

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LURGURENA

Traffic continued to increase at the Newcastle/Stockton crossing and the queues of vehicles waiting to take the punt often built up to remarkable lengths. When the austerity measures of wartime such as petrol rationing were lifted and the traffic increased even more, the DMR was able to buy another ferry to do the crossing in conjunction with the Kooroongaba. The new vessel was the Lurgurena. It had been built in 1925 at the Saltney Shipyards in Chester, UK, by J. Crichton and Co Ltd and was used initially on the vehicular ferry service between Hobart and Bellerive on the Derwent River in Tasmania. When a pontoon bridge across the Derwent at this crossing point was opened to traffic in 1944, the Lurgurena became available for purchase, and the DMR snapped her up. I wasn't able to find out how much she cost.

She was a double-ended, single screw-propelled vessel of 576 gross, steel hulled, 187 feet long and 35ft 6in beam with a draught of 13ft 1in. She was powered by a 94hp triple expansion steam engine built by Plenty and Sons at the Eagle Works, Newbury, UK, and the boilers were made by Rucy Brothers of Stockton-on-Tees, UK. The engines developed 1150 indicated horse power at 180lb steam pressure. These specifications are taken from the Newsletter of the Stockton Historical Society for July 1997.

However, as with some of the other car ferries, there are discrepancies in the “nuts and bolts” data published for the Lurgurena. An article in Main Roads of September 1972 gives the draught as 11ft 6in. A 1930 article in Main Roads (Vol XII No4) gives these stats as 199ft long, 38ft 3 ½ inches beam, and a moulded depth of 14 ft. She was 552 gross register, (Main Roads of Sept 72 gives 576) and 248 nett register. The RTA's construction drawings for the Lurgurena quote her length as 187' 0" B.p, her breadth as 35' 6" MLD, and her depth as 14' 0" MLD.



Matterson Pic

NEW SOUTH WALES

No. 714



HARBOUR OR RIVER CERTIFICATE

Issued by the Maritime Services Board of New South Wales,
in pursuance of the Navigation Act, 1901-1949

Name of Steam Ship LURGURENA Class IV

PORT OF REGISTRY and Official Number	REGISTERED TONNAGE

NUMBER OF PERSONS AND CREW

This Steam Ship is, according to the declaration of the Shipwright Surveyor, adapted for Harbour, River, or Lake Service, and is constructed and fit to carry, when there is no encumbrance of accommodation, the undermentioned number of Persons and Crew:—

NUMBER AND DISPOSITION OF VEHICLES OTHER THAN CREW		No. of Crew to be Carried	Total No. of Persons (including Crew)
<i>In Vehicles</i>	<i>235</i>		
<i>Main Deck Cabin</i>	<i>22</i>		
<i>Upper Deck Cabin</i>	<i>22</i>		

Local Limits within which this Steam Ship may navigate

ON NEWCASTLE HARBOUR, within a straight line between Stony Point and the green light on Stockton Point IN SMOOTH WATER ONLY.

Persons in vehicles may be increased to 335 provided one vehicle is deducted for every 25 persons or proportion thereof carried in excess of 235 in vehicles up to a maximum of 100 additional persons.

BOATS, LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES, &c., required to be carried by this Steam Ship:—

BOATS and LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES	EQUIPMENT
No. <u>2</u> Life Boats (of the aggregate capacity of <u>161</u> Cubic feet, {and capable of accommodating} <u>13</u> Persons)	Fire Hoses, with nozzles attached, No. <u>2</u>
- Approved Lifeboats capable of carrying _____ Persons	Compasses, No. <u>2</u> Fire Extinguishers, No. _____
- Approved Buoyant Apparatus, capable of supporting _____ Persons	Distress Signal Rockets, No. _____ <u>Hand</u> Red Flares, No. <u>6</u>
<u>329</u> Approved Life Jackets. <u>2</u> Self-igniting Lifebuoy Lights.	Two Safety Valves on each Boiler, one of which shall be out of the control and interference of the Engineer except only for the purpose of opening same and keeping it free.
<u>54</u> Approved Lifebuoys, including <u>48</u> as buoyancy	

THE AUTHORISED MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE SAFETY VALVES OF THE MAIN BOILERS OF THIS STEAM SHIP IS 180 LB. PER SQUARE INCH.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the provisions of the Law with respect to the Survey of the abovementioned Steam Ship for Harbour or River Certificate have been complied with.

THIS CERTIFICATE, unless previously cancelled or revoked, remains in force until the 15th day of NOV. 1971

DATED this 5th day of JULY 1971

By direction of the Board,

[Signature]
Secretary

[Signature]
A Commissioner of the Board

THIS CERTIFICATE, or a true copy thereof, in distinct and legible characters, must be exhibited in some conspicuous part of this Steam Ship so long as the Certificate is in force, under a Penalty not exceeding TEN POUNDS (vide Sec. 41, Navigation Act, 1901-1949).

If the number of Persons carried in any portion of the Steam Ship exceeds the number stated on this Certificate, or if the Total number of Persons carried exceeds the Total number stated on this Certificate, the Master or Owner will be liable to a Penalty of not less than FIVE POUNDS and not more than FIFTY POUNDS (vide Sec. 43, Navigation Act, 1901-1949).

