

Basic Detail Report



Karalee

Vessel number

HV000293

Date

1952

Primary Maker

Alan Payne

Description

KARALEE was built for Tom Mulhearn in Sydney by Reg and Cyril Morrow at their Balmain yard. Mulhearn had initially asked his friend Neville Chidgey to design the boat, but Chidgey said his colleague in the drafting office at Cockatoo Island, Alan Payne, would do a better job. Mulhearn planned to call the boat KARALEE, an Aboriginal word for wild flower and the name of Mulhearn's timber

yard in Dorrigo. During the design process Payne entered the plans in an international design competition, but misunderstood the name and sent it in as KILLARA. The design came third, behind winner Philip Rhodes, a US designer. Shortly after launching, when being entered for its first race, Mulhearn had a sudden change of mind, and the yacht was listed as MARGARET M, after his wife. KARALEE has the classic style and long overhangs that were typical for many yachts of that period, influenced by the International Rule's 6, 8 and 12 metre Classes. Although not designed to that rule, KARALEE is one of many yachts sometimes referred to as an English cruising 8 Metre. Seacraft magazine quoted Alan Payne describing it in October 1957 as a 'conventional English type'. KARALEE's design was developed from another yacht designed by Payne called MOONYA, which raced successfully on the east coast for many years, and the two designs helped establish his career early in the 1950s. The hull was planked in timber from Mulhearn's yard; white beech on spotted gum frames. It was carefully engineered by the designer, assisted by Neville Chidgey. An interesting feature, showing how Payne adopted unorthodox features from early in his career, was a highfield lever located on the foredeck to tension the forestay. The lever was placed aft of a sheave which the forestay passed around, running back along the deck to the lever. The lever was removed by KARALEE's second owner when the relatively flexible galvanised steel forestay was replaced by much stiffer stainless steel. KARALEE remained with Mulhearn until 1988 when it was sold to its present owner. Hearing the saga of the name changes, the present owner asked Mulhearn if he could return it to the original name KARALEE. As Margaret Mulhearn had died, Tom Mulhearn agreed to the change of name, back to his original choice. The yacht retains all of its original structure and configuration except for an

aluminium spar that replaced the wooden mast in 1970. The present owner has made one small but significant revision. He replaced the original port lights from 1952 with new oval port lights, and these new castings matched the shape drawn by Alan Payne on his plans for the yacht.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 13.72 m x 9.75 m x 2.97 m x 2.06 m, 11.81 tonnes (45 ft x 32 ft x 9.75 ft x 6.75 ft, 12 tons)