

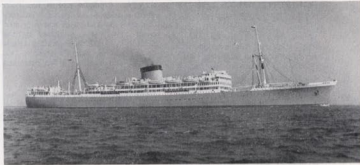
AU REVOIR TO TWO OLD LADIES

The thirty-six year old *Carnarvon Castle* was withdrawn from the Mail run on the completion of her last voyage on 1st June, 1962.

Launched at Belfast in January, 1926, she was the first motor vessel in the Union-Castle fleet and was the talk of the waterfront when she arrived at Table Bay on her maiden voyage. Apart from the novelty of her diesel machinery, her unfamiliar profile aroused great interest. The two low funnels, characteristic of the motorships of that period, gave an impression of speed and power and it was generally agreed that the lines of the ship were happier than those of the four-funnellers, which were already becoming old-fashioned.

The *Carnarvon Castle* was re-engined in 1938, thereafter appearing with one funnel.

At the outbreak of the second World War the vessel was en route to Cape Town; on arrival all passengers were disembarked, cargo discharged, furniture removed and on 8th September the Union-Castle flag was hauled down and the liner was handed over to the Royal Navy. At Simonstown she was converted into a fighting ship, with a main armament of eight six-inch guns, and for four years served as an armed merchant cruiser. On 8th December, 1940, thousands of spectators witnessed and cheered the arrival of H.M.S.



The Royal Mail Liner, Carnarvon Castle

Carnarvon Castle at Montevideo, where she put in for temporary repairs after a short and inconclusive action with an enemy raider, *Thor*, which had been roaming the South Atlantic for some months, claiming a number of victims. She was at last sighted by the *Carnarvon Castle* (Captain H. M. N. Hardy, D.S.O., R.N.) early in the morning of 5th December some 700 miles north-east of Montevideo and pursued. After an action which lasted some ninety minutes, during which the *Carnarvon Castle* fired over 500 shells and was herself hit thirty-eight times, the *Thor* laid a smokescreen and made good her escape.

After completion of temporary repairs at Montevideo, the *Carnarvon*

Castle sailed for Table Bay, where she was saluted by a special guard of honour as she passed through the harbour entrance. She continued as an armed merchant cruiser until 1943, when she was converted into a troop carrier transporting Americans to Britain.

In June, 1947, the *Carnarvon Castle* inaugurated a service to carry immigrants to South Africa; she was reconditioned in 1949 and returned to the Mail Service.



Docking in London on 1st June, the *Warwick Castle* completed her last voyage under the Union-Castle flag; she has now been withdrawn from service.

Designed for the Intermediate Service, she was completed in 1939 and originally named *Pretoria Castle*. On the outbreak of the second World War she was taken over as an armed merchant cruiser and for two years was based on Freetown. In 1942 she was bought by the Admiralty and converted into an aircraft carrier—this work was carried out by Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson who installed a flight deck. When commissioned she was used for testing landing and take-off of various types of aircraft and for testing new catapults and accelerating gear.

Released by the Government in 1946, the vessel was re-acquired by the Union-Castle Line and, after reconstruction at Belfast, was renamed *Warwick Castle*, the fourth ship to bear the name.

Her first post-war voyage was in March, 1947, when she operated on the mail run pending the return to peacetime service of the larger vessels of the fleet. She transferred to the Round Africa service in 1950.

The Pretoria Castle, later renamed Warwick Castle, in her wartime rig

