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Around The World in an hour



There was a buzz about the town as luxury residential ship 'The World' anchored in the Harbour on 13th August on an unscheduled two night visit to Stornoway.

The World is the largest privately owned residential yacht with 165 luxury apartments which circumnavigate the globe every two or three years. Each home on the ship is the property of the individual homeowner, and they come with a hefty price tag – costing from \$825,000 for a studio apartment to \$13.5 million for a luxury suite. First,

though, you'll have to prove your net worth exceeds \$5 million. Then add another 10 percent to 15 percent

of the purchase price for annual maintenance and other fees based on your apartment size.

Some owners live on the vessel year round, with the majority continuing to be

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Cruise Calendar

The Cruise Season in Stornoway hasn't finished yet. We are still expecting five Cruise Ships in September and two visits from the Hebridean Princess in October.

Expected cruise ships in September:

Monday 1st September - Marco Polo and Azores

Tuesday 11th September - Hebridean Princess

Wednesday 12th September - Prinsendam

Around The World in an hour

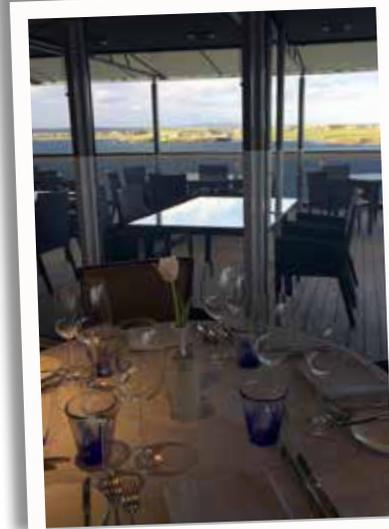
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active in their professional lives and spending three to four months onboard.

You get a lot for that kind of money, including:

- Six restaurants
- Golf facilities
- Full-size tennis court at sea
- Swimming pools
- Spa
- Fitness centre
- Library
- Cinema

Some representatives from the Cruise Ambassadors, Stornoway Shipping Services and SPA were lucky enough to get a tour of "the best address on earth."



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First Sunday cruise visit proves a success

The Cruise Ambassadors reported that the first cruise ship to visit Stornoway on a Sunday was a success despite there being no coach tours and shops open. Many passengers of MS Astor hired taxis and went to the Callanish Stones and other westside attractions – with one of the Cruise Ambassadors taking 5 passengers on a tour of the island,

much to their delight. The castle grounds proved popular amongst the travellers, with many enjoying the sunshine taking a stroll to the Stornoway Water Wheel and Gallows Hill. Others attended church services, with many passengers commenting on the warm hospitality they received and had tea and cakes after the service. All passengers were overwhelmed by the hospitality and



commented on how friendly everyone was. The Astor had 450 passengers, mainly Germans on board. The Cruise Ambassadors were delighted hearing

all the positive feedback and the sun continuing to shine throughout the day was an added bonus.

Lifeboat evacuates a woman from the Azores cruise ship



(photo courtesy of Chris Murray)

A lady in her late seventies was understood to have fallen and broken her hip on board the Azores cruise ship on Tuesday 25th August while anchored in Stornoway Harbour.

The incident led to both Stornoway lifeboat and the Stornoway based Coastguard helicopter being called out. A paramedic was lowered on board shortly after 8am and after assessing the injured

woman, it was decided it would be more comfortable for her to be taken ashore by lifeboat.

