

Basic Detail Report



Hecla

Vessel number

HV000106

Date

1903

Primary Maker

Thomas Beauchamp

Description

HECLA was built in 1903 by shipwright Thomas Beauchamp at his yard in Birkenhead, Port Adelaide South Australia. It was built for Captain C.C. Dale also of Birkenhead. He named it after his daughter, who had been named after the volcano Mount Hekla in Iceland- Captain Dale had been born in Iceland. HECLA was built for trading to Port Price. It was a general cargo vessel for much of its long life in South Australian waters, although at one point it was sold to fishermen in Port Lincoln. The wooden hull is ketch rigged and features a drop board and the typical flat-bottomed hull sections of the type. This enabled the craft to sit upright on the sand as the tide ran out and cargo could then be offloaded to be carted ashore. When launched HECLA carried patent stockless anchors, an innovation for the time and in 1915 it was also possibly the second ketch from Port Adelaide to be fitted with an engine. The engine was changed a number of times. In 1942 it was a 30 hp Murray Onga petrol/kerosene motor that was then replaced by a 22 hp 6 cylinder Wisconsin kerosene engine. In 1957 this was changed to a 62 hp 4 cylinder LA diesel, and then in 1963 the existing Perkins diesel was installed. An unusual use for the vessel early in its career involved trials and experiments for a manned torpedo that had been invented by Captain Dale. The experiments were done in great secrecy and at night on the North Arm of Port Adelaide. The torpedo was unfortunately lost when the vessel grounded in the outer harbour and the torpedo rolled off the deck at midships. Under its final owner, HECLA serviced Thistle Island carrying wool, stock and equipment. As its use became infrequent a pump was fitted to keep the bilges dry, and it was run by a deck mounted windmill. In 1978 this became clogged one day and it sank, but HECLA was re-floated undamaged four days later. In 1980 the craft was taken from the water to a site for a new museum at Kipling Cotes Fauna Park, but the museum was not established. In 1987 HECLA was bought by the Axel Stenross Maritime Museum and moved to their site on the coast in Port Lincoln. It remains there on display as one of the last examples of a South Australian trading ketch. Update August 2023: HECLA is in good condition at the Axel Stenross Maritime Museum. (Prepared from research material supplied by Axel Stenross Maritime Museum)

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 18.29 m x 17.07 m x 4.16 m x 1.14 m (60 ft x 56 ft x 13.65 ft x 3.75 ft)