

INVESTIGATOR STRAIT



State Heritage Branch

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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B. Jeffery



▲ The steering quadrant is visible above water as a diver examines the *Wilyama's* sternpost.

INVESTIGATOR STRAIT



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the

Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail.

An historical background

Investigator Strait is the extensive and navigable stretch of water which lies between southern Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. Captain Matthew Flinders gave it this name on 27 March 1802 in honour of his ship, HMS *Investigator*.

South Australia has over 3000 kilometres of coastline, deeply indented by two gulfs, Gulf St. Vincent and Spencer Gulf, which are linked at their southern approaches by the waters of Investigator Strait. From the middle of last century Investigator Strait has played an important part in the trade and communications network of South Australia as a natural route for shipping.

The first ships to use the strait on a regular basis were engaged in early whaling and sealing ventures. This activity had mostly ceased by the 1850's. As agricultural and mining settlements sprang up around Spencer Gulf and the Yorke Peninsula, vessels were engaged in transporting wheat, wool and mineral cargoes to Adelaide, and in turn carried manufactured goods back to the outports. It is not so many years ago, that almost all passenger transportation between Adelaide and these outlying districts was by small coastal sailing vessels and steamships.

Small sailing vessels, mainly ketches, carried gypsum, salt and wheat from Stenhouse Bay, Marion Bay, Port Moorowie and Edithburgh to Adelaide.



Fleets of larger sailing, and later steam powered, trading vessels carried South Australian produce through Investigator Strait to the rest of the world.

By the middle of this century the small coastal traders had all but disappeared, having been replaced by rail and road transportation. Today Investigator Strait is still an important waterway for modern container and bulk cargo vessels, and its waters continue to provide a livelihood for smaller ketches, cutters and trawlers engaged in commercial fisheries.

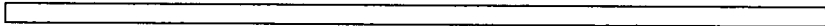
Windows into the past

The use of this seaway has not been without cost. Between 1849, and 1982, 26 vessels are known to have been wrecked in the waters of Investigator Strait with the loss of over 70 lives. A number of these shipwrecks still await discovery!

Vessels of all sizes and types are wrecked in these waters, ranging from the 10 ton wooden fishing cutter *Welling* to the 3596 ton steel steamer *Clan Ranald*. The ships which came to grief represent a whole range of social, industrial and maritime activities which have been important to the development of South Australia. These wrecks serve as a reminder of a time when sea transport was the major means of travel and communication.

Generally these sunken ships are broken up by the forces of water turbulence, corrosion and destructive marine organisms. Then over time the remains become comparatively stable with their environment as they are encapsulated in marine concretions, sand and coral.

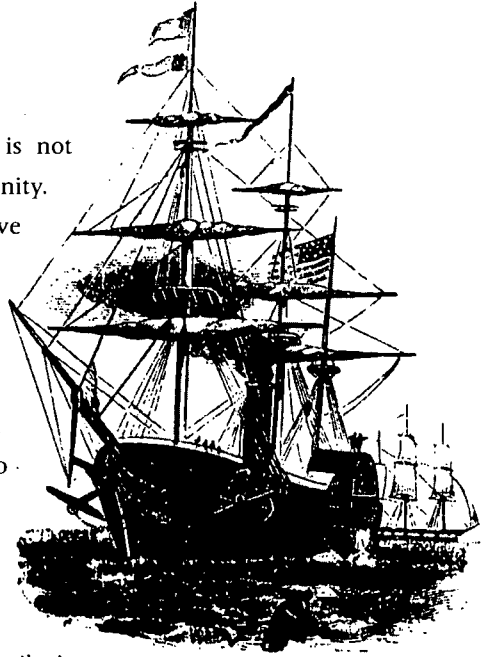
The eerie and jumbled remains of these shipwrecks are a major habitat for a diverse range of marine flora and fauna. Divers from all over the world are attracted to the awesome beauty of these sites.



Shipwrecks are memorials to the unpredictable and savage temperament of the sea. They are a valuable heritage and tourism asset for all people to discover, learn from, and enjoy. The *Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail* directs you to some of the known sites where gales, poor navigation, fog, and quite possibly foul play, was responsible for their loss.

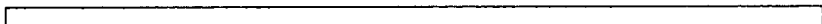
Explore our maritime heritage!

Having an interest in shipwrecks is not exclusive to the diving community. Therefore seven land-based interpretive signs have been erected along the coastline of the lower Yorke Peninsula. They cater for everyone in the community who enjoys learning about history in an outdoor environment. Each of the seven signs provides an insight into our maritime history in the days of sail and steam.



As you tour along this rugged and beautiful coastline you will find the trail signs above the cliffs and sandy beaches which overlook the final resting place of the ships they describe. Fortunately for us a number of the significant shipwrecks in this region are located near the most scenic sections of the coastline. To complement the dramatic setting of the signs, they have been written with the drama of the wrecking event in mind; the aim being to recount the final moments.

The shipwrecks which form the basis of the *Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail* were selected for a variety of reasons: the strange and tragic circumstances surrounding their loss, their historical significance, and because they provide an enjoyable underwater experience for beginners and advanced divers.



These signs also carry a message. The sea can be a dangerous and unforgiving place. Many people will view these signs on pleasant days with calm seas, giving little indication how violent the waters of Investigator Strait can become when the weather suddenly changes.

The trail signs and this guide are only two of the projects being developed for Investigator Strait, others include:

- A comprehensive report on the shipwrecks of Investigator Strait, containing maps, photos and plans of shipwreck sites.
- Underwater interpretive plaques at selected sites.
- Small directional markers on road signs to assist people exploring the *Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail*.
- Management plans for the shipwrecks of Investigator Strait.

Help protect our maritime heritage

A number of wrecksites described in this trail guide have been declared historic shipwrecks under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* (Commonwealth), and as such the remains cannot be interfered with or disturbed without a permit. Other shipwrecks are similarly protected by the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981* (State) or by the *Navigation Act 1912* (Commonwealth).

Please dive, photograph and explore these shipwrecks if you wish, but do not interfere with them by disturbing or removing anything from them, or by anchoring into the remains. An anchor can seriously damage a shipwreck by causing the removal of protective marine concretions.

If you discover a previously unknown shipwreck site please ensure that you can relocate the site and report it as soon as possible to the State Heritage



Branch. Apart from contributing to the preservation and study of the wreck, you may be entitled to a reward from the government.

If you find a shipwreck has been damaged please record the details and report the matter as soon as possible to the State Heritage Branch.

Enjoy your visit

Exploring shipwrecks can be a thrilling and satisfying experience, but to ensure your enjoyment, precautions must be followed.

The waters of Investigator Strait can be treacherous, particularly with sudden changes of weather, as is shown by the number of shipwrecks in this region.

This stretch of the coastline is included in the weather forecast for 'Gulf Waters', and marine charts are available from the Marine Safety Division of the South Australian Department of Transport as well as some retail-outlets.

Boat ramps of varying standards are located at Edithburgh, Port Moorowie, Foul Bay, Marion Bay and Pondalowie Bay. Please ensure that all necessary safety equipment including a radio is carried on your boat, and that someone ashore is aware of your plans.

If anyone is injured while diving, you should contact the Diver Emergency Service at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (Tel 1800 088 200). The nearest regional hospital is at Yorketown (Tel 08 8852 1200).

