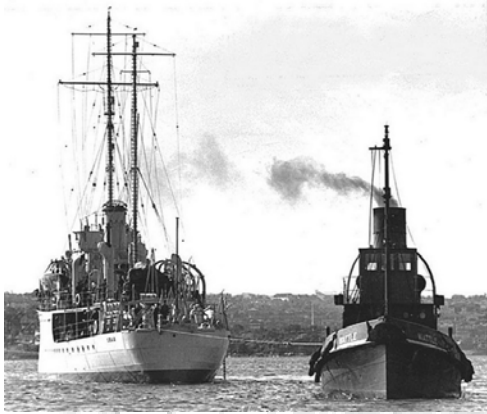


The Steam Tug Wattle is one of only a few steamers still surviving in Australian waters. She has a colourful history and is an extremely important part of Australian heritage.



ST Wattle with HMAS Swan, 1936
RAN/Graeme Andrews Collection, Naval Historical Society of Australia

Early history

The 25-metre S.T. Wattle was built at Cockatoo Dock in Sydney in 1933-1934 to keep the dockyard apprentices employed during the Great Depression. She weighs 130 tonnes and boasts one of only three remaining examples of marine steam reciprocating engines in Australia. She was a Navy tug on Sydney Harbour for thirty years and after being de-commissioned in 1962 the Wattle was purchased by a maritime heritage group that went on to found Sydney Heritage Fleet.

Wattle comes to Melbourne

In 1971 she was donated to the Victorian Steam Ship company as a tourist venture. For thirty years Wattle took school children and day trippers out on Port Phillip Bay to experience maritime heritage and life from a by gone age.



ST Wattle in Victoria Dock
Bay Steamers Maritime Museum Collection

Modern day restoration

In 2003, it was recognised that the Wattle needed major restoration to stay in survey. A company of businessmen, Sorrento Steam, came to the rescue taking over financial responsibility allowing volunteers from Bay Steamers Maritime Museum to carry out the restoration. They are refurbishing the machinery, refreshing the woodwork, renovating the hull plates and restoring the grand old lady to her former glory so she can continue steaming for decades to come.

More volunteers are always welcome. If you have experience in: welding, boiler making, carpentry and painting or are interested in preserving maritime heritage, contact Bay Steamers Maritime Museum. Capt Dick Francis wendick116@bigpond.com or 0413 797 791.

