



PORTO 2014

Silk Road
Part 2

Dodo's Nest

Madagascar

WACA
One on One

WACA WORLD NEWS

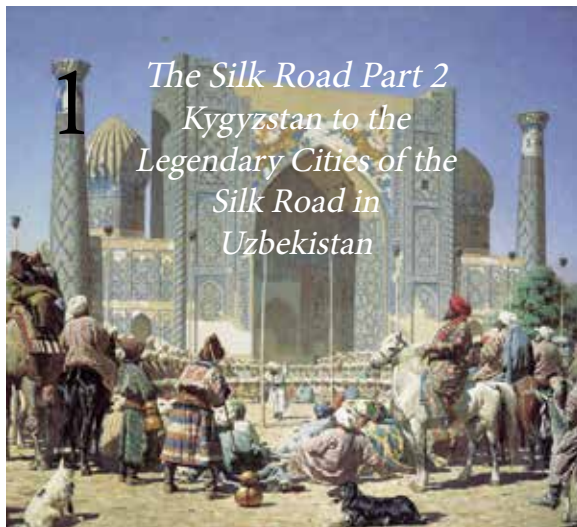
47th
AGA Info
Pack 
Inside!

August 2014

Summer Edition

WACA.ORG

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The President's Message

The next grand event is fast approaching and as per the last indication received from the organizing committee we are reaching our target number of 200 participants. I must commend first of all those participants who believe in the WACA Executive Council as well as the hosting club for proposing a good package and also in enhancing the package with the pre and post packages which are mostly sold out.



The hosting club together with the Marketing office of WACA are doing a very good job in keeping the interliners posted on the programme, facilities and also availability of seats etc... It's always through combined efforts that we will be able to succeed.

In June we had the 1st Council Meeting to plan the working sessions for the forthcoming AGA in Oporto as it will be the first AGA the WACA Executive Council will present. Some good initiatives will be shared with the membership and we are looking for your continuous supports to move ahead.

I am very proud of the team working together at the level of the Executive Council as well as the supports received from the various regional coordinators and associate to the WACA Council.

I look forward to welcome you very soon in Oporto for a successful WACA event in the true spirit of friendship, loves and interlining.

Maga Ramasamy



WACA Council Meeting Montreal, June 2014



How time flies! The picture to the right shows Maga and Trevor Thredgold having a beer at Montreal Airport after the 1992 EC Meeting. Trevor was the RVP- Far East & Australasia from the Club in Adelaide, Australia while Maga was the Secretary General at the time.



Maga and Trevor for their re-union at Montreal in June this year for the WACA Council meeting.

The meeting was attended by Maga Ramasamy, President of WACA, Keith Miller - WACA Administration Manager, and Valerie Welling, Chief of Finance. Julian Chau, Chief of Marketing & Events, sent in his apologies. The Council members and Trevor were graciously hosted by Keith Miller at his home. Important issues such as WACA's finances, future direction, and the upcoming AGA were discussed.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Interliners,

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the WACA World News. The WACA 47th Interline Celebration and Annual General Assembly will be held in Porto, Portugal. The event is seeing a brisk registration process and promises to be a well attended event compared to the past AGAs in recent years. Surmise to say, the event will be well covered by the WACA World News. In this issue, I have included articles related to past WACA tours which were not covered in the past editions of the WWN and more current events since the last issue in May, such as the Madagascar tour and the Porto Information Package. As always, contributions by you the readers will contribute to the continued success of the WACA Newsletter. If you want publicity for your club, then the best way to promote yourselves on the WWN is to submit articles about your clubs!

And with the Porto Interline Celebration approaching, we can look back at some of the successes of the new WACA structure, such as better cost controls due to a smaller "EC" structure, more sensible way of spending WACA's money, and faster decision making and initiatives. Judging from what we have seen since the Budapest AGA, the huge reduction in EC members have not affected the way WACA is run and in fact, WACA is better run today as ever. WACA will now take a more pro-active approach to managing events on our calendar, to ensure the various proposed packages do not clash or poach potential participants from each other. As such, Clubs will be advised to submit their tour proposals by the AGA, so as for WACA to plan better for 2015.

No doubt, these are exciting times and you will be pleased to hear from the WACA Council first hand the changes that are taking place in WACA at Porto. The Porto Interline Celebration organized by the Interline Clube of Portugal is shaping up to be a great success, and hopefully, WACA will ride this momentum into 2015. See you in Porto, Portugal!



Julian Chau
Chief of Marketing & Events

Grand Venture Bonanza Draw Results

And the Winners are...

The fourth draw of 2014 for a package for one person based on double occupancy for the pre-AGA tour to Madeira graciously donated by the Interline Club of Portugal was made by IATA Business Unit Controller, Steve Walker. There were 519 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner is Moya Reynolds from the Sydney Interline Club with ticket number 1070.

The fifth draw of 2014 for a package for one person based on double occupancy at the 47th AGA and Interline Celebration in Porto donated the Interline Club of Portugal was drawn by IATA Product Manager, Cargo Publications, Nicolas Carlone. There were 588 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner is Ingeborg Zurbuchen from the Interairline Club Zurich with ticket number 2261.

The sixth draw of 2014 for a package for two people donated by the Interairline Club Zurich to attend the Club's 60th Anniversary celebrations on 6/7 September 2014 (2 nights) was made by IATA Assistant Manager Corporate Finance, Justine Keller. There were 588 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner is Ann Smythe from the Sydney Interline Club with ticket number 1020.

Congratulations to the winners



Silk Road Part 2

Osh Fergana Tashkent Khiva Bukhara Samarkand

In the last edition of WACA World News, the WACA Silk Roaders traveled from Xian in China to the border of Kyrgyzstan. The story continues with the group waiting for their guide at Irkeshtam Pass with uncertainty whether she would show up and follows them as they traveled from Osh in Kyrgyzstan to Tashkent and beyond in Uzbekistan.

KYRGYZ BORDER FORMALITIES

Standing on a dirt road just across the border from China, we were surrounded by AK-47 toting Kyrgyz border guards. They were quite friendly and seemed concerned about our predicament stuck in no man's land with no one to take responsibility for us. Just as we were about to lose hope and I frantically tried to call my agent in Bukhara, one of the Kyrgyz soldiers gestured someone from afar as a Mercedes light bus could be seen driving towards us from the Kyrgyz border checkpoint. The bus stopped in front of us and an attractive young Russian lady got off the bus and nodded at us. It was not the welcoming smile you would expect from a guide who had just met her clients in such a desolate location. She seemed disinterested and did not bother to introduce herself and we knew something was amiss. As we climbed aboard, we realised how cramped the bus was given the amount of luggage we were carrying, and the cabin was dusty, we wondered why (more on this later).

At the border checkpoint, the process of just getting your passport stamped was tortuous, as it took an average of 15 minutes to process one person, and there were 9 of us, so the whole thing took over 2 hours. Then Jean got into some problems when her passport was being checked.

“Standing amongst the towering domes and minarets of the Madrassas and Mosques surrounding Registan Square, I had a feeling I am stuck somewhere back in time, maybe in a story from the One Thousand and One Nights.”

Apparently the Kyrgyz Embassy in Washington DC forgot to stamp her visa sticker and now the Kyrgyz border guards were standing firm and rejected her entry.

The soldiers at the checkpoint were uptight, unlike the friendly ones at the actual borderline whom we met earlier so I knew I had to do something. So I cracked a joke with the small and grumpy one standing next to me. I told him [Hey brother, look at my small eyes] after I took off my sunglasses. He looked up at me and pulled a wide smile and replied [Yes, we are Mongolians] and we high fived. You could see the tension was gone and the now the guards were willing to yield. At first they asked for 200 dollars to let Jean enter but when Jean asked for a receipt, which she had intended to claim back from the Kyrgyz embassy in DC for their snafu, they hesitated and eventually let all of us pass.

ORDEAL AMIDST STUNNING SCENERY WITH ALEXANDRA

After we left the border post at Irkeshtam Pass, our guide was sitting in the front of the bus next to the driver on a wooden stool and had her back turned against us and it appeared she was going to ignore us. Without the customary introduction to one's country as expected from a guide to those who visit from afar, I was compelled to give an impromptu speech on Kyrgyzstan myself.

Walt: "I have never seen such beautiful scenery before and we didn't have a chance to enjoy it!"



Ladies only, Irkeshtam Pass, Chinese Checkpoint

We would pass by some interesting stuff by the side of the road but the guide would be silent. Alexandra was her name, and I only knew because I was told she would look after us by our Bukhara agent, and she never told us her name when we met at the border. As we got hungry after an hour on the road, we noticed the driver was munching on a snack and that was when we noticed there were some food in the front and when we enquired, Alexandra indicated it was our lunch. Had we not asked, we would probably have starved all the way to Tashkent! Under the circumstances, the packed lunch was very good. A bread bun sandwich with salami slices, cheese, pickles, orange juice and bottled water.

Alexandra sitting in front in the bus



Then the roads got even worse as we climbed higher into the mountains and it got increasingly mushy as the thick melting snow made the roads impassable. This is when our nightmare really started. The bus stalled several times and we had to push the bus till the driver could start the engine and get over the mushy road surfaces. We were at an altitude of over 4000 meters and the air was thin and cold and sometimes we had to walk for a few hundred yards because the bus could not drive on the muddy road with the entire load. Sometimes we thought the bus had kaput for good and we were ready to seek help from the Chinese construction workers building a new road nearby. I think it was amongst these episodes of road despair, when we got out of our bus, that we noticed a young Kyrgyz nomad boy riding a horse on the high pasture, virtually appearing from out of nowhere.



All of us walked a few hundred metres along the road to lighten the load on the bus so it could cross the muddy mush

He seemed to delight in riding his horse on sweeping runs, and stopping in front of me momentarily from time to time, as if he knew my camera was snapping furiously at him. Then he was gone and as we gathered ourselves, we realized how beautiful and stunning the mountain scenery around us was, the high Pamir Mountains of Central Asia to our left, the same mountains Marco Polo had to traverse to get into Kublai Khan's realm in Cathay, and the Tian Shan Mountains to our right. Walt Mercer would say [I have never seen such beautiful scenery before and we didn't have a chance to enjoy it!]



THE ROAD TO OSH

As we drove further along and descended in altitude, the roads got drier and increasingly dusty. Unfortunately for us, dust was now filling the bus as there was a large hole on the floor and we had to cover our faces with clothing to filter out the dust. Alexandra would not ask if we wanted to go to the loo or take a break, and they would only stop if they wanted to have a smoke. Just when we thought the nightmare was over as we arrived in Sary Tash, our overnight stop, problems arose. We were suppose to live in yurts pitched on the pasture in the shadow of Lenin peak (Avicenna peak), the second highest mountain in the former Soviet Union and on the border of present day Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and we were told the yurts were not pitched due to the cold weather and were offered a large room in a concrete house with several beds. Although the room was clean, the communal toilets were located outside

...20 meters away and the ladies in our group balked at the prospect of having to walk out into the dark freezing night to use a primitive toilet, so it was a no no. We erroneously thought Osh was only a couple of hours away and after a call again with my agent, we decided to move on and stay in a hotel there.

The supposedly 2 hour drive turned into an eternity as we crisscrossed the Tian Shan Range. We got caked in dust and were thrown around on bumpy roads, and then the onset of darkness came and we increasingly got wary as the driver drove very fast when the roads got better, and sometimes it seemed the bus would veer off a curve and all of us thought this was it. The driver had been driving non-stop since the wee hours of the morning. He must have been on the roads continuously for at least 20 hours and then we had a couple of close calls till we hit a donkey and we thought he killed it. Luckily for us and not so for the donkey, it was just a dent on the bus and we continued, wishing we would arrive in one piece at the hotel. Just when the lights of Osh came into view, our driver took a detour into a smaller road leading to what seemed like, nowhere! This was not a joke, and we thought he was going to ransom us, up until we arrived at the compound of the Sunrise Guesthouse. It had been a very long day, and we must have been on the roads for at least 18 hours since the time we left Kashgar in China.



Clockwise from top: The high pastures of the Kyrgyzstan Pamirs with Peak Lenin in the background, The Club 777 Hotel in Fergana City, Border crossing between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Desolate road from Irkeshtam Pass to Osh in Kyrgyzstan.



