

# PURE SHORES

Issue 4 • October 2011

The Quarterly Newsletter from Haslemere Travel Tel: 01428 658777 [www.haslemere-travel.co.uk](http://www.haslemere-travel.co.uk)

**HASLEMERE**  
Travel

incorporating Farnham Travel  
Established in 1988

The Greatest Travel Experience™



## HOW TO END THE YEAR ON A FESTIVE HIGH

**Time flies when you are enjoying yourself and it doesn't seem as if this is already our final newsletter of 2011. And happily we end the year as we began, having been shortlisted once again for the TTG Agent of the Year award in London. So what better time to ask the winning team at Haslemere Travel which destinations they consider to be the best options for festive breaks this winter?**

Managing director *Gemma Antrobus* thinks a day of luxury aboard the Orient-Express is just the ticket, especially as a festive gift: **"A Christmas meal on board the festively decorated**

**British Pullman or Northern Belle** (pictured) is perfect to celebrate time with friends and family; they depart from many stations, from London to Cardiff, Liverpool to York. You are taken on a circular tour to enjoy the scenery on board the luxurious carriages, which are decorated for the occasion, with a sumptuous, festive lunch or dinner with champagne and selected wines."

Manager *Susie Atkinson* recommends Lapland pre-Christmas: "An early morning flight to **Finnish Lapland** to search for Santa, along with all the great snow activities with the huskies and reindeer," is not to

be missed for family groups, she says. "Or why not take 5 days to explore Finnish Lapland, stay in a log cabin and partake in the snow activities, have a night in an Igloo and if you are really lucky, you may see the wonderful Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis)."

From cold to the warmth of the desert, as *Jackie McClean* suggests readers swap a reindeer for a camel!

"For those who want to get away from it all and experience something different, stay at the magical Adrere Amellal Eco Lodge in the **Western Oasis of Egypt**. Why not have a camel ride to have Christmas dinner in the rolling dunes of the sand desert and watch the sunset?"

A great city break option (before December 23), *Howard Bicknell* thinks, is heading for the main towns and cities of **Germany**, which provide an idyllic setting for a **Christmas market trip**. "Half-timbered buildings are festively lit and the aromas of mulled wine and cinnamon permeate the air. You can snuggle up in cosy hotels and the Christmas shopping is friendly and relaxed," he says.

Finally, *Ash Bull's* favourite New Year holiday experience is heading off to **Breckenridge, Colorado** for all the ingredients for a fantastic **family ski holiday**. "Lots of options for places to stay, with easy access to the slopes and plenty of activities for the non-skiers. Tons of great bars and restaurants to choose from in a pretty 'Gingerbread Town'. The midnight firework display on New Year's Eve is a lovely family event."

**However you choose to spend it, the Haslemere Travel team wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year!**

## 'TASTE OF SPAIN' EVENT SUCCESS

**Haslemere Travel** recently showcased the delights of northern Spain, when three local guest speakers gave a fascinating account of their epic and picturesque walk along the famous **Camino de Santiago** pilgrims' trail, during one of our client receptions. The evening included regional wine and authentic tapas courtesy of the Spanish Tourist Board.

A record attendance of more than 90 guests were entertained at Haslemere Educational Museum by Christopher Scholfield, Peter Hampson and Stewart Brown. The trail is also the main focus of 'The Way'; a 2011 film written and directed by **Emilio Estevez** and starring **Martin Sheen**.

**All proceeds from the evening, which was part of the annual Haslemere Food Festival** will be donated to two charities, FROG St Barts Church, Haslemere and the Alzheimer's Society.



## Inside

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Adventure



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Romance



Culture



Cruise



Beach



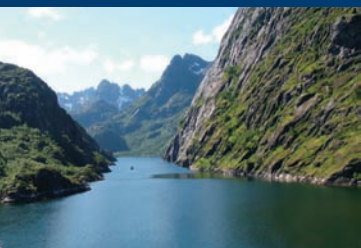
Safari

# On the Waterfront

## Norway - land of the midnight sun

**Sailing along the Norwegian coast in the months of June and July is a truly enervating experience. The midnight sun is a phenomenon in itself, but the addition of rainbows and glacier-covered mountains make for picture-postcard perfection.**

Our ship, **Black Watch**, was small enough to sail along Norway's "inside passage" where the occasional bridge links islands to mainland and the only other ships we saw belonged to Hurtigruten, the country's main passenger and freight service line.



