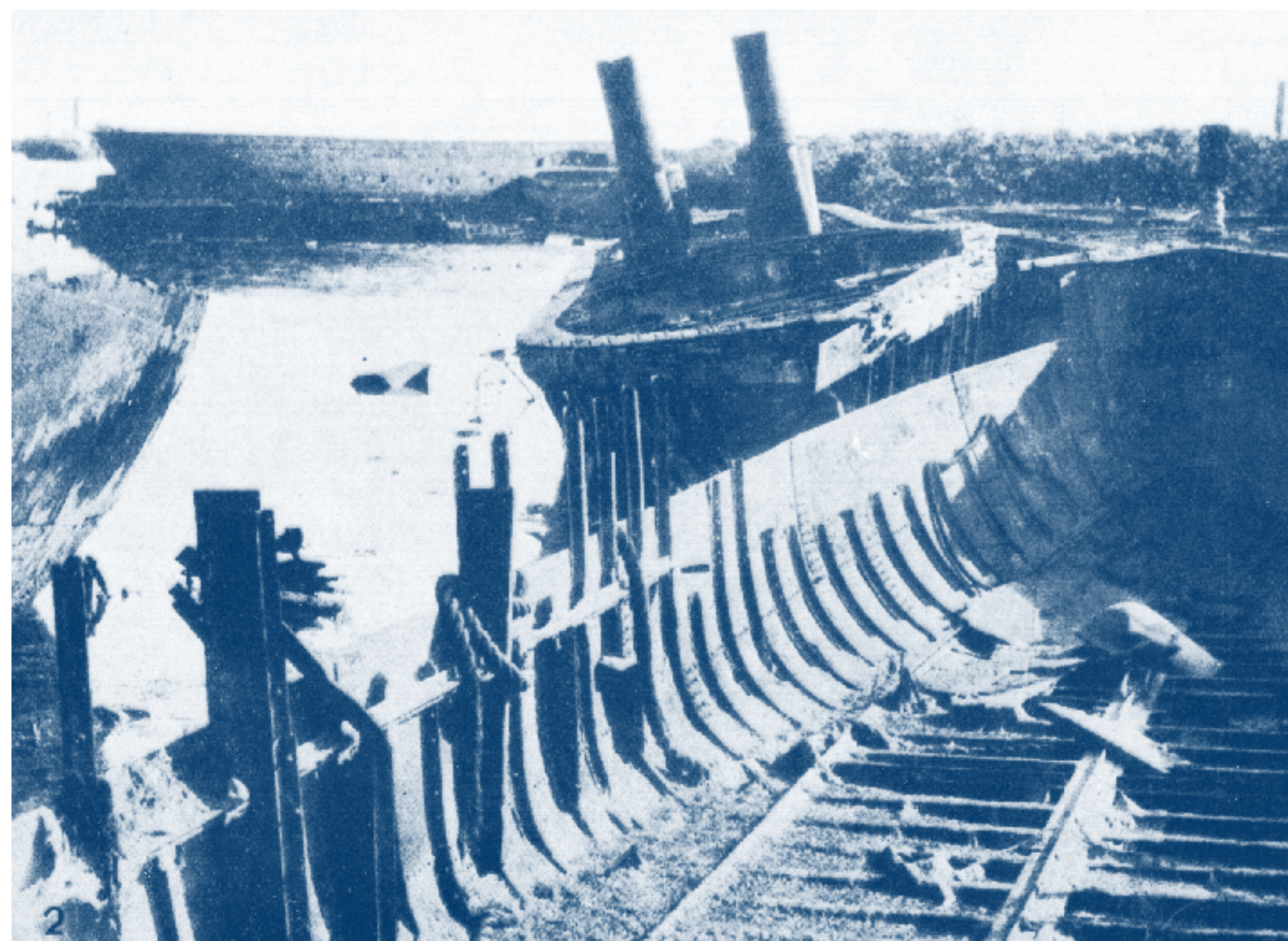# MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

