

Basic Detail Report



SY Ena

Vessel number

HV000605

Date

1900

Primary Maker

WM Ford Boatbuilders

Description

SY ENA was Dibbs' second vessel with this name, which is taken from Dibbs' wife Tryphena. Papers carried reports of the vessel's construction during 1900, and showed much anticipation throughout the nation: The Brisbane Courier 10 November 1900 reported: "A new 100-ton steam yacht which Ford of Sydney is building for Mr TA Dibbs is expected to be launched early next month. It is said to be one of the finest specimens of a modern steam yacht in the Australian colonies." On the same date, Australian Town and Country reported: "The new 100-ton steam yacht which Ford is building for Mr TA Dibbs will be one of the finest yachts ever launched in Australian waters." It was launched in late 1900, with its construction incorporating timbers salvaged from the former Royal Navy and Victorian Colonial Navy ship, HMVS Nelson. Once the machinery was installed it began steaming on the harbour during 1901. The Sydney Morning Herald carried a report on Monday 10 December 1900: "LAUNCH OF MR T.A. DIBBS' NEW STEAM YACHT. Shortly after 9.0'clock on Saturday morning a handsome steam yacht, built for Mr TA Dibbs was launched from Mr Ford's yard, Berrys Bay. As she left the ways she was christened 'Ena' by Miss Dorothy Dibbs." Dibbs used SY ENA on Sydney Harbour for day trips entertaining guests up until World War I. The small number of vessels in the navy at the outbreak of the war meant that private and commercial craft were sought out and requisitioned for support use when needed. SY ENA was considered and was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy on 13 January 1917 to become a patrol boat in Torres Strait. Renamed HMAS SLEUTH, the ship was used to patrol the area for armed German raiders. It was painted a dark grey all over, aspects of the arrangement were modified and it was armed with a three pounder on the foredeck. It eventually proved unsuitable for this work and was brought back to Sydney to be refitted and used for patrol work on the east coast as far north as Cooktown. It was later used for naval training work on Sydney Harbour as a tender to HMAS TINGARRA. After the war it was decommissioned and on 19 February 1920 it sold to a ship chandler, and then sold on to a new private owner Edward Budrodeen. He refitted it as a steam yacht, returned it to its original name and used it on Sydney Harbour for a short period. It was sold again in 1921 to William Longworth who was a Newcastle entrepreneur and philanthropist. It then became a regular sight on the Karuah River when it took Longworth from Newcastle to his home "Glenroy" on Port Stephens in the 1920s. It also made passages to Sydney. In 1928 his deceased estate sold the vessel to Vernon Armfield, an employee from the Ford yard. Soon after he sold it to Walter Driscoll from Hobart, Tasmania who took it south in 1933 to work as a trading vessel, shipping

apples, a typical Tasmanian cargo and trade. This operation did not last long, as Driscoll became caught up in legal disputes and SY ENA was seized by his creditors for a long period. It had little use until 1940 when the Roche Bros bought it from Driscoll and set the vessel up for trawling work and harvesting scallops. In 1945 they installed a diesel engine for better economy. A wet well was added for keeping live fish, refrigeration was put in aft, the stem was cut back and the vessel renamed AURORE - goddess of dawn. SY ENA still attracted attention, with the Hobart Examiner running a story in May 1946: "Former Luxury Steam Yacht, Naval Patrol, Now in Scallop Industry. Among the most beautiful pleasure craft in Australian water years ago, the ocean going steam yacht ENA is now one of the ships engaged in the Hobart scallop trade. Her life has been full of ups and downs since 1900 and she is far from being permanently down." The Roche Bros operated it for 30 years, even taking AURORE up to Queensland fishing for shark. When their interests changed to ferries they sold it in 1974 to Kevin Hursey from Dover. He used it for six years then sold it in 1980 to the Harpur Bros. It was operating as a fishing boat when it hit an unidentified object in the D'Entrecasteau Channel and sank on March 4 1981. The Harpur's salvaged the vessel when it was raised four months later. At this time Sydney businessman Pat Burke had been seeking a suitable craft similar to the LADY HOPETOUN for use as a charter vessel on Sydney Harbour and his shipwright Nick Masterman recommended SY ENA, even though it was still underwater. Burke was unable to secure it immediately, but negotiated its purchase and in 1982 it was brought to Sydney. The deal was finally completed in 1984 after protracted negotiations concerning the condition of the vessel. Burke had formed syndicate with flamboyant stockbroker Renee Rivkin and his solicitor David Baffksy, and the three became owners and oversaw the reconstruction in the hands of Masterman. The project was completed in Sydney in 1986. The structure and arrangement was restored or recreated where needed as accurately as possible to replicate how it was built originally. A new steam engine was made, based on the remains of an existing steam engine used in another Reeks designed ship that had also been used in Tasmania. The project cost over \$2 million and created a restored vessel that was supplemented with modern requirements so that it could be put into commercial survey for passenger charter work on enclosed waters. This project was an outstanding restoration and a fitting tribute to Masterman who passed away just a few years later. He was one the first to recognise that the history of many of the harbour's vessels was not well known, and began to focus his energy on retaining what was still extant, and enthusing others to do the same. In 1986 SY ENA steamed to Fremantle for the America's Cup and then returned. During this voyage it circumnavigated the mainland, passing through Torres Strait again. Back on Sydney Harbour it was used as a charter vessel until 1989 when Burkes' company Hartogen Energy went bankrupt and it was once again in the hands of receivers, when one of Rivkin's creditors seized the vessel in lieu of payment. SY ENA was bought in 1991 at auction by art dealer John Buttsworth on behalf of a private buyer. In 2014 the vessel changed ownership again, and SY ENA steamed to Melbourne where it operated on the Yarra River and Port Phillip. It returned to Sydney early in 2016 and operated on Sydney Harbour under a new private owner. In 2017 it was donated to the Australian National Maritime Museum by John and Jacqui Mullen.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 35.4 m x 5.05 m x 2.3 m, 70 tonnes (116.15 ft x 16.57 ft x 7.55 ft, 68.88 tons)