

Cunard's Commodores Honoured Aboard Queen Elizabeth

In its 170-year history, [Cunard Line](#) has had the distinction of having six of its Commodores knighted – an honour no other shipping company can claim. Each of [Queen Elizabeth's](#) six top Suites is named after one of these Commodores:

Commodore Sir James Charles K.B., C.B.E., R.D., R.N.R (1865 – 1928)

James Charles joined Cunard in 1895 after an apprenticeship under sail. He was knighted in 1918 in recognition of his war service, principally as Captain of the **Mauretania**. For ten years from 1918 he was Master of **Aquitania**, and was appointed Commodore of the Cunard fleet in 1921.

Commodore Sir Arthur Rostron, K.B., C.B.E, R.D, R.N.R. (1869 – 1940)

Arthur Rostron is probably the most celebrated Cunard captain of all – the man who was Captain of **Carpathia** on the night she rescued all the survivors of **Titanic**.

He rose to become Master of **Mauretania** and **Berengaria** and was knighted in 1926 by King George V. He became Cunard Commodore in 1928, retiring in 1931.

Commodore Sir Edgar Britten, K.B., R.D., R.N.R. (1874 – 1936)

Edgar Britten ran away from his home in Bradford at the age of 15 to go to sea against parental opposition. He began as a cabin boy – not even an apprentice – on a sailing ship at five shillings a month.

By 1931 he had risen to become captain of **Berengaria**, and was knighted by King George V in 1934. In 1935 he was appointed Commodore of the newly formed Cunard White Star fleet. In 1936 he became the first master of **Queen Mary** and was in command when she gained the Blue Riband.

Commodore Sir James Bisset K.B, C.B.E, R.D., R.N.R., LL.D. (1883 – 1966)

James Bisset was second officer on board **Carpathia** when, in 1912, that sturdy little ship rescued all the survivors of **Titanic**. During the Second World War he commanded both **Queen Mary** and **Queen Elizabeth** as they undertook trooping duties which, according to Churchill, shortened the war by a year.

In 1946 he was charged with bringing the Lincoln Cathedral copy of Magna Carta back from the USA, where it had been sent for safe-keeping at the outbreak of war. Believing the ship's vault not to be safe enough for such a treasure, Bisset slept with it under his bed.

On a peacetime crossing in 1946 an American passenger mistook Bisset and Churchill for brothers. "I only wish I were his brother," Bisset said, "as he has many things which I lack." And Churchill, waving his cigar, responded "Don't you believe him. I only command the ship of state: Sir James commands the greatest ship afloat."

Commodore Bisset was knighted by King George VI.

Commodore Sir Cyril Illingworth, K.B., R.D., R.N.R. (1883 – 1958)

Captain Illingworth became Captain of **Queen Mary** in 1942, and was one of those responsible for carrying of thousands of American GIs to the war in Europe when the ship dashed across the Atlantic at full speed, unescorted, carrying 15,000 soldiers at a time.

He was appointed Commodore in 1947, and knighted in King George VI's Birthday Honours of 1949.

Commodore Sir Ivan Thompson, K.B. (1894 – 1970)

Captain Thompson became Master of **Queen Elizabeth** in 1951 and of **Queen Mary** in 1952. On several occasions he was in command of **Queen Elizabeth** when HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother crossed the Atlantic.

He became Fleet Commodore in 1954, and was knighted by the present Queen in 1955.

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About Cunard Line

Cunard Line, operator of the luxury ocean liners **Queen Mary 2** and **Queen Victoria**, has long been synonymous with the quest for new discoveries and the epitome of British refinement since the company's first paddle-wheeled steamer, Britannia, crossed the Atlantic in 1840. Cunard voyages bring together like-minded travellers who seek a civilised adventure and relish the Cunard hallmarks of impeccable White Star Service™, gourmet dining and world-class entertainment. Today, Cunard offers the only regularly scheduled Transatlantic liner service and continues the legacy of world cruising which it began in 1922. **Queen Elizabeth** joins the fleet in October 2010.

World's Leading Cruise Lines

Cunard is a proud member of World's Leading Cruise Lines. Our exclusive alliance also includes Carnival Cruise Lines, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises, Costa Cruises and The Yachts of Seabourn. Sharing a passion to please each guest and a commitment to quality and value, World's Leading Cruise Lines inspires people to discover their best vacation experience. Together, we offer a variety of exciting and enriching cruise vacations to the world's most desirable destinations. Visit us at www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com.

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