We journeyed as far as **Honningsvåg** the gateway to the North Cape – a bitterly cold day but the joy of seeing Arctic terns in their own territory, reindeer freely grazing and tiny coastal villages was a revelation.

The towns of **Molde** and **Olden** we found particularly scenic, added to which they gave us the chance of some invigorating walking into the mountains behind.



**Contact Di on 01428 658777**

### Di's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** May-September
- **Ideal destination for:** Couples, families
- **Favourite food/drink:** Toast the midnight sun with chilled vodka
- **Must do:** Helicopter flight from Olden to Geirangerfjord

## Morocco - mysterious Marrakech, exotic with fabulous hotels



**Marrakech has always been a favourite destination for our clients and now that BA has resumed flights there (along with BMI), this mysterious and exotic city is more accessible than ever.**

Numerous *riads* and hotels have been developed over the past 10 years and rather than resting on its laurels, the city's most famous hotel, **La Mamounia**, has recently undergone an extensive and prohibitively expensive refurbishment programme. The results are stunning which is only to be expected from design guru Jacques Garcia, who also redesigned the fabulous Hotel Metropole in Monte Carlo.

there are now three beautiful *riads* with pools hidden in the gardens (complete with butler); or maybe you would prefer the famous Churchill suite with its wonderful views towards the snow-capped **Atlas mountains?**

There is a fabulous choice of restaurants, indoor and outdoor pools, an enormous spa, which has recently been voted by *Condé Nast* magazine readers as the best in the world, a fitness centre and a Henri le Conte tennis academy.

**Kasbah Tamadot**, Richard Branson's retreat, an hour's journey into the foothills of the Atlas mountains, offers a wonderful getaway location for those craving a rest from

Sheltered within the walls of the old city, the gardens of the hotel stretch to some seven acres of tranquillity, hidden away from the hurly burly of the nearby *medina*. For those wanting the ultimate in luxury,

the outside world. With just 24 rooms, ranging from classic rooms to suites, Berber tents and a master 3-bedroom tower suite, you can be assured of first-class service throughout your stay. Dining in the Kanoun restaurant is a mixture of Moroccan and international cuisine.

For a truly authentic experience you can hire bikes, horses or mules to visit the mountains and the neighbouring Berber villages.



This is a truly spectacular property.

**Contact Terry on 01428 658777**

### Terry's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** Year-round, though can be very hot during the Summer
- **Ideal destination for:** Honeymooners and couples
- **Favourite food:** Mezze
- **Must do:** A guided tour through the souk

## Greece - exploring the island and villas of Lefkada



**I travelled to the Ionian island of Lefkada for a week's villa holiday in June. Overlooking the village of Mikros Gialos, Villa Agnantio was high up the hillside with amazing views, worth the vertical, windy drive up. The living areas are large and spacious with open-plan kitchen/diner. Two of the bedrooms have balconies/terrace with views of the bay.**

This is a great villa for entertaining, lots of outdoor/indoor space. Villa Pikermi's bedrooms are large; villa Phoebe is at the bottom of the hill, so better for those less able. All three villas have a motor boat moored in the bay.

by the roadside. The west coast of the island has the sandy beaches.

Lefkada is 35km long by 15km wide and is wonderful for walkers with many trails. We walked the 10km trail to one of the highest vantage points on Lefkada with views over to **Meganissi** and **Skorpios**. The highlight of the walk was lunch in the village **Killovata**.

Lefkada is very popular with sailors and we sailed to Meganissi via Skorpios on a yacht charter, even getting up to 7knots under sail. The following day we took the car ferry to Meganissi, which is much smaller and for those who want a quieter holiday.

Driving around the island is a great way to explore the interior and reach vantage points for the views of surrounding islands and to drive past lentil fields, with wild poppies and goats

Our final boating excursion was a speedboat to the islands of **Kalymos** and **Kastos**; we saw dolphins jumping in the boat's wake!

A villa holiday on Lefkada is a wonderful break with local tavernas for lunch and BBQs in the evening back at your villa and just sitting with a glass of something,



watching the sunset, is a great end to your day.

