

SURVEYING THE S.S. CITY OF AINSWORTH

*By Bill Meekel,
UASBC Director, Southern Interior Chapter*



The SS City of Ainsworth flying the Canadian and USA flags

photo courtesy by Touchstones Museum, Nelson BC

The steamship SS City of Ainsworth was a small steamer built in 1892 on Kootenay Lake near the mining community of Ainsworth. The vessel was small at only 26 metres long. However it was built to provide service to the communities along the lake that the bigger boats of the CPR's British Columbia Lake and River Service and the Great Northern Railway Co. would not or could not service.

The C of A was lost in a severe late November storm in 1898 with the loss of six crew and three passengers.

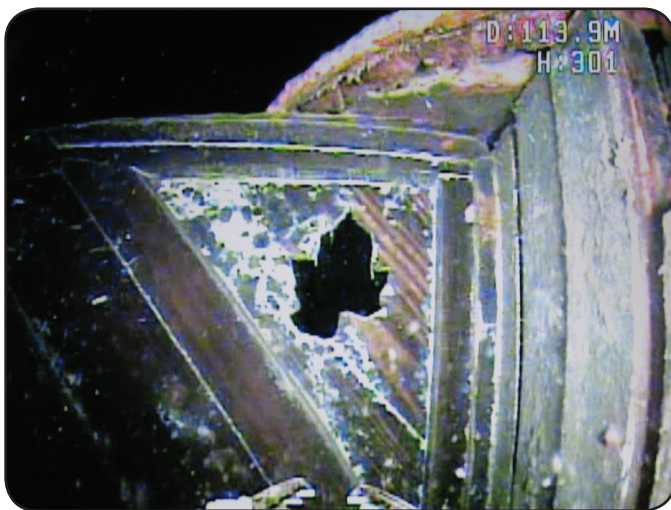
It was and still is the single largest loss of life on Kootenay Lake. Fortunately twenty-two passengers and crew survived the ordeal. The vessel was abandoned in the middle of the lake but found two days later near the entrance to Crawford Bay. The tug SS Kaslo was commissioned to tow the ship to Pilot Bay so she could be repaired or salvaged. However as the towing started the City of Ainsworth began to sink at her tow line. The crew of the Kaslo had to cut the tow line and the vessel finally sank beneath the waves on Dec. 2, 1898. Her

final journey was not yet over. She dropped onto a steep slope on the bottom of the bay. When she hit the bottom, she continued to slide down the slope bow first for about 200 meters until she came to rest upright in 115 m of water.

The vessel was not seen again until 1990 when a joint project between the DamBusters SCUBA club of Nelson, BC and the UASBC located the vessel in Crawford Bay. ROV (remotely operated vehicle) video was taken at the time.

The vessel was next visited twice by divers from the Cambrian Foundation in 1997 making it one of the deepest dives in Canada at the time. The divers took a series of photos of the wreck and made an evaluation of the condition of the vessel. Divers have not been back to the wreck since 1997.

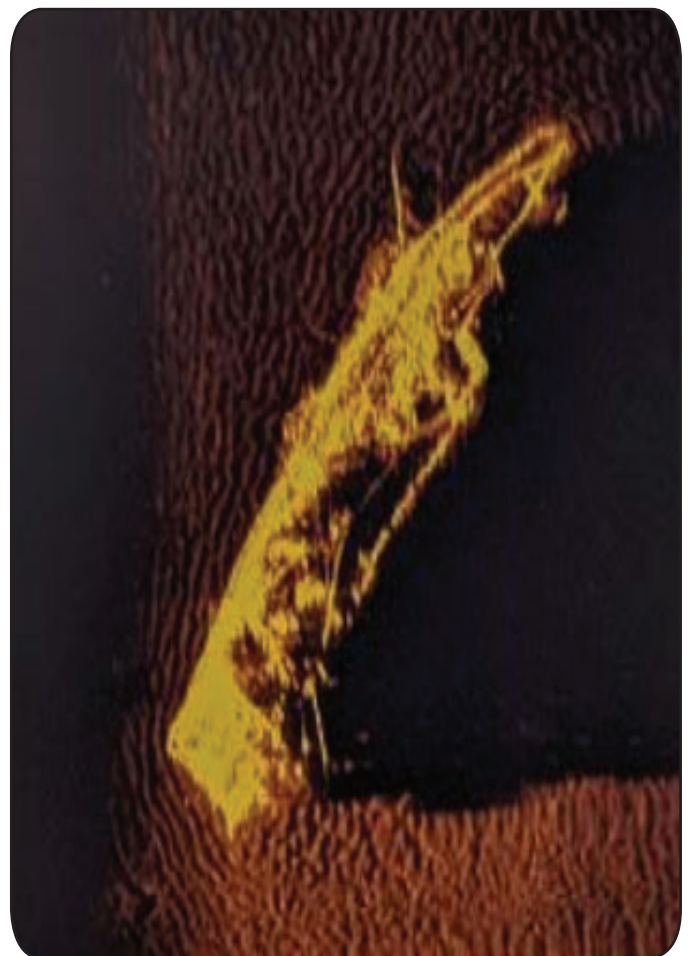
The next visits to the wreck occurred in 2011 and 2012 when a group of UASBC members relocated the wreck and collected some limited ROV footage of the wreck. The photo below shows a maple leaf that had been cut by the builders into the upper right corner of the paddlewheel cover. A complete survey of the vessel was not completed due to ROV technical issues.