Divers are advised to consider the option of chartering a vessel through a commercial dive operator who is familiar with the area and its hazards. A list of Yorke Peninsula dive charter operators has been included in this guide, along with air fill stations.

Some of the wrecks can be located using the GPS fixes and maps provided. Sites are subject to tidal variations of 1-2 metres. A number of sites are



affected by strong currents and should only be dived at slack tide or preferably during 'dodge tides'. Other sites can be subject to strong surges and swells. All diving should be carried out in accordance with standard safe practices for recreational diving with the 'diver below' flag clearly visible.

Record your observations

This trail guide has been printed on plastic to enable divers to write on it underwater with an ordinary lead pencil. As you dive on these shipwrecks you can add features not described on the printed site plan, or any changes to those which have been recorded. The State Heritage Branch would appreciate obtaining a copy of these from you to assist with the ongoing study and management of these sites.

Want to learn more?

For more information about the general maritime history of southern Yorke Peninsula, including artefacts recovered from these wrecks, try visiting one of the museums in the area. Interesting displays can be found in the National Trust Museum at Edithburgh and in the Visitors Centre at Innes National Park.

The State Heritage Branch has also published a comprehensive report, *Shipwrecks of the Investigator Strait and the lower Yorke Peninsula*, which provides detailed information on the maritime heritage of this region.

To obtain copies of this or other publications produced by the State Heritage Branch please contact:

Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Ground Floor
77 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE 5000

Telephone 08 204 1910



For further information about this or other trails, or about maritime heritage generally, please contact:

Maritime Archaeologist
State Heritage Branch
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
91-97 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE 5000 Telephone 08 204 9245

Postal enquiries:

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
GPO Box 1047
ADELAIDE 5001

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Permission to reproduce Captain Matthew Flinders' original *Chart of Terra Australis* was kindly given by the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch) and State Print.

Appreciation is expressed to all those who provided information or assisted in other ways with this publication, in particular to Richard Scrivens for the graphic design and to those listed below.

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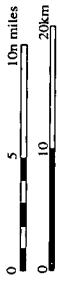
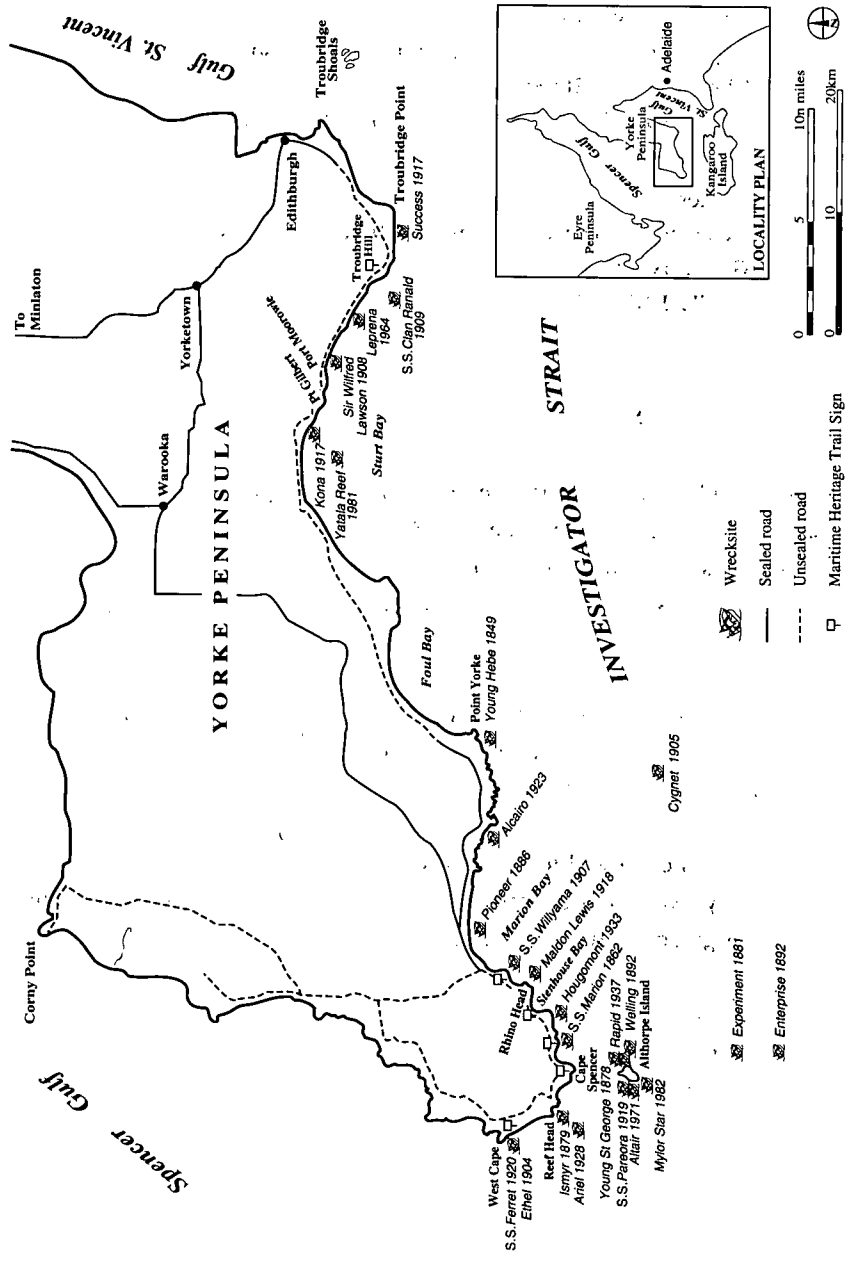
John Riley

State Library of South Australia

Australian Geographic Society



MAP SHOWING INVESTIGATOR STRAIT SHIPWRECKS



LOCALITY PLAN

- Wrecksite
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Maritime Heritage Trail Sign

- Experiment 1881
- Enterprise 1892

INVESTIGATOR STRAIT

YORKE PENINSULA

Gulf St. Vincent

To Minlaton

Spencer Gulf

West Cape
S.S. Fenet 1920
Ethel 1904
Rear Head
Ismyr 1879
April 1928
Young St George 1878
S.S. Pareora 1919
Altair 1971
Mylor Star 1982
Cape Spencer
Rapid 1937
S.S. Marion 1982
Rhinoceros Bay
Houpponnet 1933
S.S. Marion 1982
Stromboli Bay
S.S. Willywaga 1907
Merton Bay
Pioneer 1888
Alcorno 1923
Point Yorke
Young Hebe 1849
Foul Bay
Cygnet 1905

Troubridge Shoals
Edithburgh
Troubridge Hill
Laprena 1964
S.S. Clon Armaid 1909
Success 1917
S.S. Clon Armaid 1909
Sturt Bay
Sir Wilfred Lawson 1908
Kona 1917
Yatata Reef 1881
Warrooka
Yorketown
Port Moresby

