



QE2'S STORY AND RECORD

For most of her almost 40 years in service QE2 was the most famous ship in the world being rarely far from the news, for good reason or bad. She became a strikingly potent symbol, recognised around the world, not just of all that is best in Britain, but of the enduring excellence of Scottish engineering. She sailed over five million nautical miles, more than any other ship ever, completed 25 full world cruises, and crossed the Atlantic, surely the world's cruelest sea, over 800 times; yet her hull was as sound in 2008 as the day she first slipped into the waters of the Clyde four decades earlier.

QE2 was a magnet for well-wishers wherever she went; thousands turned out to greet her, not just out of passing curiosity but because they loved her. It is impossible to say just why this was so, but it was so.

QE2 was celebrated, acclaimed, revered and respected.

Yet it was a miracle she ever came into being at all. In the early sixties, in a miasma of muddled management and indecision, Cunard began planning replacement tonnage for the ageing Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. With alarming consistency the company made the wrong decisions, and only as late as the last minute was it pushed by external forces into avoiding disaster. But what this relatively conservative company eventually embarked on was a revolutionary replacement, at least 25 years ahead of her time: QE2.

Even when she took to sea and could be seen by all to be one of the most beautiful ships ever built, truly the pride of the Clyde, she was dismissed by City analysts rather unoriginally as 'a white elephant' that, in another inappropriate metaphor, would be 'mothballed' within six months. The age of the transatlantic liner, they said, was dead.

Well, how wrong they were.

QE2 spent her service life in the limelight, and her career at sea was even more eventful than her birth. It was not all exotic voyages and ecstatic welcomes. It included sailing 6,000 nautical miles south, partly through an icefield in the dark, without radar, to make her singular contribution to the Falklands Campaign; it involved various threats, from extortionists, from the IRA and from the Libyan government; it included rescuing all the passengers from a liner in distress, and having all hers similarly rescued after she hit rocks; it featured visits from every senior member of the Royal Family, from prime ministers and presidents, rock stars and film stars, and from Nelson Mandela. Not a year passed without

something happening that would have been once-in-a-lifetime for any other ship – and usually hitting the headlines in the process.

QE2 was a phenomenon and there is no doubt she will continue to be one for many more years in Dubai where she retired in 2008. She was just one of a long line of noble Cunard transatlantic liners, but she served longer than most and she travelled further than any other.

In 39½ years of service, QE2...

- completed 1,419 voyages
- sailed 5,875,493.22 million nautical miles –more than any other ship ever
- carried almost 2.5 million passengers
- completed 812 Atlantic crossings
- called at New York 710 times
- called at Southampton 726 times
- completed 25 full World Cruises
- completed ten 'extended' voyages
- been commanded by 25 Captains

FASTEST CROSSINGS

Westbound (Southampton to New York)

June 1970

3 days 20 hours and 42 minutes

Average speed: 30.36 knots

Steamship

Eastbound (New York to Southampton)

17 – 22 July 1990

4 days 6 hours and 57 minutes

Average speed: 30.16 knots

Motorship

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1964

30 December

Contract to build signed by Sir John Brocklebank, Chairman of Cunard, and Lord Aberconway, Chairman of John Brown.

1965

5 July Keel successfully laid following failed attempt three days earlier.

1967

20 September Launched by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the presence of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and HRH Princess Margaret.

1968

19 November HRH Prince Charles sails on board from the shipyard in Clydebank to drydock in Greenock.

26 November Sea trials begin, which reveal engine problems.

23 December Main sea trials and 'shakedown' cruises commence in Greenock. Engine problems develop off the Canary Islands.

