

# The Travel Society

Vol. 24, No. 1 January 2006

*Magazine*



**Nova Scotia**  
**Visiting the Bible Lands**  
**Crusing the Baltic with Saga**  
**Cruise Security**

[www.thetravelsociety.com](http://www.thetravelsociety.com)

## Editor

Ann Wallace  
ann@thetravelsociety.com

## Contributors

Pat & Hugh Gaudet  
Sandra Phinney  
Heinz and Inge Jaeger  
Ralph Carder

## Publisher

Nigel D Raincock  
nigel@thetravelsociety.com

## Administrator

Debbie Philip  
debbie@thetravelsociety.com

## Graphic Design & Production

Yong Park  
yong@thetravelsociety.com

**The Travel Society Magazine** (ISSN#1717-242X) is an independent, consumer magazine published in Canada ten times a year. Although extreme care is taken to ensure the accuracy of material herein, **The Travel Society** does not assume any liability for errors or omissions, for changes in fares or schedules, or for readers' decisions based on the opinions of the editor or writers. Readers are advised to confirm all information prior to booking.

### Rates for CANADA (incl. GST):

1 year - \$ 49.00

2 years - \$ 95.00

3 years - \$ 140.00

USA: 1 year - \$ 80.00 (incl. postage)

World: 1 year - \$ 80.00 (incl. postage)

### Back issues:

1 issue - \$ 5.00 3 issues - \$ 10.00

### Copyright 2006 by The Travel Society Inc.

Contents may not be reproduced in whole or part without written permission from the publisher.

### The Travel Society Inc.

218 - 1033 Bay Street,  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M5S 3A5  
Tel: 416 926 0111 Fax: 416 926 0222

e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com

web-site: www.thetravelsociety.com

**Postmaster:** Please send address corrections to the above address.

Printed in Canada. GST Reg # R135785962  
Publications Mail Agreement:  
# 40063904 & # 09925  
Customer # 2289997

Mail preference: From time to time, we make our membership list available to specific reputable companies and organizations whose products and/or services we believe will be of interest to you. If you do not want your name to be made available, please enclose your mailing label and initial here \_\_\_\_\_

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) and the Canadian Magazine Fund of the Department of Canada Heritage toward our mailing and project costs.

January 2006

Vol. 24, No. 1

## contents

### Readers' Letters

Family Accommodation in Orlando, Florida	3
Letter from Abe & Betty Peters re Jordan	3

### Destinations

My First Visit to Nova Scotia	4
Yarmouth, NS ... A Small Town with a Big Heart	7
Visiting the Bible Lands	9
Cruising the Baltic with Saga	13

### News

Safety and Security on Cruise Liners	17
From the Bookshelf	18
Travel Digest	20



*The church and statue of 'Evangeline' at Grand-Pré (Wallace)*

## editor's letter ...

A happy New Year to all ... and here's wishing you wonderful travels in 2006!

A slight change in our format for this issue, in that we have only one page of readers' letters.

This is to make room for a recently-received article on Jordan following my request in last month's edition. We hope you enjoy this account and,

indeed, all the articles in this edition. I hope I've conveyed how much I enjoyed my first visit to Nova Scotia and I look forward to telling you more about my trip in our next issue.

Next month we'll also be bringing you an account of travelling in the Yukon and Alaska by bus, car, train and ferry, together with other Canadian destinations to help you with your summer plans.

In spite of a troubled world and so many natural disasters in 2005, a recent Ipsos-Reid survey shows that Canadian travellers are a resilient lot. Apparently 73% of us have planned to travel this winter and 18% say they will be travelling to "another part of the world". That means Europe, Asia, Australasia or South America as opposed to Canada, the U.S. and our traditional sun destinations.

Another interesting survey result, conducted by Opinion Research in the U.S., is that 74% of travellers agree that responsible travel practices are important to them. This survey confirmed that travellers are willing to spend an average of 10% more on their excursion if they are assured of the travel provider's responsible travel practices and their respect for the ecology and diversity of the planet and its inhabitants. A little bit of good news!



*If this is the year you've decided to succumb to the pleas of children/grandchildren to visit the attractions of Orlando, you might like to take the advice of Pat and Hugh Gaudet and stay in a spacious house rather than be confined to a hotel.*

## Family Accommodation in Orlando, Florida

Orlando and central Florida, with Walt Disney World and other attractions, hosts millions of visitors each year and the area is crammed full of hotels, motels and resorts ranging from the bare minimum to ultra luxurious.

We found a wonderful alternative for the two of us and our daughter's family of four – we rented a house.

There are a number of companies in the Orlando area which handle these rentals and we chose to rent from Award Vacation Homes, Inc. Ours was a four bedroom, three bath home with a pool within a 20-30 minute drive to Disney World and all the other major attractions in the area such as Seaworld and Universal Studios, while easy access to Interstate 4 brings the Kennedy Space

Center, Tampa and other sites within easy driving distance for day trips.

Glochamorra, as 'our house' is called, is beautifully furnished and decorated. It is completely equipped with a full range of modern appliances as well as cutlery and dishes to serve a large group of people, a propane barbeque, pool towels, four TVs (yes, four), linens and everything else we needed or wanted. Families are expected, so a high chair and folding crib are included, the garage has been converted into a games room and, in accordance with Florida law, doors to the pool area are alarmed.

As well as the bed and bathrooms, it had a formal dining room, living room, breakfast nook and family room. There was plenty of room for family activities indoors.

The pool area gave us the opportunity to relax after a full day (and, for grandparents, an exhausting day) of doing the touristy things in the area.

There are so many fast food outlets in the area that it is easy to fall off a healthy diet, but having our house and all it offered let us prepare and enjoy many meals ourselves at home. The house is conveniently located near

several large grocery stores.

We felt secure, comfortable and right at home in Glochamorra and would recommend Award Vacation Homes to any family visiting central Florida. When we had a couple of small problems with the house the agency people were extremely prompt in fixing them. They were also helpful with information about the area. Rates vary by size of house (they range from 3 bedroom, 2 bath to 6 bedroom, 4 baths), length of stay and season and we were given the reduction for AAA members.

Details are on the very good website: [www.awardpoolhomes.com](http://www.awardpoolhomes.com) or by calling 1 800 338 0835.

*Pat & Hugh Gaudet,  
Calgary, AB*



Hi Ann,

We love reading *The Travel Society Magazine* and, as requested by you, have a few words to say about Jordan as we did a tour of Israel and Jordan a few years ago. We were impressed in many ways. Petra, in particular, is a place that we found so interesting. The way the huge rocks and caves are formed and the life that once happened there as evidenced by the ruins (as well as some people that still live in one of the caves) is truly amazing. While there we faintly heard a beautiful harmony of music coming from somewhere and, as we moved toward the sounds, discovered a group of German tourists were singing in one of the caves. The acoustics were fabulous.

We spent a few days in Amman and were impressed with the friendliness of the people. Mind you, at first we noticed some people staring at us and we caught them silently laughing when they thought we did not see them. It turned out to be because we were wearing shorts. The clothes they wear in public do cover most of their bodies.

But they unfailingly welcomed us to Jordan with big smiles. The merchants enjoyed dressing us up in different kinds of traditional clothes and headwear, so that we could laugh and take pictures of ourselves, without ever asking us to buy anything. We did buy a few items of "normal for us" clothes to remember Jordan by. On the sidewalks, some of the vendors had hookah pipes and they would put on a clean mouthpiece for us so that we could try them. These are just a few of our happy memories of friendly Jordan, where we had an excellent experience.

Best regards,  
Abe & Betty Peters (Winnipeg, MB)

*Several readers responded to my request for stories on travelling in Jordan (thank you all) and a full-length piece is featured on p.9 of this edition – Ed.*



# My First Visit to Nova Scotia

story and photographs by Ann Wallace

*Tide's out at Halls Harbour*

**I**t's hard to get my husband to leave the office, but two things tempt him: trains – especially sleep-aboard ones – and boats – no, not big cruise liners, but sail boats. So when I suggested a trip to Nova Scotia on VIA's overnight 'Easterly Class: A Maritime Learning Experience' train, and a visit to friends with a sailboat near Mahone Bay, I thought he might be interested. And I was right!

Long keen to visit Nova Scotia ... the only Atlantic Canada province still on my "to do" list, and thinking it would be nice to be shown around and driven along the famous coastal road known as the Cabot Trail, I was planning to join a coach tour, and full details of that trip will appear in next month's edition of The Travel Society Magazine. But the long 1<sup>st</sup> July week-end fell just before my tour's departure date, so it wasn't too difficult to persuade my husband to accompany me for a few days. We planned a brief itinerary of spots that my later tour did not include: Wolfville, the Annapolis Valley and Annapolis Royal, and then cross-country to the south shore to stay with our friends near Mahone Bay before travelling back to Halifax. In four days we saw so much and had a marvellous time; falling so in love with Nova Scotia that it's high on our 'places to retire' list. But that will be another story!

So it was that we drew into Halifax train station on the last day of June – a Thursday – after a relaxing journey with VIA from Toronto, via Montreal. We had reservations for the night at 'Halifax's Boutique Hotel' – the Halliburton – located within walking distance of the train station. We were later to learn that Oscar Wilde had once stayed there. Located in a trio of heritage townhouses, this gracious property suited us perfectly. We settled into our well-appointed room and peeked at the garden and the public rooms before setting out to explore. The Halliburton has a renowned dining room called Stories, but for our one evening together in Halifax we wanted a harbour walk and a harbour view over dinner. Salty's was the place! Located at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wharf known as 'Privateers', Salty's offers jolly family dining on the ground floor and on its spacious patio, and an elegant fine dining experience on the second floor. Whatever your choice, you'll enjoy the harbourside location and fine Maritime food including, of course, lots of fresh seafood. We had a lovely evening.

But we didn't linger too long over dinner, because we had a full day planned for the morrow. After breakfast, we were collected by an employee of Thrifty's rental cars and driven a short distance to their depot to complete the formalities for our rental car: a PT Cruiser convertible! With the roof down, and fingers crossed for no rain (in fact I had

great weather for the whole of my stay), we set off for Wolfville, just an hour's highway drive to the north west. High on our list was the historic site at Grand-Pré commemorating the Deportation of the Acadians of the Minas Basin in 1755. I'm sure many of my readers will be more familiar with this tragic story than I was, but knowledgeable or not, this is a fascinating site. You'll start your visit in the Interpretation Centre where a movie will outline this tragic story and a fine selection of books in the gift shop can provide more information. At the very least, you'll want to purchase a copy of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem 'Evangeline', which was published in 1847 and brought the story of the Deportation and le Grand Dérangement (the great uprooting) to the English-speaking world.

