

Basic Detail Report



Peel Princess

Vessel number

HV000493

Date

1948

Primary Maker

Harry Griffiths

Description

PEEL PRINCESS was built by Harry Griffiths at his Harvest Rd, North Fremantle yard, to a design by Thornycroft. This respected English motor vessel design and construction yard had been a pioneer in many aspects of motor vessel design since the type was first introduced in the late 1800s. In this instance a special vessel was required with the need for very shallow draft to operate safely in the waterways around Mandurah. Thornycroft's solution to the problem was a shallow depth, wide, single-chine section shape with the propeller fitted under a tunnel-hull stern section, giving the top of the propeller a chamber to work in. The concept was almost as old as the oil-powered launch, and there is evidence of it being used in WA in the early 1900s. The hull was planked in jarrah, one of the best West Australian boat-building timbers, which has perhaps contributed to its longevity. It had a single deck set below the sheerline with three slightly different levels, windows all round at sheer level, and the helm or wheelhouse was situated near midships, overlooking the cabin top and offset to starboard. The low, wide and shallow craft was surveyed to carry 75 passengers and two crew, and could travel widely, getting around the obstacles of shallow water and low bridges. It was powered with a 90 kw (120 hp) Ford diesel which is still installed. PEEL PRINCESS was commissioned for the Beam Transport Company, a Perth based bus company that saw the advantages of working with river transport as well. It was launched as the MV BEAM. One of the early people involved from Mandurah was Roy Tuckey who started its operations there, traveling a route from the old Peninsula Hotel (now the Sebel site) that crossed the Peel Estuary before entering the Murray River and terminating at Ravenswood, where a Beam company's Pinjarra bus was ready to transport passengers further by road. En route aboard the ferry passengers could enjoy high tea or a three course luncheon. In November 1951, the Beam Co merged with their competitors Metrobus, and whilst the name Beam remained on some services for a while, eventually Beam disappeared as a brand. In early August 1952, MV BEAM was sent to Perth for its annual slipping but did not return to Mandurah. Metrobus renamed the vessel MV VLAMINGH and begun offering charter services on the Swan River on "the luxury launch MV VLAMINGH". The State Government subsequently took over Metrobus and the other private competitors to create the state owned Metropolitan Transport Trust in the mid 1960s, and it was then that MV VLAMINGH was redeployed from a charter and cruising boat to a ferry, taking up duties on the Barrack St in Perth city to Mends St, South Perth service (the "Zoo run"). It remained on the Swan River for almost another 20 years. In 1983 it was bought from the MTT and returned to Mandurah in conjunction with the opening of

the River Resort in South Yunderup, and once again it was working on the Murray River and Peel Estuary. In 1984 it was bought by Stan McMahon, renamed PEEL PRINCESS and operated with his Mandurah Murray River Cruises business. It was bought from them in 1992 by Mick and Carol Wauchope who continued the same cruise operations. In 2000 Mandurah Ferry Cruisies took over their business and in 2011 the current operator bought the ferry and business. PEEL PRINCESS remains in largely original condition and arrangement, with only minor modifications and changes. It continues to run dolphin cruises and is available for charter.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 16.3 m x 4.9 m x 0.7 m, 16.9 tonnes (53.48 ft x 16.08 ft x 2.3 ft, 16.63 tons)