After the ordeal on the roads, the Sunrise Guesthouse was a welcomed refuge. The guesthouse was owned by a Russian family and the rooms were clean and well kept and we were treated to a delicious dinner of Russian dumpling soup and a main course of chicken with potatoes. After the dinner, I sat down with Alexandra and expressed my considerable displeasure with her, about the quality of the transport, the mix up at Sary Tash, and her attitude. The group was enraged by her behaviour. Surprisingly she listened and close to tears, she explained she had been away from her child's birthday during the past 2 days and she was in a bad mood but she promised to be better the next day.

CROSSING THE BORDER AT OSH

After a deep sleep over the night, Alexandra met us in the morning with a bigger bus since the other bus was in the shop for repairs. She had a different attitude and was more forthcoming in doing her job as a guide by pointing out landmarks as we headed towards the border with Uzbekistan.

When we passed by the main market, she pointed it out to us and then she paused and mentioned the tension in the city. It seemed tension had been building between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks who live in Osh, and she predicted violence would soon break out and everyone was scared in the city. Her prophecy came true as within weeks, ethnic violence did break out and hundreds were killed. The violence made world headlines. Osh has traditionally been part of Uzbekistan since it is geographically located in the Fergana Valley until the Soviets decided to play with the borders and awarded it to Kyrgyzstan (much like the situation with the Crimea crisis of today). This led to a lot of residual problems after the breakup of the Soviet Union as border fences came up overnight. You would wonder how the 2 groups could tell one from the other, since they both speak similar Turkic languages. The giveaway is the way they look. Kyrgyz look like East Asians (Chinese, Mongolian etc.) but Uzbeks look more Persian/Asian mix and swarthy in looks.

We reached the Kyrgyz border post and one could sense how tranquil and peaceful it was and it was hard to imagine that within a month, it would be besieged by ethnic Uzbeks escaping from the carnage in Osh. Again, Jean's Kyrgyz visa sticker was picked up for the anomaly of the missing stamp and again we had a lot of pleading to do

This time, Alexandra was helpful and pro-active. As we were leaving the border post, I turned back and gave Alexandra a tip. She hadn't expected it and she hugged me in gratitude. Had she shown the same attitude and warmth the previous day, the ordeal of the bus ride would have been tempered.

Crossing the border on the Uzbek side was a laborious process, as we waited for another 2 hours to get through. As I left customs, midway to our waiting bus, I was called back. It was reminiscent of a scene from a World War 2 or Cold War movie, when one's heart stops when the Gestapo officer calls you back as you thought you were just steps from freedom. Apparently I had filled in the customs form showing I had brought 7000 USD into the country (this money was to pay my agent in Bukhara). The customs officer asked me to show him the money and then he counted the bills one by one to make sure it was the right amount and that's when I thought he said something like "Would you mind if I take a stack?" sort of thing. Much to my enormous relief, he was pointing to my unopened can of Pringles chips, of which I gladly and speedily handed over.

I had my form stamped and handed back to me, my faith in the integrity of the Uzbek officials restored.



Clockwise from top: Bakers at Margilan, Uzbek Children at Margilan pose for pictures, Wads of Soms for beer at the Club 777 Hotel bar, Dinora showing us the Silk Weaving process.

FERGANA VALLEY, UZBEKISTAN

The Fergana Valley is a lush land full of fertile soil, the proverbial land of milk and honey, when you take into account the arid and harsh landscapes around it. We were met by 2 guides, the chief guide, Larisa, an attractive and thin lady who would escort us for the remainder duration of the tour, and Dinora, a local girl who would guide us in the Fergana Valley only. We would be spending the night in the city of Fergana City and on the way; we passed through the city of Andijan, the hometown of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Dynasty in India whose descendants built the magnificent Taj Mahal in Agra.

Despite its funky name, the Club 777 Hotel in Fergana was neither funky or in any way associated with the Aviation Industry. After the deprivations of the past few days, it was an oasis with its verdant gardens and a big swimming pool. After changing our dollars for huge stacks of Uzbek Soms, we were ready to visit our first attraction in Uzbekistan. Dinora took us to a silk factory in Margilan, a town not far from Fergana City. If Alexandra from Kyrgyzstan was an introvert, Dinora was exactly the opposite, full of life and very talkative. She spoke good English and was saving up for her marriage in a few months time. We even joked about how we felt so sorry for her future husband to have to deal with such a strong willed woman (excuse us for the misogyny)! At the silk factory, we saw how the local women manually pulled the threads from the cocoons and then weaved them into cloth on manually operated looms.

Fergana was along the way when agents of Emperor Justinian of the Byzantine Empire smuggled silkworms from China in order to break the latter's monopoly on the valuable commodity. After the visit to the silk factory, Dinora took us next door to a local bread workshop, where the bakers gladly allowed us to visit and take pictures of them making delicious nan breads. Another thing which I noticed was how the ex Soviet Union might have looked like, as almost all the buildings in Fergana City dated from the Soviet era. Dinora was very proud of the Fergana Valley's heritage and she recounted how the tribes of the area united over 2000 years ago to defy a mighty army from China seeking conquest. A deal was reached whereby the local tribes agreed to supply the much sought after "blood sweating" horses to the Chinese cavalry as a yearly tribute, so as to maintain their independence.

TRAPPED IN FERGANA CITY

After checking out of the hotel and looking forward to a tour of the Fergana Valley on our way to Tashkent, we encountered an unscheduled event as roads out of the city were blocked because the Uzbek President Islam Karimov was in town. We had switched to cars since the Uzbek authorities would not allow buses to pass through the Kamchik Pass to Tashkent for safety reasons and our cars were blocked at every possible route out of the city,



Lunch at Fergana City to wait out the blockade



A tanker truck blocks the road at Fergana City



The Kokand Khan's Palace



At the entrance to the Kokand Palace

... so we gave up and went back to the hotel to have a few drinks. When it appeared the blockade could not be re-opened soon enough, we went for lunch in a local restaurant. The lunch was good with lamb chop kebabs and Russian style dumpling soup and delicious salads. Since the blockade was still on after lunch, we headed for the nearest internet café and fired off a few emails and I assessed my Facebook account for the first time in 2 weeks.

Eventually the blockade was lifted but we had lost the morning's sightseeing activities, including a visit to the famous Rishtan pottery centre but we still had time for Kokand. The Kokand Khans used to be a powerful force to be reckoned with in Central Asia, until their subjugation by the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Although their palace at Kokand is nothing grand or spectacular, it gave us a decent introduction to the history and architectural styles of the Fergana Valley and Uzbekistan. After our visit to the Palace, we bided Dinora goodbye and continued in our 4 car convoy through the Kamchick Pass to Tashkent. The Fergana valley is surrounded by high mountains. To the north is Kazakhstan, the East is Kyrgyzstan and the south bordered by Tajikistan, so the Valley was only connected to the rest of Uzbekistan by a narrow strip of land via the Pass.

We arrived in Tashkent after the sun had set and judging from its appearance at night, it appeared to be a modern city with loads of Soviet architecture. During Soviet times, it was the 4th largest city in the Communist giant, just after Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Kiev. The old sections of the city were destroyed in the massive earthquake of 1966, so most buildings we saw were constructed in the aftermath of the disaster. We checked into the Grand Orzu Hotel and during dinner, we were told by Lorie and Don they had to go back to the States as the journey through Kyrgyzstan had taken its toll.



Turquoise domes of the Kokand Khan's Palace



Kamchik Pass linking the Fergana Valley to Tashkent



Uzbekistan Airways Tu-154s at Tashkent Airport



The city walls of Itchan Kala, Khiva's inner city

It was with regret to see them leave the group, considering how far we had come and have they have yet to see the highlights of Bukhara and Samarkand. We hated to see them depart as we would sorely miss their company and we understood their decision to cut short their adventure.

KHIVA – A CITY PROBABLY BUILT WITH 1001 NIGHTS IN MIND

And so we continued on our Silk Road adventure by boarding a Soviet era Tupolev 154 jet to Khiva. The flight took about an hour and we landed at the airport at Urgench, which is located near another famous city with the same name that was destroyed by Genghis Khan's army. Instead of the cars and that "bus" in Kyrgyzstan, we now had a new 35-seater bus just for the remaining 7 of us! The drive to Khiva was short and after checking into the Malika Khiva, a nice boutique hotel located in front of Khiva's main gate, we joined Larisa for a walk through the ancient inner city, called the Itchan Kala. The Itchan Kala is surrounded by imposing brick walls that glow orange in the warm sun and is inhabited by ethnic Turkmen (Khiva is on the border with Turkmenistan), who are ethnically different to Uzbekistan's majority Uzbek people. Khiva is located very near to the old capital of the Khwarezmian Empire which ruled over Iran and huge swathes of Central Asia before its conquest by Genghis Khan, who massacred and razed the city in the 13th century. Khiva was again destroyed by Timur over a century and a half later.

The current magnificence of Khiva can be attributable to its Khans, who ruled the Khiva Khanate till its occupation by Czarist Russia in the late 19th century during the Great Game geopolitical confrontation with the British Empire. Ironically, the Khiva Khans were descendants of Genghis Khan! Most of Khiva is made up of old buildings dating from the time of the Khanate, which endowed the city with tall minarets covered by bright blue tiles such as the unfinished Kalta Minor minaret and the Islam Khoja, the tallest minaret in Central Asia. Our afternoon was spent just wondering through its mosques, madrassas and public squares. If you could imagine the stories of the Arabian Nights with the blue domes, flying carpets and minarets, Khiva is it. The Arabian Nights or 1001 Nights were supposedly compiled from a collection of stories told by Scheherazade, a Persian queen from nearby Merv in present day Turkmenistan.

When dusk arrived, the inner city was emptied out and we enjoyed a dinner with a private cultural show by a Turkmeni family, with singing, dancing and we were particularly enthralled by a Turkmeni child wearing a huge sheepskin hat doing a pretty good impersonation of a dancing Cossack.



*"The Kalta Minor
was meant to be the
tallest minaret in
Central Asia but was
unfinished."*





Clockwise from top:

1. Bolo Haus Mosque.
2. Poi-i-Kalta Ensemble with the Kalon Minaret.
3. The Mir-i-Arab Madrassa.
4. Sitting at entrance to the Madrassa.
5. Bukhara Bazaar.
6. Dinner Show at the Beghan Devi Madrassa.
7. The Ark, the fortress of Bukhara.

LEGENDARY
SILK ROAD
CITY



Bukhara



LONG DRIVE ON THE KYZYL KUM DESERT TO BUKHARA

The drive to Bukhara took us through the Kyzyl Kum Desert, which means Red Sand in Turkic. The drive was uneventful through flat terrain and at times the road skirted the banks of the Amu Darya River, which forms the boundary between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. We entered Bukhara in the late afternoon. As we reached the front of the hotel, Al was not too impressed with the hotel and gave a thumb's down. But once we entered the front door of the Amelia Hotel, we were pleasantly surprised by the beauty of the boutique hotel, with its quaint courtyard and tastefully decorated rooms and Al's thumb went the other way. Up!

Since there was still time to spare, we went out for a late afternoon and evening walk, as our hotel was next to the old city, and I also paid a quick visit to Dmitry, my agent who set up the Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan part of the tour. Dmitry runs East Line Tours out of Bukhara and is of Afghan origin and it was a huge relief to deposit the thousands of dollars that I had been carrying on me since Beijing, money I thought was going to be confiscated at the border crossing in Osh. If Khiva looked like a museum city at night (devoid of people), Bukhara was alive with bazaars and shopping.

Bukhara, along Samarkand, was amongst the most important Silk Road cities in the middle section of the Great Silk Road and was controlled at various times by the Persians, Greeks, Chinese, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russians. Bukhara is also Larisa's hometown, and she went back home to see her daughter that evening as we thronged the streets of Bukhara.



A bus at a rest stop in the Kyzyl Kum desert between Khiva and Bukhara. Kyzyl Kum means Red Sands in Turkic.

BUKHARA

Larisa picked us up in the morning and we did a walking tour of the Jewish neighbourhood around the hotel. Bukhara has a large historical Jewish community and we visited a Jewish school, synagogue and checked out the unique...



