

Alex Bell

Imagine spending many magical days in wondrous ways, aboard cruise, or war vessels not yet adapted to luxury travel! Not an opportunity most of us will ever experience, but it was one Joe Munroe and Alex Bell were able to enjoy. While working at BCBSM (during vacation time) and in retirement, they were able to travel many miles, by land sea and air.

How does one become so involved in such a travel mode? Simple! Alex was born in the U.S., but his mother was born in Scotland and as good fortune would have, Alex and his mom were able to travel back to Scotland every four years. They were able to do this up until 1939, when the war began and travel abroad came to a halt.



During my visit with Alex, I heard some very interesting stories, two of which I'd like to share with you. After the war, in June 1946, Alex and his mother were able to return to Scotland via a Canadian Shipping Line on the Île de France, a ship not yet converted to luxury cruising. Men and women were placed in separate rooms with about 20 other people. They were happy to be able to travel, and the trip was as pleasant as it could possibly be. Once there, however; they were not able to return until the Queen Elizabeth was ready for transport - six months later.

The next adventure involved Joe and Alex. In 1956, they sailed on a ship called The United States, which was the flagship of an American shipping line. They boarded in NYC, stopped in France and South Hampton, where they disembarked and traveled by train to London. While aboard ship, they discovered former President Truman was aboard. The President was riding in first class, while Alex and Joe were on the lower deck. This did not stop them from seeing the President however! They merely climbed over a few rails every morning and were able to walk about and say "Good Morning, Mr. President". The President had no apparent bodyguards with him, just a private secretary. How many of us in the U.S. could say we greeted The President in the mornings on our regular a.m. course of exercise, and were able to shake his hand!

Joe and Alex enjoyed fascinating travel, as evidenced by the travel log below:

- They have been on over 30 ships (not including the Bob-Lo Boat)
- Crossed the Atlantic over 50 times and the Pacific 6 times
- Have visited 30 states including Alaska and Hawaii, have been in all the Canadian Provinces
- Have traveled in over 50 countries and most of them more than once
- They have ridden on camels in Egypt, elephants in India donkeys in the Greek Isles as well as taxis, buses, many cars and even trucks in Indonesia.

Be alert on your next cruise. Who knows what wonders you'll experience!