

Basic Detail Report



Athene

Vessel number

HV000598

Date

1905

Primary Maker

WM Ford Boatbuilders

Description

ATHENE was built for David Carment in 1905, and was carvel planked in New Zealand kauri. According to his grandson Max Carment ATHENE was 'fast and wet, 10.36m long, 2.59m beam, and 1.83m draught, and with over 1 tonne of lead external ballast'. Designer EW Heywood and builder WM Ford are known to have worked together on other craft including the early powerboat INVINCIBLE. An early mention of ATHENE appears in The Sydney Morning Herald on 4 April 1906, saying a private yacht race was to take place between ATHENE and Mr J Young's HERRESHOFF for a 10 Guinea Cup. The report on the 9th of April indicates it was "a well contested race.... Over the first part of the course there was a fair breeze, but the remainder of the contest was sailed in a dying wind." The larger HERRESHOFF finished first, but ATHENE was close behind and after handicaps were applied ATHENE was the winner, and it was skippered by the designer, EW Heywood. The report concluded that "Cheers for the winner were given and responded too". Other newspaper records of the period include many good results for ATHENE where it often raced with the Cruising Division on Saturdays over summer. In December 1913, David Carment colourfully described what an average day sailing was like in a letter to his son, David Shallard Carment, displaying just how ingrained the sport had become in his life: "On Saturday I took the boat down the harbour with a crew of three ... We had a good sail in a fresh nor'easter, and had a great view of the numerous open boat races. On Sunday it blew pretty nearly a "black nor'easter" in the afternoon...we went to North Harbour and had a truly great sail home round by Shark Island carrying full mainsail and jib. You see the lapse of years has not abated my love of a good breeze. I wonder if you'll take to sailing again when you come back ... or whether you are tired of the finest sport in the world." David Carment was born in Comrie, Scotland in 1843, and came to Australia in 1872 after an actuary to the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) in Sydney met David while on a business trip to Britain and offered him a position with the company. During the voyage to Sydney, David grew a long beard that he was to keep for the rest of his life, a steadfast traditionalist until the end. David Carment was considered one of Sydney's 'outstanding personalities' and served as Honorary Treasurer of the Royal Society of New South Wales as well as the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also, it seems, a fine singer, and sang in the Philharmonic Society concerts in Town Hall as well as at the opening of the famously ill-fated Garden Palace Exhibition of 1879. He was rear commodore of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in 1919, vice commodore from 1920 to 1923 and a life member. He was also a member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and the Sydney Amateur

Sailing Club, and he lent his support to other Sydney sailing clubs. Max Carment stated that during the 1920s and 1930s, David or his son would race ATHENE every Saturday. During the 1926 season, ATHENE 'was the most successful boat, having won the Tempest Trophy, Jubilee Cup, and Boomerang Cup.' It's skipper, David Shallard Carment also won the captain's trophy for the best record in "A" class. Each Sunday, David and his son would pack lunch for themselves, the crew and any other passengers, before walking to Sandeman's boatshed in Careening Cove to launch their dinghy. Max described what followed: "As soon as the anchor had been dropped, cushions were laid out on the cockpit seats and a folding table set up for lunch. Lunch was always the same - cold beef, potatoes boiled in their jackets in sea water, pickles, bread, butter and jam. If it was hot an awning was set up over the cockpit. After lunch Grandfather went down to one of the two bunks in the cabin for a nap, and most of the others rowed ashore for a walk on the beach, or in summer, a swim ... We usually returned to the moorings in Careening Cove about 5 pm." On 29 April 1934, only weeks after his last cruise on ATHENE, David Carment died of bronchitis and myocarditis at the ripe old age of 90. The tributes poured in, including one from Air Vice Marshal Sir Philip Game, Governor of New South Wales, who referenced the sport David loved so much: 'I always admired him so much in all the various roles in which I came across him and was amazed at the way in which he handled a boat in any and every weather.' Another tribute piece was written by a relative and published in the Northern Star and summed up his character quite eloquently. His daughter Amy Shallard Carment described him as a 'courteous gentleman' and, despite being the 'oldest yachtsman in Australia', she had 'vivid recollections of beating up the Harbour in the teeth of a howling westerly gale with "the Skipper" (as he was affectionately called) at the tiller of ATHENE when he was over 80 years of age.' Four to five hundred people attended the memorial service at St Peter's Church in North Sydney David Shallard Carment kept sailing ATHENE and in 1937 the rig was changed to a Bermudan sailplan. He followed his father's footsteps and was rear commodore and vice commodore of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, a member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club and, in addition, he was a foundation member of the Royal Prince Edward Yacht Club. He was highly revered for his skills in yacht design rules and was the honorary measurer for The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, succeeding Walter Reeks. As a naval architect at Cockatoo Island during World War II, one of his students was Alan Payne, who went on to design Australia's first America's Cup challenger, GRETEL, and later replaced Carment as the RSY's measurer. His children, Max and Marion, often sailed with him and Marion appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald in March 1939, described as a 'fair skipper' in an article titled "'Ladies' Day" on Harbour: Women at the Helm'. One of his grandchildren, Professor Diana Wood Conroy, recalls what it was like sailing with him in the 1940s, and seems to echo the family custom described previously by her uncle Max: "I remember sailing on her when I was 4; I was terrified and Grandpa was angry with me for crying just because the boat seemed to be tipping up and shark fins were sticking up out of the waves. The boat had a solid waxy smell like grandpa's Chevrolet pipe tobacco, old wood and corned beef sandwiches." ATHENE and the black and white images of it sailing on the harbour represent the "golden olden days" of recreational boating in Sydney Harbour. Professor David Sulman Carment reflected that his great grandfather 'looked old for many years' and in this sense, it is difficult to date many of the photographs, other than knowing the gaff rig was in place until 1937. It is almost as if, from the moment David started sailing, he stopped aging; that his 'love of a good breeze' kept the end at bay in some way. ATHENE stayed with the Carment family until 1950. It has since passed through a number of owners, and has been

altered with a new Bermudan rig and new cabin house. The current owner bought ATHENE in 2013 and has plans to begin racing ATHENE again with Sydney Amateur Sailing Club on Sydney Harbour. This story is based on extensive research published as an ANMM blog in March 2013 by Curatorial Assistant Nicole Cama who interviewed Prof David Carment and had access to their family records.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 10.36 m x 2.59 m x 1.83 m (34 ft x 8.5 ft x 6 ft)