

Basic Detail Report

00047863

Title

Model of the ship MV RONA (II)

Date

c 1957

Dimensions

Overall (display case): 550 x 1,525 x 452 mm,

Name

Model

History

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) was established in 1855 for the commercial production of sugar from the cane fields in New South Wales and Queensland. Sugar mills were built all along the north-eastern coast of Australia. Many mills were on rivers where the raw materials from the cane fields were conveyed on barges towed by small paddle tugs, to be crushed before final shipment to the refineries. The erection of mills, installation of machinery and management of the operations required staff and materials that were in most cases transported by ship. Shipping coal in particular was vital to the operation of the sugar mills. Vessels for this purpose were not readily available in Australia in the late 19th century and CSR decided to have a ship purpose-built in the UK to suit their specific requirements. Thus in 1873 CSR began managing its own shipping to transport materials and products to and from its sugar mills. FIONA, a twin screw steamship named after Managing Director Edward Knox's daughter, was built in 1874. With the increase in cane production in Queensland and Fiji in 1892 this course of action was amply justified and other vessels followed. Refineries were built in Melbourne (Yarraville 1874), Sydney (Pymont 1878), Auckland (Chelsea 1884), Port Adelaide (Glanville 1891), Brisbane (New Farm 1893) and Perth (Cottesloe 1930). CSR vessels, ranging in size up to 6000 tons were employed carrying sugar and sugar products, including molasses in tanks, between the various mills and refineries. Good accommodation was also provided on all the CSR ocean-going ships for a limited number of passengers, mainly staff on transfer from one mill to another. The company managed everything from cane punts, sugar lighters, tug boats and ocean-going ships, however it did not create a separate shipping department until 1945. This was done to more effectively build and manage its own ships and profit from collaborating with other Australian companies wanting cargo space en route. In 2008, after several years of spiraling costs and declining productivity, CSR ceased operating as a shipping manager. In Sydney, the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) refined and manufactured sugar and sugar by-products on the Pymont peninsula. The sweet smell of molasses and sugar is burnt into the memories of everyone who lived in the area. From 1875 CSR dominated the northern tip of the suburb. Horse and drays, ships and trains transported CSR goods in and out of the peninsula. The company created work, controlled housing and like most harbour industries in

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, regularly polluted the air and water. CSR first acquired land at Pymont in 1878, and eventually owned 31 acres (77 hectares). Houses and streets - such as Jones Street between Bowman Street and the Harbour - disappeared as the company expanded. CSR provided thousands of jobs, some of them unpleasant, dangerous and unhealthy. Products included sugar, golden syrup and molasses from the refinery, industrial alcohol and rum from the distillery, and particle board from the caneite factory. Operations in Pymont were eventually wound down by the early 1990s, and much of the former CSR site is now occupied by the Jacksons Landing residential development. CSR ships, built and managed by the company since 1874, were a common sight at the Pymont docks until the area was redeveloped. CSR sugar production continues to make up around 60% of the sugar on the Australian domestic market. RONA The MV RONA was named after the Bellevue Hill house of CSR's chairman Edward Ritchie Knox (and possibly one his daughters). The M.V. RONA (II) was purpose-built for CSR by Hall Russell & Co. in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1957. Launched by Lady Knox, the RONA was a 4469 gross tons single screw steel cargo vessel and CSR's first ocean going motorship. Specially constructed for carrying molasses in bulk, there was also accommodation on the ship for a crew of 43 and four double berth staterooms for passengers. Used primarily in the Fiji trade (a 3.5 week service), RONA would usually carry around 3000 tons of general cargo outward from Australia and 5100 tons of molasses back from Fiji. After CSR sold its interests in Fiji, RONA began carrying molasses and sugar from the sugar ports in Queensland to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The ship also carried occasional cargoes of gypsum from Kangaroo Island. RONA made its last voyage for CSR in February 1972 when it was sold to a Philippine company and renamed PANORIENTE. In 1975 the ship was sold again to unknown owners and renamed EASTERN VENUS, eventually being scrapped in Taiwan in March 1980.