

INSIDE VIEW:

A NON-TRADITIONAL COMMODORE

**A conversation with Cunard Line's Commodore
Christopher Rynd**

by

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On 21 April 2011, Cunard Line announced that Captain Christopher Rynd had been appointed Commodore of the Cunard Line fleet. While in the military, a commodore is an officer with authority over more than one ship, traditionally, the title of commodore of a passenger ship fleet or cruise line has been a ceremonial title honoring the senior captain in the fleet. And while Cunard is perhaps the most traditional of lines, Commodore Rynd does not see his new role as ceremonial.

Before turning to Commodore Rynd's new role, it is worthwhile to review what the Commodore has been doing since the last time we spoke with him. After commanding ships for P&O and Princess Cruises, Rynd came to Cunard in 2005 and at various times commanded Queen Elizabeth 2 and Queen Mary 2. When we last

spoke with him, he was in command of what was then Cunard's latest ship Queen Victoria. "That ship is very suited to certain types of voyaging and certainly it was very good in the Eastern Mediterranean where we did some time and on the worldwide itinerary. I very much enjoyed that."

His time on Queen Victoria was followed by a brief return to the ship that had been his first command when he was with Princess Cruises - - the former Royal Princess which was then P&O Cruises' Artemis. "That was great. It certainly was a step back in terms of technology. Once again coming to terms with a ship that did not have the high level of sensors and displays to tell you what the ship is doing, it was returning back to fundamentals. We went up the Amazon and down again and that was a great experience in a high flood year.

She was -- is -- a very beautiful little ship. Now she is considered a small ship but the amazing thing is that when she came out [1984] she was considered one of the larger ships."

Commodore Rynd's next assignment was different than any of his previous assignments and involved working with officers from multiple ships to implement a new way of doing things. To train and develop their officers, Cunard and sister companies Princess Cruises and P&O Cruises have established a facility called "C Smart" near Amsterdam in The Netherlands. CSmart offers high quality simulation training as well as classroom-type training. Under the auspices of CSmart, Rynd visited the ships of the Cunard, Princess and P&O Cruises fleets to train the officers in a new program called "Bridge Team Operation and Control."

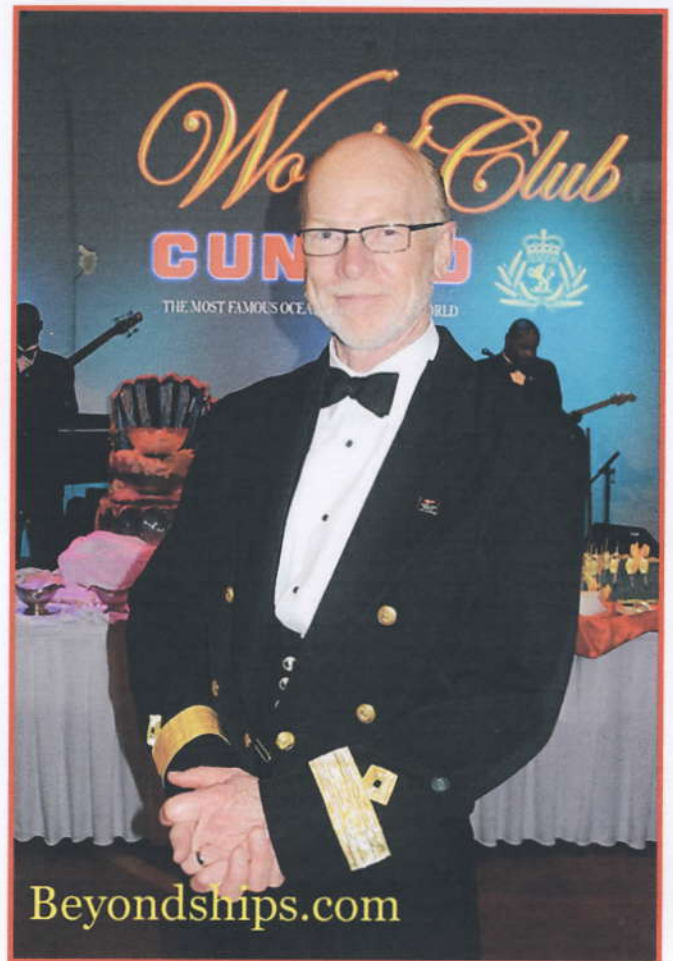
"The whole idea of having teams started with the airlines many years ago but has evolved over time. It allows us now to set up systems of operating that catch errors and help ensure error free performance in the direction and safety of the ship."

