

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£200
PER PERSON

ALBANIA & GREECE

THROUGH THE EYES OF BYRON

A JOURNEY ALONG THE IONIAN COAST
ABOARD THE MS SERENISSIMA
WITH GUEST SPEAKER GEORGE HART
4TH TO 14TH OCTOBER 2022



NOBLE CALEDONIA

The Treasure of the Athenians at the ancient site of Delphi



In 1809 Lord Byron set sail on his two year Grand Tour which ultimately took him to Albania and Greece with his great friend John Cam Hobhouse. He fell in love with the region and the people and whilst on tour he began work on the poem 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' which when published on his return shot him to literary stardom. Byron was the ideal Romantic poet, gaining notoriety for his scandalous private life, described by Lady Caroline Lamb as "mad, bad and dangerous to know". From his letters written whilst touring we gain an insight into the man, his perceptions and the times as well as the excitement he felt on his first journey to the 'Orient'. As we travel along the coast of Albania and Greece we will visit many places Byron explored and learn of the colourful characters he encountered including the formidable tyrant Ali Pasha of Tepelena.

Byron's passion for Greece never faltered and in 1823 he returned to the island of Cephalonia, spent £4000 refitting the Greek Fleet and took command of a Greek unit of freedom fighters against the Ottoman Empire. His short but chaotic and fascinating life ended in Messolonghi in 1824 where he died of a fever. Looking at a beautiful region such as this through the eyes of someone who lived two hundred years ago does add an extra dimension to the geography and history and introduces us to more recent events in a corner of Europe with a deeply complicated past.

Our fascinating itinerary combines some 'must see' historical wonders together with little known and rarely visited places that are perfectly suited for our vessel. With a maximum of just 95 guests, our trips ashore will be a pleasure as we explore with our Guest Speaker and local guides, adding immeasurably to our knowledge of the region. Ensure you are on deck for our transit of the Corinth Canal which, whilst only built in the 19th century, was conceived as long ago as the 7th century BC, a wonderful start to our cruise and only possible aboard a small ship such as the MS Serenissima.

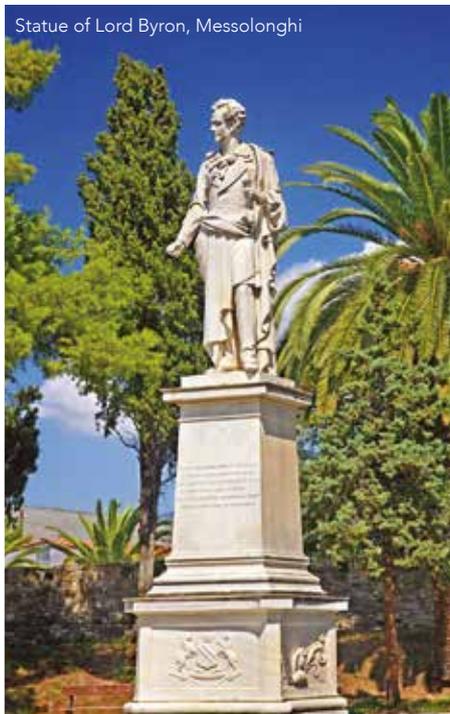


Guest Speaker – George Hart



George Hart graduated with degrees in Classics and Egyptian Art and Archaeology from University College London and joined the staff of the British Museum in 1973. He organised a diverse programme of Courses and Lectures on the Antiquities Collections which encompassed the Bronze Age and Classical Civilisations of the Mediterranean World, the Levant and Egypt. He has accompanied tours to all the major archaeological sites in Greece and

Albania. His interest in the allusions to classical antiquity in the Romantic Poets is long-standing but he regards Byron as the most important since his travels and adventures took him much further afield than Keats and Shelley – reaching into Ottoman Europe. While like many others his admiration for Byron's passion for Greek Independence is unshakable, he has also, during three decades at the British Museum of lecturing on Classical Athens, had to discuss the question of Byron's relentless onslaught on the removal of sculptures from Greek monuments and the subsequent thorny issue of restitution. He fully expects to be confronted with supporters of Byron's wish "to immolate Elgin to Minerva and Nemesis" on this cruise.



The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Tirana, Albania.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this evening and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 2 Durres. Enjoy a free morning to explore Tirana at your own pace. Meet for lunch before we drive to the coastal city of Durres which was colonised by the Greeks in 627 BC and still has the remains of a 15,000 seat amphitheatre, the second largest in the Balkans. We will explore the Medieval city and the Archeological Museum before transferring to the MS *Serenissima* this afternoon. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner this evening as we sail.

