

Basic Detail Report



Riawe

Vessel number

HV000090

Date

1912

Primary Maker

EA Jack

Description

RIAWE was built for the Holyman family in 1912, by which time the builder 'Ned' Jack had become well established in Launceston. The wooden carvel construction hull was planked in Huon pine, and the boat was powered by a Rugby Red Seal petrol motor. RIAWE was built for Holyman's use as both a private motor launch and for the cattle trade. This included guiding cattle herds swimming between Robbins Island and Smithton on the mainland. The name RIAWE is thought to be an Indigenous word for 'small boat' or 'vessel', but this is not yet confirmed. It has been recorded as a word for 'fun' and for a celebration or dance. Around 1929 RIAWE was purchased by Gordon Allison and began a busy period of work on the Tamar. It carried cargo including animals across the lower reaches, towed 27 metre long piles from the beach at Inspection Head to Bell Bay for wharf construction, conveyed fruit down the river to load aboard ships, laid the P.M.G. telephone cable between Saltpan and Clarence Point, and acted as a ferry. Shortly after war broke out in 1939, RIAWE was commandeered by the Navy and taken to Devonport where it was painted grey, fitted with a wheelhouse and armed with a machine gun for patrol between Devonport and Low Head. As HMAS RIAWE it had a crew of three including the owner who was in charge of the vessel and given the rank of Chief Petty Officer. The patrol work was virtually continuous, as one crew stepped off the next crew then boarded, refueled and went back to sea. Meanwhile the locals tagged it HMAS RIDICULOUS. The vessel was also used for target towing and some mine sweeping activities. At one point it spotted a Japanese submarine on the surface off Greens Beach, and both craft acknowledged each other but no incident occurred. After the war Gordon Allison resumed ownership of RIAWE. The Rugby engine had been stripped, fitted with new rings and bearings and reinstalled in A1 condition before it was handed back. RIAWE was then used as a ferry between Beauty Point and Georgetown, and later fitted with a Chevrolet 6 cylinder motor. In 1951 Allison launched a new craft, DALRYMPLE and gave RIAWE to his son Wilfred. Charles Gulliver bought RIAWE in 1954 and converted it to suit cray fishing, working between the Tamar River and Triabunna. He renamed it THE LADY PAM and had the misfortune to put it on the rocks on Cape Barren Island. Gulliver got ashore and walked overland to a settlement, then returned by sea when the weather cleared, expecting to find a wreck. Instead he found the vessel intact with only minor scratches and was able to tow the boat off. The next owner was Wallace Cox from Bicheno in 1963, and he fitted it with a Thornycroft engine and installed a wet well for storing live catch. Cox operated the craft until 1968. It then changed hands a number of times over many years, but the vessel continued cray fishing off the

North East coast of Tasmania and even Portland Victoria for two to three years. The current wheelhouse was fitted by one owner in 1982, and the existing Ford engine was installed around 1969. It was returned to the original name RIAWE in 2004 by the current owners, and the craft is now a private motor launch in South Eastern Tasmania where its sturdy construction and sea-going hull shape are well suited to the variable and sometimes rough sea conditions. It remains as a testament to the boatbuilding abilities of Ned Jack.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 10.97 m x 10.06 m x 3.05 m x 1.07 m (36 ft x 33 ft x 10 ft x 3.5 ft) Registered

Dimensions: 5 tons x 9 tons Registered Dimensions: 10.97 m x 3.05 m x 1.01 m (36 ft x 10 ft x 3.31 ft)