Whereas the VICTORIA has some Victorian design elements, the ELIZABETH's décor is influenced by late art deco and art moderne. On the QUEEN ELIZABETH, Cunard is also reviving the famed Verandah Grill a la carte restaurant, first popularized on the QUEEN MARY of 1936 and the QUEEN ELIZABETH of 1940. Surprisingly, this room will not afford diners sweeping views over the ship's stern, as it did on the earlier transatlantic QUEENS. Once in service, QUEEN ELIZABETH will be Cunard's third vessel and will be employed in worldwide cruising.



The new QUEEN ELIZABETH on sea trials . (photo by Cunard)



The Queen's Room will be a traditional Cunard venue. (Cunard)



The first QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1940 - 1968, on a 1964 brochure cover. (Bob Allen collection)



QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, 1969 - 2008, at New York in 1981 (photo by Bob Allen)

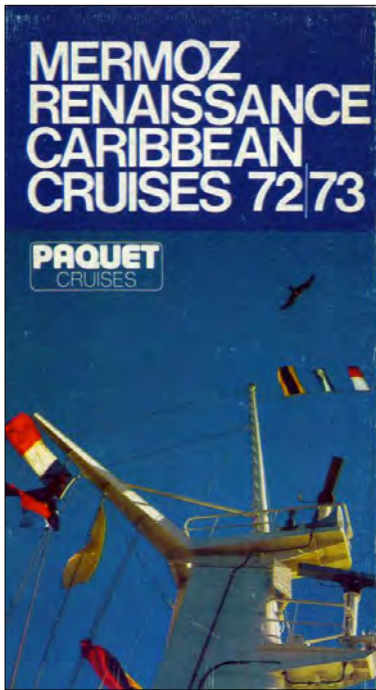
The CLIPPER ADVENTURER, a small expedition cruise ship with a 128-passenger capacity, ran aground in the Arctic Ocean in late August. Equipped for navigation through ice, the 330-foot vessel encountered an uncharted rock while cruising through the Northwest Passage. She was evacuated by the Canadian Coast Guard after attempts to free her were unsuccessful. No injuries were reported.

Cruise West, another small-ship exploration cruise line, is in the process of restructuring the company. They have suspended operations on their largest ship, SPIRIT OF OCEANUS (ex RENAISSANCE FIVE), and are no longer taking new bookings. Cruises will continue on the smaller vessels SPIRIT OF ENDEAVOUR and SPIRIT OF '98 through October, 2010.

The MONA LISA (ex KUNGSHOLM, SEA PRINCESS, VICTORIA) has completed her last cruise for her German owner and is now for sale. The 26,678-ton former flagship of Swedish America Line was completed by the John Brown Shipyard in Clydebank, Scotland in 1966. Due to SOLAS 2010 regulations, it is unlikely that the 44-year old vessel will be purchased for future cruise service. Unfortunately, tentative plans for her to become a waterfront attraction in Stockholm or Gothenburg, Sweden have failed to materialize, leaving scrap merchants as the most likely buyers.

Another classic ship from a bygone era has reached the end of a long career. The MAESTRO (ex RENAISSANCE, WORLD RENAISSANCE, AWANI DREAM, GRAND VICTORIA, BLUE MONARCH) was beached at Alang, India for demolition in mid-August. Commissioned for the Paquet Lines, RENAISSANCE was built by the famed Penhoet St. Nazaire, France and sailed on her maiden voyage from Marseille, France to Haifa, Israel in 1966. Built in the same shipyard as NORMANDIE (1935) and FRANCE (1962), she was one of the last French-built and owned vessels designed for passenger service to and from her native country. The 11,724-ton liner originally carried 416 passengers in one class and featured a single, slender funnel amidships, distinctive twin-boom aft kingposts, and overall sweeping lines that showed a clear link to her predecessors.

Service to Haifa and other eastern Mediterranean ports, interspersed with an increasing percentage of cruises, continued until 1977 when RENAISSANCE was sold to the Greek Epirotiki Cruises. Renamed WORLD RENAISSANCE, she continued in cruise service, with charters to Costa Cruises as well. In 1995, she became AWANI DREAM based in Indonesia, but returned to Epirotiki in 1998 and was finally laid up in 2004. Sold at auction to Elysian Cruises, she became GRAND VICTORIA in 2006 and was soon sailing for a Russian tour company. Her final employment as BLUE MONARCH was in 2007 for Monarch Classic Cruises.