TABLE OF INVESTIGATOR STRAIT SHIPWRECKS

Year	Name	Rig/Type	Gross Tons	Hull Type	Location	Lives Lost
1849	<i>Young Hebe</i>	schooner	39	wood	near Point Yorke	10
1862	<i>Marion</i>	steamer	197	iron	Cable Hut Bay	-
1878	<i>Young St. George</i>	schooner	15	wood	Althorpe Island	-
1879	<i>Ismyr</i>	barque	610	iron	possibly near Reef Head	15
1881	<i>Experiment</i>	schooner	55	wood	south of Althorpe Island	2
1886	<i>Pioneer</i>	lugger	6	wood	Marion Bay	-
1892	<i>Enterprise</i>	ketch	61	iron	south of Althorpe Island	-
1892	<i>Welling</i>	cutter	10	wood	Althorpe Island	-
1904	<i>Ethel</i>	barque	711	iron	NW of Reef Head	-
1905	<i>Cygnat</i>	schooner	77	wood	south of Point Yorke	4
1907	<i>Willyama</i>	steamer	2705	steel	south of Penguin Point	-
1908	<i>Sir Wilfred Lawson</i>	ketch	52	wood	Port Moorowie	-
1909	<i>Clan Ranald</i>	steamer	3596	steel	west of Troubridge Hill	40
1917	<i>Success</i>	ketch	61	iron	SW of Troubridge Hill	-
1917	<i>Kona</i>	schooner	670	wood	Point Gilbert	-
1918	<i>Maldon Lewis</i>	schooner	45	wood	Stenhouse Bay	-
1919	<i>Pareora</i>	steamer	650	steel	Althorpe Island	11
1920	<i>Ferret</i>	steamer	460	iron	NW of Reef Head	-
1923	<i>Alcairo</i>	schooner	72	wood	Marion Bay	-
1928	<i>Ariel</i>	schooner	46	wood	south of Reef Head	4
1933	<i>Hougomont</i>	barque	2378	steel	Stenhouse Bay	-
1937	<i>Rapid</i>	cutter	??	wood	Althorpe Island	1
1964	<i>Leprena</i>	ketch	105	wood	east of Port Moorowie	-
1971	<i>Altair</i>	fishing vessel	??	??	Althorpe Island	-
1981	<i>Yatala Reef</i>	trawler	76	wood	SW of Port Moorowie	-
1982	<i>Mylor Star</i>	fishing vessel	18	steel	Althorpe Island	-



S.S. *Clan Ranald* (1900 - 1909)

History

The schooner rigged, single screw steamer *Clan Ranald* was built in 1900 by Doxford & Sons in Sunderland, England, as a two deck turret ship for Clan Line Steamers of Glasgow. The steel hulled vessel of 3596 gross tons measured 355.0 feet (108.2m) in length, 45.6 feet (13.9m) breadth and 24.7 feet (7.5m) depth. The turret ship was a popular design around 1900 as it was considered seaworthy and economical for carrying bulk grain cargoes.

The *Clan Ranald* departed Port Adelaide under the command of Captain Arthur Gladstone for South Africa on 31 January 1909. Of the 64 crew, 54 were of Asiatic and Indian origin, more commonly referred to as Lascars. The cargo consisted of 39 862 bags of wheat and 28 451 bags of flour. Also loaded were 648 tonnes of coal, 172 tonnes of which were placed on the top decks. The vessel had developed stability problems in port as cargo was stowed and the water ballast tanks emptied. The problem was supposedly rectified, however a 4 degree list to starboard was evident when the *Clan Ranald* left its berth.

At 2:00pm the ship was south of Troubridge Island when it suddenly lurched onto its starboard side at a 45 degree angle. The crew rushed up to the deck leaving the engines still running. They found the rudder out of the water and the starboard deck submerged. At 4:30pm the wind blew up from the south-east driving them towards Troubridge Hill. Rough seas smashed the two accessible lifeboats so the crew tried to construct wooden rafts.

The starboard anchor was dropped after nightfall which brought the bow into the wind, but the ship began to fill with water when deck hatches washed away. About 9:30pm the crew saw the lights of the passing S.S. *Uganda* and tried to signal it without result. Then at 10:00pm the *Clan Ranald* capsized and sank about 700 metres from the rocky cliffs. As the huge ship sank the



vortex caused many men to be sucked under the water and drowned. Others supported themselves on floating wreckage for the long swim to shore, only to be dashed against the jagged rocks and cliffs.

Of the 40 men who perished, 36 bodies were later recovered and buried in the Edithburgh cemetery. The 20 Lascar survivors were seized by the Commonwealth for being illegal immigrants under the terms of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* which related to the white Australia policy. They were handprinted, given a dictation test designed to cause failure, and deported within a week.

An inquiry investigating the sinking of the *Clan Ranald* did not reach a satisfactory conclusion as to the cause of its loss.

Diver swimming between the *Clan Ranald's* hull and boiler.

B. Jeffery



C. Coroneos

Clan Ranald anchor and Maritime Heritage Trail sign, with a dive boat at centre anchored over the wreck

The Wrecksite

When the wreck was located in 1962 it was found to be in a remarkable state of preservation. But soon after, divers blasted the wreck with explosives to recover the copper alloy fittings and other artefacts. Whilst still a spectacular site to dive, they left behind a broken hull and shattered remains.

The wreck of the S.S. *Clan Ranald* rests on its starboard side almost upside down on a sandy seabed at a depth of 18-20 metres. The bow section has collapsed forwards and downwards. The double hull bottom of the bow stands vertical, and the port bow plating has deteriorated leaving the bow stem laying horizontal on the seabed.

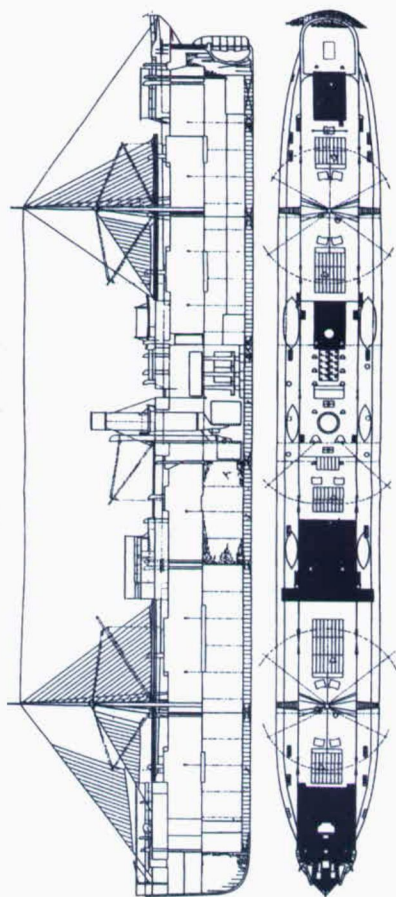
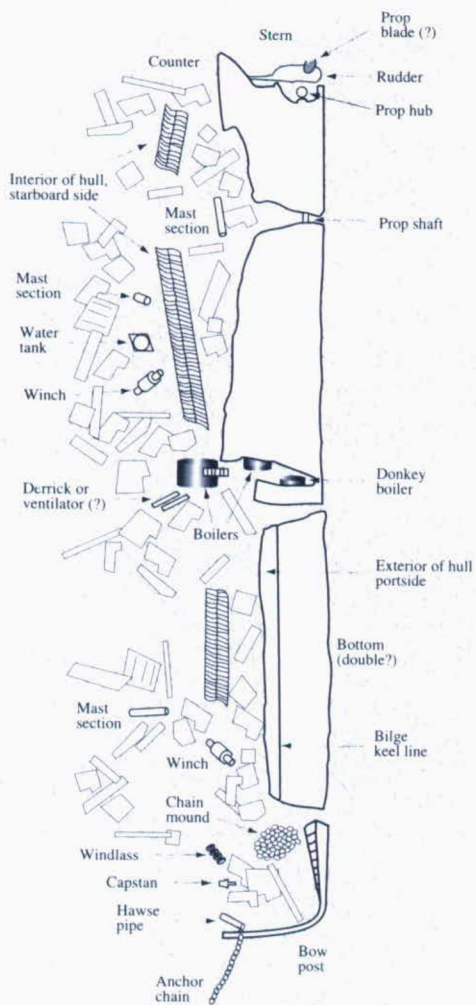
The highest part of the wreck, about 6 metres above the seabed, is the port bilge keel and double bottom of the hull which is resting on the starboard main boiler. The port main boiler has rolled out and is free of the hull remains. The stern has collapsed to starboard and lies horizontal on the seabed. This section is still attached to the midship wreckage by the propeller shaft and tunnel. The balanced rudder has detached from the stern, possibly as a result of explosives used to remove the propeller blades.