Out in the grounds you'll find Philippe Hébert's much-loved statue of Evangeline, some fine gardens and the memorial church/museum where a guide will engage you in lively conversation. Take time to leave the grounds by the northern gate, where you can gaze out over the dykelands that the early settlers claimed and where, today, the reeds rustle in the breeze like whispering ghosts. If you've arrived in Nova Scotia on the Easterly Class train you will already have learned how the land was reclaimed from the sea.

Our Nova Scotia friends had recommended that we visit a couple of the Wolfville area wineries if our schedule allowed (was this a hint? ... we certainly bought them some!) and so we were soon enjoying samples of some of the region's excellent wines at Domaine de Grand Pré and Gaspereau. The former is home to an attractive restaurant which, I feel, would be an excellent choice for lunch or dinner if you are staying in Wolfville. After our substantial breakfast we did not need to linger for lunch at this stage, but we were beginning to appreciate the gentle beauty of the area and started taking some back roads to enjoy the scenery. This included a detour to the Blomidon road with its beautiful views over the Minas Basin. On our next visit we will schedule time to hike the renowned trail to Cape Blomidon.

Soon we were changing direction and heading into the beautiful Annapolis valley. What an idyllic region this is, with its rolling hills and prosperous farms, grazing sheep and dancing wildflowers. "But I want to see the coast," said the driver, so we headed down a side road to a randomly-chosen coastal village. Thus it was that we arrived in quaint Halls Harbour and joined a party! Of course ... it was Canada Day and the whole community seemed to be out celebrating. The famous tide was out too, and I was soon busy leaning over the bridge and snapping photographs of the fishing boats high and dry against the harbour wall. We stopped on the patio of a wharfside restaurant and enjoyed a bowl of chowder, and then, strolling beside the harbour,



(above) Mahone Bay B&B



(left) Visitors are invited to join the Canada Day fun

were offered a piece of Canada Day cake by three enthusiastic party-goers. Such fun.

But famous Annapolis Royal and a reservation at an inn were beckoning and soon we were back on the road, though again we eschewed the highway and meandered down the lovely country lanes of the Valley, also known as the Evangeline Trail, on our way to one of Canada's most historic towns.

Annapolis Royal! With a name like that how could it be anything but historic?

The location of our chosen inn – the 1854 Garrison House – turned out to be perfect, right across from Historic Fort Anne and its ancient graveyard, all of which was the view from our room, enjoyed as the light of early July lingered into the evening. A sunset walk onto the grounds of Fort Anne, located above the wide Annapolis River, is highly recommended, as is dinner on the inn's verandah, where

you'll no doubt be surprised by the eclectic menu: not only traditional seafood specialties of the region, but also such offerings as Thai soup, Vietnamese curry and Indonesian chicken. Everything we tried was delicious. The inn is, by its own description, 'modest', but it's very comfortable and each of the seven en suite rooms is different. I can't imagine there is a better place to stay in Annapolis Royal.

Our following morning was a full one: first a walk around the delightful Historic Gardens (just a couple of blocks from the Inn) followed by a visit to Fort Anne (where we wished we had more time). The Historic Gardens is a 10-acre site containing various themed gardens: roses, Acadienne, ornamental grasses, perennials, a rock garden and so on, as well as the peaceful Marsh Lookoff where visitors can look out over the dykes, marshland and the tidal river to the distant hills.

The history and all there is to see at Fort Anne could fill a book. Acadians, Mi'kmaq, English, Scots, French and Loyalists have all put their stamp there, struggling for freedom or empire. In the Interpretive Centre there's a movie, many artefacts and – the highlight – the three-million stitch Fort Anne Heritage Tapestry, created by over 100 volunteers over a period of four years. Outside there are fortifications, military quarters, cannons, the magazine and more, including that fine river view. It would be nice to take a picnic lunch to the site, but we couldn't tarry as our friends in Mahone Bay were expecting us later in the afternoon.

Before setting off for our cross-country drive to the south shore we took a brisk walk around the town, noticing many of the 150 buildings with Heritage protection, the delightful gift stores and many little restaurants and pubs. We made a quick stop at the Annapolis Royal Farmers' Market held downtown every Saturday, purchasing a snack for our road trip and a couple of pies ... more presents for our hosts!

Over the next couple of days we stayed with our friends. They, knowing my husband was not joining the guided tour I had planned for the following week, insisted we visit the nearby famous towns of Lunenburg and Mahone Bay together. As these were to be on my tour itinerary, I will leave details of them until my next story. However, for those

of you who are planning an independent Nova Scotia tour and who wish to follow in my footsteps, I did search out an appealing B&B in each town. Lunenburg has literally dozens of B&B's and inns but I found a winner hidden behind the first façade I chose. The Sail Inn is quaint ... small and old, but recently and unusually renovated to provide four charming, traditionally furnished en suite rooms with great modern bathrooms. A plus to your visit here is a complimentary cruise aboard the 48' ketch *Eastern Star*, berthed near the famous *Bluenose* in the harbour, just a few blocks away.

And in Mahone Bay you can't miss the elegant, four-bedroom Mahone Bay B&B on Main Street overlooking the harbour. I peeked in and noticed the pretty décor, fresh flowers and sunny colours everywhere, all obviously created with great care, and although I didn't stay I can confidently judge that any visitor would be comfortable here.

All too soon it was time to bid our friends "good-bye". We drove back to Halifax via Peggy's Cove, stopping to appreciate the moving memorial to the victims of Swissair flight 111 on the rocky shore nearby. Note: if you, too, would like to pause at this memorial you will have to drive yourself as the car park there does not accommodate tour buses.



John Langley in his Cunard Museum room at Duffus House Inn, Baddeck

In four days we had seen and enjoyed so much, yet we only scratched the surface of Nova Scotia. (Read on to find out what subscriber Sandra Pinney has to tell about Yarmouth.) After our long week-end *à deux* my husband flew back to Toronto and I joined an Ambassatours tour to cover the highlights of Halifax, Lunenburg, Peggy's Cove and Cape Breton Island. All the details next month, together with the story of the *Easterly Class* train trip.

However, before ending this section of my story, I would like to make yet another accommodation recommendation for those planning an independent tour of Nova Scotia. This time it's for Baddeck, the attractive and bustling village that's "the beginning and end of the Cabot Trail". On the water's edge, overlooking Baddeck Harbour, you'll find Duffus House Inn, two historic residences linked by a lovely English-style garden. Here you'll receive a warm welcome from John and Judy Langley and friendly golden retriever Bear. And if, by any chance, you are an

... [continued on page 20](#)



# Yarmouth, Nova Scotia ...

## a Small Town with a Big Heart (and lots to do!)

*story and photos by Sandra Phinney*

*While staying with friends in Nova Scotia last summer I (editor Ann) made some new friends. One of them was Sandra Phinney, who lives in Yarmouth. Sandra waxed poetic about her hometown and invited me to visit, but unfortunately I just didn't have time. However, I asked Sandra if she would write a piece on Yarmouth to add to all the other Nova Scotia information that we are bringing you. She readily agreed and here, for a change, is a travel story from a resident rather than a traveller!*

I know Editor Ann is giving you lots of Nova Scotia information in this and the next issue. But although she saw a great deal of my province on her visit last summer, I know she missed my hometown – Yarmouth, on the southwestern shore – a place I'm unabashedly biased about. So when Ann invited me to share some information on the place I love I was delighted to do so. Known as the "Gateway to Nova Scotia", Yarmouth gives you an immediate reading on the pulse of the province. Folks here are hospitable and good-humoured; everyone smiles a lot! The lifestyle is vibrant but laid back and there's lots to do. So much, in fact, that I hope you'll stay awhile.

So, first of all you'll need somewhere to stay. On Main Street, you'll find our full-service **Rodd's Grand Hotel**, overlooking Frost Park and the harbour. It always receives stellar ratings. For breakfast, try their scrambled eggs with sautéed lobster on an English muffin or their renowned fish cakes. I'm also fond of the dinner theatre there. Six nights a week a lively cast of singers and dancers perform a musical and serve a four-course meal. It's great fun.

For those who prefer the intimacy of an upscale B&B for accommodations, you'll be impressed with the **McKinnon-Cann Inn**. Here innkeepers Neil Hisgen and Mike Tavares have painstakingly restored an Italianate Victorian home and decorated each room in period pieces from the 1900's to the 1960's. It is simply exquisite. You'll also like the **Guest-Lovitt House** where your hostess, Twila Rogers, invites guests to enjoy a late afternoon glass of wine

from the panoramic Widow's Walk overlooking the harbour.

For good eating, walk north on Water Street and you'll come upon **Rudder's**, a casual dock side restaurant and brew pub in an historic building where sails were once made upstairs and a dry goods general store was housed in the bottom section. Rudder's has an oyster bar and seafood is their specialty including steamed lobster done to perfection. The restaurant has a patio overlooking the marina; a great spot to be when there are waterfront festivals and live entertainment. And for still more entertainment, there's always a great roster of live theatre at **Th'YARC**.

A skip and a jump south from the ferry terminal (The Cat that links Yarmouth with Maine) will take you to **IMO Foods**. This company smokes and cans fish destined for customers all over the world. It's a fascinating process as they use natural wood smoke and make their own unique sauces. They always have the welcome mat out and you'll be offered some tasty samples!

Downtown Yarmouth has many one-of-a-kind stores. Whether you are looking for woolens, small antiques, handmade crafts, fine art, unique gifts, memorabilia or bric-a-brac, it's worth strolling along Water Street and Main Street. You'll have no trouble parting with your money! Yes, Yarmouth is home to a large number of artists and artisans like Michael and Frances Morris. You'll find their pottery studio **At The Sign of The Whale** on the northern outskirts of town. They also feature the finest in NS crafts and have a small but delightful art gallery on site.

A tour is always a good idea both for insight and enter-

tainment. **Designer Tours** offer the best tours in town – bar none. My favourite is the 2.5 hour loop that introduces you a number of “Widow’s Walks” – unusual structures atop some stately Georgian, Second Empire, and Italianate homes. The tour then heads to Cape Forchu to see the impressive **Yarmouth Lighthouse** with its breathtaking grounds and charming museum. En route, you’ll drop into **Stanley’s Lobster Co.**, one of the many lobster pounds in the area. Try your hand at putting a lobster to sleep! (Tip: stand the lobster on its head, tail downward, and stroke the long “nose” between its eyes.) If you come here on your own, you can select a lobster and stroll along the ocean’s edge while it’s cooking.

At some point, you’ll want to visit the **W. Laurence Sweeney Museum** located on Water Street. A heritage treasure, the museum recreates the marine lifestyle that’s welded the community together for decades. Another “must-do” is the **Yarmouth County Museum** located downtown on Collins Street. It’s arguably the best small museum in Canada. But don’t let the word “small” deceive you into thinking you’ll see it all in half an hour. There’s an impressive collection of ship paintings along with 20,000 artefacts. And don’t miss the **Firefighters Museum**—the only provincial firefighters’ museum in Canada, and well worth the visit.