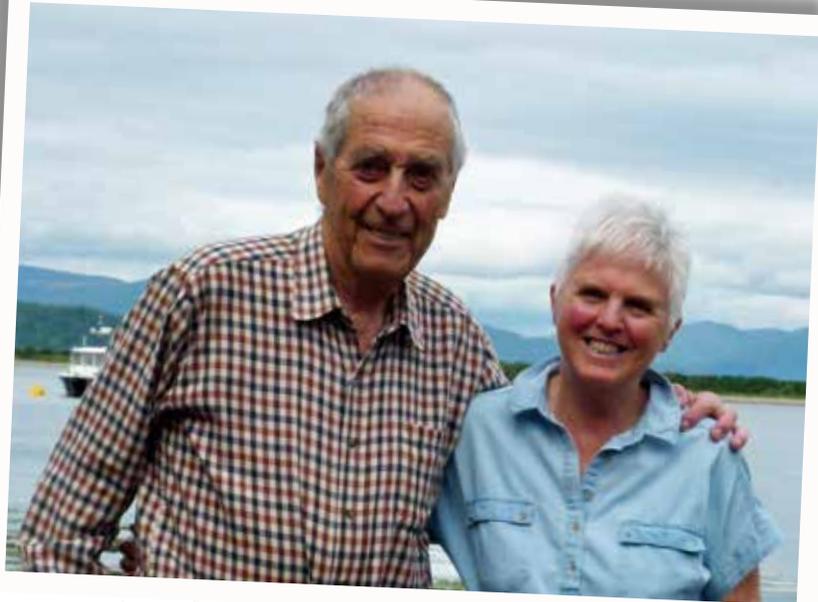
A Coastguard spokeswoman said: "Stornoway Lifeboat carried out the transfer and an ambulance took her to Western Isles Hospital. Stornoway Coastguard was also tasked to help transfer the woman from the lifeboat to ambulance."



The Anderson's story

John and Helen Anderson have been sailing to Stornoway since 1966, a year they so clearly remember because on that particular visit the only place open was the Fisherman's Mission - the TV was on so they sat and watched England win the World Cup. A day, they recall, as very quiet with no-one about apart from those attending church.

John's passion for sailing began at an early age of 7 when a neighbour took him out sailing on Belfast Lough. From then on it was his dream to be a sail boat owner. His ambition was finally achieved when his late grandmother left him £100 in her will with which he immediately went



searching for a suitable boat. It wasn't long before he found a sail boat that met his needs, however it was over budget by £20 and despite much haggling the seller would not budge in price. John finally persuaded one of his sisters to pay the balance and become a part

owner.

He was now a delighted, first time skipper of the 19ft boat called Quickstep, where he spent many of his teenage days on board. John developed a great respect for the sea but sometimes he occasionally pushed the boundaries and once managed to sail as far as the Isle of Man from Northern Ireland - totally unbeknown to his family.

At his parents' suggestion John studied for two years at the merchant navy deck officers' training school HMS Conway in North Wales and then served as a Royal Navy Reserve cadet on the aircraft carrier HMS Bulwark, including passage to the Mediterranean in 1956 to take part in the ill-fated Suez campaign.

After spending three years as Chief Instructor in



Sailing to Stornoway for fifty years

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outdoor activities at the YMCA National Training Centre in the Lake District, John became a student at the age of 25. It was during this time that he met his now wife, Helen, while climbing up Ben Arthur, a mountain near Arrochar, Argyll in October 1964. John informed Helen that she was one of the best female climbers he had ever seen just before he dropped two bombshells – that he never intended to get married and he was determined to sail round the world. Despite John's well thought out intentions on forever remaining a bachelor, he finally capitulated and they married in 1967. Against both of their mothers' wishes, they left for a round the world voyage

together in 1972 for four years. John laughs, "our parents soon changed their minds when we never died!"

They held many jobs along the way to fund this epic adventure - John was skipper of an offshore oil support vessel in Columbia, while Helen took up various secretarial positions in Barbados and New Zealand. They stayed longer than they expected in Barbados, not only because of the beautiful weather and beaches, but also because together they built up a very profitable charter business taking paying guests on their 27 foot yacht. They were some £300 in debt when they set off from the Clyde. This then grew to about £1,200 by the time they completed their

circumnavigation.

Prior to this voyage, they undertook a voyage to Arctic Norway in the summer of 1971. The couple both reminisced about the dramatic fjords and glaciers in Norway and the never ending daylight hours. The fjords were so steep sided that it was virtually impossible for them to anchor. However, there were numerous little jetties dotted around the coastline and offshore islands for them to use free of charge. On their return they were caught in the worst summer gale to hit the North Sea in 13 years. John also recalls that Stornoway was the first port where they had to pay any harbour due. Laughing, he said, "It cost us about 10p!"

When asked what their favourite experience has been, John said that it was when they sailed back into Gourock after being away for four years. Helen concurred, "It's an amazing moment to see your family and friends after such a long time."