The Amelia Hotel, a gem in Bukhara

... wooden carvings on the doors of old houses. After the visit to the atmospheric Jewish neighbourhood, we visited the Kalon (Kalyan) minaret at the Po-i-Kalyan Complex in the old city. The Kalon Minaret was built in the 11th century and was the only structure surviving after the Mongol invasion. Genghis Khan was so impressed by it, he spared the tower while the surrounding buildings were destroyed. He did have a use for it, hurling the terrified citizens of Bukhara down to their deaths from the top of the minaret.

The Kalon Minaret is flanked by the large Kalyan mosque complex and the Mir-i-Arab Madrassa, which is the only active madrassa in Uzbekistan (a madrassa is an Islamic religious school), ironically with Stalin's approval. The Kalon tower itself is constructed of intricate brickwork and the Mir-i-Arab Madrassa has 2 turquoise coloured domes. These combined with the Kalyan Mosque provide an impressive ensemble of Persian style Islamic architecture.

After lunch in a traditional Uzbek teahouse (a Chaikhana), we entered the fortress palace of the Bukhara Emirs, also known as the Ark. The Palace is situated on a small hill with a vantage view of Bukhara and was last overcome by the Red Army in 1920 after a heavy bombardment. After our visit to the Bukhara Fortress, we walked around and soaked in the other notable sights in the old city, such as the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, the Char Minor mosque, and the Lyabi Haus Complex. It was getting hot and we decided to beat the heat back in the cool hotel courtyard with a few beers. For dinner, Larisa organised a fashion show dinner at the Divan Beghi Madrassa, built on land that was once owned by a Jewish widow, who stubbornly refused to give up her land but later relented when another plot of land was given in exchange for it (the present day Jewish quarter).

BUKHARA TO SAMAKAND VIA SHAHRISABZ

In order to break the long drive to Samarkand, we stopped in the city of Shahrissabz along the way, where Timur was born. Timur is considered a national hero in Uzbekistan and his lofty statue graces the city's main square. This heroic status is puzzling since Timur's dynasty was ousted ...

In every city Timur sacked and destroyed, he spared the artisans and brought them back to Samarkand to build his magnificent Palaces, Mosques and other public buildings

...by the Uzkeks when they invaded the area. His descendant Babur was driven from the Fergana Valley and founded the great Mughal Dynasty in India. Timur was even a more accomplished conqueror than Genghis Khan. Descended from the Mongol Barlas tribe, he went on to defeat the great empires of the day, such as the Egyptian Mamluks, Turkish Ottomans, Persian Il-Khans, the Golden Horde in Russia and the Delhi Sultanate; and he terrorised their cities from Damascus to Ankara, from Isfahan to Delhi, leaving behind a legacy of epic massacres. He died in present day Kazakhstan at Otrar while preparing for an invasion of China. Timur was born in Shahrisabz and he had a Mausoleum built there for himself, which he never occupied, as he was buried in his capital, Samarkand. Shahrisabz was also home to Timur's summer palace, the White Palace, which is just a ruin today, standing behind Timur's statue. We arrived in Samarkand just before evening, staying at the Malika Hotel Samarkand.

SAMARKAND

Samarkand is another fabled city on the Silk Road and today, it is the second largest city in Uzbekistan. This morning Larisa picked us up with the bus and we were dropped off at the Gur-i-Amir Mausoleum where Timur is buried. The mausoleum is a popular shrine for Uzbeks who pay respects to their national hero. We encountered a group of Muslim men who gladly posed for a photo while they were praying in front of the Mausoleum. Many of the mosques, madrassas and mausoleums in Central Asia have blue as its dominant colour and for Timur's mausoleum, a special blue was used on the dome's



Above: Timur's Statue in Shahrisabz.

Below: ruins of the White Palace, Timur's Summer Palace



"a special blue was used on the dome's tiles to signify mourning"

Referring to Timur's Mausoleum, below



After Gur-e-Amir, we decided to walk to Registan Square and along the way, there was a children's festival where children were dressed in their national dress, youth association uniforms etc and putting on shows for the pedestrians. We spent some time mingling with the happy children during this detour.

With the children behind us, we finally reached Registan Square. Standing amongst the towering domes and minarets of the three Madrassas surrounding Registan Square, I had a feeling I am stuck somewhere back in time, maybe in a story from the One Thousand and One Nights. The square has one of the largest ensembles of outstanding Islamic architecture in the world and it is one of the most iconic sights of the Islamic World. How I wished Walt was here, so he could see the impressive architecture lying before us, but he was sick and resting at the hotel with a stomach bug.

After our visit to Registan Square, Larisa showed us the Bibi Khanym Mosque, which was previously a UNESCO World heritage landmark but her award was stripped as the result of the Uzbek Government's zeal renovating it. The mosque, named after his favourite wife, quickly fell apart not long after Timur built it and earthquakes from later eras contributed to its ruinous state. It is a huge mosque with a massive portal. Our next stop was the Necropolis, where many relatives and descendants of Timur were buried.

Timur's name is romanticized to Tamerlane in the West and he was the subject of Christopher Marlowe's play "Tamburlaine", an important milestone in the history of English Drama.

Samarkand

Samarkand - Crossroads of Cultures



Clockwise from Top:

1. Sherdor Madrasa, Registan Square.
2. Ceiling of the dome of the Sherdor Madrasa.
3. Uzbek men pray in front of the Gur-i-Amir, Timur's Mausoleum.
4. Al Toledo posing front of Registan Square.
5. Frances in the Necropolis Complex with Larisa in blue behind her.
6. Children's Festival in Samarkand.
7. The giant portal of the Bibi Khanym Mosque, built by Timur for his favourite wife.



Then I mentioned the legend of Daniel. The Uzbeks claimed that Timur brought back the bones of Daniel (Biblical Prophet) from Syria and entombed it in Samarkand. Sobie, being a devout Christian, along with Jeanie, wanted to see the tomb, so we made an unscheduled stop at his mausoleum, which also happens to be located on the site of Maracanda, the city where Alexander the Great killed his best friend in a drunken rage.

TASHKENT

Despite the distance, the drive to Tashkent the next day was relatively quick and we were checked in at the Grand Orzu hotel just after lunch. I was tired and so stayed behind in the hotel while Larisa took the rest for a tour of the city, where they visited Tashkent's beautiful subway, opera house and the city centre. That night, we had a farewell dinner at the Caravan Restaurant and said our goodbyes to Larisa, who had to catch a train to Bukhara. She was a very professional guide and we learnt a lot from her about the history and cultural heritage of her country.

"Too often. . . I would hear men boast of the miles covered that day, rarely of what they had seen." – Louis L'Amour

I stayed an extra day in Tashkent and did a tour of the city with Walt and Fran Mercer, and left early the following morning for a Turkish Airlines flight to Istanbul, alone, to complete the Great Silk Road.

EPILOGUE

Looking out from my hotel balcony in Sultana-met at dusk over the Hagia Sophia, I reminisced over my journey from Beijing to Istanbul. I had taken 3 overnight train rides, rode horses and camels, took 3 flights in between, rode in buses and cars, and crossed several deserts and mountain ranges; Gobi, Takla Makan, Kum Tag, Tian Shan, Pamirs, Kyzyl Kum. I gasped at the archaeological wonders of the terracotta warriors in Xian, rode a camel in the giant sand dunes of Dunhuang, immersed myself in the exciting chaos of Kashgar's livestock market, survived the highway of hell in Kyrgyzstan, and sipped tea in the Chaikhanas of Uzbekistan amidst the turquoise domes, and now, I am in Constantinople, after a journey of over 3 weeks, a journey that took Marco Polo three and a half years to complete going the other way. **Julian Chau**

All pictures published in this article were taken by Julian Chau. More pictures can be seen in https://www.flickr.com/photos/j_chau/sets/72157624264885189/

The China section of the trip was assisted by cnadventure.com and the Kyrgyzstan/Uzbekistan section was assisted by eastlinetour.com



The Great Silk Road

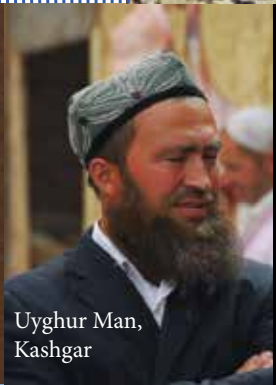
1. Beijing 2. Xian
3. Jiayuguan 4. Dunhuang
5. Turpan 6. Urumqi 7. Kashgar
8. Irkeshtam Pass 9. Osh
10. Fergana Valley 11. Tashkent
12. Khiva 13. Bukhara
14. Samarkand

[[The Journey of Ten Thousand Miles starts with a Single Step]] - Lao Tzu

Khiva's Skyline



Uyghur Man,
Kashgar



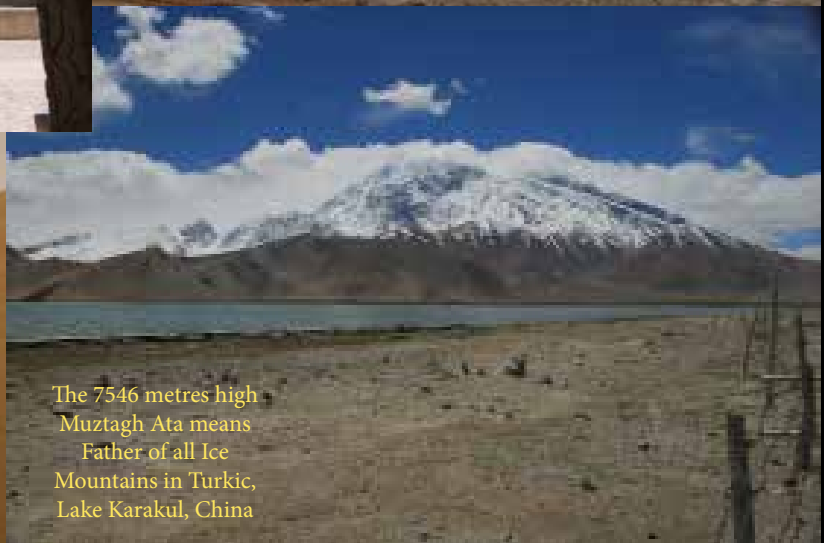
Bukhara's Mir-i-Arab
Madrassa



Kyrgyzstan Pamirs
Irkeshtam Pass to Sary Tash



Riding Camels in
Dunhuang's Singing
Sand Dunes



The 7546 metres high
Muztagh Ata means
Father of all Ice
Mountains in Turkic,
Lake Karakul, China



JIAYUGUAN FORT



Rishtan
Pottery



Sobie with Uzbek Family, Samarkand



David Cianfarani with current WACA President, Maga Ramasamy

It was literally a blast from the past as we caught up with David Cianfarani, member of the London Interline Club, late last year in the UK during the WACA Council Meeting that was held at the Holiday Inn Heathrow in London. David talked fondly of the old days and also discussed with WACA about the way forward in the future. Given David's extensive background in the early days of WACA, we asked him to give us an insight into the past.

WACA – the way we were.....

Late in the year 2013 the WACA Executive met in London, and I took the opportunity to do what we all like to do when fellow Interliners are in town – we met up!

It was a chance for me to learn first-hand how Maga, Valerie, Keith and Julian are trying to get WACA moving forward after a long period during which the airline industry has faced so many challenges. It was also an occasion to look back on the early years of WACA, which corresponded very much to my working life in both the London town Reservations Office of British European Airways (BEA as it was then, before becoming part of a larger British Airways) and in the departures / arrival Offices landside and airside at Heathrow Airport from 1963 to 1972.

In those days things were very different. There were quite a few strong Interline Clubs, including the London Interline Club (LIC), which I was privileged to Chair for two years. WACA covered quite a large part of Europe and some parts of Asia, Africa and Australasia, but North American Clubs in those days belonged to a separate and slightly less formal grouping – NAICC (North American Airline Clubs Conference). The exception was Miami, one of WACA's foremost Clubs, where the LIC first sent a delegation which included myself and Danny Boyle. Our role was that of an Observer Club and we were allowed to sit in at meetings so that we could make a decision whether to join WACA (which we did soon afterwards).

In those days the make-up of Interline Clubs, and their method of operating, bears little relation to the current situation: most Clubs were primarily for ...

... salespeople or those actively engaged in promoting their airlines, reflecting the very considerable numbers employed as Sales Reps and Managers. One consequence of this was the ready availability of discounted or free tickets to events, but on the other hand many people who were to go on to be great Interliners when the rules were relaxed, were excluded from Membership in the early years.

