REMINISCENCES OF SHIPWRECKS IN ILLAWARRA DURING THE PAST SIXTY YEARS (1891-1951)

The following notes have been prepared by W. V. Mintorn, Esq., Librarian/Curator, on the paper read by him to the Society on 5th July, 1951.

Nov., 1890—Ketch, “MAGGIE,” went ashore on outer rock at Fairy Creek — no loss of life.


May, 1898—Steam Collier, “SAXONIA,” stranded on Bellambi Reef, close to the wreck of the “Aldinga”—no loss of life. Both wrecks were said to be caused by abnormal current swinging into the Reef.

13th Feb., 1898—Brigantines, “MALCOLM” and “AMY” were lost in a heavy gale. The former completely disappeared, leaving no trace. The latter was smashed up in the surf at Thirroul Beach, where a monument was later erected to the memory of the lost crew.

12th July, 1907—Blue Metal Steamer, “RESOLUTE,” stranded on Bellambi Reef and drifted ashore—no loss of life. Current also blamed in this instance.

7th Dec., 1912—General Cargo Str. “COMBOYNE,” foundered off Bass Point after springing a leak—no loss of life.

20th Sept., 1918—Steamer Collier, “UNDOLA.” Supposedly struck a mine laid by the German Raider, “Wolf,” in the Gabo Island mine field (many drifted north) during the 1914-1918 war. Sank with all hands off Wollongong.

21st Feb., 1924—General Cargo Str., “KILTOBRANKS,” stranded at Shellharbour and became a total loss — no loss of life resulted.

15th Aug., 1927—Scow, “CLEO,” stranded inside the tip of the Eastern Breakwater at Port Kembla and later broke up.
15th May, 1943—Large Tanker, "CITY OF BOSTON SERVICES," one of a large convoy of vessels being escorted southwards by the Navy. The convoy was ordered to disperse when a severe easterly gale sprang up. She was driven high up on the rocks at Bass Point. The wreck was stripped of all fixtures, and later the Aust. Iron and Steel Ltd. purchased the hull for scrap iron. The remains are still visible.

22nd Feb., 1949—Blue Metal Str., "BOMBO," developed a list, whilst voyaging from Kiama to Sydney during rough weather, a little to the north-east of Wollongong. The list gradually increased and she suddenly capsized and sank. Several crew members were drowned and the bodies later recovered on the beaches about Woonona and Bulli.

17th May, 1949—Collier, "MUNMORAH," while on her maiden trip to the South Coast to load a cargo of coal at Bellambi (having been diverted from the Newcastle run) attempted to approach the jetty from the south-east instead of the usual north-easterly direction, and became wedged in an inner ledge of rock about half-way along the length of the Reef. The wreck has withstood many heavy gales in the last couple of years, and is plainly visible from all directions.

STRANDINGS

The 4-masted Barque, "LANGDALE," was almost wrecked on the rocks below Cliff Road, Wollongong, during a severe gale in 1904. Her anchors held about 50 yards clear of the outer line of breakers and she rolled dangerously for several hours before being towed away.

The Ketch, "RUAKAKA," a flat bottomed craft, which traded between Jervis Bay and Wollongong, with timber cargoes, was washed up on the rocks to the south-east of the "Continental" Baths at Wollongong in 1914. She remained there for several months until towed off during the peak of a spring tide.

The Iron Ore Steamer, "IRON MONARCH," was blown from her moorings in Port Kembla Harbour by a sudden southerly gale and lodged against the Northern Breakwater on 8th July, 1923. She was later towed clear and sustained little damage.

The "WENDOWRIE," a large steamer, while proceeding to moorings in Port Kembla Harbour in 1924, grounded close inshore by the Steelworks Jetty, and became embedded in the sand, where she remained for many weeks until liberated.

The Collier, "MALACHITE," after leaving Port Kembla Harbour, broke down and drifted on to the rocks in front of the M.M. Works, but slightly to the south. She was towed off some days later.

The Collier, "MARJORIE," stranded on Bellambi Reef in 1928 and remained there for several days before being towed off.

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