1969

2 January Arrives in Southampton for the first time. Six sailings, including the proposed maiden voyage, cancelled.

18 April Cunard formally accepts delivery.

22 April Officially enters commercial service with a mini-cruise to the Canary Islands.

1 May HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visit at Southampton.

2 May Maiden transatlantic voyage to New York.

7 May Arrives in New York to tumultuous welcome; greeted by Mayor John Lindsay.

29 May HRH The Duke of Edinburgh again visits in Southampton.

1970

- 23 March** Welcomes her 75,000th passenger less than one year after entering service.
- June** Crosses Atlantic westbound in a record time of 3 days, 20 hours and 42 minutes, an average speed of 30.36 knots.
- October** Departs on her first long cruise: 37 days to North America, Africa and South America.

1971

- 9 January** Rescues 501 passengers and crew from the burning French Line cruise ship Antilles in the Grenadines and lands them in Barbados.
- 5 March** Suffers power failure for four hours off Trinidad as a result of jelly-fish being sucked into intakes.
- 30 June** Trafalgar House purchases Cunard and QE2 for £27.3 million.

1972

- 23 April** Arrives 36 hours late in Southampton following one of the worst North Atlantic storms.
- 17 May** Extortionist informs Cunard in New York that there are six bombs on board, as QE2 sails to Southampton. RAF Nimrods parachute a bomb disposal team of four into the Atlantic, who are picked up by the ship. No bombs found. Extortionist arrested and sentenced to 20 years.
- October** First major refit changes external appearance with the addition of ten penthouse suites.

1973

- 14 April** Leaves Southampton on first of two chartered cruises to Israel to commemorate 25th anniversary of the state's founding. Intense security

for the ship through the Mediterranean following Arab terrorist threats. On 16 July 1974, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt reveals in a 'Panorama' interview on BBC Television that he personally had countermanded an order given to an Egyptian submarine commander by President Gaddafi of Libya to torpedo the vessel during the cruise to Israel.

1974

- 1 April** Loses power after a boiler oil leak. Passengers transfer at sea to Sea Venture.
- 25 September** Rescues six passengers from sinking French yacht Stephanie in the Mediterranean.
- 28 October** Breaks loose from moorings during gale in Cherbourg and strikes pier, suffering 30' gash and 48 hours delay.

1975

- 4 January** Sails from Southampton on first World Cruise – a journey of 38,000 miles and a total of 3,965 passengers.
- 25 March** First transit of Panama Canal; QE2 breaks two records – she is the first Cunard Queen to transit and becomes the largest ship to travel through the Canal and pays the highest toll for the transit.
- 4 December** Completes first million miles, between Antigua and Boston.
- 31 December** Bulbous bow holed when ship strikes incorrectly charted reef at Nassau.

1976

- 23 July** A huge engine room fire travels up the funnel uptake, severely distorting the funnel plating which is evident for the rest of her career.
- 26 November** IRA plot to blow up the ship in drydock in Southampton foiled; three men arrested and sentenced to 20 years.

1977

27 June Takes part in the rehearsals for the Jubilee Review of the fleet by HM The Queen.

December Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth Suites added.

1978

January Visits Australia and New Zealand for the first time.

1979

May Celebrates her tenth year of service, having carried half-a-million passengers to 63 countries.

1980

January First transit of the Suez Canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.

1981

July Special screening of the Royal Wedding between the Prince and The Princess of Wales takes place while QE2 crosses the Atlantic.

1982

25 April Maiden arrival in Philadelphia as part of the city's tricentennial celebration.

3 May Requisitioned for use by the British Government as a troopship in the Falkland Islands Campaign.

- 5 May** Arrives in Southampton and immediately undergoes conversion to a troopship, including the installation of three helicopter pads.
- 12 May** Leaves Southampton for war with 3,000 troops and 650 crew volunteers.
- 26 May** Arrives in war zone.
- 11 June** Welcomed home with 604 survivors from Royal Navy ships Ardent, Coventry and Antelope in Southampton by HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on board Royal Yacht Britannia.
- 7 August** Hull repainted light charcoal grey and the funnel in Cunard's traditional red and black, (in place of her previous non-traditional white).
- 2 December** HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother visits in Southampton.

1983

- June** Hull repainted black but the Cunard funnel colours retained.
- November** The Magrodome, a sliding glass roof, installed over Quarter Deck outdoor swimming pool.

