

# Combined Probus Club of Wheelers Hill Inc.

## Mediterranean Cruise 11th - 30th September 2013

Photos courtesy of Brian & Helen Brown, Robin & Rosemary Bray.  
Commentary courtesy of Travelrite International brochure (amended).

### Day 1. Departure

Our holiday began with our Emirates flight from Melbourne to Milan in Italy via Dubai. Our 13 person tour group formed part of a larger Travelrite International and The Senior Tour Group.



Julie, Rosemary and Ellen in the Dubai Terminal.



Helen, Robin, John & Barbara, Freda and Ros in the Milan Terminal.

### DAY 2. Como

Upon arrival we transferred to Como in the beautiful Italian Lakes district where we spent the next three nights. Como was prosperous under the Romans and reached its zenith in the 11th century. Now, it is a modern town situated in a beautiful setting on the shores of Lake Como. The afternoon was free to explore this beautiful town and we enjoyed a group welcome dinner in the evening.



Our hotel was the Metropole Suisse on the shore of Lake Como.



View of Lake Como from the hotel.



A street entertainer in the main town square in Como.



The town square, Como.

### DAY 3. Como

Today we ferried across the lake to the lovely town of Bellagio. Occupying a magnificent site on the promontory dividing Lake Lecco from Lake Como, it is known for its pretty streets, villas and gardens. We returned to Como by ferry in the afternoon after a wonderful day in this beautiful part of Italy.



Typical view from the ferry on Lake Como.



Margaret & Peter, Brian & Helen in the sunshine on the ferry.



Housing is clustered close to the water's edge around the lake.



An example of the spectacular properties surrounding the lake.



Further examples of the magnificent buildings and estates dotted around the shores of Lake Como.



We approach the beautiful village of Bellagio where we spent an enjoyable day together.



Rosemary in one of Bellagio's shopping lanes.



Enjoying a cuppa in a street side cafe in Bellagio.



Ellen, Helen, Margaret, Ros, Barbara, John, Robin & Rosemary in Giardini di Villa Melzi.



Helen, Freda and Julie in the Gardens.



Brian and Robin taking a rest in the Gardens.



Rosemary resting on the wall in the Gardens next to the lake.

**DAY 4. Como and Lake Maggiore.**

Today we travelled through Italian Lakes countryside to Lake Maggiore where we took a motor boat to Isola Bella, the most spectacular of the Borromean Islands. We visited the Palace, built in the Lombard baroque style, including its staterooms, Napoleon's Room, the Hall of Mirrors, Music Room and more. The structured gardens of the palace are undoubtedly among the most dramatic examples of 17th-century gardens in Italy, filled with ornamented fountains and statues and the most exquisite plantings.



Our motor boats to take us to Isola Bella on Lake Maggiore.



Helen, Ros and Barbara settle into their seats on the motor boat.



Island on the way to Isola Bella.



We approach Isola Bella and the Villa Melzi.



The decor inside the Villa Melzi was breathtaking in its opulence and beauty.



The gardens of the Villa were just as ornate as the palace.



John, Barbara and Rosemary in the gardens.



Every section of the gardens are ornate and perfect.



Helen posing with one of the many imposing statues.



Julie, Freda, Brian, Helen and Ellen enjoying a cuppa in the gardens.



Rosemary enjoying the beautiful plantings in the conservatory.

Upon return to Como a few of us took the funicular railway to the top of the mountain behind Como to take in the magnificent views afforded from this vantage point.



Entering the funicular railway car.



Freda, Rosemary and Margaret riding to the mountain top.



The views of Como from the top of the mountain were simply breathtaking.

### DAY 5. Venice & Celebrity Silhouette.

This morning we travelled by coach to magnificent Venice, built on 117 islands and once the head of a maritime empire. Venice is unique with its canals and renaissance palazzos, it is one of the most romantic cities in the world. Early afternoon we boarded our ship, the Celebrity Silhouette and settled into our staterooms and explored the wonderful facilities onboard. The afternoon was free to explore Venice at our leisure. Before dinner we enjoyed welcome Drinks to celebrate the start of our cruise around the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.



