

# Basic Detail Report

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## Torquay

**Vessel number**

HV000668

**Date**

1913

**Primary Maker**

Jas Edwards & Sons

## Description

The pair-oared skiff is 5 metres long and 1 metre wide, with a plumb stem and rounded forefoot, a transom stern supporting a rudder with a coxswain sitting on the aft thwart and steering with a yoke and lines. There are two rowing thwarts, each opposed to gunwale-mounted brass rowlocks and stretchers in the bilge. The planking is New Zealand kauri which is copper riveted throughout, the frames are blue gum frames and gunwale strike rails are West Australian Jarrah. There is an oval-shaped, brass 'Jas Edwards & Sons' builder's plate on the transom. TORQUAY and the other three craft were built for the Anglesea Recreation and Sports Club in 1913 for a sports day of 'rowing, tennis, swimming and beer chewing' which started as a "fau-formal" challenge from the lads at Anglesea to those of neighbouring Aireys Inlet in 1911. Anglesea and Aireys inlet just to the south are on the Great Ocean Road coastline about 100kms to the west of Port Phillip heads. While the gauntlet to compete in the 'Grand Challenge Cup' was thrown down in 1913, the build up to it began early as 1887. The early land-holders of the two villages often met for river-side picnics that inevitably included all manner of sporting engagements which were central to these gatherings. As the Anglesea River was particularly suitable for events both on and in the water, these became the focus. By the turn of the century Aireys Inlet also held Sports Meetings at Christmas or Easter in which golf and tennis were the main events. However it was late in 1910 that a challenge was issued by Anglesea to Aireys Inlet. Unfortunately the original challenge and the response documents (which had a white feather affixed) held by the Noble & McMillen families were lost in the disastrous Ash Wednesday fires of 1983, but photographs of the documents survive and the text of both is provided at the end of this story. The New Years Day 'Grand Challenge Cup' regatta was a major social event of the summer with many well-off Melbourne and Geelong families represented. It has been held every year since except for two years during World War II. The regatta has always been managed by a committee of volunteers whose fathers and grandfathers preceded them in the same roles: a tradition that has been maintained as well as the boats. TORQUAY has been maintained in original condition and has been housed in the club's shed that was built for specifically the four boats in about 1916. On the low ground of the eastern river bank, it appears that the humid environment of the shed and has been a key factor in their longevity and the excellent condition of all four boats today. The 1911 Challenge from Anglesea to Aireys Inlet set out the events to be contested and the rules under which they would be engaged, While rowing is the only one of the original program that is still conducted, it is run in the spirit established by these original rules - a spirit

the reflects the Australian sense of humour that has become some recognisable to us today. In a rather sad prologue, several of those few who started this unique event enlisted and fought with the A.I.F. at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. Some returned. THE CHALLENGE We, the undersigned, being the crème de la crème of the residents of the township of Anglesea River, formerly Swampy Creek, do hereby challenge the like residents - if there be any - of the village of Aireys Inlet sometimes termed Split Point, to despatch a team of young men to do battle with the aforementioned undersigned in any of the athletic arts hereunder mentioned - the aforesaid meeting to take place at Anglesea River at any date agreed upon by the captains of the opposing sides, between the dates of December 25th 1910 and January 5th 1911. Appended are the bones of contention together with the conditions thereto attached. 1. The Head of the River race is to be rowed over a course not longer than two miles in pull boats. The use of clinker boats and oar riggers to be prohibited. No restriction to the number of the crew but competitors are asked not to take girls or drink in the boat as the race must be finished by dark to enable married men to look after their wives. Coxswains must not weigh less than two pounds in their stockinged feet. Motor boats must remain moored whilst the race is in progress. Photographers wishing to obtain snaps for the English and Continental papers may obtain permission from the Marine Board through Jonas Hollingworth - Harbourmaster. 2. Relay Swimming Race. Teams of four Males preferred. The use of life buoys and water wings is strictly prohibited. Professionals are debarred from taking part in this or any other event, as we do not desire to encourage pot hunters. Competitors in this event are requested to use the soap before entering the water as the fishing societies are protesting against the amount of fish found poisoned in the district. Spectators are requested not to poke borax as they are doing their best. 3. Golf Championship. Two representatives from each side. Competitors are requested to bring their own clubs, balls, caddies and links. Two rounds of one hole each to be played on the American system of the loser coming to light at the beer garden. 4. "(There is no point 4)" 5. Tennis Championship. To be played on the same lines as the Golf Championship but we shall supply the court. Competitors are requested not to spit on the court as it tends to increase the growth of the weeds. Players are also warned against gallery play as it invariably leads to the discussion as to the correctness of the score. 6. Beer Chewing Championship. Two representatives from each side. The competitor drinking the most beer in fifteen minutes to be declared the winner. The losing side to pay all costs. Outside pacing prohibited. Spectators are requested to keep their thirst in check until the result is announced, when there will be a brawl. Signed this twenty third day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten, under the seal of the Martyred Rooster. This was signed by: S. T. McMillan (Captain) Terrell Crowl A.A. Bateman A. Cunningham H.B. Parrington Lt .W.T. Appleton Jnr. L. McMillan Keith Cecil and Roger Carr in their 1987 history of the regatta noted 'that the men from Aireys Inlet were not the type to let such a challenge go unanswered and the following was soon dispatched to Anglesea'. It is interesting to note that this acceptance is still in the possession of the Anglesea Recreation and Sports Club. THE ACCEPTANCE KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENT that we, the undersigned residents of 'Angahook', situated at Aireys Inlet (also known as Split Point) EXTEND GREETINGS to the crème de la crème of the residents of Anglesea River and HEREBY accept their challenge to the trials of skill and endurance as enumerated under the seal of the Martyred Rooster, represented by the White Feather. 1. The Head of the River Race. We are pleased indeed of the opportunity of measuring blades in this classic event, under the conditions stated. 2. Swimming Relay Race. A selection of great merit, marred only by the inclusion of the soapy condition. We regret the cause

for this condition and we are glad to say that there has been no such complaint from the Fishing Society of our district. The fact, though, of your having included such indicates that the position with you is a grave one, and, therefore, if by our acceding to this request your inhabitants can be induced to overcome their apparent prejudice to the use of this composition - and subsequent replenishing of your river with fish - we feel we would be lacking in courtesy if we did not thus assist you in your great and subtle effort of reform.

3. Golf Championship. A truly great and ancient test of skill, from which great pleasure would result. Conditions are acceptable. However on looking over our links we find one missing, but we anticipate no difficulty in being supplied with 'it' from your locality. 4. Tennis Championship. Another great test of skill. Conditions acceptable, but we trust that the restrictions involved will not prove such a severe handicap to you as it appears to us they must. 5. Beer Chewing Championship. An unequal contest we fear, but strenuous efforts will not be wanting on our part to bring this event to a successful conclusion, and you can be assured that the 'Inlet' will be extended to its utmost. Given under our Hands and Seal of the Spirits of Sport this twenty-second day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten.  
Allen G. Noble (Captain) Geo. C. Noble J MacMullen J. Bell Norman Hurst R. Smith A.M. Douglass P.W. Fisher R.W. Noble W. Ritchie

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 5 m × 1 m (16.41 ft × 3.28 ft)