Communication between Clubs and Executive Members was achieved by telex – yes, telex! – and airmail postage, although some airlines allowed post to travel free in their company mail-bags. It was a very long time before any form of computerisation or facsimile would be invented. Letters were typed with accompanying carbon paper to make copies. Nevertheless flagship events like the Inter Airline Club Zürich's (IACZ) annual Christmas Ball and the LIC Dinner / Dance drew numbers from far and wide.



Telex machine - the main form of instant communication before the advent of emails.

WACA was administered with an iron hand by the legendary Secretary-General and subsequent Member-of-Honour, Hanns Proksch, based in SAS Frankfurt, who meticulously prepared and minuted all WACA AGAs or Executive Meetings. We became great friends and I visited him in Germany before he sadly passed away a few years ago. Once the LIC joined WACA I soon became a Member of the WACA Executive with the lofty title of Vice-President Europe, encouraging Clubs to form and hold events. At the same time my other dear and life-time friend, David Larkin, became first Director of PR and then Vice-President Procedures, before later becoming WACA President.

We went together to Johannesburg to address the Interline Club there, and to see whether there would be interest from Capetown, (both to become very strong WACA Members as time progressed), and of course David arranged for my baggage to be erroneously offloaded in Switzerland, so that during the trip I had more or less only the clothes I had travelled in.

The great thing about WACA then, as now, is that it brought people of a common interest together and supported a number of good causes along the way. It ...

WACA One on One Continues...

...provided an umbrella for Clubs worldwide, but despite the fact that many Clubs paid their dues promptly, it was very hard to administrate as it had no Office and no other source of income except a small levy at AGA's.

When a person left the industry, as I did in 1972, one usually played little or no further part in Interline Clubs, especially as most airlines withdrew concessions and it was too expensive to travel to events. Nonetheless, in the same spirit that Members-at-Large want to continue as part of the WACA family I, as a Member of Honour, have done the same and read all the literature and study all the photographs avidly.

And so, while I won't be joining you in Portugal, I wish the Executive, all participants, the host Club and all readers a wonderful AGA, and hope that its success will help WACA build a better future.

I look forward to reading about it.....

Yours in interlining,

David Cianfarani
London, May 2014



A WACA Annual General Assembly was held in this city. Which city is this?

The first person to send the correct answer to waca.travel@gmail.com wins either a WACA Polo T-Shirt or a WACA Beach Towel. Each person is allowed one chance!

Airline Jargon

Those who traveled before the 90s on large commercial airliners are likely to have encountered the "Blue Juice". Today's airplanes are equipped with vacuum suction toilets that use the differential pressure during flight to evacuate wastes from the toilet bowl. In the old days, aircraft lavatories relied on flush toilets with a liquid reservoir beneath the toilet bowl holding the "blue juice" used to flush the toilet. The "blue juice" is mostly water with chemical additives such as for deodorant, anti-ice and sanitizer purposes. So when a flight attendant says: "There is no blue juice in the lav" back in the old days, it meant the lavatory was inoperative.



WACA needs you to contribute to the WACA World News. Please contribute by telling us about the interesting activities at your clubs or anything you want to share with fellow interliners. Contact waca.travel@gmail.com



47 AGA & INTERLINE CELEBRATION INFORMATION PACKAGE

Porto, Portugal



Oct 05-10 2014



*“I’ve got two
places I like to be.
Portugal is one.”*

Cliff Richard

The English pop icon from the 60s and 70s was so enthralled with the country of Portugal that he suggested it was the only foreign country he would like to be in, which spoke volumes about this historical nation sharing the Iberian Peninsula with Spain.

This year’s AGA is held in a country with a rich cultural heritage and punched above its weight in the past. Today, we associate Portugal with Port Wine, its soccer stars and coaches such as Cristiano Ronaldo and José Mourinho, its Algarve resorts and the Portuguese language spoken in Brazil. Yet Portugal burst onto the scene of the world in the 15th Century to launch the world’s greatest age of exploration and changed the history of mankind in an epic manner. Portuguese explorers such as Henry the Navigator, Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco Da Gama pushed the boundaries of exploration one after the other. By the early 16th Century, Portugal was the pre-eminent trading empire in the world, with colonies and trading outposts dotting the coasts of Brazil, Africa, India, Iran, South East Asia and China (I am in fact typing this article just a few miles from the location of an old Portuguese fort at Tuen Mun in Hong Kong, called Tamao by the Portuguese).

Given the competition posed by the Dutch, who were expanding their mercantile interests at the expense of Portugal, the later rise of the British Empire, and domination at various times by its larger neighbour Spain, Portugal went into a decline till it finally relinquished its last colonies in Africa and Asia after the Carnation Revolution in 1974 and democracy was introduced in 1976. The last colony of Macau was returned to China in 1999, closing the chapter in the legacy of Portuguese discoveries and colonialism.

Today Portugal is a modern and progressive nation of 10.5 million people firmly entrenched in the European Union. There are many more millions of people of Portuguese descent who are living in Brazil, Canada, the USA, Australia, France, and elsewhere. Lisbon is the largest city in Portugal and its capital but Porto is an important business hub and the country’s second largest city. Geographically and culturally somewhat isolated from its neighbour, Portugal has a rich, unique culture, lively cities and beautiful countryside. The country offers outstanding landscape diversity, due to its North-South disposition along the western shore of the Iberian Peninsula. You can travel in a single day from green mountains in the North, covered with vines and all varieties of trees to rocky mountains, with spectacular slopes and falls in the Centre, to a near-desert landscape in the Alentejo region and finally to the

Dear Interliners,

This Information Package is compiled to provide useful information about the upcoming 47th Annual General Assembly and Interline Celebration to be held in Porto, Portugal by the Interline Clube of Portugal. The Package will start with a short introduction to Portugal and Porto, followed by useful tips that will address some of the FAQs about the event, followed by a brief introduction to the day by day program of the Interline Celebration.

Julian Chau
Chief of Marketing & Events



...glamorous beach holiday destinations of Algarve.

Portugal is Mediterranean but it’s on the Atlantic, it’s Iberian but it’s not Spanish, it’s European but focuses more on the ocean, it’s Latin but with a more reserved Nordic-like temperament. Portugal is difficult to define in familiar terms, a low-profile land with a feeling of apartness, in its own little world that’s more ocean than dry land, more an island than part of a peninsula. Vamos para Portugal!

Julian Chau

Portugal General Facts and Figures

Population	10.5 Million
Language	Portuguese
Capital	Lisbon (Lisboa)
Area	92,212 Kilometres ²
Currency	Euro
Government	Unitary Semi-Presidential Republic
President	Aníbal Cavaco Silva
Prime Minister	Pedro Passos Coelho
Power Socket	European 2 pin round
Electricity Voltage	220 Volts AC
Time Zone	GMT+0 or UTC +0:00, DST GMT+1
EU Member	Yes
Visitors Visa	Schengen
Country Dial Code	+351
Porto City Dial Code	22

Transport Details

International Airports IATA Codes	Lisbon Portela (LIS) Porto Francisco Sá Carneiro (OPO)
Airlines flying to LIS	BA, EK, KL, IB, LH, TP, AF, SK, TK, LX, UA, US, HV, UN, U2, 4U, DY, RV, EI, FR, SN, TS, LY, VY, DS
Airlines flying to OPO	BA, SN, U2, TS, LH, LY, VY, TP, YW, DS, ZI, ML, FR
Lisbon-Porto Train	Most trains depart from Lisbon's Oriente and Santa Apolonia Stations to Porto's Campa-ha Station and vice versa. Price of a ticket is between 24 to 30 Euros oneway. The journey takes about 2.5 to 3 hours. From Campaha Station, you can take line E (purple line) and get off at the Francos Station, which is located about 500 metres from the Tiara Park Hotel. The journey takes about 12 minutes. You can get the timetable and book tickets at the Portugal Rail website at http://www.cp.pt/
Porto Airport to Hotel	Subway: Take Line E (purple line) at the Airport and get off at Francos Station. The Francos Station is about 500 metres from the Tiara Park Hotel. The ticket cost is about 1.80 Euros and takes 20 minutes. More information such as timetables and routes can be found at the Porto Metro's website: http://www.metrodoporto.pt/en/
Porto Public Transport Information	Public transport in Porto can take the form of buses, metro, taxis, funiculars etc. and prices are reasonable compared to the public transport of your typical Western European country. More information can be found in Porto Tourism's Website: http://www.porto-tourism.com/how-to-get-around-in-porto.html

Climate

Porto has a Mediterranean type climate with dry warm summers and mild winters. From June to October, Portugal enjoys the warmest and best temperature range with an average maximum high of 22 celcius and an average minimum low of 11 celcius in October. There is a 40% chance of precipitation between early to mid October.

Hotel Details

Address	Hotel Tiara Park Atlantic Porto, Avenida da Boavista 1466, 4100-114 Porto, Portugal
Contacts	Phone:+351 22 607 250 Website: www.tiara-hotels.com/en/park-atlantic-porto
Amenities	Free Wifi, Room Safe, Gym, Garage, 24 Hour Room Service, Discotheque, Restaurants etc.

CONCELHO DO PORTO, A CIDADE INVICTA



PORTO IN A COLLAGE

Avenida
dos Aliados

Casa
da Música

Clérigos
Tower

Igreja do
Carmo

Casa de
Serralves

Old town at
night with
Luiz I Bridge

Arrábida
Bridge

Estádio
do Dragão

Panoramic view from Vila Nova de Gaia



PORTO

A CIDADE INVICTA

A Guide to the
Best European
City to Visit in
2014

Porto is one of the last undiscovered European metropolises, but that is about to change with the city being named the best European city to visit in 2014. But this is not a new city. It is an ancient port steeped in history and tradition. It is a highly atmospheric place that has become known for its monuments by renowned architects (Gustave Eiffel's Dona Maria Bridge, Nicolau Nasoni's Clerigos Tower, Rem Koolhaas' Casa da Musica, or Siza Vieira's Serralves Museum), but just when you think you don't know much about this city, think again.

This is the city that originated and named Port Wine, and gave birth to one of world history's legendary figures, Prince Henry the Navigator (you'll also see in new guidebooks that it is also the birthplace of that world-famous fictional character, Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling was living in Oporto as an English teacher when she started writing her first book). These are just a few curious facts about this intriguing and majestic city, and if you want to find out more, then you are in the right place and at the right time in this Interline Celebration hosted by the Interline Clube of Portugal.

Porto is in the North of Portugal and the region has a rich cultural, historical, and architectural and landscape heritage, pearls that UNESCO has classified over the years as World Heritage Sites. While visiting the region, you can't miss the Upper Douro Wine Region, a unique setting in the world that will leave you mesmerized; the historical centers of Porto, the city of granite, but with an open heart, and Guimarães, birthplace of Portugal and the European Capital of Culture in 2012.



THE OLD QUARTERS OF PORTO

The historical centre of Porto is an urban set of incalculable value. Visit the Cathedral and walk through the alleys that, in cascade, lead you to Ribeira, where you can take a guided tour of the Stock Exchange Palace, built between 1842 and 1910 and one of the most beautiful buildings of the city, and right next door, visit the Gothic church of S. Francisco.

You can walk through the winding streets of the old quarters, and you can also rent a bike but the day after, your muscles will protest from this adventure - or visit this part of town in an organized segway tour. Feel the intensity of life in Ribeira and enjoy a snack of cheese on a board accompanied with Port Wine. Glance at the sky and discover the towers of the Cathedral, or climb up to the churchyard and take some time out in the Belvedere. Visit the Clérigos and if you have time and are up to it, climb the 255 steps of the Tower, boldly high and beautiful in its unique Baroque style. Admire São Bento railway station, with glazed tiles portraying the history of Portugal, by Jorge Colaço. Walk down Rua das Flores, through the vital streets of the historical centre and admire the richness of the historical buildings classified by UNESCO. Marvel at the area around Alfândega and the series of coloured houses anchored in arches in Rua de Miragaia.

Discover examples of Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque and Neo-classical art, and of Portuguese iron architecture, side-by-side with buildings that have been refurbished, yet kept their traditional style. In the last five years, the urban rehabilitation of the historical centre has grown by the day and this part of the city, as well as downtown, has now been taken over by younger residents.

