

## Greece – 2011

### Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October

We were flying on a Jet 2 aircraft shortly after 9.00 a.m. and therefore had decided to stay the previous night at the Holiday Inn, Gatwick. Brian had arranged this for us with his Preference card for that hotel chain and we were able to stay for the night, and with 15 nights parking, for not much more than £100.00. We were travelling with Brian and Ann for what was to be our eight cruise aboard mv Discovery.

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October, we spent several hours with Nathan, Amalia and Ava but were unable to meet up with Keren, Simon and Zac because Zac was very unwell with a virus. Zoë also was unable to be with us as she was recovering from her two-day infusion of Campath administered as an in-patient the previous Thursday and Friday.

The whole aircraft had been chartered by All Leisure for Discovery passengers and we landed at Athens Airport at about 2.40 p.m. on the Monday afternoon. We were met by Discovery representatives and by several coaches and were driven for nearly an hour to Piraeus – at which port Discovery was moored.

We were occupying cabin 4120 for the second time and had turned down an upgrade to the next deck as we knew that the familiar cabin was a quiet one.

We found, at dinner, that we were on a table for four with just Brian and Ann – even though we had requested a table for either six or eight people. We were also tucked right at the far side where we felt very much on the periphery. Therefore we asked whether anything could be done about this and were duly relocated – to a table for six – on the second night. We shared with a couple from Weybridge – Elaine and Doug.

### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November

Ann had discovered that the Archaeological Museum of Piraeus was not too far from where we were docked – and I found, from the internet, that it opened at 8.30 a.m. This gave us time to do it justice as we were due to sail at 12.00 noon and had to be back on board by 11.30 a.m. It proved to be an excellent museum with most exhibits having been found in the locality and dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. One whole room was full of items discovered in the harbour being the cargo on an ancient shipwreck. Many items were identical having been “mass produced”! The stone friezes and statues were destined for Rome where other items that made it safely and were manufactured by the same workshop have been discovered.

We all four walked there together but then went our separate ways once there, meeting up again just as we neared the port.

In the afternoon, we went to David Bascott’s port lecture on Rhodes and also to one on Jerusalem by Dr Ghada Kami, an Arab lecturer at Exeter University whose talk proved to be highly contentious.

The evening was spent at an Introductory Meeting to life onboard Discovery and we then finished off the day by winning the Quiz!

## Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November

We had never visited Rhodes before and were delighted to see it bathed in sunshine when we docked at about 7.00 a.m.

After a fairly early breakfast, we disembarked Discovery to enter the city of Rhodes Town by ourselves. We had hoped to find others who would like to share a taxi or, better still, minibus, to Lindos. However this was not to be and so we spent the morning exploring the old town of Rhodes by ourselves. We trudged around the old Jewish quarter and were impressed by the age and state of preservation of most of the buildings.

We returned to Discovery for lunch and then, at about 1.00 p.m. left again to take an open-top bus tour of about an hour. This took us around the walls of the old town and also up to the ancient theatre and Temple of Apollo much of which had been destroyed the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

We travelled along the coast, looking down onto the modern buildings of the seaside town and finally alighted near Mandraki Harbour. A doe and buck are now positioned on the two pillars which straddle the entrance and on which, perhaps, the feet of the Colossus of Rhodes were once placed.

We then went back into the old town and visited the Archaeological Museum where we particularly marvelled at the life-size statue of Aphrodite which had been washed ashore in 1929 having been "lost" for two millennia. There was also a large head of the God Helios with holes around the crown which would once have contained wires representing the sun's rays.

There was a fascinating garden at the Archaeological Museum (which is housed in the Knight's Hospital dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD). This contains many ancient artefacts – constantly added to as local people dig up further items in their back gardens!

We then walked back to the ship in time for afternoon tea and the editing of the 365 photographs taken by Jill and a further 65 by Adrian. These 430 were whittled down to 350 and uploaded to Picasa that evening following the first formal dinner of the cruise.