Day 3 Vlore. Today on a full day tour we will drive inland to Gjirokastra, a charming hillside town which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Byron spent time here and its cobbled streets and fortified Ottoman houses have changed little since his time. We will visit the interesting museum learning about Ali Pasha and Byron's time in this historic town. After lunch in a local restaurant take a stroll through the 17th century Ottoman Bazaar before heading north to Tepelena. It was here that Byron stayed as guest of Ali Pasha Tepelena, the so-called Lion of Janina. In a letter to his mother Byron provides a description of his host, ending with, 'He has been a mighty warrior, but is as barbarous as he is successful roasting rebels'. We will see the castle built by Ali Pasha to enclose his palace. Alternatively, enjoy a morning tour to nearby Apollonia

and an afternoon at leisure. Apollonia, the ancient city of Illyria reached its zenith around the 4th to 3rd centuries BC when it is believed the population numbered over 70,000.

Day 4 Sarande. From the port of Sarande we drive to the nearby historic UNESCO site of Butrint. Founded as a Greek colony, a Roman city and Bishopric, it enjoyed a period of prosperity under a Byzantine administration and then the Venetians. Abandoned in the late Middle Ages the site today offers a remarkable glimpse of all its past. It is thanks to the Butrint Foundation, founded by Lord Rothschild and Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, that we can appreciate this remarkable site which has over the past 25 years been conserved, preserved and developed far beyond what Byron witnessed. On a guided tour we will explore the Hellenistic temples, promenade and the 4th century BC theatre as well as the Roman public baths, gymnasium and fountains. Further into the site, from the Byzantine era, we see chapels and the large Basilica of St Peter and St Paul, whilst the Venetians are represented by a hill-top watchtower and a small castle with commanding views over the Straits of Corfu.

Day 5 Igoumenitsa, Greece. Arriving in Greece we visit the lovely city of Ioannina. The walls of its old fortified city enclose an old quarter that Byron would recognise, spiked with minarets. He spent about a month in the region much taken with the scenery

'many a mount sublime'. It was in Ioannina that Byron probably first saw himself as the future saviour of Ottoman controlled Greece and began composing Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. The highlight today will be Ali Pasha's fortress and from its ramparts we will gaze across the lake just as it had impressed Byron and John Hobhouse in 1809. Visit the Ali Pasha Museum and later walk in this enchanting capital of the Epirus region. We enjoy a local lunch and also plan to stop and visit the remote and impressive Ancient Theatre and Oracle of Dodoni. This area was a site of worship and pilgrimage from 2000 BC until Roman times and was dedicated at one time to the Mother Goddess Gaia and then to Zeus.

Day 6 Argostoli, Cephalonia. We will spend the day here on the largest of the Ionian islands. From our base in the capital Argostoli, we visit the village of Metaxata where Byron spent four months in 1823 and a statue of remembrance sits proudly in the main square of the village, near where the house he occupied once stood. The devastating earthquake of 1953 destroyed much of the island's buildings. A drive across the island brings us to the delightful, quiet coastal village of Assos. Choose to take the climb up to the castle of Assos or stroll along the front.

Day 7 Messolonghi. Situated on the northern shore of the Gulf of Patra, this picturesquely sited small city sits between craggy mountains and Europe's largest lagoon. In January 1824 Byron journeyed to Messolonghi leading a force of

Suliot troops he had funded with the aim of recapturing the Turkish occupied fortress of Lepanto. But his plans were interrupted by the arrival of the Ottoman navy. With the help of the Messolonghi Byron Society, our exploration here will include a visit to the Garden of Heroes. Here, just inside the Gate of Exodus where the Ottoman forces massacred fleeing Greeks sits a prominent statue of Lord Byron.

Day 8 Delphi. From our berth in Itea we spend the morning exploring the archaeological treasures of the ancient site of Delphi and one of Greece's most important sites of antiquity. Byron visited in 1809, carving his name on a column in the gymnasium: 'Yet there I've wandered by the vaulted rill Yes! Sighed over Delphi's long deserted shrine, Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still.' It was nearly one hundred years after Byron's visit that serious excavations began revealing some major buildings and structures of the sanctuary of Apollo and of Athena Pronoia including thousands of objects, many of which are housed in the Archeological Museum. We will see the site of the sacred Delphic Oracle, walk along Delphi's Sacred Way, visit the Treasury of the Athenians and the 5000 seat theatre dating from the 4th century BC. Spend the afternoon at sea as we sail to Corinth where we moor overnight.

