

Basic Detail Report



Lady Freda

Vessel number

HV000261

Date

1905

Primary Maker

WM Ford Boatbuilders

Description

LADY FREDA was first registered in December 1905. It is planked in New Zealand kauri over spotted gum frames and longitudinal members, an established construction method for the period. It was fitted with a 9 kW (12 & 1.2 hp) Thorneycroft twin cylinder engine. The designer was RW Heywood, who was establishing a name as a launch designer in this early period of motor craft design. The Sydney Morning Herald carries a report on various motor boats in the 5th August 1905 edition. Included is a mention of LADY FREDA, noting that a "30 ft Whale-Boat" for Dr Piers Hatton was under construction at Ford's yard, along with another launch by the same designer. The term whale-boat is a comment or description of the vessel's very neat canoe stern hull shape. In 1907 Hatton sold LADY FREDA to another harbour physician, Dr Caldwell, and he too may have used the craft to visit merchant vessels on the harbour. In 1920 it was sold to an unknown buyer and the vessel's trail of ownership was lost. In 1980 it was sold as a sunken vessel to Peter Nicholson, who, after considerable salvage efforts, brought the vessel ashore at the waterfront in Seaforth, Sydney. By this time the craft had acquired a heavy cement keel and a hole in the cabin top, both features suggesting it had been rigged with a mast and sail at some unknown time. In 1997 the craft was donated to the Australian National Maritime Museum as a possible craft for a volunteer restoration program. The museum accepted the craft, removed it from the shoreline, then slipped the hull to take off the concrete keel and stabilise the structure. In 2008 it was in storage. The hull and superstructure are largely original, and it is a rare survivor of an early motor launch.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 9.75 m x 9.08 m x 2.19 m x 0.69 m, 3.94 tonnes (32 ft x 29.8 ft x 7.2 ft x 2.25 ft, 4 tons)