GARDEN ISLAND SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

The abandoned wrecks of the Garden Island Ships' Graveyard are unburied archaeological treasures. They represent a unique collection of craft which plied South Australian waters during an era when the maritime industry dominated transport, trade and employment.
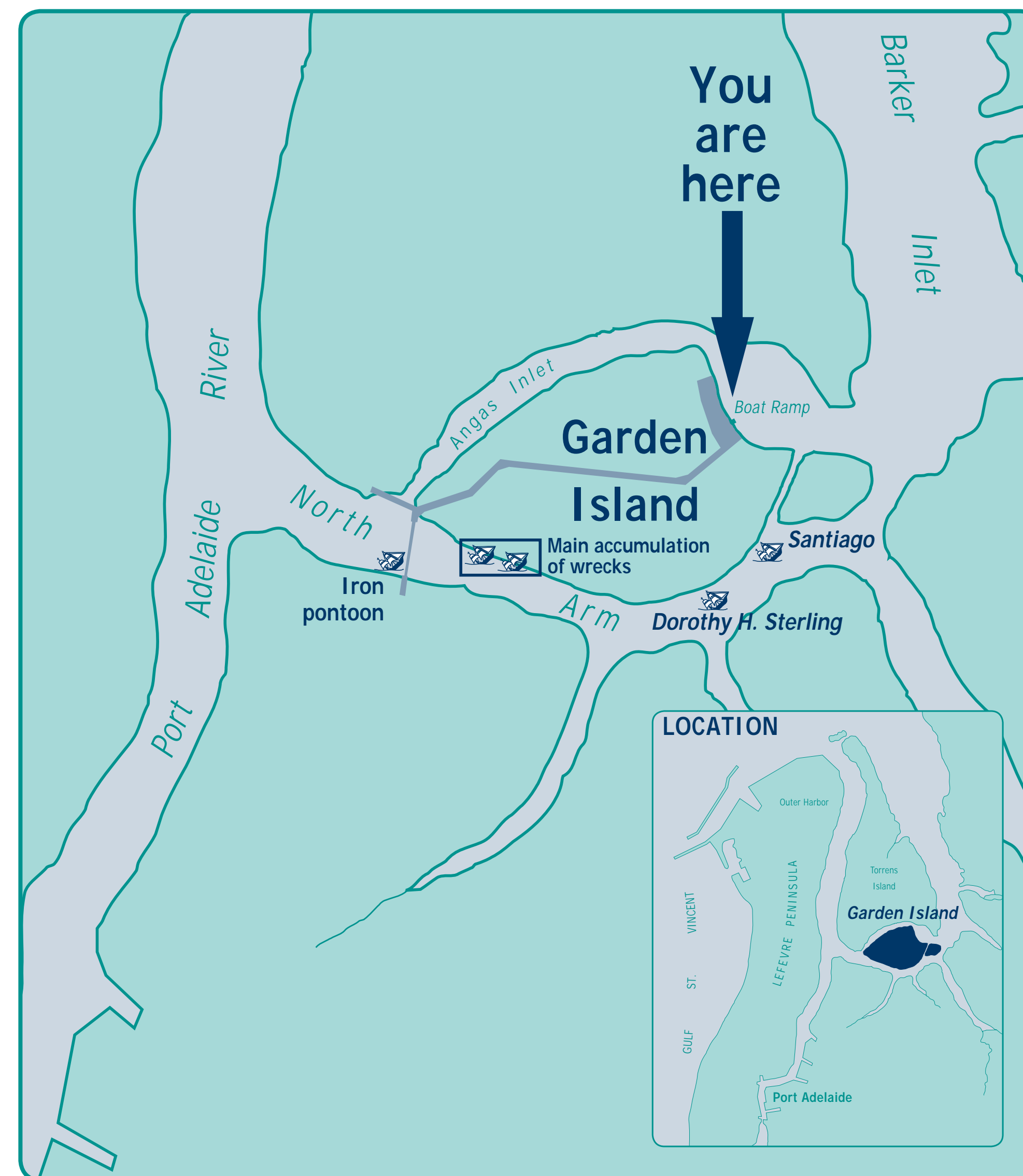
From 1909 to 1945 the North Arm of the Port Adelaide River became the final destination for many vessels which had outlived their usefulness – casualties of technological change; of the Great Depression and two World Wars; or simply of disrepair and accidental damage.

