

England to the North Atlantic

Tony Hancock

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August 7 2024 (Wednesday)

We picked a good time for this trip - Dallas is forecast to be in triple digit heat for the next week or two. Did the usual pre-trip things, plus dealt with a dishwasher problem (not draining) that required some interesting work with the wet-dry vacuum, but was finally out the door as planned at 10:30.

Went back and forth before departing about how to get to/from the airport. Ruled out the train, cab, ride share and Uber and decided on the convenience and low-bills of driving and parking ourselves. Our first experience with The Parky Spot which we bought out Park N Fly.

Our flight is not until 4:50... Went so early to meet Joe, Eric and Benjamin who (by sheer coincidence) were flying through DFW on their way to Mexico.

After first had lunch at Fridays, then met them at the gate as they got off the plane. Sat at a tupper bar we had ordered and had a pleasant few hours to talk and catch up on things before we left to catch our plane. Departure was delayed for 20-40 minutes (they needed more time to clean the plane) so we killed time at the CRU wine bar located conveniently across from gate.

We had 2 seats by ourselves on the 777-300, just behind the exit row and next to the kitchen service area. Kathleen mostly watched movies and I got a bit of sleep, and the time went by quickly. Food was mediocre - chicken with any any 1 spic or pasta (our choice). "Breakfast" was granola & Yogurt - we both passed!

The  
A&E

Getting into England was surprisingly itself - all automate. They have individual kiosks set up: we scanned our passports, they did some photo recognition and we were in! Our bags were tagged for priority (we are still Gold with AA) so they came out right away.

We had booked a 9.20 bus to the Victoria bus station (just a few blocks from our hotel (The Wadsworth)). We caught an earlier bus - they could have charged us 5 pounds each, but didn't. There was a lot of slow traffic, but I wasn't driving and did not care! There were a lot of people on board, and the bus station was full of travelers too.

It was a short (3-4) block walk to the hotel, but it was a sunny, breezy, cool day and we enjoyed a bit more exercise (did a lot of walking to get from the plane to the terminal too).

Mary and Dotty had flown British Air and arrived a couple of hours before us.

Kathleen recommended they take a cab for the airport to the hotel, which they did. Our rooms were, as expected, not ready, so they had already done a walk around the neighborhood and were having coffee in the breakfast area when we arrived  $\approx$  10:00. We sat there for awhile and decided to walk to Harrod's for lunch.

While we were waiting for Mary & Dolly to visit the bathroom the young women at the table next to us commented on how beautiful Kathleen (blue eyes) were. They were 2 women from France, and we had a brief but enjoyable conversation about traveling in France.

Took a meandering walk to Harrod's. M & D are not foot walkers to begin with, so the going was slow. We witnessed a woman cross the street fall and they stopped down ever more. They seem very cautious.

Harrod's was crowded but fun, we settled into the Mediterranean restaurant in the great hall in the basement and enjoyed a very beautiful and enjoyable meal.

Walked around the store a bit more, walked back to the hotel and agreed to meet in the reception area at 6:15 for dinner. (This was at about 2:00 pm and our rooms were ready).

Our room is a bit on the small side - had to find a place for both Runtexes, the Bathroom (toilet & shower) is obviously carved out of a corner of the original room, & the sink is in the corner outside. But, The A/C, is quiet, and the bed is comfortable. After shopping & showering, we were both quite refreshed by the time we left for dinner.

M & D said they neither slept or took a shower... I don't know how the bath managed to stay unmade! They said they hadn't slept with their pants on but they did.

We ate at the near-by (= 2 block walk)

ARTIST RESIDENCE CLUB HOUSE, 52 Cambridge St, which turned out to be fabulous. I had Steak & Fries, and Kathleen had a cool pasta that was marvelous - / May-Chicken, Put-Look!

We walked back to the hotel with the & had plans on getting one more glass of wine then but they were not serving, so we went back out to find a Savin Buy store (in 67 block away) and bought wine & cookies, which we enjoyed in our room before crawling into bed at 10:30

will meet for breakfast at 7:30 in the  
Morg

14, 738 Styr

Friday Apr 9 - London 14, 764

M & D were set up for a bus tour of the city. They wanted to beat the terminal early so we decided to leave at 8:00. Breakfast at the hotel (included) starts at 7:45, but they agreed to let us in at 7:30 knowing that everything might not be ready and available that early.

The restaurant manager seemed a little put out and said we could only have things from "The top of the menu" (mainly that required cooking), but that we "might" be able to get scrambled eggs if we waited for them to complete their preparations. Further wait for the Croissant. M, P & I opted for the scrambled eggs, which did soon appear. The coffee was good and plentiful.

We all seem to have gotten over our jet lag.

