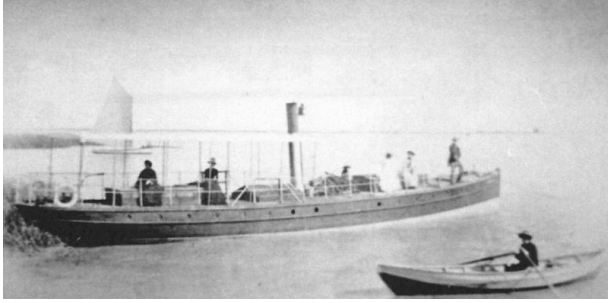


Basic Detail Report



Alexandrina

Vessel number

HV000731

Date

1884

Primary Maker

Willans and Robinson

Description

ALEXANDRINA was built at Govan, Scotland in 1884 by Elder & Co. It was Boat No. A21, a twin screw launch consigned by Allan McFarlane (Jnr.) of Wellington Lodge, South Australia and cost 7,500 pounds before shipping and assembling. Willans and Robinson designed the boat, built the engines and possibly the boiler. The firm John Elder & Co, later became the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Elder Smith & Co. Adelaide, on August 6th 1885, advised Mr McFarlane that the parts of the vessel had arrived by the ORIANA. It was in ten packets, seven small and three large. The large ones remained in the hold until all the other cargo was removed. The consignment was sent to Milang and then taken to McFarlane's by barge. The vessel was assembled on McFarlane's slip by Frank Potts of Langehorne Creek, (the well-known shipbuilder turned winemaker), with some assistance from his son Fred, and completed about August 29th 1886. The canopy was added around January 1887. ALEXANDRINA was appointed in the tradition of a steam pinnace with plush red horse hair bunks separated by velvet curtains, polished longitude planking, light oak in colour and a lot of artificial graining that used to be a craftsman's art. It had a most detailed "Prince of Wales" crest hand painted in blue and white on the toilet and washbasin. The windlass is made by Pascall Atkey & Son of Cowes, England. The deck and interior cladding (and bulkheads) were New Zealand kauri and the deckhouses were teak. From the earlier photos, it was observed that there were no vents on the cabins and the boat was steered by a tiller. In the 1911 photo, both the wheel and the vents were fitted. ALEXANDRINA was named after the lake "Lake Alexandrina". The McFarlanes kept it on their slip at Wellington Lodge. At a later time Capt. Bill Collins said the name became ALEXANDRIA for a period because some of the equipment, such as the grappling hook, had the misspelt name "Alexandria" engraved into it. There is an entry in the records of "Surveys of Steamships" (GRG.51/92, page 19), stating that ALEXANDRINA was surveyed at Wellington on December 16th 1908 in McFarlane's possession and Certificate No. R16 was issued. The expiry date was June 17th 1909. Allan McFarlane (Jnr.) died on March 11th 1908, at the age of 80 years. In October, 1910 the vessel was purchased by the Irrigation & Reclamation Works Dept. It was valued at 1000 pounds but was purchased for 500 pounds. ALEXANDRINA was refitted with a new boiler because the old one was now pitted and corroded. In 1916 ALEXANDRINA sank at its moorings. It was raised and the steam engines were removed and two, four-cylinder Invincible kerosene engines with Paragon gearboxes were fitted. The kerosene tank was installed below deck aft of the rudder post and the work was done on a slip at Goolwa. To start the new motors, the starboard motor

