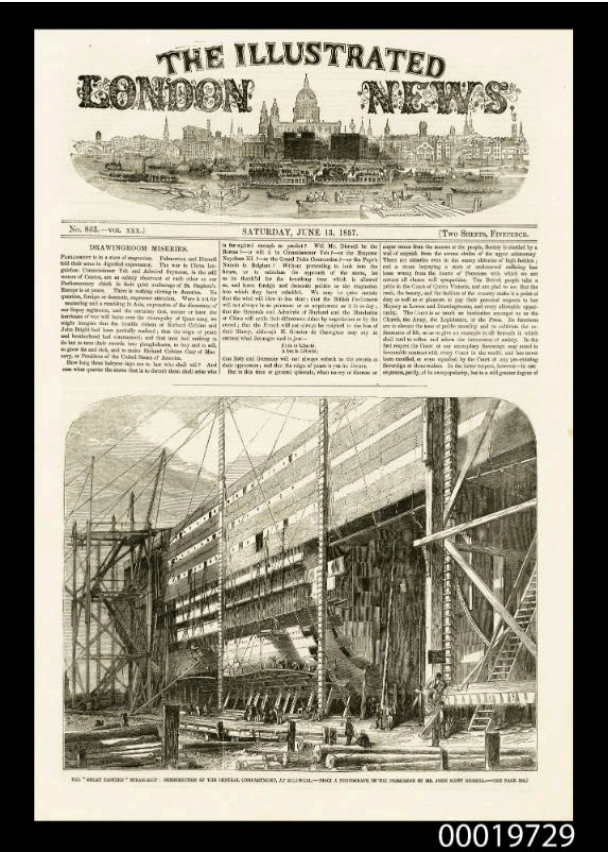


Basic Detail Report



00019729

Title
The GREAT EASTERN Steam-Ship: Construction of the Central Compartment at Millwall

Date
13 June 1857

Primary Maker
Illustrated London News

Medium
Ink on paper

Dimensions
Overall: 400 x 280 mm, 10 g

Name
Engraving

History

In 1858 when the 18,914-ton GREAT EASTERN was launched, it was the world’s largest iron ship. At a time when the largest ships on the seas were less than 5,000 tons, the GREAT EASTERN was a colossal vessel designed to carry 4,000 passengers along with 6,000 tons of cargo to Australia without the need to re-coal. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the five-funnelled six-masted ship featured side-paddles and a screw propeller, and was built by Scott Russell & Co Ltd at Millwall on the River Thames between 1854 and 1858. The screw engines by James Watt & Co were built at the Soho Foundry at Smethwick, England in 1857. The third of Brunel's ‘great ships’ (after the GREAT WESTERN and the GREAT BRITAIN), the GREAT EASTERN was unique as the first ship to incorporate a steering engine and was designed with a double cellular hull. Despite a myriad of technical and financial difficulties during construction, the ship was eventually launched in January 1858 and fitted out at Deptford. During trials in September 1859, a heater attached to the paddle engine boilers exploded killing several men and damaging the forward funnel and grand saloon. In 1860 the GREAT EASTERN made its first trans-Atlantic run, and was promoted by a series of public exhibits and port visits along the United States east coast. In 1864, the GREAT EASTERN was sold for a fraction of its cost to a cable-laying company and it was used to lay the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. Between 1865 and 1874 the ship laid and repaired telegraph cables across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The GREAT EASTERN was then laid up at Milford Haven for the next 12 years, until it was used as a fairground and floating advertising billboard off the coast at Liverpool. It was sold for scrap in 1888, and in early 1889 the mammoth task of deconstruction began on the banks of the River Mersey.