Walked with them to the bus station & would wait till they boarded to begin the tour, then walked the few blocks to the Victoria train station by the Oyster Card. We navigated the machine well and were feeling pretty stuffed when the first card came out, but were baffled when the 2<sup>nd</sup> one did not emerge...

We called the nurse on the screen for help, but they just told us to get help from someone at the Underground Station. We did - they passed on the front of the machine a few times, but when that failed to produce the card they called

for more skilled help. He arrived with 50 minutes  
left behind the scenes, only to return to say the  
machine was coast - it had no more cash  
to dispense. So he gave us a coin refill (all  
came in!) and we bravely purchased another  
card from a different machine.

We took the bus up to Court Garden  
using our credit cards to pay. Turns out  
you cannot use the same card to pay for two  
people so Kathleen got a ride for free (this time).

Walked up to the London Transport Museum to  
meet on 10:15 walking tour guide for a fascinating  
tour of the area - a marvelous mix of history,  
architecture and transportation trivia. There  
was a couple from Atlanta in our group - he  
was obviously a devoted Underground and train  
buff - tosher on my many tours and  
has plans to take every one that is available.

Had a few minutes to go into the museum  
(included in our tour package). Got a glimpse at a  
depthy many photo display showing pictures of  
the use of the illegal stations as bomb shelters  
during WW II and the same phenomenon going on  
today in present day Ukraine.

Had tickets for the Coventry Art Museum and  
a boat cruise to Greenwich. Since it was  
such a beautiful day we could for the Brit.

I + was fortunate to be on a boat, and I will never get tired of seeing the many points of interest along the Thames, but... A German couple with two young children were sitting behind us in the non-stop chatter drove us both crazy. We could still hear and understand the murmurings of our boat tour guide, but it was a huge distraction... So much so that we agreed to get off the boat at Greenwold and catch the next one at 4:30.

We did nothing more than find a shady spot under a table outside the museum near the Cutty Sark and enjoyed a Greenwold Lager before wandering back down to the river to catch our boat back to London. That is when our plans began to fall apart...

Spoke out in time for the wrong boat. We realized that quickly and got in the much shorter City crosser line, only to discover that the 4:30 boat stopped at the Tower Bridge, and did not go on to the Westminster Pier, where we had departed from, and where we were scheduled to meet M & D at 6:00.

We had the dice of taking that one or waiting for the 5:10 sailing, which would not reach Westminster until 6:15. We opted for the earlier one knowing that we could take the Tube to Westminster and



arrived there in time. That all worked out, except May did not receive Kathleen's text to return at the trucked booth and instead met up with Brenda Big Ben as she had previously agreed to do. It took awhile (and a phone call) but we finally met up.

Took the bus back to Pomilio and showed a bottle of wine at a bar near a restaurant, waiting for our 7:00 reservation.

The O'Sole Mio (35 Belgique Rd) has expanded greatly since we were there the last time. It was a bit noisier, but the food was still very good (I had pasta) and we enjoyed sharing several bottles of wine from the surprisingly small wine list.

It was only a  $\approx 10$  minute walk back to our hotel, and we were all grateful to retire after a long day of being tourists.

14,764 steps today

14,738 steps yesterday

We have been average  $\approx 50W-60W$   
back home...

We purchased an E-Sim for Kathleen's phone... the phone part worked OK but we have been having problems getting the data part to work. Hope to work that out tomorrow...

I went up to the Room to try to get the A/C going but could not figure it out and ended up calling the front desk. The host came up and showed us how to do it.

Saturday Aug 10 - London 6,821

Met for breakfast at 8:00. We slept OK, but M & D were disturbed by the late and noisy arrival of someone above them. So, in spite of having A/C (could not get it working the night before) they did not sleep well.

Re-arranged the day schedule about to accommodate the shift of time at Westminster Abbey to the afternoon and met up at 9:30 to depart for the day's adventures.

We took the bus to Covent Garden and did a brief walk through the shops and restaurants on our way to the London Museum of Transport. Our tour yesterday got us in for 1/2 price! We all enjoyed the museum immensely, especially the exhibit comparing the use of the underground for bomb shelter in London during WWII with the first by U.K. The history of the growth of London and how the transportation evolved to keep pace was fascinating.

From there we headed to St Westminster Cathedral. We arrived a little early for our 1:00 entry which worked in M & D's favor: they got the last two spots available for the special tour which began at 1:30 and lasted 90 minutes.

Kathleen & I did the self-guided walk with

the air of a recorded narrative which was very informative. The architecture of the building by itself is amazing, as are the statues and other aspects of the building & chappels. When you add in the prominence of those buried or commemorated there it makes for an overwhelmingly wash of history.

We had a light meal in the cafe (5 scottie for us, as did for me) while we were waiting for the tour to end. Then we were back on the bus to return to the Court Garden area for dinner and our play.