Helen, Brian, Robin and John enjoying morning coffee.



Helen admiring the impressive Celebrity Silhouette.

### Day 6. Venice.

This morning we took a sightseeing tour of Venice which included a visit to St. Mark's Square, the Grand Canal, St Mark's Basilica and the Doges Palace among many other sites. We wound our way through the narrow alleyways to the market square of the Rialto. The rest of the day was free for individual exploration.



Margaret 'takes charge' of the tour group in Venice.



A picturesque gondola on the Grand Canal near the Rialto.



The busy Grand Canal.



St. Marks Square.

In the afternoon we came up on deck before dinner as the Celebrity Silhouette slipped her moorings and set sail past Venice Island, one of the most beautiful sights in the world.

Day 7. Koper, Slovenia.

The old town of Koper is a highlight of the Adriatic Coast. Our tour of Koper took in the 15th-century Praetorian Palace and Loggia in Venetian Gothic style, the 12th-century Carmine Rotunda church, and the Cathedral of St. Nazarius, with its 14th-century tower. We visited the pretty town of Piran.



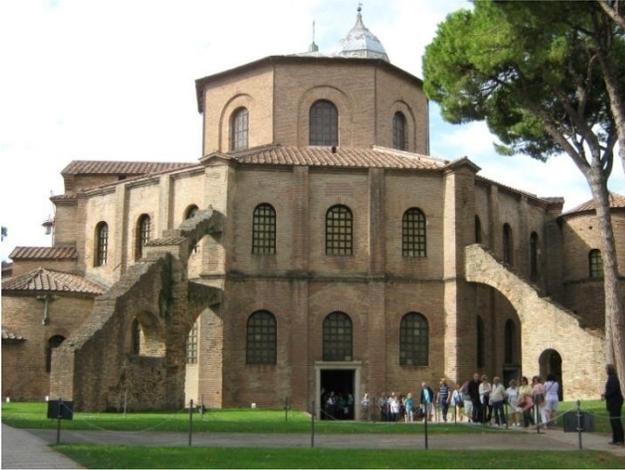
John on the waterfront in Piran.



View of the picturesque village of Piran.

Day 8. Ravenna, Italy.

Located on the Adriatic coast in North-East Italy, Ravenna was briefly the capital of the Roman Empire and later the Italian capital of the Byzantine Empire. During this time, incredible mosaics were constructed throughout the city. Described as a symphony of colour in Dante's Divine Comedy, Ravenna's well-preserved mosaics are some of the finest remaining in the Western world. We toured the town.



The Basilica Di San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy.



A part of the brilliant mosaics inside the Basilica.



More examples of the breathtaking mosaics.



Brian heads for the local bakery for morning tea!



Helen and Freda inside Dante's tomb in Ravenna.

Day 9. Split, Croatia.

Today we visited Split in Croatia. We used tenders to reach the city from the ship. The old town grew up around the Emperor Diocletian's vast Roman Palace. We visited the interior courtyard of the Roman complex and the Golden Gate, the main entrance to Diocletian's Palace and the Baptistery of St John a small, beautiful building consecrated in the sixth century. We saw the Renaissance Town Hall on People's Square surrounded by Venetian buildings.



Rosemary, Julie and Freda inside the tender boat.



The tender arrives at the wharf in Split.



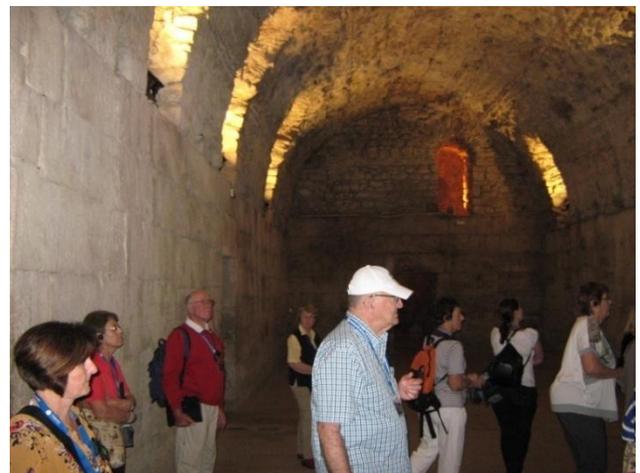
Heading for the entrance to Diocletian's Palace.



