

Post



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# Stopped by the authorities. Twice. - August 16, 2024

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## ***SUMMARY***

We arrive early in the morning in Southampton, England. After clearing UK Immigration we take off walking into town. I'm looking for two things, Beef Bovril and Bioré sunscreen. The Bovril, an ingredient in a recipe of my Dad's that I make, is easy. It's sold everywhere here (but not in Austin). We look in multiple places for the sunscreen without success, racking up 10 miles in the process. Very unlovely walk back through the port to our ship only getting stopped twice by the authorities on our way. Pub lunch onboard, nap. Dinner in the main dining room where we find that our assigned table is not a table for two but rather a

table for 10. - Karen

[Photos](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

### ***DETAIL***

When we awaken we're in Southampton and the ship is docked. Out our big open porthole we see sunshine and the Tesla new car processing facility nearby. In the outdoor parking lots are new Tesla's as far as the eye can see. We again have room service breakfast: coffee, all-bran, fruit. Easy and private.

Last night, before we went to bed, the halls were filled with the luggage of 1,000 passengers. Today they're all the luggage is gone and soon the passengers will be, too. Everyone, including we two, have to go see UK customs downstairs. The guy we talk to is uniformed, smiley and jovial, making cracks about Texas. Light hearted, but no stamps in our passports. Karen's disappointed.

Ashore we follow our GPS to the nearest Boot's pharmacy (and a grocery store nearby). It's a good mile to all of this, part of a big shopping mall. We have to cross a few streets and go around some roundabouts. Each time we step into the street we look the wrong way. There are cars, of course, but also lots of big lorries, or as you would probably call them, trucks. And bikes. We really have to be on our toes.

First stop is a cut-rate grocery store. We're looking for beef flavored Bovril (essentially British bullion). It's an ingredient in a much loved dish that Karen's late father invented and we'd be heart broken if we couldn't make it. We ran out of Bovril recently and you can't get it (the beef kind) in the states. Thankfully this place has it! We pay for it and head to our next stop. The kindly cashier call out to us "Wait, don't forget your Bovril!" Whoops.

At Boots Pharmacy we looked but couldn't find the special Bioré sun block Karen was looking for. Apparently Europe is well ahead of the US in approving effective, safe ingredients for sun block, so you have to buy it here. Well not here here, as this Boots doesn't carry it. Maybe another one, up the way? It's bigger.

It is bigger but doesn't have this brand either. We look on the Bioré web site and Tesco carries it. We visit a small Tesco Express but no joy. There's a Jumbo Tesco about an hour and a quarter walk up the road. Sure, let's go there! We walk through some not-so-nice looking neighborhood of Southampton. As we walk we realize that a seventy five minute walk is a long way, but hey, we've come this far. We walk along Saint Edmunds Road (Edmund being Karen's father's name). Surely this must be a sign.

Eventually we get to the store. It's huge. Alas, it too doesn't have the sun block (but it does have a loo/bathroom, thank goodness). We say "Screw the sunblock, let's head back to the ship!"

At the entrance to the port (still a mile or more from our ship) a security guard wants to know where we think we're going. To our ship, the Queen Mary 2. He says that's a really long way away. We reply "yeah, we know". He asks to see our ship credentials and lets us continue on. It's very industrial and not very pleasant. There are a lot of space-age looking huge devices for picking up a container over here and putting it down on top of another container over there. I take some photos, I have a blog, don't cha know.

After a while a car with flashing lights stops just ahead of us. It's the authorities again but this time it's the police. Their cameras picked me up taking photographs. Yes. Yes I was. Oh, it's not allowed is it. Should I delete them? Say what? You want to watch me do that, sure. I delete them and we get back to earlier pictures I don't have to delete (e.g. of Boot's Pharmacy). I promise not to take any more pictures and the officer lets us go on our way. One question, we ask, can you tell us how to get to our ship?

In all we have walked over ten miles. We are beat, but we are probably the only people on the ship with beef bovril, so there!

We have lunch downstairs at the Golden Lion pub, I order a pint and we split fish and chips. It's not bad! After so much walking, eating and the beer, we crash in the room.