1984

- 1 April** When leaving Piraeus blown onto the south breakwater head and suffered a large dent in the area of the mechanics accommodation.
- April** By the completion of her World Cruise, QE2 had visited 145 different ports worldwide. New York was the most visited port with 325 calls while Southampton was second with 240.
- June** First sea-going branch of Harrods opens.

1985

13 February Cunard charts Concorde to take passengers out to Sydney, to join QE2 and Sagafjord – both in port together. The Concorde trip breaks the records: 17 hours, 3 minutes and 45 seconds.

18 May QE2, the Red Arrows and Concorde photographed at the same time in the English Channel.

1986

3 May HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother visits the ship in Southampton to mark the 50th anniversary of the Queen Mary's maiden voyage in 1936.

4 July Participates in centennial celebration of the Statute of Liberty.

20 October Leaves New York for the last time as a steamship and undertakes Cunard's last crossing of the Atlantic under steam, ending a 146-year tradition.

QE2's steam turbines had taken her a total of 2,622,858 miles – the equivalent of 120 times around the world.

October 1986 – April 1987

Re-engined with nine diesel electric engines and totally refurbished at a total cost of £110 million. Appearance altered with bulkier funnel and additional penthouse suites.

1987

29 April HRH The Princess of Wales attends a children's party on board, and Concorde makes a special flypast, to mark the ship's successful re-engining. First crossing under diesel electric power to New York commences.

1988

14 December HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother lunches on board to celebrate the 50th anniversary of her launching the Queen Elizabeth in 1938.

1989

27 March Chartered by a consortium of Japanese companies for 72 days to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the city of Yokohama.

1990

January – June Again chartered by the Japanese.

22 July Arrives in Southampton after completing her fastest diesel crossing in 4 days, 6 hours and 57 minutes at an average speed of 30.16 knots. Sets out on a Round Britain cruise to celebrate 150 years of Cunard.

23 July Greeted by 60,000 people on her maiden arrival at Cobh, Ireland. Mr Charles Haughey, the Taoiseach, boards for lunch to mark the event.

24 July An estimated 1,000,000 spectators greet her maiden arrival in Liverpool.

25 July Goes home to the Clyde for the first time.

27 July Royal review of Cunard and Royal Navy ships at Spithead by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on board Royal Yacht Britannia. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh transfer to QE2 by Royal Barge. The Queen then becomes the first reigning monarch to sail on a commercial liner with passengers. Captain Ronald Warwick temporarily assumes command. This was the first time that a Cunard Master had captained the same ship as his father (Commodore W E Warwick was QE2's first Captain).

9 August Completes 500th scheduled crossing of the Atlantic.

1991

15 June HRH Prince Edward and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh attend a Royal Ball on board in Southampton.

1992

- 10 May** The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher lunches on board in Southampton to mark the 10th anniversary of the Falkland Islands Campaign.
- 11 June** One of the nine diesel engines (Engine Echo) experiences a catastrophic failure.
- 7 August** Strikes uncharted rock off the coast of North America, all passengers transferred ashore and **QE2** goes to Boston for temporary repairs. Full repairs subsequently made in Hamburg. Returns to service on 4 October.

1993

- 12 June** HRH Prince Edward lunches on board to celebrate 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession.

BBC's 'Keeping Up Appearances' filmed on board.

- 13 June** First call at Edinburgh.

1994

- 8 – 13 May** Special Silver Anniversary crossing to New York.
- 22 May** Albert Reynolds, Irish Taoiseach, visits in Cobh.
- 4 – 8 June** Leads flotilla of ships commemorating 'D' Day, reviewed by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (as well as other world leaders) on board Royal Yacht Britannia. Sails past the Normandy beaches. Dame Vera Lynn and Bob Hope on board.
- 20 November** Arrives in Hamburg for extensive refurbishment costing £45 million, which includes removal of the Magrodome.
- 17 December** HRH Prince Andrew guest of honour at lunch on board in Southampton to mark return to service. Controversially, the ship sets sail for New York with workmen still on board.

