

SHIPWRECKS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

BRONZEWING

The ex-tug *Bronzewing* was built by Mort's Dock and Engineering Company in Balmain, NSW, in 1930. The vessel was steel-plated and hand riveted. It was originally owned by the Royal Australian Navy, but was later purchased by Victrawl Pty Ltd to be refitted for tuna fishing.

The 58 foot (17.7m) vessel was based in Port Lincoln and operated in the Southern Ocean. In December 1962 (at this time owned by Messrs C & N Sparnon) the *Bronzewing* developed a substantial list at its moorings at Brennan's Jetty, when it filled with water from a corroded sea cock. Ropes were passed under the hull and the Fire Brigade pumps used to right the vessel.

See *Port Lincoln Times*, 10 January 1963 (on next page)

The *Bronzewing* was made seaworthy and the following (1963) season caught 94.2 tons of tuna. In the late 1980s the *Bronzewing* failed its survey and was subsequently purchased by the Port Lincoln Game Fishing Club for \$1.00. Club members stripped and cleaned the boat in preparation for its scuttling as an artificial reef in Boston Bay, Port Lincoln.

A Fisheries Department inspection gave approval for the sinking and, on 1 July 1990, the *Bronzewing* was towed six nautical miles west of No 4 beacon, about one nautical mile off Port Lincoln near Bass Shoal.



The tug *Yarwun* holds the *Bronzewing* in position for scuttling. Photo: Neville Wanklyn

Tug's watery grave will be a haven for fish

Winds gusting up to 40 knots yesterday tested the skills of mariners scuttling a former tug and fishing boat off Port Lincoln.

"A gale blowing at the time made it awkward," said Port Lincoln harbormaster Captain Bob Cobban. "But it's in the appointed place."

The Bronze Wing was bought by the Port Lincoln Fishing Club to become an artificial reef. Club spokesman Mr Neil Wilson said yesterday the reef would promote fish stocks and marine life in Boston Bay.

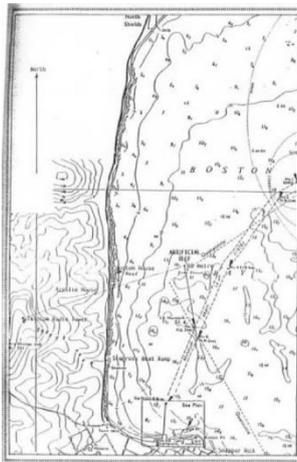
"And we aim to dispel the theory that game fishermen go out to kill shark," he said. ...

Yesterday the vessel was towed ... near Bass Shoal.

"The idea was to tow it out and drop an anchor and let the vessel settle but the anchor with the winds we had was not heavy enough and it started to drag," Captain Cobban said.

"Eventually the tug held its position. It went down bow first. It took about 30 minutes."

The Advertiser, 2 July 1990



Bronze Wing sunk

A team of volunteers from all over Port Lincoln battled Sunday's stormy seas and gale force winds to sink the Bronze Wing.

The former tug boat went to the bottom shortly after midnight, when it offered a watery home to up to four dozen species of fish.

One of the chief organizers of the operation, Des Woodcock, said although the weather had been extremely rough, there were too many people and organizations involved to cancel the plan.

Thirty-five minutes after the stormcocks were knocked out, the boat that sat on the seabed for weeks cleaning and mending nets to meet specifications for artificial reefs, sank.

Mr Woodcock said four workers from Port Lincoln Ship Construction, headed by production manager Rick Verbeek, gave their time to carry out the scuttling.

Tug boat manager Nick Silvester allowed the

groups to use the tug boat, while the crew gave their time.

The State Emergency Service boat and crew was also on hand to provide assistance.

Harbormaster Bob Cobban said his role was to ensure the Bronze Wing went down in the designated place.

He said the operation had gone smoothly despite the stormy weather, although the vessel had moved away

from the scuttling site at one stage.

The Bronze Wing's anchor had not held when the line from the tug was cast off.

However the tug moved in again how to how, and loved the vessel back to the site, 0.5 nautical miles west of beacon four.

Mr Woodcock said the local clubs which organized the scuttling, particularly the game fishing and anglers clubs, were more than pleased, and were al-

ready planning to create more reefs using anything from discarded vehicles and railway carriage to old rubber tyres.

He said the sea floor in Boston Bay was particularly barren, probably as a result of the heavy dredging that was carried out there during the 100 years of the oyster industry.

The Bronze Wing, which was donated by Vitevas, is expected to have an established fish colony within the next six to 12 months.



ABOVE: The Port Lincoln tug holds the Bronze Wing in position in readiness for the scuttling.

LEFT: A map showing the position of the artificial reef.

The Port Lincoln Revival Centre invites you to . . .

Port Lincoln Times, 3 July 1990

SINKING TUNA BOAT SAVED



A 58 ft. tuna boat, Bronze Wing, was narrowly saved from sinking at her moorings at Brennan's Jetty on Proclamation Day, December 28.

When a fire broke out on board at the wharf, Mr Cyril Turner, clerk of Port Lincoln, noted that the boat was in serious danger of sinking at 2.15 am. Police sought the assistance of the R.A. Harbour Board, the Southport & Water Supply Department, and the Port Lincoln Fire Brigade.

The boat which was stuck in her halberd, the freighter, the Southport, South of the Jetty, lowered a rope which was passed beneath the wharf.

Freighter's Role

The freighter, the Southport, South of the Jetty, lowered a rope which was passed beneath the wharf.

Guided by Mr. Charles Oliver, of North Shields, passed the rope under the sinking boat and secured the rope to a bollard on the jetty.

The tug boat Cape Lynne also assisted to

keep the boat afloat with a rope lowered from her stern.

The captain, former of the Port Lincoln Fire Brigade Mr. Murray, Captain, noted the town's fire alarm to call out. From the boat, the fire unit on the jetty to join in pumping out water.

Fortunate Save

The Harbourmaster at Port Lincoln (Capt. C. P. Pickhaver) and police stood by as the jetty staff temporary repairs were effected. It is believed the leakage was caused by a rivet which had become loose.

Capt. Pickhaver said it was fortunate the Bronze Wing was prevented from sinking because she would have become a hazard to shipping.

The Bronze Wing is owned by Mr. Chris Stewart, of Port Lincoln.

Port Lincoln Times, 10 January 1963

