



VIRTUAL EXHIBITION LAUNCHED ON REMARKABLE P&O PASSENGER SHIP, CANBERRA

In her 36 year career, CANBERRA sailed more than three million miles and carried nearly a million passengers

London, UK; Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 17 August 2011:- Celebrated for her innovative design as “the ship to shape the future”, the P&O passenger vessel CANBERRA set sail 50 years ago; today, P&O Heritage is marking the 50th anniversary of one of the most remarkable passenger ships to sail under the P&O flag with an online exhibition that includes a collection of rare film footage and photographs.

The exhibition looks back at the original design and construction that made CANBERRA unique. Built at the Harland & Wolff yard in Belfast, CANBERRA was called “a tribute to British craftsmanship”. In addition, under chief designer Sir Hugh Casson, CANBERRA boasted what were then ultra-modern interiors and contemporary works of art by famous artists, including a young David Hockney, who is today one of Britain’s most influential artists.

The online exhibition (www.poheritage.com) draws on P&O Heritage’s extensive film and photographic archives and reveals an outstanding collection of original works of art from CANBERRA, which were saved by P&O Heritage just before she was scrapped.

Named after the Aboriginal word for “a meeting place”, CANBERRA played a vital role in connecting Britain and Australia, including delivering thousands of new immigrants to Australia from Britain under the Australian Government assisted passage scheme, which gave rise to the immigrants’ nickname “10 Pound Poms”.

CANBERRA also briefly served as a troop carrier for the Royal Navy during the Falklands war in 1982. CANBERRA retired from service in 1997 after an emotional farewell from thousands of well-wishers at her home port of Southampton.

Susie Cox, Curator, P&O Heritage Collection, said:

“CANBERRA occupies a special place in P&O’s history and in the history of Australia and Britain. This online exhibition highlights the innovative design of both the vessel itself and its interiors, containing the very best of art and design of its day.

“In her 36-year career, she carried nearly a million passengers, a great many of those to new lives in Australia. There is continuing interest in the CANBERRA, especially from those who travelled on her and from their families. Our virtual exhibition gives easy access to those interested in exploring the history and design of this remarkable vessel.”

Visitors to the virtual exhibition can order prints of the rare photographs.

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