

MASTER'S OUTING 2024 NEWSLETTER

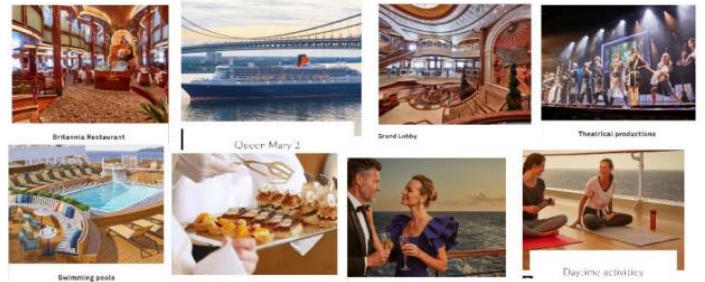


The Master's Sail Away Weekend

30th May to 2nd June 2024



A mini cruise on the iconic Queen Mary 2, the only ocean liner in the world was an inspired choice of venue by the Master for her Outing and too good an opportunity to miss! Not surprising either of the Master's choice as she and her Consort Nigel Phillips are seasoned **CUNARD** cruisers. The Outing was sold out with 68 Liverymen and Guests booked a year in advance.



QUEEN MARY 2

On Thursday 30 May, the majority of the group of QM2 travellers boarded an Edwards coach at their base in Llantrisant and set off in high spirits at 0830 to Southampton. The rest of the group met us there.



The high spirits on the coach were either enhanced or dashed by a quiz all about Wales, followed by a spirited sing-song. The complete lack of singing ability by SCA Roger Harper earned him an Award later in the trip of a mug inscribed "Loud and sometimes in tune." Harsh but true



Embarkation was impressively smooth and, amazingly, the cases found their way directly from the coach to our cabins. On arrival we were greeted and welcomed onboard by the QM2 staff. Intelligible tannoys in the staterooms told us how to avoid certain death in the event of the ship sinking. Reassuring!



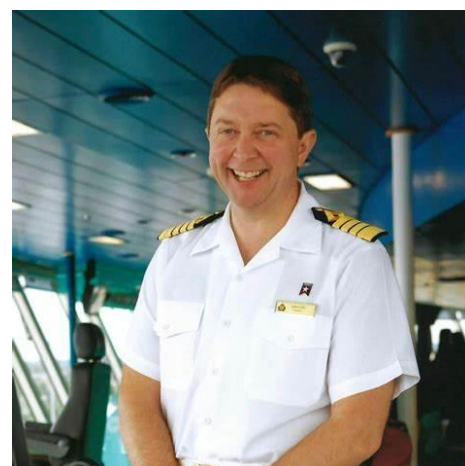
Cherbourg Harbour

Due to unforeseen inclement weather and French strike action the QM2 was diverted from Le Havre to the port of Cherbourg. This last minute change in the itinerary was a surprise – who would have guessed that the French might go on strike! Well, being British, we decided to make the most of this opportunity and ventured out to this historical port city with a rich history.

Its harbour is the largest in Europe and it was here that the Titanic made its final stop before sinking (perhaps not a good omen). As if to honour our arrival in port, the Olympic torch passed through Cherbourg in the morning on its way to Paris – although it was a little too early for most of us to see. Immediately after disembarkation we were greeted with the magnificent sight of the Art Deco 'Gare Maritime Transatlantique' which once greeted 200,000 emigrants per year chasing the 'American dream'.



The town itself was busy, partly due to the arrival of QM2 and also because of the many school children engaged in sport activities to celebrate the passing of the Olympic torch. Some of the shops appeared closed, which was perfectly fine as most of us only wanted to sit outside one of the many French cafes for a coffee and croissant. In terms of weather, it was a beautiful sunny day. That said, after two to three hours in Cherbourg the attractions of the QM2 became irresistible and we scuttled back to the comfort of our transatlantic cruiser in a desperate bid to accommodate afternoon tea prior to dinner.



Although some of the group were originally booked to tour Honfleur on the Saturday, the ship's **Captain Andrew Hall**, played a blinder by docking on the Friday night at Portland so we could visit Weymouth on the Saturday.

With an astonishing resemblance to Honfleur, Weymouth, and its vibrant folk festival did not disappoint. The QM2 was spotted arriving at Portland and was reported in the DORSET ECHO ... we made the news!!



World famous ocean liner Queen Mary 2, one of two cruise ships arriving at Portland

It was a sunny day and we were welcomed by Morris dancers waving their sticks and ringing their bells with vibrant kicks in some medieval manner. The Americans who had sailed from New York on the ship were convinced that this was the native costume of Portland and such celebrations happened every Saturday.



Weymouth, actually, is a very pleasant town and harbour with plenty of activities, shops and pubs. There was so much to do and see that some of us had to rush back before the ship was due to set sail again home to Southampton.

A few used Portland as a launching pad to visit other areas on this Jurassic coast. A small hunting party of Liverymen to Corfe Castle proved delightful. You won't find Portland on any advertised cruise brochure – it remains a gem which only the privileged few can experience. It simply added to a wonderful weekend and will prove to be a hard act to follow.



The Britannia Restaurant

The group ate each night at the Britannia restaurant. With a staff to passenger ratio of 1:2 all our needs were met, and the catering and services were mainly very good.



QM2 Black Tie Gala Ball on Friday 31st May



On Friday night, the QM2 had a Black Tie Gala Night and there was a palpable sense of occasion as guests emerged from their staterooms in their finest evening wear, beautifully attired in tuxedos and ball gowns like a scene from a Hollywood movie. Professional photographers were at hand to take portraits of guests and as can be seen some of the Group including the Master posed for a Group photo whilst the SCA Roger opted for a more romantic photo of just him and Olga.



