

## **UK's largest liner *Britannia* calls into new anchorage in Newhaven**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **The UK's largest cruise ship *Britannia* calls into the River Forth with a welcome from her royal namesake**

The UK's largest and newest cruise liner, P&O Cruises' *Britannia*, called into the River Forth today (**8 July**) with around 5,000 people on board as part of her first British Isles tour.

The brand new 141,000 tonne luxury liner, which was launched by Her Majesty the Queen earlier this year, was warmly welcomed into the river by tugs displaying their water cannons in the time honoured way as she made her way to Forth Ports' new anchorage point off Newhaven, near Leith, Edinburgh.

At 12 noon, the P&O Cruises *Britannia* took part in a "ships' horn" welcome which could be heard across the city with the cruise liner and other ships in Newhaven and the Port of Leith sounding their horns to mark the occasion.

In a ceremony on board the new *Britannia*, Captain Paul Brown was presented with a gift from the City of Edinburgh by the Deputy Lord Provost Steve Cardownie who welcomed the ship and her passengers to Scotland's beautiful capital city.

The Captain also welcomed guests from the ship's royal namesake, *The Royal Yacht Britannia*, the Queen's former floating palace, which is now a five star visitor attraction, permanently berthed in Leith, for a tour of the P&O Cruises *Britannia* ship and for the Royal Yacht's Chairman - Rear Admiral Neil Rankin - to see for himself the bridge of the new £473m liner. The Royal Yacht Britannia returned this welcome by inviting Captain Paul Brown aboard the Royal Yacht.

Commenting on Britannia's inaugural visit, **Charles Hammond, Chief Executive of Forth Ports**, said: "We are thrilled to welcome the magnificent *Britannia* to Newhaven today. Forth Ports' cruise business is an

important economic generator for Scotland with the draw of Edinburgh being very attractive for cruise operators around the world. We have opened this anchorage this season as a permanent option for larger liners to call into the Forth and we look forward to welcoming more vessels this year.”

**Captain Paul Brown from P&O Cruises *Britannia*** said: “I am delighted to bring *Britannia* into Newhaven and personally very excited to be in this historic port. To see The Royal Yacht *Britannia* is a highlight for me and I know all our passengers are looking forward to seeing the stunning city and landscape along the Forth.”

**The Royal Yacht *Britannia*'s Chief Executive, Bob Downie,** said: “It is great to see this new anchorage welcoming such a high profile cruise ship to Edinburgh, and we look forward to seeing many more similar visits in the coming years.”

**Edinburgh's Deputy Lord Provost, Steve Cardownie,** said: “The two *Britannias* - one with 5,000 passengers and crew on board and the other with 300,000 visitors a year in Edinburgh and indeed the UK's number one attraction\* - is great news for the capital's ports. The new deep water anchorage that has been opened at the site is a positive step towards further reinvigorating the Newhaven and Leith area, and the city will certainly benefit from the increase in visitor footfall. It really is a spectacle to see them so close together in Edinburgh's waters.”

P&O Cruises *Britannia*'s maiden itinerary, which many are describing as a lap of honour, is a celebration of all things British, from its bold Union Flag livery, contemporary elegant design and cutting edge art collection to the best chefs this country has to offer, the range of British cheeses and its Great British Beer and Gin menus. During its day-long call at Newhaven, many passengers disembarked using a tender operation managed by Forth Ports, to enjoy bus tours calling at the iconic Falkirk Wheel, the Kelpies, the golfing attractions of St Andrews and the World Heritage Site of Edinburgh while others strolled along from Newhaven Harbour to nearby Leith to visit The Royal Yacht *Britannia*.

Forth Ports' new cruise ship anchorage operation off Newhaven Harbour was opened this season to accommodate larger liners like *Britannia* who have thousands of passengers on board looking for direct access to Edinburgh. The anchorage point will see a further three calls during the 2015 season.

**8 July 2015**

**-Ends-**

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## **Notes to editors:**

### **About P&O Cruises Britannia**

Britannia is the biggest ship built for the British cruise market and offers a sophisticated, contemporary holiday experience across health and beauty, shopping and entertainment with a strong focus on dining. Special features include The Cookery Club, a 24 person state-of-the-art cookery school developed in association with James Martin; a three-tier feature atrium with Eric Lanlard patisserie, a charcuterie and gelateria as well as spectacular Star Burst sculpture; Sindhu restaurant by Atul Kochhar and Olly Smith's The Glass House; gala menus created by Marco Pierre White; plus The Limelight Club, a combined entertainment and dining venue in the great tradition of the supper club.

**About P&O Cruises** - P&O Cruises has a fleet of eight ships offering holidays tailored to British tastes combining genuine service, a sense of occasion and attention to detail, ensuring passengers have the holiday of a lifetime, every time. Azura was launched in April 2010 – officially named by Godmother Darcey Bussell CBE. Small ship Adonia was added to the fleet in May 2011, named by Dame Shirley Bassey, DBE. Britannia, a new 141,000 ton ship, was named by HM The Queen on March 10, 2015.

### **About RYB**

*Britannia*, now a five star visitor attraction in Edinburgh, was named the UK's No.1 Attraction (TripsAdvisor 2014-15). The ship is owned by The Royal Yacht *Britannia* Trust (Registered Charity No. SC028070). The Trust's responsibility is to maintain and preserve *Britannia* in keeping with her former role and to display her to the public as a key part of British maritime history. The Trust is a wholly self-funding, not-for-profit, charitable organisation. Income generated from running the Royal Yacht as a visitor attraction and events venue goes towards preserving the yacht for future generations. *Britannia* is the official headquarters of the Association of Royal Yachtsmen.

During her 44 year career, *Britannia* conveyed The Queen, other members of the Royal Family and dignitaries. She travelled 1,087,623 nautical miles, calling at more than 600 ports in 135 countries. Situated in Edinburgh's historic port of Leith, *Britannia* is now an iconic five-star visitor attraction, as well as an exclusive evening events venue. Visitors enjoy a fascinating insight into The Queen's former floating palace, and the lives of those who lived and worked on board. With an audio tour in 27 languages, of *Britannia*'s five decks, highlights include the teak-panelled Sun Lounge and elegant State Dining Room, which contrast dramatically with the working side of the ship and the crew's quarters.

## **About Forth Ports**

Forth Ports owns and operates eight commercial ports in the UK – Tilbury on the Thames, Dundee on the Firth of Tay and six on the Firth of Forth – Leith, Grangemouth, Rosyth, Methil, Burntisland and Kirkcaldy. Within and around the Firths of Forth and Tay, Forth Ports manages and operates an area of 280 square miles of navigable waters, including two specialised marine terminals for oil and gas export and provides other marine services, such as towage and conservancy.

As the only port operator in the United Kingdom that can offer direct access to two capital cities, Forth Ports welcomes over 100 cruise liners each year bringing over 150,000 visitors to the UK. The business is investing significantly in the cruise operations with a multimillion pound renovation project underway at the historic London cruise terminal to upgrade the facilities and increase the capacity to accommodate larger vessels.

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