For something different, consider taking a wilderness canoe or kayak trip ranging from a few hours to several days. Master canoeist and guide Larry Muise operates **Springhaven Canoe Outfitting** and will gladly customize a trip for you.

You mustn’t leave the area without getting a taste for the French Acadian culture and all it has to offer. Many places top my list, starting with **Wedgeport**, a fishing community about 20 minutes’ drive from town. In the heyday of tuna fishing competitions, Wedgeport was recognized as the ‘Sport Tuna Fishing Capital of the World’. The likes of President Franklyn Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart and Ernest Hemmingway came to Wedgeport to cast their rods. The competition is legendary and the stories live on at the **Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum**. Should you visit in August, the tuna tournament has been reinstated!

Call ahead to arrange for a **Tusket Islands Tour** with Captain Kevin LeBlanc. (His boat leaves from the Wedgeport wharf, adjacent to the museum.) It’s a “wow” four-hour experience that is simply magical. Your destination will be Big Tusket Island, one of 365 coastal gems, where you’ll be treated to a fresh feed of mussels and piping hot steamed lobster. I never tire of this trip and the amazing stories associated with the islands.

A little farther away from Yarmouth (about a 40-minute drive) is **Pubnico**, Nova Scotia’s oldest region still Acadian. Drop into the **Acadian Museum** and meet Bernice d’Entremont, a fount of information. There are always fun things going on from tradi-

tional toe-tapping “kitchen parties”, to quilting bees and rug hooking demonstrations. You may even luck into a tour to the newly erected (and controversial) windmill farm in the community, with storyteller Laurent d’Entremont. Your next stop should be the **Historical Acadian Village** where you’ll be greeted by a nine-foot pine sculpture of the Baron Philippe Mius d’Entremont, founder of Pubnico (shown below). Here you’ll learn how the Acadians survived the Deportation of 1755 and how their indefatigable spirit lives on. Before you leave this area, you’ll want to taste a traditional Acadian dish called Rappie Pie. It’s a weird looking potato-chicken concoction, but oh so tasty! It’s well known for miles that Helen LeBlanc at the **Red Cap Restaurant** makes the definitive Rappie Pie.

There’s so much to tell you but I must stop or Ann will say “No more room!” But I’d be delighted to correspond with anyone who’s planning a visit to these parts and would like more information. My e-mail address is [s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca). I’d be happy to hear from you!

### Some details:

**Rodd’s Grand Hotel**, tel: 1 800 565 RODD, [www.rod-hotels.ca/ourhotels/grand.html](http://www.rod-hotels.ca/ourhotels/grand.html), summer rates from about \$142 which includes a CAA 15% discount.

**MacKinnon-Cann B&B**, tel: 1 866 698 3142, [www.bbonline.com/ns/mackinnoncann/](http://www.bbonline.com/ns/mackinnoncann/), shoulder season rates from \$95.

**Guest-Lovitt House**, tel: 1 866 742 0372, [www.guest-lovitt.ca](http://www.guest-lovitt.ca), high season rates from \$120.

**Rudder’s Restaurant**, tel: 902 742 7311, [www.yarmouth-web.com/rudders](http://www.yarmouth-web.com/rudders)

**Designer Tours**, tel: 902 742 4849, [www.about-yarmouth.com/tours.html](http://www.about-yarmouth.com/tours.html)


For a tour with **Tusket Islands** call 902 663 4437 or inquire at the Tuna Museum

**Th’YARC Theatre**: [www.thyarc.ca](http://www.thyarc.ca)

**All the museums and other businesses mentioned have information on line which can be accessed through your search engine.**

**Getting here:** I always recommend **Enterprise Rent-A-Car** to any friends who are flying in to Halifax. They have a wide selection and reasonable rates. [www.enterprise.com/car\\_rental/home.do](http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do). But for those who don’t wish to drive it’s easy to get from the airport to Yarmouth with **Cloud Nine Shuttle**, tel: 1 888 805 3335, [www.thecloudnineshuttle.com/](http://www.thecloudnineshuttle.com/) Fare \$60 one way. The drive takes about 3.5 hours. Yarmouth is also home to **The Cat** – a high-speed car ferry that leaves Bar Harbour, Maine and arrives in Yarmouth, from May to October: [www.catferry.com/](http://www.catferry.com/). It will also be sailing from Portland, Maine this coming season.

**Yarmouth County Tourism Association**, tel: 1 866 850 9900, [www.aboutyarmouth.com](http://www.aboutyarmouth.com)

**Nova Scotia Tourism**, tel: 1 800 565 0000, [www.novascotia.com](http://www.novascotia.com) 





# Visiting the Bible Lands ... our three-week trip through Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon

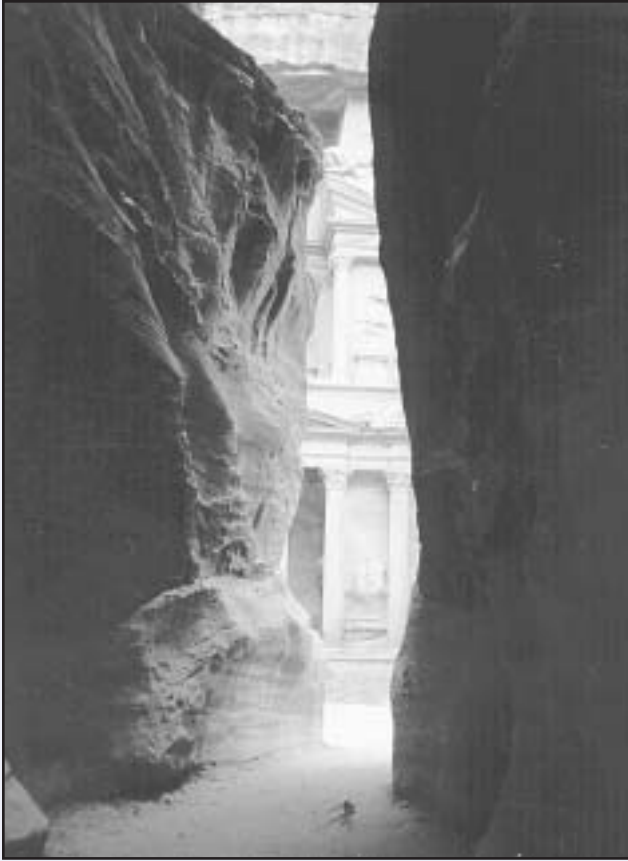
*story and photos by Heinz and Inge Jaeger*

*“Hi Ann. What a coincidence ... just as we were finishing writing about our lovely experiences in Jordan, we get The Travel Society Magazine and read your letter! Yes indeed, Jordan is a fascinating and friendly destination. We invite anyone who would like to know more to give us a call at 905 634 1239; we love to talk about our trip! Here’s our story. Keep up the good work at TS!”  
Heinz and Inge Jaeger, Hamilton, ON.*

**“Y**ou are going where? You must be kidding!” This was the usual response when we told friends and relatives about our plan to visit the Middle East. But in spite of all dire predictions, during the entire trip we never felt uneasy or threatened. The horrible bombing of the three hotels in Amman in November could have happened anywhere in the world, and did not injure any tourists. Travellers, in addition to the many biblical and historical sites, will find friendly people, good hotels and restaurants with excellent food, well-maintained roads and, in the spring and fall, a very pleasant climate.

Historically and ethnically, there is practically no difference between Jordan, Syria and Lebanon; the present political divisions were created in a clumsy attempt to pacify the





*The first view of Petra's Treasury*

enraged Arab governments when the promises made by Britain and France during War I to obtain the help of the Arab forces in defeating the Ottoman Empire, were not kept.

Until World War I the entire area had been a part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and before that it was an Arab Caliphate, a part of Byzantine, a province of the Roman Empire and a Greek possession under Alexander the Great. Islam is now the predominant religion, but small enclaves of Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Maronite and other early Christian Sects still survive without any governmental restrictions. Similarly, the countries are ethnically far from being homogenous. In the north, Armenian and Kurdish tribes, which are not Semitic, prevail, and in the southern and eastern parts Arabic (Semitic) tribes are the majority.

Large parts of the country are desert, only the Fertile Crescent, that is the mountain valleys along the Coast of the Mediterranean and the area between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, receive sufficient rain to allow sustained agriculture.

This dry climate and the consequent sparse population have preserved an astounding amount of evidence of early human settlements; remnants of large buildings and closed villages dating back to before 5,000 BCE ('before the common era') have been excavated; and several even earlier Neolithic sites have been identified. It appears that the first settlers in this area had come some 9,000 years ago from Mesopotamia and active trade routes soon were established

between Egypt and Arabia/Yemen in the south and Persia and China in the east. Large and prosperous cities grew at the cross roads, such as for instance Bosra, Petra, Palmyra, Damascus and Aleppo.

Recently, thousands of inscribed clay tablets were found at Mari and Dura Europos near the Iraqi border, dating back to 1,800 BCE, which describe many events of previous centuries. Some of these stories are identical to those written in the Old Testament about Abraham and the Jewish tribes, which supposedly had not occurred until the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This has resulted in hotly-defended controversies between archeological translators and Orthodox Jewish scholars. This early writing is still symbolic, and not all symbols have been translated. However, just recently the oldest true alphabet consisting of 30 letters, again inscribed into clay tablets about 1,500 BCE, was found in Ugarit.

One of the remarkable facts of this area is that succeeding rulers rarely destroyed the places of worship of the conquered people, but most often converted them to their own use, frequently allowing the people to retain their customs and beliefs. Thus one can find the remnants of a Roman or Greek temple incorporated into a Christian church, which in turn was converted into a mosque. Many of the original decorations have remained, and on occasion a Christian shrine or mausoleum is still maintained as part of a mosque. In view of the many wars that were fought here, this tolerance toward other religions and customs is very admirable.

Our trip was organized by Adventures Abroad of Vancouver (tel: 1 800 665 3998) and started in Amman, the capital of Jordan. This city of wide streets, built on the slopes of eleven hills, is dominated by the old citadel on top of one of the hills, which at one time was a Greek temple that was later converted to a Byzantine basilica. The view over the city from the citadel is spectacular. We stayed in the Amman West Hotel, which is very roomy, clean and pleasant, although too far away from the inner city to do any shopping by foot.

From Amman we took a trip north to the city of Jerash, the best known of the Roman Decapolis cities, and then we travelled south to Mount Nebo, from where Moses first saw the "Promised Land", and where now stand two Christian churches. Mount Nebo is a good example of the religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence: a Christian church, possibly converted from a pre-Christian structure in 400 CE on top of a mountain, located in a Moslem country and depicting Jewish history. On the way we stopped at a couple of Greek and Roman ruins and visited the remains of a hunting lodge of an Umayyad caliph.

