Victorian Heritage Database Report

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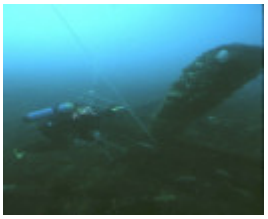
S.S. AUCKLAND

S47 SSAucjland BewareReef HistoricView dateunknown

S47 SSAucjland BewareReef Bow March1988 JR



S47 SSAucjland BewareReef Propellor March1988 JR

S47 SSAucjland BewareReef Wreck March1988 JR

S47 SSAucjland BewareReef TopView March1988 JR

Location

Beware Reef, near Cape Conran

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S47

Date lost

27/05/1871

Official number

47310

Construction material

Iron

Hull

4 bulkheads

Propulsion

Steam - Screw

Engine specification

Four engines - 180 horsepower, unique adaptation - compounded using additional HP cylinders mounted to side of simple direct acting LP engine cylinders connected by levers

Engine builder

Morrison of Newcastle (UK), adapted by William Jaffrey, ASNCo. Superintendent Engineer

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

212.80 Feet / 28.00 Feet / 16.30 Feet

Builder

C. Mitchell & Co, Morrison & Co

Year of construction

1863

Built port

Low Walker, Newcastle

Built country

England

Registration Number

22 of 1871

Registration Port

Sydney

Date lost

27/05/1871

Departure

Melbourne

Destination

Sydney

Cargo

General Cargo, 50 tons iron, 500 bags potatoes

Owner

Australasian Steam Navigation Co

Master

Captain D. Walker

Weather conditions

Foggy conditions, strong easterly current, compasses not adjusted

Cause of loss

Struck Beware Reef due to faulty compass and fog.

Passenger comments

Mrs Bennett and three children, Miss Clarke, Messrs. McMillen, Peacock, Chapman, Gregory, J. Cullen, Pennester and nine in steerage. mariners.records.nsw.gov.au/1871/05/072mac.htm note other passengers as Miss Forelene, Mrs McMullen (McMillen), Mr Penert

Crew comments

mariners.records.nsw.gov.au/1871/05/072mac.htm note crew as: William J Stuart (1st Officer); AH Wallace (2nd Mate); W Downer (3rd Engineer); Patrick Quinn (Fireman); James Glass (Fireman); George Prince (Fireman); Michael Raffael (Fireman); Fred Aimers (

Statement of significance

The vessel is archaeologically significant due to the construction of the steamers engine. The engine represents the first attempt in Australia to manufacture compound steam machinery and was hailed a success.

VHR history

The Auckland was a two masted, iron screw steamer built in Low Walker, Newcastle, UK by C. Mitchell & Co. in 1863. It measured 212 x 28 x 16.3 feet (64.6 x 8.5 x 5 metres) and registered 699 tons gross. Originally built with a simple two cylinder low pressure steam engine, it underwent major modifications in Sydney to the order of its new owners, the Australasian Steam Navigation Company (ASNCo). The modifications were to extend the raised quarterdeck to the bridge, to enlarge the ladies saloon , both the ladies and the main saloon were elaborately fitted out, and to compound the engine to run at a higher pressure - making it more efficient and powerful.

 This was the first attempt in Australia to manufacture compound steam machinery and was hailed a success, the AucklandsÂ speed increasing by 2 Â½ knots using half its previous consumption of coal in trials held on 16 May 1871. The ASNCo preferred to update its existing vessels rather than buy new vessels from the UK like its competitors, and investigation of the engine has shown it to be a unique and very interesting adaptation.

 On its first trip after its renovations, in foggy weather in the early morning of 27 May 1871, the SS Auckland was steaming from Melbourne to Sydney with passengers and a general cargo. With no warning it ran into breakers and struck Beware Reef. The engine was reversed but the ship could not be

got off, and it was taking in water from damage at the bow.

 All the passengers and crew were rescued by the SS Macedon after firing blue distress rockets to attract attention. The vessel was successfully and extensively salvaged as it lay on the reef for some time. A Marine Court of Inquiry found that the ASNCo was to blame for the wreck as it had not checked nor adjusted the compasses after the renovations. Captain D. Walker was merely censured as he had a reputation as a careful navigator.

 The SS Auckland has now collapsed down the reef slope with the result that the bow and rudder post of this once 65 metre long vessel now lie 25 metres from each other in 19-26 metres depth. Iron hull plating, beams and decking lie in a twisted jumble down the slope. Of particular interest are the modified engine and four bladed propeller (two blades are broken), with propeller shaft lying on top as it has bent back over the rudder/ rudder post, and the triangular bow section lying on its port side with the gracefully curved clipper stem cemented into the reef. A diving club has put a memorial plinth on the site which lies on the sea floor between the engine and bow section.

 SS AUCKLAND ENGINE
 With respect to the Auckland, the conversion of the original engines has necessarily been attended to with considerable difficulty, and no small amount of credit is due to Mr. Jaffray the companyâ??Ã³Â superintendent engineer, for the perseverance he has displayed in overcoming all obstruction, and bringing to a happy issue so valuable an adjunct.
 Sydney Morning Herald 17 May 1871

 "The SS Auckland engine was the first compound engine manufactured in Australia. However the Aucklandâ??Ã³Â engine was not compounded by inserting a sleeve into one of the low pressure cylinders as expected.
 Instead it was updated by having an extra high pressure cylinder added to the side of each of the two low pressure cylinders. The crossheads of the high and low pressure cylinders were joined by a lever. It appears that the high pressure cylinders also drove the pumps mounted in the engine base. The success of the modifications proved that the skills of Australian marine engineers were on a par with their English counterparts."
 John Riley, 1998.

 #VHR: The SS Auckland ran onto Beware Reef in foggy weather on the night of 27 May 1871. A faulty compass was blamed for the vessel being off course. No lives were lost but the vessel was a total wreck. It is highly significant for its unique steam engine which was the first marine engine to be compounded (to run at high pressure) in Australia.#