Day 9 Corinth & Corinth Canal. Byron visited Corinth with his friend Lord Sligo in the summer of 1810. His rhymed, tragic narrative poem, 'The Siege of Corinth'

Medieval hill-town of Gjirokastra



Assos, Cephalonia



was published in 1816 and was inspired by the Ottoman massacre of the Venetian garrison holding the Acrocorinth in 1715. On a morning tour we will visit the extensive remains of ancient Corinth including the Temple of Apollo and from here we can see the hill of Acrocorinth where stood a Medieval fort, the inspiration of the poem. Be on deck in the early afternoon as we navigate the narrow Corinth Canal. Completed in 1893 and only 6.4 kilometres long and 21.5 metres wide, it is only small ships like the MS Serenissima which can now make this journey. We will continue sailing to Lavrion where we arrive this evening and moor overnight.

Day 10 Cape Sounion & Athens.

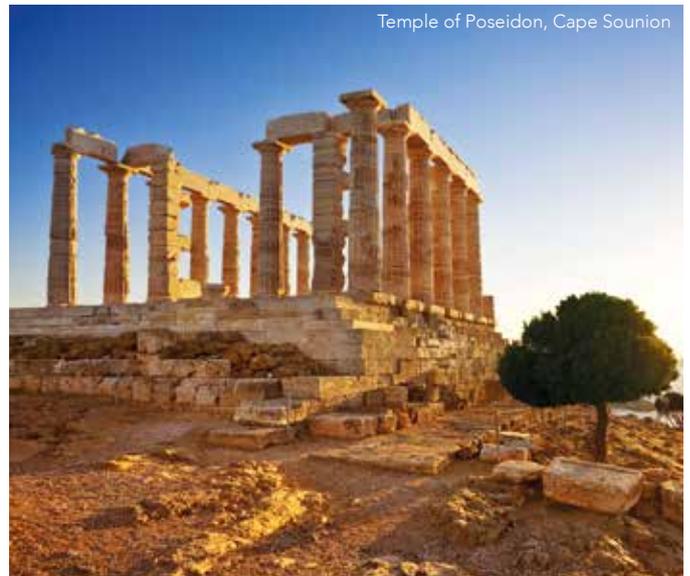
From the port of Lavrion it is a short drive to Cape Sounion and the Temple of Poseidon, one of the major monuments of the

Golden Age of Athens. Nearby, see the Temple of Athena and a fortress built in 413 BC during the Peloponnesian War against the Spartans. Whilst spending several months in Athens in 1810-11 Byron visited Sounion; his name is carved on one of the columns and in his poem 'Isles of Greece' he mentions Sounion. After our visit either return to the ship for lunch and spend the afternoon at sea sailing to Piraeus. Alternatively take lunch ashore and continue to Athens by road. Here we see Byron's statue, located next to the National Gardens, whilst in the National Historical museum we can see some of his personal items. Return to the ship this afternoon in Piraeus where we moor overnight.

Day 11 Athens to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

Temple of Poseidon, Cape Sounion



Lord Byron arrives at Messolonghi (The National Gallery of Athens)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
2	Standard Stateroom	£4595	£4395
3	Classic Stateroom	£4795	£4595
4	Superior Stateroom	£5095	£4895
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5495	£5295
6	Junior Suite	£5895	£5695
7	Owner's Suite	£6295	£6095
8	Serenissima Suite	£6395	£6195
10	Standard Single	£5395	£5195

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight accommodation in Tirana with breakfast • Lunch on day 2 • Nine nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner on board • Noble Caledonia onboard team including Guest Speaker • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance, dinner on day 1.

MS SERENISSIMA



Harald Jarl Lounge



Venice Restaurant



Andrea Lounge

The charming MS Serenissima began her career as the Harald Jarl, cruising the Norwegian coastline and fjords. Since 2003, when she was extensively renovated, she has been operating as a classic cruise ship. Previously known as the MS Andrea, she was upgraded again in 2013 and started her new life as the MS Serenissima. With her small size she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships and appears an impressive sight when moored. With her fleet of Zodiacs, she is capable of both destination and expedition cruising.

Your Cabin/Suite

Accommodating no more than 95 passengers, there are eight different grades of cabins arranged over five decks, and all feature either windows or portholes. The cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an en-suite bathroom with shower (please note cabins 601 - 605 and 507 have a bath with shower attachment) and a selection of toiletries in addition to a hairdryer, robes and slippers. All cabins come equipped with telephone, flat screen television, safety deposit box and other thoughtful appointments. Refillable water bottles are available in all cabins for use on board. Due to the very nature of the ship, the cabins vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm.

