



The Cobar

The *Cobar*, a much-loved Wellington Harbour ferry, joined J H William's Wellington Steam Ferry Company fleet in 1906. After the Eastbourne Borough Council bought her in 1913, she did both regular harbour ferry duties and special summer cruises.

The *Cobar* was built of timber at Laurieton, New South Wales in 1903 for the Cobar Mining Company. Having been found to be more of an expense than anticipated she was sold to a harbour ferry operator in Sydney where she sailed until being purchased by the Wellington Steam Ferry Company.

The *Cobar* had been designed to operate in the warmer climate of New South Wales with a vast amount of open deck space and seating aft. It was quickly discovered that more shelter had to be provided for passengers travelling in the less favourable Wellington weather.

This led to changes in her appearance. Some of the changes undertaken were the removal of the mainmast, extension of a bridge deck and the addition of canvas sides to give shelter to the previously exposed aft deck seating, the building of a new enclosed wheelhouse, removal of the foremast and the decorative carvings with the name on each side of the bow.

The *Cobar* continued to carry passengers across the harbour until 1948, when she was damaged by fire. The development of road transport saw the decline of the ferry service and its replacement with a bus service. Despite much heated debate between pro and anti-ferry groups the *Cobar* made her last trip to Eastbourne on 2 July 1948. The *Cobar* was sold in 1950.



