

Basic Detail Report



Tribal Warrior

Vessel number

HV000408

Date

1899

Primary Maker

Tsugitaro Furuta

Description

TRIBAL WARRIOR was built at Port Kennedy on Thursday Island. Furuta also constructed the lugger MERCIA, now PENGUIN (HV000396). It is a 15.4 metre long gaff-rigged ketch, carvel planked in jarrah and planked down to the heel on the keel or deadwood. It is currently fitted with a Gardner 6LW diesel and when in survey can carry 20 passengers on enclosed waters. The wooden masts, bulwark rails and other timber work are carved and painted in Aboriginal motifs. On all public occasions and celebrations, the Tribal Warrior flies the Koori (Aboriginal) Flag. The special events jib sail has the words "It's a Koori harbour" and a Black Duck (Guindaring) painted in Aboriginal design. This is a totem from the Yuin people from the south coast of New South Wales. As MINA, the vessel was first registered in the name of George Smith, then in 1908 it was owned by Hodels Ltd. Both were well known names in pearling in the Torres Strait area, although compared to Smith, Hodels was a relatively small operation. By 1918 MINA was registered in Fremantle, indicating it then worked in the north west of Western Australia. The owner was the 'Pearl King' James Clark, from Brisbane. MINA worked in the northern pearling grounds for many decades under different owners with different crews. Typical of pearling luggers, many of the crew members were Indigenous Australians, who were skilful divers and cheap labour. The history of pearling has been a mixed one for Aboriginal people - abuses were common and the work was hazardous, with divers in the water for up to 10 hours a day. In 1933 MINA was wrecked near Swan Point, but apparently recovered and is known to have been rebuilt in 1940 by Captain Gregory at Broome. By early 1942 it had been turned over to the military and during the Second World War it was used by the United States Army. By 1945 it had been fitted with an auxiliary motor, presumably during the war, and a new one was fitted in 1946. In 1949 it was registered as S. NICOLA or SAN NICOLA and belonged to Arthur Morgan, a pearler at Broome. In the 1980s, the Ganabarr Morning Star Clan, traditional people of the Arnhem Land and Gove Peninsula area, adopted the boat. They named it WUTUKU meaning "drifting wood". It was later taken over by the Tribal Warrior Association who support Indigenous community employment, based in Redfern, Sydney. It became their flagship to reclaim an Indigenous Australian presence on Sydney Harbour, known to them as Birra Birra. On Sorry Day, 1999, the Tribal Warrior underwent a traditional smoking ceremony to purify, cleanse and heal past memories. In August 2001, after a departure ceremony at Cockle Bay, TRIBAL WARRIOR left Sydney Harbour on a 'voyage of reconciliation' around Australia, visiting every major Aboriginal community on Australia's coastline. TRIBAL WARRIOR was warmly welcomed in ports by local

Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and attracted much media attention. It returned to Sydney on 9 June 2003 after a momentous 648 day circumnavigation, and tied up at the Australian National Maritime Museum. The historic voyage marked the first circumnavigation of Australia by an Australian Indigenous owned and crewed vessel. Now based in Sydney Harbour, TRIBAL WARRIOR is maintained by members of the Tribal Warrior Association and the students of the Tribal Warrior Indigenous Maritime Training Program. The Tribal Warrior Association conducts Aboriginal focused tours of Sydney Harbour and uses the boat to train Aboriginal youth to attain their Master Class V Commercial Maritime Certificate and other qualifications. The first four students completed the program in November 1999. Prepared with assistance from the Register of Australian and New Zealand Ships and Boats compiled by Mori Flapan; www.boatregister.net

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 15.4 m x 4.1 m x 2.4 m, 32 tonnes (50.53 ft x 13.45 ft x 7.87 ft, 31.49 tons)