The S.S. *Clan Ranald* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*, and as such the remains cannot be disturbed without a permit. The wreck is also an outstanding feature of the Troubridge Hill Aquatic Reserve declared in 1983 to provide protection to a diverse and unique assemblage of marine flora and fauna.

The State Heritage Branch has produced a separate colour brochure about the *Clan Ranald* shipwreck which can be obtained from the Environment and Natural Resource Information Centre, Ground Floor, 77 Grenfell Street, Adelaide.

GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 10' 03.7" South
 Longitude 137° 37' 14.8" East





S.S. Clan Ranald (1909)

Troubridge Hill

Plan by: C. Coroneos, B. Jeffery 1994

J. Riley 1995



 Weed, sand
  Scattered wreckage (Not measured)

0 10 20 30
metres

Cross section of hull

Ethel (1876 - 1904)

History

The barque *Ethel* was built in 1876 by Austin and Hunter in Sunderland, England. Originally named *Carmelo*, the barque was renamed *Ethel* in 1892. The iron hulled vessel of 711 gross tons measured 177.4 feet (54.1m) in length, 30.7 feet (9.4m) breadth and 18.5 feet (5.6m) depth.

Owned by S.A. Sande and sailing under the Norwegian flag, the *Ethel* entered Investigator Strait on 2 January 1904 under the command of Captain Bogwald. It had sailed from South Africa and was bound for Port Adelaide to receive a cargo of grain.



Mortlock Library

▲ *Ethel* and *Ferret* on the beach. *Ethel* ashore under the cliffs and S.S. *Ferret* lying in the surf zone.

The master intended to pass south of Althorpe Island but due to poor visibility caused by gale force south-westerly squalls he was actually steering a course close to Cape Spencer. The *Ethel* struck a reef which damaged the rudder and left the vessel at the mercy of wind and waves. In the darkness the *Ethel* was driven broadside onto a small beach north-west of Reef Head. One of the crew, 19 year old Leonard Sterneson, bravely volunteered to swim ashore with a line but he was drowned in the powerful surf.

At daylight with an ebbing tide the crew were able to easily jump ashore. Help soon arrived after the S.S. *Ferret* heading towards Port Adelaide saw the stranded *Ethel* and reported the wreck to the lighthouse keeper on Althorpe Island.

A salvage attempt was made during May 1904 by A. H. Hassell of Marion Bay who had purchased the *Ethel* for £100 at auction. With lines attached the tug *Euro* successfully dragged the *Ethel* into deeper water. The lines parted when a south-westerly blew up and the *Ethel* was thrown back onto the beach with a broken keel. The *Ethel* was then abandoned.

The Wrecksite

Many photographs have been taken of the *Ethel* from 1904 until the present day and they clearly show the breakdown of an iron vessel in a corrosive environment. Although totally above water the *Ethel* is indicative of what happens to vessels that are situated underwater.

Firstly the masting, rigging, superstructure and other material such as planking collapses leaving an iron shell - the hull. Over a longer period of time this breaks down until the 'integrity' of the hull is gone and it lies collapsed and buried under the sand. Such is the case with the *Ethel*, little of which can be seen until occasions when the sand is washed off the beach during storms.

The remains of the *Ethel* lie parallel to the shore with the bow heading south-east. For many years the hull was largely intact deteriorating gradually with every storm. A severe gale in 1988 caused the hull to completely collapse leaving the iron frames as the most identifiable feature of the site.

GPS Plot (taken from cliff top above the site):

Latitude 35° 16' 11.2" South

Longitude 136° 50' 38.3" East

S.S. *Ferret* (1871 - 1920)

History

The schooner rigged steamship *Ferret* was built for the Scottish coastal trade by J. & G. Thompson of Glasgow in 1871. The iron hulled vessel of 460 gross tons measured 170.9 feet (52.0m) in length, 23.0 feet (7.0m) breadth and 12.7 feet (3.8m) depth.

The S.S. *Ferret* found its way into Australian waters after having been stolen by confidence tricksters in 1880. It arrived at Port Phillip in Victoria under the false name of S.S. *India*, where it was recognised by a newly arrived Scottish policeman and seized in dramatic circumstances. Restored to its original name it was purchased in 1881 from the Vice-Admiralty Court in Melbourne by W. Whinham, a prominent South Australian shipping identity. It was resold in 1883 to the Adelaide Steamship Company which operated the vessel on the west coast of Yorke Peninsula until its loss in 1920.

On the afternoon of 13 November 1920 the S.S. *Ferret* under the command of Captain Blair left Port Adelaide for Port Victoria with a cargo of beer, wine, whiskey, timber, petrol, engines, bricks, iron and other sundries. At about 3:00am the following morning as the *Ferret* neared Althorpe Island it was enveloped by a dense fog which showed no sign of clearing. The course was altered to take the vessel south and to the west of Althorpe Island. In the belief that they had passed clear of Althorpe and Cape Spencer the course was changed to north-east. At 5:35am breakers were reported close to the starboard bow and the engines reversed, but it was too late.

The *Ferret* ran ashore on a small beach 1.5 km NNW of Reef Head and about 200 metres from the wreck of the *Ethel*. Attempts by the crew to attach a line to the *Ethel* resulted in one boat capsizing, but they eventually succeeded and all 22 crew made it safely to shore.

The Wrecksite

The *Ferret* is a difficult site to dive because of its location in the turbulent and cloudy surf zone. Therefore exactly how much of the vessel is left, or what condition it is in, is still unknown.

The remains are broken up and mostly buried, although a section of the bow is often visible in the waves at low tide. Ship's fittings and parts of the engine, drive shaft and propeller are also present on the site. A partially buried scotch boiler, 12 feet (3.66m) in diameter and about 10 feet (3.05m) in length, can sometimes be seen at low tide inshore of the main site and about 100 metres to the east of the *Ethel* wreck. The full length of the boiler can be seen on occasions when the sand is washed off the beach.

The S.S. *Ferret* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

▶ Collapsed hull of the *Ethel* in the foreground and exposed boiler of the *Ferret* centre left, after a storm in 1988.

B. Jeffery



GPS Plot (taken from cliff top above the site):

Latitude 35° 16' 13.5" South

Longitude 136° 50' 39.5" East

Hougomont (1897 - 1933)

History

The four masted barque *Hougomont* was built in 1897 by Scott Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. of Greenock, Scotland for J. Hardie & Co. of Glasgow. The steel hulled vessel of 2378 gross tons measured 292.4 feet (89.1m) in length, 43.3 feet (13.2m) breadth and 24.1 feet (7.3m) depth.