Our guide was Jihad Tabcho, who is a Syrian and loves to let his guests benefit from his encyclopedic knowledge of the local history, archeology and religious customs. Our group of twelve travelled in a 32-seater bus, which was very comfortable since everyone had a window seat.

Driving farther south we stopped for three nights in Petra, the "Rose-coloured City", which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985. Petra defies descrip-

tion. Cut into the soft sandstone sides of a narrow gorge, this city once had 20,000 inhabitants. The first kilometer of the gorge, which is in fact a dry river bed or *wadi*, is in parts less than eight meters wide, with sides rising vertically about 250 meters; an easily defended entrance. Suddenly this narrow gap intersects a wider gorge and, on the opposite wall, the first spectacular façade, carved into the mountainside, becomes visible. Almost 30 meters high, the so-called Treasury with its six massive columns glows in the morning light. Farther down the gorge dozens of other tombs, sacred buildings and living quarters cover the cliffs. At one time, between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, the Nabatean king in Petra was in control of a major part of the trade routes between the East and the Mediterranean.

From Petra we visited Wadi Rum and then Aquaba on the Red Sea. For future trips we recommended to the company drop Aquaba from the itinerary in favour of a stay at a Dead Sea Resort. Aquaba is like many other resort towns, the Red Sea beaches are rocky and dirty and the hotel swimming pools are only open during the hottest summer months. The drive back toward Amman along the Dead Sea is beautiful, the deep blue water offset against the whitish cliffs of the Moab Mountains.

After eight days in Jordan we crossed into Syria and reached its capital Damascus via Bosra, the ancient northern capital of the Nabatean Empire. Damascus is known as one of the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world; some records found recently indicate that Damascus was an influential economic centre some 5,000 years ago. Our hotel, the Semiramis, was located near the city centre and within easy walking distance of the market and the Umayyad Mosque, which is one of the city's major landmarks. This site was a place of worship thousands of years ago; it later became a Roman Jupiter temple and then about 400 CE a Christian church. It finally was converted to a mosque in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and still contains a shrine said to enclose the head of John the Baptist.

Next to the Mosque is the 'Souq Al-Hamidieh' a one-kilometer long, covered market street, which has been in operation since 1863. A nondescript side door in the *souq* leads to a beautifully restored *caravanserai*. The House of Ananias (the baptizer of St. Paul) in the Christian quarter of the city contains several well-preserved murals depicting the story of St. Paul's conversion to Christianity.

No visit to Damascus is complete without seeing the tomb of Zeinab, the daughter of Ali and Mohamed's daughter Fatima. The mosque surrounding the tomb was built in Iranian style architecture some 200 years ago and is covered on the inside with gold, silver and glass mirror tiles, giving it an unreal, very bright appearance. The shrine is a favourite religious destination for the Shiites. Another interesting site was the town of Maalula, which is one of only three places in Syria where the Aramaic language is still spoken. It is located on a steep mountainside at an elevation of 1500 meters and contains two monasteries, dating back to

the third and fourth century CE.

The 1½-km long main north-south street in the ruins of Afamia, a city built by descendants of Alexander the Great, still attests to the once beautiful architecture. The street was lined with two rows of columns on both sides, with a depressed carriageway in the center and stores and temples behind the columns. Some 500,000 people lived here at one time. The city was destroyed several times by earthquakes, and rebuilt by the Romans, but after the last earthquake in 110 CE its importance declined and it was eventually abandoned.

In the city of Hama we observed the unique waterwheels, which lift the water from the Orontes River over ten meters into aqueducts, without any external power input other than the flowing river. From there we then turned eastwards into the desert and drove to Palmyra with its extensive Byzantine and Roman ruins and interesting Tower Tombs. Farther east on the shore of the Euphrates River and just short of the border to Iraq, we visited Mari where a royal palace dating to 1,800 BCE has been excavated, with indications that an even older palace once existed below it.

In Deir Ezzor we stayed in the Cham Palace Hotel on the shore of the Euphrates River and then made our way along the river, passing the new hydroelectric dam, to the second largest Syrian city, Aleppo. Here we stayed for three days in the charming Hotel "House Tourath", a 200-year-old



*The Treasury, Petra*



*The Roman Decapolis, Jerash*

converted merchant house on a street so narrow no car could pass through. Like most Arab houses, it was built around a courtyard reached through a plain door and a passageway. Below many of these old buildings were multi-storey basements, used as cool storage areas during the summer and often reaching the ancient aqueducts so that the households of wealthy merchants did not have to go to the public well for their water.


The ruin of the cathedral of St. Simeon, the first of many “Stylites”, was another fascinating destination. St Simeon had lived here on top of a 10-meter high pillar for 43 years, performing many miracles. The remains of the pillar are now only about one meter high as it is said that over the centuries pilgrims took pieces of the pillar home as relics.

Reaching the Mediterranean coast we visited Ugarit, where the clay tablets with the oldest true alphabet were recently found; Latakia, Syria’s main seaport; Saladin’s castle high on the top of a mountain and finally Craq des Chevaliers, the largest and best-preserved of the many crusader castles in the area.

On the last day several of our group took an optional excursion into Lebanon to see the ruins of Baalbek, a truly magnificent site with many beautiful friezes and stone carvings still in good shape. A drive through the city of Beirut and a short stroll along the Corniche ended this interesting day.

Unfortunately the recent bombings in Amman, which happened a few days after we had left the country, will likely curtail tourism for a while. On our trip we had met many other tourist groups, primarily from Europe. However, about half of our group were Americans and none of them met

any hostility or felt less than welcome. Unfortunately there are some fanatics everywhere, but we should not play into their hands by being afraid to visit these beautiful countries.

*Information on travelling in Jordan can be obtained from the Jordan Tourism Board, North America – tel: 1 877 SEE JORDAN or on line at [www.seejordan.org](http://www.seejordan.org). Readers may also like to make a note that the exhibition **Petra: Lost City of Stone** will be transferring from Calgary’s Glenbow Museum to the Canadian Museum of Civilization on 7 April 2006 and will be on view until 2 January 2007. The Museum is in Gatineau (just across the river from downtown Ottawa). For more information call 1 800 555 5621 or visit [www.civilization.ca](http://www.civilization.ca). *



# CRUISING THE BALTIC WITH SAGA

by Ralph Carder

*Believe it or not, as a new year arrives, it's not too early to start thinking about 2007. That's if, as Ralph Carder advises, you'd like to take a vacation with British-based Saga AND take advantage of their generous early-booking bonuses. Here Ralph tells us more about the Saga company and the Baltic Cruise he enjoyed last year.*



*A corner of Tallin's Old Town*

For several years we had listened to our friends in England, and others visiting us in Canada, recommend Saga, so when good friends in the UK suggested that we join them for a Saga Baltic cruise we readily agreed.

We had assumed that Saga was some type of travel agency dedicated to arranging holidays for seniors, but how little we knew! As we later discovered, it is a multi-million dollar organization covering all facets of holiday recreation for seniors (50 and better) on a global basis. In 1951, one Sidney de Haan, who then owned a hotel in Folkestone, Kent, England, was looking for means to increase his business in the off-season and introduced incentives to encourage retired people to stay with him over this period. He began by offering them full board, inclusive travel and excursions at attractive prices. From these small beginnings his business grew steadily over the years. In 1957 he char-

tered his own train and in 1959 offered his first overseas venture by flying his hotel guests to France for the day. By 1970 he was offering holidays in Romania, Spain and Yugoslavia and by 1979 had established an office in Boston for American seniors. At the time of his retirement in 1987, when his son Roger took over, the SAGA magazine was launched and is now one of Britain's highest subscription magazines.

As well as Saga Holidays and SAGA magazine, this organization now has Saga Shipping Ltd., which currently owns and operates the 587 passenger *Saga Rose* and the 655 passenger *Saga Ruby*. Other services include share dealing; saving and investment schemes; health, car and home insurance and the provision of low-cost phones. The company also owns three radio stations. We had no idea until we made the effort to find out, what a huge and unique organi-



*Our Saga cruise liner*



zation Saga is.

For our first introduction to Saga, we and our friends decided on a September Baltic cruise. We booked a year in advance which gave us a 25% discount, and by paying in full within 60 days of departure we obtained a farther 2% discount. In total, we paid £3,420 (about C\$7,000) for a very good outside cabin (including trip cancellation insurance) for the 16-day cruise for the two of us. The original price had also included health insurance, but as we already had it we were given a deduction of a farther £50 pounds each. The ship was formerly the 350-passenger Swan Hellenic *Minerva*. It was like an English country hotel. No floor shows or casino but an excellent library and, in the evenings, first class individual performers. We had lectures on the ports we were to visit and on other interesting subjects such as the sad history of the Romanovs, as well as a classical music series.

The cruise started and finished in Dover on England's south coast. Saga provides free limousine pick-up and delivery service within a 75-mile radius of Dover and also from London terminus stations and Gatwick or Heathrow airports. In flying from Vancouver we had to stay overnight near Heathrow but those coming from Toronto or Montreal would arrive early enough for direct transfer to the ship. We were picked up before noon at Heathrow by limousine and taken to the new Dover Cruise Terminal which is large, com-

fortable and attractive. We checked in at counters designated by deck levels with very little waiting and given a number for boarding, after which we relaxed in a large hall with comfortable lounge chairs at one end and a small buffet with tables and chairs at the other. A four piece band dressed in blazers and straw hats regaled us with popular tunes and show songs. It was all relaxing and enjoyable and so different from previous boardings with crowds of people and long lineups. We boarded about a half hour later after going through security, checked out our cabin and then went up to the Veranda Restaurant for some light refreshment and to listen to the same band now playing on the deck below us.

From then on we enjoyed the ship's country-house atmosphere, the many armchairs and sofas, the chintz drapes and the fine library with some 35,000 books and many magazines, mostly new. We only wished that we had far more time to enjoy them. We loved the stylish informality of the Veranda Restaurant and at nights the more formal dining room. We particularly appreciated the open seating for all meals, the times for which were generally spread out over a two-hour period. Open seating is normally only offered on small, far more expensive cruise ships. We did not in the least miss the nightly glitzy floor shows nor a casino, the individual entertainers were a pleasant change and we talked to more people during the first few days of this cruise than we had on the whole of previous two-week cruises.

While tipping was included in the price, one tends to give a little extra for special service and this we had in full measure from our Filipino crew, who were friendly, efficient and courteous throughout the voyage. The officers were British except for Boris, the Staff Captain, who grew up in what was Leningrad under the Communist regime and who gave a talk on several occasions. On the only Sunday we had at sea there was an ecumenical service led by our Scottish Captain with the singing of popular hymns led with gusto by a Filipino choir.

