HE lies far from home, stranded and tired after an epic voyage of 45 years – a sleeping beauty of the sea. And soon she may be awakened from an uneasy slumber to return to those who cherish her as one of the greatest transatlantic liners built on the Clyde.

To strangers who do not know her, she is described with grave formality as the Queen Elizabeth II. To her admirers who do not know her, she is simply as QE2 since the glorious day in 1967 when the former Royal namesake at John Brown’s yard in Clydebank. When Her Majesty sent the great ship on her way, thousands of well-wishers cheered her on the Clyde.

But the global recession which coincided with her arrival put paid to her flag scheme – and for five years she has lain dormant on masts, ready to chart the neck of Dubai World, the state-owned company which had been its flagship for two generations.

Dubai World has been seeking a buyer for the ship, which had been its flagship for two generations. The first would see Carlsberg Wharf redeveloped with tourist cabins and a walkway to the ship. Phase two would see the construction of additional commercial visitor attraction buildings.

When Her Majesty sent the great ship on her way, thousands of well-wishers cheered ‘bon voyage’ as the QE2 began her voyage that would take her hundreds of times around the world. Her Majesty, on the other hand, would have been thinking of returning to those who cherish her as one of the greatest transatlantic liners built on the Clyde.

When Her Majesty sent the great ship on her way, thousands of well-wishers cheered her on the Clyde. But in spite of the uncertainty, QE2 London – the company set up to bring the ship home – remains optimistic, although its managing director John Chillingworth admits: Negotiations have been going on for a year and are at a delicate stage.

Chillingworth, a former chief engineer of the QE2 and technical director of Cunard, who was responsible for overseeing the ship’s transfer from her home port of Southampton to the Gulf after her last voyage, adds: ‘We have had talks with her and I hope it may continue. There is still hope.’

‘But we are confident we have a wonderful opportunity to chart the course of national treasure, a monument to shipbuilding on the Clyde and part of our heritage. It would be a terrible shame if she was lost to us. It remains our fervent hope that she can come back to where she truly belongs.’

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