

Photography

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Black and white photograph of the royal yacht Britannia, taken during an official visit by Her Majesty Elizabeth II for the inauguration of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. The royal yacht is flying the royal flag, as well as the flags of Great Britain and Canada (then the Red Ensign). On the horizon, the Jacques Cartier Bridge and the tower of Île Sainte-Hélène. The royal yacht prepares to anchor; the gangway is embellished with the royal coat of arms and displays the Canadian and American flags. Photo paper mounted on cardboard.

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Artiste / Auteur Desmarais, Gabriel?

Date 1959

Medium and Support silver print, paper; cardboard

Measurements 50 x 60,7 cm

Historical context

This yacht, seen in the waters of a lock opposite Montreal, is the Britannia and belonged to the British monarchy. Built in Scotland, she was in service from 1953 to 1997, playing an important ambassadorial role for Great Britain around the world. She has also served as a hospital ship in times of war, as in Yemen in 1986.

Her passage through the waters of the St. Lawrence River in June 1959 was part of an official visit by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip to inaugurate the St. Lawrence Seaway. This major Canadian-American project was designed to enable commercial vessels to penetrate the interior of the continent, through a network of locks and canals, all the way up the river to the Great Lakes. That's why, when the Britannia passed through Montreal, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker were also on board to take part in the inauguration.

No longer in use, the Britannia is now located in Edinburgh, where it serves as a tourist museum.

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