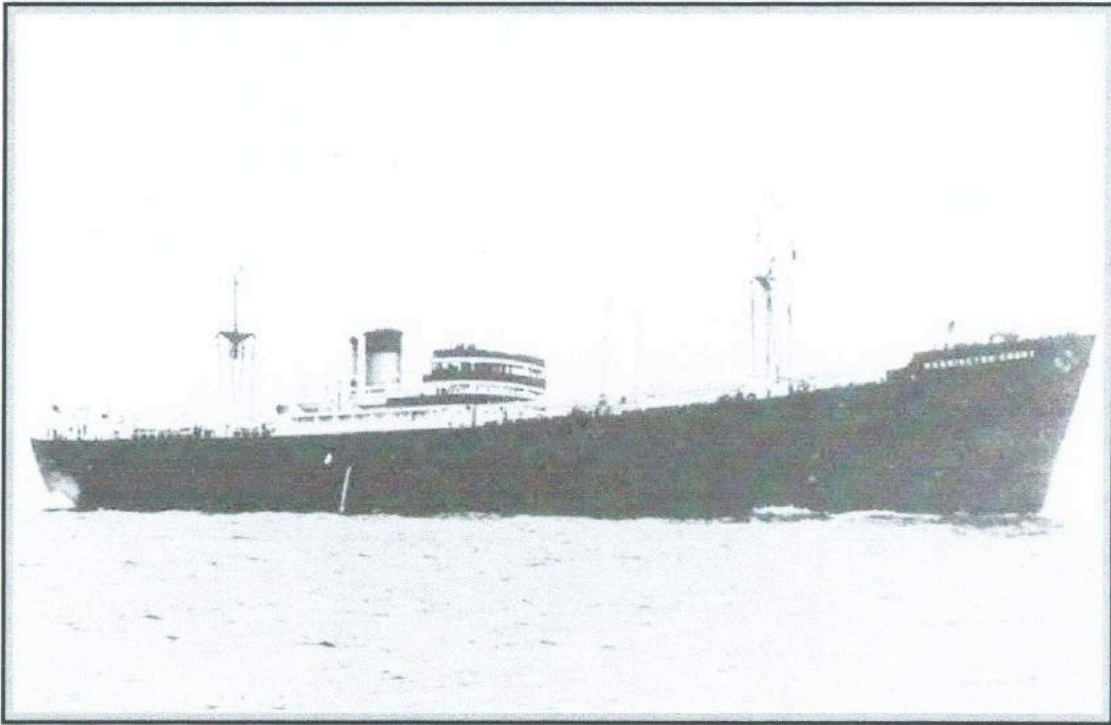


Hannington Court

(2011/2012 Season)



P. Valentine

Locating the wrecksite:

We had three different positions for the Hannington Court, the Ridsen Beazely position, who worked the wreck 1950-1956. Peter Wilmot worked the wreck in late 1980's and Jimmy Herbert and George Bells position. All 3 of these proved wrong either because the navigation used was not accurate or more likely by design.

We searched all 3 sites for 1 square kilometre around the position using the Aquascan VX 200 magnetometer but had no anomalies.

We decided to work from HMS Dragon's position using a Simrad Side-scan sonar on board M.V Seaway Invincible, a 130ft survey and recovery vessel. We have a joint venture agreement with the Swedish company Seaway Offshore who owns this vessel. We located the position at UTM Block 34H at position E 356826 and N 6146282.

Description of site:

Wrecksite is approximately 140m long and 30m wide. Bow and stern are intact and in good shape with railings etc in tact. The entire midships is completely collapsed by the heavy explosives used by Ridsen Beazely as the copper was located in this area. (see Fig 1). The only structure standing in this area is the 3 cylinder 2.5.L.S.A oil engine and the propshaft.

Peter Wilmot's grab can be seen trapped under the propshaft where it was lost in the late 1980's.

The ship is lying with the bow slightly facing inshore towards the Struisbaai side. We mapped the site using a Kongsberg Simrad Hydroacoustic Positioning Reference. (H.P.R) and are in the process of generating a site map.

We will probably continue with the vessel 'Theo' which is also owned by Seaway Offshore. And this has a High Precision Hydroacoustic positioning system (H.I.P.A.P) which is even more accurate. We have also photographed the entire wrecksite and will produce a photo mosaic image for reference.

Recovery Operation:

The vessel lies at a depth of 97 m. We used a 70 h.p Remotely Operated Vehicle (R.O.V) with 4 thrusters, 6 recording cameras and a hydraulic grab hanging underneath (see Fig.2)

We performed approximately 150 dives on this site, each one filmed and recorded (see Fig.3)

We enlisted the services of a researcher Nigel Pickford in the U.K to obtain the list of cargo as well as a stowing arrangement (see Fig.1). In some places the copper is still covered with intact maize-meal sacks which have an awful smell. The copper ingots weigh around 180 kg each and are from 2 different mines in Zambia RA (Roan Antelope Mines) and MUF (Mufamedi Mine). The metal on the vessel is very corroded and the rivets have mostly fallen out of the structure, particularly in the areas where there is copper.

This recovery system is still experimental and was used successfully for the salvage of the 'Moncalahad' another World War 2 vessel which sank in 600m in the Mozambique Channel. In the shallow water of the 'Hannington Court' the movement of the vessel is more of a problem and resulted in the R.O.V smashing into the hydraulic grab and sustaining damage. We decided to halt operations to improve the system drawing on technology developed by De Beers Marine and have spent the last 6 months building a heave compensator (see Fig.4). This will enable us to work in swell conditions up to 3 m.

Proposed 2012/2013 season:

We should complete the compensation tower by mid-August this year after which we would like to proceed back to the site and continue working. The methods we are using involve cutting edge technology in the salvage industry and it would be our pleasure to invite SAHRA archaeologists to come aboard for a few days to observe this system in operation.

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#	Dive start	Dive End	East and North	Location Description & Comments (Cu, ROV, Grab)	Amount
21	1356	1408	E: 356 825 N: 6146 278	PROBLEMS WITH GRAB - NOT CLOSING RETURNING TO SURFACE AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS. 1426. LOOSE CONNECTIONS FIXED LAUNCHED.	—
22	1429	1441	E: 356 828 N: 6146 280 (also SE 2240)	LOTS OF MANIPULATING OF CHIP HEADING CHANGED TO 132 BECAUSE OF INCREASE IN WIND RECORDED 3 INJOTS.	3 (31)
23	1424	1455	E: 356 827 N: 6146 281	RECORDED 1 INJOT	1 (31)
24	1527	1528	E: 356 827 N: 6146 278	ONE SIDE OF GRAB NOT STICK - NOT CLOSING RIGHT ON PILE OF INJOTS - CONTAINS DIVE TO KESTIX - ATTEMPT TO GRAB - TURT BUBBLE - CONTAINS DIVE - RECORDED 1 INJOT	1 (31)
25	1531	1535	E: 356 829 N: 6146 287	RECORDED 3 INJOTS	3 (31)

Fig. 2



Fig 4



Fig. 3