

The Hopper m.v. Lerryn

Ex Empire Reaper

m.v. Browning

m.v. Pen Adur

m.v. Sand Wren

m.v. Margaret Smith

The Lerryn was built as the EMPIRE REAPER by HARKER SHIPBUILDERS - KINGSTON UPON HULL yard number 146 as a collier for the Ministry of War Transport for taking coal from the South Wales ports of Newport, Swansea and Cardiff to the Power Station at Gloucester. They cost around £22,500 and were managed and operated from the Gloucester office of Harker John Ltd... She was a self-trimming collier carrying 420 tons, Measuring 140ft LOA by 21'6" beam with a draft of 10'6" being launched on 17-10-1942 . She had a 5cylinder Crossley 275hp and steamed at 8 knots on about two and a half tons of gas oil per day (600/700 gallons). She entered service in 1943. Her GRT was 309 and had a DWT of 430 tons. She carried a crew of eight and also went down to the channel ports of Bideford and Appledore. Her ON 6520167 IMO/Off. no.: 167140

After the war she was sold in 1947 to Anglo-Danubian Transport Co Ltd, of London and renamed m.v. Browning. She continued trading as a collier until being sold in 1949 to Kerton Shipping Co Ltd and renamed Moreton Corbet.



As the m.v. Moreton Corbet

In 1952 they sold her to Fowey Harbour Commissioners. On 1st December 1952 they sent a master and chief engineer to Aberdeen to supervise the hand over which took place on 10th December. She sailed two days later for the Humber on charter to Hannan and Samuel. In mid-January 1953 she was put on a time charter to R.F.Care-Lines Ltd, Cardiff. She was renamed m.v. Lerryn and registered in Fowey in February 1953 when she came of charter and was engaged in taking China clay to Preston.

In the March she was chartered again by Hannan and Samuel. She continued to trade until October that year and then was brought to Fowey and slipped at Brazen Island on 30th October for conversion into a hopper. She was insured for £25000 to start with and once the work was completed for £35000. In February 1954 she started work with the Lantyan being loaded by the dredger Tregeagle working in Port Talbot. On 9th February 1955 she was in collision with the Dutch vessel. M.v.Antares. The work at Port Talbot was completed in March 1955 and Lerryn returned to Fowey being slipped on arrival on 28th March.

In the June that year she was loaded with timber for Par and ECLP's own store. She carried on working in Fowey until going to Mounts Bay with Tregeagle, firstly for Newlyn then Penzance in April and May returning to carry on dredging in Fowey. She must have returned to Newlyn as it was recorded she was damaged hitting a rock there on 25th July 1956. The work in Newlyn was completed in September and then it was off to dredge Castletown Pier in Portland on 9th October. The work was slow and Weymouth entrance was to follow. Completion was 4th March 1957 and Weymouth was completed on 12th April. In April 1957 The Harbour Commissioner discussed selling the dredging plant and broker T.W.Tamplin and Co were appointed. In the May 1957 the commissioners agreed to sell the plant including Lerryn to Lord Craigmyle of London for £82000. The plant was delivered to Milford Haven for the buyers.

Presumably she was used with the plant in south Wales and the next record is being sold to Seabourne Aggregate Co Ltd, Southampton in 1964. They converted her into a sand carrier and renamed m.v. Pen Adur. She had a suction pump fitted and started life as a an aggregates dredger. They operated the vessel for 5 years and then she was sold in 1969 to South Coast Shipping Co Ltd, Southampton and renamed m.v.Sand Wren. Four more years passed before she was then sold in 1973 to Bowen & Caine, Southampton and renamed m.v.Margaret Smith.



A sonar image of the wreck

Five years later whilst working off the Isle of Wight she capsized on 28 June 1978 at Cowes, Isle of Wight. She was towed to a position off Yarmouth but sank at 52°42'N 01°28'W. in 11 to 16 metres