

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 annotated 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 Port Lincoln's Sunday's stormy seas and gale force winds sank the boat the Bronze Wing.

The bronze boat was towed to the moorings after midday, where it had been moored up to four dozen vessels.

One of the chief organizers of the sinking, Des Woodford, said although the vessel had been extremely popular, it had caused many people and organisations involved to consider the possibility.

Thirty-five minutes after the vessel was blocked out, 300 people spent weeks cleaning and preparing the specifications for artificial reefs.

Mr Woodford said four volunteers from the Lincoln Ship Construction, Engineering manager Rick Verhoven, gave their time to carry out the scuttling.

Tug boat manager John McMillan said the

groups to use the tug boat, while the crew of the Bronze Wing's anchor had not told where the vessel was moored.

The State Emergency Service boat and crew provided valuable assistance.

Harbormaster Bill O'Connor said he was to ensure the Bronze Wing was scuttled in the designated place.

He said the operation had been carried out despite the stormy weather and the vessel had moved away

from the scuttling site at one stage.

The Bronze Wing's anchor was set back to the site, 6.6 metres from the end of the beach front.

He said the sea floor in the area was sandy and rocky, probably as a result of dredging that was carried out during the last 100 years of the oyster industry.

The local clubs which organized the scuttling, divers, fishing and anglers were pleased, and were al-

ready planning to create more reefs using any debris from the ship, machine and railway carriage.

Mr O'Connor said the Bronze Wing, which was damaged by fire in 1987, had not have an established flat bottom and would not last 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 friend at work at the wharf, Mr. Cyril Turner, alerted Port Lincoln police that the boat was listing badly and in imminent danger of sinking at 5.30 p.m., police sought the assistance of the R.A. Harbormaster, the Fisheries & Water Safety Department, and the Port Lincoln Fire Brigade.

The department rushed ponies to the wharf and began pumping water from

the boat which was stuck in her hatches.

Freighter's Role

The fisherman, Benjamin Trader, hooked at the jetty, lowered a rope which was passed beneath the wharf.

Shaddeens, in charge of Mr. Charlie Oliver, of North Shields, passed the rope under the sinking boat and secured the rope to a bollard on the jetty.

The fire boat Captain Cyrus also assisted to

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

The auxiliary fireman of the Port Lincoln Fire Brigade, Mr. Murray Copsey, secured the fire hose and drove to call on Mr. Oliver and bring the fire unit to the jumping out water.

Fortunate Save

The Harbormaster at Port Lincoln, Capt. G. F. Pickhaver, and police stood by as the jetty until temporary repairs were effected.

It is believed the breakaway was caused by a strong wind.

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. Claus Sparmann, of Port Lincoln.

Port Lincoln Times, 10 January 1963

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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