

Basic Detail Report



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Title

RMS CARONIA anchored in Sydney Harbour

Date

February 1951

Primary Maker

Samuel J Hood Studio

Medium

Emulsion on nitrate film.

Name

Nitrate negative

History

RMS CARONIA was built by John Brown and Company in Clydebank, Scotland in 1947 for Cunard White Star Line. The passenger ship was launched on 30 October 1947 and christened by Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth. Nicknamed the 'Green Goddess', it was painted four shades of green and was one of the largest vessels to be built after World War II. The vessel is often credited as being the first 'dual-purpose' ship to be built, that is, it was suited to both cruising and transatlantic crossings. It was also equipped with amenities not seen in cruise ships before, including a swimming pool and private bathrooms. CARONIA undertook its maiden voyage on 4 January 1949 from Southampton, England to New York, United States of America. In January 1951, CARONIA made its first world cruise. Over the 1950s, CARONIA underwent various refits including installing air-conditioning in 1956, in order to compete with other European cruise ships. As demand in the cruise ship market declined and operating costs increased, Cunard decided to withdraw the vessel from service in 1967. CARONIA was sold the following year to Star Shipping, Panama and renamed SS COLUMBIA and then SS CARIBIA. It was, however, plagued by disaster on its first and second voyages. En route to the Caribbean the waste system malfunctioned and on its second voyage an explosion in the engine room killed one crew member and severely injured another. This signalled the end of the ship's career as a cruise liner. In 1974, CARIBIA was sold for scrap, however, as it was towed to the ship breakers in Taiwan it encountered severe weather conditions and was wrecked near Guam.