We spent the first day after leaving Dover at sea, leaving the English Channel behind us and heading northwards up the North Sea to Cuxhaven at the entrance to the Kiel Canal. This first day at sea was spent familiarizing ourselves with the ship, attending talks and enjoying an excellent slide presentation on all our shore excursions. And we still found time to attend a wine tasting! The next day we docked around midday at Lubeck, a river port with much industry and commerce related to it, but with an attractive old town with many ancient churches. Of the three afternoon excursions offered this day we chose to visit Hamburg, Germany's second largest city, with the large and beautiful Lake Alster in the middle of it. It was about an hour's drive from Lubeck on the autobahn. We had a tour of the city which included the 1751 baroque cathedral and the renaissance-style Town Hall (with more rooms than Buckingham Palace) where we enjoyed coffee and a traditional *kuchen*. The town hall faced the main square and here a jazz band was marching around entertaining the crowds.

Our next port-of-call was Stockholm, Sweden. Set on

14 islands is one of Europe's most beautiful cities and aptly named "Venice of the north". Here there were five tours to choose from for morning, afternoon and evening. These included a city tour, the waterways, a walk around the Old Town (which we did on our own), a coach tour to beautiful Drottningholm Palace and gardens, and City Hall and the intriguing Vasa Museum that contains the beautifully-preserved Vasa Galleon which sank in the harbour on its maiden voyage in 1628.



*A glimpse of Stockholm*

Helsinki, Finland, was our next stop and again our ship was able to tie up within easy walking distance of the city centre. The tours offered included an architectural one which included the Cathedral and the unique Temppeliaukio Church which is carved out of solid rock and topped by a copper dome. There was also a water tour and one to the home of Jean Sibelius, complete with a private concert

The highlight of our Baltic cruise was a visit to St. Petersburg and this was our next stop where we had a prime mooring below the bridge across the Neva River adjacent to the Hermitage. We had taken a cruise *towards* this city years before, but it was at the time of the coup when Gorbachov was deposed and we were turned back when we were only fifty miles distant. Here the choice of the many tours we were offered for the two days we had in port was difficult. As did most of the passengers, we started off with a bus tour with many frequent stops and time to explore. Apart from the magnificent palaces and many churches we particularly remember boarding the warship *Aurora* from which was fired the first shot to start the Bolshevik Revolution in December 1917. And across the river from here, in the Gardens of the Admiralty, stands one of Russia's unforgettable monuments ... that of Peter the Great on horseback, in bronze and weighing 6.5 tons and mounted on the largest granite block in the world weighing 16,500 tons. (*Those readers who have seen the exhibition on Catherine the Great at the Art Gallery of Ontario will have learned the story of the construction of this monument, including artists' renderings of the moving of the granite block into the city This exhibition is now on its way to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, where it will run from 2 February to 7 May 2006 – Ed.*)

At the top of our "must see" list was the vast Hermitage Museum. Our only regret was that we did not have more time for this fabulous collection of paintings. We then chose

an evening of ballet over that of a folklore performance, plus a full day visit into the countryside to see Catherine's Palace in the village of Pushkin. It was designed by a Scottish architect, Charles Cameron, for Catherine and its ornate blue façade and sumptuous interior is nothing short of breathtaking. It was used by the German Army as their HQ during their siege of Leningrad and when they were forced to retreat they burnt down the whole of one wing. The Russians started to restore it as soon as the war was over and it is impossible to tell the new from the old. After a lunch of Russian specialties and entertainment in a local village restaurant we were driven back to St. Petersburg for an afternoon river cruise which enabled us to view this city of palaces from a different perspective. Others on the cruise had been to the Peterhof Palace and all were equally enthusiastic about it and its stunning water garden.

Our two full days and evenings in St. Petersburg had left us exhausted and we went to bed early as we departed for Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. There the Old Town, perched on a hill and overlooking the port, is quaint with narrow, cobbled streets and alleyways. This time we were docked about ten minutes' walk from the foot of the Old Town, but we had the option of a free shuttle service. The half day tours offered included a tour of the city or the surrounding countryside or a visit to an open-air heritage museum. In the evening there was a medieval concert. We elected to explore the Old Town on our own, walking back to the ship for lunch before returning to continue our exploration. It was only as the ship left port later that afternoon that we realized what an industrial city it was as we passed by many shipyards and docks and learned that Tallinn is renowned for its ship and yacht building.

The next day, a Sunday, found us in Klaipeda,

Lithuania, which, during the WWII German occupation, was called Memel. Again we were moored some 10 minutes' walk from the town centre and had the option of a free shuttle. Again there were excursions offered, but we elected to have a quiet day walking around the town. We visited the rebuilt Old Town Square and the small Old Town with its half-timbered buildings. Being a Sunday, the shops were closed and having explored the older part of town, we crossed the river and meandered along the riverbank gardens before returning to the ship. Others who had taken the full-day ornithological tour said that it was fascinating and the countryside was very pretty, while those who had taken the excursion to Polanga, the largest and most attractive seaside resort in Lithuania



*In the canals of St. Petersburg*

with miles of beaches and white sand, spoke glowingly of the botanical gardens there. All reported worthwhile trips. As we sailed away early in the evening, enjoying our cocktails on the aft deck, we were amazed at the miles of shipyards and repair facilities we passed and could well understand why it had been so heavily bombed during the war.

We docked at Gdynia, Poland, the following morning after a Force 7 stormy night but which, with the ship's stabilizers out, had not disturbed us, and we awoke to clear blue skies. Gdansk, formerly Danzig, was a pre-war duty free port, but it was controlled by the Germans and they made it so difficult for the Poles to do business through it that the Poles established their own port at Gdynia about 25 km up the coast. All four of our shore tours included a Gdansk city tour in their itineraries. One included a castle, another covered the trail of Solidarity Movement, while another a three organ recital which was the one we chose. We were not disappointed. The virtuosity of playing from three entirely different organs was truly remarkable and certainly appreciated by the 600 or so of us gathered in the church for the performance. We agreed that the highlight of our Baltic Cruise, second only to St. Petersburg, was Gdansk. It's a beautiful old city which has been remarkably well restored after extensive bombing of the shipyards during WWII. Buildings have been rebuilt down to the finest original detail. They cover the gamut of Renaissance, Gothic and Baroque architecture over the city's one-thousand-year history. The complete restoration of the Old Town is truly remarkable and with its variety of attractive houses and cobbled streets it has the air of tranquility we had not found any-


where else. We rejoined our ship that evening delighted with our day in Poland.

For our last day in the Baltic we were scheduled to visit Ronne, Bornholm, the principal town of this quaint little island and apparently very Danish despite being much closer to Sweden and Poland than Copenhagen. Its harbour was too small for us to dock and we were to anchor offshore and

go in by tender but there was a heavy swell and the sea was too choppy for us to do this. Instead we had a day at sea with two of our passengers volunteering to give talks. The first, an MP, called his lecture "Order, Order" and amusingly regaled us with anecdotes and the traditions and quaintness of the British House of Commons and parliamentary procedure. The second, a retired clergyman and former

teacher of Scripture at a UK public boys school, delighted us with stories of his lifetime interest in fireworks and the manufacturing company he later formed to produce and design displays - the Millennium display at Buckingham Palace being his crowning glory! The company, now run by his son, is the only firework company left in the UK, due mainly to Chinese competition.

Our return again took us through the Kiel Canal at night to dock at Dover the following morning. Disembarking was carried out efficiently and quietly and passengers such as ourselves with flights to catch were provided with limousine service to Heathrow or Gatwick. It had been a wonderful cruise and I can only speak highly of Saga.

Saga Holidays Ltd., can be contacted at: The Saga Building, Enbrook Park, Folkestone, Kent, England, CT20 3SE, tel: [011 44] 800 300 456 or, for overseas bookings: 1303 771 190, [www.saga.co.uk/travel/](http://www.saga.co.uk/travel/) 

## ***Writers are rewarded for sharing!***

*The TravelSociety* rewards readers with subscription extensions of varying lengths for all submissions published. So whether you have a letter with a travel tip or a destination to share, please write to us!

*Following the recent pirate attack on a cruise ship off the coast of Somalia, many voices in the cruise industry were raised to reassure passengers of their safety. The following article appeared on TravelWireNews. However, as with most issues, there are other sides to the security story, and next month we will be bringing you some more information that is far from reassuring. They are stories of disappearances, suspected kidnappings, violence, public health challenges, employee abuses and more. But let's start with the more positive news.*

## Safety and Security on Cruise Liners

According to International Council of Cruise Lines' (ICCL) president, Michael Crye, and Charlie Mandigo, Director of Fleet Security for Holland America, the safety record of the cruise industry in the new age of terrorism is very good. Cruise ships have been remarkably free of terrorist acts or piracy for the last 30 years. Only one passenger death as a result of a terrorist action on board a cruise ship has ever occurred in modern history. In 1985, a 69 year-old, wheelchair-bound Jewish passenger from New York named Leon Klinghoffer was shot to death and pushed overboard by hijackers from the Palestinian Liberation Front who had taken over the cruise ship *Achilles Lauro* in the Mediterranean.

The recent attempted piracy boarding of a luxury passenger liner off the coast of Somalia, which included the firing of rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles at the vessel, indicates that even the cruise lines are not completely immune from those with violent intent. The attempted piracy was thwarted by the captain's quick maneuvering actions as well as the use of a secret "sonic weapon". The weapon, technically know as a Long Range Acoustic Device, or LRAD, points a directed beam of intensely shrill "bangs" at attackers, much like a smoke alarm but at nearly twice the decibel level. These and other non-lethal weapons were developed by the US military after the 2000 terrorist attack on the *USS Cole* by a fast moving small boat laden with explosives. Citing security concerns, ICCL declined to comment on this weapon or any other anti-piracy/anti-terrorism devices that may be currently deployed on its members' cruise ships. ICCL believes that the release of such information would reduce or render ineffective such measures if known to potential terrorists.

There are several other reasons for the somewhat impeccable run of security and terror-free good fortune in the cruise industry according to ICCL and cruise line officials. To begin, Mr Mandigo of Holland America described cruise ships to be "more in the nature of a

floating hotel, rather than as part of the nation's critical transportation infrastructure. Most likely, a successful attack on a cruise ship would not seriously affect business or commercial travel like the series of public transportation attacks has done in the recent past." The reasoning is that by attacking a cruise ship, terrorists would not readily accomplish one of their most important goals: disruption of the national and international economies.