We ate at THE IVEY, which was right across the street from THE AMBASSADORS THEATRE where our play (KATHY AND STELLA SOLVO A MURDER) was performed.

The restaurant was elegant, crowded, and full of people, located in the heart of the theatre district. The food was delicious and served with style (Steak for me, 1st Mynthe Diner Plate, 1st Lark), accompanied by a superb red wine (290 pence).

The play was performed in an unusual setting - The stage was about 9 feet above the front row (and we were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> row) but the performer stayed near the front of the stage so it was OK.

I wish the play was good. The plot was a little thin, and Kather & I both had a little trouble falling asleep the night, but it was an enjoyable experience, until we left to return to the hotel.

We have been totally reliant on our phone to navigate since we arrived. For one reason we could not access the internet when we left the theater, we had walked down to Cherry Lane road and were frustrated on a phone trying to figure out when the next bus stop was when Mary observed an approaching #24. It passed us and we all chased after it hoping to catch up before it left the next stop. Kather used ahead while I stayed with M.F.D. We weren't running but they were moving faster than I have seen them move since we arrived and we all made it!

Kather's call has progressively worsened throughout the day ..

Sunday Aug 11

10,596

Met for breakfast at 9:00. Kathleen & I walked with D to the newly collected church, then returned to our room when I caught up her while Kathleen snuffled a bag to pack for tomorrow's departure to South Hampton.

Dated leave for the National Gallery until 11:30 so we had a nice bit of downtime to relax in our room...

Took the bus up to Trafalgar Square to go to the National Portrait Gallery. The square was full of people (in spite of the fact that the fountains were shut down for upgrades/repairs) and performers were attracting large crowds. There was a long line waiting to enter the museum, but we were admitted almost immediately thanks to Kathleen who had scheduled a 1:00 entry in advance.

I am somewhat ashamed about my lack of interest in art, but Dottie seemed to really enjoy the visit, as did Kathleen. May and I were frequently on an available bench together...

We then walked up to Court Garden and milled around the shops there. It was a beautiful, warm, sunny day and there were very many people there too. We ended up buying some leather gloves (K), wallet (M)

and a belt (Dette gift) at a leather shop.

Soon it was time to head to the American Bar in the Savoy Hotel on the Strand where we enjoyed two bottles of wine and strained conversation... We were seated right next to a piano that was just a piece of furniture when we arrived, but the piano player / singer appeared shortly after our first bottle of wine, so it was challenging to have end utter, but we managed.

We had 6:30 reservations at the Savoy Grill, and we were seated at the same table as our last visit! The service was as good as the food. D & I both had Steaks with truffle & Mary had the 6 course meal. I get to sample everything with the bar, and each course was marvelous... the best Beef Wellington I have ever had, and the Haddock Souffle was heavenly.

We just missed a #24 bus at Trafalgar Square so we had a 20 minutes to enjoy the musicians still performing there & watching the steady stream of people and vehicles pass by while waiting for the next bus. Kathleen's cell has worked throughout the day...

We were all happy to retire to our rooms to get some rest.

Monday Aug 12 - London -> South Hampton

A rough night for Kathleen (and I) as we were both awake a lot during the night. We both hope she improves soon.

Kathleen created a fabulously detailed itinerary for the trip (the couple at breakfast a few days ago comments on it as we review the days plan). She split our own activities into a separate document, but did not put it into the brochure she drew, so she is having to go back through emails to find the tickets and reservations for our activities on the days when we're not doing things with M&D.

My sunglasses (in a case) mysteriously disappeared overnight. We have packed for the bus trip to South Hampton so I am really hoping that Kathleen packed them without realizing it.

I have noticed that Kathleen's memory and ability to manage a trip like this has declined markedly. I really hope that this is just due to her cold and medication.

We've finished breakfast and packed up and will soon check out to go to the bus station. It is a 4-5 block walk, and the sidewalk and streets seem manageable so M&D has decided against getting a cab and will walk with Kathleen and I.



First by leaving - its Southampton, not South Hampton (where the weather is quite different).

The bus tunnel was quite crowded with a wide variety of people, most of whom were just hanging out waiting for their bus. Our left from gate 18 / out of 19, which was on a 2<sup>nd</sup> landing and a little less frenetic. We got 4 seats together but were soon up and on our way.

The bus was  $\approx$  50% full. There was a surprising amount of traffic. I slept a little - at the end we were on the M3. Made one stop before reaching Southampton.

Decided on a cab to the hotel. Much to our surprise we (and all of our luggage) fit into the Ford utilized by our driver. I gave the £10 for a 5:60 change.

The hotel is markedly different than the Woodman - much larger & more luxurious looking. We had to wait  $\approx$  15 minutes for our rooms (we arrived at 2:45) but were soon provided keys to the Kingdom. Mr & Phil the manager were at the Woodman (all right! - larger than our with a large, modern bathroom). We have the better room here - has a large sitting area, a large walk out deck area a bathroom that is probably just about the size of the room we had in London.

