

## Cunard's 175th anniversary year gets off to a spectacular start



- **Fireworks mark sailing of Queen Mary 2 and Queen Elizabeth on their Round World Voyages – photos attached**
- **Spectrum of elite speakers across the 2015 programme**
- **175 special features on sailings through the year**
- **Full set of 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary events planned**

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Cunard's 175th anniversary year has got off to a spectacular start, with fireworks and marching bands marking the departure of **Queen Mary 2** and **Queen Elizabeth** on their World Voyages this weekend. A magnificent year of celebrations is planned, with special features on board, a top-flight line-up of celebrity speakers and a series of World Class events and commemorative sailings in place for 2015.

Flagship **Queen Mary 2** and sister ship **Queen Elizabeth** took centre stage in Southampton on Saturday as the two Queens embarked on their 2015 World Voyages. Joining guests on board were acclaimed British actress, Celia Imrie (aboard **Queen Mary 2**), and former chief news correspondent for the BBC, Kate Adie (aboard **Queen Elizabeth**), as part of Cunard's acclaimed 'Insight' speaker programme, featuring high-calibre presenters throughout the year. Further leading lights, including statesmen, authors, actresses, poets and politicians, will share their knowledge, stories and experiences with passengers on board Cunard's ships during this anniversary year. These include:

- FW De Klerk (**Queen Mary 2**, Port Elizabeth to Durban, 15-17 April 2015),
- Sir Max Hastings (**Queen Mary 2**, Dubai to Hong Kong, 29 January-21 February 2015)
- John McCarthy (**Queen Elizabeth**, Dubai to Southampton, 13 April-3 May 2015)
- Sir Jackie Stewart (**Queen Mary 2**, Dubai to Hong Kong, 29 January-21 February 2015)
- 'Vertigo' Actress Kim Novak (**Queen Elizabeth**, Honolulu to Auckland, 13-27 February 2015)
- Lord Michael Howard (**Queen Victoria**, Istanbul to Rome fly-cruise, 10-24 October 2015)

- Anne Widdecombe (**Queen Victoria**, Canaries, 10-22 May 2015)
- Simon Weston (**Queen Victoria**, Caribbean, 20 January-2 February 2015)
- Pam Ayres (**Queen Elizabeth**, Mediterranean, 21 October-7 November 2015)
- David Blunkett (**Queen Victoria**, Mediterranean fly-cruise, 12-19 September 2015)

The 175 anniversary will be celebrated across all three Cunard ships during the year, with

- Gala dinners with souvenir menus on cruises of more than 4 nights
- “Black, Red and Gold” themed Balls in the Queens Room aboard each ship
- 175 themed commemorative drinks from special blends of wine to craft beers, plus 175 themed cakes and deserts at afternoon tea and formal dinners.
- Themed entertainment, including 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary quizzes and the quirky side of Cunard’s history presented by the RADA theatre group travelling aboard Queen Mary 2’s transatlantic crossings
- Specially created 175 merchandise, from collectible Cunard 175 posters to teddy bears and polo shirts to cufflinks and 18 carat Clogue gold jewellery
- Mail posted on board will be over-stamped with the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo
- In cabin stationery – postcards, writing paper and envelopes – will display the 175 anniversary logo

Angus Struthers, Marketing Director for Cunard, said:

“2015 is going to be an amazing year for Cunard. We’ll be celebrating our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout the year with an exciting programme of commemorative sailings and special events. Celebrity speakers will add an extra touch of sparkle and insight to the celebrations on board while the sheer spectacle of bringing the fleet together in Southampton and Liverpool and marking key dates in Cunard’s history will make compelling viewing for both passengers and spectators ashore. We want everyone across the globe to be able to share in these historic celebrations. “

“Highlights of our 175th year will include the gathering of **Queen Mary 2**, **Queen Elizabeth** and **Queen Victoria** in our home port of Southampton on 3 May for a spectacular sailaway of the three Queens. And up to one million spectators are expected to gather in our spiritual home of Liverpool for the ‘Three Queens, One Magnificent City’ three day event 24-26 May. This will culminate on 25 May when the Cunard fleet, made up of the three largest ships ever to appear in formation on the Mersey, will perform a series of carefully choreographed manoeuvres within sight of the Three Graces on Pier Head waterfront, including the iconic Cunard Building which was the company’s headquarters for nearly 50 years.”

“We will also be re-creating the transatlantic voyage that marked the start of the company’s 175 years of operation. **Queen Mary 2’s** ‘175th Anniversary Crossing’ (Southampton to New York 2-14 July 2015 M511D) will sail into Liverpool on 4 July and depart the same day - exactly 175 years since Cunard’s ship Britannia made her maiden crossing from the port, heading for Halifax and Boston.”

One of Cunard's most famous ships, **Lusitania**, will also be respectfully saluted by **Queen Victoria** during a special '**Lusitania** remembered' sailing (3-10 May 2015, V510) as the ship sails into Cobh, exactly 100 years since Lusitania was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland on 7 May 1915. A series of commemorative events have been organised in the town which passengers are invited to attend, while on board, expert historian Eric Sauder will display on board a special collection of **Lusitania** memorabilia including china, silver, brochures, postcards and souvenirs that will help tell the story of Cunard's former flagship. A few places remain on this historic sailing, with Cunard fares from £959 per person for inside accommodation.

Further details on 175th anniversary sailings will be announced shortly.

