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The Royal Iris

Built by William Denny & Brothers Yard in Dumbarton, Scotland at a cost of £256.00 (£8.7 Million 2019) in 1950. Launched in December she started service on the Mersey on 5th May 1951 the 1,234 Gross Tonnage vessel is 159' x 48' with a draught of 9'. Fitted with Ruston & Hornsby Engines powering four generators to drive two electric motors had a top speed of 12 knots

Originally finished in distinctive Green & Cream ship could economically was licensed for 2,296 passengers. Associated with the 'Merseybeat' music scene of the 1960's the Beatles and Gerry & the Pacemakers played onboard

Even though debts had accrued against the ship she underwent a refit in 1969. Freshly painted in Blue & White and sporting a new Steak Restaurant replacing the old Fish & Chip Saloon, side slung Lifeboats were disposed of one retained on a stern davit

The Queen sailed on her in 1977 during the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. For a publicity drive for Merseyside 'Royal Iris' embarked on a 1,500 mile round trip cruise to London. In 1990 she was considered too expensive to keep in service, awaiting her fate she was granted permission for a commemorative sailing marking the 1918 Zeebrugge raids

With a price tag of £100,000 she was bought for conversion into a Nightclub, Restaurant, and Conference Centre in 1991. Sold again to a leisure group she left the Mersey in 1993 bound for Cardiff, but in 1994 the local authorities refused permission for the ships conversion and leisure use, it was hoped in 1996 she'd return to the Mersey for preservation, this failed

In 2002 'Royal Iris' was towed to what was to be her final berth below the Thames Barrier at Woolwich in readiness for refitting as a nightclub. However, in February 2010 the ship had taken water over the stern up to the passenger deck, over time settling into the mud a hole developed on the lower starboard side

Refloating her is now uneconomical and her owners have abandoned her to a continued dereliction

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