

= Illawarra Steam Navigation Company =

The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company was a shipping company that serviced the south coast of New South Wales , Australia from 1858 to the early 1950s . It was formed through the amalgamation of the General Steam Navigation Company , the Kiama Steam Navigation Company and the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company , each of whom serviced parts of the south coast with their respective vessels . After merging , the new company held a near monopoly in regard to shipping on the south coast , and their fleet visited every significant port between Sydney and the border of Victoria . The company transported both passengers and a range of produce , including livestock , and hence it became known as the ' Pig and Whistle Line ' : it was said that ships would wait an hour for a pig but not a minute for a passenger .

Over the years more than twenty steamships were a part of the fleet , including the 1112 ton Merimbula and the 693 ton Eden . Many of these vessels were purpose @-@ built for the company 's needs , and were constructed at shipyards both within Australia and abroad . The company 's eventual demise came as a result of a number of factors , including increased competition from road and rail , the cost of replacing ships after World War II , waterfront disputes and rising costs . As a consequence , after almost 100 years in operation , the company was placed into voluntary receivership and was delisted from the stock exchange in 1955 .

= = History = =

Prior to the formation of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company in 1858 , a number of companies and individuals ran steamships along the south coast of New South Wales . The first of these was the Sophia Jane , which had traveled to Australia under her own power from the United Kingdom (and was the first steamship to do so) , arriving in Sydney in 1831 . But while the Sophia Jane ran a service to Wollongong , a more regular service was provided from 1839 with the establishment of the Illawarra Steam Packet Company . The Illawarra Steam Packet Company was not known by that name for long , as just three months after being established , the company merged with the Brisbane Water Steam Passenger Co. to become the General Steam Navigation Company . The newly formed company initially employed two steam vessels , the Maitland and the William IV , both of which were built in New South Wales on the Williams River , and the company serviced the Hunter River along with the south coast .

The General Steam Navigation Company continued to expand , services to Jervis Bay and Kiama were trialled (and later abandoned) , and the company launched the Illawarra to handle the run to Wollongong . Nevertheless , competition soon emerged . This included the screw @-@ driven steamship Keera , which began operations in 1852 between Sydney and Wollongong , although she failed to achieve commercial success and was sold to " Victorian interests " . Other competition emerged as a direct result of the lack of service provided to ports further south of Wollongong . Residents at two of those towns ? Kiama and Shoalhaven ? were led to form two new steamship companies in 1854 . These new companies , the Kiama Steam Navigation Company and the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company respectively ran the steamships Kiama and Nora Creina .

At this point three steamship companies were handling the south coast , and this proved to be too much competition for their respective interests . Thus in 1855 an agreement was reached , leaving the south coast to just the Illawarra , Kiama and Nora Creina . However , an enquiry had been undertaken into the transport facilities in the Bega district in 1851 , in October 1858 the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company through an act of the New South Wales Parliament became an amalgam of the three companies . The new amalgamated company possessed a fleet of at least three vessels : the Illawarra , Kiama and Nora Creina that had been servicing the region . To this list the Nowra was added , while a sixth ? the Mimosa ? was soon included on the register .

The number of ships continued to grow , and by 1866 the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company was running weekly services from south coast ports to Sydney , carrying wool , cedar , coal and a variety of raw materials . As the company expanded it became known as the " Pig & Whistle " run , due to the main cargo and the " whistle " that was made by the ships prior to departing from the port . The

company was to play a leading role in the development of coastal New South Wales , and her ships were to stop at every port between Sydney and the Victorian border . As such , by 1905 , the company was able to link Eden by regular steam communication with Sydney , Launceston , Tasmania , Hobart and New Zealand . The company enjoyed a near ? monopoly on the south coast trade for many years , negotiating with or taking over many potential competitors , although competition from rail and road transport were to play a significant role in the eventual demise of the company .

Along with cargo the company also took passengers , and an article by Henry Lawson , published in The Bulletin in 1910 and titled ' Bermagui - In a Strange Sunset ' , describes a steamer journey from Bermagui to Sydney ? in all likelihood Lawson was traveling with the company . Unfortunately , in 1928 one of the company 's vessels , the Merimbula , ran ashore on Beecroft Head while heading south . After this wreck , passenger shipping to the south coast finished , and the company focused entirely upon cargo .

In 1904 the company was incorporated as the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company (ISCSNC) , and the company continued to operate successfully until the Second World War . However , significant problems had emerged for the company , even though it remained in good financial standing . In particular , road transport was able to offer a door @-@ to @-@ door service , (although the company did attempt to provide something similar at Narooma) , and the railways provided increased competition , entering into exclusive contracts with some hotels and taking some goods contracts away from the shipping line . When combined with waterfront disputes , rising costs , and the post @-@ war costs of ship replacement , the company was in trouble , and in 1948 , for the first time , no dividend was paid to investors . In 1950 the company entered into voluntary liquidation , and this led to delisting from the Australian Stock Exchange in 1955 .

