

We had very comfortable cabins, even Mother's which was a single berth inside cabin on the Saloon Deck. We thought she would be seasick but she never turned a hair. With her deck shoes etc she looked like a real globe trotter. She was very satisfied with her cabin especially as she had a very nice stewardess, and a steward or Stewardess can either make or spoil one's trip.

We had a very comfortable trip always finding something to do - deck games, reading or just sitting on deck talking and watching the sea and sometimes passing ships.

Mother loved just sitting and reading, for she was a prolific reader and very well read. Sometimes she did a jigsaw in which many seemed to take an interest, even the deck hands. Every now and again someone would come along and point out a piece. One day I remember we went down to lunch and when we went back on deck found Ginger the deck hand had finished the jigsaw.

There was dancing nearly every night, a game I was never fond of but Lorna and Joyce loved dancing. I remember one night, however, it was very rough but we had to dance. There were at first about half a dozen couples but before long there only remained Lorna, Joyce and myself on the deck and they both wanted to dance. Well, I tried but what a game bumping with the rolling of the ship first into the railings and next into the lounge wall. Well we gave it up after one effort.

And so the time passed until we arrived at Madeira, where in those days the ship anchored off the island whereas today they go alongside a quay. Lorna and I went ashore but Mother remained on the ship.

We wandered about the town for a while and looked at some of their needlework etc. and then back to the ship. It was quite fun watching the boys diving from their small boats for coins thrown from the deck. On deck there were a number of the local inhabitants selling some of their beautiful works of embroidery etc.

We eventually set off but after steaming for an hour had to return to the island to land two stowaways.

Later we passed quite close to the outward bound mail ship and there was the usual waving and shouting. They usually pass within a couple of hundred yards of each other.

On arrival at Southampton there was the usual hurry and scurry and bustle. The night before everyone had been busy packing and during the day doing the usual tipping of stewards etc. A few of the people one had known on deck were so dolled up that you hardly recognised them. Having passed through the Customs and Immigration - the latter one passed quite early in the Smoke room - we were shown to the compartment which had been very thoughtfully reserved for us by the Union-Castle Company official. And so we were off to London in what is known as the Boat Train.

This was my third trip to England and I think Lorna's fifth or sixth. The train journey up to London, in a most comfortable compartment, is always most interesting. It was early spring and the trees were just beginning to show their new green leaves. A few of the early flowers were beginning to show, daffodils, Crocus etc. The beautiful green fields with here and there a few sheep and cattle grazing. We passed through several villages as the train is a non-stop, all very exciting. As I have mentioned the train which is first class - the third class follows - is most comfortable and shortly after leaving a steward came along serving tea which was most welcome as we had had an early breakfast. Mother was thrilled on this her first trip to England since leaving as a young woman. Today tea is not served in the compartments, you have to go to the saloon and bring back what you require for your party. As we steamed along, the open country was left and we began to enter the outskirts of London. As we approached Waterloo Station one noticed the tenement houses which looked pretty dim and dirty. Today most of these have been demolished or destroyed by enemy action and replaced by large blocks of flats.