A picture of what the Palace looked like in Roman times.



Beneath the old city inside Diocletian's Palace. The town is built over this old ruin.





Split at ground level, over the old Palace.



Croatian male singers inside the Palace.



The courtyard outside the front entrance to Diocletian's Palace.



Ellen takes a photo of Julie with the Roman guards.

### Day 10. Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Today we visited the historic city of Dubrovnik. It was founded by fugitives from the Roman city of Epidaurum during the seventh century. We saw the Fort of St John and the Sponza Palace, which was built in the 14th century as the mint. The afternoon was free for individual exploration.



The old city of Dubrovnik, Croatia.



Entering through the old city wall.



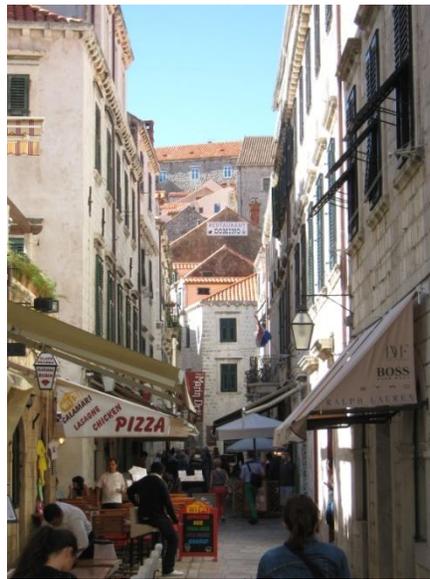
The main street of Dubrovnik.



Robin on the outside the city wall by the waterfront.



Freda taking refreshments.



Typical alley in Dubrovnik.



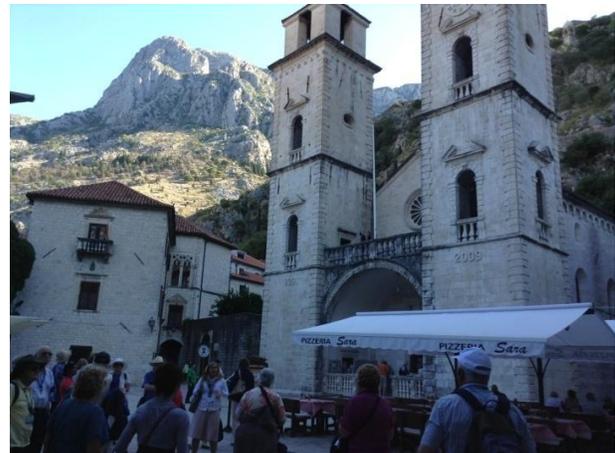
Helen posing by an old sea anchor.

### Day 11 Kotor, Montenegro

Today we sailed up the picturesque Bay of Kotor, a submerged river canyon. A fantastic landscape is created by the overhanging limestone cliffs of Orjen and Lovcen. The town was founded by the ancient Romans in 168 BC and conquered by the Venetians in the 15th century. The port of Kotor was built by the Republic of Venice and is surrounded by impressive city walls.



Sailing into the Bay of Kotor.



The old church and city museum in Kotor.



Inside the old church.



Exploring the back lanes of Kotor.



In the afternoon we visited the pretty town of Budva on the Adriatic coast.

Day 12. At sea.

A rest day for us to enjoy the onboard facilities and check out the schedule of art auctions, guest lectures, cooking demonstrations and entertainment on board.



Barbara and Helen enjoying a liquid refreshment.



John, Ros, Helen, Helen and Barbara at an outside bar.