*Maple leaf in the starboard side of the paddlewheel cover taken in 2011
photo by Darren Mutak*

The next visit to the wreck occurred in early May 2019 when Ralston and Associates were hired with sponsorship from Aircheklab Inc. to confirm the location of the wreck using sidescan and if feasible to take ROV footage of the condition of the vessel. The first objective was achieved and a sidescan image of the vessel is shown below. The bow of the wreck is in the upper right of the photo with the paddlewheel in the lower left. The vessel is still three dimensional. However it appears part of the forward port freight deck walls have partly collapsed. The upper passenger deck appears to be gone.

The other part of the 2019 project was to collect ROV



*A sidescan image of the SS City of Ainsworth taken in 2019
photo by Brian Nadwidny*

Surveying The S.S. City of Ainsworth *(continued)*

video footage of the current condition of the wreck. Anchors were set up to provide a stable platform from which to operate the ROV. A cautious survey was planned to avoid contact with the wreck. The ROV was sent down to the wreck however underwater conditions were not good due to particulate in the water. The image below shows the port side maple leaf, the paddlewheel cover and part of the paddlewheel. Additional video footage was poor quality due to the particulate in the water. The ROV survey was cut short due to the risk of getting caught up in the wreck due to the poor visibility conditions.



Maple leaf (left of center) in the port side of the paddlewheel cover taken in 2019

photo by Gene Ralston

This leaves the ROV survey of the SS City of Ainsworth still not complete. We do not have an up to date quality survey of the vessel on the outside and limited information of the inside of the freight deck.

I would like to thank Gene and Sandy Ralston, Mike Clements and Brian Nadwidny for their efforts and commitment to the study and preservation of the SS City of Ainsworth shipwreck .

SPECIAL THANKS TO AIRCHEKLAB INC. (www.aircheklab.ca) for sponsoring this survey.

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!**

SHIPWRECKS Conference 2019

By

Eric Young

After March's drought not too many people were distressed by a showery morning on April 6th. Besides, we were all going to the Hellenic Centre on Arbutus to hear about Maritime matters in the Mediterranean, a fairly "sunny" topic. About 45 people arrived and enjoyed the day in the very convenient facility. The room is wider than it is deep so that everyone could be moderately close to the large screen for the visual presentations. The good acoustics meant that no speaker needed a microphone to be well heard.

The first two topics concerned harbours. Dr. Hector Williams talked about Greek harbours around the eastern Mediterranean.

The numerous natural harbours were consistently utilized. They all exhibited significant water action and/or siltation. Thus, they changed and required reworking after a century or so. Attempts were also made to construct man-made harbours where no natural one existed. The same natural forces acted on these and limited their useful lifespans to less than two centuries. Given all the effort it is clear that a safe haven was of paramount importance for the ancients.

Dr. Katherine Crawford extended the theme with a talk about her work at Portus Romae/Ostia in Italy. The challenges were similar. Ostia, the natural harbour on the Tiber, was too small and subject to flooding in order to function as Rome's only port. The Romans built the larger Portus three kilometres north. Protection, access, and siltation were again issues. Rome had the resources to keep the port functioning



into four centuries, hence its structure kept evolving over that time. From the archaeologists point of view access is now an issue as part of the site is owned by a duke, and part of it is under the modern airport.

After coffee our focus moved to the western Mediterranean and the Barbary pirates of the middle ages. Dr. Joost Schokkenbroeck, a Nederlander, explained that while it might not be openly obvious, the Netherlands played an important part in this period. The Netherlands, due to its position and size, had to make continual alliances with other powers to

prosper and avoid destruction. In this arena the Dutch made alliances with the Ottomans, the titular controllers of North Africa. The Dutch then acted as privateers off that coast. They were friendly with the local rulers and plundered unfriendly ships as they attempted to sail past.