As 5 pm approaches we don our swim togs and bath robes and head for a hot tub. There's a sail-away party going on and everybody's there. We're two of the very few in swim suits. We soak in a hot tub as we (and everyone) watches the Disney Big Red Boat push off. Then it's our turn. The whole time we're marinating in the tub. As we leave the tub and small deck it's on, we pass a sign indicating this is an area reserved for the high society guests in the expensive suites (that is, not for us hoi polloi). Our bad.

For dinner we get dressed a little fancier. I'm in slacks with a collared shirt and my new \$10 sports coat. Karen's sporting a nice dress. We think we requested a table for two (when we signed up for the cruise) but maybe that was a different cruise. We end up at a table for ten, and all the seats are eventually taken. Lots of nice people but mostly we talk to Carl and Carol from Southern California (and Chicago and Pleasanton and... before that). Carol "doesn't fly" so this is their only way to get to Europe. Her ancestors are Norwegian and his are Swedish so they were back to see 'the old country'.

At 8:15 the early set of the evening's the main entertainment kicks off in the big theater. It's a fiddler (violinist). She was the winner on one of those youth "Britain's Got Talent" type shows. She started playing when she was four and apparently never stopped. She is now in her late twenties-early thirties. She is very good and quite entertaining. Karen ducks out about half way through to go see the movie The Fall Guy (with Emily Blunt and Ryan Gossling) in the theater next door. I'd already seen it and so eventually go back back to the room and watch YouTube (like Steven Colbert). The internet connections on ships these days are really good (thanks to Elon Musk and his StarLink system).

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## Photos



Up early and off the ship. Looking for a specific brand of sun block. Boot's Pharmacy. Maybe they'll have it!



Some old wall and crenellated tower right next door to the huge modern mall.



Walking, walking. We pass a Pig 'N Whistle. Karen checks the menu.



Maybe not the most picturesque part of the UK.



Karen's late father's name was Edmund. A saint already. We're not surprised.



Not one of the pictures the police make me erase, but similar, from the web. I can believe they have to be vigilant for people trying to put dirty bombs or drugs into one of these containers.



Home at last after 10 miles of walking.



Getting back on the ship and over here even the cruise port walkways make you walk on the left!

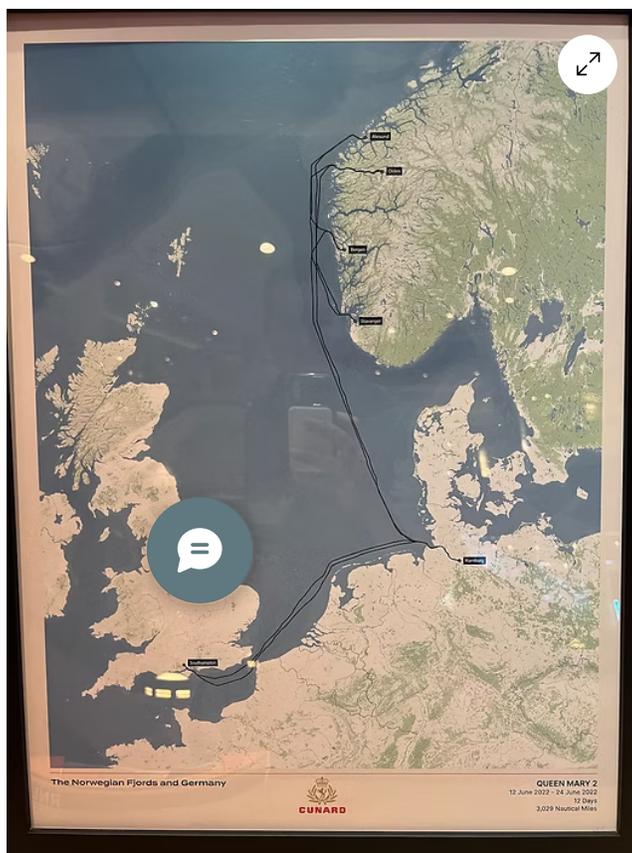


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And fish and chips! Righty-oh. They were proper good, gov'ner.



At the service desk was a map showing where the ship had been recently. We saw the ship in two of those ports! (When we were there on a different cruise line).



Finally we cast off and head for the new world. New York City, here we come!

[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

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