Recent research also indicates that terrorists continue to seek targets and utilize methods that have been successfully employed before and that can easily be taught and replicated. Cruise ships are clearly not in this category. Moreover, the high cost of access to a cruise ship is in and of itself an additional security layer. Hijackers apparently do not want to pay several thousand dollars to reach and board a luxury cruise ship when they can easily enter a nearby subway station for a few coins and have ready access to large crowds of soft targets in an enclosed killing zone.

In today's security-conscious world, relatives and friends can no longer gather near a cruise ship gangway for a *bon voyage* or a welcome home celebration. Current security measures require even brief visitors on cruise ships (including authorized members of the media) to provide ID information to the cruise line several days prior to the intended boarding. The cruise line industry has also implemented multiple security checks for all passengers with up to five access control and ID check points at many ports. These checkpoints include extensive baggage checks, metal detection and X-rays scans, passenger ID and ticketing verifications, and badging that typically start at the streetside door of the port building and continue throughout the entire process of embarkation.

Photographs of each passenger are now taken prior to the initial boarding and loaded into the ships' electronic security systems with additional ID information. Each passenger is given a matching encoded security card that must be used when leaving or reboarding the ship. When a passenger reboards a ship after a port-of-call, the card is swiped and the ship's security system shows the photo

that is then visually verified by the cruise security personnel to ensure the face in the computer registry matches that of the presenting passenger. Detailed electronic records are kept for each passenger that boards or disembarks from the ship.

Ports now have their own “threat level” systems, similar to the US Department of Homeland Security’s threat level ratings, which are set in each seaport by local governmental authorities. Called MARSEC (Maritime Security) threat levels, the cruise lines have a general policy of entirely skipping ports that have even slightly elevated MARSEC levels. Modern cruise ships are highly maneuverable and self-sufficient and can change itineraries at will. Unlike an aircraft that might be running critically low on fuel during a hijacking, a cruise ship can generally do just fine at a dead stop in the water and moving off to another port usually does not pose major logistical problems. Even at the lowest MARSEC threat levels, the cruise lines still actively screen 100% of their oncoming passengers, luggage and stores.

Unlike a ferry, no vehicles are loaded aboard cruise ships, thereby avoiding any chance for an internal explosion by car or truck bomb. Similarly, cruise ships carry no container cargo where large explosive caches could be hidden and later detonated. By their sheer numbers, the

many crewmembers on these ships numbering in the hundreds or thousands on the largest cruise ships are another significant deterrent against an attempted hijacking or pirate takeover.

Many other factors were cited by ICCL and cruise line officials for the lack of successful terrorist attack or pirate boarding on cruise ships including the enactment of wide-ranging, internationally accepted legislation promoting and standardizing maritime security and the close and continuing collaboration between the cruise industry, the Coast Guard and State, Federal and foreign port authorities. Also cited were such measures as frequent ship security audits and assessments, detailed security planning including drills and exercises, and a contingent of designated security personnel on board every ship.

For the time being at least, the cruise lines appear to remain uniquely apart from terrorism’s traditional targets: airlines, trains/subways, buses and other forms of public transportation as well as land-based resort hotels and restaurants.

*This article is reprinted with the permission of TravelWireNews, where it appeared on 20 November 2005. Here at TTS we thought it informative and interesting, but we would like to point out to our members that the views expressed here are those of the people quoted.*

## from the bookshelf

**M**any travellers are list-keepers ... everything from countries or provinces visited, to U.S. state capitals/capitols, to the new Seven Wonders of the World or merely “birds spotted on my travels”. If you are such a person, and if you love travel, design and architecture (or know people who do) then a new book by Howard Watson should be on your/their shelves. Entitled *Hotel Revolution: 21st Century Hotel Design*, this handsome volume describes and lavishly illustrates over 30 hotels around the world. Use the book as your ‘list of places to go’ and you are sure to have some memorable stays and some fascinating stories to relate on your return. There are, as may be expected, lots of shimmering glass interiors, monochrome rooms, “fluid forms” and ‘cool’ bars on display in the chapter entitled “Shock” in destinations from Turkey to Berlin to New York. But there are also thatched villas on the beach in the Seychelles, space-age eco-pods (a fancy term for a domed tent) in the snow in Switzerland, state-

ly manors in the English countryside and an eco-lodge in Nicaragua. Most are probably pricey. I, for one, know that (unless I win a lottery) I have about as much chance of staying in the seven-star (self proclaimed!) Burj Al Arab in Dubai (described as “unadulterated decadence ... for super-rich jetsetters”) as I do adding that elusive (extinct?) ivory-billed woodpecker to my bird list. But the book does contain a “Micro Budget” section listing innovative hotel groups offering properties such as capsule hotels with names like *easyHotel* (“minimalist orange”) and *YOtel* (“spaceship cabins”) ... small to be sure, but far from shabby. And in case you’re wondering, while Bhutan makes the grade, there are unfortunately no properties in Canada featured.

I came across this book too late to recommend for December gift giving, but search for it now for yourself or to take care of a birthday in the coming year. You’re sure to be fascinated. Published by John Wiley ([www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)), 224 pages, 300 colour illustrations, C\$70.

## BRITAIN

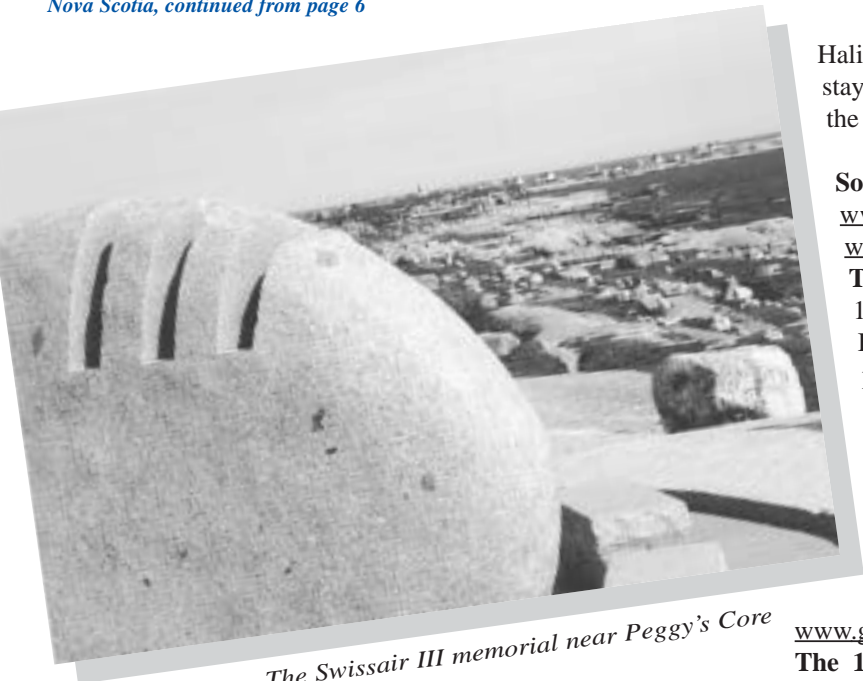
- Some of those *Pride & Prejudice* locations we promised you: the main locations for the movie were in the counties of Derbyshire and Lincolnshire (East Midlands). In the former, travellers can visit Chatsworth House (“Pemberley”) and Haddon Hall (“Inn at Lambton”) and enjoy the magnificent scenery of the Peak District. In nearby Lincolnshire, Stamford (“Meryton Village”) is one of the finest stone Georgian towns in England. There, the George Hotel is said to be one of England’s greatest coaching inns. If your pockets are deep you can enjoy a stay there, just as the stars of the movie did! The East Midlands tourism department has a special website – [www.visitpride-andprejudice.com](http://www.visitpride-andprejudice.com) – to facilitate visitors to this region. There’s also information by calling 1 888 VISIT UK or logging on to their website [www.visitbritain.com/ca](http://www.visitbritain.com/ca).
- If you prefer theatre to the movies, Shakespeare fans are in for a treat this year. The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is to stage the biggest festival in its history, featuring every play, sonnet and poem by the great dramatist. ‘The Complete Works’ will be staged in the town most associated with the bard, Stratford-upon-Avon, between April 2006 and April 2007, and a carnival atmosphere is expected to prevail throughout the year. For information call [011 44] 1789 403 444, for tickets 870 609 1110 or log on to [www.rsccompleteworks.co.uk](http://www.rsccompleteworks.co.uk) for full details and to reserve tickets.
- Or is installation art of interest? Thousands of visitors have been making their way to a beach near Liverpool to see one hundred cast-iron, life-size figures standing motionless in the sand, looking seaward and stretching almost a kilometre out to sea. The brainchild of artist Antony Gormley, who made the casts from his own body, this artwork has already been seen in Germany, Norway and Belgium. It will be on view in Liverpool (due to be European Capital of Culture in 2008) until November this year. Take your cameras! For a preview visit [www.visitliverpool.com](http://www.visitliverpool.com) and enter ‘Antony Gormley’ in the search.
- And for our garden lovers ... make a note of 10 & 11 June. Those are the days when more than a hundred of London’s private squares, gardens and historic green spaces will unlock their gates and welcome visitors for the Ninth Annual Open Gardens Week-end. Information at [www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)
- History buffs are also in for lots of treats if Britain is in their travel plans this year. That’s because the country’s Historic Royal Palaces have a theme for the year: “History Where it Happened”. Included in this celebration is the reopening after a decade of restoration work of Kew Palace (home of George III) and an exhibition of photographs of Diana, Princess of Wales by Mario Testino in Kensington Palace - her former home. Another ‘HRP’ is the Tower of London. Details at [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk).