The mast of RENAISSANCE is on the cover of a 1972 Paquet brochure.



French cruising in high style: the RENAISSANCE from a 1974 Paquet brochure. (both images: Bob Allen collection)

While excavating the World Trade Center site in mid-July for the new vehicle security center, workers made a spectacular discovery. They unearthed a 30-foot section of the hull of an 18th century merchant ship, 20 to 30 feet below ground level at Washington and Liberty Streets. Located in an area identified as Lindsey's Wharf or Lake's Wharf on a 1797 map, it was the first large-scale archeological discovery along the New York waterfront since 1982. Archeologists believe that the vessel was a two-masted brigantine, which worked cargo up and down the eastern seaboard in the mid- to late-1700's. Examination of the vessel indicated that the hull had been cut apart, most likely so that the ship could be used as part of a landfill to extend Manhattan Island. Exposure to air after 200 years caused the ship's hull section to deteriorate rapidly, so the pieces were moved to the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory for further study and preservation.

We've just passed a little-remembered anniversary, one that brings together local history, the Port of New York and New Jersey, and some famous ocean liners. One hundred years ago, on August 9, 1910, newly-elected Mayor William J. Gaynor of New York boarded the North German Lloyd liner KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE, bound for a month-long vacation in Europe. On deck chatting with fellow passengers and posing for newspaper photographers, the mayor was approached by John J. Gallagher, who had recently been fired from a night watchman job on the East River piers. Gallagher had been accused of dereliction of duty and solicited the mayor's help in clearing his name, but was rebuffed by City Hall. Gallagher apparently did not take this treatment lightly – he shot the mayor with a .38 caliber revolver as he shouted "You took the bread and meat out of my mouth!" Mayor Gaynor was taken to nearby St. Mary's Hospital in Hoboken, NJ where doctors were unable to remove the bullet lodged in his neck. However, he did recuperate enough to return to work on October 3, 1910. Gallagher was sentenced to 12 years in prison, but died in 1913 in a state hospital for the insane. On September 4, 1913, Mayor Gaynor boarded the White Star liner BALTIC, for a relaxing European vacation before a planned re-election campaign. Unfortunately, sea voyages did not bring him good fortune; he died in mid-Atlantic on September 10 from a heart attack and the lingering effects of the gunshot wound. The body was returned to New York on the Cunard liner LUSITANIA, and the Mayor was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE: None of these ships were very lucky for New York Mayor William J. Gaynor.



KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE, North German Lloyd, 1897



BALTIC, White Star Line, 1904



Mayor Gaynor as an attempt was made on his life aboard the KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE on August 9, 1910



LUSITANIA, Cunard Line, 1907

Ship postcards from the Bob Allen collection; photo of Mayor Gaynor by William Warnecke, New York Evening World, reprinted in the New York Times on August 9, 2010.

FOURTH OF JULY GETAWAY CRUISE

by Bruce Gallacher

On July 1st members of the World Ship Society and Steamship Historical Society boarded the “QM2” for a five night cruise on the grand lady to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Boston, Mass. My wife, Marilyn and I boarded early in order to view a great movie, „MR. OCEAN LINER THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BILL MILLER”, later to be released on DVD. For us this presentation was very much a nostalgic trip. The film was followed by a complimentary cocktail party with an orchestra and a few speeches. Captain Nick Bates and Bill himself spoke, as did Robert Neal Marshall who directed and produced the film. Some of our group got to board the “WHALEN”, a 1938-vintage harbor tanker docked nearby, but lack of time forced us to forego this visit.

Later we met new friends, two delightful couples, in the Britannia Restaurant. The entertainment was top-shelf and the food superb - all up to Cunard standards - and the weather remained cooperative to a fault during the entire cruise.