1995

- 3 – 10 May** First call at Plymouth as part of the VE Day commemoration.
- 14 June** Leaves New York for Southampton on her 1,000th voyage, having sailed 3.8 million miles and carried 1.7 million passengers.
- 17 July** HRH Princess Anne lunches on board in Edinburgh. Leads the Tall Ships out of the Firth of Forth.
- 10 September** Encounters Hurricane Luis on a voyage to New York experiencing 130 mph winds and a 90-foot wave.
- 13 – 25 October** Special episode of UK's 'Coronation Street' filmed on board.

1996

- January** Begins 20th World Cruise from New York, a voyage covering 53,000 miles and 38 ports on 4 continents.
- 2 January** QE2 clocks up the four millionth mile at 2100 GMT, the equivalent of sailing around the world 185 times.
- 4 April** Trafalgar House, including Cunard Line, is sold to the Norwegian Kvaerner Group.
- 28 September** HRH Prince Edward attends a Royal Ball on board in Southampton.
- 22 November** Goes into the A&P Yard in Southampton for a £12 million refit.

1997

- 4 January** Marks the 75th anniversary of the first World Cruise (Cunard's Laconia in 1922) with her own World Cruise departure from New York.
- 20 September** 30th anniversary of launch by HM The Queen.

1998

- 29 - 31 March** South African President Nelson Mandela (accompanied by future wife Graca Machel) sails from Durban to Cape Town. A Gala Dinner for the

Nelson Mandela Children's Fund held on board in Cape Town. Mandela writes in QE2's visitor's book: "Travelling on QE2 was an unforgettable honour and pleasure".

3 April A consortium led by the Carnival Corporation purchases Cunard Line from Kvaerner for \$500 million.

1 August Visits the Orkney Islands for the first time.

30 October Visits Malta for the first time.

1999

14 April Celebrates the 30th anniversary of her first transatlantic crossing with a special birthday party in Southampton.

In 30 years QE2 has made 1,159 voyages, sailed 4,648,050 nautical miles and carried over 2 million passengers.

13 June 1999 QE2 marks another milestone in her 30-year career: at 15.00 hours, while enroute from Madeira to Southampton, she exceeds 175,296 hours steaming time. This equates to exactly 20 years (including four leap years).

12 November –10 December

QE2 undergoes a £19.5 million refit at the Lloyd Werft Shipyard in Bremerhaven, Germany.

31 December QE2 is positioned off Barbados to welcome the third Millennium. A special rendezvous with Cunard's 'new' Caronia (on her inaugural cruise) takes place.

2000

January Proclaimed a 'British Icon of the 20th Century' in one of the exhibitions at the Millennium Dome.

Embarks on her first World Cruise of the Millennium: 124 nights (Southampton – Southampton).

John Brown, principal naval architect of all three Queen liners, knighted in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

July Two pigeons stow away on **QE2** and make headline news when handed back over to their owners in Southampton.

Chartered to a travel company for a week for use as a hotel for golfers taking part in the Open Golf Championship in St Andrews.

18 August Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Rt Hon John Prescott, visits in Southampton.

November Line Voyages to Cape Town introduced.

2001

(General) Both QE2 and Caronia recall the 1940s and 1950s when their 2001 schedules are linked to allow passengers to cross the Atlantic on a Queen and then transfer to a Caronia for a cruise to the Baltic, Mediterranean or Canada prior to re-joining QE2 for the trip home.

March QE2 officiates at the opening of the new cruise terminal in Dubai.

May and June Two transatlantic crossings (3 May and 6 June) commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the 1936 Maiden Voyage of Queen Mary. The May crossing includes a performance by Larry Adler who entertained on the Queen Mary voyage.

Autumn The 11 September World Trade Centre attack results in QE2 being diverted to Boston as the American terminus for the remainder of her 2000 Atlantic programme.

