

Basic Detail Report



MV Spray

Vessel number

HV000823

Date

1954

Primary Maker

Clarrie Motum

Description

MV Spray is a 33ft recreational launch built in 1954 for use as an oyster punt tow vessel. It was built by Clarrie and Horace Motum and Ken Burrows in Tea Gardens NSW. The following is an abstract on MV Spray's history written by Craig Engel Thomas who was involved in the vessels construction: The next time you have the pleasure of wandering down the Myall river waterfront at Tea Gardens, spare a thought for the generations of local

workers and craftspeople who trod that path before, their contribution to the survival and longevity of such a landlocked town merely a memory. A glance across the river will reveal the remains of wrecks such as the Iluka, Tera, Yalinbah, Myall River, and Salamander and a trip to the Port will reveal the skeletons of the Duckhole wrecks and others. Isolation necessitated many true local boats to be constructed by very skilled shipwrights and self-taught craftsmen. A unique and enduring example to serve as an oyster punt tow vessel is the Spray, built in the backyard of Clarrie Motum's home now 23 Iluka St Tea Gardens. Spray is a 33 foot shoal draft, carvel planked, forward raised deck vessel. It is constructed of flooded gum above and below the waterline, with a planked deadwood (heel), partly copper sheathed. It is said that Spray's planks were cut from a single tree, most probably milled on the banks of the Myall River at Bulahdelah in Woodward's Mill. Spray's forward sloping tuck with slight reverse tumblehome is made up of two fitted pieces of flooded gum due to the inability of obtaining a sizeable single slab. It is fixed with a horizontal external stern collision gunwale strip over the butt join handy for punt collisions. Spray is partly seam battened over the internal plank joints. Its ribs, stringers and gunwales are of spotted gum with the main gunwales steamed and skilfully shaped to the form of the hull, considered by many as being impossible at the time with its flare, bevelled on the undersides so as not to 'hang up' on wharves or punts while working. Some of Spray's square copper nails were jagged with burrs inflicted by chisels head down on each corner, providing a stronger fixture when driven through the brace and bit hand bored holes through the planks and fixtures. The deadwood to keel, stringers and some other areas were fixed with roves, the rest being mostly clinched, whereby the internal top of the driven nail was cut off about one inch above the timber and hammered into the grain, with the dolly providing the external force giving a very secure

fixture. Spray's breast hook, sternpost and other knees were all constructed of tea-tree cut from the lower Myall River. Its pilothouse sitting over the semi flush deck astern of the raised deck accommodation was inspired from an American design. The rear cockpit, ahead of the small lazarette with removable hatch was of drained and sealed semi well-deck design. The lazarette gave easy access to the internal rudder trunk and gland, a relatively new feature of the day compared with external gudgeon pin mounted rudders with tiller steer. A sturdy Sampson post properly positioned for towing was secured in the area of the cockpit. In 1954 the completed hull in white and grey external livery not yet fitted out with an engine was transported to Government Wharf at Tea Gardens for launching. This initial launch proved unsuccessful, the vessel taking on considerable amounts of water and beached. After a few weeks Spray was re-launched, and fitted with a four cylinder Perkins P4 freshwater diesel engine of 67 horsepower and 2:1 reversing gear which aided its towing duties. Spray later competed in the Port Stephens Regatta Club's annual Mungo Brush Regatta, placing fourth in the big launch race. It further acted as a towing, safety, and retrieval boat for the 16 and 18 foot sail races. In 1960 Spray was sold to Oyster Farmer Max Phillips of Pindimar. In 1968, Phillips installed a more powerful 120 horsepower Ford marine diesel engine to allow the vessel to tow multiple oyster punts. This engine remains in the vessel today. Under Phillips' ownership Spray assisted in the laying of the PMG telephone cables across Duckholes Bay - transporting the cables via a large drum in an oyster punt to their location. When Phillips and his brother Doug moved part of their oyster farm enterprise to Brooklyn on the Hawksbury River, Spray followed suit, working between both Port Stephens and Brooklyn. In 1998 Spray was sold into private ownership, ending its working career. In 2003 remedial work was undertaken on the vessel, the trunk cabin roof raised and an opening hatch installed in the foredeck. Domestic additions consisting of a sink, stove, refrigerator, table and chairs, settee, flushed head with stored effluent system, on board water and duckboard were all installed. The grey gunwale colour was also changed to black. As of 2020 Spray continues to reside in Port Stephens as a unique vessel with a long association with the local community and oyster farming industry.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 10.06 m (33 ft)