Cross the Luís I Bridge and visit the Port wine cellars on the south bank of the river. Do not be surprised if you see kids diving in the Douro: they throw themselves from the bottom tray and dip crossing the Douro on the hottest days, previously they did that to ask for some money. At night, watch a concert in the old Market Ferreira Borges, an emblematic building of nineteenth-century of iron architecture which today houses the concert hall of Hard Club.

1 CAIS DA RIBEIRA The Soul of Porto

The alluring district of Ribeira is made up of medieval streets and seedy alleyways. It is a crumbling but fascinating place, ending at a riverfront square (“Praça da Ribeira”). With photogenic traditional boats floating at the quayside overlooked by colorful ancient houses, this is the most picturesque spot in the city and the place everyone loves -- UNESCO did too, and declared it a World Heritage Site.

Have a refreshing drink and take in the unique atmosphere, and return at night when it is especially lively. There are dozens of cafés, bars, and restaurants sheltered under medieval arches, making it the most popular district in the city for eating and drinking.



The entire city seems to come by on feast days (especially on Saint John's Day every June and on New Year's Eve) to watch the major fireworks shows. In the center of the square is a bronze cube surrounded by café tables, and just around the corner on Rua da Alfândega is “Casa do Infante” (or “House of the Prince”), where Prince Henry the Navigator was born in 1394.

Over the years the building also served as the city's customs house, and now contains the city archives, including the document of Prince Henry's baptism, and other articles and manuscripts related to the history of Oporto. From Ribeira you can also see the series of Port Wine houses across the river, as well as the attractive Cais de Gaia riverfront.

2 CAIS DE GAIA Porto's Stunning Skyline and a Taste of Port

The views from Cais de Gaia are perhaps the longest-lasting images of Oporto for visitors. It's impossible not to stand in awe at the city's stunning skyline, whose impact is further enhanced by the picturesque boats that stand in front, and the soaring double-decker Dom Luis Bridge.

Breathe in the atmosphere from the several cafes and restaurants at the riverfront, and then visit the terracotta-topped Port Wine warehouses that stand behind them. Most of the world's supply of Port is stored and aged here, and a visit to any of the warehouses should not be missed. If you venture into the alleys uphill, you will find 19th century manor houses and even more port lodges (that of Taylor's is especially worth a visit).

It is best to come here in late afternoon and stay for dinner overlooking Oporto.



AVENIDA DOS ALIADOS The Monumental Heart of Porto

The imposing Avenida dos Aliados is the heart of the city, a sloping boulevard lined with grand buildings and a central promenade. Most of the buildings are hotels or main branches of the country's major banks, while the central promenade used to be a garden but was remodelled in 2006 by renowned architect Alvaro Siza Vieira who also designed the city's Serralves Museum.

At the top of the avenue stands the Town Hall, a palatial building with a tall bell tower (70m high). Made of granite and marble, its design was influenced by municipal architecture of Flanders and France. In front of the building is a modernist statue of Portuguese writer Almeida Garrett. At the other end of the avenue is Praça da Liberdade, a square adorned with a statue of King Pedro IV on a horse.

There are also several cafes, including the historical Guarany. Sit at one of the tables on the pavement outside to watch the world go by, and pass by the city's main tourism office by the Town Hall.



4

RUA DE SANTA CATARINA & PRAÇA DA BATALHA Porto's Lively Shopping Street

This mostly-pedestrianised shopping street is a magnet for both locals and tourists. Most come simply for a stroll, to shop, or to seek refreshment at the wonderful Café Majestic.

This could be seen as the city's shopping center, although there is also a mall halfway down the street. That's "Via Catarina", with international retailers such as "H&M" and "Zara," as well as a very attractive food court with restaurants built into what was

made to look like traditional Portuguese houses.

This street is always full of life except on Sundays, when most shops are closed. At the end of the Rua de Santa Catarina Street is this also mostly-pedestrianised



square, Praça da Batalha. It is a pleasant place in which to rest, with several benches and cafés.

It is overlooked by a statue of King Pedro V and São João Theater, a building with a French Renaissance look, inspired by the Louvre and the Paris Opera. The city's most important cultural events and shows take place here.

Another noteworthy building is the old Post Office, dating from the late 18th century. Turn the corner, and you'll be struck by the tiled façade of Santo Ildefonso Church.

7

FOZ A Stroll by the Sea

Foz is the most sophisticated district of Oporto, with a multitude of ocean-front bars, cafés, clubs and restaurants. You may begin a walk by the waterfront at Jardim do Passeio Alegre on Avenida D. Carlos I. This is an elegant garden entered through two 19th century obelisks and surrounded by palm trees, various sculptures, two mini-golf courses, and a bandstand that hosts philharmonic concerts during the summer. Jardim do Passeio Alegre This area retains a village-like feel, but eventually when the waterfront avenue becomes Avenida do Brasil, the wide open spaces, big attractive houses, beaches, and cafés give it the look of a resort.

The beachfront cafés remain open and popular during the winter, and locals come here to jog, ride a bike, skate, or socialize especially on Sunday mornings. The café Praia da Luz is a favorite and also recommend for a drink at night. Most of the beaches here are dotted with outcrops of rocks, so they are not recommended for swimming. But they're a great escape in the city, allowing you to lie on the sand and get your feet wet in the warmer summer months.

After the 3km (just under 2 miles) of beach, you reach Castelo do Queijo, a fortress dating from 1661. It is reached by a drawbridge, and cannon inside point towards the sea. From the fortress you can walk to the enormous Parque da Cidade, the biggest park in Oporto. It has a variety of landscapes, with parts looking like a forest with lakes. Many locals come here to exercise and use its shady spots to picnic.

5

RUA DE CEDOFEITA A Classic Porto Street

The street to the right of Carmo Church leads to Praça Carlos Alberto, a lovely square surrounded by old buildings. One of those is Teatro Carlos Alberto (or simply "TeCA"), a theater that hosts regular cultural events.

In the center of the square is a monument to the heroes of the Great War (1914-1918).

This square then leads to Rua de Cedofeita which is one of Porto's most characteristic streets. It has been pedestrianised, and is covered with the



traditional Portuguese cobblestone pavement. It is lined with shops but retains a residential atmosphere.

Turn left to Rua Miguel Bombarda, and you will find a quiet residential street but that is home to several art galleries and CCB (Centro Comercial

MERCADO DO BOLHÃO Porto's Colorful Market

6

Located in the heart of the city, this noisy and exuberant market is a sight not to be missed. It's found in a two-tier covered building and sells everything from fresh fruit to household goods. Especially entertaining is listen-



ing to the flamboyant fishwives hawking the latest catch in true Oporto spirit, an image that has made this market famous all over Portugal.



[Top Attractions and Sights of Porto - Churches]

8

SÉ DO PORTO

Porto's Fortress-like Cathedral

Oporto's austere fortress-like cathedral is where Prince Henry the Navigator was baptised and where King John I married the English Princess Philippa of Lancaster in the 14th century. The building has its origins in the 12th century, although it underwent many alterations over time.

The Gothic rose window is the only part of the original façade that remains, especially after Baroque alterations in the 18th century. The loggia on the north front was added at that time, as was the extraordinary altarpiece inside, entirely made up of silver. The Gothic cloisters are more outstanding than the church itself, covered with magnificent blue and white tiles from the 18th century.

Also worth a visit is the dazzling chapterhouse and its collection of sacred art. Before going inside, contemplate the fine views over the rooftops of old Oporto from the terrace, and admire the grandiose three-storey façade of the Episcopal Palace whose interior can not be visited. Although the cathedral is the city's largest church, the most impressive church in Porto is São Francisco Church which has a magnificent golden interior which should not be missed by anyone visiting the city.



9

SÃO FRANCISCO CHURCH

Porto's Extraordinarily Lavish Church

What from outside looks like an ordinary 14th century Gothic and Baroque construction, has the most extraordinary church interior in Oporto and unquestionably one of the most fabulously opulent in all of Europe.

The extensive 17th and 18th baroque decoration is a profusion of gilt wood carvings in the vault pillars and columns: cherubs, plants, and animals dripping with gold -- note the "Tree of Jesse," dating from 1718. The little that is not covered in pure gold (it is said that there is 400kg of it here) such as the wide-ribbed Gothic arches, are made of marble.

There is a museum housed in the catacombs below consisting of artifacts from the former monastery. Beneath the flags of the cellar are thousands of human bones, stored to await Judgment Day. Church services are no longer held here, but it is often the venue for classical music concerts. If you only have time to visit one church in Oporto, make it this one.



CARMO CHURCH

Porto's Most Eye-Catching Church(es)

10

Look carefully and what looks like just one big church is actually two connected by what is one of the world's narrowest houses - just 1 meter wide.

To the left is Carmelitas Church, part of a former 17th century convent with a simple classical façade, a bell tower, and a richly gilded interior. To the right is Carmo Church, built later in the 18th century. It is a magnificent example of late baroque architecture with a single nave made up of elegant gilt carvings in seven altars by master Francisco Pereira Campanhã.

Outside, an extraordinary side wall is completely covered in blue and white tile panels. The house that separates the two churches was inhabited until about 20 years ago. It was built due to a law that stated that no two churches could share a wall, while also ensuring chastity between the monks of Carmo and the nuns of Carmelitas.



11

CLERIGOS TOWER

Overlooking the City from its Iconic Landmark



Clérigos church tower was the tallest structure in Portugal when completed in 1763 (the national record is now Lisbon's Vasco da Gama Tower), and as the main feature of the city's skyline, ships used it as a

guide when coming into Cais da Ribeira. It's a remarkable baroque landmark designed by the Italian architect Nasoni, who also designed the adjoining church. It has become a popular tourist attraction for the aerial view of the city from the top (76 meters up -- after a steep flight of 240 steps). Inside the church, the highlight is a polychromatic Baroque-Rococo marble retable.

Opposite the tower is Cordoaria Gardens and an imposing Neoclassical and Pombaline building that is the city's former prison. The ground floor houses a photography museum with both permanent and temporary exhibitions. The collection includes the works of a Scotsman named Frederick William Flower who spent much of his life in Porto in the 19th century, and who photos (many of them of Oporto) are Portugal's oldest.

From here it is possible to walk to the monumental Santo Antonio Hospital, classified as a national monument for being a remarkable example of 18th century Neoclassical architecture.

13

CASA DA MUSICA

Porto's Architectural Marvel

This twelve-storey, irregular-shaped building was designed by world-renowned architect Rem Koolhaas exclusively for musical performances. It opened in 2005 and for admirers of architectural marvels it justifies a visit to Oporto on its own.

The striking white concrete structure is an inventive building. Inside the 1,300-seat auditorium of perfect acoustics is a baroque organ pinned to the wall, and the VIP room has hand-painted blue tiles, blending contemporary minimalism with traditional touches.

Top international orchestras have already played here, and there is also a resident company. On the top floor is one of the most sophisticated restaurants in the city. From outside some have described the building as looking like a meteorite landed in the middle of the city. It's located on the city's main avenue (Avenida da Boavista that stretches for 7km toward the sea), on a roundabout that is overlooked by a column bearing a lion and a flattened French eagle -- a monument that celebrates the victory of the Portuguese and British in the Peninsular War.



12

PALÁCIO DA BOLSA

Porto's Exuberant "Reception Room"

This pompous 19th-century building with a vast Neoclassical façade is the former stock exchange that was built to impress and earn the credibility of European investors.

Inside it could be mistaken for a royal place, especially the ornate Arab Room, an oval chamber that attempted to copy Granada's Alhambra Palace. It is now "the grand reception room" of the city where heads of state and other luminaries are received on a visit to Oporto.



Another noteworthy room is Pátio das Nações, lit by a large skylight that is a magnificent example of iron architecture. Flags of most of the countries that had trade relations with Oporto are represented here. There is also a remarkable grand staircase with two bronze chandeliers hanging from the cupola.

14

SÃO BENTO STATION

A Monumental Train Station

The first train arrived here in 1896, but the building (designed with a French Renaissance touch) was only officially inaugurated in 1916 where a convent once stood.

This is the city's most central station, standing downtown just around the corner from the monumental Avenida dos Aliados.

Around 20,000 magnificent tiles alluding to the history of transport and Portugal cover most of the atrium. They're the work of artist Jorge Colaço and date from 1916.

The most remarkable panels are those showing King João I and Queen Philippa of Lancaster by the city's cathedral in 1387, Prince Henry the Navigator conquering Ceuta in Morocco, and a representation of the Battle of Arcos de Valdevez.