"We have taken the rank out of it and put functions in. Part of this new system allows that the captain does not have to take the role of navigating the ship. He can delegate it and stand back and take an operations director role. And that is a very good and fundamental change to make. It allows the officer of the watch to do the actual navigating of the ship under his direction. It is a good system."

"I did a year away doing what is called 'coaching' -- coaching of bridge teams in new operating procedures. I was going around the ships, seeing that this new way of operating was being assimilated. It gave me a chance to visit ships in all the three fleets including the Princess and P&O Cruises. I really enjoyed that."

Following his appointment as Commodore, Rynd returned to Queen Mary 2 as her master. "It is delightful coming back here. There is the sense of solid, seagoing integrity when you come to this ship. She is just so strong, so powerful, so comfortable. She is truly a one of its kind. We saw her in the heavy weather yesterday -- 20 knots into a five and a half meter swell and she was relatively comfortable and enjoyable. When you are on the ocean like this, there is nothing like it."

While QM2 is one of a kind technologically, she does compete with the cruise ships in the sense that they are all seeking to attract people to spend their vacations/holidays on them. One of QM2's competitive strengths is her enrichment program. "The quality of the lectures remains very, very high. It is such a pleasure to have people of that quality on these transatlantic voyages giving talks on various subjects to stimulate the mind and excite the imagination. We remain very strong in that field."



Commodore Christopher Rynd

In addition, the enrichment program is continually being enhanced by innovative programming such as a professional song writing program and a relationship with the Juilliard School of Music Jazz Program. "They have been wonderfully innovative programming the offerings that they have had for the ship. I can only say that I am delighted to be associated with this ship and with what they are offering. We had a group of teenagers on and their parents wondered what on earth they would do. They got into the song writing and instrumental side of it with known writers and bandsmen and they were absolutely completely engaged and enthusiastic for their time onboard."

Still, Rynd sees his role as not just being the master of Queen Mary 2. "It is evolving beyond that. Before it was a position of honor and it was confined to this ship or the flagship of the time. Now it is a role that also involves helping to manage all three ships along the lines of the company's objectives, particularly in what we call our health, environment, safety and security focus on the operational seamanship side. I also intend to sail on all three ships too. Because the

ships are widely deployed in different areas, otherwise we don't have much interaction with each other. There is a need to have a consistent product in Cunard and this is one of the ways that we can help ensure it."

Part of his role will involve being an interface between Cunard's shoreside management and the people who actually operate the ships. "When [management ashore is] introducing new ideas or are asking for a sounding board for ideas or developments, then I, along with my fellow captains can come to conclusions and [I can] report back to them."

"As master of the ship, I have a lot in common with the other captains. Speaking both to and for my fellow captains - - which is not just the two on the other ships but those on leave as well - - and being involved in the development of new policies and procedures, then [it will] become a joined approach."

Of course, success in such a role will very much depend upon interpersonal skills and Commodore Rynd sees his experience in coaching and developing bridge teams as facilitating this work. "I learned a lot through that. In some ways we think that if we have the technical knowledge we can be trainers. In fact, I learned through professional training that I received for that job that there is a lot to learn about being the trainer or the coach. I have benefited from it hugely."

Another factor that should facilitate Commodore

Rynd's fleet-wide responsibilities is that the composition of Cunard's top rank is becoming more stable. "It is settling down now after a period of transition. The captains who have come into this fleet will be regularly returning to this fleet. As I see it, it is now set. We had three retirements [during the] last year. Three new captains have come into the fleet. There is Captain Hutley on the Queen Victoria, Captain Olsen, who was promoted in that time and who has been enormously successful and very well accepted; and we have Captain Oprey coming here."

At the same time, there will continue to be some movement between Cunard and P&O Cruises in the more junior ranks. "We share engineer officers and navigating officers to a degree, particularly when it is the Victoria and the Elizabeth.. There are many technological aspects of those ships which are identical [to the P&O ships] so officers can easily shift across. It doesn't affect the brand. That just makes sense."



Queen Mary 2