Whenever this Steam Ship has sustained or caused any accident occasioning loss of life or any serious injury to any person, or has received any material damage affecting her seaworthiness or efficiency either in her hull or in any part of her machinery, the Owner or Master of such Steam Ship shall, within twenty-four hours after the happening of such accident or damage or as soon thereafter as possible, transmit through the post to the Board by letter, signed by such Master, a report of such accident or damage. If such Master fails to do so, he shall, for such offence, incur a penalty not exceeding FIFTY POUNDS (vide Sec. 50, Navigation Act, 1901-1949).

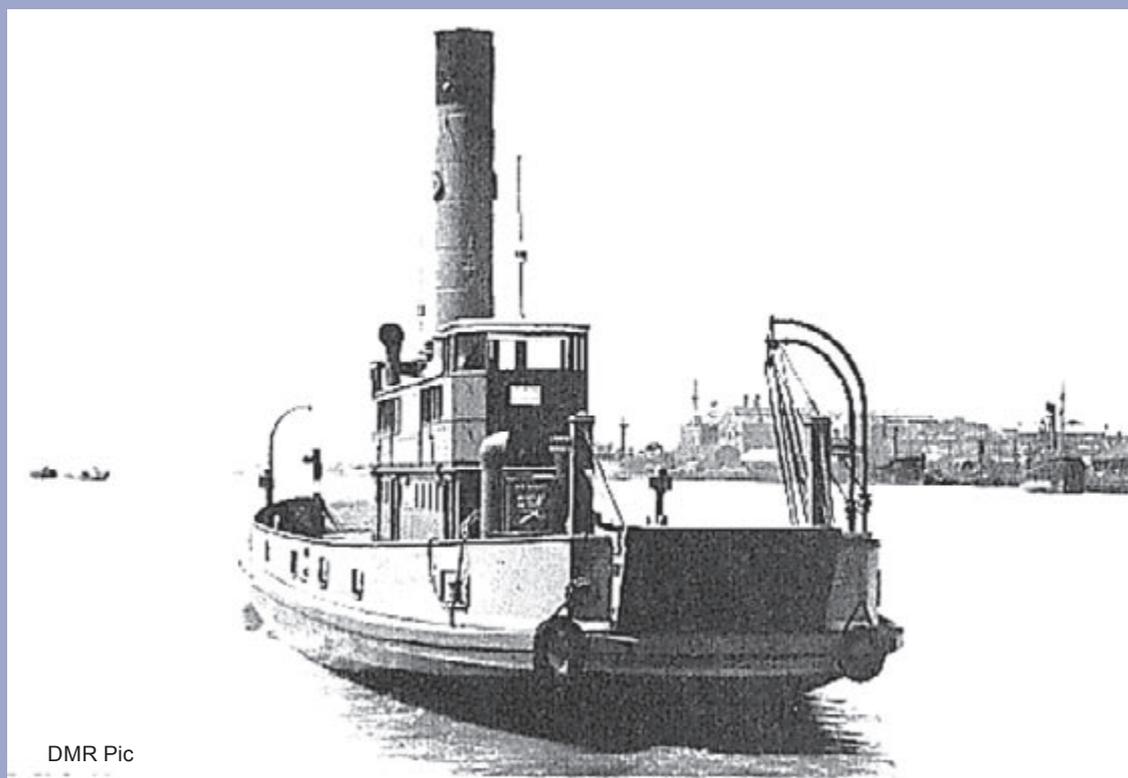
SS Lurgurena's Harbour Certification of carrying capacity

Some of these conflicting specifications are considerably divergent, but it is reasonable to conclude that once again they probably came about through confusing the overall length with the length between perpendiculars, the extreme breadth (or beam) with the breadth moulded, and the draught with the depth moulded.

The Lurgurena needed some repairs before she undertook the sea trip from Hobart to Newcastle, and provision had to be made to protect the vessel from possible big waves, similar to the way she was set up when she made the original voyage out to Hobart from England. A contract was let to Mr G Newell of Sydney to deliver the punt to Newcastle from Hobart and it duly arrived on Xmas Eve 1945.

Before going into service she was given a thorough overhaul and a refit, included the fitting of lifeboats and provision of better visibility from the wheelhouse. Furthermore, because it had (approx 1ft) deeper draught than the Koroongaba, dredging had to be carried out on the Stockton side to enable it to enter the docks there. After a trial run in October, the Lurgurena commenced service on December 6 1946. The Koroongaba and the Lurgurena worked the crossing together until 1952, when an even larger steam powered punt, the Koondooloo, took over from the 'Gaba. (See next chapter).

I haven't been able to find out why she was called the Lurgurena.



The Lurgurena in Newcastle Harbour after she had been refitted and the visibility from the wheelhouse improved. Lifeboats and lifebuoys were still to be added



A full load on the Lurgurena one day during 1970

*(Below)
The Lurgurena arrives at Stockton dock, 1970*

G. Andrews Pics

