

Basic Detail Report



RAN 27 Ft Motor Whaler 2703

Vessel number

HV000413

Date

1961

Primary Maker

Naval Dockyard Garden Island

Description

RAN 27 foot motor whaler 2703 is almost 8.2 m long by 2.14 m wide. The double-skin, moulded plywood hull has two gunwale timbers on the topsides, and a bilge keel stringer on the exterior below the waterline. The moulded ply or double diagonal construction was also a feature of the RN vessels, and is noted in early 1950 editions of the Admiralty Seamanship Manuals. It was fitted with an Enfield diesel motor and thwarts for rowing, but has no sailing rig. Carved into the stem is its number 2703 and year of building, 1961. It was built at the Navy's Garden Island Dockyard where the RAN apprentices learnt their trade. It was a typical project for the apprentices, working with an experienced shipwright. The apprentices learnt practical skills and teamwork by building the vessel. The RAN motor whalers were the same design as the Royal Navy craft. In 1956 the RN had decided to modernise its seaboats with a motorised craft, and redesigned their sailing and rowing version to include a motor. It was officially designated a 27 foot Motor Whaler and unofficially known as a three-in-one whaler. They did not sail or pull very well as they were too heavy, and the RN then changed them to a version designated a 27 foot Motor Whaler Mod 1, which abandoned the sailing rig. The RAN built 13 three-in-ones, numbered 2701 - 2713 from 1961 to 1963, and then four Mod 1's numbered 2714 - 2717 from 1963 to 1964. Royal Australian Navy Motor Whaler 2703 was used aboard HMAS DIAMANTINA during a period when the ship was involved with a number of interesting oceanographic survey and scientific research tasks around the Australian coastline from 1961 to 1969. The whaler would have been put to use for a variety of support roles for this work however the overall duties of these seaboats were quite varied. At sea they performed man overboard rescues, transfer of stores and personnel between ships, transferring an armed boarding party, recovering practice torpedoes and passing towing lines. In harbour they would assist in securing a ship to a mooring buoy or laying out a kedge anchor, transferring mail, stores and personnel, or laying buoys for survey or salvage operations. They also had a recreational purpose as a pulling boat for naval regattas and if fitted with sail, for sailing races. It was sold from the RAN in 1975, and remained in private ownership until 1989 when it was acquired by the West Australian Maritime Museum. In 2007 it transferred the whaler to Queensland Maritime Museum so that it could be reunited with HMAS DIAMANTINA. QMM volunteers completely restored the vessel, including some accidental fire damage to the planking that happened enroute to QMM. Although built as a three-in-one, 2703 appears to have become a two-in-one as it is currently not fitted for a sailing rig. This whaler has been restored at the Queensland Maritime Museum where it is on display

aboard HMAS DIAMANTINA. Before 1961 HMAS DIAMANTINA had carried two clinker whalers. Prepared from research provided by the Naval Historical Society of Australia and the Queensland Maritime Museum

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 8.18 m x 8 m x 2.14 m x 0.94 m (26.84 ft x 26.25 ft x 7.02 ft x 3.08 ft)