

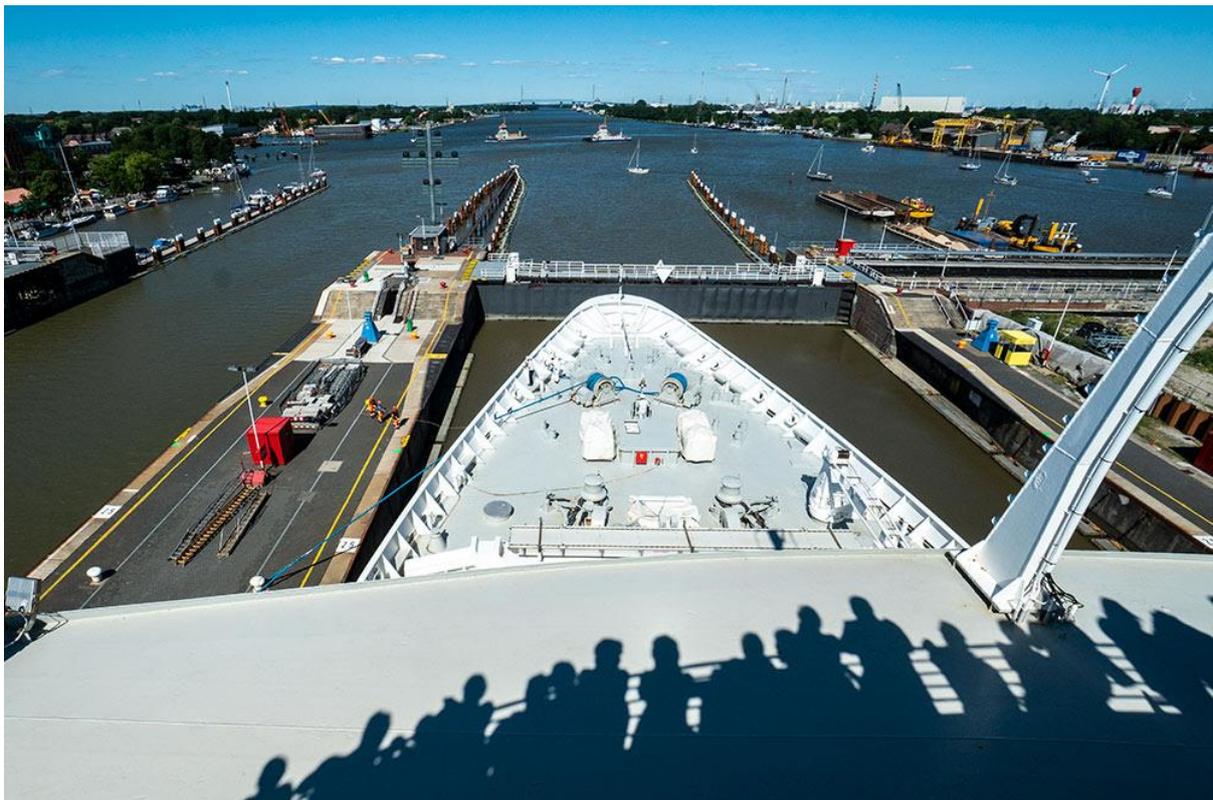


Mystery Cruise

by Sheila Haycox ARPS MPAGB/AV EFIAP



Our trip was planned, a 13 day cruise to the Baltic ; Dover, Kiel Canal, Travemünde, Ronne, St Peterburg, Tallinn, Stockholm Archipelago, Stockholm, Visby Sweden, Kiel Canal, Dover. All went well for the first few days. Arrival at the Kiel Canal was exciting watching the vessel navigate into the lock and then onwards into the Canal which took 8 hours to navigate. Travelling down the canal proved interesting with the crew keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings.





Crew keeping a watchful eye



Kiel Canal, Germany



Kiel Canal, Germany



Kiel Canal, Germany



Travemünde, Germany

First port of call Travemünde in Germany with a quick trip to Lübeck with its beautiful buildings and towers.



Lübeck, Germany

Next port was Ronne, Bornholm Island, Denmark. A scenic drive round the island visiting Gudhjem with its glass shops and a smokery and Svaneke with its quaint half timbered buildings.





Svaneke, Bornholm, Denmark

We were due to leave early evening for St Petersburg but this is where it all changed.