After a relaxing lunch, we had another pair of talks that dovetailed with each other (not a big wonder, they were presented by wife and husband). Dr. Elizabeth Greene started by explaining about her work on the shipwreck at Pabuc, Burnu, Turkey. This wreck dates from the 6th century. Dr. Justin Leidwanger followed with his research on the 'jar' wreck. It is a 7th century wreck in a small cove on the southern coast of Turkey. Together they show how examining the contents of wrecks is the critical detective work in creating an accurate picture of who was trading what and with

whom. The Eastern Empire in Constantinople, Orthodox Christian, was openly trading with the Muslim territories in the Levant.

Our next “detective” was Dr. Robyn Woodward. She related some of the work she has contributed on the Serce Limani Glass

Wreck. Once again things are not always as they may first appear. Sink a boat and the glass stuff will break, right? Well, no. In antiquity, glass was a very highly prized substance. It was also much easier to re-make into something else than it was to make in the first place. The detective work has determined that the valuable cargo in this wreck was already broken glass on its way to (probably) Constantinople.

The final day-time talk took us around into the Red Sea. Bill Zanke presented some of the research he has been a part of in those waters. Side scan sonar was used to identify targets south of the Suez Canal. Dive teams were sent down onto each of the wrecks. The vast majority were vessels involved in canal traffic. As is normal, extensive archival research then ensued to positively identify a particular wreck.

The attentive staff at the Hellenic Centre transformed the meeting room into round tables for eight people. In short order they opened a bar to the pleasure of all. They then brought out a lovely Greek meal which



the gathering did its best to consume.

Dr. Leitwanger gave the keynote speech after coffee and desert. This concerned work he had done on the “Church Wreck” at Marzamemi, Sicily. The town right at the bottom of Sicily, Marzamemi has always been completely concerned with the sea. Centuries of tuna fishing and more lately wine growing, for export, have been economic drivers. Most recently wine production has retrenched and one of the unused winery buildings has been repurposed to house a new maritime museum. Dr. Leitwanger has been involved in this project. When it is completed, artifacts from the wreck will be exhibited in the museum.

The ship ran aground on shallow reefs in the 6th century within sight of what is now the town. Along with other cargo, it was carrying more than three dozen each of large stone columns, bases, caps, plinths, etc. All of these were quarried on an island in the Bosphorus. The 6th century was a period when the Eastern Empire was re-establishing hegemony back into the western Mediterranean. At various locations in Italy there are churches that originally date from this period. While they are sizeable, these churches typically used twelve columns in their construction. Clearly a lot of research has gone into this wreck and the sociology of the environment that surrounded it. It now seems fairly clear that the ship was carrying “pre-fabricated” church parts that were intended to be erected to “secure” the empire back into the west. History tells us that this re-expansion was only partly successful, while this vessel was no part of that at all. It is, however, a key piece in the reinvigoration of a small Sicilian town.

All of the participants and the attendees very much enjoyed the day. While every Shipwrecks topic is fascinating, this edition fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Each topic seemed to flow directly from its predecessor. Everyone had enough time and there were always plenty of questions. Everyone in the Lower Mainland (and they know who they are) deserves a big Thank You for putting this Conference together.



all photos by Bronwen Young

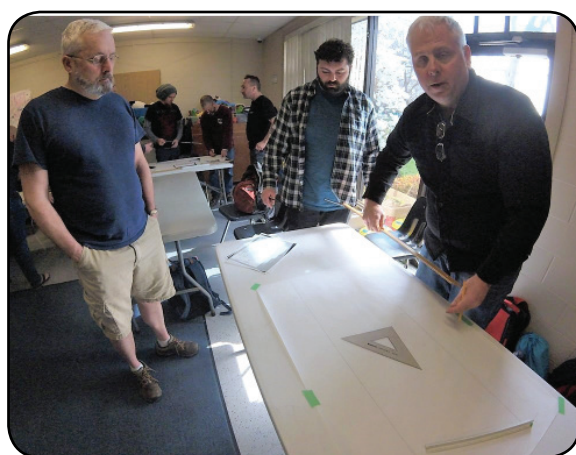
Congratulations to March 23rd NAS Introduction Course Graduates

*By
Jacques Marc*

An Introduction to Foreshore and Underwater Archaeology course was held in Victoria at the Crystal Pool on March 23rd. The course was attended by 11 new students, and Bob Simpson audited the course to refresh his skills. Four members of the Maritime Archaeological Society based in Astoria Oregon attended to learn what the NAS program offers. The demographics for this course were impressive. Five people came from the USA, two from Vancouver, three from Victoria and Farron Draper gets the prize for travelling from Nelson.



