

NOVEMBER, 2018 VOLUME XXXV, # 10

Friday, November 30, 2018 - 6:45 PM

THE HEBRIDEAN EXPERIENCE

By Pat Dacey

The National Opera Center, 330 7th Avenue at 29th Street, 7th Floor, Manhattan

Join your fellow members and guests for a presentation by Pat Dacey on the HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS. This very small and special vessel - 2,112 tons and now in her 30th season - is the only ship currently operated by Hebridean Cruises. Often described as a "Floating Country House", the all-inclusive HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS caters to just 49 guests. A staff of 38 sets the mood, ensuring each voyage is a luxurious house party afloat.

The HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS began her career as the Mac Brayne car ferry RMS COLUMBA in 1964 and continued to serve in that role until she was purchased by Hebridean Island Cruises in 1989. She was transformed into a luxury cruise vessel and commenced her new role after a naming ceremony by the Duchess of York. Her royal association continued when HM Queen Elizabeth II chartered HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS for two family holidays. Following, Hebridean Cruises was granted a Royal Warrant, making HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS the only cruise ship ever to receive the royal recognition.

Pat will explore the more than fifty-year history of this ship and offer a first-hand account of a recent voyage he took to discover the natural beauty and history of the Sea Lochs of the Lower Clyde in Scotland. He will provide a sample of life on board, including dining and shore visits.

Pat Dacey is a long-time PONY Branch member who also serves on the executive board and is the committee head for special events.



HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS

(Pat Dacey)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings: Holiday Party at Paris Cafe, Sunday, December 9; Friday, January 25, 2019 – Program TBA
Group Cruise on the INSIGNIA: August 18, 2019

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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.

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



SILVER SPIRIT departing New York, October 17, 2018.

(Bob Allen)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
QUEEN MARY 2	New York	New York	Canada New England	Alan & Janine Yorker	09/18
QUEEN MARY 2	New York	New York	Canada New England	Carol Miles & Mario De Stefano	09/18
VOLENDAM	San Diego	Ft. Lauderdale	Pacific Coast/Panama Canal	Matt Jacobs	10/18
QUEEN MARY 2	Southampton	New York	Transatlantic	Ted & Suellyn Scull	11/18
AZAMARA PURSUIT	Barcelona	Miami	Transatlantic	Carol Miles & Mario De Stefano	11/18
AZAMARA PURSUIT	Barcelona	Miami	Transatlantic	Doug Friedlander & David Sykes	11/18
ENCHANTMENT/SEAS	Pt. Canaveral	Pt. Canaveral	Bahamas	Mr. & Mrs. Tom O'Reilly	11/18
VIKING IDUN	Budapest	Passau	Danube River	Marjorieann Matuszek & David Hume	11/18

WORKING AND RESEARCHING ALONG NEW YORK'S WATERFRONT: LECTURE WITH TED SCULL

Wednesday, December 5 | 6:30 pm | \$10 (free for members)

Ted Scull still recalls the impressive ocean liners and handsome break-bulk cargo ships that piqued his interest back in 1964 New York. What began as a job in the passenger department for Holland America Line transformed into a passion for the waterfront that has spanned over half a century.

During this lecture, Scull will highlight the experiences that shaped his affinity for the waterfront. Hear fascinating stories of his time as a travel writer producing maritime and New York-based travel guides: one authorized by the City of New York, focusing on the Staten Island Ferry, and the second on Hoboken's innovative, waterfront Beaux Arts Lackawanna Terminal.

About the Lecturer

Ted Scull is a New York-based author, travel writer, and lecturer specializing in maritime subjects and the New York region. He has released several publications based on his ocean travels, including the Ocean Liner trilogy and 100 Best Cruise Vacations. This event will be held at the Melville Gallery at 213 Water Street. Doors open at 6:15 pm.

SHIP'S LOG

By Marge Dovman

Our September meeting inaugurated not only a new season but also a new meeting place. We are now meeting at the National Opera Center, the purpose of which is to encourage opera, but are happy to host groups with other interests – like us. The Center is conveniently located near Penn Station, in an area near various transportation options and eating places. No, you won't find Renee Fleming or the ghost of Luciano Pavarotti wandering in the halls, but there are discreet signs outside the restrooms requesting users not to vocalize inside, as it might disturb people who are rehearsing. The meeting room itself is the

right size to accommodate our usual attendance, and there is a waiting area or two for early arrivals. We're there on a three-month trial basis, and opinions of the room are welcome.