Your Dining

The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting and, with its Deck 5 location, all of the tables benefit from great views. The picture windows also make the restaurant wonderfully light and airy. Breakfast is served buffet-style with cooked dishes available and eggs to order by the ship's accomplished chef. Lunch is also served buffet-style

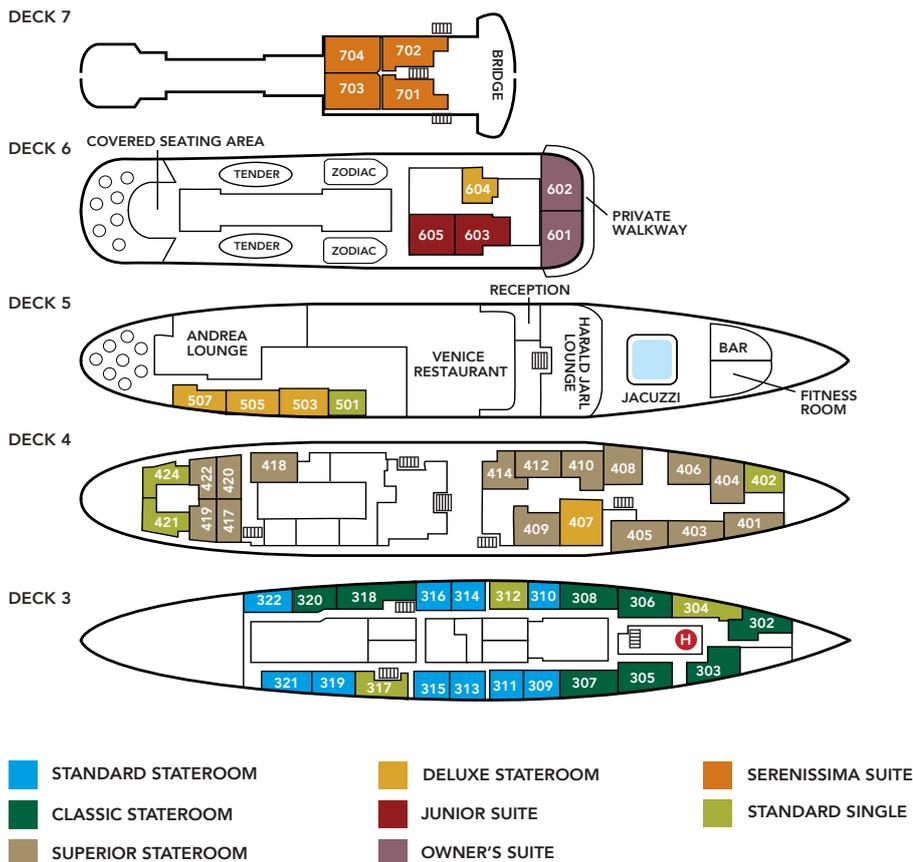


with hot and cold dishes available. Dinner is served à la carte and is four courses, except at the Captain's Dinner, which is a six course affair. Where possible, local produce is sourced for an authentic dining experience. A choice of red or white wine, beer and soft drinks is included at lunch and dinner. In good weather there are al fresco dining facilities available and tea and coffee are available around the clock in the Andrea Lounge.

Your Space

The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Jarl Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library and Wi-Fi is available at an extra cost throughout the vessel. The outside areas really are something special. A spacious observation deck allows 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with Jacuzzi and outside bar. The covered seating area at the back of Deck 6 is ideal for relaxing with a drink in hand. Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique style. During the major refit in Sweden the then owners commissioned Swedish interior designers to create a country house style which has recently been updated with some Art Deco styling which works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and a classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

MS SERENISSIMA DECK PLAN & CABINS



NB. Please note cabin sizes vary in each category and measurements shown are approximate.



SERENISSIMA SUITE
(25 square metres)



OWNER'S SUITE
(22 square metres)



JUNIOR SUITE
(21 square metres)



DELUXE STATEROOM
(15 to 25 square metres)



SUPERIOR STATEROOM
(11.5 to 18 square metres)



CLASSIC STATEROOM
(14 to 19 square metres)



STANDARD STATEROOM
(10 to 11.5 square metres)



STANDARD SINGLE
(7 to 12.5 square metres)



Lido Deck



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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Assos, Cefalonia.