= = Ports = =

In the early 1850s , when the General Steam Navigation Company , Kiama Steam Navigation Company and the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company were independent operations , the major ports of call along the south coast of New South Wales included Sydney , Wollongong , Shoalhaven , Merimbula , Kiama and Twofold Bay . After the amalgamation of the three companies , this list included stops at Gerringong , Batemans Bay , and Nelligen . Later , minor gold rushes at both Moruya and the Wagonga district resulted in their inclusion , and other ports were to include Bermagui , Eden , Narooma and Tathra .

The extent of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company 's operations along the coast can be seen by their 1870 schedule , in which they were making the journey to Kiama , Shoalhaven and Gerringong every three days , and to Ulladulla , Clyde , Shoalhaven and Wollongong at about the same rate . Mourya was visited every two weeks , while an additional journey was made to Merimbula and Ulladulla once a week . 1873 saw a simplification of these services , and a weekly run to Merimbula , Eden and Tathra was amongst the changes .

Maintaining the services of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company did , at times , take some effort on the part of the residents . For example , in Ulladulla a wooden jetty was built in 1859 in order to retain the services of the company ; they had informed the farmers that their ships would not call again at Ulladulla unless better mooring facilities were provided . (After seven years the jetty was replaced by a stone pier built by the government on the natural reef) . Similarly the town of Tathra was created through the erection of a small jetty , built so that the local farmers could gain access to coastal shipping which previously had stopped 25 km away at Merimbula .

= = Ships = =

Piecing together the Illawarra Steamship Navigation Company 's fleet is difficult , as , unlike most steamship companies of the day , neither the company 's advertising nor their arrival and departure notices carried the names of the vessels . Instead they simply listed the ships as " I.S.N. Steamers " , if the vessels were mentioned at all . Nevertheless , it is known that when the company was

amalgamated they had at least three vessels to handle the south coast trade : the Kiama from the Kiama Steamship Company , the Nora Creina from the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company , and the General Steamship Company 's Illawarra .

Of these three , the Kiama was a 104 @-@ ton paddle steamer that entered service with the company in 1855 . Purpose @-@ built in Glasgow in 1854 , she took 144 days to arrive in Australia , and she served the South Coast until 1876 when she was sold and converted into a hulk . Prior to sale she had been lengthened from her original 123 feet to 154 feet , and her tonnage increased to 111 tons . The Nora Creina , on the other hand , was lighter at 93 tons , and was locally built in Sydney . She was sold by the company in 1861 . The third of the original three vessels , Illawarra , had been constructed at Waterford in 1849 with a net weight of 166 tons , but , like the Nora Creina , she was only to remain with the new company until 1861 when she was sold .

By 1864 the company was operating a fleet of at least four ships - the Kiama was still in service , and she had been joined by Hunter , Mynora and Kembla . Both Kembla , a 204 @-@ ton iron steamship , and Hunter , a paddle steamer with a net weight of 105 tons , were built in Glasgow , Scotland . The Mynora was built in Australia at Prymont in Sydney . A 117 @-@ ton wooden paddle steamer , her time with the company ended in 1864 after she ran into St Georges Head in Wreck Bay . In an attempt to save the lives of passengers and crew , the captain fought to keep the ship afloat until she finally ran aground on a sandy beach approximately three miles from the headland . While the boat was lost , all of the passengers and crew on Mynora were saved .

The next significant change to the company 's fleet came in 1878 with the purchase of the Illawarra (II) . At 533 tons and 190 feet in length , she handled both passengers and cargo for the company , and proved to be " most popular " until being laid up in 1908 and eventually scrapped . Illawarra (II) was soon joined by Allowrie , a 504 @-@ ton vessel built in 1880 for carrying passengers and cargo , including livestock and dairy produce . (Allowrie remained in service with the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company until 1909 , when , like Illawarra (II) , she was laid up) . The third major vessel during this period was Kameruka . A 515 @-@ ton steamer , she was built in 1880 , but was then lost when wrecked on Pedro Reef off Moruya in October , 1897 .

When the company was reconstituted as the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company in 1904 , their vessels included Allowrie and two new steamers : Eden and Bega . Eden was a 693 @-@ ton screw steamer that had arrived in 1900 , a purpose @-@ built vessel constructed for the company in Glasgow to handle the Sydney ? Merimbula ? Eden ? Tathra route . Eden remained with the company until being converted to a hulk , and she was finally scuttled in 1933 . Bega , at 567 tons , transported both passengers and cargo between 1883 when she was launched and 1907 when she capsized with the loss of one of the passengers .

At least two more ships joined the fleet in the early 1900s : Peterborough , which was acquired from the Shellharbour Steam Navigation Company , and Merimbula . At the time Merimbula was the company 's finest vessel . She was a 1122 @-@ ton screw steamer which provided accommodation for 106 passengers (96 saloon and 10 second class) as well as possessing refrigerated cargo space , and she was capable of between 13 and 14 knots . Unfortunately she ran aground off Beecroft Head in 1928 .

Just prior to the onset of the first World War , four new ships were purchased : Bermagui , Bonandera , Bodalla and Bergalia . Bodalla was requisitioned for the war effort and repurposed as a minesweeper , and she was lost in 1924 . After the war the company purchased another three vessels : Nergalia , Cobargo and Kianga . Two of these three boats , Nergalia and Kianga , were requisitioned during World War II , but while both survived the hostilities , Kianga was not returned to the company after being decommissioned .