The next day, July 2nd, was full of activity, with parties and some excellent lectures, including one by Bill Miller in Illuminations (Planetarium) called „LUXURY LINER ROW”. There was a cocktail party sponsored by Pisa Bros. in the Commodore Club and it was attended by Captain Nick Bates and folks got to mix around and get acquainted. That night was the traditional Black and White Ball, a formal event.

Also on the voyage we attended the Captain's Cocktail Party. There was a bit of excitement when we passed through a pod of whales, probably humpbacks, but these shy mammals stayed just under the surface and their presence was betrayed by tall spouts from their blowholes.

July 3rd, found us tied up at Pier 21 in Halifax. Bill Miller took some of our members on a walking tour. We and some others went off on our own since we had already been to The Museum of the Atlantic and other places on Bill's tour. Saw some interesting vessels along the waterfront, and a number of naval and maritime monuments, including a recent sculpture of that most famous of Haligonians, Samuel Cunard.

This was followed by a bus tour with a maritime theme. At the Narrows, we passed the site of the collision between the Belgian relief ship, „IMO”, and the French munitions ship, “MONT BLANC”, that resulted in an explosion that devastated Halifax. This was believed to be the most devastating man-made explosion in history up to that time (1917). The bus passed Bedford Basin, which during WWII was crowded with warships and merchant vessels forming up for the great convoys carrying supplies to Russia, Britain, and the European theater of operations.

The high point of the tour was a visit to the Fairview Lawn Cemetery, and its TITANIC burial plot, the largest of three in the Halifax area. This was a very moving visit. One grave was that of an English boy about 11 years old without family. The locals more or less adopted him and decorate his grave from time to time. We were astonished to learn that the class distinctions of TITANIC'S day were adhered to even in death. When it was possible to ascertain what class the bodies belonged to the recovery ships brought back the 1st class in caskets, 2nd and 3rd class in bags, and crewmen on ordinary stretchers. It may be significant too that the large majority of head stones belonged to crewmen. These chaps stayed at their posts and brought no shame to the British Merchant Marine.

Before going back to the ship, we stopped for a while at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic which we had visited once before. Time is no friend to the traveler, and the visitor has two options with such a large world class museum. One is to skate through and eyeball those things that particularly attract ones interest, and the other is to spend a day from opening to closing on your own time. There are several vessels there to explore as well.

Halifax was a jumping place during that part of the summer, having a military tattoo, a visit by the Queen, Canada Day, and Fleet Week, all in the period of a week or so. A lot of Canadian naval vessels were in port. Soon we were back on “QM2”, having picked up a lot of Canadian nautical history in a remarkably short time.

Next day, 4th of July, we were tied up at the BLACK FALCON pier in Boston, the cruise ship berth. This gets its name from a Scandinavian merchantman, BLACK FALCON, carrying explosives some decades ago blowing up and killing a number of longshoremen. A variety of tours were available and Marilyn and I opted to go to Salem, scene of the infamous witch trials of 1692 and, of course, we saw the Witch Museum. This consisted of a series of life-size dioramas of the salient events of this episode accompanied by thought-provoking narration. It was well presented and worth a visit. Later we visited the ancient Charter Street Cemetery and saw the monument containing memorial stones in memory of each of the victims of the witch trials. But Salem is more than witch trials and the home of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

When nautical Massachusetts is mentioned, places like Boston and New Bedford pop into mind. But Salem was at one time a very important seaport in this state, in fact, on the Atlantic coast. Starting from the early 1600's as a fishing port, it reached its heyday between the American Revolution and the War of 1812, after which its fortunes declined. From exporting fish it developed into a wide variety of trade, extending to the entire east coast and the West Indies, and Canada. Eventually its trade reached Europe and the rest of the world, including China. Salem's importance as a port declined after the War of 1812 for a variety of reasons, including being too shallow to accommodate the new sailing ships coming on the scene. Afterward much of the wharfs and harbor were filled in. But some of the vestiges of its glory days are still to be seen preserved is the wonderful mansions once owned by rich shippers, the Customs House, as well as Derby's Wharf, a stone dock in which is tied up a beautiful reproduction of a late 1700's sailing barque, “FRIENDSHIP OF SALEM”. In fact the entire town is a treasure trove for those with a bent toward colonial and early American architecture. There is something for everyone in Salem, and in Boston generally.