Kathleen needs some cell medicine, so after agreeing to meet O & M in the lobby we set out to the local Boots, which turned out to be an adventure. We navigated way on Phase to the first location, but no Boots was in sight. I think it was located inside what appeared to be a large shipping center, but there was no entry in sight either. So we walked to another one that wasn't much further away.

Two mysteries of the missing prescription sunglasses still being unresolved I bought a pair (\$40) and some Athletes foot insoles for my toes, which began to flain up on the flight one for Dallas.

met M & D at 6:00, then walked through the nearly old town to get over to the drinks outside the Dancing Man Brewery (along with a lot of others who were enjoying the brilliantly sunny afternoon.

Then on to the nearby GMMOP Italian restaurant - quiet, elegant, and (at our request) slow food service and good food.

Back at our room I found the etruscan sunglasses in my shiny KT!

Tuesday Aug 13 - in Southampton 8,464

Woke up to a cloudy and cooled day (which is good as the A/C in our room is not functioning... good thing we had several windows that opened and a fan to keep us cool enough).

Kathleen has checked Ferry Scholite on ticket availability and decided to reverse the order of our plan. It seems we will also travel to the PDG museum by car instead of boat over night.

Had a pleasant start to the day with coffee on our private balcony / also a good note to catch up on yesterday's happenings here: 1.

Breakfast here at the hotel is good - a buffet with a variety of the usual suspects...

Woke up to ~~the~~ Slet, Sly Museum, a = 15 walk through a waking dusk / light industrial part of town. From the outside it didn't look like much, but we found it to be criss-crossed with airplanes (expected) and motor, plus a fascinating collection of information about life while living in a city that was the target of Nazi bomb attacks. The city had a lot of airplane manufacturers, including one that manufactured the Spitfire, and the 4 cars did then had to look them out of existence. The Ford (manufacturer was just dispersed... thanks for Boston, the bombs did not damage the equipment required for

pride and pleasure). Silly for the sake of  
it as the bank also declines/ loses and the  
business, greatly emptying life. The man  
deserves a better location and more funding

We Ukeled over to Paterson (= 20 minute  
ride) to visit the D-Day museum. Stated  
with a lunch in the cafe, then found the building  
wreck (Tank) outside - the last remaining LOT was  
by the British of the museum of Normandy. It  
had gotten a part - we history - was not seen  
returned and did in Liverpool. It essentially sank,  
was ruined, restored and ended up here!

The museum itself was made and well organized,  
but we did not get as much out of it as we did  
for the museum this morning.

The trip back to Southampton was fun.  
A ≈ 15 minute walk, a Home Cup to the  
Isle of Wight, a long taxi ride, then a  
~~trip~~ Calsonic boat to Southampton. Met  
M & P for a quick drink, then done

Met at The Grapes - 1st of the White Star  
restaurant.



**THE D-DAY STORY**  
PORTSMOUTH

Wednesday Aug 14 (Southampton) 13, 613 stop

Plan to meet in the lobby at 9.00 to walk to the train station to catch on 9.33 train to Worcester. Kathleen & I arrived right at 9.00, and waited for Mrs D to appear. - and waited on more. Finally, about 9.15 we saw May walk into the restaurant! They had been sitting on a couch and so right waiting for us and she was going in to the restaurant to see if we needed eating!

Kathleen & I dived on the route to the station and that ate up extra bit of time, so we arrived at the station right as the train arrived. It takes a while to get through the tunnels (Kathleen had our tickets on her phone), then up, over and down the stairs to get to the other platform. The conductor saw us coming and held the train back so we needed it, unwell and a bit awkward.

It was a short 2-stop ride to Worcester, which found out to be much better than we had expected. Walked through the cool, misty morning air to the great hall, a modern building that (thankfully) has saved the ages and is now a tourist attraction that is also used for public and private events.

It is also how to who is reputed to be King Arthur's round table. Whether there is or not, it is a remarkably old table and

seems as the main attraction. They had a lot of information about the hall & surrounding area. Worcester was the capital of England before it was moved to London.

Walked through a light, cool day ran to a lunch chair, which had not opened yet, so we both headed to another restaurant and enjoyed sandwiches.

Our next destination was the Worcester Cathedral. We all took a tour from a very knowledgeable woman and learned about about the history and construction of the longest cathedral in the world. I left the tour about early so I could finish the 2.15 tour of the tower. 476 steps late (213 up and down) I know a lot more about how the cathedral was constructed and what the bells in the tower. All fascinating. They broke the climbing up by stopping at stages to explain things so I wasn't too challenged.

