

Basic Detail Report



PS Enterprise

Vessel number

HV000521

Date

1878

Primary Maker

William Keir

Description

PS ENTERPRISE was built in Echuca by William Keir from river red gums. These trees, which lined the Murray River, provided the hardwood for both building and powering many of the river's paddle steamers. It was powered by a single expansion, twin cylinder engine made by Beverley Iron Co. in England. The engine's maximum revolutions were 120rpm. PS ENTERPRISE has a shallow draft hull which made it suitable for dealing with the varying water levels of the river system. In 1879 it managed to steam through the year despite falling water levels. PS ENTERPRISE has worked as a cargo ship, floating store, fishing vessel, houseboat and showboat. The Keir family were its first owners, they sold it in 1893 to Tommy Freeman, and in 1911 it became a floating store for Emma Davie and Francis Dunn at Wentworth. Augustus Creager bought PS ENTERPRISE in 1919 and raised his family on board while working as a fisherman. They were based near Mildura and then later near Rufus River. Over the years a number of adjustments were made to the boat, including the building of a new galley with a wood stove and a new master bedroom. The steam hose from the boiler was used to heat water drawn straight from the river for bathing, washing and cleaning the decks. Although the family lived on the boat, PS ENTERPRISE was moored for most of the time. This allowed the children to attend school, and Augustus to maintain a shed on the bank for his motor vehicles and tools. The Creagers also had a vegetable garden and a goat for milk. Living right on the water was hazardous for the Creager children. As toddlers, each of them fell overboard at least once. Mrs Creager displayed great calm and presence of mind by watching the trail of bubbles from the child and reaching into the water to rescue her offspring when he or she came to the surface! The Creagers lived on board until they sold PS ENTERPRISE in 1945, at which point it became a houseboat in Mannum. In 1973 enthusiasts Graeme Niehus and his father Bruce restored PS ENTERPRISE and later that year held steamboat races at Echuca with other paddle boat owners. In 1984 PS ENTERPRISE was acquired by the National Museum of Australia. It was further restored in Echuca in 1987/88 and a new boiler fitted before being moved to its new home on Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. Since its arrival at the Museum, PS ENTERPRISE has carried number of special guests including the Governor General Bill Hayden and his wife Dallas, and Paul Keating when he was Federal Treasurer. In 1993 a unique role was bestowed upon PS ENTERPRISE as part of the Royal Australian Navy Maritime Pageant. PS ENTERPRISE was recommissioned as HMA PS ENTERPRISE for 4 December 1993 only and was given permission to fly the Navy's White Ensign for the day. To mark the occasion, PS ENTERPRISE carried as guests the then Chief of

Naval Staff, Vice Admiral MacDonald, then Governor General Bill Hayden and then Chief of Defence Force, Admiral Beaumont.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 17.3 m x 17 m x 4.6 m x 0.8 m (56.76 ft x 55.78 ft x 15.09 ft x 2.62 ft)