

# Basic Detail Report

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## HMAS SYDNEY (III) Ship's Cutter

### Vessel number

HV000648

### Date

1940s

### Description

The clinker construction ship's cutter may have been built at the same time as the ship it served with, the aircraft carrier HMAS SYDNEY. This warship was built in the late 1940s in the UK, initially for the Royal Navy but during construction the ship was redirected to the RAN to fulfil one of two orders for RAN aircraft carriers. The other was HMAS MELBOURNE. Navy documents have the cutter attached to HMAS SYDNEY in 1971 with the number 321458. At one stage its colour scheme was black topsides and white underneath. The ship's cutter served a multitude of small workboat and transport requirements for the aircraft carrier, almost exclusively in port. It was an open boat, and powered by a Dorman diesel engine. Instead of a rudder the steering system employed was the Kitchen method which redirected the flow off the propeller to steer to port or starboard, and also enabled the boat to move astern. The Kitchen rudder (full name - Kitchen's Patent Reversing Rudders), is a patented directional control system that suits slow speed craft. It was the invention of John Kitchen of Lancashire, England in the early 1900s. Instead of being a single 'vane' rudder, it is a two part bucket configuration placed directly aft of the propeller that controls the direction of the thrust, and allows the engine to maintain constant revolutions and constant drive shaft rotation direction, while altering the direction of the thrust off the propeller. The system consists of a pair of partial or half cones ('buckets') mounted on a pivot either side of the propeller with the long axis of the cone running fore and aft when the helm is midships. They are pivoted about a vertical axis and by manipulating how much each side is opened the vessel can change direction, and when completely closed the system is then directing the thrust forwards and pushing the vessel astern. It required training to get used to, as the helmsman often had to look down at the controls to note the setting of the twin 'buckets' and adjust them as required, taking their eyes off where they were heading, and for some this was disconcerting. The cutter was taken from the ship at an unknown date and transferred to the RAN Reserve cadets in Adelaide and used by them for many years. It was then bought by the Milang Historic Steam and Shipping Museum in 1993, and later handed over to the Armfield Slipway in Goolwa as a restoration project. It was relaunched recently and is in use at Goolwa SA.

### Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 9.75 m × 9.75 m × 2.74 m × 0.67 m (32 ft × 32 ft × 9 ft × 2.2 ft)