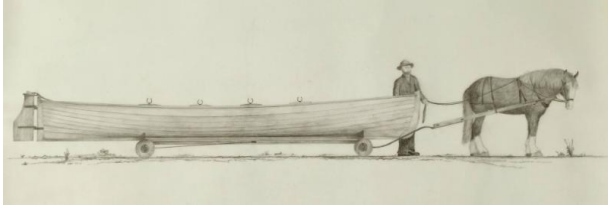


# Basic Detail Report

---



## Noah

### Vessel number

HV000702

### Date

1889

### Primary Maker

John Hawken

### Description

As an example of the flood boat type NOAH represents a local design with its own characteristics and construction, and provides an important comparison to historic flood boats held in other collections. It has a typical concave sheer line, but the double-ended hull shape is a contrast to the other flood boats with a transom stern. The clinker construction is a typical method, and in this instance the builder has used half frames at intermediate stations between the full frames. The retention of the cradle and harness is a valuable additional means of interpretation, showing how the craft was managed onshore for storage and launching. The flood boat has a double ended hull shape, with a rounded bow profile at the stem piece and a vertical stern frame. The hull midsection shows a relatively flat floor with a low dead rise angle to the garboard and adjacent strakes, an easy turn to the bilge and the top strake is relatively vertical. This full section shape is carried through the main body of the hull and gives a buoyant hull to suit the need to carry a number of passengers as well as the four or five crew in any emergency situation. Thwarts are evenly spaced along the hull. NOAH is built in a traditional clinker on frame method. The planking has eight strakes on each side and is supported by 23 full frames with intermediate  $\frac{1}{2}$  frames through the main part of the hull from frames 3 to 21. The keel longitudinal has a rabbet for the planks, and the stem and stern frames are lapped onto the keel and also have an overlapping vertical joint on the centreline, in contrast to a longitudinal scarph. Breast hooks and knees support the main connections around the topsides. The riser for the six cross thwarts and two side thwarts or seat is the main longitudinal through the topsides, and the topsides are finished at the sheer line with an inwale, packing between the frames, the sheer stake and then a gunwale, forming a solid band around the hull. It has a bilge stringer from frames 6 to 19. The floor boards and stretchers complete the layout. Copper fastenings are used, and the stem and stern frame both have a large eye bolt with the ring located on the inside face. This may have been a means of lifting the vessel on and off its cradle in the boat house where it was stored. It has been recorded as made of local red cedar *Toona australis*, and this would be correct identification for the planking and thwarts, but that timber is too soft for many of the other items of structure and it is more likely they were made from one of the eucalypts such as spotted gum *Corymbia maculata*. One of the tea tree species is a likely source of material for the knees and breast hooks that benefit from being made from a grown piece with the grain following the shape of the bracket. The cradle and harness are made from a hardwood including the wheels, with iron used for the washers, pins and other fittings. The first two flood boats in the

Shoalhaven region on the southern NSW coastline were acquired after the flood of 1870 when the Numbaa Council petitioned the Colonial Secretary to provide two boats to protect residents from the danger of further flood events. The Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department provided 60 pounds to Captain Hixson to purchase two boats and forward them to the Numbaa Municipal Council. Mayor James Ryan received the boats in May 1878. Ironically the boats were never used for their stated purpose being built with heavy planking that made them too cumbersome and unwieldy to safely navigate the river. The boats however were used during the construction of the Shoalhaven River Bridge at Nowra. By 1888 both flood boats were found to be in such a state of repair that they were considered useless and needed replacement. In a generous gesture respected local land owner David Berry agreed to replace the two boats and their sheds at the expense of his property, Coolangatta Estate. The two boats were built by the Berry family's shipwright John Hawken. Sheds were built at Bolong and Numbaa to house the boats which stood on horse drawn trailers. These trailers were made completely from wood with cast iron fittings and needed one horse only to be used. The two craft were called NOAH and SHOALHAVEN. NOAH was placed on the northern bank of the river at Bolong on Henry's farm "Buena Vista", and SHOALHAVEN was placed on the southern banks at Numbaa closer to the head of the river at J McLean's property. Berry Council controlled the Bolong boat, while the Numbaa boat became the property of South Shoalhaven Council. There are no recorded reports of the boats being used in any subsequent flood. It is thought that these boats were also relatively heavy and it was difficult to navigate the dangerous, heavy floodwaters that also carried large logs and other debris, further endangering any craft in the water. Both boats were reported to be in good condition in 1942 during wartime, and appeared to escape any possible directions to have them removed or even destroyed in case of enemy invasion, a practice that was put into effect in other regions of the country. The craft remained in their sheds and were almost abandoned until 1966 when the Rotary Club of Nowra and the Nowra branch of the CWA jointly arranged a two day historic and antique exhibition in the Nowra School of Arts. Amongst the exhibits were SHOALHAVEN from Numbaa as both boats had been rediscovered as a result of the interest in the exhibition. NOAH remained in a shed until 1984 when it was gifted by the Shoalhaven Council to the Berry Museum, managed by the Berry and District Historical Society. It was given the Accession No B1989 in February 1989. It is now on display in the northern courtyard of the museum under a shelter.

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 7.23 m × 1.92 m (23.72 ft × 6.3 ft)