A 1960's tribute band called **The Revolvers** and an Armenian/ British comedian called **Kev Orkian** provided excellent entertainment on two of the evenings and a very good jazz band kept some of the group entertained in the Chart Room and Commodore Club on the other nights.

The ship's bars did a magnificent job in quickly depleting passenger's bank accounts. £50 for a French Merlot was almost a steal.



Afternoon tea is a bit of an institution on board at 1530 everyday in the Queen's Room. Dainty sandwiches, small but scrummy cakes, and fruit scones with cream and jam (or jam and cream, depending on whether you are from Devon or Cornwall) kept the troops potentially fat but actually happy



On behalf of the Company, the Master organised a lovely drinks reception on the last night which was held in the vibrant nightclub of the QM2 called **G32**.





The Master invites you to a Drinks Reception prior to dinner

Saturday, 01 June 2024
 5.00pm – 6.00pm prompt in G32
 through the Queens Room, Deck 3, Stairway D.

Dress code: Smart Attire with pins.

The usual crowd of young rockers in **G32** were for an hour or so, replaced by a crowd of happy old rockers. The drinks reception gave Liverymen and Guests the further opportunity to get to know each other better, make new connections and share their cruising experience.







The Master welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of the Company for guests who were not familiar with the Company. She thanked all Livymen for their continued support and hoped they enjoyed a different Master's Outing.



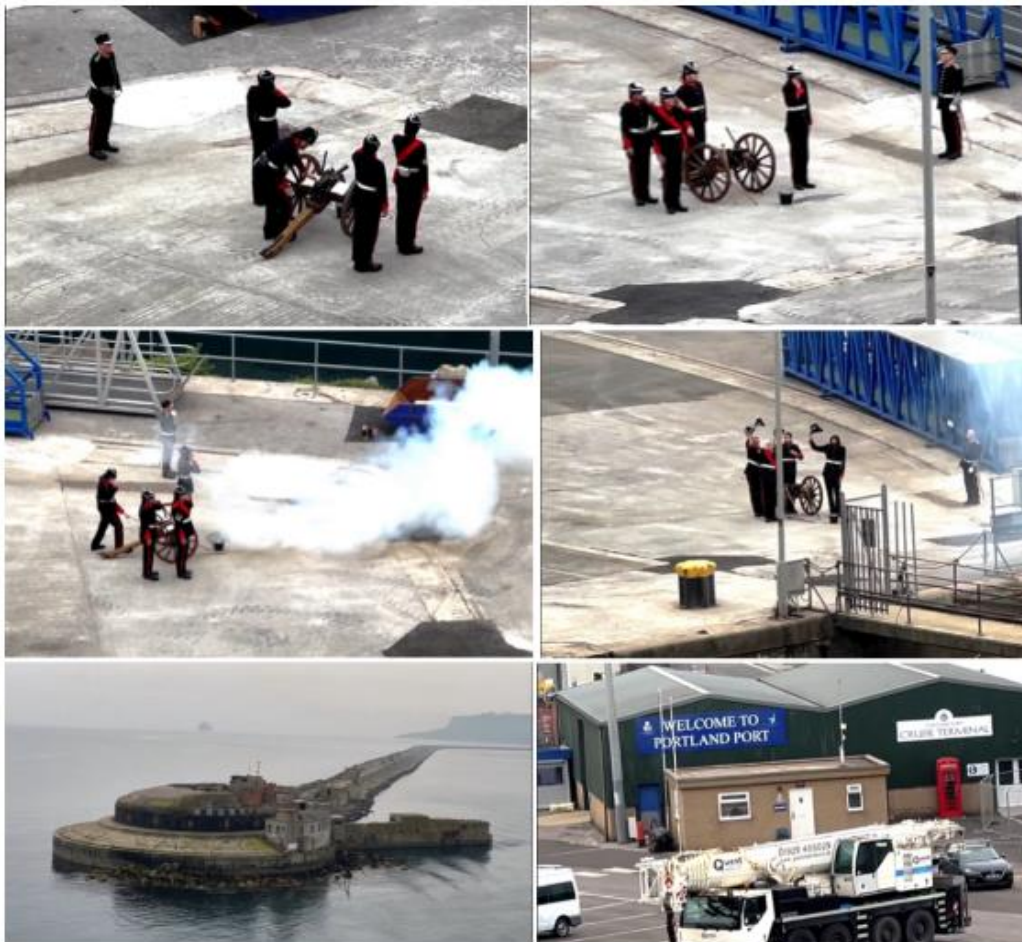
The Master was very touched with an unexpected presentation made to her to thank her for a wonderful and truly Liverly entertaining weekend!



SCA Roger Harper, was as previously stated, thanked for his part in making the round coach journey to and from Southampton, a jolly and convivial experience.



A fleeting glimpse of the famous immigrant's ship at Portland served only to highlight the opulence of the QM2. The cannon salute on the quayside at Portland marked our farewell as the QM2 set sail on her return journey from Portland to Southampton .



A quiz on the return coach and much raucous singing together with music provided via Tristan (youngest guest in our Livery Group!) and his technological expertise made the return coach journey fly by. Our Master proved that she's a pretty accomplished air guitar player. What hidden talents came to the fore and what other hidden talents remained hidden!



This mini cruise was an inspired choice of venue for the Master's weekend and, despite the last minute changes of ports to visit it was great fun. Existing friendships were strengthened and new friendships made. That's what these weekends are all about encouraging fellowship, collegiality and camaraderie.



Thank You
So Much



**Agnes Xavier-Phillips JP DL
Master 2024-2025
Worshipful Company of Wales**