*Chris, Bill & Nick Plotting Survey
photo by B Simpson*



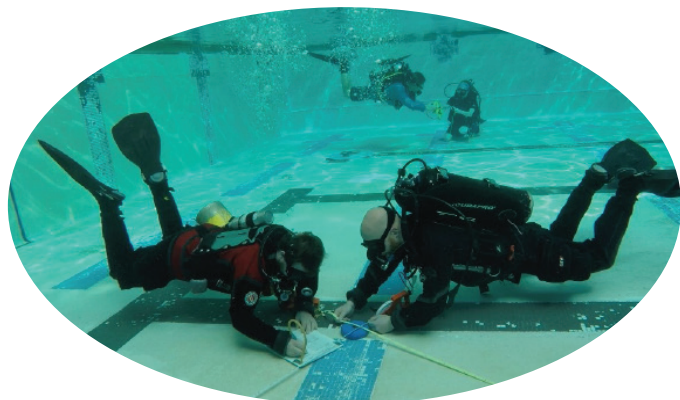
*Jennifer & Ian Plotting Survey
photo by B. Simpson*

The enthusiastic students spent the day attending 4 lectures covering the basics of U/W Archaeology, site surveying, the law and site types. After the site surveying lecture, the students donned their dive gear entered the pool and carried out a variety of surveying projects. Back in the classroom, the results of the pool session were transcribed to paper. Achieving accurate results was quite an eye opener' but there will be another chance to work at it in NAS 1.



*Joakim & Richard on Trilateration
photo by E. Anderson*

Congratulations NAS Graduates



*Jacob & Ian on Trilateration Exercise
photo by E. Anderson*

Congratulations go to the following people for completing the course.

1. Richard Jack
2. Evangeline Kesteven
3. Eric Lee
4. Farron Draper
5. Bill Zanke
6. Chris Dewey
7. Jennifer Kozik
8. Nick Mead
9. Joakim Hjelm
10. Ian Stephen
11. Jacob Desjardins
12. Bob Simpson (Audited)

We look forward to seeing them in NAS 1.
The next NAS Intro course will be offered in September and will be followed by a NAS 1 course in early October.

Keep your eye on the UASBC website for more details.

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM
for latest Updates!**

NAS 2 completion. The first in a long time!

*By
Bronwen Young*



Congratulations to Shelley and Tim Novak for completing their NAS 2 project! Very few people in British Columbia have achieved this accomplishment; it takes commitment and perseverance.

The requirements sound fairly straight forward: demonstrate the skills that were taught in NAS 1. This means: survey something that is under the water, of moderate size and then document it. The guidelines suggest that data gathering should be expected to take a couple of weekends (!). Along the way, all the challenges of fulfilling these goals start to manifest themselves. Water movement, visibility issues, finding historical data, oh no we forgot to... can challenge the NAS 2 aspirant. Anyone who has completed the project will know to how to avoid or deal with these pitfalls another time. Only when everything has been transcribed and written up in a clear and logical fashion is the project ready to be handed in. Completion of a NAS 2 project yields very valuable experience that can only be gained by working through the whole process step by step.

The NAS program is internationally recognized. Best of luck to Shelly and Tim as they travel, dive, and look around for an opportunity to join a marine archaeology project.

UASBC Presidents' message Summer 2019

by: Keith Bossons

Hi Everyone,

Well this will be the last Foghorn before we wind things down for the summer months.

We have continued to progress our projects over the past few months. We ran a very successful Shipwrecks conference in April at the Hellenic Community Centre in Vancouver. The event was well attended and there were many excellent presentations on Mediterranean Maritime History.

A recent search for the Minto by Southern Interior Chapter came up empty but the team did manage to get some side scan images and ROV video footage of the SS City of Ainsworth. There is a full article on this work by Bill Meekel, our Southern Interior Chapter Director, in this edition of the Foghorn.

Work in the Gulf Islands has continued over the spring and we hope to be ready to generate and publish a Shipwrecks book for the Gulf Islands in 2020.

Jacques is working on the fall exploration plans and the dive schedule should be available in late August so remember to check out the website from time to time.

Personally, I will be spending most of my free time over the summer out on our boat with my wife Sharon and our seasick terrier.

*All the best
Keith Bossons
UASBC President*

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!**

**The UASBC Victoria Chapter
meets at
The offices of Terra Archaeology
45 Bastion Square in Victoria
at 07:00 PM
The 2nd Wednesday of the
month**

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