To inaugurate this new space, Ted Scull, one of our best photographers and one of our most adventurous travelers, took us via slide show on one of his earliest journeys. He was introduced by his wife, Suellyn, with a brief but colorful description of what traveling with Ted is like.

Ted voyaged from London to Borneo by his favorite means of transportation – “the ground” (that is, no flying). We began in London, where we were introduced to Ted's long-time friend, Lawrence Dunn, and his wife, with whom he stayed while there. Lawrence Dunn can be considered the British equivalent to Frank Braynard, who among other claims to fame drew silhouettes of both Allied and Axis ships for identification during World War II.

Leaving the comforts of London, Ted took us photographically from one exotic locale to another, at times introducing us to people he met, now and then giving us an historic tidbit or two, and occasionally encountering the unexpected. His first means of “ground” transportation was the cross-Channel ferry, consisting of sleeping cars on a train ferry. Here we learned that Hitler was planning to invade Great Britain using them, and despite Hitler's interest, the ferries lasted until 1980.

In Paris, Ted picked up the Orient Express bound for Istanbul, one of his favorite places. Despite the train's glamorous reputation, there were sleeping cars, but the “dining car” consisted of vendors at various stops who sold food through the windows. In Istanbul, we were treated to colorful street and waterfront scenes, the latter including the cross-Bosporus ferries, built in Europe between 1905 and the 1920's. Many cargo/passenger ships added to the atmosphere. Then there was the rush hour, with crowds of taxis gathered at the piers, drivers yelling out their routes.

Having survived the Istanbul rush hour, Ted embarked on the Taurys Express for the trip to Basra, and ran into the first unexpected event: the train derailed in Tabriz, injuring some passengers. Naturally, a tourist's instinct is to take pictures. The instinct of the local authorities was the opposite, as they destroyed all of the camera's – except Ted's, as he had cleverly packed his. A substitute train eventually arrived, and took everyone to Teheran. Ted's photographs along this leg of the trip showed why he found Isfahan the most interesting place in the area.

Once he arrived in Teheran, Ted found he was the only one going from Iran to Kuwait, by ship rather than by bandit-infested bus, even though he had to wait three days before departure in temperatures often averaging 110 degrees.

The ship Ted was waiting for was one of his favorites, British India's DWARKA. Ted told us of British India's position as a major transportation provider on the Indian Ocean with its four ships including the DWARKA, which was featured in the movie “Gandhi.” We were taken through all of the DWARKA's interiors, hearing about and seeing the prevalence of Bakelite fittings, and the absence of air conditioning, except in the saloon accommodations.

Here Ted had his scariest travel experience, boarding the ship with hundreds of Indian workers, while police struck the workers with sticks. Ted and other non-Indians were sent to a room where passports were randomly piled on a table, and then told to find their own passports. (Mistreatment of workers, said Ted, was common there.) Another unexpected, but a historical one from the 1960's: the British India ship DARA, was sabotaged by Omani bandits, killing 236 people – an early act of international terrorism.

The DWARKA was prevented by bad weather from docking at Dubai and diverted to Bahrain, a busy trading port with pilgrim ships and other interesting craft. Then on to Karachi, a city that was interesting but hot, and where no photography was allowed in the port for political reasons. And then the next unexpected: while entering the harbor at Bombay, a huge swell caused the DWARKA to roll and alarming 15 degrees, reminiscent of the famous near-capsizing of the legendary ROTTERDAM outside Casablanca in the early 1970's. Some DWARKA passengers were seriously injured, and some items were hurled overboard.

Deciding to leave Bombay, Ted and some companions traveled by land to Calcutta, which Ted found very poor but the people friendly. From there, he proceeded to Darjeeling, well known for its tea cultivation, where he passed by an area which had recently suffered a landslide.

