

QE2 LAST CALL IN NEW YORK

By Richard H. Wagner

On October 16, 2008, Queen Elizabeth 2 sailed into New York for the last time. To commemorate this occasion, Cunard Line invited the British Ambassador to the United States, New York City officials, maritime historians, members of the press and others who have been connected with QE2 over the years to a "Queen Elizabeth 2 Farewell to America Celebration" held onboard the ship. The following is excerpted from the public remarks.

Carol Marlow, President and Managing Director of Cunard, welcomed the guests.

This is the last visit that QE2 will make to New York and also the final visit that QE2 will make to America so it is doubly important and doubly poignant for us. This wonderful ship, QE2 - - the best loved ship in the world - - has traveled nearly 6 million nautical miles. She has circumnavigated the world 25 times and she has delighted over two and a half million guests. She is still the fastest ship in the world even though she was built back in 1967 and re-engined in the 1980s. And, of course, this is her 710th call to New York. She has been a wonderful ship for us and I am so pleased that you have joined us in paying this great tribute.

It is very fitting that the final call in America for this ship is made in New York. New York has been a very important port for us at Cunard. We started coming here back in 1847 when the Hibernia came in. We changed the routing of our very historic transatlantic voyages from Liverpool - Boston to Liverpool - New York. And, we have been coming back ever since. So, it really is a wonderful occasion that we can have

here in New York.

The transatlantic crossing itself has been happening with Cunard since 1840. We have been back and forth between one continent and the other and this journey has played an important part in the history of our two continents. We have brought over at Cunard over two and a half million emigrants from the Old World to the New to start a new life. We have in the 1920s and 30s and in the 50s and 60s - - the Golden Age of Ocean Travel - - we have brought across celebrities, luminaries, stars of stage and screen, politicians, royalty - - they have all traveled with us. Of course, during the Second World War, our ships were converted to troopships and we carried troops to and from the battlefields in Europe.

We are still, I am delighted to say, traveling between our two continents and we are bringing discerning travelers to and from our great lands. And, of course, QE2 has played her part in the transatlantic history of Cunard from 1969 to 2003. In 2003, she handed over that transatlantic baton when she handed over the flagship baton to her new sister Queen Mary 2, which continues that tradition. QE2 continued to delight guests on the European trade and on her world cruises and she does still do the occasion transatlantic. The final one, which she is setting off to do this evening, is her 808th so she knows the way.

We also made history back here in January this year when we had three Cunard Queens in New York Harbor for the very first time - - Queen Mary 2, QE2 and Queen Victoria, our new ship. We were just delighted with how many New Yorkers came out to watch as our ships progressed one behind the other, saluting Lady Liberty and they left the harbor to skies

that were a little bit grey but to a lot of fireworks, which was fabulous.

This time we have two Queens here. We have QE2 and we have Queen Mary 2, our new flagship, which has come over and escorted QE2 on her last transatlantic voyages. She is based in her new homeport in America in Brooklyn and we are delighted that she is there and we are delighted to see Marty Markowitz here, the Borough President of Brooklyn.

I am also delighted to see so many other familiar faces around the room

For the last hundred years or so, each generation has taken one ship out of all the ships of the day to their heart. In the early 20th Century, it was the beautiful, wonderful, four-funneled Mauretania.

She was one of the new floating palaces, one of the first floating palaces that Cunard ever had. She was the fastest ship around - - she had the Blue Ribband for some 22 years. When she left Cunard's service, she went slowly up the east coast of the United Kingdom to the breaker's yard in the Firth of Forth and she was watched by thousands of people that came out to see her and pay their respects.

The next ship was really Queen Mary, the ship that King George V said was the "stateliest" of all ships. She had a wonderful life in peacetime and in war serving her country and was seen and traveled on by many, many millions. When she finally made her [last] trip, [it was] not to the breaker's yard but down to Long Beach, California where she still is today as a hotel ship and a visitor center, she is admired by generations to come.

This last 40 years, the baton has fallen to QE2. She had become the most famous ship in the world, she is the best loved ship in the world and she is really an icon of her age. She is loved all around the world and she has done so many world cruises and I am delighted that you are here today so that we can pay tribute to this great ship on her last visit to New York and her last visit to America.

Ms. Marlow then introduced Sir Nigel Sheinwald British Ambassador to the United States and Her Majesty's Consul General - New York Sir Alan Collins. Sir Nigel Sheinwald said:



QE2 leaving New York for the last time.

It is great for us to be able to represent the government at this important and poignant moment. For four decades, this ship has represented something rather special in our special relationship. It represents I think three things: First of all, the importance of the human links between Europe and this country and particularly between the UK and this country. This ship has nurtured a huge number, millions, as you say, of human relationships and has done so over the years with great distinction.

Secondly, this ship is a part of our fantastically successful trade relationship. The trade and investment relationship between the UK and the US is one of the jewels in the crown of our overall relationship and a very, very important part of it is travel and trade and tourism.

Lastly, that indefinable something which is part of transatlantic life which this ship expresses and that is something about transatlantic style and character and policy. I think that you have done that remarkably.

