

Basic Detail Report



John Oxley

Vessel number

HV000032

Date

1927

Primary Maker

Bow, McLachlan and Co.

Description

JOHN OXLEY was built by Bow, McLachlan and Co. in Scotland in 1927 to the order of the Queensland Harbours and Marine Board (the Queensland Government). The vessel was launched in Paisley, Scotland by the Agent-General for Queensland, the Hon. John Huxham. The Hon. John Huxham stated at the launch of the vessel "that John Oxley was one of the most important discoverers in connection with Queensland. He had been a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy and was sent out to Queensland to found the penal settlement." (Transcript from original newspaper article in the Paisley and Daily Gazette Thursday 21 July 1927). The JOHN OXLEY steamed out under her own power for service as a pilot vessel in Moreton Bay and as a buoy tender and lighthouse tender along the Queensland coast. JOHN OXLEY was built in riveted steel with teak decks. She is a typical coastal steamship with raised forecastle, well deck, machinery and navigation midships and accommodation aft. She has two boilers and a triple expansion steam engine. The ship was originally coal fired, but was converted to burn heavy fuel oil (no longer available) in 1946. JOHN OXLEY was taken over by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) during World War 11 for use as an examination vessel responsible for verifying merchant ships and other craft entering or departing port. While the requisition was terminated in 1943, the JOHN OXLEY continued to be manned and operated by the RAN until 1946 when it was returned to full Queensland Harbours and Marine Board control and operation. Ship's data Built 1927 to Lloyds 100A1 Bow McLachlan & Co. Ltd. Thistle Works, Paisley, Scotland Ship SS No. 464 Launched Wednesday, 20th July, 1927 Length 168 feet (51 m) Beam 32 feet (9.8 m) Depth 15 feet (4.6m) Tonnage 540 gross tons Displacement 760 tons Speed 14 knots Propeller Manufacture by Stone - 4 Bladed, 10'6" (3.2 m) diameter by 12' pitch, cast iron hub. Manganese bronze bolt on blades Construction Well-deck steamship with main hold, a riveted steel hull and a superstructure to boat deck. Captain's cabin and wheelhouse in teak, crew accommodation and mess in forecastle, officers accommodation and mess midships on the main deck, pilots accommodation aft below deck. Teak decks throughout. Two 24 (6 m) clinker whalers for pilot transfer in davits plus additional 14' (4.3 m) dinghy also in davits. Bow McLachlan steam windlass and anchoring through hawseholes, cargo winch and mast/derrick cargo handling gear was originally driven from the windlass, however, a Clarke Chapman steam winch was added here. Propulsion • Two coal fired scotch marine boilers each with three triple-expansion engine furnaces., dimensions 12'9" internal diameter, by 11'3" long and weighing around 30 ton each. Working pressure 180 psi. • Michell thrust bearing by Michell Bearing LTD, transferring propeller

thrust to the hull • James Howden forced draft and Brundrits boiler circulators • Triple expansion steam engine 17.5" + 29" + 48" x 33" - 1400 IHP (Indicated Horse Power) Surface condensing • Dawson & Downie air pump, general service pump and bilge ballast pump • Weirs main feed pumps and float tank, Matthew Paul circulator • John Kirkaldy feed heater and filter • Bow McLachlan steering engine in bridge with rod and chain to quadrant. • Sisson steam engine driving a Crompton 8KW 110 volt DC. • Reader steam engine driving L. Sterne refrigeration set, Caird and Rayner evaporator (now removed) • Sees ash ejector by Trewent & Proctor (removed when oil fired). Converted from coal to oil firing by Sergeants in Brisbane in 1947 • Sanitary pump by Dawson & Downie was also fitted but has been replaced by a number of pumps over the years Crew Master, Mate, Leading Hand, Chief Engineer, Second Engineer, three firemen, and four deckhands, cook and a steward. Accommodation for up to 14 Pilots. A Third Engineer and a trimmer were carried on longer voyages. Technical Significance – Superstructure JO-foredeck-sm.jpg JOHN OXLEY was never modified and retains her original layout and configuration. Many similar ships have been extensively altered and re-engined. JOHN OXLEY is especially valuable as she is a very conventional and typical ship of her time (straight stem, counter stem, raised forecastle, well deck, raised boat deck, machinery amidships, tall funnel, and with accommodation aft). She has six watertight compartments and a tunnel space. Well deck, cargo winch and derrick are significant being a typical rig for cargo handling during the earlier part of the twentieth century. The same can be said regarding her boats and their handling. Teak decks were also laid on most ships from this period. JOHN OXLEY is riveted in steel using the conventional in-out plating system. The ends of each plate are lapped and have no butt straps. Her frames are the more modern and lighter jogged system (no packers at out strakes). She is a single bottomed vessel with no tank tops. Fit out for crew and for officers/pilots are of typical quality for the period. The cabins, washrooms, mess and pantries for officers and pilots in particular have varnished Queensland Maple panelling and furniture. This timber was shipped to Scotland by the Queensland Government, especially for JOHN OXLEY. Technical Significance – Propulsion Scotch-boiler-2colour. The layout of two boilers athwartships with a triple expansion steam engine is very typical of marine engineering from this period. This machinery layout was used for most of the many thousands of small steamships that no longer exist. Originally coal fired, JOHN OXLEY retains her coal burning furnace fronts with a commercial conversion for oil fuel built and installed by a local company, Sergeants of Brisbane, in 1946. As such she represents two technologies. As an oil burner she is significant in that she combined Howden's forced draft with a locally manufactured oil fuel conversion, Scotch-boiler-3colour Note that JOHN OXLEY burnt heavy fuel oil, which was once a common marine fuel, but today is no longer available. JOHN OXLEY has a comprehensive set of steam-powered auxiliaries. These include the usual condenser (fabricated), independent air, feed, circulating and bilge pumps, feed heater/filter, Forced draft fan, air beater, a 110V dynamo, L. Sterne ammonia refrigeration set, steam steering engine and a sanitary pump. Her layout is very typical of marine engineering of the period. JOHN OXLEY has a propulsion system that would adequately power a considerably larger vessel. Restoration of the JOHN OXLEY commenced in 1982 and continues today by Fleet volunteers. In this respect the Fleet is fortunate in having, in its Records Centre, many of the original 1927 drawings produced by Bow, MacLachlan & Co. Ltd. in 1927. JOHN OXLEY remained in service until 1968 and was donated to the Sydney Heritage Fleet (SHF) in 1970. JOHN OXLEY was never modified and retains her original layout and configuration. Many similar ships have been extensively modified and re-engineered. In 1997 JOHN OXLEY was docked on the Sydney Heritage Fleet barge and extensive

restoration took place from 2004. On 3 April 2022 JOHN OXLEY was once again refloated as part of SHF's operation 'SWAP'. This entailed the towing of both JOHN OXLEY and the SHF ferry KANANGRA from SHF's Rozelle workshop in Sydney's inner west to the Captain Cook dry dock on Garden Island. JOHN OXLEY made the outward passage atop a barge and KANANGRA was escorted by tugs. While in dry dock JOHN OXLEY's hull was cleaned, and it made the return passage in water escorted by other SHF fleet vessels and to much fanfare of other harbour vessels and members of the public. Back at the Rozelle workshop KANANGRA took JOHN OXLEY's place out of the water and JOHN OXLEY has remained in water for further restoration work.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 51.2 m x 9.75 m x 3.35 m (168 ft x 32 ft x 11 ft) Registered Dimensions: 544 tons x 212 tons