Basic Detail Report

Lithgow

Vessel number
HV000373

Date
1927

Description
LITHGOW, originally named KIN-GRO, was the fourth vessel in the fleet owned by the Kincumber Growers' Co-op Co. Ltd. This Co-op had been formed in 1921 by growers in the rural Kincumber district of Brisbane Water. Needing a service to carry their own produce, a co-operative ferry service commenced in 1921, carrying produce at first, and passengers from 1924 onwards. The Co-op's fourth ferry was launched in 1927 from Gordon Beattie's yard at Palermo, adjacent to St Hubert's Island on Brisbane Waters. Beattie was one of the established boatbuilders in the area. LITHGOW remained in service with the Co-op working from two wharves in Kincumber Creek, where it was based. The ferry worked in tandem with the Co-op's other craft GROWER and they ran to Woy Woy and return, stopping at various wharves along the way. On Thursdays, all launches converged on Gosford for the weekly market. The Co-op's secretary and manager was WG Humphrey (the Humphrey family were major Co-op shareholders). Along with his other duties Humphrey also shared the driving of the ferries with other employees. During World War II it is understood LITHGOW was used to tow the military 45 foot tug boat hulls built in the area out of Brisbane Water before another tow took over for the sea voyage to Sydney for fitout. The local ferry service was terminated in 1944, and the company was liquidated in 1945. WG Humphrey's son, WF Humphrey (born 1924) recalled in the late 1970s that "...about the time I started taking an interest, KIN-GRO was re-engined with a 55 hp Petter 2-stroke diesel, quite modern at the time, compressed air start and all that sort of thing, which made the driver's life much easier...". He also recalled that KIN-GRO was used to tow a small suction dredge working around Brisbane Water when it had to be moved. After the closure of the Co-op at Kincumber in 1944 it is understood that LITHGOW was sold to Mr Cox of Stockton. It is thought that it was converted to a fishing trawler and worked from the Newcastle area for a short period. According to WF Humphrey again, it was badly damaged by fire while there, but later repaired. This could correspond with the knowledge that LITHGOW was purchased and towed to Sydney in 1946 where it was rebuilt by WM Holmes at Lavender Bay. It was licensed as a passenger-only ferry to carry 113 passengers and two crew. From 1946 to 1950 the ferry operated an off-peak service to Longueville on the Lane Cove River after the withdrawal of the Sydney Ferries service. It was then part of Stannard Bros Launch Services who changed the name to LITHGOW. It remained with this well known firm until 1983 when it was bought by Adam Huie of BanksMarine Events. In 2009 it was purchased by Noakes Boat and Shipyards to join their Rosman ferry

fleet based in Berrys Bay, Sydney Harbour. References: Prepared with information from Gwen Dundon, from the Register of Australian and New Zealand Ships and Boats compiled by Mori Flapan; www.boatregister.net and Rosman Ferries

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 16.65 m x 3.96 m x 1.65 m (54.63 ft x 12.99 ft x 5.41 ft)