



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



19th Century Lifeboat Found in Shed Rafters

A 136-year-old lifeboat from the sunken 19th Century vessel, *The Maid of Lincoln*, has recently been rediscovered in the rafters of an old hay shed on a farm on the west coast of Western Australia.

According to [ABC Australia](#), the vessel's captain, some crew and a stowaway had used the 3.6-metre lifeboat in April 1891 to escape their sunken vessel and subsequently gifted it to the Grigson Family in gratitude for assisting them on to Dongara.

Having been used for fishing for a period by the family, it was later stored in the hay shed and then hoisted up into the rafters, where it has reportedly stayed for the past about 70 years.



The 136-year-old lifeboat discovered in rafters of an old hay shed (Photo credit: ABC Australia)

Forensic archaeologist Bob Sheppard, who has worked alongside the Maritime Archaeology Department and the Conservation Department of the Western Australian Museum, is said to have recognised it as a "seafaring treasure" when shown recently.

With Mr Sheppard volunteering his assistance to rescue and restore the historic lifeboat, a delicate operation then ensued to bring it down from the rafters. Mr Sheppard is understood to be seeking a suitable venue to display the boat once it is restored.

Described as "wonderfully preserved" the lifeboat is all that remains of *The Maid of Lincoln*.

Fate of The Maid of Lincoln

According to the [Western Australian Museum](#), the wooden steamer, schooner-rigged *Maid of Lincoln* struck a reef 13 kilometres south of Jurien Bay (about 220 kilometres north of Perth) and sank in the early hours of April 12, 1891.

The vessel had the day before departed Dongara laden with guano, intending to call at Fremantle to load coal en route to Bunbury.

Crew were able to make land safely, but given the speed of the vessel's sinking, were unable to save any food or clothing – half of them reportedly landing with no shoes.

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