It was almost raining (heavy mist?) at this point so we had to head back to the train station, and home (with incorrect train announcements - kept saying we were heading for London Waterloo station!) and a final look at the hotel more than a little tired. Had drinks at the hotel, watched the short distance to the Dancery Man Brewery who kindly enjoyed about 100 which the rest of us had delicious Port Belly.

Kathleen & I have been enjoying our balcony  
each night. Being that you us a shower to open  
both balconies doesn't allow the room to cool  
down a bit more, so we have not been suffering  
from the lack of AC.

Our shower is also a point of frustration.  
Small (especially considering the size of the bathroom  
which has a huge tub with water jets) with  
a door down that keeps coming off of its track.

We had a brief conversation with a man on the  
stairs who said AC was also on the fritz, the sound  
he stopped her about and that they were no longer  
doing much maintenance.



Thursday Aug 15 - Southampton - 9522 steps

One hot full day in England! Had breakfast (we have been eating separately lately), met in the lobby at 9:15 and walked to the ferry station where we boarded the high speed catamaran for the 30 minute trip to Cowes on the Isle of Wight. It was a short walk to the #1 bus which we rode to Newport near the center of the island.

Then we caught the #9 to Wootton to begin our steam train journey. It was kind of underwhelming at first - a small platform, a few buildings and two sets of tracks. The train appeared soon. Once they transferred the engine to the other end of the train we boarded the restored Victorian-era coaches and rode the short distance through the countryside to Havantree.

This was the hub of the operation, featuring a cafe, restaurant, restoration & maintenance facilities and a museum showcasing the history of the RR (Started by two teenagers in the 1960's), the engine (11) and cars (very many). It was all very interesting (and informative). We had lunch in the restaurant, then finished our wait with the out and back to Smallbrook Junction, then back through Havantree before returning to Wootton.

The day was overcast and cool which made being outside and moving around in the countryside quite enjoyable.

We waited c 20 minutes for our #1 bus so we could return our steps back to the ferry. We had thought about stopping off at the maritime museum on the way but we spent much more time at the train, and the bus ride took nearly an hour so we pressed on directly back to Southampton.

We did a bit of confusion about our dinner reservation - we all thought it was scheduled for 7:30, and Kathleen was about to call to see if we could come at 6:30, but on looking up the phone # she came across the confusion that said it was really 6:30. So we returned to the nearby Grapes bar and had a drink and a rest.

However, when we arrived at PORTERS STEAKHOUSE (20-22 QUEENS TERRACE) they informed us that 7:30 was correct. But, they were not at all busy and seated us right away. We split the specials (May #1 had Ruby, Kathleen & I had Chateau Bruni) served with opress sides of potatoes & vegetables and, of course, a nice bottle of wine.

M & I came up to our suite and we enjoyed a last bit of wine with Charles Cook's before we all called it a day. We will meet on the dinner at 1:15 tomorrow to begin our voyage home.

I haven't mentioned the flies, which have  
appeared at virtually every restaurant we have  
eaten at on this trip. They have been quite  
annoying!

Friday Aug 16 - Southampton, 9184 Steps

A leisurely morning - all we need to do is  
have breakfast, pack, and get to the boat  
on time. We had at 1:15, M&D had at 2:00

We ate and packed quickly, so stopped by  
M&D's room to coordinate schedule, checked  
out, left our bags with the concierge and  
took a bit of a walk in the brilliant sunshine.  
Ended up at the White Star Bar and had a  
leisurely cup of coffee, then ended up at  
the pier when the Red Hat Ferries departed just  
to enjoy the coming & going of people, cars  
and boats.

Met back at the hotel at 1:00 to meet  
our Uber at 1:15. He arrived early in a  
price that could not facilitate us and our luggage,  
so we sent M&D on ahead and asked the hotel  
to call a cab for us, which arrived promptly  
and took us to the Mynyflood docks.

Everything Kathleen had said that said  
this was not something we wanted to do or  
foot was absolutely correct. It + walk has  
been a long, unpleasant walk.

Smores has boating down to a few at.  
They took our luggage at the Club, and Kathleen  
and I were welcomed through check in. Thanks to  
our priority status (due to the room we had  
booked) and sun on board and in our room.

The room isn't huge, but it is going to be big enough for us. There is tons of room in the closet for all of our clothes. The couch/desk area is adorable, and the desk is perfect for me. We enjoyed a snack of peanuts & the best of the wine we bought with us from our hotel room.

I got my internet access working but realized that we would not be able to communicate with each other or with M&D without purchasing additional internet access packages.

M&D got with M&D with the idea of having drinks and a snack to hold us until dinner (M&D have an 8:30 seating) but all we could find was a bar that provided small bowls of complimentary potato chips. Fiddle & I may purchase their internet access while we were there.

The ship is huge - long with 13 decks, it's like a small city.

