

Basic Detail Report



Fee

Vessel number

HV000808

Date

c 1920

Description

FEE was built in the remote Tasmanian south west coast town of Strahan in the late 1920s. It is a 'piners punt' made for use in the local Huon Pine industry, and is

batten seamed, 14' 10" long and 5' 4" wide, with 6 carvel planks per side. Fee was designed and built by Harry Grining, a prominent local punt designer, and displays many signs of Harry's own design traits, slightly different to the traditional piners punt design. The traditional west coast piners' punt has a shape ideally suited to its purpose. They are thought to have originated in Port Davey where the Huon pine industry was well established by the late 1800s. They had a snub or transom bow and the square ends were often referred to as forward and aft tucks. They were built with a lot of rocker or spring to the keel line and no skeg so they could turn quickly. They also had to negotiate rapids. Although they had a slack turn of the bilge, their width made them reasonably stable. The shape had an easy run to the strakes, which allowed quick planking of the hull. Two or even three people could row them at a good speed. Fee's unique design is detailed here, through an oral history conducted between the current owner of FEE, Peter Higgs, and Harry Grining's nephew Don Grining: 'FEE has a round and not "V" shaped tuck stern, a critical methodology of Harry's punt building. Her bow tuck was also much the way Harry built his punts. The vessel had a beautiful shear that Harry insisted on to have the two centre thwarts with little/low water line clearance to assist long distance rowing, a skill needed for successful piners. FEE had six planks per side that were batten seamed, clenched nails. Although Harry built clinker piners' punts he also built batten seam carvel planked punts.' Harry Grining's punts became particularly popular during the late 1930s, when a demand for boat building timber increased. The local Queenstown-Strahan road had just been completed and this resulted in an influx of Huon pine workers along the Gordon River. The longer and wider design a Grining Punt, such as FEE, presented as a perfect solution to the need for further supplies along the river. During this period Fee would have regularly carried supplies and horse chaff up the Gordon, King, Rocky, Sprent, and Jane rivers to piners in isolated locations. Prominent Strahan piner Charles Barnes Able was a regular user of Harry Grining punts, and may have owned FEE for a period of time. FEE is currently owned by Peter Higgs and is under restoration.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 4.3 m × 4.3 m × 1.65 m × 0.3 m (14.1 ft × 14.1 ft × 5.4 ft × 1 ft)