

Basic Detail Report



Needle

Vessel number

HV000072

Date

1949

Description

NEEDLE is 6.5 metres long and was built by George Whymark in 1949 at his home in Croydon, NSW. Whymark was an engineer interested in design, but it is not known if he designed the hull shape and the structure of the boat or worked from plans by another designer. The hull is planked in marine grade plywood over timber framing. The deck around the twin cockpits is plywood with one joint and nailed at the edge to the sheer stringer, but the fore deck and aft deck panels are made in canvas (originally yellow coloured). These canvas pieces attach to the rest of deck with two wooden strips. The racing number '98' is painted on each piece of canvas in black. Each cockpit still has its original white canvas curved seat backs attached to the rear coamings while the seat bases are wood. The original leg protecting padding on side of cockpits is also still attached. NEEDLE was steered with a foot controlled tiller arm in the front cockpit that connected to the yoke on the rudder stock at the transom with wire cables. The outboard tin rudder is not the original blade, it was added in 1970. The two steering cables run from the stern of the kayak and enter the hull through wooden covered panels on either side of stern cockpit. There are draining holes at the stern and bow that are secured with cork bungs. NEEDLE was used in competition over many seasons in the 1950s, when paddling became well established. It was an Olympic sport and the prospect of the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne encouraged the sports expansion in Australia. Whymark and his crew, 1956 Olympian Max Baldwin won the first 10,000 m K2 race in NSW, staged on the Nepean River. Later on in the 1950s the kayak participated in a 100 km marathon race on the Nepean/Hawkesbury River, from Penrith to Brooklyn, which has since become an annual fund-raising event. In 2003 the second owners of NEEDLE, who had carefully stored the unaltered hull in their garage for many years, donated the vessel to the Australian National Maritime Museum where it is now part of the National Maritime Collection.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 6.5 m x 0.55 m (21.33 ft x 1.8 ft)