

EAST LONDON
DAILY DESPATCH
1 DEC 1995



Aquila II on the rocks near Mbashe Point. The picture was taken by the owner of the yacht, Mr Bouwinius van Ingen.

EAST LONDON DAILY DESPATCH

1/12/1995

Dutch sailor's yacht wrecked on Wild Coast

by GRAESON HAW

EAST LONDON — A Dutch yachtsman is stranded in East London after his yacht ran aground at Mbashe Point on the Transkei Wild Coast on Tuesday night.

For a man who has lost his home and his dream, Mr Bouwinius van Ingen was surprisingly calm when he spoke about his misfortune in an interview last night.

Mr Van Ingen, 55, took early retirement from his job as a mechanical engineer in 1991 and left the Netherlands in his yacht Aquila II. He had bought it seven years ago for R450 000, to fulfil his childhood dream — to sail around the world.

Five weeks ago he left Réunion for Durban where he stopped briefly before heading south.

"I had a north-easterly wind and the sea was smooth but then on Tuesday evening the barometer fell and the wind shifted to a south-westerly."

Because the wind was blowing against the Agulhas current, Mr Van Ingen decided to sail closer to shore where there was less possibility of freak waves.

About seven kilometres off shore, he spotted the lighthouse off Mbashe Point and went below to plot his position. But he fell asleep — the exhaustion of two days without rest finally catching up with him.

He was woken up at about 10 pm as his yacht was grinding its way over the rocks at Mbashe Point. Remarkably, Mr Van Ingen escaped injury and after taking half-an-hour to collect himself, he put out a mayday message which was relayed to the Police Water Wing in East London.

Warrant Officer Dries Bekker said the unit received the call at about 4 am. A helicopter was dispatched from Umtata and Mr Van Ingen was found by 7 am.

Members of the Water Wing tried to prise Aquila II off the rocks but were unsuccessful and Mr Van Ingen decided to abandon ship.

He is trying to raise enough money for a ticket back to the Netherlands.

Although he has lost the yacht which has been his home for the past five years, he is grateful to be alive.

"I am very glad that I survived without a scratch," he said.



Mr Van Ingen in East London last night with some of the few possessions he managed to salvage.

Picture by GARY HORLOR