The ship was berthed in a tight area and the wind and undercurrent had made it difficult to manoeuvre the vessel out of the port pushing it back against the side of the dock. A tug was called and after a great deal of effort in trying to toe the ship out had to abandon the procedure. The Captain eventually made the announcement that he would have to wait for the wind to die down before we could proceed. It seemed ridiculous to passengers as it was sunbathing weather!

Eventually we left port at 2.30 a.m. This caused no end of problems because it meant we would not be arriving at St Petersburg in time to have two whole days there. A rearrangement of itinerary, we would go to Visby and Stockholm first then St Petersburg and Tallinn. Sorted, but not quite.....

The Captain then had to announce that there would be no Pilot Boats available at Stockholm for the new date of arrival, so we were going to have to change the itinerary yet again. The Captain was handling the situation very well announcing that by now you must realise we are now on a "Mystery Tour".



Manoeuvring from dockside



Tug toeing ship



Tugs in action.

Visby, Sweden was the next point of call a walled city which had cobbled streets, unusual buildings and an interesting cathedral called Sveriges Karlekskatedral.





Visby, Sweden

Next mystery place was Turku which used to be the capital of Finland. Not a town I found that interesting except perhaps the coffee shop seating!



Turku, Finland

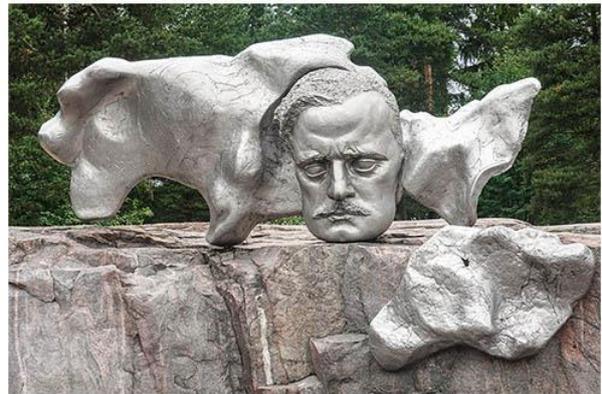


Turku, Finland

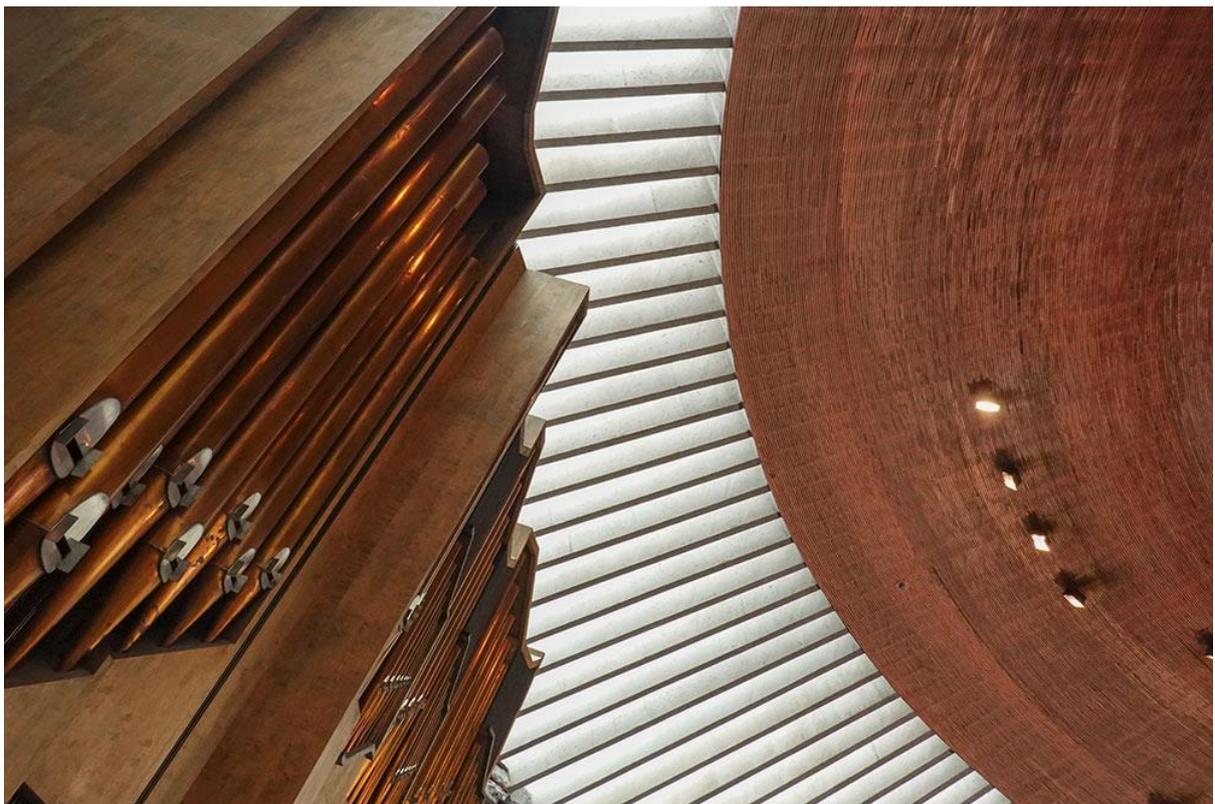
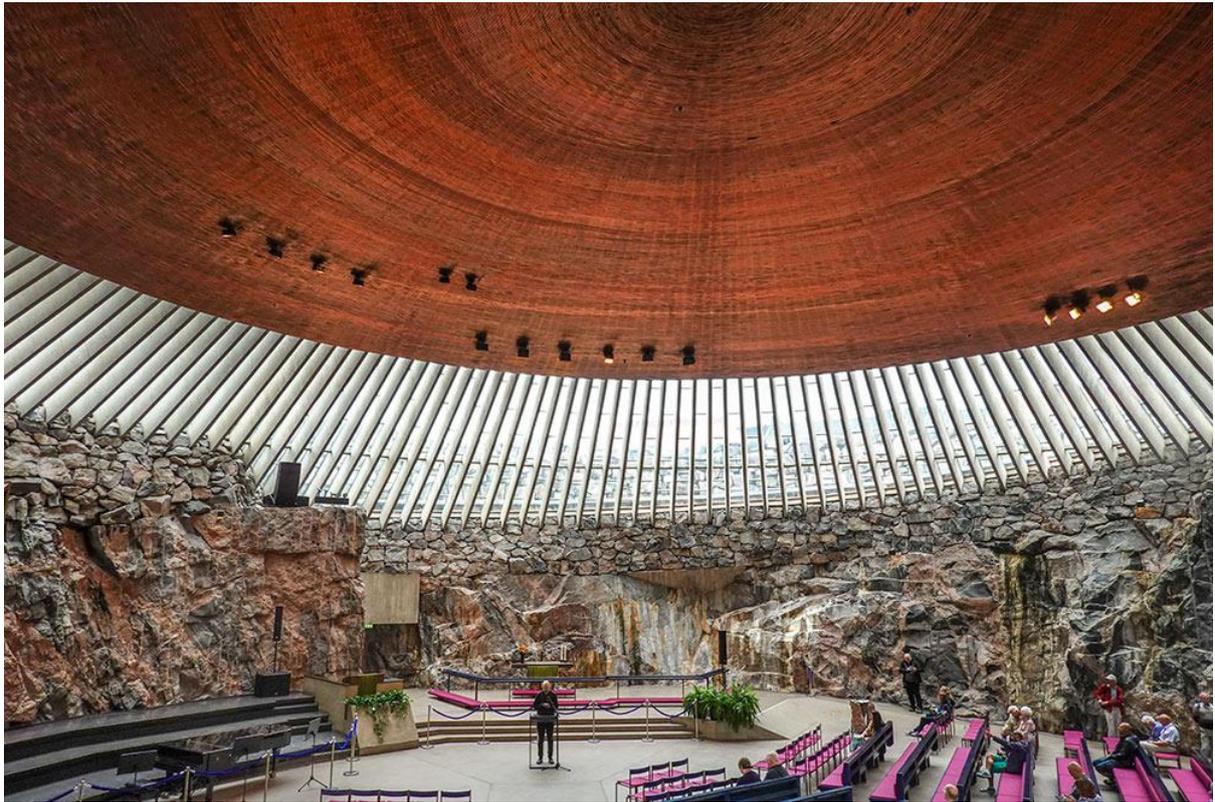
The approach to Helsinki our next port was very pleasant as there seemed to be several small islands dotted around.

