

Our tour today was similar to that we took in Barcelona in that we visited three areas of the city and were given about 45 minutes free time in each. The first was the magnificent Monastery of St Jerome with the attached church dedicated to St Michael. The church is very ornately decorated inside and out with hardly a square inch of surface without some form of adornment. Its other claim to fame is that it houses the tomb of Vasco de Gama, the first to circumnavigate the globe.



***Monastery of St Jerome
And Tomb of Vasco de Gama***





The achievements of Portuguese sailors was honored at our next stop, a huge statue on the river bank dedicated to the explorers from this country and erected on the 500th anniversary of the death of the Navigator Prince Henry, who died in 1460. He was the fourth son of the then King John and is considered the leader of the Portuguese exploration that led to the vast Empire.



Belem Tower

Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument of the Discoveries) is a monument on the northern bank of the Tagus River estuary, in the civil parish of Santa Maria de Belém, Lisbon. Located along the river where ships departed to explore and trade with India and the Orient, the monument celebrates the Portuguese Age of Discovery (or Age of Exploration) during the 15th and 16th centuries. It was inaugurated in 1960.

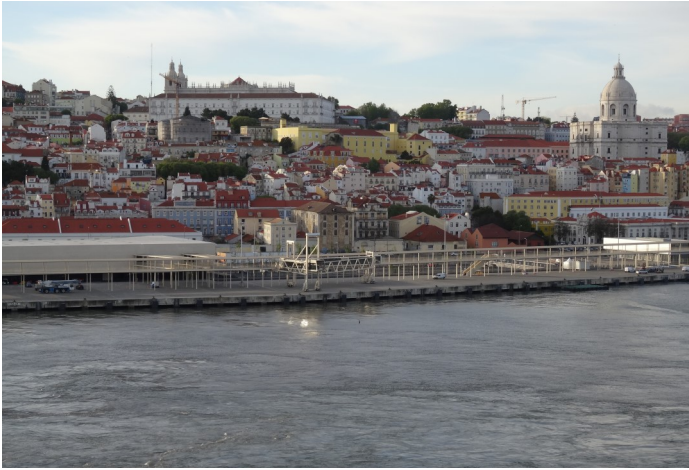
Belém Tower is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Lisbon that played a key role in Europe's Age of Discoveries, since it served both as a fortress and as a port from where Portuguese explorers departed to establish what would be the first European trade in history with China and India. It also served as a ceremonial gateway to Lisbon.

Our final stop was on the main shopping boulevard of Lisbon the Avenida de Liberdade, perhaps one of the finest in Europe and often compared with the Champs Elysees in Paris. I recall being very impressed with this avenue on our first visit to Lisbon 20 years ago and the buildings that grace either side are equally impressive today. We were able to have a light lunch sitting outside on a street just off the avenue; once again, we had fantastic weather (sunny and bright, if still a little cool) and it was great to enjoy a meal in these surroundings.



We returned to the ship late afternoon and sailed around 7pm. It was still light at this time, so we were able to get some more great views of the city as we sailed towards the ocean – and two days of cruising before reaching our destination of Southampton.





Evening Sailing from Lisbon



Friday April 12

Molly had started a cold yesterday and had had a poor night. Suspecting a sinus infection, she went to see the doctor right after breakfast. The good news was that there was no infection; the bad news was that there was little to do but treat the symptoms and wait it out. So, she spent quite a bit of the day resting and sleeping in the room and I filled the time by walk-

ing around Deck 7 twenty times. We also visited UK Immigration personnel who were on board and they completed our “entrance” into England – two days ahead of our arrival!

Tonight was the final formal night and also our final alternative dining experience – once again an excellent meal in The Verandah.

Saturday April 13

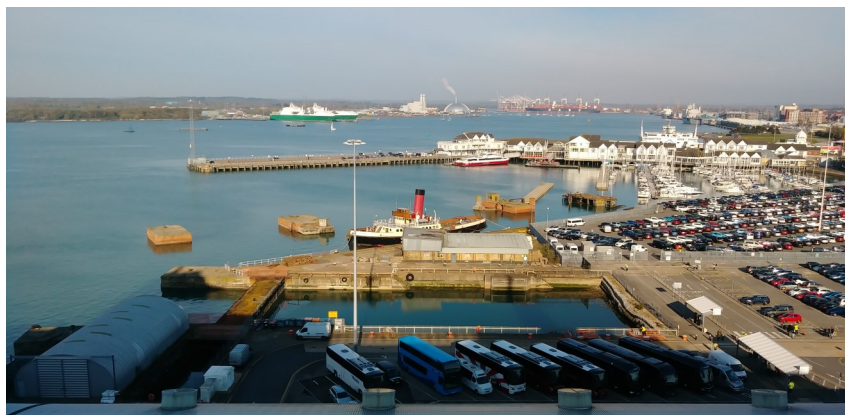
Today was our final day on board. We attended two lectures, I went for a walk, we did our packing and had our last dinner on the Queen Mary 2 for this voyage. We said goodbye to our dining companions from Southport and retired as we sailed up the English Channel towards Southampton.



