

Basic Detail Report



N & E Towns Motor Boat

Vessel number

HV000584

Date

1920

Primary Maker

N & E Towns

Description

N & E Towns were one of the principal boatbuilders in Newcastle in the first half of the 20th century, and their shed was on Dempsey Island in the Hunter River. Small craft were commonly built in clinker or lapstrake construction around a simple set of moulds, and this craft would have been built in the same manner. It is 4.90m overall and 1.80m beam. The hull has eight planks per side, a raked and curved stem, a round bilge hull shape and the deadwood keel features an aperture for the propeller. The internal arrangement has a small raised deck forward and four thwarts. The aft thwart is fixed to the stringer and transom, the remaining three have double knees, and the second aft thwart has a removable back rest. The hull is varnished inside and out and painted bottle green below the waterline on the exterior. The engine is well forward, along with seating for passengers, and the boat's hull carries its beam and volume forward as well to trim correctly to this weight distribution. Having the engine well forward requires a long shaft, and this is enclosed through to the stern gland. There are two rowlock brackets for oars and a footboard fitted for use with the midships thwart. It has a rudder and tiller for steering from the aft thwart. Its use and ownership remain unknown, however a launch of this nature has the capacity to ferry people and stores or supplies some distance along the Hunter River and tributaries, and could have multiple recreational uses as well. AMBER LEE (HV000236) is a similar launch built by N & E Towns at their shed on Dempsey Island, most probably in the 1920s. It is not known if it was used commercially or built solely as a recreational craft, but it shares the same clinker construction and profile, but is 6.1 metres long, and AMBER LEES's hull shape resembles an easily driven rowing skiff rather than the launch proportions used on the shorter hull of this craft. In 2014 this vessel is part of the Newcastle Maritime Museums extensive collection of regional small craft.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 4.9 m x 1.8 m (16.08 ft x 5.91 ft)