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The Pacific Steam Navigation Company's Royal Mail Steam Ship. John Elder 3,500 Tonneaux, 600 Chevaux. Construit par John Elder & Cie. A Glasgow.

Lith. Roques & Goullaud.

[n.d. 1869]

Lithograph 500 x 380mm [sheet size]

JOHN ELDER 1869 - 3,832 gross tons, length 382ft x beam 41.7ft, one funnel, three masts, clipper bows, iron hull, single screw, speed 12.5 knots, accommodation for 70-1st, 100-2nd and 273-3rd class passengers. Crew of 104.

Launched on 29th Aug. 1869 by John Elder & Co., Glasgow and named for her builder, she was owned by Pacific Steam Navigation Co.. She was completed after the death of John Elder and named as a tribute to the changes affected by his compound engines. Liverpool and started her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Valparaiso on 13th Dec.1869. In Feb.1872 after four round voyages, she was rebuilt and lengthened to 406.4ft, re-boilered and given a second funnel. In 1877, her third mast was removed and she was placed on the joint PSNCo. - Orient Line Australian service and started her first voyage from Adelaide via Suez to Liverpool on 19th April. On 27th Jan. 1879 she started her first London - Melbourne - Sydney voyage and commenced her last on this route on 27th May 1886 before reverting to the Liverpool - Valparaiso service. On 17th Jan.1892 she was wrecked in fog on Cape Carranza Rocks en route Valparaiso to Talcahuano, Chile with 139 passengers but with no loss of life.

Pacific Steam Navigation Company: Formed in London in 1838, the company commenced operations on the West Coast of South America in 1840. In 1852 they were granted the British Government Mail contract to the area. In 1877 a joint P.S.N.Co-Orient Line service to Australia was started and lasted until 1905 when P.S.N.Co sold their Australian route interests to Royal Mail S.P.Co. Ultimately what had been Pacific Steam Navigation Co has disappeared into Furness Withy Shipping.

Notes on the Builder.....In 1834 - Mr. Charles Randolph and Mr. R. S. Cunliff started a small millwright's business in Centre Street under the title of Messrs. Randolph & Co. Till the years 1852-3 marine engineering formed no part in the firm's business, but at that time this important addition was made to the millwright and other branches. The occasion of this was the accession to the partnership of Mr. John Elder, son of Mr. David Elder, who managed the engineering works of Robert Napier with consummate skill for many years. John Elder - destined to achieve a name and fame in connection with steam-engine improvements second only to Watt himself - served an apprenticeship of five years under his father in the works of Robert Napier, and was employed successively in the pattern shop, factory, and drawing office. He was then engaged for a year in the pattern-making works of Messrs. Hicks, at Bolton-le-Moor, and afterwards as a draughtsman at the Great Grimsby Docks. In 1848 he returned to the works of Mr. Napier to take charge of the drawing office. Here he enjoyed the rare opportunity of assisting in the engining of some of the Cunard liners - vessels in which the highest skill possible at that time, both in design and execution, was displayed. ohn

Elder's accession to the co-partnery of Messrs, Randolph, Elder & Co. took place in September, 1852, and it was not long until his work was seen to be characterised by great originality and thoroughness. Between the years 1853 and 1867 no fewer than fourteen important patents were taken out by him for improvements in engines and boilers, the objects chiefly being economy of fuel and an increase in the power developed.

In 1860 the firm commenced to build ships in the yard now occupied by Messrs. Mackie & Thomson, just above Govan horse-ferry, and in 1864 the shipbuilding was removed to Fairfield, where ever since the business has been one of constant expansion. In 1868 Mr. Randolph and Mr. Cunliff retired, Mr. Elder remaining sole partner until his lamented death, which occurred in London on 17th September, 1869. During this year the output of work at Fairfield consisted of fourteen steamers and three sailing vessels, of a total tonnage of 25,235 - this being nearly twice as much as the next highest output for that year of all the Clyde firms.

[Ref: 5079] £590.00