**Contact Susie on 01428 658777**

### Susie's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** May to mid-October
- **Ideal destination for:** Couples and families
- **Favourite food:** Baked feta cheese and home made chips or daily catch of the day
- **Must do:** Take a boat to find secluded bays and waterside tavernas; listed walks for stunning countryside and views

## Antigua - swim among stingrays in the Caribbean



**My first visit to the Caribbean was to the stunning island of Antigua, with its quaint houses, churches and beautiful bays and beaches – one for each day of the year.**

With a great variety of hotels to choose from, there is somewhere for everyone: nearly all of them are located in bays with little



or nothing to do right outside the property, so it is essential that you let us choose the right one for you!

Top of the range is still **Carlisle Bay** on its lovely private crescent bay,

but it is now has a couple of other 5-star rivals: **Hermitage Bay**, built overlooking a stunning bay with beachfront and hillside rooms and the contemporary-looking **Sugar Ridge**, which though with no direct access to a beach, has arrangements with nearby beaches. Stalwarts such as **Curtain Bluff**, with its excellent tennis centre and famous wine cellar; the **Inn at English Harbour**, with its lovely rooms and **Galley Bay** with its beautiful beach, still offer wonderful experiences.

**Shirley Heights** with its fantastic location overlooking English Harbour, brings all the expats and locals together to enjoy the

sound of live music, while the bar serves luscious rum punch in dangerous quantities; a tasty BBQ is also available for a small cost. The action starts in the afternoon, with the steel band and later in the evening reggae, soca and calypso bands takes over, so you can dance the night away under the stars. A great evening to unwind in and enjoy the cultural sounds of the country.

Another incredible experience is **Sting Ray City**, where you have the chance to swim with, stroke and feed these vast creatures in a crystal-clear, turquoise lagoon.



**Contact Howard on 01428 658777**

### Howard's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** Almost year round
- **Ideal destination for:** Perfect for everyone
- **Favourite food/drink:** Rum punch at sunset on Shirley Heights
- **Must do:** Visit Nelson's dockyard at English Harbour

## Lithuania - ideal for history, culture and excellent beer!



**Perhaps the lesser known of the three ex-USSR states that gained their independence in 1992, along with Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania boasts a really beautiful capital city, Vilnius, spectacular white sand beaches of the Amber Coast, a countryside of lakes and forests and an equally diverse history.**

**Vilnius**, fondly referred to as Little Rome, was named the European City of Culture in 2009, fully justified for its cultural excellence, with many musicians

and artists making it their home, and a large variety of theatres, a National Ballet and Opera House.

A city tour including Gediminas Castle Tower, the Museum

of Applied Art, The Cathedral Basilica, The Palace of the Grand Dukes and the KGB Museum provides a fascinating picture of the country's history, with visits outside the Capital to The Hill of Crosses at **Siauliai**, the 14th century Teutonic Castle at **Kaunas**, the fascinating archaeological site at **Kernave** and **Trakai Island Castle**.

With direct flights from Luton and Stansted, just two hours time difference, this area of Eastern Europe may surprise you with its beauty and historical attractions,

cultured and friendly inhabitants, good international and local food washed down with a glass of Svyturys Degintas beer.

This city was a real 'wow' with all at the 2010 Conference of AITO and AITO Specialist Travel Agents in June.



**Contact Andrew on 01428 658777**

**See back page for details of our exciting Vilnius competition!**

### Andrew's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** April/May and July/October
- **Ideal destination for:** Couples and extended families
- **Favourite food/drink:** A zeppelin washed down with a glass of Svyturys beer
- **Must do:** Climb up to Gediminas Castle Tower

## Portugal - perfect short break in Evora

**Built on a low hill, Evora is the old capital of the Alentejo region, celebrated for its wines. A UNESCO World Heritage site, its key attractions for culture vultures are its 13th century cathedral, a 2nd century Roman Temple (one of the best preserved Roman structures in Portugal) and a megalithic stone circle.**

I began my 4-night trip to **Evora** with a flight to **Faro**, followed by a scenic, two-hour drive through the cork and olive groves, but **Lisbon's** airport is even closer to the picturesque city of whitewashed buildings.

I visited two, city centre hotels; the 4-star, traditionally styled **M'Ar de Ar Muralhas** and the 5-star **M'Ar de Ar Aqueduto**, which has a more contemporary design. Muralhas is situated by the battlements (hence its name) and city walls which form its boundary; while Aqueduto, as its name suggests, is close to an impressive aqueduct.