Due to this side-excursion, Ted missed his cross-Indian Ocean connection, finally sailing on the STATE OF MADRAS to Singapore, arriving in its harbor full of coasters. There he boarded the next vessel, the RAJAH BROOKE of Straits Line, the equivalent of British India for its area. Interestingly, two prisoners of war designed the RAJAH BROOKE, to be built after their release.

Ted was off from Singapore to the Sultanate of Brunei, visiting the capitol and a longhouse on Sasawak before returning to Singapore, from whence he returned home with many an adventure story and lots of great photographs.

We thank Ted for sharing his travels and photography, and providing us with some of the best travel and ship stories.

ELECTION SEASON IS HERE

Ballots were mailed to members in early November. Please return them by November 30, 2019.

TIME TO RENEW!

Don't miss the exciting events scheduled for 2019 – more delightful talks, events and shipboard luncheons are in the planning stages! Your renewal form was mailed in early November. Please send it back by December 31, 2018.

HOLIDAY PARTY!

It's time send in your reservation for the WSS – PONY Holiday Party! This year, we will celebrate at The Paris Café, in the Seaport District of Manhattan. See the flyer and reservation form included in the October edition of The Porthole for additional information.

MEMORIES OF THE S.S. ISRAEL

By Alan Yorker

Bill Miller's piece about the WSS visit to the s.s. ISRAEL in 1966 reminded me of a souvenir I obtained for my collection years ago. It's a hammered copper dish with details of the ship's maiden voyage along the border. This was typical of Israeli art of the time.



Above left, a hammered copper plate given to passengers in commemoration of the s.s. ISRAEL's 1955 maiden voyage is part of WSS member Alan Yorker's collection. (Alan Yorker Collection) Above right, a postcard of the s.s. ISRAEL. (Bob Allen collection)

COSMIC CRUISE

By Marge Dovman

Saturday, October 13, and fall was in the air, accompanied by a hint of winter – an almost perfect day for a harbor cruise with an Italian accent. Participating members were to meet at the Skyport Marina, at 23rd Street and the East River, where they would anticipate three hours on the water, fortified by an Italian buffet, and with the promise of five or so ships at their piers or departing. Our intrepid voyagers gathered at the marina at the appointed check-in time of 1:30 P.M., surrounded by groups of would-be cruises waiting to board one of the eight boats tied up along the pier – but ours, the COSMO, was not one of them. After a period of uncertainty, our fearless leader, Marjorieann Matuszek, accompanied by Ben Lyons, charged off to find it. They returned very soon with the news that the COSMO would be docking in five minutes, which it did. We boarded with the assistance of the crew, as the COSMO was bobbing up and down on the East River swell, and the boarding ramp was sliding back and forth under the same influence.

The COSMO was small and elderly, but well kept. We entered a cozy space, which was comfortably warm, unlike the windblown outdoors, although loud music filled the air. In the dining area, tables covered with white tablecloths each sported a small vase of flowers. At the far end of the room, the featured Italian buffet was taking shape. As for the necessities of life, four small clean bathrooms were available. The top deck was completely open to the elements, with no obstacles to sightseeing or photography. It was furnished with some soft seats and benches, plus other seating surfaces. All this – inside and out – was just for our enjoyment!

Most of us spent a good part of the cruise on the top deck, enjoying the sights, which included some of New York Harbor's latest waterfront improvements. The 30 of us aboard included some visitors from far away – for instance Ellen Meshnick and Paul Immerman, members originally from New York who have moved to Atlanta, and who added a visit to their former home town to the club cruise on the QUEEN MARY 2.

Our route took us down the East River into much calmer waters around the Battery and up the Hudson River as far as the passenger ship terminal, and back to our starting point. After a slightly late start, we bounced along the East River, otherwise enjoying the bright sky and fluffy clouds left over from an overcast morning. On this part of the cruise, the ocean breeze did not abate, and at times at least some of us flopped onto those comfy seats in self-defense or worried about going overboard.

Once the buffet was ready, there was much traffic between the tables and the food counters, returning with plates full of yummy chicken, fish, salad, pasta and more, followed by delicious cookies and accompanied by coffee or red wine. (A tea drinker in your midst bemoans the lack of tea.)

