

STEAM ICEBREAKER ELBE

The ELBE today is the only sailing steam icebreaker on the river Elbe. He was built in 1911 as one of special ships with a steam engine in the shipyard of „Gebrüder Wiemann“ in Brandenburg/Havel with the bow nr. 150. Owner was the „Preußische Elbstrombauverwaltung“ with their „Wasserbauamt Lauenburg“. The price was 90.000 Mark. The new ship was the leadership in the fleet of about more than 5 icebreakers, working together in front of the frozen iceline. For the inspector of ice-breaking the ELBE has a special saloon in a deck house on the foreship with panorama view for checking the situation of the iceline and the working of the other ships.

After a lot of dangerous ice-periods it was urgently necessary to use large steam icebreakers to fight against the frozen ice barriers in the river Elbe. Since 1889 the government started to build continuously large steam icebreakers for this special purpose. Special construction of the ship-lines together with strong material of the ships body is necessary for using as a river-icebreaker.

The normaly work during ice-breaking on the river is as follows: the steamer started with „full speed ahead“ running against the closed frozen iceline and sliding up to the ice with about 1/3 of the ships length. Under the heavy weight of the ship the frozen ice around break down into smaler flakes. The ship becomes free swimming, goes astern and started a new pushing trip. This art of icebreaking is called „boxen“.

The steam-icebreaker ELBE was in action up to 1974. After a long way at least the „Förderverein Dampfeisbrecher ELBE e.V.“ reconstructed the ship. Today it is operating as a historical memorial with a passenger possibility of 150 persons.



Steam icebreaker ELBE as historical memorial today



Steam-icebreaker breaking frozen ice of the river Elbe near Hamburg



2-Zylinder vertical steam engine, 280 PSI

Technical dates of the icebreaker ELBE

Length o.a. 30,80 m	Breadth o.a. 7,45 m	Depth 2,55 m	Draught 1,60 m
Main-engine:	2 Zy. vertical steam engine with expansion, condensing and with easily operating reversing of the system „Klug“ // power 280 PSI		
	number of revolutions 180 U/min		
Steam boiler:	cool-fired boiler with 2 fire tubes	heating surface 108 m ²	working pressure 10 at