Trains arrive here and depart to the major cities of the north of Portugal, while the service to Lisbon is at Campanhã Station which is easily reached by Metro from the center of Porto, including from São Bento Station.



15 DOM LUIS I BRIDGE An Ironwork Showpiece

Oporto's iconic bridge opened in 1886, when it held the record for the longest iron arch in the world. Today the metro crosses the upper level, while the lower level is used by cars and pedestrians to cross the river between the center of Oporto and the spectacular city views and port wine warehouses of the municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia.

There are four other bridges in the city and they are best seen on a Douro River cruise. The most famous of all is the impressive Dona Maria Pia Bridge, also an iron railway bridge, completed in 1876.

Designed by Gustave Eiffel before he built the famous Paris tower, and named after King Luis I's wife, it held the world record for the largest span for seven years. It remained in service until 1991 but today it stands as a national monument (it has also been designated an "International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark" by the American Society of Civil Engineers).

The other bridges are Ponte do Infante (whose central 280-meter reinforced concrete arch is the world's longest), the triple-arched Ponte de São João, and Arrabida Bridge -- the least attractive of the city's bridges, but representing a mean feat of engineering: spanning 270 meters, and supported by a single arch. It was the largest such reinforced concrete bridge when inaugurated in 1963.



Top: Dom Luis I Bridge
Right: Arrabida Bridge
Below: Dona Maria Pia Bridge



"Gustave Eiffel designed the Dom Luis Bridge before he designed the Eiffel Tower in Paris!"

SERRALVES MUSEUM Porto's Cultural Eden

16

This world-class museum displays cutting-edge international contemporary art in a striking minimalist building by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Alvaro Siza Vieira.

Like the Guggenheim, there is no collection permanently on display, with temporary exhibitions taking up the entire space, as well as that of the separate "Casa de Serralves," a pink Art Deco construction located in the surrounding formal gardens (which are magnificent and worth a visit in their own right).

The eighteen hectares of grounds also contain natural farmland, and are dotted with modern sculptures (including a much-photographed gigantic shovel by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen).

Major exhibitions in the past have included "Andy Warhol: A Factory," "Francis Bacon: Caged - Uncaged," and "Paula Rego."

This is a sight that should not be missed when visiting Porto, and be sure to also pass by the museum shop for some of the best of Portuguese design.

If you're in the city in late May or early June, be sure to check out the museum's annual "Serralves em Festa" festival, with 40 hours of free events related to contemporary art and culture.



17 CRYSTAL PALACE GARDENS Porto's Most Beautiful Gardens Overlooking the Douro River

This beautifully landscaped park is dominated by a huge domed pavilion built in 1956 which replaced the 19th century iron-and-glass "Crystal Palace." Today's pavilion serves as a venue for concerts and sporting events. It is surrounded by a lake, flowerbeds, and roaming peacocks, all overlooking the Douro River, of which there are superb views.

There is also a multimedia library, an auditorium, a cafeteria, and the Romantic Museum. Across the street from the park entrance is the gateway to the city's art galleries district (Rua Miguel Bombarda has the largest number).



18 SOARES DOS REIS MUSEUM Portugal's Oldest National Museum

This was Portugal's first designated national museum. It was founded in 1833 to showcase works of art from dissolved monasteries and convents, including a valuable collection of paintings, glass, ceramics and jewelry (especially noteworthy is an 18th century breast piece studded with precious stones).

The collection's most emblematic work is "O Desterrado" ("The Exhiled") by sculptor Soares dos Reis (after whom the museum is named), but also of note are two portraits by François Clouet (1522-72), and landscapes by Jean Pillement (1727-1808).



Another highlight is the huge "Pedra de Eiró", a rock taken from a threshing ground by the Douro River, engraved with spiral motifs that are typical of western European megalithic art.

WORLD OF DISCOVERIES MUSEUM A trip thru the world of Portugal's explorers

19

This interactive museum/theme park makes visitors embark on the epic journeys of the Portuguese explorers. It recreates life-sized characters and sceneries of the different sea routes and lands mapped by the Portuguese, and part of the visit is made on a boat navigating through the continents.

In one of the rooms are navigation instruments and maps, as well as a 4D globe where visitors get to see how the world was known in different periods in time. Everything is explained in six languages: Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian.

At the restaurant there's a menu with foods from the different world regions, from Africa to Asia and Brazil. It's open every day of the week.



Information about the day trip to Braga, Guimarães, Viana do Castelo and the Douro River Cruise are covered in the Spring Issue of the WACA World News.

47th Interline Celebration & AGA Program

Sunday 05th October	Arrival of participants at Sá Carneiro airport (OPO) and transfer to Hotel TIARA. Check-in and registration. 19:00 Welcome Ceremony followed by a Welcome Buffet.
Monday 06th October	06:30 to 10:00 Buffet breakfast at hotel. 08:00 Full day tour to Guimarães, Braga. Lunch with wines included. After lunch return to Porto via Viana do Castelo to see the sunset in the sea from Santa Luzia. 19:00 Dinner at Hotel.
Tuesday 07th October	06:30-10:00 Buffet breakfast at hotel. 08:00 to 12:00 Regional Meetings (if applicable). Typical seafood lunch. 13:00 ½ day tour with Porto Sightseeing and visit to a Port Wine cellar/wine tasting. 19:00 Dinner at hotel. Regional night Get-Together.
Wednesday 08th October	06:30 to 10:00 Buffet breakfast at hotel. 08:00 Full day tour with a cruise on River Douro from Porto to Régua. Lunch on board with wines included. On arrival Régua a visit to the Port Wine Museum. Return Porto by bus. 19:00 Dinner at hotel.
Thursday 09th October	06:30 to 10:00 Buffet breakfast at hotel 08:00 to 17:00 47th WACA AGA (All day). Lunch at hotel only for delegates. Free day for observers. Optional tours 7:30 Gala Dinner with show. (wines included) Awards presentation.
Friday 10th October	06:00 to 10:00 Buffet breakfast at hotel. Transfer to OPO airport all day. End of program. For participants on Post Tour Açores transfer to LIS airport after breakfast.



Commonly Used Portuguese Phrases

English	Portuguese
Hello	Olá. (oh-LAH)
How are you?	Como está(s)? (KOH-moh ish-TAH(sh)?)
Fine, thank you.	Bem, obrigado(a). (behn, oh-bree-GAH-doo(ah))
What is your name?	Como se(te) chama(s)? (KOH-moo seh(teh) SHAH-mah(sh)?)
My name is _____.	Chamo-me_____. (SHAH-moo-meh____)
Pleased to meet you.	Prazer em conhecer. (prah-ZEHR ehn koh-NYEH-sehr)
Please.	Por favor (poor fah-VOHR)
Thank you (said by male)	Obrigado (oh-bree-GAH-doo)
Thank you (said by female)	Obrigada (oh-bree-GAH-dah)
You're welcome.	De nada. (deh NAH-dah)
Yes.	Sim. (seen)
No.	Não. (now)
Excuse me. (getting attention)	Com licença. (kohn lih-SEHN-sah)
Excuse me. (begging pardon)	Desculpe(a). /Perdão. (dish-KOOL-peh(ah) / PEHR-dow)
I'm sorry.	Desculpe(a). (dish-KOOL-peh(ah))
Goodbye	Adeus. (ah-DEH-oosh)
I can't speak Portuguese well.	Não falo bem português. (now FAH-loo behn poor-too-GEHSH)
Do you speak English?	Fala(s) inglês? (FAH-lah(sh) een-GLEHSH?)
Is there someone here who speaks English?	Alguem aqui fala inglês? (AHL-guehn ah-KEE FAH-lah een-GLEHSH?)
Help!	Socorro! (soo-KOH-roo!)
Look out!	Atenção! (ah-tehn-sow!)
Good morning.	Bom dia. (bohn DEE-ah)
Good afternoon.	Boa tarde. (BOH-ah TAHR-deh)
Good evening/Good night.	Boa noite. (BOH-ah NOY-teh)
I understand.	Compreendo (kohn-pree-EHN-doo)
I don't understand.	Não compreendo. (now kohn-pree-EHN-doo)
Where is the toilet?	Onde é a casa de banho? (OHN-deh eh ah KAH-zah deh BAH-nyoo?)

Portuguese (Português or, in full, língua Portuguesa) is a Romance language and the sole official language of Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Acores, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe. It also has co-official language status in Macau (China), Equatorial Guinea and East Timor. As the result of expansion during colonial times, Portuguese speakers are also found in Goa, Daman and Diu in India, in Batticaloa on the east coast of Sri Lanka, and in Malacca in Malaysia.

Numbers				Days of the Week	
0	zero (ZEH-roo)	18	dezoito ()	Monday	segunda-feira (Seh-goon-da-feira)
1	um (oon) uma (ooma)	19	dezenove ()	Tuesday	terça-feira (Ter-sah-feira)
2	dois (doysh)duas (doo-ahsh)	20	vinte e um ()	Wednesday	quarta-feira (Koo-arta-feira)
3	três (trehyesh)	21	vinte e dois ()	Thursday	quinta-feira (Kin-ta-feira)
4	quatro (KWAH-troo)	22	vinte e três ()	Friday	sexta-feira (Sezh-ta-feira)
5	cinco (SEEN-koo)	23	vinte e três ()	Saturday	sábado (Sá-bado)
6	seis (saysh)	30	trinta ()	Sunday	domingo (Do-mingo)
7	sete (SEH-chee)	40	quarenta ()	Today	hoje ()
8	oito (OY-too)	50	cinquenta ()	Tomorrow	ontem ()
9	nove (NOH-vee)	60	sessenta ()	This Week	esta semana ()
10	dez (daysh)	70	setenta ()	Last Week	semana passada ()
11	onze(On-zee)	80	oitenta ()	Next Week	próxima semana ()
12	doze(Doh-zee)	90	noventa ()	Time	
13	treze ()	100	cem ()	minute(s)	minuto(s) ()
14	catorze ()	200	duzentos ()	hour(s)	hora(s) ()
15	quinze ()	1000	mil ()	day(s)	dia(s) ()
16	dezesesseis ()	1 million	um milhão ()	week(s)	semana(s)()
17	dezessete ()	1 billion	um bilhão ()	month(s)	mês/meses ()

Madagascar

An Island Like No Other



In May this year, the AIM Region organized a tour to the Island nation of Madagascar. This is the first time a tour has been organized to the Indian Ocean island and it was well received by fellow interliners who participated in the tour.

Steve Charlton of the Montreal Interline Club gives us a first hand account and explanation of this fascinating tour.

Left: Steve Charlton

Everyone knows the Galapagos, west of South America, and its significance to science. I think the island of Madagascar should be nick-named “the Galapagos of the East”. We were 25 adventurous Interliners who took WACA’s initial Madagascar trip for 12 days in late May 2014. If it’s ever offered again, and you are spry enough to deal with “adventure travel”, take it! It was my 85th country, and certainly one of the most-memorable!

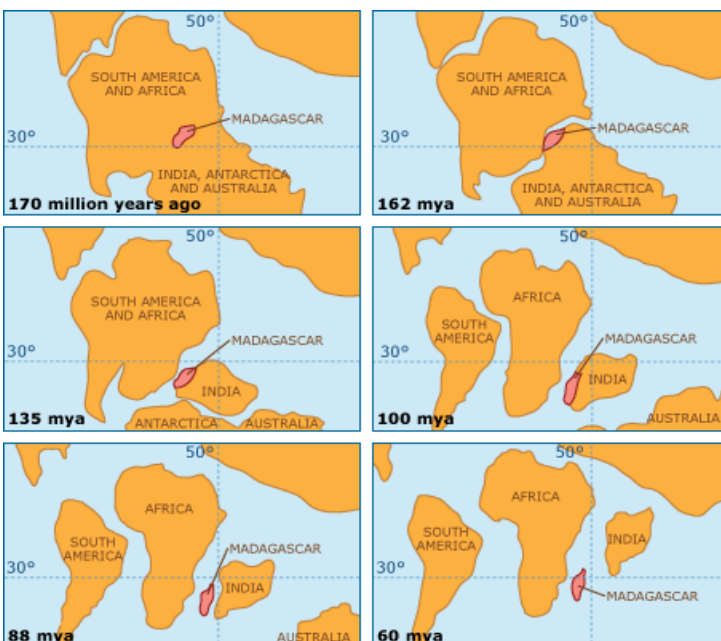
Once-called the “Green Island” by early explorers, it is now better known as the “Red Island” because of the terrible destruction of native rainforests, exposing the red soil everywhere where the trees aren’t. However, the government has set aside several large preserves, which we visited, and in these primary rain forests live the target for most of us who visited – the lemurs.

