

Basic Detail Report



Cartela

Vessel number

HV000237

Date

1912

Primary Maker

Alfred Blore

Description

CARTELA is an Indigenous word for seal. It was built for the Huon, Channel and Peninsula Steamship Company Ltd at Purdon and Featherstone's Battery Point yard on the Derwent River in Hobart. CARTELA is carvel planked in New Zealand kauri with blue gum frames and keelson. It is understood to have been designed by Tom Purdon and possibly assisted by Alfred Blore the well known Hobart draughtsman and designer, with the intention to build the fastest steamer on the Derwent. The vessel was intended to transport cargo but the immediate aim was to defeat TOGO in the highly popular but unsanctioned and unofficial Christmas Day race from Hobart to Green Island in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and return. CARTELA has a double-ended stern shape, with a vertical stern frame not unlike a modern racing kayak, to give a maximum waterline length creating little wash at the stern. This was probably inspired by TOGO, built in Launceston some years earlier to a design by Australia's then premier naval architect Walter Reeks, from Sydney. TOGO however featured a rounded canoe or torpedo type stern which would have contributed to its impressive speed. However another aspect to consider is the need to reverse out from wharves against the wind and sea, and this shape would also be ideal for those situations. The two vessels raced each other on Christmas Day ten times, with five wins each, including a controversial race in 1926 when CARTELA nudged TOGO from astern as they closed in on the finish line. TOGO lost control ending up ashore at the Esplanade, but with little damage. Both ships' masters were suspended over the incident. CARTELA spent most of its time trading around Hobart. It originally carried fruit and other cargo, but as this trade declined it moved into passenger work. During World War 1 CARTELA served as an examination vessel on the Derwent under hire to the RAN, and in 1915 it assisted in the rescue of the dismasted barque INVERNESSHIRE SHIRE. An outcome of this was a series of court cases that eventuated in a ruling to distinguish between 'towage' and 'salvage'. In 1919 it made a trip to Melbourne during the seaman's strike. By the 1950s it was almost exclusively working as an excursion vessel. The steam engine was replaced by a lower powered diesel in 1958 and the vessel laboured. It was granted a reprieve from retirement after the Tasman Bridge Disaster in late 1974. A span of the bridge collapsed after being hit by a ship and all available vessels were needed to operate as ferries between the two shorelines until the bridge was re-opened. A new more powerful diesel was fitted to CARTELA and it worked alongside newer ferries while the bridge was being repaired. In 2008 CARTELA remained in operation as an excursion ferry, one of the largest vessels of this type in Hobart. In 2009 plans are now in hand to re-engine the vessel

from diesel back to steam. The original engine was a Plenty and Son triple expansion engine, and it has remained in existence in a collection in Dover, Tasmania and was put on display at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February 2009. If this engine can be restored it will be put back into CARTELA with a new boiler during the conversion project. CARTELA celebrates its centenary in 2012, and it will have then worked continuously for 100 years. Prepared with assistance from the Register of Australian and New Zealand Ships and Boats compiled by Mori Flapan; www.boatregister.net

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 37.4 m x 37.4 m x 8 m x 2.5 m, 300 tonnes (122.71 ft x 122.71 ft x 26.25 ft x 8.2 ft, 304.8 tons)