Instead of scuttling these obsolete vessels in deep water, the Harbors Board decided that an easier and cheaper option was to beach and further dismantle the stripped hulks at Garden Island.

The 25 vessels known to have been abandoned in the North Arm are a varied group of dredgers, barges, pontoons and ferries as well as sailing ships and steamers. Many ended their working lives in the Port as storeships or tenders. One even became a footbridge and another a floating grain mill.

Today the historic wrecks which line Garden Island are partially shielded by mangroves and washed by the tide. They represent a significant chapter in South Australia's maritime history and provide valuable insights into Port Adelaide and its past.

*Vessels in the Graveyard 1933 (foreground **Stanley**, left **Moe**, centre **Gem**, right **Sarnia**, background **Sunbeam**)*

(The Adelaide Chronicle, 20 July 1933)

You are here

Barker Inlet

Angas Inlet

Boat Ramp

Garden Island

North Adelaide River

Port Adelaide River

North Arm

Iron pontoon

Main accumulation of wrecks

Santiago

Dorothy H. Sterling

LOCATION

Outer Harbor

GULF ST VINCENT

LEFEVRE PENINSULA

Torrens Island

Garden Island

Port Adelaide

Map showing location of wrecks in the Graveyard

View from the Garden Island Bridge showing main accumulation of vessels

(T Arnott, Department for Environment and Heritage)

The Garden Island Ships' Graveyard Maritime Heritage Trail includes five interpretive signs which communicate the history of the Graveyard and its abandoned vessels. Two of these signs have been placed at the Garden Island Boat Ramp with a further three erected on piles in the North Arm, adjacent to the main accumulation of vessels. Further information is also provided in the booklet, *Garden Island Ships' Graveyard*, available from the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre and the South Australian Maritime Museum in Port Adelaide.

Historic shipwrecks are protected by legislation so that present and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.
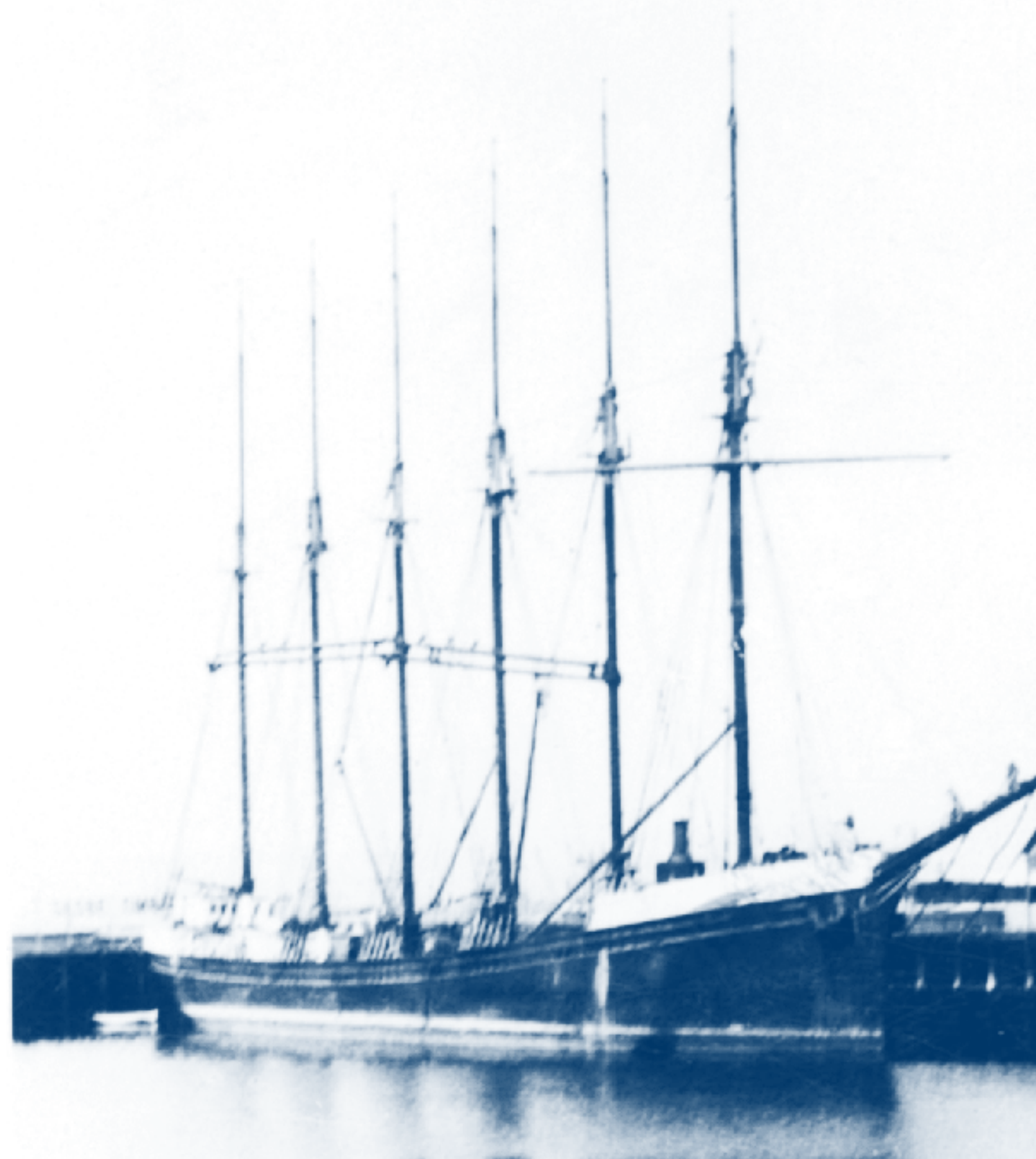
MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