was started electrically and then a foot operated pulley system was used to bring in a large belt drive to start the port motor. They started on petrol then switched to kerosene. The gear boxes had two large levers which moved between astern, neutral and ahead. The trickiest part was keeping the two engines in synchronization. Later, while in Murray Walker's possession, W. Reschke's grandfather made two brass quadrant throttles, finely calibrated to overcome this problem and also added water injection for smoother running on kerosene. ALEXANDRINA was used by Samuel McIntosh, known as the "Father of Irrigation" in South Australia. He was born at Woodville {Woodville's farm) on December 11th 1867. In 1910 he was appointed Officer-In- Charge of Irrigation and Reclamation Works in South Australia, later becoming Director of Irrigation. ALEXANDRINA was then called ALEXANDRA and was known as "McIntosh's yacht". It was used for official inspections and tours on the lower river travelling to Jervois, Wellington and further. Up river it travelled as far as the pumping station at Cobdogla but is unlikely to have gone any further. At this time it was moored at Murray Bridge next to the Irrigation Office, now known as Moritz's Slip. Alexander "Alec" Stuart Grundy, was the skipper and also in charge of the Irrigation Office. He also skippered the PS TARELLA (HV000695) another Irrigation Dept, boat. In 1934, ALEXANDRINA was put up for tender and purchased by Murray Woodburn Walker of Walker's Flour Mill at Mannum. It was used as a pleasure craft and moored at the mill. W. Reschke told the following story about Walker:- "He was a character and had a reputation for drinking. He would operate the engines allowing no one else to touch them. He would often, at a signal from the skipper to change engine speed etc., come out to see what was going on which caused a few problems. He also used to shout 'beer, beer' from the engine room upon which they would pass him a flagon from which he would take a big swig. A very sad cruise of the "Alex" comes to my mind, which was just before World War II, The engineer was Paddy Anderson, driver at Walker's Mill, a highly respected riverman. One of our group, Teddy Loxton, son of Jimmy Loxton, perhaps eight years old, disappeared and was feared drowned. Dragging failed to locate the body. Murray Walker took the "Alex" out and cruised up and down at full speed for a couple of hours creating a great wash to bring the body to the surface. It did not work but I shall never forget the occasion nor the spectacle of the boat at full speed. The boy's body was found a few days later. I took over the "Alex" as we called her in the early 1947. My job was to prepare her for a run to Goolwa for slipping. Murray did not believe the irrigation slip at Murray Bridge was adequate. Knowing him and knowing Grundy, it could have been because they had a fallout - not uncommon in old rivermen. I got her all fuelled up and ready for the trip, but it did not eventuate. Murray could not make up his mind. He wanted dead calm weather and we did have a very rough year, in fact, a couple of bad years just after the war. Day cruises used up all the fuel and I had to get her ready again in 1948. Murray became ill and that was the end of the whole business. I kept her in shipshape condition with paint and polish and at all times ready for sea - batteries charged all ready to start. Eventually I had to let her go because my own work mounted. I was then doing dairy technology and writing for newspapers. Skipper Harry Payne {ex Captain Sturt and the immortal Brewarrina voyage) put the malthoid on the deck because of seam problems. I might say Murray wanted calm weather for the Goolwa run because he was worried about the bolts securing the skin planking." During the war ALEXANDRINA is understood to have been registered with the Government, the number was RM 1896. Murray Walker was worried about corrosion to the hull so he had a jarrah sheath fitted by Peter Clausen, a shipwright of Port Adelaide. This was done at the Irrigation Slip at Murray Bridge. The smokestack, added by Murray was cosmetic. He had his 1st AIF (WWI) colour patch painted on the stack.