4 October Captain Warwick conducts the wedding service for his daughter on board QE2 in Boston; the first wedding to take place on board.

November /December Undergoes further refitting and refurbishment at the Lloyd Werft Shipyard in Bremerhaven.

2002

- 8 January** QE2 becomes the first passenger ship to call again at New York following the 11 September attacks. Wreath is laid as a mark of respect. The visit is QE2's 668th call at the port.
- World Cruise** Opera singer Russell Watson sails between Honolulu and Auckland. Open air concert given in Auckland with QE2 as the backdrop.
- 14 June** Baroness Thatcher lunches on board in Southampton to mark the 20th anniversary of the Falkland Islands Campaign.
- 29 August 2002** At approximately 2150 hours ship's time QE2 completes five million miles – a world record and a world first. It's the equivalent of sailing to the moon and back nine times, sailing around the world 230 times or sailing 1570 consecutive transatlantic crossings.

2003

- 24 October** As Concorde passes over QE2 on the Atlantic for the last time the Master of QE2, Captain Ray Heath, sends the following message to the Captain of Concorde:

"From one British icon to another: QE2 and Concorde have been an improbable, unique and successful transatlantic partnership for the past 20 years. We are sorry to see you go".

2004

- 25 April** QE2 meets Queen Mary 2 for the first time in New York after completing her last westbound transatlantic crossing as Cunard flagship.
- 25 April – 1 May** Both ships cross the Atlantic in tandem and are greeted by a Nimrod and a Harrier Hawk off the Cornish Coast on 30 April.
- 1 May** QE2 completes her last scheduled eastbound crossing of the Atlantic upon her arrival with Queen Mary 2 in Southampton.

At a ceremony that day the flagship status of QE2 passes to Queen Mary 2 when the Boston Cup is transferred to Commodore Warwick, Queen Mary 2.

1 – 22 May QE2 in drydock at Lloyd Werft (Bremerhaven); work includes preparations for her new role as ex-UK cruise ship.

November Having completed 35 years, six months and three days in service QE2 reaches a notable milestone in her life becoming the longest serving Cunard express liner in the company's history. QE2 took the record from the company's Aquitania which served Cunard Line, in peace and war, from May 1914 to December 1949. During her service QE2 has carried almost three million passengers, completed 797 Atlantic crossings.

2005

2 May Celebrates the 36th Anniversary of her maiden Voyage departure with a special birthday party while in Southampton.

25 – 29 June Undertakes a special four-night cruise to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar and takes part in the Trafalgar 200 Fleet Review.

4 September Having completed 36 years four months and two days record in service QE2 becomes the longest serving Cunard Atlantic liner ever taking the record from the Scythia which served from 1921 to 1957.

December For the first time since her Acceptance Trials in 1969 QE2 spends Christmas in European waters.

2007

2 January Departs Southampton on her 25th World Cruise.

20 February Meets Queen Mary 2, undertaking her Maiden World Cruise, in Sydney Harbour.

18 June Sale of QE2 to the Government of Dubai announced.

15 – 23 September Undertakes a 'lap-of-honour' around the UK to mark the fortieth anniversary of her 1967 launch. The voyage includes a maiden call to the Tyne, a visit to the Clyde exactly forty years to the day and a return visit to Liverpool.

2008

- 6 January** Departs Southampton with Queen Victoria and both ships undertake a tandem crossing to New York.
- 24 February** Arrives in Sydney for the final time.
- 18 March** Achieves 32.8 knots on a voyage.
- 30 September** Embarks on her Farewell to Britain cruise.
- 10 October** Departs on her final westbound crossing to New York.
- 16 October** Arrives in New York for the final time.
Departs on her final eastbound crossing.
- 11 November** Commences her Final Voyage with an emotional departure to Southampton.
- 26 November** Arrives at Port Rashid, Dubai, exactly 40 years to the day she first took to open water in 1968.
- 27 November** QE2 is officially handed over by Cunard to her new owners Nakheel.

2009 -

Dubai.

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