## CANADA

- Some news about that useful website [www.BBCanada.com](http://www.BBCanada.com): this site has been upgraded with links to menus, nearby attractions, etc., and inn owners can now up-date their own on-line information (rather than going through the webmaster) so rates etc., are kept current. Enter a destination and check it out!
- Readers who were interested in our ski-ing in **Newfoundland** story in our last issue may like to know that **Maxxim Vacations** has ski packages to Marble Mountain with prices starting from \$825 p.p., dbl., from Toronto, for a 4-night stay. Visitors can also partake in snowshoeing, ice climbing, cat skiing and snow kiting. A 7-night package, with accommodation at Marble Villas, located at the foot of the hill, is priced at \$1,129 pp. and includes one free night. Maxxim also offers ski packages to **Mont Tremblant, Québec, and Whistler, BC**. For details call 1 800 567 6666, [www.maxximvacations.com](http://www.maxximvacations.com)
- **Rocky Mountaineer Vacations**, owners and operators of Canada’s acclaimed Rocky Mountaineer train, has won the prestigious World Travel Award as “World’s Leading Travel Experience by Train.” The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual World Travel Awards gala event was held in London’s Royal Opera House last November and was attended by over 2,000 tourism industry leaders. Fellow nominees for this award included The Blue Train (South Africa), Rovos Rail (South Africa), Great Southern Railway Ltd. (Australia), Palace on Wheels Inc. (India), Orient - Express Ltd. (U.K.), and Orient Express (Peru). This is the first time a Canadian company has won a World Travel Award in a train category. For information on these vacations call 1 877 460 3200, [www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com)

## FRANCE

**French Country Waterways** is offering special spring savings of US\$800 p.p. on all April departures of its luxury barge cruises in four regions of France: Alsace-Lorraine, Burgundy, Champagne and the Upper Loire Valley. All-inclusive cruise rates on weekly sailings from during April range from US\$2,995 to US\$4,195 pp. dbl. The canal cruises are aboard stylish 8- to 18-passenger barges and daily excursions include historic cities, medieval towns, stately châteaux, Gothic and Romanesque churches, and private wine tastings. Passengers can relax on the deck and walk or bicycle along canal towpaths in free time. Cruise prices include deluxe stateroom or suite, all meals, dinner ashore at an acclaimed Michelin-starred restaurant, estate-bottled wines at lunch and dinner, open bar, daily tours and excursions, personal service by an English- and French-speaking crew, bicycles and escorted transfers between Paris or Strasbourg and the barges. Details at 1 800 222 1236, [www.fcwl.com](http://www.fcwl.com).



*The Swissair III memorial near Peggy's Cove*

ocean-liner enthusiast you're in for a special treat. That's because John is Chairman of the Cunard Steamship Society and the front parlour of Duffus House Inn is a small but comprehensive museum of Cunard memorabilia and a tribute to Nova Scotia-born Sir Samuel Cunard. Visitors are welcome to browse here or enjoy a conversation with John about his outstanding collection of paintings, models, books, newspapers, photographs, jig-saws and dozens of items from Cunard line ships of the past such as menus, matches, china, programmes for the day, playbills, posters and so on. And all this is only a fraction of the collection. Important – and fascinating – among the original newspaper clippings here are those which recount the rescue of 703 survivors from the *Titanic* by the Cunard Line ship the *Carpathia*. Part of this collection formed last summer's exhibition *Cunard on Canvas – The Langley Collection* on display at Pier 21 in

Halifax. But no need to regret missing this exhibition ... stay at Duffus House in Baddeck and you will have both the art and the curator to yourself!

#### Some helpful websites and other details ...

[www.wolfville.info](http://www.wolfville.info), [www.annapolisroyal.com](http://www.annapolisroyal.com),  
[www.explorelunenburg.ca](http://www.explorelunenburg.ca) and [www.mahonebay.com](http://www.mahonebay.com)

**The Halliburton**, 5184 Morris Street, Halifax, NS B3J 1B3, tel: 902 420 0658, [www.thehalliburton.com](http://www.thehalliburton.com), B&B rates from \$120 or enjoy packages such as B&B plus dinner for \$199 per couple.

**Salty's Restaurant**, 1869 Upper Water Street, tel: 902 423 6818, [www.saltys.ca](http://www.saltys.ca)

**Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada**, open 1 May – 30 October (grounds open year round), admission \$6.50 or less, tel: 902 542 3631, [www.grand-pre.com](http://www.grand-pre.com)

For information on those **wineries** visit

[www.grandprewines.ns.ca](http://www.grandprewines.ns.ca) and [www.gaspereau-wine.com](http://www.gaspereau-wine.com)

**The 1854 Garrison House Inn**, 350 St. George Street, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0, tel: 902 532 5750, [www.garrisonhouse.ca](http://www.garrisonhouse.ca) B&B rates from \$79.


**Annapolis Royal History Gardens Society**, tel: 902 532 7018, [www.historicgardens.com](http://www.historicgardens.com). Open mid May – mid October, admission \$8.50 or less.

**Historic Fort Anne**, tel: 902 542 3631, [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca). Open mid May – mid October, admission \$4 or less.

**Sail Inn**, 99 Montague Street, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0, tel: 1 877 247 7075, [www.novascotiasailing.com](http://www.novascotiasailing.com)

**Mahone Bay B&B**, 558 Main Street, Mahone Bay, NS B0J 2E0, tel: 1 866 239 6252,

[www.bbcanada.com/mahonebaybandbnovascotia/](http://www.bbcanada.com/mahonebaybandbnovascotia/)

**Duffus House Inn**, Box 427, Water Street, Baddeck, NS B0E 1B0, tel: 902 295 2172, [www.baddeck.com/duffushouse](http://www.baddeck.com/duffushouse), B&B rates from \$125. For more information on the Cunard society visit [www.cunardsteamshipsociety.com](http://www.cunardsteamshipsociety.com) 

---

## The Travel Society website

Visit *The Travel Society* website [www.thetravelsociety.com](http://www.thetravelsociety.com)

Our website is fully operational. We always want to improve it and welcome your input.

To access the site, the password will be up-dated monthly and will appear on the back page of your *Travel Society Magazine* within the address box.

You can renew your subscription on-line too!

# China ... Yangtze Spectacular

## \$3,995 FOR 18 DAYS!

*Departing:*

*16 March, 20 April, 5 September, 10 October 2006*



**Please call for the full itinerary**

**I**t is vast, fascinating and mysterious and it has beckoned travellers from the west for centuries. Mention it to avid travellers and they are sure to say, "Yes, I hope to visit China one day." And what would they choose to experience? **A cruise on the mighty Yangtze River (now in the process of changing for ever);** a look at the work-in-progress on the massive **Three Gorges Dam;** a walk on the ancient **Great Wall;** views of charming villages, lush terraced hillsides and magnificent mountain peaks; visits to the great cities of **Shanghai** and **Beijing;** a trip to view one of the world's greatest archaeological finds ... the 6,000 terra-cotta warriors at **Xi'an;** scenes of palaces, pagodas, pavilions and pandas; tastes of Peking duck and Chinese banquets and so much more. So how do you choose? When you decide on The *Travel Society's* tour there's no need to choose because all these highlights are included. Yes, in these

remarkable 18 days you'll stay in Beijing; you'll take a 4-day first-class cruise on the Yangtze with many shore excursions; you'll fly to see those centuries-old terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an; you'll visit bustling Chongquin and see its pandas; stay in Hangzhou and travel into the hills covered with tea plantations; explore the exquisite gardens of Suzhou, and visit Nanjing and Wuzhen. And you'll have time to explore spectacular Shanghai. Throughout the trip you'll see magnificent architecture, you'll be entertained at cultural events, you'll join your hosts at a variety of banquets, you'll have time to shop, and you'll marvel at some of the most wonderful scenery on earth, all in the company of English-speaking guides. You'll travel by plane, by luxury bus, cruise ship and river boat. Many of our members have told us it's an experience of a lifetime ... and all at an amazing price!

Editor Ann Wallace took the China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated account is available. For your copy please send \$5 with your address.

### **Your tour costs includes:**

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on **Japan Airlines or Air Canada**
- Chinese domestic airfares
- Canadian domestic airfares
- First-class hotel accommodation
- First-class 4 days/3 nights Yangtze River cruise aboard a deluxe cruise ship
- All transfers
- Daily sightseeing
- Three meals daily
- 2 Western style dinners.
- Special banquets in Hangzhou, Xi'an and Beijing
- Evening cultural shows
- Fully escorted by English/Chinese-speaking tour guide
- English-speaking local guides
- Free time in Beijing & Shanghai

### **AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES:**

**Departing:**

<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>\$3,995 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops</b>	<b>\$4,125 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Calgary/Edmonton</b>	<b>\$4,250 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Saskatoon/Regina</b>	<b>\$4,250 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>\$4,250 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Toronto</b>	<b>\$4,280 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Ottawa &amp; Montreal</b>	<b>\$4,280 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Halifax/Quebec City/London</b>	<b>\$4,440 pp/dbl</b>
<b>St. John's</b>	<b>\$4,440 pp/dbl</b>

Single supplement \$1,200 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Taxes and visas extra.

### **ADD-ON HONG KONG**

**4 days/3 nights** **\$1,288.00**

Prices are subject to confirmation

Please call *The Travel Society* 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for *Travel Society* members and are only available at these prices through our office.  

**New  
lower prices**

## Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

with options to Kapawi Lodge in the Amazon and Machu Picchu, Peru  
14 days departing Jan, Feb, Mar & April 2006.

The Travel Society is proud to be able to offer its members an outstanding trip to some of the world's most spectacular destinations. Who hasn't dreamed of cruising to the Galapagos Islands and seeing wildlife as Darwin witnessed it? Think of the unique adventure you will enjoy, of the stories you will have to tell and the photographs you will take! You will spend a week aboard your first-class 20-passenger ship, taking daily shore excursions to a variety of the islands with experienced naturalists in groups of no more than 10 people per guide.

You'll also visit other destinations in Ecuador, and then you can choose to enjoy the exciting optional extensions: to Kapawi - a ecological lodge in the Amazon and/or a visit Machu Picchu in Peru. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is enjoy!

**PRICES INCLUDE AIR: Toronto \$5,895.00 pp/dbl**

*prices are available from all major cities*

**GREAT ADD-ONS, INCLUDING AIR:**

**Kapawi - from all departure points \$1,680.00 pp/dbl**

**Machu Picchu from \$1,996.00 pp/dbl**

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international air transportation
- All domestic air transportation
- All accommodation
- First class Galapagos small ship cruise
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Admissions to all sites
- Expert Galapagos guides
- Transfers & baggage handling
- All taxes

## Copper Canyon and Mexico City

Departing: January, February, March and April 2006

We are offering a new 9-day tour to Mexico City and the Copper Canyon. The Copper Canyon is four times larger than the Grand Canyon, and you'll enjoy a journey that is considered by many to be the world's most exciting train trip, with its 87 tunnels, 39 bridges and uncountable spectacular views. You'll meet the people, stay in unique accommodations and explore the present and the past in this astonishing region.

### Air-inclusive prices:

**Toronto, Ottawa & Montreal \$3,540 pp/dbl**

**Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg \$3,794 pp/dbl**

Single supplement \$748 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Prices are subject to confirmation

### New lower prices!

### Your tour includes:

- All air transportation on Mexicana
- Canadian domestic air
- Bilingual guides
- 8 nights first class accommodation
- All transfers, baggage handling & tips
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All train trips and tours as per the itinerary
- All taxes

**Please call 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the complete itineraries**

**22 days from \$5,995**

**Limited to 20 Members  
Fully escorted**

## A Traveller's Turkey

Departing: 25 April & 12 September 2006

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here are fabled cities, unique landscapes, incomparable historic sites and calm, friendly people who are eager to show that their land is, indeed, both historic and modern.

