

Basic Detail Report



Little Dirk

Vessel number

HV000008

Date

1927

Primary Maker

Robin Gourley

Description

LITTLE DIRK is a wooden, gaff-cutter rigged vessel nearly 9 metres long. It was initially built as a net boat before being used as a pearl sheller in Shark Bay. It was designed and built by Robin Gourley in 1927. He was based in East Fremantle WA, and is an excellent example

of a boat with Gourley's unique cartwheel stern. This stern is nearly semi-circular in planform at the deck, while the hull planking finishes almost as a double-ended shape and the rudder then hangs off the end of the hull. This configuration is an interesting mixture of details. The pearl shelling industry in WA was one of the most significant early industries in the region, and was largely centered around Broome as a base for the pearl fields offshore. However another source of pearl shell was the shallow area in Shark Bay, further south of Broome. The craft used in this area were shallow draft, single masted and smaller vessels than the offshore capable craft working out of Broome. Although not designed to be a pearl sheller, LITTLE DIRK's size was ideal for the work and it was similar to other craft working the fields in Shark Bay. In this region they dredged the bottom for shell, and sorted the material from the mud and other debris that came up in each load. When it was no longer required for pearling the craft found other uses in the same area of Western Australia and was at one time converted to a motor launch for private owners. In 2013 LITTLE DIRK was being stabilized and undergoing a gradual restoration project overseen by the Carnarvon Heritage Group.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 8.89 m x 8.75 m x 2.88 m x 0.72 m (29.2 ft x 28.7 ft x 9.4 ft x 2.4 ft)