Five cruise ships were promised; we saw seven. American Cruise Line's small cruise ships INDEPENDENCE and AMERICAN STAR (your reporter will soon be sailing on the latter) were docked at Pier 32, not far south of the Skyport Marina. The ROYAL PRINCESS could be seen in silhouette as she arrived, and the ANTHEM OF THE SEAS was waiting to sail. Lined up at the Hudson River piers were the AIDADIVA, DISNEY MAGIC and AIDALUNA. The occasional tug, dinner boat or other harbor craft added to the picture. Too soon we were back at the marina, having enjoyed a fun day afloat, with some of us absconding with those vases of flowers.

Our hearty thanks go to Pat Dacey for his work in planning this excursion.



WSS-PONY branch members enjoyed close up views of cruise ships at the Manhattan Passenger Ship Terminal (top); Branch members photographed many sights in the New York Harbor on a busy fall Saturday afternoon (bottom). (Stuart Gewirtzman)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

SHIP NEWS will return in the next issue of The Porthole.

SHIPS IN PORT: THE LEONARDO DA VINCI AND NUCLEAR POWER

By Bill Miller

I was watching on a Saturday morning in July, 1960 from the Hoboken shore. Horns and whistles sounded, fireboats sprayed plums of water and extra tugs formed an escort. Although it was quite hazy, the silhouette of the newest liner to arrive in New York harbor was fascinating. The ship was big. It was very handsome. And it was very modern – it hinted of the future. It was Italian Line's LEONARDO DA VINCI and, slowly and rather graciously, she was heading up along the Hudson to Pier 84. She was the new Italian flagship and touted as the replacement for the ANDREA DORIA, which sank four years before, on July 26th 1956.

But there was more to the stunning, 760-ft long LEONARDO DA VINCI. Her engine room, noted Italian Line publicity, was twice as large as needed. Her Genoa designers and shipbuilders were looking to the future. It was said that by 1965 the 33,300-ton DA VINCI would be converted to nuclear power, the "future of ocean liner propulsion." It was of course ambitious, even optimistic, but never happened. Instead, the 23-knot, twin-screw liner settled down to a rather ordinary life of Atlantic crossings, to Gibraltar, Naples, Genoa and Cannes. She was paired with the slightly smaller CRISTOFORO COLOMBO and later, after 1965, with the far bigger, even more luxurious MICHELANGELO and RAFFAELLO.

The LEONARDO DA VINCI could carry up to 1,326 passengers – 413 in luxurious, upper-deck first class, 342 in cabin class and 571 in lower-deck tourist class. The passenger quarters, done in sleek Italian contemporary, occupied nine of the liner's 11 decks. Much improved over earlier Italian liners, all of the first and cabin class staterooms had private bathrooms, as did 80% of those down in less costly tourist class. Each class also had its own theatre, lido deck and swimming pool. Infra-red rays were installed around the first class pool, which warmed the air and allowed wintertime use. There were also two cargo holds and two garages with a combined capacity of 50 cars.

In her later years, the LEONARDO DA VINCI did lots of cruising as well – including an annual four-week Mediterranean cruise over the Christmas-New Year holidays and, more luxuriously, a two-month Grand Mediterranean each winter. But as the Atlantic liner business withered away by the 1970s, it was the DA VINCI that made the final Italian Line crossing in March, 1976. Afterward, she was used for short cruises between Florida and the Bahamas, but these were unsuccessful. For all of her life, she was a fuel-hungry and therefore expensive ship to operate. Finally laid-up, she was about to be scrapped in Italy when she caught fire and burned out completely in July, 1980. The scorched hull partially sank, but was salvaged two years later and then finally demolished.



Heading up along the Hudson River, the very handsome LEONARDO DA VINCI as seen in July, 1960.

(Bill Miller Collection)

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CORRECTIONS TO THE SEPTEMBER PROGRAM REVIEW THAT APPEARED IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

By Ted Scull

As the Porthole is the PONY branch's printed record of programs given, I would like to correct some of the facts related to the understandably complex overland and sea journey I made in the summer of 1974 between London and Borneo. Corrected text replaces only the erroneous copy (in parentheses) for the portion between Istanbul and Brunei. The reviewer's personal observations remain as written.