(To see “about lemurs”, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eaTBoqpNEg>)

When the earth was first formed and then cooled, a crust started to appear on the molten orb, called Pangaea, which covered about a third of the earth’s surface. It gradually broke apart into pieces, many of which form today’s continents. These large plates slowly drifted over the molten surface, casually banging into each other. (Today, the earth’s crust is still only 50 miles thick, and the deepest ocean is only 5 miles deep – under everything is still lava, and the plates are still moving.) The plate we now know as “India” broke off from Africa and drifted northward, banging into Asia, creating the Himalayas. Part of this drifting land mass also broke off (some 150 million years ago) and remained behind, alone in the middle of the Indian Ocean – the island of Madagascar, the 4th largest island in the world (after Greenland, Papua-New Guinea, and Borneo).

(See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYbTNFN-3NBo>)

Carried along on this piece of land were pro-simians (pre-monkeys), which in Africa developed into monkeys and which on Madagascar developed into lemurs, found nowhere else on the earth. Even though these little creatures generate money for the island through eco-tourism, there is great pressure on the forests by the burgeoning population. Slash-&-burn agriculture, habitat fragmentation, inbreeding, and even isolated hunting for bush-meat, all threaten lemur populations. These were the animals we wanted to see.



The break-up of the Pangaea Super Continent



Madagascar’s Central Highlands and its red soil

Human population on the island numbers 25 million, 60% of which are children. There is no government-sponsored birth control strategy, and most people have large families, especially those in the countryside, where 80% of the population live. In spite of over-population issues, one of the highlights of

"About 1800 years ago, the ancestors of the Malagasy People sailed thousands of miles of the Indian Ocean from the Barito River area of Borneo to reach Madagascar. They were later joined by the Bantus from Africa"

... this trip was still seeing the children, and participants brought school supplies to donate to them. The people were friendly throughout the trip, and all the children waved at us as our buses passed by – no rock-throwing or slurs. And when we stopped at various points, I was surprised at how the children often lined up in an orderly queue for handouts (pencils, candy), one after the other, rather than mobbing the donor. Were there beggars? Yes, here and there, but not offensive nor bothersome. Were there pickpockets? Not that anyone noticed, but good travellers know they're always there, and those taking pictures out of the bus window were warned by the guides to always keep the camera inside the bus, not at the end of an outstretched arm.



Clockwise from top right: Welcoming Ceremony set up at the Tamboho Hotel, Market Scene at Tana, Spices at Tana Market, Group Photo during Welcoming Ceremony at Tamboho Hotel, Street View of Antananarivo (Tana) from the Brajas Hotel, Malagasy Woman with Child. Photo Credits: Lorie Boehme and Don Wright.

Originally a series of tribal kingdoms, with their own history of internal feuds and wars, when European countries embarked on their own quests of expansion, the island was first befriended by Britain. Indeed many Malagasy words are still obviously English. It was later forcefully taken by France (1895), the people attempted independence by waging a fierce but unsuccessful rebellion (1948), then the island nation gained full independence in 1960. Although French is still the commonly-used second language, English, being the de facto Esperanto of the world, is also taught in schools. Being able to speak French while travelling in Madagascar is an asset, and where English didn't work, I was called upon to be the translator for our (North American) bus – the second bus was full of Europeans, and they spoke several languages already. Thanks to the early days of colonialism, many people are still Catholic, and we saw crowds emerging from a church near our hotel a day or so before our departure, and although poor, everyone was still well-dressed. In the country-side, more primitive beliefs prevail – mandatory circumcision, arranged marriages with dowries, and most-interesting, ...

...“turning of the bones”. Bodies are placed in caves (at least in the highlands where we were...) for 2-3 years, and then are ceremoniously retrieved, then re-buried permanently, higher up in the mountains. By this time only the bones remain – “rats” was the answer given to my obvious question to the guide regarding flesh. This “turning of the bones” is a village affair, where a “fatted calf” is killed for the celebration, and everyone in the village partakes. On one of our hikes, we saw more than one of these caves, the entrance piled high with stones, waiting for this bizarre celebration.



Zebu Cattle

On the topic of “fatted calves”, the local bovine is called a “zebu”, where each animal has a fatty hump on its back, over its forelegs. Many meals offered by the hotels included “zebu” as the meat, certainly no competition to Alberta beef. For most meals, I ordered the ubiquitous chicken, although fish was also available.



Meals were actually quite good during the whole trip. There were usually 2 choices of (1) starter (2) main course, and (3) dessert, sometimes 3 choices. Some of us cautiously ate salads towards the end of the trip, and I don't know of anyone who suffered from "Delhi belly" (although one usually suffers in silence). The last hotel (the "Isalo Rock Lodge") was really an oasis of luxury, and the hotel manager

("Gabriel") explained with great pride how all the food in his kitchen was washed with purified water to ensure all clients could eat anything with confidence, and that no guest would become sick. With this one exception, accommodation was "acceptable to good" – hot water, a combination safe in every room, mosquito netting, no bugs. On the downside, one night some participants were allocated cabins in the rain forest which were not high and dry on the hillside, were not in the sun during the day, and were considered "damp throughout, even the bedding". As I said, this was the initial trip, and I suspect this problem will be addressed on any future trip. As WACA travellers, we can't always expect a Hilton everywhere, and have to go with the flow. One couple of our group never saw their checked luggage for the entire trip (it sat in Istanbul), but they carried on stoically – "we won't let this spoil our trip" was the attitude, and it didn't.



Chameleon at Pereyras Reserve



The Vakona Lodge at Andasibe National Park



A Malagasy child displaying strong Austronesian genes. Malagasy's ancestors migrated to the Island from Borneo



Butterfly at Pereyras Reserve



Meal starter with frog legs and Vietnamese style spring roll.

"Meals were actually quite good during the whole trip."



Pereyras Reserve on the way from Antananarivo to Andasibe. The Reserve is famous for its butterflies and chameleons.



Dining Hall of the Vakona Lodge in Andasibe National Park

So, did we see lemurs and other creatures that go bump in the night? You bet we did! Although we didn't see the "giraffe-necked weevil", nor the "hissing cockroach", nor any snakes in the wild, we did see giant spiders, frogs, a few chameleons, endemic birds, and of course, several types of wild lemurs. There were two scheduled night walks, and several day-hikes into the forest after a hearty breakfast. The guides were excellent – I don't know how they spotted the creatures they did. There are many species of lemurs, from the small "mouse lemur" to the large "Indri lemurs", and we managed to get quite close to several families of wild lemurs that the guides found for us. The highlight for most of us was a visit to "Lemur Island" as we called it ("Vakona" in the itinerary), a natural setting surrounded by a man-made moat which kept the lemurs in the island's forest (lemurs don't swim). And of course these ones were accustomed to people, who fed them fruit, including bananas. In turn the lemurs (there were several types including the favourites, the Ring-tailed Lemurs) actually jumped on us, and from one person to the next, hoping for free food. They were wild, but unafraid, and offered many photo opportunities.



Left: The thick jungle of Ranomafana.

Below:

Bus ride to view wildlife at night (Andasibe)

Grey Gentle Lemur at Andasibe

Lena with some Common Brown Lemurs



Regarding photos, Madagascar is really a photographer's delight – people, wildlife, scenery. At sunset, the red soil was bathed in warm light, and the scenery was striking in its own right. The people eat a lot of rice, and almost every plot of land, stretching across most valleys, was turned into a number of rice fields, creating a patchwork of colour almost everywhere one looked. Most-interesting were people-scenes, where almost everyone operated a small one-person open-market stall, right at the roadside. In the country, most stalls were selling fruits and vegetables, but in the city, one stall was selling CD's, the next batteries, then shellfish, then clothing, then carrots, then plumbing supplies, and so on. Several of us arrived early, but rather than staying at the comfortable WACA-sponsored hotel (the "Tamboho") away from the action, we all gathered at a WACA-sanctioned hotel in the middle of town (the "Brajas"), and from there a walk into the central market area was easy, eye-opening, and well worth it! A huge bazaar of colourful people and stalls....



Top to Bottom:

Resting at the Rock Lodge after a long journey, Vakona Lodge at Andasibe, Wendy with a Common Brown Lemur at Andasibe, Group picture at the Vakona Lodge in Andasibe, Rickshaw rides at Antsirabe, an Idris Lemur at Andasibe. Pictures by Wendy Farch



From top to bottom:

1. Don teasing a hanging Idris lemur, Andasibe National Park.
2. A road side stall.
3. Typical country adobes of Southern Madagascar.
4. The luxury Rock Lodge at Isalo National Park.

...and banks. ATM's worked well, and were easy to use. Those who didn't do their homework before going were unhappy to find MasterCard was generally not accepted at all, but Visa was ubiquitous, even at the little stores at fuel stops. Local currency was necessary at some places of course, where thousands of "ariary" were needed to equate to a dollar.

And how much did the average worker make? One stop was at a tea plantation, where the guide explained the steps from picking the topmost tea leaves, through fermentation, and then baking. Quick calculation of baskets picked per day and price paid per basket showed that the "pickers" made about one Euro per day! It was a country of contrasts, with many people making about a dollar a day, yet an occasional Mercedes passing by on the street. Our bus was new and comfortable, the hotels were fine, and we probably tipped too generously as we travelled, considering where we were. But it was a good trip, well-organized, safe, and very interesting.

Madagascar is truly an anachronism. I suspect time is running out for the lemurs – the Indri has never bred in captivity, and may go the way of the Giant Lemur, now extinct. Half of Madagascar's 220 breeding bird species are found nowhere else in the world, but Aepyornis, the Madagascar-endemic "elephant bird", and the largest bird (10 feet tall and weighing half a ton) to have lived in modern times, was exterminated by man by the 17th century.

If you like to see new countries, see wildlife, or just like to go on WACA trips to places not normally visited by the average tourist, watch for this trip to be offered again. If it is, grab it !!! You'll be glad you did.....

Veloma !!!

Steve Charlton, Montreal Interline Club

For further information on Madagascar, you may also want to look at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxhJthA3DtA&fea->

From Top to bottom:

1. Trekking at Isalo National Park.
2. The luxury Rock Lodge at Isalo National Park.
3. A natural pool in Isalo National Park.
4. Malagasy girl posing in front of a baobab tree.



Madagascar - An Explanation of the Itinerary

The itinerary for this AIM organized tour took in the essence of Madagascar by including the three great national parks of Madagascar of Andasabi, Ranomafana and Isalo. Since this was the first tour ever organized in WACA to Madagascar, it was decided to give participants a comprehensive coverage of the Island.

1 Antananarivo is the capital of Madagascar and the start point of the tour. The group stayed at the Tamboho Hotel.

2 Andasibe - Matadia National Park is a 155 square kilometre protected area consisting principally of primary growth forest in the Alaotra-Mangoro Region in eastern Madagascar. The park's elevation ranges from 900-1250 meters, with a humid climate. Average annual precipitation is 1700 mm, with rainfall on 210 days of the year. This rainforest is habitat to a vast species biodiversity, including many endemic rare species and endangered species, including 11 lemur species. The park's two component parts are Mantadia National Park and Analamazoatra Reserve, which is best known for its population of Madagascar's largest lemur, the Indri. This is one of the easiest parks in Madagascar to visit from the capital city, Antananarivo, with a 3-hour drive east on a paved road. The group stayed at the Vakona Forest Lodge.

3 Antsirabe is the third largest city in Madagascar and the capital of the Vakinankaratra region, with a population of over 180,000. In Madagascar, Antsirabe is known for its relatively cool climate (as the rest of the central region of the country), its industry and the high concentration of pulled rickshaws or pousse-pousses (in French), among other things. Antsirabe was an overnight stop for the journey from Andasibe to Ranomafana National Park.

4 Ranomafana National Park is located in the southeastern part of Madagascar in Haute Matsiatra and Vatovavy-Fitovinany. With more than 41,600 hectares (161 square miles) of tropical rainforest, the park is home to several rare species of flora and fauna such as the lemur. The park was established in 1991 with the purpose of conserving the unique biodiversity of the local ecosystem and reducing the human pressures on the protected area. It is part of the World Heritage Site Rainforests of the Atsinanana.



