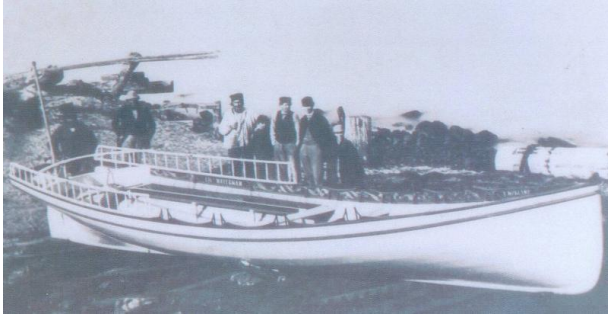


Basic Detail Report



Admiral

Vessel number

HV000311

Date

1865

Primary Maker

T Morland

Description

ADMIRAL was built by T Morland and was operated for many years by Charles Dillon. It was launched as an eight-oared rowing ferry to operate on the wide and open estuary of the Derwent River in Hobart. It was carvel built in Huon pine and the following entry from the Hobart Mercury August 1865 is thought to describe its launching. 'At the close of last month a very beautiful new excursion boat was completed by Mr Morland to the order of Mr Charles Dillon, waterman. It is intended for picnic parties during the coming season, and is constructed to pull eight oars. The boat is perfect in model of form, and her appointments are furnished in a style which will far exceed any boat of the kind on the river.' In December 1865 it was hired to act as the Governor's barge for the Hobart Regatta which at that time was held around the beginning of December. Early that month the Mercury noted: '... the vice-regal party took their seats in Mr Charles Dillon's new barge ADMIRAL which was turned out in tip top style ... Mr Dillon himself acted as coxswain ...' ADMIRAL was hired many more times especially for the annual Hobart Regatta, and undoubtedly operated on other important occasions. In 1888 Dillon converted the craft to steam power and it was then licensed to carry 30 passengers in smooth water, or 17 in partly smooth water. In 1896 Dillon added a longer overhanging counter stern in place of the transom board. Charles Dillon died late in the 1890s and it appears ADMIRAL became a fishing boat soon after. It was renamed MYRA and clinker topsides with a raised deck were added above the existing sheerline. It competed as a second class fishing boat in several races on the Derwent River from 1916 onwards. Charles Conrads is recorded as an owner in 1924, while in 1930 the vessel was offered for sale by Herlley Bros of Lymington. At an unknown time after this sale it was renamed NUILLA. Little more is known about its activities from that date until the 1970s when it was found derelict on a slip in Tasmania, and about to be burnt. Allister Martin bought the wreck for \$1.00 and for the same price then sold it to Bruce Hills, who rebuilt it as a gaff rigged yacht and reverted to the name MYRA. In 1986 it was sold probably by Hills to a Sydney owner but suffered considerable damage whilst being unloaded in Sydney. Another new owner, John Newton, commissioned a further reconstruction in Sydney, lasting nine months. The sheerline was lowered to just two clinker strakes, the deck was shortened and the hull was repaired where frames had been removed to allow concrete ballast to lie snug against the planking while it was a fishing boat. The gaff rig was retained and it was fitted with a 12hp Kelly & Lewis diesel engine. Unfortunately late in the 1990s the craft sank at its mooring on Sydney Harbour. When recovered it was shipped to Nigel Shannon's boatyard on Mitchell's

Island in the Manning River in northern New South Wales. Six years later, John & Susan Dikeman discovered MYRA at the boatyard where it was only known as a very old Huon pine vessel. Their enquiries revealed that the craft was indeed ADMIRAL. Well known Tasmanian sailor Bern Cuthbertson then set about organising it's rescue and return to Hobart. A trailer was made available and fitted with a 150mm steel channel welded up the middle to support the keel. The keel had about 200mm of spring, or camber, fore and aft. Cuthbertson thought this sag in the keel, due to old age, would straighten out during the journey south. Surprisingly, it bent the channel and the trailer instead. It turned out that the keel had not sagged. ADMIRAL was built with the spring and its strength was significant testimony to the skills of the original builders. Upon arriving back in Tasmania it was renamed ADMIRAL and restoration began in an apple shed in the Huon Valley. ADMIRAL was on display at the 2009 Australian Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart showing the partially completed rebuilding work, and the project was completed early in November. Soon after ADMIRAL was put back in the water, and rowed up the Derwent to Hobart where it was relaunched by the Governor of Tasmania. In 2021, ADMIRAL was transferred for display at the Bass and Flinders Centre in George Town.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 8.79 m x 8.69 m x 2.46 m x 0.46 m (28.85 ft x 28.5 ft x 8.08 ft x 1.5 ft)