At one stop we had an incipient panic. Seems we got back to the place where the bus stopped to find no bus. But a staff member showed up to take us in tow. Apparently the bus was illegally parked and the cops chased it off. On taking a head count before going back to Boston we were shy a couple of folks. Never turned up. Hope they had a bunch of money for the taxi back to “QM2”. Before leaving Salem it is worth mentioning that this was

the birthplace of Nathaniel Bowditch, who compiled "The New American Practical Navigator". This book is still in use and his house still stands in Salem.

Once back in Boston, we explored the dock area. A little after dinner at about 10:00 p.m. or so we were on deck to watch the 4th of July fireworks with the other passengers. Though a good distance away, the display was quite spectacular. That's really something, celebrating Canada Day, and the 4th of July on the great British ship, "QM2", in one week.

The next day was a relaxing sea day with fabulous weather. At one point the ship slowed down ostensibly because we were going through a pod of whales, but we saw none. Porpoises frolicked around and one lucky couple had the unusual experience of spotting a sea turtle. Pieces of copper-colored sargassum weed were commonplace. This warm-water plant life has found its way out of the Gulf Stream. Bill Miller gave another lecture, this one on the Port of New York, and later in the afternoon hosted a book signing session. Then following dinner we collected menus and bid fond goodbyes to passengers and staff before finishing the melancholy chore of packing. Almost forgot to mention that early in the cruise there was a contest held to guess the distance between the lowest girder of the Verrazano Bridge and the top of "QM2" funnel.

Early next morning we were tied up at Red Hook once more. The glum feeling is somewhat dampened by thoughts of future cruises. But New York City had a welcome for us we did not expect. It was the hottest day of the year at 103 degrees. This was a sign of things to come. Oh, for those sea breezes!

ON THE NORWEGIAN COASTAL STEAMER

By Ira Drogin

Last October my wife Janet and I took a trip to Scandinavia, part of which was a five-and-a-half-day voyage on the Hurtigruten Line's KONG HARALD. We boarded in Kirkenes in the northernmost part of Norway, on the Barents Sea, above the Arctic Circle. Kirkenes has a history in World War II. It was occupied by the Germans and used as a staging base for Hitler's Russian campaign. As such, being on the Russian border close to Murmansk, it was repeatedly bombed by the Russians. Some wartime ruins of German fortification remain.

The KONG HARALD is one of a fleet of Hurtigruten ships that run daily between Kirkenes in the north and Bergen in the south. Although technically classified as a car ferry because it carries vehicles below decks, it is a coastal cruise ship. It is slightly less than 500 feet long, very modern, and cruises at 15 MPH. It does not have a casino or entertainment but has a beautiful dining room, and a cafeteria for passengers who board at any of the 15 or so stops it makes.

The KONG HARALD runs on a tight schedule because of its frequent stops. It is similar to the Alaska ferries, but lavishly designed and decorated. Our cabin was very small, with two beds that pulled out of the walls, but we spent little time in the cabin.

The ship travels up and down the northern and western coasts of Norway. The scenery is spectacular and the observation lounges are large and comfortable. The first night out, as we approached Norway's North Cape, we were called out by the PA system to see the Northern Lights in the chill of the night.

The meals (three per day) were very, very good. Breakfast and lunch were buffet style, with huge and diverse displays of meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, desserts etc., prepared in varieties of ways. Dinner was served by waitresses, with a single entree each night, alternating between fish and meat dishes. There was lots of reindeer, prepared in many different ways. KONG HARALD gets an A+ for its food. Special dishes were available if requested in advance of the evening meal.

The staff speaks fluent English and is friendly and accommodating. The ship is immaculate. It is a medium size cruise ship by all standards. Its ride is very good due to stabilizers. It pitched somewhat when passing the North Cape, noted for its stormy waters. The staff held the King Neptune ceremony on an open deck when we passed through the Arctic Circle southbound. King Neptune slipped a small ladle of ice water down our backs, followed by an offered glass of schnapps and a certificate of crossing.