Having survived the Istanbul rush hour, Ted embarked on the Van Golu Express to Tehran (~~Taurus Express for the trip to Basra~~), and ran into the first unexpected event: the train derailed in Tabriz, injuring some passengers. Naturally, a tourist's instinct is to take pictures. The instinct of the local authorities was the opposite, as they destroyed all of the cameras – except Ted's, as he showed the police that his camera was not working, so they ripped out the film and kept it. (~~had cleverly packed his~~) A substitute train eventually arrived and took everyone to Teheran. Ted's photographs along this leg of the trip showed why he found Isfahan the most interesting place in the area.

Once he arrived in Tehran, Ted decided against taking a series of buses from Iran through Afghanistan thence to Pakistan as he had been warned that bandits had attacked buses while crossing Afghanistan and stolen travelers' money and property. (~~Ted found he was the only one going from Iran to Kuwait, by ship rather than by bandit-infested bus, even though~~) He took a bus from Tehran to Isfahan with a three-day stopover then onto Kuwait where he had to wait three days for the ship's delayed departure in temperatures often averaging 110 degrees.

The ship Ted was waiting for was one of his favorites, British India's DWARKA. Ted told us of British India's position as a major transportation provider on the Indian Ocean, founded in 1856, (~~with its four ships including the DWARKA~~) and with the DWARKA featured in the movie "Gandhi." We were taken through all of the DWARKA's interiors, hearing about and seeing the prevalence of Bakelite fittings, and the absence of air conditioning, except in the saloon-class dining room and lounge. (~~accommodations~~).

Here Ted had one of his scariest travel experiences boarding the ship with hundreds of Indian and Pakistani workers, while police struck the non-Arabs (~~workers~~) around him with sticks. Ted and the other non-Arabs (~~other non-Indians~~) were then sent to a room where passports were randomly piled on a table, and then told to find their own passports. Mistreatment of workers, said Ted, was common there. Another unexpected, but a historical one from the 1960's: the British India ship DARA, was sabotaged by Omani bandits, killing 236 people – an early act of international terrorism.

The DWARKA called at Bahrain (~~was prevented by bad weather from docking at Dubai and diverted to Bahrain~~), a busy trading port with pilgrim ships and other interesting craft. Then it was onto Doha, Dubai, Oman, and Karachi, a city that was interesting but hot, and where no photography was allowed in the port for political reasons. And then the next unexpected: while entering the harbor at Bombay, a huge swell caused the DWARKA to roll heavily (~~an alarming 15 degrees~~), reminiscent of the famous near-capsizing of the legendary ROTTERDAM outside Casablanca in the early 1970's. Some DWARKA passengers were seriously injured, and some items were hurled overboard. The captain did not say how many degrees the ship but he did say to our speaker that he was glad it was not two or three degrees more.

Deciding to leave Bombay because of the heavy monsoon rains, Ted traveled by the Calcutta Mail (~~and some companions traveled by land~~) to Calcutta, which Ted found very poor but the people friendly. From there, he proceeded first by train en route to Darjeeling, well known for its tea cultivation, where it was then stopped (~~he passed by an area which had recently suffered~~) by a landslide. He and the other passengers had to walk across the landside and join Land Rovers for the rest of the trip.

Due to (~~this side excursion and~~) long delays in land travel, Ted had to fly to Singapore (~~missed his cross-Indian Ocean connection, finally sailing on the STATE OF MADRAS to Singapore, arriving in its harbor full of coasters~~). There he boarded the next vessel, the RAJAH BROOKE of Straits Steamship (~~Line~~), the equivalent of British India for its area. Interestingly, two British naval architects and WWII prisoners of war designed the RAJAH BROOKE and other similar ships while in prison, to be built after their release.

Ted was off from Singapore to the Sultanate of Brunei, visiting the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, and then by boat some distance along the coast and inland to a longhouse in Sarawak, before returning to Singapore, from whence he returned home with many an adventure story and lots of great photographs.

We thank Ted for sharing his travels and photography, and providing us with some of the best travel and ship stories. Marge Dovman. N.B. I thank Marge Dovman for the positive review. Ted Scull

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