

# Basic Detail Report

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## Eva Blanche

### Vessel number

HV000773

### Date

1910

### Description

The first major operator of motor launches in Tasmania was A. A. Abel of Hobart, who also operated a substantial boatbuilding operation at Battery Point until after it was destroyed by fire in December 1917. By 1911 his own fleet the Royal Blue Motor Launch Line (RBML) consisted of three vessels, BLANCH (48ft. built 1906), BLANCH ABEL (42ft. built 1908), and EVA BLANCH which operated cruises and were also available for hire. By 1917 he had also built about twenty similar launches for other commercial operators and as private motor yachts. The lines of the BLANCH were reported to have been scaled down from the recently built river steamer MONGANA and all subsequent vessels which emerged from the yard were essentially similar in appearance despite ranging in size. Tucker continued to build smaller vessels and dinghies until his untimely death in 1938 in a car accident. EVA BLANCH is believed to be the sole remaining member of the RBML still afloat but a number of other Abel built vessels still exist, including the VERA, WATERLOO, NANCY, and TELITA. EVA BLANCH was launched on the 18 October 1910 according to the 24 October 1910 edition of the Daily Post (a Hobart newspaper). The article describes her as 'one of the finest of its kind. Is built especially built for tourist and pleasure parties by the owner, Mr A Abel'. The article goes on describing Eva Blanche as being 'built of Huon pine, copper fastened with kauri decking. Her length over all is 34 foot and beam 8 foot. Her cabin is glassed in and she has an open cockpit of 20 feet which is the largest of any boat in the river leaving ample room for large fishing parties. She is fitted with an 8 BHP Frisco Standard engine and has an estimated speed of 8 knots. The new craft will be an ideal vessel for the purpose for which she is intended.' Eva Blanche was to 'be moored with the rest of her line at the new ferry wharf now under construction'. This is presumed to be Waterman's Dock. Its first trial was to be the following week. Excerpts taken from "The Mercury", Monday 23 February 1914, page 2 describe the scene in that period. "Lindisfame Regatta - A Perfect Day - Fine Rowing and Close Finishes Under splendid weather conditions, the ninth annual Lindisfarne Regatta was held in Lindisfarne Bay last Saturday. All the pretty esplanades and beaches were crowded with spectators and picnickers, and, as the ferry steamers continued to discharge load after load of fresh arrivals, who dispersed themselves over the different vantage points, or took to the bay in motor-boats or dinghies. Lindisfarne presented quite a gala appearance. The Rosny brought over her compliment on several trips, and when the afternoon was about half over there must have been more than 3,000 people present. The bay itself was covered with craft of all sorts, ferry steamers, yachts, motor-boats, steam launches, sailing dinghies, rowing boats, crews in their skiffs, a couple of punts, which showed evidence of considerable ingenuity on the part of their builders, and two small blue and white canoes, fashioned a la Esquimaux, which were especially prominent

all the afternoon. The SV Edina was the flagship of the day, and the races were followed in the Eva Blanch. Afternoon tea was obtained in a comfortable marquee presided over by the ladies of the committee, as follow: Mrs Brammall, the Misses M and J Brammall, M and C Whitham, Elliston, Seager, Pinkerton, Chambers and Spratt." EVA BLANCH was advertised for sale on the 12 December 1922 and was bought by Mr A. Hammond of the Huon Valley. There EVA BLANCH carried both people and cargo - mainly apples- around the lower reaches of the Huon River until the 1940s. From then until the current time, EVA BLANCH has been in the Rodway, Coad and Conway families as a pleasure craft. During this period, her foredeck was raised to make her more commodious. In 2008, EVA BLANCH was slipped and underwent an extensive renovation and repair over the next 10 years by the current owners at Cygnet. This involved replacing 60 m of hull boards, a new aft deck, stem and stern posts and cabin. A 30 HP Kubota Beta Diesel motor replaced the Perkins diesel present at the time of slipping. The new motor was positioned further towards the bow similar to the original design. The cabin is configured more in keeping with its ferry roots. EVA BLANCH was relaunched at Port Huon on the 26 March 2018 and currently resides in Franklin. The main sources of information for this brief history are Mays, N "Industrious, Innovative and Altruistic: The 20th Century Boat Builders of Battery Point", and Broxam, G (2006) "Those That Survive".

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 10.36 m × 9.14 m × 2.59 m × 1.22 m, 4.57 tonnes (34 ft × 30 ft × 8.5 ft × 4 ft, 4.5 tons)