After an eventful career, having been aground on two occasions, once posted as missing, and once partially dismasted, the *Hougomont* was laid up for three years until 1924 when it was purchased by Captain Gustav Erikson of Finland. In 1928 the vessel was again dismasted, this time off the Portuguese coast whilst sailing to Melbourne.

On 20 April 1932 the *Hougomont* was 111 days out from London, 530 miles (853 kms) west-south-west of Kangaroo Island, in ballast and bound for Port Lincoln to load a cargo of wheat destined for European ports.

At 1:00am four of the crew were ordered aloft to adjust the rigging due to an approaching storm. As they were undertaking their tasks a brief but fierce gale struck the ship with wind speeds of 100 km/h (60 mph). Within minutes the steel foremast and mainmast, with their rigging, as well as the mizzen topgallant rigging, snapped off and crashed to the deck.

Miraculously the four sailors who came down entangled in the rigging were unhurt, although they were quite shaken. The storm lasted only 15 minutes but it left behind a seriously damaged vessel, wallowing in heavy seas. The captain and crew then spent some anxious hours cutting away the steel wire ropes attached to the masts and spars which were hanging over and pounding against the side of the ship, threatening to break holes in the hull and sink the ship.

Captain Ragnar Lindholm was instructed by the owners not to accept any assistance from other ships which might involve payment of a salvage fee. Therefore, sailing under jury rig, the *Hougomont* took a further 18 tortuous days to reach Semaphore anchorage off Port Adelaide.

The owners of the *Hougomont* determined that the expense to repair the vessel was too great, the vessel was valued at about £1000 but repairs were costed at £2500, and a decision was made to scuttle it. After stripping the vessel of its fittings the *Hougomont* was towed to Stenhouse Bay on 8 January 1933 where it was positioned south-west of the jetty and sunk with explosives to provide a breakwater for vessels loading gypsum.



Edwardes collection, State Library of S.A.

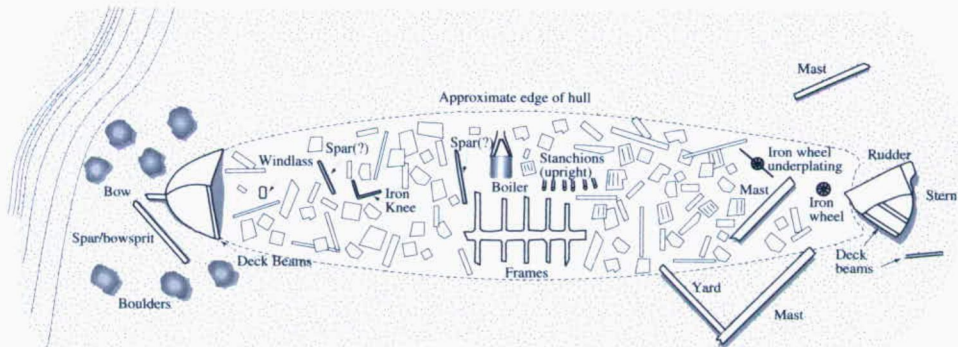
▲ *Hougomont* shortly after being scuttled as a breakwater for the jetty at Stenhouse Bay.

The Wrecksite

The full length of the hull of the *Hougomont* still lies on the seabed in 9 metres of water, with the bow at the base of the rocks and the stern about 100 metres to the east. The bow and stern sections as well as some stanchions at the centre of the site stand upright on the seabed, although the majority of the vessel including the remains of masts and rigging has collapsed.

Swimming east from the bow a windlass can be found about 13 metres distant, and another 32 metres along the site on the starboard side at about midships a donkey boiler can be seen. Further to the east the remains of masts and yards lie across the site, and at the stern the rudder can still be identified standing upright and attached to the sternpost.

GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 16' 58.4" South
 Longitude 136° 56' 36.2" East



Hougomont (1933)

Stenhouse Bay

Plan by: R. McKinnon 1993, B. Jeffery and C. Coroneos 1994

Sand
 Scattered wreckage (Not measured)



0 10 20 30 40
metres



Divers recording the stanchions amidships on the *Hougomont*.



S.S. *Marion* (1854 - 1862)

History

The schooner rigged, single screw steamer *Marion* was built in 1854 at Glasgow, Scotland and imported for the Hobart - Melbourne passenger trade. In 1857 it was sold to South Australian interests for the Port Adelaide - Port Lincoln trade. The *Marion* was the first vessel to operate a regular steam shipping service from Port Adelaide to the Spencer Gulf ports. The iron hulled vessel of 197 gross tons measured 114.2 feet (34.8m) in length, 19.6 feet (6.0m) breadth and 10 feet (3.0m) depth.



La Trobe Library

▲ Vessel of similar age and rig to the S.S. *Marion*.

On 11 July 1862 the S.S. *Marion* was en-route from Adelaide to Wallaroo under the command of Captain Alexander McCoy. On board were 35 passengers and 15 crew. Visibility became hazy while the *Marion's* chief officer was at the helm and, after passing Troubridge Hill, he became unsure of his position. Unexpectedly, heavy surf threatened out of the gloom. The engine was ordered full astern but it was too late, the advancing swells lifted the vessel onto rocks at the east side of Cable Hut Bay, 5 kilometres west of Stenhouse Bay.

The passengers and crew were landed safely on the nearby beach. Anxious moments followed when a passing vessel, the S.S. *Lubra*, appeared not to notice the distress flag and fire lit by the castaways. When all seemed lost, the S.S. *Lubra* altered course and rescued the shipwrecked group.

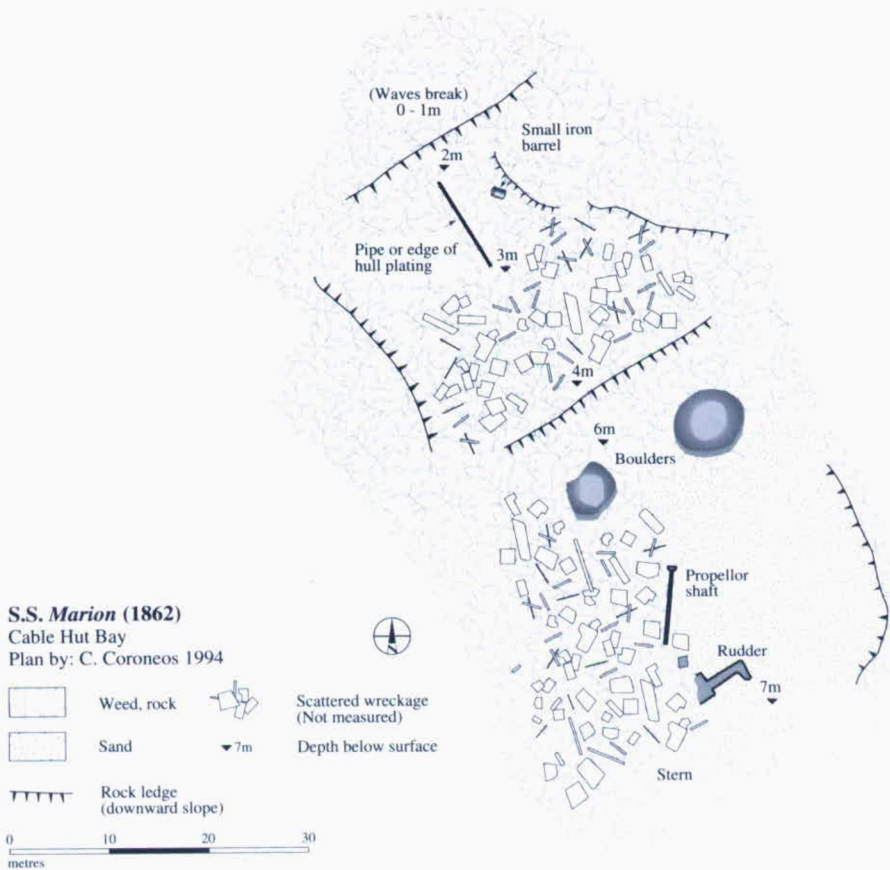
The Wrecksite

The wreck of the S.S. *Marion* lies at the base of a cliff, in 2-7 metres of water, east of Chinamans Hat Island, and to the south-east of the car park at Cable Hut Bay.