There were only a few negatives to our trip. The most important was inherent in the voyage. The ship stays only between half an hour and an hour in most of the towns and cities it calls on. There is no real opportunity to sightsee at these places. The longest stop was three hours, at Trondheim, where we arrived at 8 A.M., and nothing was open. In Tromso, we arrived shortly after midnight and departed about 3 A.M. Some passengers went by bus to a cathedral after midnight for a short musical program, but that was in Tromso.

Hurtigruten offers shore excursions. They are grossly expensive, and for the most part offer little in the way of interest. They are mostly short, and passengers who participate in them are taken by bus to meet the ship at its next stop.

I took the bridge tour, which was very interesting, but I really felt I was being “nickel and dimed” by being charged \$15 for the experience.

Finally, the cost of wine in the dining room was a surprise, even knowing that Norway is the most expensive country in Europe. I recognized some Spanish table wines that sell in the U.S. for \$10 to \$15. They sold for \$65 in the dining room. I observed very few bottles of wine on dining room tables as a result. Many other ordinary bottles were \$100 plus. A package of wines for five dinners was available at what I considered an exorbitant price.

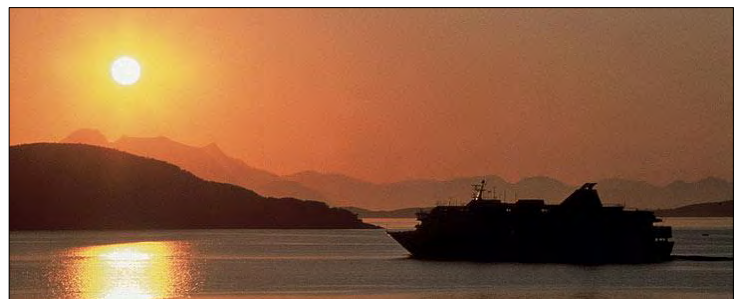
If someone is not familiar with Norway’s fjords, offshore islands, fishing communities and small towns, and is content to essentially take a comfortable five-day ride, this type of cruise would be appealing. Janet and I caught up on our rest on the KONG HARALD. Fortunately it was only part of our Scandinavian trip, which involved much more activity.



Hurtigruten’s KONG HARALD, 1993



Nidaros in Trondheim is Norway’s only Gothic Cathedral.



The midnight sun is an unforgettable part of any cruise to Norway.

(photos by Hurtigruten)

SHIP OF THE MONTH



t/n MICHELANGELO

(Bob Allen Collection)

Original owner: Italia SAN, Genoa, Italy
Builder: Ansaldo Sestri Ponente, Genoa, Italy
Route: Genoa - New York; cruising

Dimensions: 905" x 102" x 45,911 grt
Passenger capacity: 1,775 in 3 classes
Maiden Voyage: May 12, 1965

The MICHELANGELO and her sister ship RAFFAELLO were the last liners designed and built for year-round transatlantic service, with cruising intended as a minor part of their employment. MICHELANGELO's sleek external profile featured a pair of innovative wing-topped lattice funnels located midships-aft, towering fore and aft masts, a sharply raked bow and a cruiser stern. Her spectacular First and Cabin Class accommodations were designed by, among others, legendary Italian marine architects Gustavo Pulitzer Finali and Nino Zoncada. Crisp and ultra-modern with signature Italian design flair, MICHELANGELO's memorable public spaces included the two-deck high First Class ballroom, decorated with exquisite Flemish-inspired tapestries and three huge Lucite chandeliers. Tourist Class quarters were spartan, with mostly windowless staterooms and uninspired public facilities – basic transportation for immigrants. MICHELANGELO and her sister were the last liners built to accommodate three classes – technologically state of the art vessels, yet woefully behind the times. Despite some early success, like other Atlantic liners the MICHELANGELO was failing the competition with jet airliners by the early 1970's, and was heavily subsidized by the Italian government in order to keep operating. Only ten years after her maiden voyage, MICHELANGELO was laid up in Genoa and offered for sale in July 1975. Considered for purchase by Home Lines and NCL, her three-class design made her unsuitable as a cruise ship. In 1977, she was sold to the government of Iran to be floating barracks and arrived at Bandar Abbas in July of that year. By 1986 she was offered for scrap, and finally arrived in Pakistan for demolition in 1991. It was a sad end for a ship of remarkable beauty that just came along too late.

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* = past charman