

## THE M V MIRRIMAR – A PART OF QUEENSLAND'S HISTORY

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The *Mirrimar* proudly made of Queensland timber was built in Brisbane by Norman Wright & Sons. She had the length of 96 foot, a beam of 18 foot 6 inches and a draught of 5 foot 6 inches. Launched on 13 June 1934 which was a year after I was born. She was Brisbane's largest ferry. The vessel fitted with Gardiner 228 HP diesel engines made her capacity speed of up to 13 knots for a cruising range of 2,000 miles.

That photo was taken by my sister-in-law over at Dunwich.

There were three sister ferries. They served the Brisbane River and the bay. The largest was the *Mirrimar* and her sisters were *Mirrabel* and the *Mirana*. The boats were all built by Norman Wright & Sons.

Who can remember boarding the *Mirrimar* at North Quay to head upstream on the way to Lone Pine. The *Mirana* would pass under two bridges – there were only two bridges that it went under – the Victoria and the Grey Street Bridge. The captain would come in close to the river bank at Indooroopilly to smell and show the passengers the bat colony. When berthing at Lone Pine, there was an Alsatian dog with a koala on its back to welcome the visitors to the sanctuary. The RSPCA stepped in to stop this from happening. I don't know why. They might have been frightened that the koala would get hurt or anyway.

A young Cathy Beitz was a little apprehensive with her first cuddle of a koala. At one time, this sanctuary was the world's first and largest koala sanctuary with over 130 koalas to cuddle. It might still be the largest – I don't know. In beautiful natural surroundings, kangaroos could be handfed and a large variety of aussie wildlife could be encountered.

Hazel Kennedy took this photo in the late 1930s or early 1940s while the *Mirrimar* was berthed at Amity Jetty. From this jetty, passengers would disembark to have an enjoyable day or stay for longer periods. People would try their hand at fishing off the jetty or at other fishing spots on Stradbroke Island or explore the natural beauty of Stradbroke Island. Since the early 1900s, people liked fishing on the beaches near Amity.

Here the Town Clerk, Joe Sands, with Thomas Welsby, whose book *Triumph in the tropics volume 1 and 2* have a wealth of knowledge of early settlement. The party is on a fishing trip to the beaches near Amity.

Who remembers the arduous journey through bushland travelling across the island on Claytons vehicle taxi to arrive at Point Lookout. The *Mirrimar* took the amateur fishing club formed in 1936 on fortnightly fishing trips to Jumpinpin, the Southport Broadwater and North Stradbroke Island. In 1986, a half century badge was specially minted to mark the 50th anniversary of the club.

This is something I found when I googled – Two years during the 1930s, workers Claire on the SS *Koopa* and Ken on the *Mirrimar* would wave tea towels to each other when the vessels passed in the bay. Eventually, they met and were married.

War time, the *Mirrimar* was used as a supply vessel with the Australian Army in North Queensland where she remained for 17 years for inter island cruises. On her return, she was completely restored. Two brothers, Rob and Mark Treasure, owned the *Mirrimar* at the time of her retirement in 2009. I didn't find out who owned it in between.

After 75 years of service, she was replaced by *Mirrimar 2*. In 2011, Mr Cook, who is photographed at Hemmant with the sad *Mirrimar*. At this time, Mr Cook was looking for some financial backing to restore the old girl. I was able to trace Mr Cook by phone on Monday, the 8th, when I was preparing this when he told me he was not able to raise the money and the *Mirrimar* still remained at Hemmant and is, or has been, scrapped of any valuables.

So that is the fate of the *Mirrimar*. She served the people of Brisbane well. Vale the *Mirrimar*. Mr. Cook said the *Mirana* was now a houseboat on the Tweed River and the *Mirrabel* was sent to Sydney.

So that is my little story about the *Mirrimar*.