

Basic Detail Report



00046489

Title

House flag of the Eastern & Australian shipping company

Date

1873-1880

Medium

Wool

Dimensions

Overall (rope extends 930mm from flag): 1100 x 1690 x 25 mm

Name

Flag

History

The E&A Line actually consisted of four successive companies bearing the same name, Eastern and Australian Steam Ship Company, between 1873 and the early 1980s. It was established to serve routes between Australasia and 'Far Eastern' ports - Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan, and was originally named Eastern & Australian Mail Steam Company Limited. It only had a small fleet of ships but those it had, such as the NELLORE and the NANKIN, were well known. Ownership of E&A Line was involved in other companies in the 20th century, notably the AUSN Company, and from 1946 P&O. Through its history, the E&A Lines carried cargo and passengers, and was involved in trooping and supply in World War I and in World War II. Its entire fleet of three of its ships was lost in World War II. In the post-war period it operated cargo-passenger ships until 1975 when passenger service was given up and the ships were progressively sold, though in 1983 it continued to staff and operate AJCL containerships. E&A's flag was well-known throughout the regions it served. It is believed to have been designed, along with the company seal, by Sir James Guthrie, the Line's first Chairman. He was descended from an old Scottish family whose escutcheon included a lion rampant. The predominant colours of the Guthrie tartan were red and green, the colours of the flag. Merchant ships usually wear the company flag, or house flag of the owners, on the main masthead when in port, or when approaching or leaving port.