They now spend the summer months cruising around the West Coast of Scotland but their favourite port in the UK is Stornoway, where they have many friends - they were even stewarding at this year's Hebridean Celtic Festival which they enjoyed immensely. Stornoway Port Authority send their best wishes to Mr and Mrs Anderson and we look forward to seeing them again next year.

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THE SUEZ CRISIS was major international incident that arose in 1956 from the decision by Gamal A. Nasser of Egypt to nationalise the Suez Canal, which long had been controlled by Great Britain. After Nasser took over the canal, Britain and France induced Israel to provoke a conflict with Egypt that would serve as a pretext for an Anglo-French invasion of Egypt. The United States, which had been excluded from the planned invasion, denounced it. The incident severely damaged Anglo-American relations.

Cruise ships from the past

RMS Avon

by Colin Tucker

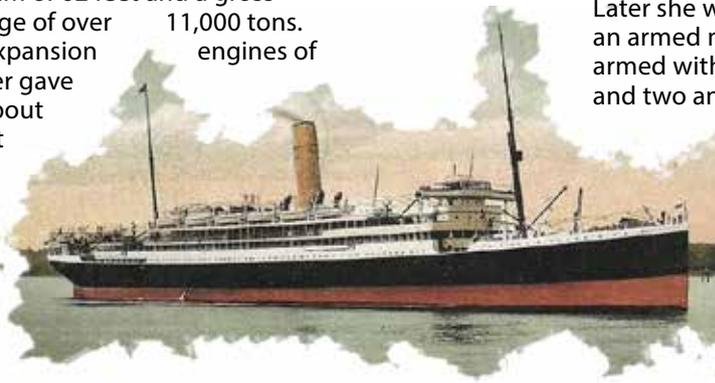
During the 1920s there was a demand for high-class cruising on large ocean liners, most of which were destined to carry their passengers to sunshine destinations. It was unusual, therefore, for one such large ship to make a call at Stornoway on a cruise. The ship was the RMS Avon, belonging to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. She was one of four sister ships built for the company's South America service from Southampton. She had been built by Messrs Harland & Wolff Ltd at Belfast in 1907. For the technical minded, she had a length of 535 feet, a beam of 62 feet and a gross registered tonnage of over 11,000 tons. Her quadruple expansion engines of 7,000 horsepower gave her a speed of about 16 knots, not fast but sufficient for her intended service. There were four boilers and no less than thirty furnaces. It was noted that 'with the view of breaking up the clinker, each fire bar can be moved independently by a detachable spanner.' Such was the technology of the day!

She could accommodate 300 first-class and 130 second-class passengers in varying degrees of luxury. There were also berths for 100 steerage-class passengers, as the ship called at a Spanish port en route and carried emigrants one-way and migrant workers to and from South America.

First-class accommodation was described as 'the most luxuriously appointed yet'. There were numerous single cabins, and several deluxe suites. The public rooms were decorated in a distinctive and exotic style favoured by the Latin meat barons who would often travel. Balconies, domes adorned the smoke room and grand saloons, and these and a gymnasium were highlighted in company brochures. The ship was built before the luxury of the lift was available, so passengers had to take to the stairs. A contemporary description describes the smoke room. 'The arrangement is somewhat novel, as the room is on two floors; the first is

the smoking-room proper, and opens into a large well; and around the balcony there is a card-room and smokers' lounge. The advantage of superior ventilation is obvious, and the arrangement lends itself admirably to floral decoration.' The article continued, 'The cabins are generally admirably furnished, and in many of them there has been an effort at decorative effect, simulating the arrangement in hotels and private dwelling-houses.'

At the beginning of the First World War the Avon was used to carry troops. Later she was converted to an armed merchant cruiser, armed with eight 6 inch guns and two anti-aircraft guns. She



was renamed HMS Avoca and sent to join the 15th Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific, where her patrol area stretched from Vancouver to Cape Horn.