Ann Wallace, our editor, has travelled extensively in Turkey and always returns claiming it is one of her favourite destinations. So now we have organized a luxurious tour of Turkey exclusively for Travel Society members. We have combined our extensive knowledge with careful research to ensure you see the very best that Turkey has to offer. You'll stay in first-class historic or very specialized hotels, travel in a 40-seat air-conditioned luxury bus, enjoy cruises on private boats, sample fine food and be entertained by cultural performances. And the itinerary? Magical Istanbul (plenty of time there); Ankara, home of one of the world's finest museums; the unique 'geological poem' called Kapadokya (or Cappadocia); mysterious and lovely ruins such as Aphrodisias, Pergamum and, of course, Ephesus; the fabled and beautiful Aegean coast; the peaceful Princes Isles in the Sea of Marmara and so much more.

Ann says, "This is the most perfect tour of Turkey imaginable; you will have an unforgettable time ... and such a small group, too! Sign up now!"

### AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES: 22 Days

<b>Toronto</b>	<b>\$5,995.00 pp/dbl</b>	<b>Ottawa</b>	<b>\$6,175.00 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Montreal</b>	<b>\$6,175.00 pp/dbl</b>	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>\$6,395.00 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>\$6,275.00 pp/dbl</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>\$6,245.00 pp/dbl</b>
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>\$6,275.00 pp/dbl</b>	<b>Halifax</b>	<b>\$6,295.00 pp/dbl</b>

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic flights with Air Canada/Lufthansa/British Airway
- All domestic flights
- 20 nights' accommodation
- All meals as per itinerary
- All domestic transportation
- 40 seat air conditioned luxury bus
- Admission to all sites
- An English-speaking guide/director and a Travel Society host
- All Taxes

**Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.**



From  
**\$5,135**

## India's Golden Triangle

20 days departing 6 March & 9 October 2006

Fully  
escorted

India is one of the world's greatest travel destinations. But unless you're a young backpacker, a tour is the way to go! And The Travel Society is offering the ultimate tour of India's fabled northwestern region, known as The Golden Triangle. This tour will show you the highlights of this fascinating region. You'll spend time in the economic powerhouse of India - Mumbai (once known as Bombay) where you'll drive along Marine Drive, visit the Hanging Gardens, enjoy the Prince of Wales Museum and stroll through Neru Park. On another day you visit St. Thomas Cathedral, the Jain Temple and see the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi as well as take an optional tour to Elephanta caves. Then it's on to Udaipur, the most romantic city in all of Rajasthan, known as the city of lakes. Here there are palaces and temples to visit as well as beautiful gardens with pools, fountains, pagodas and carvings. Mt. Abu-Ranakpur is next on the itinerary, famous for its 15<sup>th</sup> century temples, before you proceed to the famous medieval city of Jodhpur, home of the massive Mehrangharh Fort and many exquisite palaces. Then how about a camel safari ... sure to bring lots of laughs and some great photographs! Khimsar and Nagaur are next on the itinerary, where there's more sightseeing and lots of leisure time for relaxing, shopping or wandering alone with your camera. Bikaner is next - a royal walled city with a wealth of architectural heritage - where you'll visit Lalgarh Palace Museum, a combination of

European luxury and Oriental fantasy and Junagarh Fort, which was started in 1587 and houses 37 palaces, pavilions and temples. You'll then travel on to Mandawa, known for its exquisite frescoes where you'll stay in Castle Mandawa, a unique desert resort. Jaipur - the pink city - is next; a city of beauty famous for its bazaar full of wonderful gifts. Here you can take an elephant-ride excursion to Amer Fort and also see the Palace of the Winds and the stone Observatory. Of course Agra is on the itinerary, for that never-to-be forgotten dawn visit to the Taj Mahal, before you travel on to famous Delhi, the capital of India. Throughout this trip you will stay in first-class hotels, travel in deluxe a/c, fully-equipped coaches and enjoy wonderful meals, banquets and entertainment. Many days will be full, but there's plenty of free time too. Haven't you always wanted to visit India? Make this the year and come with The Travel Society this fall.



### PRICES INCLUDING AIR departing from:

<b>Vancouver</b>	\$5,385 pp/dbl	<b>Toronto</b>	\$5,135 pp/dbl
<b>Edmonton</b>	\$5,385 pp/dbl	<b>Montreal</b>	\$5,135 pp/dbl
<b>Calgary</b>	\$5,385 pp/dbl	<b>Halifax</b>	\$5,485 pp/dbl
<b>Winnipeg</b>	\$5,385 pp/dbl	Single supplement	\$1,178

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- All international & domestic flights
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- State transport taxes
- All taxes and Indian visa charge
- All meals
- English-speaking guides and escort
- All entrance fees
- Elephant ride and Camel safari
- Baggage handling

From  
**\$2634**  
all inclusive

## Long Stays in Mexico

departures throughout Jan, Feb, Mar and Apr 2006 for 1-, 2-, 3-weeks or 1 month

We invite you to come to Mexico's fascinating Yucatán and immerse yourself in this region's culture. *You will hardly believe all that this trip includes!* You'll stay in an en-suite room in a home in a gracious, residential area of colonial Mérida, where your English-speaking hosts can help you with your Spanish if you so wish. All the homes have been carefully selected by our colleague in Merida and if you would like a home with a special feature - a swimming pool, for example - we will try to please you. You will enjoy three meals a day with your hosts or away from 'home' when you are on an excursion with us. And, of course, your flights from Canada and airport transfers in Mexico are included too.

Every day - but only if and when you wish - you'll take part in an incredible variety of cultural activities, workshops or excursions. Workshops include cookery lessons, painting and sculpture, music appreciation, Tai Chi and others. Short excursions include theatrical, musical and dance events; a bull fight; museum and gallery visits; sporting events; birdwatching; traditional Mexican evenings and more, while a week-end trip will take you to Cancun and the Mayan Riviera. Again

all meals, accommodation and admissions are included. In luxurious coaches you'll visit Campeche and Izamal, the fabled Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, the Celestial Biosphere and much more.

To add to the experience of this trip you may also choose to take daily Spanish lessons in a pleasant Merida language school. This is the only 'extra' of the trip ... other than that you will rarely open your wallets except to purchase personal items, souvenirs and gifts.

Because Mexicans really know how to enjoy life, you will return to Canada with wonderful tales of all the fun you have had while enjoying your rich learning experience. You will have made new friends and have many wonderful memories. You can choose to go for a week or two, or for a month. On subsequent weeks you may remain with your original hosts or move to enjoy another home and make new friends. This programme has been designed exclusively for The Travel Society ... it is a unique and wonderful experience. Enjoy!

### ALL INCLUSIVE PRICES:

1 week	\$1,490 pp/dbl
2 weeks	\$2,075 pp/dbl
3 weeks	\$2,490 pp/dbl
4 weeks	\$3,250 pp/dbl

Prices are subject to confirmation

### SPECIAL AIR FARES AVAILABLE NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

#### Optional Spanish lessons 20hr/week

1 week	\$300 pp (incl. registration)
Additional weeks	\$195 pp

### Your stay includes:

- Round trip international & domestic air fare
- Airport transfers
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- Homestay accommodation with English-speaking hosts
- Three meals a day
- English-speaking guides and escorts
- All workshops and activities
- All week-end trips with meals and hotels
- All entrance fees
- All departure taxes and fees

prices are available from all major cities

Please call for the full itinerary

a 19-day tour at an incredible price ...  
Spectacular  
**South Africa**

Departure: 23 February & 21 September 2006

Space is limited  
call now  
Fully Escorted

Come with The Travel Society to a land of wonder ... on a South African trip unlike any other. Designed especially for our members, this trip takes in all the highlights: Kruger National Park for game watching, the famous Garden Route, the beautiful wine region of Stellenbosch and the sights of incomparable Cape Town, including Cape Point, Chapman's Peak Drive and Robben Island. But on our trip you will do far more. You will tour the Great Escarpment of Eastern Transvaal – a place so beautiful writers run out of adjectives – where you will visit God's Window, the Blyde River Canyon and historical towns like Pilgrims Rest. You'll see Johannesburg and be escorted to Soweto for lunch in a Township house and jazz in a famous nightspot. You'll enter the Kingdom of Swaziland to meet the people and enjoy more game watching. Zululand is also on the itinerary, with its historical sites and unique entertainment traditions. You'll be driven through the Valley

of a Thousand Hills to East London and take the famous Outeniqua Choo-Toe train from Knysna to George. You'll visit the Addo Elephant National Park and traverse the Little Karoo Desert – flanked by great mountain ranges – to see the Cango Caves. You'll travel in a luxury air-conditioned coach, you'll stay in lovely properties ranging from good hotels to charming chalets, you'll enjoy a wide variety of entertainment and you'll enjoy South Africa's delicious cuisine and wines and you'll be escorted all the way by Satour-accredited guides. Here at The Travel Society we know South Africa well ... and we can't imagine a more comprehensive, in-depth and fascinating tour of South Africa.

**PRICES INCLUDING AIR AND TAXES departing from:**  
**Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa \$7,315 pp/dbl**  
**Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax \$7,675 pp/dbl**  
 Single supplement \$790.00 (sharing can be arranged)  
 Prices are subject to confirmation

**Your tour includes:**

- Return international airfare on British Airways
- First-class accommodation throughout
- Luxury a/c Mercedes coach
- Experienced Satour-accredited tour guides
- Special Travel Society experiences
- All meals breakfast, light lunch and dinner
- All transfers with full luggage service
- All sightseeing fees (with no hidden extras)
- All taxes

Please call 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the complete itineraries



**YOUR DISCOUNT VOUCHER FOR RENEWALS, GIFTS AND NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Don't let my subscription run out ...

please: **RENEW MY SUBSCRIPTION** \_\_\_\_\_  
 or **START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION** \_\_\_\_\_  
 or **SEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION** \_\_\_\_\_

check your discount choice, we will extend your subscription from the expiry date:

- \_\_\_ 3 years for \$110.00 (a 21% saving off the regular \$140.00)
- \_\_\_ 2 years for \$79.50 (a 16% saving off the regular \$95.00)
- \_\_\_ 1 year for \$44.00 (a 10% saving off the regular \$49.00)

All prices include GST.  
 \_\_\_ my cheque is enclosed, or charge my:  
 \_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_ AmEx  
 card #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
 signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to pay The Travel Society the above amount in accordance with the card issuer agreement.

Address for NEW or GIFT subscription only  
 name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 town: \_\_\_\_\_ prov: \_\_\_\_\_  
 postal code: \_\_\_\_\_ tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
 gift message: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: The Travel Society  
 218-1033 Bay St Toronto ON Canada M5S 3A5  
 Fax: 416 926 0222 e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com  
 Publications Mail Agreement: # 40063904 & # 09925

Password: key