

Use of Penguijn & Proteus vessels during the imprisonment period.

(Extracts from a telephonic interview with Mr Jan Moolman, held on Friday 01 July 2016. He is a former Robben Island Museum employee and was a Department of Correctional Services employee deployed to the ferries between 1964 until 1996)

- Penguijn & Proteus vessels were both used as general transport ferries from their date of commissioning in 1986.
- The main reason for the acquisition of the vessels was to increase carrying capacity as tour groups were brought to the island on Wednesdays and the demand for prisoner's visitors increased to be accommodated on both Saturdays and Sundays.
- Both vessels were used to replace the Dias which was out of commission at the time.
- Residents, wardens, prisoners and visitors were transported on the vessels.
- Vessels were skippered by Correctional Services personnel, Jan Moolman, Chris Roelofse, Das Basson and Trevor Lloyd. One of the Engineers was called "Steps".
- Proteus developed engine trouble and lay out of commission during the launch of the Museum in 1997. It has never operated under the RIM administration.
- The Proteus sank in the Murray's Bay Harbour during the late 1990's and had to be salvaged using a crane.

The search of Ex-political prisoners' interview transcripts revealed no substantial leads to support the consensus that both the Penguijn and Proteus were used as ferry transportation for the warders and their families as well as prisoners being transported to and from the island during the late 1980's. The reason for that is simply that the interviews which have been done with ex-political prisoners have focussed on the older generation of prisoners whom would not have knowledge of these two vessels as they would have been released by the time of their commissioning in 1986.