Later she was transferred to the Atlantic for escort duties. There is a record life on board in the form of a diary kept by G W Smith who was a steward. His diary begins in April 1916 when HMS Avoca left Liverpool. The very first entry notes sighting a submarine and an 'unknown ship torpedoed at 10 pm'. German submarines were also present in the Pacific: in October while off Chile all on deck were told to keep 'a sharp look-out'. All was not doom and gloom, however, for Smith records that 'crossing the line was celebrated and nearly all the new hands were ducked, including the captain', while on another occasion 'several nurses came to dinner leaving around midnight'. Another interesting comment describes how the ship was meant to sail to rescue Shackleton's men stranded on Elephant Island, although this did not happen.

After the War the Avon returned to her River Plate service, but as newer ships gradually took over, she started to take on the role of a cruise ship. In 1927 this became her sole duty and she appeared with a white-painted hull. Unlike the majority of cruise ships she did not

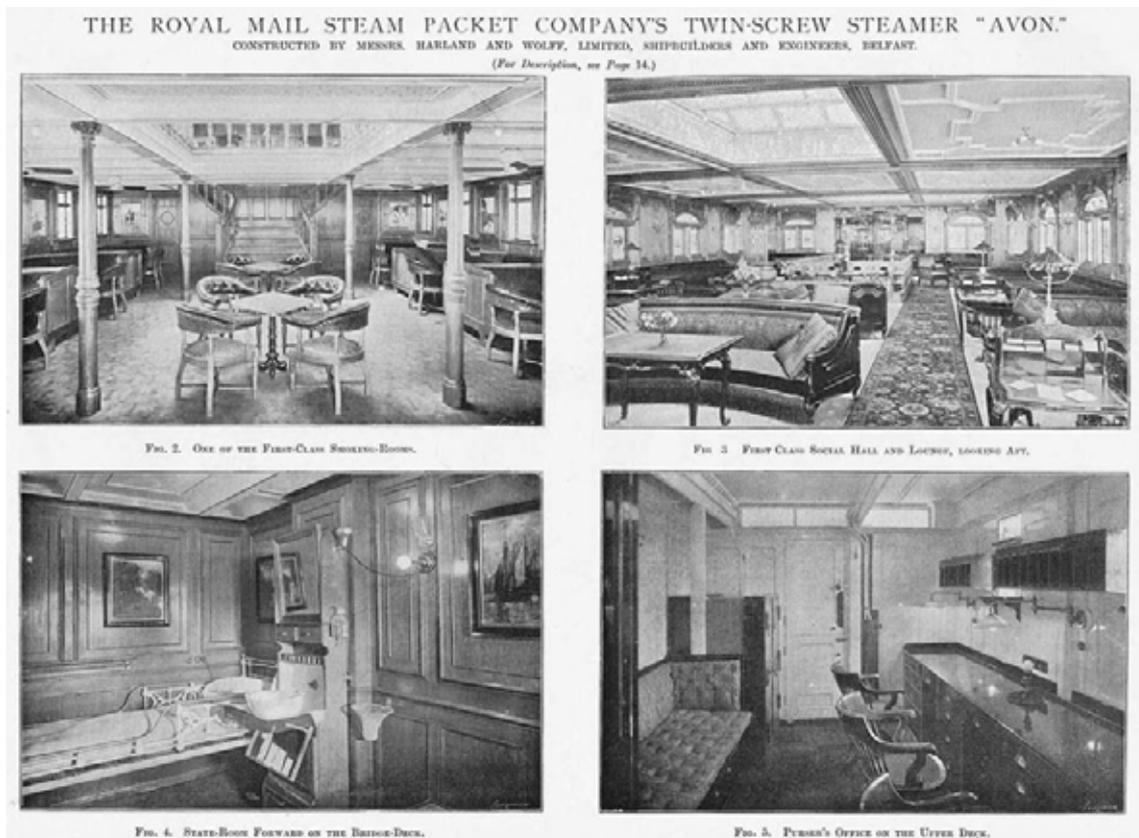
head for the sun but instead undertook round-Britain and Norwegian cruises from various UK ports. It was on one of these cruises that the Avon arrived at Stornoway on Sunday 26 August, 1928, dropping anchor outside the Arnish lighthouse. She had 300 tourists on board on a fourteen-day cruise from Liverpool round the British Isles to Tilbury. The Highland News reported that the ship 'was the largest vessel yet seen in the bay,' and that 'favoured with excellent weather, many of the ship's company visited the town on the afternoon.' It stated that 'about 7 pm the anchor was again weighed, the next call being at Scapa Flow.' The Highland News also recorded that her previous port of call had been Portree, where 'local car hirers were busily engaged



conveying her passengers to and from the various beauty spots through the island.'