So, over the past four decades, this ship has been a very visible, distinctive, inextricable part of transatlantic life. Although I have never set foot on the ship before, it is an instantly recognizable part of that relationship. We will all miss the ship but I think it is very appropriate that it is going out to a market and a country which is incredibly important to both of us, to the United Arab Emirates. As an emerging market and a partner and an ally of both the United States and the United Kingdom, I'm sure she'll find a very happy sec-

ond home.

Captain Ian McNaught, Master of QE2, spoke next.

After all those facts and figures from Carol Marlow, I am just happy to be able to say that I played a very small part in this ship's tremendous history. I have been here now for over half of the ship's life and it has been a great honor, in fact a boyhood ambition realized, to finally end up as master of this fine vessel.

Today, is a little bit of an occasion which is full of mixed emotions. Arriving in New York is always a fantastic experience, especially in the company of Commodore Warner and Queen Mary 2. But, as we leave tonight, there will be a few tears, I'm sure, shed both on the shore and inside the ship as we leave this great port for the last time.

We have had many adventures here in the Port of New York and one of them concerns a visit we did here several years ago during the July the Fourth celebrations when President Clinton very kindly gave us a sail past. After the day at anchor we came up to the berth here at Pier 90, expecting the slip to be empty. There is not a lot of space when you are attempting to fit something this big in one of these slips. As we turned the corner, there were two warships parked in our spot. So, we had to quickly move across to the other side. However, we did manage -- how should I say -- to lean on one of the warships as we were coming in.

At the time, I was Staff Captain. Captain Paul Wright was here and he very quickly delegated me to go and apologize to the other two ships. The British guy was all right on HMS Manchester. He offered me a stiff gin and tonic and said: "Don't worry about it."

The Japanese ship -- where life is a little more formal perhaps -- was a different story. I was shown to a waiting room and the Japanese admiral would call on me when he was ready. I just sat there absolutely terrified for about ten minutes. Then the door finally opened and I was ushered in. He bowed gentlemanly-like and said: "Welcome aboard my ship."

I said, "I do apologize, sir, for the slight mishap this morning."

"Think nothing of it, Staff Captain. It was a pleasure to be kissed by a queen."

Some of you may have noticed that we are flying a special flag today -- our paying off pennant. This is a flag that a ship flies in the final days of her service to mark the years of service. We have a paying off pennant flying from the mast that is 39 feet long, that is one foot for every year of service. I have actually had six of these pennants made and we are presenting them to



Cunard President Carol Marlow addressing the Farewell to America Celebration onboard QE2.

places which are very special to the heart of QE2 and to Cunard Line. The first pennant was presented to the port of Halifax where Samuel Cunard was born. The next pennant went to the City of Liverpool in England last week which was where our head office was for over 100 years. Then the next pennant went to the City of Glasgow where the ship, of course, was built. This next pennant is going to be present to the Port of New York where, as Carol says, we have been coming now for many, many years.

Captain McNaught presented the New York Paying Off Pennant to Mr. Grover Sanschagrin a retired berthing pilot who has not only brought QE2 into New York many times but also beginning in 1943 piloted all of the great Atlantic liners including the earlier Cunard Queens in and out of the piers of Manhattan.

Commodore Bernard Warner took the floor.

I have just popped over from Brooklyn where we moored Queen Mary 2 this morning. I have to say that I came into port with Captain Ian McNaught this morning. We have enjoyed a fabulous crossing of the

North Atlantic. We had some lovely weather all the way across - - just a little bit of a pitching motion as we started out. The ships were very close to each other all the way across. Just last evening we moved to within about a third of a mile of each other and we gave Queen Elizabeth 2 three rousing cheers and she gave them back to us. I think that was a great moment.

I am very pleased to be a part of these celebrations here today and to be aboard what has been the most famous ship in the world for the past 40 years. She has been held in affection by millions and millions of people all over the world. She has captivated countless generations of travelers over many, many years. And indeed, we are proud of her for her outstanding and heroic achievements during the Falklands campaign of 1982.

She has resolutely carried the North Atlantic mantle for all of this time bringing the Atlantic traditions back to life with splendor and unmistakable glamour. Thanks to Queen Elizabeth 2, the Cunard brand goes hand in hand with luxury ocean travel.

I have to say ladies and gentlemen that although Queen Elizabeth 2 is retiring and we are all here to celebrate that moment here today, Cunard Line goes on. In actual fact, when QE2 eventually leaves us, we will have the youngest fleet in the industry - - Queen Mary 2 is not quite five years old and Queen Victoria, of course, is only 10 months old already being very successful all around the world. But, the greatest news is, I think, is that in 2010, a new Queen Elizabeth will be with us, named after RMS Queen Elizabeth, which was, of course, named after Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who was the consort of King George VI. So, that I think is the great news for the company. The future here is very bright.

Captain Ian McNaught, Master of QE2, presents QE2's New York paying off pennant to Mr. Grover Sanschagrin..



The paying off pennant flying from QE2's mast.



Beyondships.com