

# MV Konanda

The Konanda retained the same name throughout her life; Konanda is an aboriginal which means “North” or ‘Northwards”.

The MV Konanda was launched in October 1954 but was not completed until July 1955, she was to become the last of the small ships to be built or acquired to serve in what was known locally as the “Mosquito Fleet”

The Konanda weighed in at 414.35 tons gross, 342 tons deadweight, length 153.25 feet (51 mtrs), breadth 29.92 feet (9 mtrs), depth 8.91 feet (3 mtrs). Her port of registry was Melbourne, she was registered with Lloyds (1196736). The Konanda was fitted with a single 450 b.h.p. six cylinder oil engine which was supplied by Motorenf which gave her a maximum speed of 9.5 knots and a service speed of 8.5 knots and she used one ton of oil per day, a single mast with two swinging derricks serviced the single hold.

The Konanda was the last of the Queensland Sugar Lighters which was owned by The Adelaide Steamship Company Limited; the Sugar Lighters were a small fleet of ships that carried most of the raw sugar produced from the various district mills which extended from Innisfail in to the south to Mossman in the north. The raw sugar was packed in to jute bags at the mill located at Goondi, South Johnstone, Babinda & Mourilyan, they weighed in at around 31kgs and were loaded by hand on to ship and would head up to Cairns to be unloaded. In 1960 the Konanda was finally laid up at the conclusion of the 1956/60 sugar harvest.

The Konanda did not stay out of work for to long when in May 1960 she was moved within the Adsteam group transferring on charter to Coast Steamships Limited of Adelaide to fill in for the Yandra which had been damaged due to grounding in the foggy conditions while investigating the Strait and Spencer Gulf at 2140 hrs on the 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 1956.

In October 1961 the Konanda was purchased by the Pearl Kasper Shipping Company Ltd. of Nelson, New Zealand. The Konanda’s duties were now to deliver the nightly mail and cargo between Wellington and Nelson. On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1966 the Konanda sailed from Wellington to Nelson expecting to return to Wellington 2 days later when instead she was sold on completion of discharge, sailed from Nelson on 10<sup>th</sup> December under the ownership of Captain Athol Rusden of Port Vila, New Hebrides (now know as Vanuatu). She was sold to Athol Rusden for \$70,000, she sailed immediately from Albany where she was placed into seismic Survey work in Australian waters, this did not prove to be very successful and again in 1968 Rusden sold her to Burns Philp (New Hebrides) Limited for \$80,000.

Quoting from the *New Zealand Marine News* Vol 19 No.4 1968 “Burns Philp intend on installing a trading store on board **Konanda** and she will make regular calls at over twenty places in the island of the New Hebrides group selling general goods and buying produce.” She did this very successfully for 19 years. Also during this period it is said that the Konanda was used to evacuate refugees from Santo during the rebellion that occurred in May 1980: together with MV Nalkutan and MV Semle Federsen the ships ferried approx 2,000 people from Santo to Malekula.

The Konanda had a good life traveling the waters of Vanuatu until her end came when cyclone Uma struck the waters of Port Vila on the on the weekend of the 7/8 February 1987, she was seriously damaged and subsequently sold cheaply to Iririki Island Resort as a dive site. After being completely scuttled she finally came to rest on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1987 sitting in 26 mtrs of water.

It is quite amazing that she retained her one name through 32 years of operation; this is quite unique in these days of frequent name changes. The Konanda was the general cargo ship that was build overseas by D & J Booth Shipyard in Aphen, Rive Rhine, The Netherlands for The Adelaide Steamship Company which makes her historically significant. The Konanda gave sterling and apparently trouble free service in four distinct trading areas. The Konanda certainly comes within the category of interesting ships.

### **The Sinking of MV Konanda:-**

On a sunny day on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1987 in Port Vila Bay the MV Konanda was laid to rest with plenty of on lookers to see her go to her watery grave, MAY SHE REST IN PEACE. But this was not to be with 1,000's of divers over the years being able to have the opportunity of diving on her. She is still a grand lady of the sea putting many a smile on a happy divers faces.



*The Lovely Lady Awaits Her Watery Grave*



*MAY SHE REST IN PEACE*