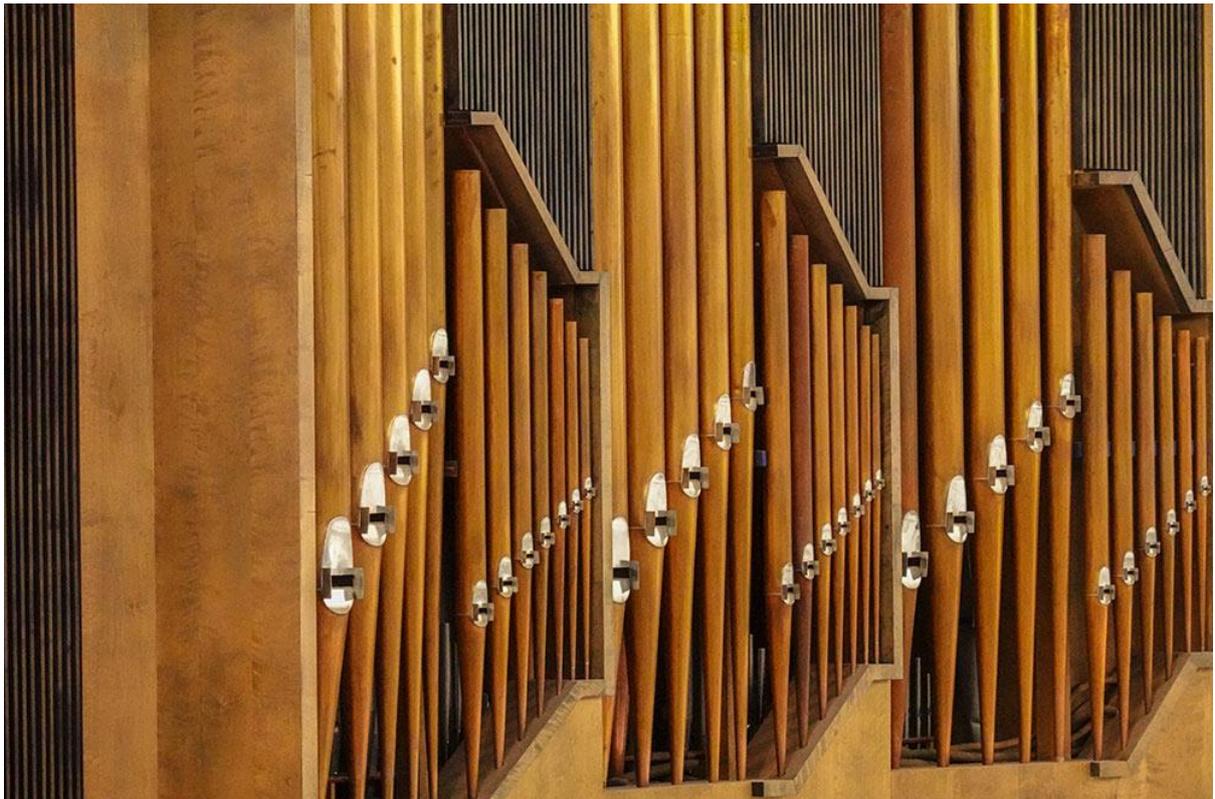


A trip into Helsinki gave us the opportunity to see Sibelius Park with its famous monument to 600 steel pipes honouring the composer Jean Sibelius.



Also took a look at the unique Tempelpiaukio Rock Church and then to Mannerheim Street and Square.





Tempelaukio Rock Church, Helsinki, Finland



Helsinki buildings



Railway Station and Mannerheim Street, Helsinki



Cap Shops, Mannerheim Street, Helsinki

The approach to St Petersburg was through the Dock area which proved to be very interesting with glimpses of golden towers and finally berthing near the city centre.



Dock Area, St Petersburg, Russia



Berthing at St Petersburg, Russia

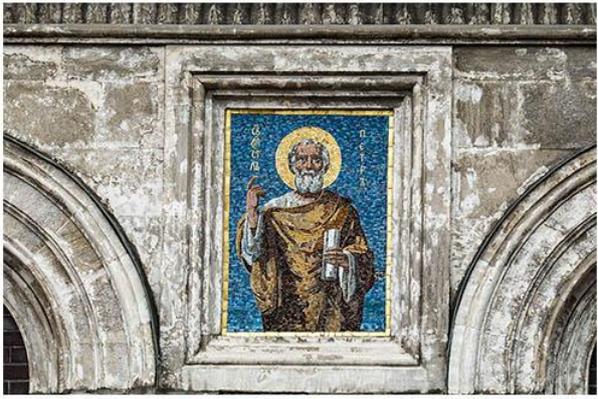


On the first day a short tour with stops was taken which gave a flavour of the city and on the second day a private tour was organised with the view of stopping at various points of interest, go inside a couple of places and visit the metro.



Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Petersburg

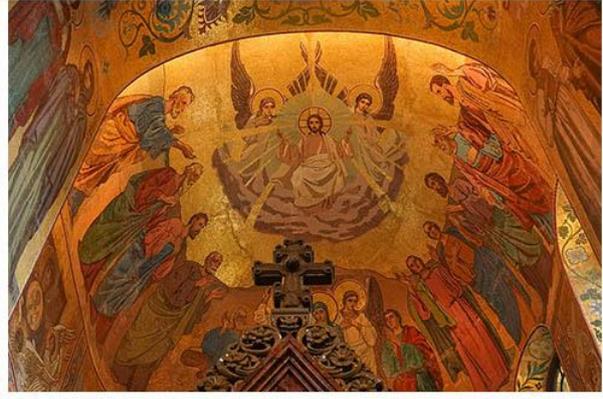
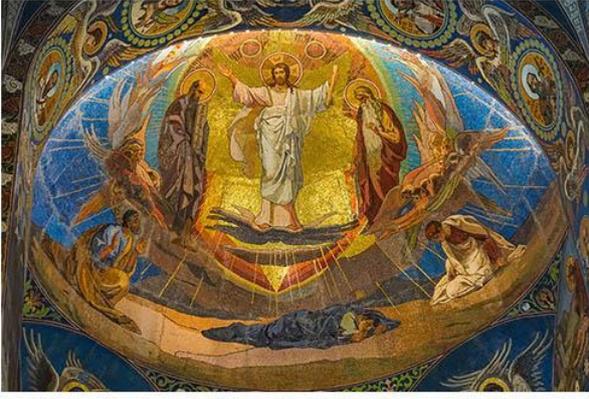




Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood, St Petersburg



Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood, St Petersburg



Mosaics in the Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood, St Petersburg



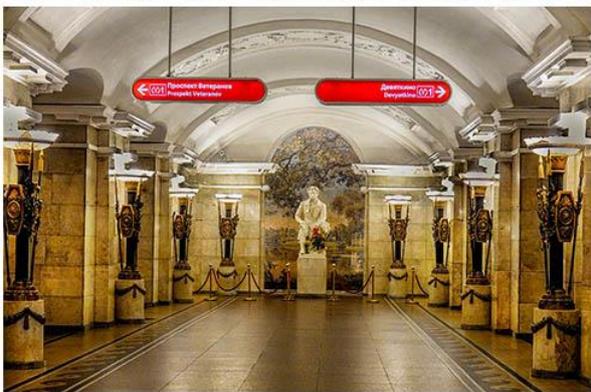


White Palace, St Petersburg





St Isaac's Cathedral Interior, St Petersburg

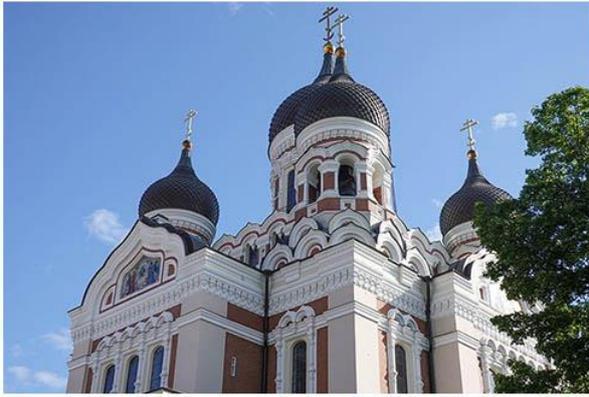


Inside the Metro, St Petersburg



The Metro, St Petersburg, Russia

Left St Petersburg for Tallinn, Estonia, which is a beautiful medieval city full of charm and character. Plenty of lovely buildings and towers, cobbled streets and quaint shops.



Tallinn Cathedral, Tallinn, Estonia



Tallinn Old Town



Old Town, Tallinn, Estonia



Quaint Buildings, Marzipan painting, Folk Dancing



Tallinn Ampitheatre



Dominican Monastery, Tallinn, Estonia



Getting ready for the journey back but not before a quick Rib Ride on the Ship's Rib.



"Little and Large" – Out ship against one of the massive cruise liners



Leaving the Baltic behind us we now have three days cruising because of our Mystery Tour but at least we are going through the Kiel Canal during daylight. It's a busy canal with plenty of cargo boats and our funnel only just goes under all the bridges, which is just as well.





Going through the Kiel Canal, Germany



Going into the lock on the Kiel Canal



Passing an oil rig on the way back to Dover, UK

We then venture into the open sea passing the odd oil rig and our last glimpse of the open sea being sunset before we berth the following morning.



In our 13 day cruise we travelled 2,672 Nautical Miles which is over 3,000 miles.