Walker had a few skippers, W. Reschke's grandfather, who became disillusioned with Murray & Co.'s drinking and lost interest. Harry Thompson, a Swedish runaway sailor was another. He lost interest after the usual manoeuvre from the wharf and going astern. When he signalled for stop engines, Murray ignored him, which left the boat rushing towards the opposite bank and Harry, powerless to move the wheel, just staring astern. Murray came up, saw what was going on and went down and stopped the engines. While going forwards from this event, they promptly ran aground on the other side of the river. Murray tended to treat Harry as an able-seaman. Andrew Duncan, a dentist, was another skipper and a good friend of Murray's. When Murray died in 1949, he left ALEXANDRINA in his will to Mrs. Curtin from the Eudunda Farmers Store. After a short while she sold ALEXANDRINA to Capt. Bill Collins for about 500 pounds. Bill Collins, his brother Norman and Dud Gray then took ALEXANDRINA from Loxton to Mildura. They intended to refit ALEXANDRINA to tourist work but the MV TRIX came up for sale after about 10 months they sold ALEXANDRINA. It was sold to Eddy Lear with financial assistance from Eric Bruce for 1500 pounds, around 1951. This financial arrangement became a 50% share partnership. They intended to use ALEXANDRINA for tourist work. ALEXANDRINA was badly burnt on Monday 26/7/54 near Wentworth Lock in a fire that started around 2.35 pm and was caused by a petrol leak in the engine room. After this it was altered extensively. The two central bulkheads were cut out and two 1928 BUICK 6 cylinder petrol engines were installed in the aft cabin. The engine room became a cabin. A top structure was built enclosing most of the deck and a sponson was built around the boat. The anchor locker was converted to a freezer and was used to store fish bought from fishermen along the river. Unfortunately just about all the regal interior was burnt or taken out, however the wood panelling in the saloon is still original. The two smaller air cowls were reported to be on the PS MAYFLOWER (HV00166) and then moved to the PV Rothbury (HV000502). ALEXANDRINA was skippered by various people including Captain Paddy Hogg, who used to do tourist trips, mainly for executives, between Mildura and Lindsay's Homestead. Eric Bruce eventually bought Eddy Lear out. ALEXANDRINA's name at this time was changed to DON-DIANE (named after Eric's son and daughter). When he died in 1965, his Will stipulated that his girlfriend, Edna Berger, was to have control of the boat as long as she lived on it. When she had finished with the boat, complete control and ownership was to revert to Don Bruce, Eric Bruce's son. This did not eventuate and Berger gained ownership of the boat. Around 1975 ALEXANDRINA was sold to Norman Collins who sold it to Ian Tonkin and he renamed the vessel back to ALEXANDRINA. Ian Tonkin had ALEXANDRINA for four years, two and a half at Mildura, eighteen months at Wentworth. He updated the boat by removing the Masonite walls and malthoid roof and reclad the same in aluminium, also putting in aluminium windows. The corrugated fibreglass and flywire shadehouse was removed and the wheelhouse was lengthened by about four feet. Below decks it was painted brown. He removed the combustion stove which also supplied the hot water and replaced them with separate gas items. He also removed the two Buick engines and replaced them with a single SD33 Nissan diesel engine. In May 1979 Ian Tonkin sold ALEXANDRINA to Fred Mabey of Mildura. On a cruise, the rudder fell off, so the vessel was lashed to the side of the PV ROTHBURY and taken to Capt. Alby Poynton's slip. The boat was slipped, the hull painted and the rudder replaced. Later he removed the diesel engine in preparation for installation of a steam engine. This was purchased but due to the non-availability of a suitable boiler, he was unable to proceed. On November 28th, 1986, he sold ALEXANDRINA to Ralph Mabey and Nada Celan. On January 20th, 1987, they installed a Bedford 330 diesel with a Chevrolet Powerglide transmission (built by Grant Brokenshire). After a few cruises a vibration and

knocking from the shafts was noticed. From this it was decided that the boat would be slipped. In August 1987 it was slipped for repairs at Capt. A. Poynton's slip, and on November 16th, 1987 the journey back to South Australia was begun. After nearly capsizing whilst enduring a water spout, running aground several times and a few mechanical failures, ALEXANDRINA arrived at Murray Bridge on November 27th, 1987. It was moored at the Long Island Marina the following day. In June 1988, the middle cabin was removed and the engine was brought forward into the original engine room. The boat was slipped on July 23rd, 1988 at River Glen Marina and the stern tubes and the shafts (now stainless steel) were replaced. The hull was painted with Hydroseal. In August 1988, the top structure was altered. The middle section was dropped 18" and the bulkhead between the saloon and galley was removed in time for the River Ramble in September/October 1988. Between late 1988 and early 1989 all the top structure was removed. Down below, everything not original, was removed. Between March and May 1989, all missing steel deck beams were replaced. On July 1st, 1989, ALEXANDRINA was moved to B. Reschke's Marina at Mannum and exactly one month later moved to R. Broomhead's Marina. The rudder fell off trying to negotiate entry and a few days later it was towed in by Russ Williamson's boat the POTTY GUATTY. At the time the only way to get in was across the swamp during flood, which meant ALEXANDRINA was marooned there until next flood or until Broomhead had excavated the entrance. Between January and March 1990 a deck of kapur was laid and on September 13th, 1990, ALEXANDRINA was moved to Purnong Landing. From 1993 through to 2000, a gradual overhaul of the structure and fitout took place, and since that period ALEXANDRINA has remained in good condition and in use in the same region.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 20 m × 18.5 m × 1.07 m (65.62 ft × 60.7 ft × 3.5 ft)