5 Fianarantsoa is the capital of Haute Matsiatra Region. It was built in the early 19th century by the Merina as the administrative capital for the newly conquered Betsileo kingdoms. It is at an average altitude of 1,200 metres (3,900 ft), with a cool climate. It was an overnight stop between Ranomafana and Isalo National Park.

6 Isalo is a National Park in the Ihorombe Region of Madagascar. The park is known for its wide variety of terrain, including sandstone formations, deep canyons, palm-lined oases, and grassland. A total of 340 faunal species are known to inhabit the area, including 82 species of birds, 33 species of reptiles, 15 species of frogs and 14 species of mammals. Several different species of lemur are found in the park. The group stayed at the Rock Lodge, an attraction in its own right.

7 Toliara, or Tulear, is located on a broad coastal plain, surrounded by dunes and mangroves, near the Tropic of Capricorn in the Mozambique Channel. A nearby barrier reef (the Great Reef) is 18 km long and 3 km wide. Toliara was the last stop on the tour. Toliara is nicknamed the "City of the Sun" because it has a hot climate (28 °C average) and is semi-arid.

Dodo's Nest 2014



The Dodo's Nest was again held in Mauritius from the 3rd to 8th of June this year. More than 20 participants including many from the Madagascar tour attended the AIM Region hosted event. In addition to cruising the sparkling coast of Eastern Mauritius on a Catamaran and visiting the various attractions on the Island, the participants were also treated to a special horse racing day at the Mauritius Turf Club, the oldest race course in the Southern Hemisphere. WACA President Mr. Maga Ramasamy, Julian Chau (WACA Chief Marketing & Events) and Yousef Yousef (AIM Region Co-ordinator) were interviewed by the Turf Club's Television Channel. This was a good opportunity to introduce WACA to the general population of Mauritius and the outing was a tremendous success as everyone enjoyed a favorite Mauritian past time at the races mingling with friendly local people. This year's Dodo's Nest was held at the excellent Sugar Beach Resort in Flic En Flac on the West Coast of Mauritius.



Catamaran Cruise



View of the Sparkling Indian Ocean from the highlands of Mauritius



Mauritius Turf Club Interview



Sugar Beach Resort



*Photos by Don Wright and Lena Lundgren

Trevor Thredgold is the current North American Region Co-ordinator in the new WACA Structure. Trevor is a long time Interliner well known among the WACA Community due his work with the Adelaide (now defunct) and Calgary clubs. Trevor started his airline career at Trans Australia Airlines in 1972/3, and continued with Ansett Airlines from 1974-2001 and Malaysian Airlines 2001/2002 in Adelaide, South Australia. He then emigrated to Canada with his Canadian wife Jane and retired after working for WestJet in Calgary from 2002-2011. Trevor always worked at the Airport and held many positions including Customer Service Manager, Operations Centre Manager, Duty Airport Manager and Planning/Support Manager.

Trevor first joined the Interline Club of South Australia in 1984 and was the Club President for 6 years in the 90's. He attended his first WACA Regional Meeting in Fiji in 1986 and his first AGA in Singapore in 1987. Being an active member of WACA, he attended many events over the next 9 years including all the AGAs. He also held the position of RVP Far East and Australasia from 1989-1994 and became a Member of Honour in 1991 at Pattaya. By 1993, Trevor had travelled over 1 million flight miles on some 86 flights whilst visiting all 13 regional clubs and attending EC meetings, the AGA and several WACA packages.

Trevor joined the Calgary club in 2003 after moving to Canada and has now become more involved in the North American Region since becoming the WACA Co-ordinator late last year. His work at Westjet took up much of his time over the past 11 years, but he has been keeping up with WACA events by visiting WACA members in different parts of the world. He also hosted an EC meeting as well as many WACA friends at their home in Calgary. Trevor looks forward to working with all his WACA friends now that he has lots of time to do so, with the aim on strengthening the WACA numbers and friendships.



At an EC meeting in the early 90s with current WACA President, Maga Ramasamy.

Trevor: "We look forward to seeing many old friends in Porto this year and giving back to WACA for the wonderful times both Jane and myself have been able to experience over many years."



Trevor with Marj Homenick, Gail Morlock, Audrey Mealy and Val Welling of the Winnipeg Interline Club at a Regional Night in the Oslo AGA in 1993.



Vietnam

Vietnam is a nation seared in many's minds as the scene of the War that took place in the latter half of the 20th Century. However today Vietnam is again at peace and an exotic travel destination with many possibilities. Blessed with attractive scenery and varied terrain and climates, from tropical beaches to cool highlands, from historical monuments to bustling cities, Vietnam has everything. After long periods of colonisation by outsiders, Vietnamese culture is heavily influenced by Southern China and some French influences. It also acquired the influences of peoples it subjugated when it was strong, like the Champa and Khmer Kingdoms and their Hindu heritage. This amalgamation of various influences today gave the Vietnamese a unique culture and a fine cuisine that is gaining popularity around the world.

Ho Chi Minh City, the commercial hub of Vietnam and formerly known as Saigon, is proposed to be the venue for the 48th World Airlines Clubs Association Interline Celebration and Annual General Assembly. The proposed dates are October 18-22, 2015. The excellent and highly rated Lotte Legend Hotel has been identified as a possible venue of the Interline Celebration. Situated in Ho Chi Minh City's District One, at the center of the city close to all the city's attractions and next to the Mekong River. Taking into account that many interliners have already visited Vietnam, the day tours will be organized to present attractions not likely visited by previous visits of these interliners.

In addition to the the main event, WACA will be organizing interesting pre and post tours. For the Pre-Tour, a tour of Cambodia taking in the World Heritage site of Angkor Wat at Siam Reap and Phnom Penh. For the Post Tours, a tour of Central Vietnam based in a Beach Resort and taking in the world heritage sites of Hoi An and the former imperial city of Hue. A tour to Northern Vietnam based in Hanoi with side visits to Halong Bay are also on the cards.

More information will be available at the 47th AGA in Porto, Portugal, with the full package details. Once the Package Proposal is approved, Ho Chi Minh City will be the official venue of the 48th Interline Celebration and AGA. This Event will be hosted by WACA.

A Proposal for the 48th Interline Celebration & Annual General Assembly



WACA CALENDAR



Madeira - AGA Pre-Tour
01-05 Oct 14

Madeira has a great beauty with tropical gardens and spectacular panoramic views. Its green mountains, cliffs, steep valleys, flowers, sun and its blue sea, happiness and hospitality melt together to create an island of sublime peace. Madeira's gentle climate is neither too hot in summer nor too cold in winter. Madeira is one of the only European destination able to grow bananas all year round, proving the "Always Summer" accolade. Whether you're a first timer or a returning visitor, our unique island will leave you speechless with its stunning natural beauty and culture. There's no place on earth like Madeira. Contact Mr. Victor Carvalho - Interline Clube Portugal at waca2014porto@gmail.com



47th Interline Celebration & AGA Porto
05-10 Oct 14

Porto is one of the last undiscovered European metropolises, but that is about to change with the city being named the best European city to visit in 2014. But this is not a new city. It is an ancient port steeped in history and tradition. It is a highly atmospheric place that has become known for its monuments by renowned architects (Gustave Eiffel's Dona Maria Bridge, Nicolau Nasoni's Clerigos Tower, Rem Koolhaas' Casa da Musica, or Siza Vieira's Serralves Museum), but just when you think you don't know much about this city, think again! Contact Mr. Victor Carvalho - Interline Clube Portugal at waca2014porto@gmail.com



Azores - AGA Post Tours
10-15 Oct 14

NINE ISLANDS SCULPTURED BY NATURE LYING IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Brought together in an archipelago, each Azorean island has its own identity. Even if they all share an extraordinary natural legacy, they also have their own unique strokes in their landscape, traditions, cuisine and architecture. There are no words capable of describing and classifying the charm of these nine charismatic islands. They have been sculptured by ancient volcanoes and populated over the centuries by courageous and kind people. Thus the Azores are a place of varied experiences and emotions. Contact Mr. Victor Carvalho - Interline Clube Portugal at waca2014porto@gmail.com



Aveira- Fátima - Lisbon AGA Post Tour
10-13 Oct 14

Join the ICP Tour to Aveira, the Venice of Portugal; Fátima, a Shrine celebrating the witnessing of the apparition of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima by 3 shepherd children; the magnificent town of Sintra in all her magic and full of splendor – a romantic realm where majestic palaces, a fairytale Castle, Regal and glamorous mansion properties emerge in the midst of mountains and lush forests; then there is Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, perched on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Lisbon is one of the rare Western European cities that face the ocean and uses water as an element that defines the city. Lisbon enchants travelers with its white bleached limestone buildings, intimate alleyways, and an easy going charm that makes it a popular year round destination. Contact Mr. Victor Carvalho - Interline Clube Portugal at waca2014porto@gmail.com

WACA is sad to announce the passing of London Interline Club former Chairman and long serving member **Carole Bray**. Carole passed away just before Easter and details were sent to the London I/C of her passing. Carol served on the London Interline Club Committee from about 1969 to 2000. She was the Chairman of the Club for a couple of terms and always totally involved with the 'London Interline Club International Friendship Weekend' - David Cianfarani, Carol, myself with others, instigated the first 'International Weekend' in 1971. It was originally a London event for it's members and then after London joining WACA and becoming more involved on the 'International' scene, the event grew in stature and the event with London Ball was a major event in the WACA calendar for many years.



Carol had a long career in commercial aviation starting with BOAC Interline, moving on to open the first London off line office for American and Western Airlines and stayed with American until she 'retired' and moved on to AVIAREPS the major international GSA organisation. Finally retiring in 2007 due to ill health, she suffered with cancer for many years tragically passing away in April this year. Carol will be sadly missed by her family and Interline friends.

The Vancouver Interline Club lost a long-time member, Miss **Joan Milton**, who passed away recently. Joan was a very active member of the VIC and was involved with their Springfest weeks and Wet n' Wild Tours. Joan is survived by her husband Tom, a son and daughter and grandchildren.

Sad news also came from the San Diego Interline Club. 2 of their oldest, longest and best supporters have just passed away, **Isabelle** and **Chuck Dinene**. Isabelle passed away on June 15 and while Chuck and the kids were planning her service, Chuck also passed away.

May their souls rest in peace.



Holyland Summer Tour 2014

Four interliners (2 from Canada and 2 from the USA) braved the turmoil in the Region to participate in the Holy Land Tour organized by the Israel Interline Club in July. The tour took the participants to Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Masada, Acre, Haifa, Caesarea, and Nazareth etc. This tour has been offered on a regular basis by Aharon Gabbay of the Israel Interline Club. Those interested should contact him at gabbayo@012.net.il for more information on future trips!



Left:
Camel Riding at
the Dead Sea.

Right:
Carmen (R) and
Margaret (L)
from Canada
with Aharon at
Tel Aviv Port for
dinner.



WACA Round-up

Washington Interline Club Closes

As the Airline industry has changed over the years so has the dynamic of our club. The Washington Interline Club Executive committee REGRETFULLY has come to the conclusion we can no longer function as an active club and will close the Washington Interline Club.

The special friendships, the laughter and the travel we have experienced will never be forgotten. We will continue to promote WACA and its ideals and its full travel calendar. Those who remain will become members at large.

You have not seen the last of us. We look forward to future travels with you ALL, around the world.

Susie Walter
Washington Interline Club

When Nancy Loughead, member at large, won the WACA Draw of 100 USD cash prize donated by the Sydney Interline Club, she graciously declined the prize and donated the money to WACA, citing the tight financial situation of the Association as a key reason why she declined the prize.

WACA thanks Nancy for her generosity and dedication to the Association.

ID Travel



Sign of the times

Next Edition.....

1. **Report on the 47th AGA at Porto and the pre and post tours.**
2. **WACA's vision for 2015 and beyond.**
3. **Venue of the 48th AGA and the pre and post tour proposals.**
4. **The Interairline Club of Zurich's 60th Anniversary Celebration.**
5. **Beyond Tartary - Tracing the steps of Genghis Khan.**

For any questions about this edition of the WACA World News, please send your queries to us at waca.travel@gmail.com

Your feedback and views are very important to us!

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