

## THE ROYAL YACHT "BRITANNIA"

When the sleek, blue hull of Her Majesty's Yacht "Britannia" cuts through the waters of the St. Lawrence Seaway this summer, she will have already logged over 100,000 miles and sailed most of the sea lanes of the world in the service of the present Royal Family.

But this trip, up the mighty river, through the Great Lakes and deep into the heart of the North American continent, will be the first time, as far as can be determined, that the Yacht has cruised in fresh waters.

From the time the Royal Party boards the ship at Seven Islands, Que., on June 20, until they disembark at Port Arthur and Fort William on July 9, she will have added to her proud record by sailing an indirect route of over 3,000 statute miles through the world's longest inland waterway.

Before the "Britannia" sails for home at the conclusion of the Tour, her return trip from the head of the Lakes and her ports-of-call in the Atlantic Provinces will have seen her cover a total of nearly 7,000 miles in North American waters.

After the Royal Yacht leaves Seven Islands on the evening of Saturday, June 20, she will carry Canada's Queen to Gaspé, Port Alfred on the Saguenay River, Wolfe's Cove at Quebec City, Three Rivers, Montreal, for the official Seaway Opening ceremonies, through the Seaway to Brockville, Kingston and on to Toronto where the Royal Party will disembark on Monday, June 29. At Windsor, on Friday, July 3, the Royal Cruise will continue to Sarnia, Georgian Bay, Chicago, Sault Ste. Marie and the twin cities of Port Arthur and Fort William.

While Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh continue their tour by rail and air, the Yacht will make her return passage through the Seaway and, on Tuesday, July 28, again pick up her Royal passengers at Shediac, N.B., for calls to Charlottetown, P.E.I., and Cape Breton, N.S. The Queen and Prince Philip will leave the ship at Sydney on Friday, July 31, to fly to Halifax. The following day, their official duties completed, they will re-embark on "Britannia" for a restful voyage home.

Launched in April 1953, and commissioned early the following year, "Britannia" has been no mere pleasure craft. She has carried her Royal passengers to the far-off corners of the Commonwealth and on visits of state to friendly nations around the globe.

In 1951 it was decided to replace the 50 year-old "Victoria and Albert" by a new, medium-sized hospital ship which would be used as the Royal Yacht in peacetime. Built by John Brown and Company at its famous Clydebank yards, the ship was especially designed to take long ocean voyages and to be large enough for economical use as a hospital ship, should

the necessity arise. The 412-foot, 5,769-ton "Britannia" is the result.

That she is a well built ship is evident from her successful journeys to far-away ports in all kinds of weather. That she is a practical ship is equally evident when it is considered that she can be quickly converted into a hospital ship with accommodation for 200 patients and that her range without re-fueling is over 2,000 miles at 20 knots.

As well as being a sturdy ship, "Britannia" has an elegance that befits her Royal duties. Her bluebottle blue hull with white upper structure, sharp yacht-like bow and blunt stem is set off by a gleaming gold band below the upper deck. Her buff-coloured funnel and three masts have a smart rake - or backward slant. But it is the interior of the vessel which makes "Britannia" a miniature floating palace. On the shelter deck - the uppermost deck of the super-structure - between the main and mizzen masts, are located the Royal sleeping apartments. From this deck the main staircase runs down to a vestibule around which are grouped the drawing rooms of Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh, the dining room which can accommodate 50 for a State banquet, or serve on occasions as a cinema, and the main drawing room and ante room which extend across the full width of the super-structure.

Another flight of the fine, wide staircase leads down to the main deck and to the cabins of the Royal Household and guests.

The Royal quarters include a special section for Prince Charles and his sister, Princess Anne. These apartments were, in fact, the first to be used officially as the Prince and Princess made the maiden voyage of the "Britannia" to Tobruk, North Africa, to meet their parents returning from their Commonwealth tour in 1954.

The furnishings of the Royal suites are in keeping with their function. Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh took a personal interest in their selection and in the interior decoration of the cabins. Included in the furniture are some fine old pieces taken from the "Victoria and Albert".

Among the many modern innovations on the "Britannia" is a link for ship-to-shore telephone communication on which speech can be "scrambled" for security purposes if required.

Part of the extensive sun deck has been strengthened to embark and operate a helicopter which could be used for a variety of purposes, including the carrying of despatches to and from the Queen when she is on board.

Other features of her design, regarded as essential for a hospital ship, are stabilizers which can cut down a 20-degree roll to a mere six degrees, a complete air-conditioning system and unusually large laundry facilities.

(Over)