We were expecting our own table for 2 at dinner (which we can enjoy at any time between 6-9), but ended up at a table for 6 with a waitress <sup>(EPH)</sup> who apparently spends most of her life sitting around the world on the QM2. She had lots of freely given advice on navigating the menu and carried on in a friendly snippy way with our wine steward throughout the meal. We were joined by another couple (Tom & Allison)

Safety drill - completed by watching a video  
on the TV in our room and walking down  
and checking out our muster station - the  
gym on deck # 7 (we are on deck 13  
Room 008.)

who has been doing a lot of work  
with a company called FIRST STEPS Family  
WALKS that sounds really interesting - they  
handle your luggage and lodging and fashion  
walks suited to your abilities & desires.

Brought me back to our room and enjoyed  
a cool and breezy evening on our balcony before  
calling it a day & going to bed

Saturday Aug 17 - on the QM 2 somewhere in the

5,660 Steps - Atlanta

Lost an hour overnight - we shall be making gradual & minor changes throughout the week or so shall any have with that mind jet lag (but by?).

We are both a little surprised by the amount of movement we feel overnight and this morning. The wind is, wholly, though the body does, but there doesn't appear to be much more activity. Neither of us are feeling any signs of motion sickness - hope that continues to be the case.

Had to spend some time today figuring out when everything is on the boat. At least I know when to go for my 10:00 massage!

We think we have at least solved the seating riddle. Stopped at the Concierge office on our way to breakfast - he gave us another map of the boat (for Kettle) and answered several questions for us (even though he is only there to help people on the really expensive rooms - he was nice - just mentioned that as we were leaving). He told us that the dining table information is not provided to the boat crew, but said the dining staff should be able to take care of it.

It started off well... when we arrived for breakfast we were shown to a table for 2 at a window, but the hostess swooped



on our info as that the table was reserved for someone else. When I brought up the fact that we had also requested a table for two she said OK and seated us at a table on the corner of the room and said that that was now our table. Kathleen (who has been very critical of our entire boat experience) said "but you don't even know who we are", she replied "I will remember". We will see.

I had a quack (we weren't seated until 9:15) breakfast of eggs & bacon, stopped by the room to brush my teeth, and walked to the spa for my massages.

That started off well... it was a large area with many rooms. Nina started my massage, but stopped soon and explained that she was feeling very sea-sick and asked me to re-schedule. I kid - got a 2:30 appointment with someone else.

Met Pat D at the Kings Court cafeteria area for lunch (funny story there). She and Kathleen had already made arrangements to meet at the Britanna restaurant. I went around before lunch scouting the other areas where we could change to eat. I was taking pictures and descriptions to Kathleen and accidentally sent her from Kings Court to Marys and she assumed that I wanted to eat there & responded that they would meet us there instead.

Mary is also feeling the effects of the ship's motion as she let us wait on her white table at the table. There were very many types of food available, all served cafeteria style (and still being served by staff - they announced that they would be doing that for the first 3 days in an attempt to control the spread of germs).

We enjoyed a lovely lunch until I was time for me to return to the spa. The massage (100 minutes) was great - thought enjoyable to spend an afternoon!

Trouble ensued after I got out of the shower back in our room and found that I no longer had access to the internet and thus could not contact Kathleen to meet up with her. I finally walked down to the Internet centre on deck 2 where the tech told me that I just needed to go back through the log - in process again, which worked. These access systems (and web sites) are hopelessly complex - not at all user friendly. I went back to our room on the assumption that Kathleen would eventually do the same, which she did, nearly outrageously at our frustration with the challenges, difficulties and disappointments encountered the far side of the voyage. Curious is not being up to this reputation in our room!

This being a final night we dressed for dinner, lit off some stars over a few drinks

Kathleen found a place to read and enjoy some tea  
yesterday helping Mary purchase something for her  
new sickness. M & D went back to their  
room so Mary could rest. D has been Mary's  
shadow so far on this entire trip...

in the Chart Room bar (where we had mtd  
lost night) on deck 3.

When we arrived for dinner the hostess did indeed  
remember us and escorted us to "our" table. The  
couple at the table next to us were Professor  
musicians (piano players) from NJ. They were just  
finishing their dinner but we had a delightful  
conversation with them before they left. We  
all have similar views on Trump and Kamala.

Brought the remains of our excellent wine  
(14 Hands Cabernet Sauvignon - 2018) back to  
our room.

My attire fit just in at home... there  
was a wide range of clothing on evidence, for my  
needs and as to find types for the men,  
while the ladies dress ranged from simple to fancy.

Sunday Aug 18 - About the W&E 2 smelter in the Atlantic

Had been informed yesterday to expect rain today, but (so far) it is sunny with scattered clouds.