Sunday April 14

We had had a smooth sail up the English Channel overnight and were docked in Southampton before we woke. Molly was still suffering with her cold and cough but was able to eat some breakfast before disembarkation.

The process went very smoothly and quickly, the taxi we had ordered was waiting for us and we were at the rental car office before 10am. Hertz England was its usual slow self,



but we eventually set off on our drive to Devon. It was a cool (low forties) but a bright morning as we drove through the beautiful countryside of Hampshire, Dorset, Somerset and finally Devon. There were only two short stretches of motorway on our 120 mile journey so – with a coffee break on route – it took almost four hours to reach the Rock Inn in the tiny hamlet of Haytor Vale, a place we have enjoyed on several previous occasions over the past 15 years.

We chose to rest for the remainder of the afternoon and had a very nice evening meal in the old world surroundings of the pub.

Monday April 15

Molly had slept poorly and, to make things worse, she woke up with conjunctivitis in both eyes. We decided to get this checked out at a local doctor's office but his prognosis was for some more days in a similar condition. On the plus side, he confirmed what the ship's doctor had said in that there was no bronchitis, pneumonia or any infection that could be treated with antibiotics. So, armed with more pain medication, cough suppressant and tissues, we drove onto Dartmoor for a couple of hours before returning to the hotel to rest for the balance of the afternoon. I took a couple of short walks but it was quite cool with a biting wind.

Once again, we had a good meal in the pub, although Molly ate only lightly.

Tuesday April 16

The forecast for today was for lessening winds and perhaps even a little sunshine. Molly was still under the weather so we decided to take it very easily and drove over to Tavistock. Here we visited the Pannier Market (always a stop in Devon) and did a little more shopping for medications, etc. We had tea and a pastry sitting outside in a café near the market – and it was pleasant enough in the sheltered area and we even saw some sunshine.

I went for a longer walk in the afternoon (to the old Haytor granite quarry) and we dined in the inn restaurant again.

Wednesday April 17

We had breakfast and then set out for a day in Exeter. It was very foggy in Haytor but at the lower level of Exeter, the fog had lifted and it was a very pleasant day. We took the Park and Ride bus into the center of town and strolled along the main street and spent about 45 minutes in the cathedral area. We were able to have a light lunch sitting outside on what had



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turned into a beautiful spring day – sunny and a high temperature about 60F.

After returning to Haytor, I took another walk and spent most of it following the old tramway that had been built in 1820 to carry granite from Haytor to the canal and then to the coast. It was a beautiful day for a walk in a beautiful part of southern England. We dined at the Rock Inn again and had another good meal.

Thursday April 18

It was another beautiful morning as we ate breakfast at the Rock Inn. Unfortunately, Molly still didn't feel like doing anything energetic, so we drove on to the Moor and parked.



The Haytor Granite Tramway (above right)

was a tramway built to convey granite from Haytor Down, Dartmoor, Devon to the Stover Canal. It was unusual in that the track was formed of granite sections, shaped to guide the wheels of horse-drawn wagons. It was built in 1820; the granite was in demand in the developing cities of England as masonry to construct public buildings and bridges. In 1850 the quarries employed about 100 men but by 1858 they had closed due to the availability of cheaper Cornish granite.

I took two more walks while Molly slept and then we had a light lunch in Widecombe. We also visited Bovey Tracey for some more throat lozenges before returning to the hotel for the rest of the afternoon and evening. We had our final dinner here for this trip.

Friday April 19 (Good Friday)

It was another perfect morning (except for a lack of water in the hotel as a result of a pumping station breakdown) with a temperature of over 50F first thing. After breakfast (water now on) we finished packing and set off to London.

It was a relatively easy drive with some slow spots – but nothing like the very heavy traffic going the other way. Presumably, everyone was heading to the Southwest for the long weekend. The temperature gradually increased all day to the point it

was over 75F by the time we reached our hotel near Heathrow airport. We checked in, I returned the rental car and quickly got an Uber ride back.

We dined in the hotel restaurant and turned in early in preparation for our early start tomorrow.

Saturday April 20

We were up at 6:30 and took a taxi to Heathrow airport at 7. Traveling in Business Class on Delta meant that we could take advantage of the Virgin Atlantic Upper Class Wing – which gave us a dedicated security line and a quick check-in as our bags were handled by an airline representative. As a result we were in the Virgin Atlantic lounge by shortly after 7:30 and were soon served a hot breakfast.



The flights back to Cincinnati, via Detroit, were uneventful (although a little rough near Detroit) and we were home by 6:30pm local time. We decided to eat out, despite some jet lag and Molly's cold, and spent our time recalling the high points of a fantastic journey. We had enjoyed it so much that we were already talking about another Cunard cruise in 2020.