Specialty food displays, ice carvings and sea views.

### Day 13. Valletta, Malta.

The capital of Malta, Valletta was founded by the Knights of St John in 1566. Its purpose was to strengthen the Order's position on the island following the siege of Malta by the Turks in 1565. Our sightseeing tour included visits to St John's Co-Cathedral and the magnificent Palace of the Grand Masters. We also visited Mdina, Malta's ancient capital.



Picturesque views of Valetta, the Maltese capital.



The ancient capital of Malta, Mdina.



The entrance to Mdina.



The magnificent painted dome in St. John's Cathedral.



Inside the Grand Masters Palace.

Day 14. Catania, Sicily.

Today we arrived in Catania, Sicily and travelled to the ancient city of Syracuse. We visited the Greek theatre and the Ear of Dionysius archaeological sites which still stand in the north of the city. Syracuse was founded in 8BC by Greeks from Corinth. This splendid city eventually established supremacy over the rest of Sicily. The old part of the town is on the island of Ortygia and contains the churches, the cathedral, the old palazzos and houses. We walked this historic centre viewing the sites. The cathedral has been converted from an ancient Greek temple and is over 2000 years old.



Mount Etna fumes overlooking the city of Catania, Sicily.



The ancient Greek theatre in Syracuse.



Julie, Freda and Barbara sitting in the bleachers at the theatre.



Entrance to the Ear of Dionysius

The Ear of Dionysius was most likely formed out of an old limestone quarry. It is 23 metres high and extends 65 metres back into the cliff. Horizontally, it bends in an approximate "S" shape, vertically it is tapered at the top like a teardrop. Because of its shape the Ear has extremely good acoustics, making even a small sound resonate throughout the cave. This cave was dug in Greek/Roman times as a water storage for Syracuse. A narrow tunnel was dug first. This tunnel was widened by digging down and sideways afterwards, giving the cave its unusual shape. The small narrow tunnel is still visible on the top of this artificial cave. An earthquake struck this area causing damage, and the cave became unusable for water storage afterwards. We congregated inside the Ear and sang 'Waltzing Matilda' as loud as we could to represent Australian tourism this day in Syracuse.



We all sing 'Waltzing Matilda' with gusto!



Rosemary by the waterfront in Syracuse.

#### Day 15. Naples, Italy.

We arrived in Naples this morning and drove to the preserved ruins of Pompeii, a wealthy settlement of the Roman Empire, destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD. We toured the ruins with a local guide and saw the Forum, the House of the Vetti, a well-preserved aristocratic villa, a bath house, a brothel and more and gained an understanding as to how the Romans lived in Pompeii. After the visit we drove to the beautiful resort town of Sorrento, with its spectacular views of the Bay of Naples.



Brian, Peter, Helen and Rosemary arriving in Pompeii.



The Forum in Pompeii with Vesuvius in the background.



A typical streetscape in Pompeii.



Freda, Rosemary and John inspecting a fast food outlet.



The crowd lining up to visit the brothel!



Ros shows off her shopping to Ellen, Helen and Rosemary.

## Days 16 & 17. Rome, Italy.

This morning we arrive in the port of Civitavecchia and travelled by coach to Rome. We visited the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel. The next day we took a sightseeing walking tour to see the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain. The afternoon was at leisure. We enjoyed a farewell dinner on the last evening to celebrate our wonderful cruise together.



Ellen, Rosemary and Freda outside the Colosseum.



The Pantheon.



The Trevi Fountain.



The Spanish Steps.



Barbara, Margaret, Ellen, Peter, John, and

Farewell Dinner at the Mediterraneo Hotel



Robin, Rosemary, Helen and Ros.

Farewell Dinner



A thank you presentation ceremony for John and Barbara.



Group photo of our travellers.

Before we went to dinner we had a small thank you presentation for John and Barbara for co-ordinating this wonderful cruise.

Day 18. Rome.

Today we enjoyed a free day in Rome before flying home in the evening with wonderful memories of a terrific cruise together.