During my message yesterday my mind had time to wander and wonder about how different the Atlantic crossing must have been for my ancestors. The length of time would have been about the same for the Norwegians who came in the 1910's, although I don't think they experienced anything near the level of luxury we are enjoying. It would have been a very different story for the Germans who most likely I would make sail.

After breakfast at "on table" Katherin & I settled into the Commodore Club located at the front of the ship on Deck 9. It was a quiet area with windows, bits of chairs and a bar. Katherin read what I did, some thinking and planning for a Georgia Society Leadership meeting I am co-hosting in September.

Stopped by the room on our way to lunch and picked up a telephone message (has quantity) from Mary... She also lost Internet access and still doesn't have it.

Met them at their room and walked to the Chef's Galley where they promise we can have hamburgers and pizza - which we did.

Resolved Mary's internet problem. She is feeling much better today.

We left them and again returned to the Commodore club for a relaxing afternoon of contemplation and reading, followed by some wine as the dinner hour approached.

The rain did finally arrive around noon, but it had stopped by that time we walked back for dinner (Pate for Me, Veal for Kathleen).

We brought the remains of our bottle of wine back to our room and enjoyed the winds but pleasantly warm weather on our deck before retiring for the evening.

Only 3,219 steps today

Monday Aug 19 - QM2 - Somewhere in the Atlantic

3,976 steps

Slept well... I finally used my exercise bank and did some of my exercises!

Went to the Chart Room on deck 10 after breakfast and read (k&w) & went a bit more on my upcoming Leadership Forum ideas.

Went to the Veranda on deck 8 (where we will dine on Wednesday) for an N10m wine tasting. It was very informative; the wines were all from California and uniformly good, as was the food (Salmon, Grains, Fruit, Lentils and a cheese course).

Kathleen had an afternoon message so I settled into the Commodore club on deck 9, where we will meet M&D at 5:00.

Fortunately or unfortunately (depending on how much you like strong + ris<sup>s</sup>) my attempt to avoid the gaggle of LBGQ men who we sat near yesterday placed me within arms reach of the Chello players, so conversation was a little difficult until they finished their set.

Split up for dinner (which goes up to its usual standards) and again finished the evening with wine on our deck. It was windy but warm, and the light was such a big but beautiful appearance.

Talked to a couple in the Commodore club -  
from England, have done the trip many times.  
Are doing this as a road-trip - NY to Back.  
She said something that stuck me: "This isn't  
a cruise - it's a crossing".



Tuesday April 20 - Qm2 - mid Atlantic  
4110 steps + 1.4 miles walked (w/o phone)

We were anticipating wind, rain and large waves from typical storm Ernesto, but woke up to a warm, windy day. We stayed in the room, then went down to deck 7 where we did 4 laps (1.4 mile) in the often windy, salt sprayed deck. Grabbed some coffee and enjoyed the sunny calm on deck 8 near the terrace pool.

The wind does appear to be strengthening as we clean up & get ready to have breakfast...

We cleaned up, had breakfast and found a spot in the Commodore Lounge on Deck 8 to settle in for the morning. One nice thing about traveling by ship is that we get to gradually adjust to the time zone change as we make our way back home. However, without cellular coverage this is not something that is automatically done on our phone. We got crossed up and ended up an hour behind the rest of the world, so we no longer had our arranged lunch meeting with M & D (they had to text us to say they were holding a table for us).

We plan to go to the 3:00 Tee Runway models (except me!) etc. Kathleen started to create videos in Camra for M & D and continued that effort while we sat at a table in the lounge

Cont'd dining area on deck 7.

M & D had a lecture but the lecture at 2:00, so we met to the Chat Room on deck 3 when Kathleen continued her work on the video which I caught up on news and rest.

The tea was held in the Queens Room on deck 3. It is a large room, and it was jam packed with people. It is Free, held every day and is obviously very popular. They served finger sandwiches, scones w/ cream & jam, sweets, and (of course) tea.

We all proceeded from there to the Commodore Club on deck 9 for drinks before dinner. We sat at the same table as the day before, but today's musical entertainment was a group which did not get in the way of our conversation.

Mary seems to be over her sea-sickness but has caught a mild cold so Kathleen stocked her up with cold medicine and advised on how to take it.

They decide to pass on dinner (the staff was generous with the food at the tea!), we had pre-ordered our meals for Dinner (Grand ft. duck for me) & we kept on 7:00 rendezvous with an elevated dining experience. The duck was excellent!

We finished the evening with wine on our deck.

Wednesday April 21 - QFE - The Atlantic

8,429 Steps

Slept well, woke up early, did an exercise in the room, then headed out to deck 7 when we did 5 loops (1.7 miles). Got coffee and settled into a quiet area by the pool boats at the back of the ship on deck 8. Enjoyed it so much that I went back to the Cafeteria on deck 7 and got us each another cup of coffee.

