

Basic Detail Report



Alma Doepel

Vessel number

HV000436

Date

1903

Primary Maker

Frederick Doepel

Description

ALMA DOEPEL was designed and built by Frederick Doepel in 1903 at Bellingen NSW, and purpose-built to navigate the shallow bars of the northern rivers of New South Wales, in particular the bar at the mouth of the Bellinger River. It is almost 31 metres long, and 8 metres wide. To help it sail upwind it had two centreboards fitted. Surveyed and registered in Sydney, ALMA DOEPEL was beamy and had plenty of volume in the holds to carry timber for building projects in Sydney. Its voyages sometimes included crossing the Tasman Sea to New Zealand. In 1916, the ship was taken over by Henry Jones & Co Limited of Hobart to carry timber and jam to the mainland, mostly to Melbourne. The "jam fleet" included JAMES CRAIG. During this period ALMA DOEPEL was fitted with an auxiliary engine. In January 1943 the Australian Army took over the vessel for war service in World War II. It was given the number AK82 and taken to Sydney for de-masting and conversion to suit the Army's requirements, which included carrying troops and ammunition. ALMA DOEPEL operated around ports in northern Australia and New Guinea including Rabaul on New Britain. After the war in 1947 ALMA DOEPEL was returned to full sailing condition and continued working for Henry Jones and Co and made regular passages across Bass Strait. It now had twin diesel engines fitted. The mid-1950's brought increasing competition from power driven vessels however ALMA DOEPEL continued operating primarily under sail until 1958. In 1961 the ship was reduced to one mast, supporting a derrick for cargo handling, and had been relegated to carrying limestone from the southern end of D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Deep Hole, four hours away. Road transport gradually replaced the carriage of limestone by sea and in 1975 ALMA DOEPEL carried its last cargo and was laid up. ALMA DOEPEL was purchased from Elders IXL in 1976. It was now de-rigged and lying at the southern end of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in Tasmania. Later in 1976 the ship was delivered under its own engines to Melbourne for restoration to be used as a sail training vessel. When the restoration back to its sailing rig was completed ALMA DOEPEL sailed to Sydney to lead the Parade of Sail on Bicentenary Day, 26 January 1988 alongside the Royal Australian Navy's training ship YOUNG ENDEAVOUR. By 1999 the ship had completed around 150 nine-day sail training voyages in Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay, as well as many three-day voyages, giving over 5,000 young people the benefit of a life changing experience. In 2000 it was taken out of service again and spent eight years as a static museum display alongside the town jetty in Port Macquarie. In 2009 the ship was returned to Melbourne to undertake another major restoration of its rig and hull and this is partially complete in 2010. It has returned to Port Philip for this work and will

eventually operate again as a youth sail training vessel. A considerable portion of its frames and planking are original, but other parts have seen evolutionary repairs over its lifetime. An interesting heritage connection is the fact that Doepel House at Repton, on the mouth of the Bellinger River also remains extant. Prepared with assistance from the Register of Australian and New Zealand Ships and Boats compiled by Mori Flapan www.boatregister.net

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 30.48 m x 45.6 m x 30.77 m x 8.1 m x 2.3 m, 235 tonnes (100 ft x 149.61 ft x 100.96 ft x 26.58 ft x 7.55 ft, 231.24 tons)