

Basic Detail Report



Lady Forrest

Vessel number

HV000617

Date

1904

Primary Maker

Samuel White and Co. UK

Description

LADY FORREST was built by J Samuel White and Company Ltd, of East Cowes, Isle of Wight in 1903, from plans prepared in 1902 by W Tregarthen Douglass, M. Inst. C.E. of Westminster, London. His plans were based on the well-known James Peake's lifeboat designs. Peake was assistant master shipwright at HM Dockyard, Woolwich, and his lifeboat plans were adopted by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution of Great Britain in 1852. LADY FORREST was plated in riveted, galvanised high-tensile

steel and fitted with a compound surface-condensing steam engine built by White-Foster. It is 17.23m long, 4.6m wide and has 1.93m draft. And displaced 32 tonnes at full load. LADY FORREST was a larger version of Peake's self-righting lifeboats, and these designs were also used in Australia- three are listed on the ARHV: the Queenscliff, Port Fairy, and Portland lifeboats (HV000029, HV000045 and HV000273). Coastal jetties served as Fremantle's port facilities until the inner harbour, Victoria Quay, was opened in 1897. However there were a number of near fatalities and total shipwrecks on the approaches to the new port. In 1899 CARLISLE CASTLE was lost with all crew and CITY OF YORK was wrecked, claiming six lives. At this time a sailing lugger served as the pilot boat. After the lugger was swamped and the pilot, Captain Cleary nearly drowned, an unsatisfactory tug-boat was commissioned in 1900. Cleary pleaded for a steam pilot boat and in 1902 the plans were commissioned. Named in honour of the Premier's wife, LADY FORREST completed its trials in the UK and was sent to Fremantle as deck cargo on SS FIFESHIRE, arriving in 1903. Although sometimes disparagingly referred to as a submarine as it sat low in the water, the vessel served satisfactorily as a pilot/ lifeboat and never failed to put to sea even in the worst weather. In 1947 the steam engine was replaced with a General-Motors Gray Marine diesel engine and included in other major works was the installation of a brass conning tower that was salvaged from one of the Dutch submarines that had escaped from Indonesia early in World War II and later scuttled off WA. The tower gave the crew some protection from the elements. In 1953 LADY FORREST underwent another major refit. In 1959 after a new pilot boat was commissioned, LADY FORREST was recommissioned to transfer customs and immigration officers, quarantine doctors and medical staff to incoming ships lying at anchor off the

coast waiting for a berth at Victoria Quay. This helped to make immigration and customs processing more efficient. In 1967 LADY FORREST was decommissioned and restored to its original pilot boat and lifeboat configuration before being donated to the WA Museum in November 1970. It has undergone a number of restorations, the latest being in 2001. In 2013 it is on display at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Victoria Quay Fremantle, and aspects such as the wonderful curved stern shape, riveted plating details and deck arrangement are all visible. Prepared from research provided by Western Australian Maritime Museum

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 17.23 m x 4.6 m x 1.93 m, 32 tonnes (56.53 ft x 15.09 ft x 6.33 ft, 31.49 tons)