▲ Map showing the approximate location of the S.S. *Marion* wreck

Little of the hull structure remains to be seen because the wreck, which is scattered on a northerly axis for a distance of some 60 metres, is located on a predominantly rocky bottom in a high wave energy zone. The wreckage is divided into two distinct locations with the forward part of the ship broken and scattered over a shallow reef shelf, and the stern lying in an area of patchy sand in deeper water at the base of the reef.



Amongst the wreckage of the stern the rudder is clearly visible lying at a depth of 7 metres, with the propeller shaft about 8 metres further inshore. Remains of machinery, possibly the engine, can be seen nearby. Seaweed and rocky crevices obscure the scattered remains of the bow, but frames, beams and the remnants of other structures can be identified. Fragile artefacts, part of cargo and fittings, can be seen lodged in crevices in the rock platform.

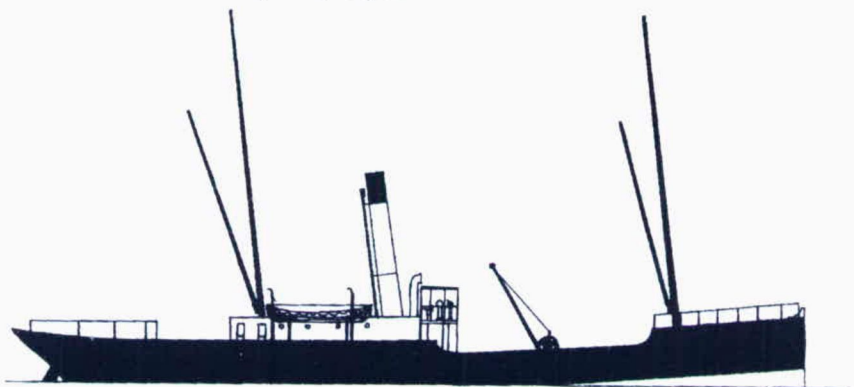
The S.S. *Marion* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 17' 17.1" South
 Longitude 136° 55' 18.4" East

S.S. *Pareora* (1896 - 1919)

History

The screw steamer *Pareora* was built in 1896 by Wood, Skinner & Co. in Newcastle, England for the Canterbury Steam Shipping Company. Originally named *Breeze*, the steamer was renamed *Pareora* in 1900 when purchased by the New Zealand Shipping Company. The steel hulled vessel of 355 gross tons measured 180.0 feet (54.9m) in length, 29.2 feet (8.9m) breadth and 11.1 feet (3.4m) depth.



▲ Vessel of similar age and rig to the S.S. *Pareora*. (J. Riley)

A few months prior to its loss the *Pareora* underwent a thorough overhaul at Port Adelaide and was acquired by the Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australia. The vessel was purchased to convey zinc from the Associated Smelters at Port Pirie to Hobart, and return with Tasmanian timber.

The *Pareora* left Port Pirie for Hobart under the command of Captain McFarlane on 16 September 1919 with a 672 tonne cargo of zinc. Shortly after departing, the steamer grounded and stuck fast on a sand bank for twelve hours. This did not augur well for a trouble free journey. Once underway a crew member is reported to have said, 'I won't be satisfied until we pass the Althorpes'.

At 4:00am on 18 September the *Pareora*, in heavy seas, struck rocks to the north of Althorpe Island near The Monument rock. The tremendous power of the waves quickly broke the vessel up, shearing off the stern section. Confusion ruled. Unable to release the lifeboats the men either jumped or were washed overboard. It was a terrifying struggle for survival.

The crew of the cutter *Zephyr* which was sheltering nearby were alerted by the cries for help, and heroically rescued seven survivors in the dangerous conditions. The master and ten other members of the *Pareora's* crew were killed. A cross erected on Althorpe Island marks their graves.

The subsequent Marine Board inquiry found the tragedy was caused by careless navigation.

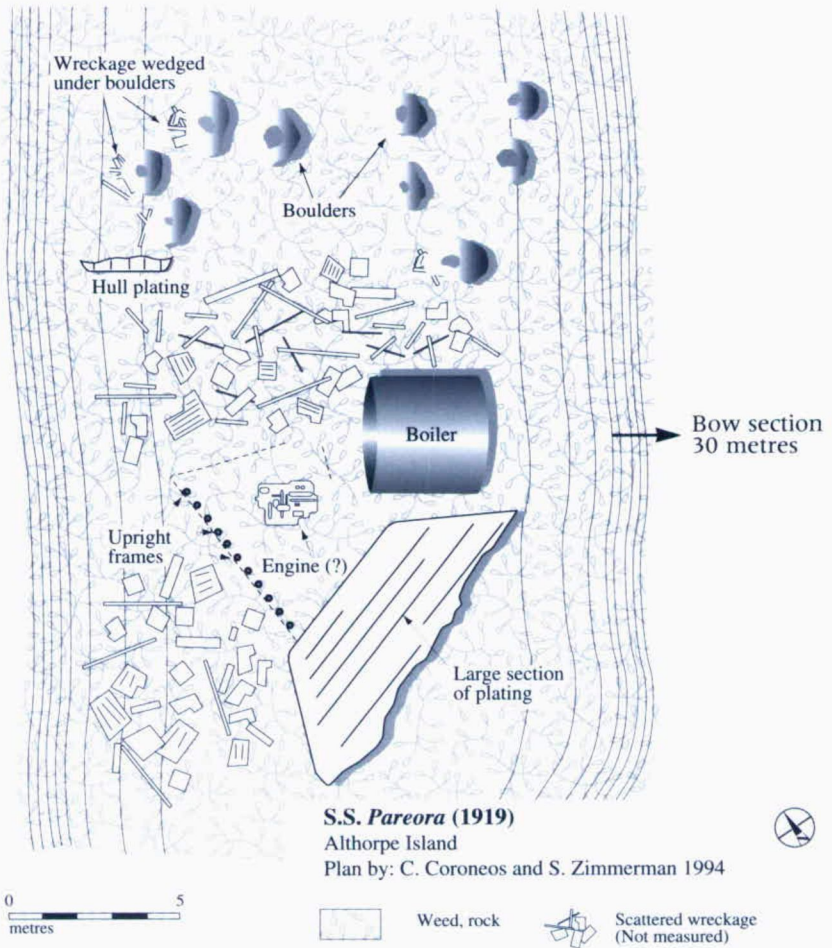
The Wrecksite

The wreck lies broken and scattered in rocky gullies to a depth of 13 metres, and is situated 75 metres north-west of a large rock, known as The Monument, on the northern extremity of the island. A large proportion of the wreck including a boiler (diameter 3.5 metres), steel frames and hull



Althorpe Island viewed from the north-east. Cross shows the approximate location of the *Pareora*.

plating, as well as the engine, can be found lying in a gully between two reefs. The remains of bow structures and machinery lie in an adjacent gully about 30 metres to the east, and include an anchor, hawse pipes and windlass.



