

Basic Detail Report



?, Ted Want, ?, Merv Want and Roy Want

Duck Soup

Vessel number

HV000794

Date

1935

Description

Ted Want was always a Yamba man, born there in 1915. The Clarence River was home and work, he had been a professional fisherman since he was 15 years old. He was

still fishing in 1996, 66 years later and aged 81. His launch came from a design published in the US Rudder magazine and adapted by him to suit his net fishing on the river. It was built on the shores of Oyster Channel, and was one of a small number of craft he built for himself as a self-taught 'tradesman' over the years. It is clinker planked, from a beech tree he felled and milled himself. It was fitted with a cuddy cabin. DUCK SOUP is still operating on the river under only its second owner. He has given the boat a major overhaul to keep it going well into the future, with repaired or additional supporting structure inside, a new cuddy styled off the original, and a small diesel engine. He also gave it the name DUCK SOUP, as Ted Want always had a pot of that on hand if you ever dropped by. Ted Want came from a family of five children. He and his wife Hazel lived in one of a series of houses built on a site set aside for workmen constructing the Oyster Channel bridge early in the 1900s. His father was a labourer but went fishing to help make some extra money and feed the family, and Ted got the fishing skills from him. His uncle passed on some boatbuilding skills, and as well as using his launch for fishing, he lived in it for a while when he was building a new house, and helped push barges with steel frames for the new Oyster Channel Bridge. Dick Richards interviewed Ted in 1996 and recorded the following. "In the very early days, it was a case of rowing around the river to find the fish, but in later years I had outboard motors and eventually a small diesel-power launch" he said. Most of the boats, especially the flat bottom punts, he built himself, and several of them are still pulled up on the bank next to his home, but now largely overgrown. The only break from his beloved fishing was during the war years when he was called up and served about 500 days in the engineers as a sapper. "When the boats in the area were being confiscated because of the scare of an invasion, I had a row with the inspector who was in charge of the taking of the boats," he said, "I kept my boat, but I was called up a short while later and I'm sure it was the inspector who brought this about." DUCK SOUP remains running up and down the lower Clarence, as it always has. Still recognised as Ted Want's boat, it is a reminder of a true character of the river, and a style of vessel that was once common at a time when fishing was a profession and a lifestyle at the same time.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 7.62 m × 6.1 m × 2.44 m × 0.46 m, 2.03 tonnes (25 ft × 20 ft × 8 ft × 1.5 ft, 2 tons)