Both hotels have attractive gardens, are close to all the main historic sites and have excellent pools and restaurants; Aqueduto also boasts a spa and a sushi bar.



**Contact Aly's colleagues on 01428 658777**

### Aly's Top Tips

- **Best time to go:** Spring/Autumn, Summers are v hot
- **Ideal destination for:** Couples, older families
- **Best meal:** At award-winning restaurant Fialho
- **Must do:** Have a drink in the cafés in Giraldo Square

## Events Diary

Our final client event for 2011 is for all those who have a passion for cruising:

**Wednesday, 7th December**  
1221 Luncheon Club at 12 noon. Branksome Place Hotel, Haslemere with a speaker from luxury cruise specialist **Orion Expedition Cruises**.

Price £15 pp, including a two-course luncheon with wine.

Since its launch in 2004, Orion Expedition Cruises has become the leading expedition cruise operator in Asia Pacific. Their 100-guest ships venture into locations where larger ships cannot access, or bring guests ashore. Destinations include: the Russian Far East; the Inland Sea of Japan; Vietnam and Cambodia; Borneo; the dramatic NW Australian coast at Kimberley and sub-Antarctic islands that so few can visit.

**To book a place at this event - or to find out more about what's in store next year - call 01428 658777**

## WIN A TRIP TO VILNIUS

with *Surrey Life*



In association with the **Lithuanian National Tourism Office** ([www.lithuaniatourism.co.uk](http://www.lithuaniatourism.co.uk)), **Haslemere Travel** has linked with *Surrey Life* magazine for a fabulous competition prize opportunity. Two readers will fly with **AirBaltic** to the city of **Vilnius, stay two nights B&B at four-star, luxury hotel Mable Residence** and visit its celebrated Christmas markets this December 15-17. **Deadline for entries is October 31**, so grab your copy of the October issue of *Surrey Life* quickly for the entry form!

## BAGS OF FUN!



Two of our lucky Take That competition winners (*see below*), Michael Mehta and his daughter Vicky from Hindhead, used their eco bags during their prize-winning stay at the H10 hotel in London



Three year-old water baby Aurelia Antrobus in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt



Ian Warner poses with his eco bag in the historic Giraldo Square, Evora, Portugal

**Email your photos with the Haslemere Travel ecobag to [gemma@haslemeretravel.co.uk](mailto:gemma@haslemeretravel.co.uk) and we will print them in the next newsletter!**

## WINNERS!



### Mayor's dinner prize

The Mayor of Haslemere's Charity Dinner raised £1,500 for charity, including the Melanie Braysher Trust. Our raffle donation for the evening, a fabulous book on Australia, was coincidentally won by Melanie's mother, Penelope (*pictured*).

**Take That Competition** - Ten lucky *Surrey Advertiser* readers saw Take That live in concert at Wembley in July, courtesy of the competition prize draw it ran with Haslemere Travel. This exclusive opportunity to see the group, plus two nights' free accommodation at the 4-star H10 Hotel in London, attracted a record number of more than 500 entries. Pictured below, the winners also attended a reception at our shop to collect goodie bags.



## TRUNKIS MAKE THE PERFECT XMAS GIFT!



**Do the younger members of your family love to travel, but find any queues or waits at the airport 'boring'? Then why not invest in a trunki this Christmas?** Haslemere Travel is one of just a few



travel retailers who are licensed to sell these award-winning, wheeled suitcases

that are designed to make family travel easier, whether that's a weekend at Granny's, or a round the world trip! We've got everything you need to make your journey a doddle, including the **brand new BoostApak** - a backpack which doubles as a booster seat as seen on BBC's **The Apprentice**. We've also got the **Gruffalo & Trunkisaurus** ride-on suitcase, a range of fun **Trunki accessories** and the **NEW SnooziHedz** travel pal, pillow & blanket.

**Call at our shop or ring 01428 658 777 for more festive gift ideas.**

Contact us if you would prefer to receive this Newsletter by email • Look out for your next edition of Pure Shores in early 2012!



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## CLIENT VIEW

**"Thank you for a wonderful trip to Kenya. All the plans went smoothly; the camps were fantastic, we saw every animal you can think of, including the wildebeest migration. A trip to remember!"**

Mrs G