The Avon's career as a cruise ship did not last long as the trade was badly hit by the economic slump of the late 1920s and only a year after the ship had graced Stornoway Harbour she was laid up at Southampton and then sold for only £31,000 for scrap the following year.

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Successful Sail Stornoway week

by Ian Stephen

In this 150th year of a Port Authority run harbour at Stornoway, the Sail Stornoway Festival has been run once again, in the week of the Heb Celt Festival. Many of the visitors to the music festival have been involved in a range of water-borne events which involved people of different ages and different recreational maritime interests.

For four days the squeals of delight from young trainee dinghy sailors echoed around the harbour area. With the support of CNES and the Port Authority, daily teaching sessions, run by suitably qualified instructors and their volunteer assistants were well subscribed. Wednesday saw a good proportion of our developing fleet of community owned St Ayles skiffs join the programme. Yackydoola, the superbly finished Shawbost skiff, was trailed over to the town after its official launch in home territory. The Stornoway and Portobello skiffs joined in a parade of sail and oar which linked town and country groups and on and off island members of both the rowing and sailing larger community.

This was consolidated on Thursday with a cruise-in-company of local and visiting yachts proceeding to the superb cruising ground of Loch Erisort to observe a long- distance

rowing event involving the three skiffs. The sgoth an Sulaire, already moored at Keose, gave 20 rowers their first taste of the graceful but demanding dipping lugsail rig. Sailors and rowers shared a lunch on the shore before the sailing fleet made their return to Stornoway harbour. A locally based sailing dinghy also joined-in, tack for tack, with the 33ft sgoth Niseach. Friday's programme offered both rowing events on Loch a Bhaile and more opportunities for visitors to enjoy the unique experience of helping to work three examples of the unique North Lewis craft. Only one scheduled session was cancelled in very gusty conditions. Come-and-try sessions and a very demanding local dipping lugsail challenge went ahead that day.

Meanwhile rowing events continued at the west side of the Island. Co-ordinator, Murdo Macleod reports, 'Friday, despite a poor forecast we had 4 crews of 5 people in 2 skiffs out of Miabhaig into Loch Roag. Much thanks to Murray Macleod Seatrek for providing advice and safety cover. Thanks to Michael Skelly for safety cover on Loch Eireasort. Saturday we had scores of first time rowers out on Loch a Bhaile - before a closely fought photo finish race for the Digby Chick Trophy won narrowly by Row Porty from



Edinburgh.'

Thus Saturday was another opportunity for both community rowing out of town and sailing challenges, out from Stornoway. Over the years the Sail Hebrides and Sail Stornoway Festivals have worked towards a higher profile revival of the Coronation Cup challenge. This is based on a historic race of working boats, out of Stornoway harbour in 1902. Saturday's Challenge events included a tight harbour course for smaller craft and a long triangle out round Dubh Sgeir in the Lochs district and across to Chicken Rock, off Point, before a beat back to the harbour. Examples of Bermudan, gaff and dipping lug craft sailed the inshore course and eight yachts of various sizes sailed the longer course.

A range of prizes generously donated by on and off island businesses

and individuals were given out by harbourmaster Tony Morrison at an informal prizegiving in the Sea Angling club. Two new trophies, generously commissioned and donated by the Port Authority and other interested individuals were unveiled. Next year the new trophies will be engraved and ready for presentation to participants in a series of events which all hope will attract an even wider range of entrants.

The Ed Anker Award for significant cruising achievement went to Trevor Robertson, a visiting yachtsman from Australia. During his winter residency in Stornoway Harbour, Trevor was generous in sharing his wide experience and his home - the self-completed vessel Ironbark 2 - with the growing harbourside community.



The Shawbost team and their superbly finished new skiff - Yackydoola



Row Porty - winners of the Digby Chick Trophy of Rowing 2015