

Independent from Long Beach - December 5, 1967

Philatelist Laments Mary Trip End

By BILL DUNCAN, Staff Writer aboard the RMS Queen Mary

This mammoth luxury liner will dock in Acapulco at noon today, last port of call before she starts the last leg of the long journey to her new Long Beach home. She will steam into Long Beach Harbour through the Queen's Gate at noon Saturday. One passenger regretting the voyage's pending end is Malcolm C. Dizer of New York City, sailing on the Mary for the price of postage stamps. Dizer, 81, a philatelist, is paying for his trip with each stamp cancellation he puts on an envelope in each port the Mary visits. Easy? Not on a long voyage it isn't. Dizer sold 100 envelopes for \$25 each before he left New York for England. He guaranteed the customer that he'd get a cancelled stamp from each port where the Mary stopped up to and including Long Beach.

The cancellations have the date the Mary was in port, beginning Oct. 31 when the Mary sailed from Southampton on her epic cruise. His troubles began in Southampton. "The Monday before the Queen Mary sailed, I visited the Government Post Office in Southampton and tried to get the British to pre-cancel the 100 envelopes with an Oct. 31 date because the Queen Mary was sailing at such an early hour," he explained. "The British are quite proper and told me this was against all regulations, but promised if I'd leave the envelopes with the postal authorities they would cancel them first thing Oct. 31 and deliver them to the ship before sailing time. It was a big risk, but I decided to take it." Dizer, his 100 envelopes on shore, paced the deck Tuesday morning as the clock ticked toward sailing time - 9:30 a.m. At 9:15 a.m. a man raced up the gangway and delivered Dizer's precious cargo.

At Lisbon he met more difficulty when the Queen Mary arrived late on November 2 and he couldn't find a post office open for a Nov. 2 cancellation. However, on Nov. 3 without speaking a word of Portuguese, he somehow talked the postal authorities into rolling back the cancellation machine to Nov. 2 for his 100 envelopes.

"The Queen Mary arrived at Las Palmas on a Sunday, but Dizer's luck was all good. He found an auxiliary post office in a panel truck on the dock where it has been established to take care of the Queen Mary's mailings. Dizer asked if he could get his 100 envelopes stamped and cancelled, but the postman said he was too busy to handle such a request. Dizer volunteered to help him if he'd allow him to cancel the 100 stamps for his envelopes and he possibly became the only American member of the Spanish post office. He had to work the whole day in the auxiliary post office and that's as much of Las Palmas as he saw.

In Rio, the ship again arrived on a Sunday and postal authorities would not cancel his stamps. The 100 earned a Monday, Nov. 13 cancellation date, instead of Sunday Nov. 12, the day the Mary arrived. He purchased Chilean stamps ahead of time, then

had his own cancelling stamp prepared and cancelled them when the Queen Mary rounded the Horn-Chilean territory. He faces similar situations in the Mary's future ports. The ship arrives in Long Beach on a Saturday, which is going to make cancellations difficult. Dizer was certain either the United States or Great Britain would issue a special commemorative stamps for the Queen Mary. When neither country did, he decided to build his theme around the Last Voyage of the Queen Mary, and the historic trip taken by Sir Francis Chichester around the world in the Gipsy Moth IV. "This is my tribute to such a gallant man and so strong a sailor, a man who spent 226 days at sea alone," Dizer said. The 100 envelopes Dizer holds will one day be priceless. They will be the only ones of their kind in existence and "that's exactly why I limited the number. I could have sold 10,000 for \$25 each on this voyage alone," he said. "But can you imagine trying to get all those cancelled in each port?" While Dizer was talking a lady approached him and offered to buy two and she was willing to double the price.

Dizer had obviously had the envelopes made specially, since they were a non-standard size and had the picture and the voyage map printed down the left side. The inclusion of Cherbourg as a port of call is intriguing. The original documentation made no mention of calling at Cherbourg on this voyage, even though it was a normal call on the North Atlantic run. However, in the *De Witt Journal* there is the entry for 8 November :

"I met a Scotsman from the Clyde who said the reason we did not stop in Cherbourg was that we were going to pick up the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, but they had changed their minds at the last moment."

Therefore the second stamp is intriguing. It is a French stamp, franked 31 October 1967 at 'Cherbourg Maritime', but originally attached to another envelope.

Malcolm Dizer also gave one of his envelopes to Capt Treasure Jones, franked with a special stamp for 9 Dec, in Long Beach, but this did not include the Cherbourg stamp.

After all these years, one can only speculate what probably happened ;

- The stop in Cherbourg to collect additional passengers was cancelled.
- Dizer arranged for 100 envelopes to be stamped and franked on 31 Oct in Cherbourg, then posted (probably in one package) to his home address in New York.
- He presented Capt Treasure Jones with his envelope when they had arrived in Long Beach on 9 Dec, but without the Cherbourg stamp.
- He then flew back home to New York, where he cut out the franked stamps from the Cherbourg envelopes and attached them to the 'master' envelopes.

- Although his covering letter distributing the envelopes is dated 9 Dec, from Long Beach, these pre-purchased envelopes were actually sent from New York.

Editor's Footnote

Dizer's choice of his opening stamp is very significant – he chose the commemorative stamp of the *Gipsy Moth IV* round-the-world voyage.

Gipsy Moth IV is a 54 ft (16 m) ketch that Francis Chichester commissioned specifically to sail single-handed around the globe, racing against the times set by the clipper ships of the 19th century. The name, the fourth boat in his series, all named Gipsy Moth, originated from the de Havilland *Gipsy Moth* aircraft in which Chichester, as an aviator, had made a pioneering flight from the UK to New Zealand & Australia before WWII.

Gipsy Moth IV set out from Plymouth on 27 August 1966 with 64-year-old Sir Francis at the helm. On 28 May 1967 having logged 28,500 miles (45,900 km) in just 274 days (226 days actual sailing time), the voyage claimed 5 records, including the fastest voyage around the world by any small vessel.

A few weeks after his solo circumnavigation, in July 1967, Chichester was knighted, being appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire for "individual achievement and sustained endeavour in the navigation and seamanship of small craft". For the ceremony, the Queen used the sword used by her predecessor Queen Elizabeth I to knight the adventurer Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman with his crew to complete a circumnavigation.

His description of Cape Horn was very graphic :

"The waves were tremendous. They varied each time, but all were like great sloping walls towering behind you. The kind I liked least was like a great bank of grey-green earth, 50' (15 m) high and very steep. Image yourself at the bottom of one. My cockpit was filled five times and once it took more than 15 minutes to drain. My wind-reading machine stopped recording at 60 knots. My self-steering could not cope with the buffeting....I had a feeling of helplessness."

Just as he thought all hope was lost and he was alone, on exiting the cockpit one day, he saw that he was being followed by the British Antarctic Survey vessel HMS Protector, and later the same day a Royal Air Force plane broke through the clouds.

The commemorative *Gipsy Moth IV*, 1s 9d stamp, was issued on 24 July 1967.