The site where the *Pareora* is wrecked is particularly treacherous for boating and diving. The area is subject to strong currents and large swells, and the nearby submerged reefs rise very close to the surface, sometimes exposing in the swells. Only those with local knowledge should attempt to visit the site, and only in the very best conditions.

The S.S. *Pareora* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

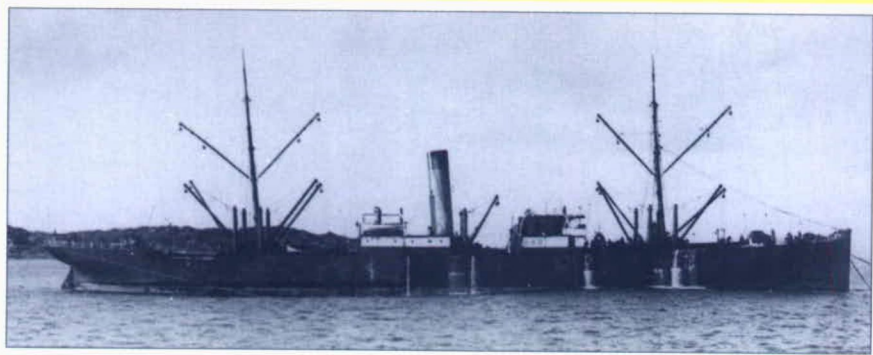
GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 21' 50.3" South
Longitude 136° 51' 22.6" East

S.S. *Willyama* (1897 - 1907)

History

The schooner rigged, screw steamer *Willyama* was built in 1897 by William Dobson & Co. in Newcastle on Tyne, England. At the time of loss it was owned by the Adelaide Steamship Co. The steel hulled vessel of 1713 gross tons measured 325.5 feet (99.2m) in length, 45.1 feet (13.7m) breadth and 21.0 feet (6.4m) depth.

Mystery surrounds the *Willyama's* striking of the reef near Marion Bay. The crew's collective silence appeared to indicate that they either agreed to protect the captain's integrity, or perhaps were threatened if anyone spoke against him.



Edwardes Collection, State Library of S.A.

▲ S.S. *Willyama* aground near Marion Bay.

The *Willyama* was carrying a cargo of coal from Newcastle, NSW to Port Pirie. On the night of 13 April 1907 the vessel was several miles off course. In the hazy gloom the crew on watch had failed to notice the Althorpe Island lighthouse. When land was finally sighted at 3:30am, the men on watch were undecided on the next course of action. They summoned Captain Bewley to the bridge, but it was too late. The vessel struck a reef and sank off Penguin Point in Marion Bay. There was no immediate danger to those on board and all were safely landed.

An initial inspection indicated that the vessel could be saved. However, even with the removal of the cargo and the use of the ship's pumps, the *Willyama* held fast. Salvage attempts ceased after rough weather caused severe damage to the hull, after which the *Willyama* was abandoned.

The Wrecksite

The wreck is situated in 5 metres of water on a reef bottom approximately 300 metres south of Penguin Point. The position is marked on navigation charts. Caution must be used when approaching the site in a boat to avoid colliding with structural remains. The sternpost and steering quadrant at the stern are visible above water at all times, and about 40 metres south-east of the stern the steamer's two boilers break the surface at low tide. The *Willyama* site provides an enjoyable diving experience, although it is preferable when the swell is down.

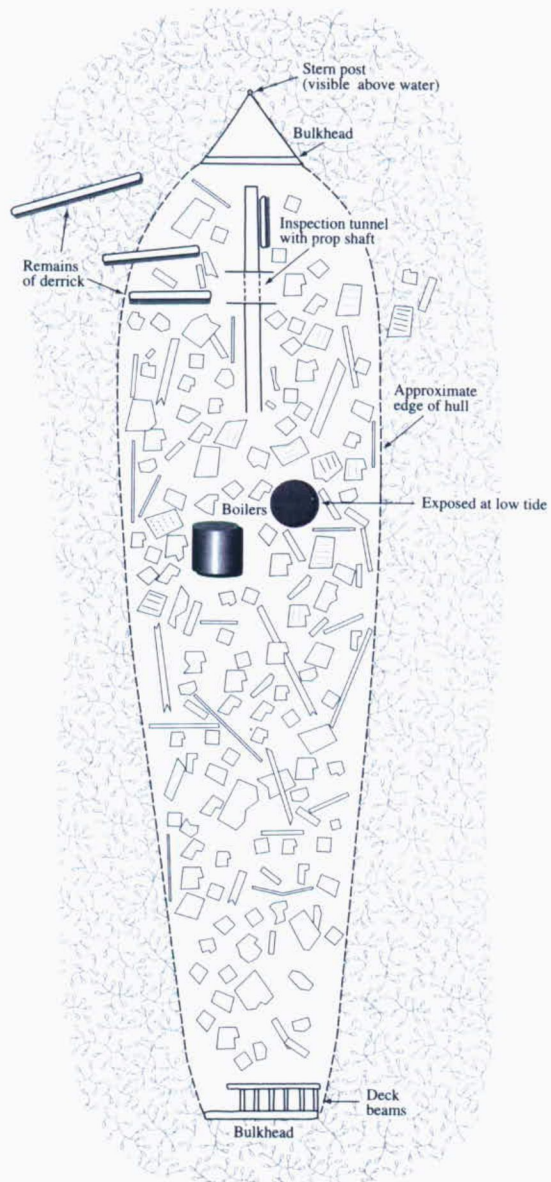
An interesting feature of the site is the inspection tunnel for the propeller shaft which extends 20 metres from the stern to the area where the boilers are situated. The tunnel is home to many fascinating and colourful forms of marine life. Care should be taken not to damage the flora or the wreck in the vicinity of the inspection tunnel.

Remains of derricks lie scattered around the site from the stern to midships, at which point the starboard boiler can be seen *in situ* and adjacent to the port boiler which has been tipped on end. The remains extend some 50 metres south-east of the boilers to the forward section where deck beams are clearly discernable. The wreck ends abruptly at this point as about 7 metres of the *Willyama's* bow has broken away. The bow section of the vessel has not yet been located.

Large lumps of coal from the wreck can often be seen washed up on the beach after storms.

The S.S. *Willyama* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 15' 09.7" South
 Longitude 136° 58' 38.9" East



S.S. Willyama (1907)

Marion Bay

Plan by: C. Coroneos and B. Jeffery 1994



Weed, rock



Scattered wreckage
(Not measured)

0 5 10 15 20
metres

Yatala Reef (1948 - 1981)

History

The single screw motor vessel *Yatala Reef* was built in 1948 at Melbourne, Victoria for the RAAF by Batterill and Frazier. Originally named *Challenge*, it was built to carry supplies to coastal landing strips in Papua New Guinea and surrounding islands. In the design of the vessel provisions were made to carry twin Vickers machine guns on either side of one of the masts and an anti-aircraft gun behind the wheelhouse. The wooden hulled vessel of 99 gross tons measured 79.2 feet (24.1m) in length, 20.0 feet (6.1m) breadth and 6.75 feet (2.1m) depth.

