

Basic Detail Report



Akarana

Vessel number

HV000013

Date

1888

Primary Maker

Robert Logan

Description

AKARANA was designed and built during 1888 by Scottish shipwright Robert Logan at his Devonport yard in Auckland, specifically to race in Victoria for a regatta held to mark the centenary of British colonisation of Australia. It was launched in October 1888 and given the patriotic name 'Akarana' – the Maori word for Auckland. After one successful trial sail on Waitemata Harbour it was shipped to Melbourne, Australia, for the November Centennial International Regatta where it joined boats from Victoria and other eastern states. Logan's intention was to use the yacht to demonstrate his expertise as a designer and builder and attract orders for yachts for export to Australia. Contemporary Auckland boat builders Charles Bailey and Henry Niccol had already sold boats to Australia. In Australia the races were conducted to the new Sail Area and Waterline Length rule, whereas Logan had designed AKARANA to suit the previous tonnage rule. He knew of the change in rules just before he shipped the yacht, but nonetheless elected to come, bringing rigger Jack Bell as his skipper and recruiting local New Zealanders as crew. As a consequence of the rule change AKARANA raced in a class consisting of generally larger boats and did not have the anticipated time allowance. It was disadvantaged in some winds but in lighter conditions AKARANA convincingly won two races against centreboard craft in Melbourne. However, the keel yacht GALATEA defeated it twice in more significant events. After the mixed success of the Melbourne Centennial International Regatta and pre-regatta racing with the St Kilda Yacht Club, Logan brought AKARANA to Sydney to compete in the Anniversary Day Regatta on Sydney Harbour on January 26, 1889. There it was skippered by local expert Dick Hellings and won the second class yacht race with first prize £20 and three cases of Moet and Chandon champagne, beating Sydney yachts ASSEGAI, SIROCCO and IOLANTHE. AKARANA was offered for sale in Sydney in February 1889 and later that year was bought by Sydney chemist John Abrahams. Logan did not receive any orders for yachts from Australia, but a decade later his sons Logan Bros were able to capitalise on the success of one of their own designs and exported a small number of yachts that dominated Sydney yachting for over a decade in the early 1900s. Abrahams raced AKARANA with the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron for at least a couple of years, In 1899 it was sold to Calveley C McEwen who raced it with the Prince Alfred Yacht Club. In 1901 Charles H Relph was the owner and he is recorded as having raced AKARANA in the Commonwealth Regatta for Federation. From here onwards AKARANA became primarily a recreational yacht for outings with family and friends of its various owners. .In 1910 Frederick R Poole installed an 8-hp oil engine from

Brookes and Co, Lowestoft, England. AKARANA inspired much affection, in particular in the Abraham and Leigh families, who were related. The two families owned the yacht for a 30-year span, over two periods: In 1916 Jack, Mim & Roy Leigh bought AKARANA and took the yacht cruising on Sydney Harbour and Broken Bay. The Abraham family was related to the Leigh family. Both families sailed on AKARANA until the 1930s. The most significant change the Leigh's made were the removal and subsequent replacement of the keel around 1925, and a reduction in the rig size. Memories of fond times on board during this period are revealed in this verse: "Ah dear old face what memories sweet You now to me recall The splashing wave, the briny deep 'mid pleasures dear to all When hearts were young and spirits high And care beyond our kin We passed the happy days gone by With many a loved friend Ah yes indeed you do recall Scenes from our own life drama With many a comedy between You 'Dear old Akarana'." George Graham, US Navy. Thought to have been a guest of the Abrahams and/or Leigh family on AKARANA, George Graham wrote the verse on the reverse of the original AKARANA figurehead believed to have been souvenired from the yacht when the Leigh family sold it in 1938; the poem also appears on the reverse of a photograph of AKARANA. Around 1942 Bill Gardiner is known to have been the owner and a coach house was added, it was re-rigged, a Citroen engine was installed, a binnacle and compass was placed in the cockpit the galley was renovated., a toilet was fitted up forward, and a full bulkhead and a half bulkhead were added. The hull was painted black by John barber in 1949, and when owned by John and Molly Beach in 1952 the counter stern aft of rudder post was removed as a result of an accident when yacht hit a wharf pylon. The also put in a Ford 10-hp. By 1956 AKARANA was owned by Eddie Kleeson. Under his ownership the concrete and iron ballast was removed, a new 2-tonne keel and deadwood added, with a new cabin sole, new rig, new rudder (it was missing), tiller and bowsprit. He renewed the deck with plywood and planks, fibre-glassed the hull, replaced the coach house, and installed a Simplex engine. Further ownership changes occurred and it fell into disrepair again. By 1987 the yacht was moored as a covered hull at Mortlake on the Parramatta River, Sydney, awaiting restoration by its owner Andrew Bishop. Its history, and association with the centennial celebrations of 1888, was then well-known in yachting circles and the yacht was identified as a potential Government gift for the forthcoming bicentennial celebrations. After extensive restoration in New Zealand by Salthouse Boatbuilders at Greenhithe, Auckland, AKARANA was presented to the ANMM as a bicentennial gift from the New Zealand Government and people in 1988. In 1997/98 further work was undertaken by the museum to revise a number of details that subsequent research had shown were incorrect. The principal action was to restore a 5 tonne lead casting to the keel, giving the yacht the correct amount of outside ballast, but included with this was a new deadwood and rudder configuration, and the rig was re proportioned as well. AKARANA was relaunched later in 1998 and has proven to be an excellent performing yacht in a wide range of conditions.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 11.88 m x 8.83 m x 2.04 m x 2.0 5m, 9.48 tonnes x 0.6 tonnes x 5 tonnes, 91.75 square metres (39 ft x 29 ft x 6.7 ft x 6.7 ft, 9.63 tons x 0.61 tons x 5.08 tons, 987.69 square feet)

Registered Dimensions: 9.72 m x 2.01 m x 1.65 m, 8.74 tons (31.89 ft. x 6.6 ft. x 5.4 ft)