Decided to have breakfast in the Kings Court on deck 7 for a change. It was enjoyable.

Back to our room now to get cleared up and vigorously attack another rehydrating morning.

We lounge on our deck for awhile, enjoying the sunny, warm but very windy weather before heading out to find someone that Kettle can work or video. We parked at a table in the Kings Court and worked...

Ms D joined us at 11:30 and provided Kettle's pictures to us for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Southampton) video after further finish the 1<sup>st</sup> on (London). She will also try to get a 3<sup>rd</sup> one (the Ship) before we reach New York.

Mary is still under the weather - kind of seasick and has a cold... Not a good voyage for her!

Kettle & I next went for the Chat room when she continued work on the video while I read, caught up on news of the Democratic National Committee (see Kando!) and played Hearts.

Paused at 4:00 for a few glasses of wine,  
then changed for dinner (I wore my 2<sup>nd</sup> Suit...  
we bought it, I packed it so I decided I was  
going to wear it!) and met m&D at The Veranda  
on deck 9 for our special (ie, Paul was for it)  
dinner. The food was about better than we  
had been hoping but the ambiance and service  
made it special. Steaks all around, except for  
K. Helen who ordered the superb shot ribs,  
all washed down with a nice S + E selection.

It was a very leisurely meal - so much so  
that we missed the 8:15 start of the musical  
show we had planned on watching.

Afterwards we went out on the back deck  
near the pool and enjoyed a last glass of wine  
(Kathleen & me) and the thoroughly lovely  
weather before finally retiring for the night.

Thursday April 22 - Qm 2 - The Atlantico

9,041 steps

Had full day on board what has been "on ship". We disembark shortly after 8:00 AM tomorrow. Katherin admitted that, despite our rocky start, she must begin to doing this cruise again at some point in the future. The benefit of arriving fully rested and in sync with the time zone has a lot of appeal.

The day is sunny & warm. We did our exercises, then went down to deck 7 and walked 6 laps (2.2 miles). Got coffee and sat on the deck chairs we had observed being set up as we walked. Had breakfast in the Kimp Court again, got cleaned up, and am now enjoying the sun, fresh air and privacy of the deck outside of our room. I could get used to traveling this way! Especially because we go on here each day - it makes getting an early start each day very easy.

Moved from the "on" table of the Kimp Court and so Katherin could continue working on the tables. She is making good progress & hopes to finish all 3 (Lobby, Southampton & the Ship) today.

met M&D at 1:00 to collect ship pictures and eat lunch. We hung out at the table (M&D

left to walk around of park) before heading up to the Commodore club to stake out a table & meet the founders & find things we did - by the time they arrived (at 5:00) the place was packed.

We eventually had dinner (at "on" table), packed, then locked ourselves out of our room which we were pulling our suitcases out into the hall about 9:30. I walked down to the purser's office on deck 3 to get another card, which did not open the door! Meanwhile Kathleen had found a porter who let her into the room, so it all ended well.

We enjoyed our most beautiful view on our deck before retiring for our last night on the ~~Big~~ Ship.

Kettle finished the last notes and am-dropped  
them to M & D's iPhons. They send to him  
the ad result!

Friday April 23 - on the Qm2, Brooklyn, Newark  
& Dallas

5,703 steps

Planned to get up at 5:00 so we could see the Statue of Liberty and the Verazzano Narrows Bridge. Kathleen planned to get on by stairs and meet off at 4:00:-- We went back to bed & got up at 5:00, but went under the bridge while I was on the shower, so we just missed seeing that. But we did have a good view of the Statue of Liberty - it was on our side of the ship so we did not need to stay with the crowd up on the top deck. It is a beautiful clear day.

Had breakfast at the Kings court - it was very crowded, but we ended up (by good chance) sitting at the table next to M&D.

Waited for our 8:10 disembarkation in our room, went down to Deck 3 to meet M&D, but they never showed up, and were not reachable by text or phone... Decided to get off anyway, hoping we would meet them on-shore. My room card swallows from last night almost caused a problem... I almost threw the one they gave me last night away but tossed it into my back pack at the last minute to have as a souvenir. I had it to be a good idea as the one that opened the room door would not scan when I tried to leave the ship - had to use



the others on!

Caught up with m&D - they thought we had agreed to meet after we passed through security...

Got on bus to Newark for the ~ 45 minute ride... parted ways with them (Laurie is driving up to pick them up), checked on bags, and are now settled in at the AIT Ambassador lounge waiting for our 1:00 Flight back to Dallas.

The flight was uneventful - no bad exit row seats so had lots of Leg Room. Dallas more as predicted - 15. Officially 101 miles we landed, but the car themselves showed 106 on the drive home.

It is different (more that really nice) to arrive back from a trip to Europe with the usual jet lag!