In the 1950's the vessel was purchased from Sydney shipbroker Harry Stride by Evan Padden of Evans Head, NSW. It was recommissioned and engaged on government surveys to search the Australian coast for areas of prawn trawling potential, successfully proving many grounds. After being sold in 1963 the vessel was brought to Port Lincoln where it was engaged for many years in the tuna and prawn fishery. It was during this period that the vessel was renamed *Yatala Reef*.

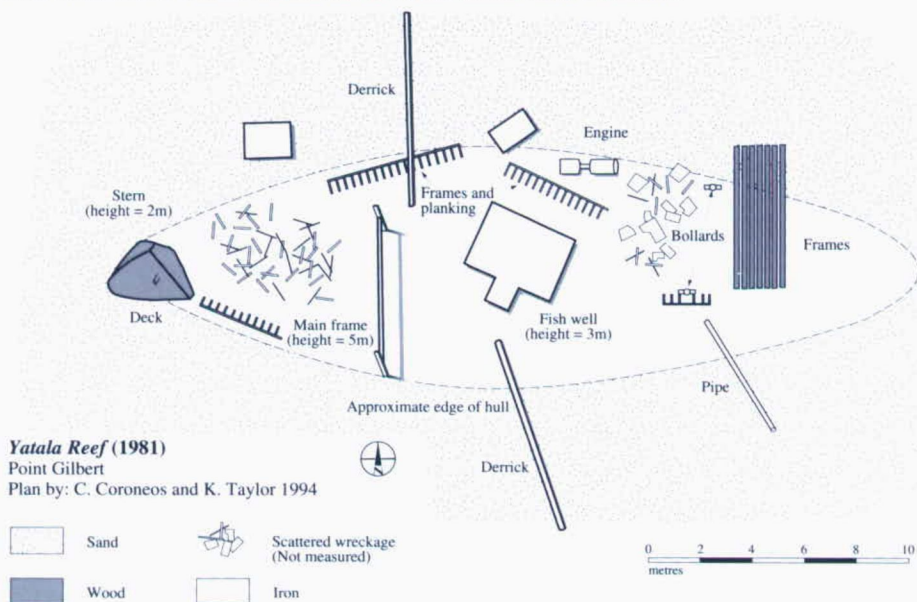
On the evening of 21 December 1981 the *Yatala Reef* was moored off Port Moorowie. It was on a voyage from Port Pirie to Port Adelaide to undergo repairs to its refrigeration system. A fire started in the engine room and despite the efforts of the four crew, it could not be controlled. Shortly after the crew abandoned the trawler, strong winds drove the flames forward and three explosions were heard.



▲ Stern of the *Yatala Reef* shortly after sinking.

The Wrecksite

The *Yatala Reef* sank about 1 kilometre from shore in 11 metres of water. The wreck lies almost parallel to the shore with the bow heading eastwards. The wooden hull, with the exception of the stern, has totally collapsed outwards and lies flat on the seabed, mostly covered with sand. Conspicuous features of the site are the intact stern, heeled over 30° to starboard and rising 2 metres above the seabed, the main frame used for hauling prawn nets which rises 5 metres, and the fish well which rises 3 metres.



Part of a tractor and its engine situated about 6 metres east of the stern was used as winding gear for the trawler's nets. The main engine can be seen on the port side about 17 metres north-east from the stern.

The *Yatala Reef* can be a spectacular dive when the water visibility is good as its relatively small size enables the entire wreck to be seen.

The *Yatala Reef* is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 07' 07.2" South
 Longitude 136° 29' 22.9" East

Althorpe Island Shipwrecks

Althorpe Island lies at the western entrance to Investigator Strait 4 nautical miles (7 km) south-south-west of Cape Spencer, the most southerly point of Yorke Peninsula. Vessels travelling between Gulf St Vincent and Spencer Gulf are faced with many hazards at this western entrance. Apart from Althorpe Island, other obstacles include Seal and Haystack Islands, as well as numerous reefs and shoals.



B. Jeffery

▲ Divers recording the boiler and other remains on the *S.S. Pareora*.

The discovery of copper at Moonta, and the settlement of the Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas in the 1860's, led to an increase in coastal shipping to and from Spencer Gulf. Ports were bustling as cargoes such as coal for the smelters and general merchandise for the settlements were brought in. Minerals, wool and wheat were loaded for return shipment to Adelaide.

The opening up of ports around Spencer Gulf and increased traffic using the western entrance to Investigator Strait led to calls for navigational aids to be constructed, particularly so after the loss of the *S.S. Marion* at Cable Hut Bay in 1862.

In 1877 approval was given for the construction of a lighthouse on Althorpe Island. To enable the landing of materials a jetty was constructed near the anchorage on the north-east side of the island. First exhibited in 1879, the Althorpe Island lighthouse served as the only guiding beacon in these treacherous waters until the establishment of a light on Cape Spencer in 1950.

It is ironic that all but one of the six shipwrecks on Althorpe Island occurred after the lighthouse began operation. Most are fishing cutters which came to grief while sheltering from storms. Despite appearances Althorpe Island is not a particularly safe anchorage, and can be a dangerous place for small vessels caught in a sudden shift of wind. The largest shipwreck and one that features in the *Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail*, is that of the S.S. *Pareora* which was lost due to faulty navigation by running aground on a reef on the northern side of the island. Eleven men lost their lives on the *Pareora*.

List of vessels lost at Althorpe Island

Date	Name	Rig/ Type	Gross Tons	Hull Type	Deaths
02/01/1878	<i>Young St George</i>	schooner	15	wood	-
10/07/1892	<i>Welling</i>	cutter	10	wood	-
18/09/1919	<i>Pareora</i>	steamer	650	steel	11
11/09/1937	<i>Rapid</i>	cutter	?	wood	1
00/07/1971	<i>Altair</i>	cutter	?	?	-
09/07/1982	<i>Mylor Star</i>	trawler	18	steel	-

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Walton, T., 1907, *Present-Day Shipbuilding*, Griffin & Co., London.



B. Jeffery



Divers measure the main frame above the deck of the *Yatala Reef*.

DIVER SERVICES

Boat Charters

Troubridge Island Charter

4 Blanche Street, Edithburgh 5583. Tel 08 8852 6290

Edithburgh Charter & Boat Hire

36 Park Terrace, Edithburgh 5583. Tel 08 8852 6288

Natty's Fish & Dive Charter

Old Honiton Road, Edithburgh 5583. Tel 08 8852 6338

Marion Bay Boat Charter

Marion Bay 5575. Tel 08 8854 4008

Air Fill Stations

Edithburgh Motors

55 Blanche Street, Edithburgh 5583. Tel 08 8852 6067

Braund's Yorketown Store

2 Stansbury Road, Yorketown 5576. Tel 08 8852 1005

Marion Bay General Store

Marion Bay 5575. Tel 08 8854 4008

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CHART OF
TERRA AUSTRALIS

BY M. FLINDERS
 COMM^R OF H.M. SLOOP
 INVESTIGATOR.

South Coast, Sheet III.

1802.