GARDEN ISLAND SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Dorothy H. Sterling (1920 - 1932)

Dorothy H. Sterling, Port Adelaide, 1929
(South Australian Maritime Museum)

Six masted schooner; wooden hull; 2526 tons gross
Length 81.4m; Breadth 15.3m; Depth 7.7m
Built: 1920 - Portland, Oregon, USA

The *Dorothy H. Sterling* (formerly named *Oregon Pine*) became a victim of the Great Depression when it arrived in Port Adelaide in 1929 with a cargo of timber from the USA. Unpaid harbour dues resulted in the schooner being seized and offered at auction.

Bids did not reach the reserve and the vessel was eventually sold to a local shipbreaker. The six lower masts were purchased and removed by the Harbors Board, subsequently being cut into three sections and used at Outer Harbor.

During the next three years the wooden schooner was systematically dismantled in the Jervois Basin, Port Adelaide.

On 6 June 1932 the gutted hull was towed to the eastern end of the North Arm to be broken apart by the unemployed as a source of free firewood.

The *Dorothy H. Sterling* was the largest vessel abandoned in the Ships' Graveyard. Today the hull structure is easily seen above and below water. The remains form a small island, reclaimed by silt and colonised by mangroves.

Santiago (1856 – 1945)

The *Santiago* is the oldest vessel in the Ships' Graveyard and the last vessel abandoned there.

The barque traded world-wide under the flags of various nations until July 1901, when it arrived at Newcastle in New South Wales and was purchased by the Adelaide Steam Tug Company. After its arrival in Port Adelaide with a cargo of coal, the *Santiago* was used as a hulk until 1945, when it was abandoned at the eastern end of the Graveyard.

Santiago, North Arm, April 2000
(T Arnott, Department for Environment and Heritage)

Three masted barque; iron hull; 455 tons gross
Length 49.0m; Breadth 7.9m; Depth 5.3m
Built: 1856 – Methil, Scotland

Today the mostly intact hull of the *Santiago* is exposed above the river level. The masts have been cut off and lay next to the hull; other fittings lay within the structure. Attempts are being made to stabilise the hull with sacrificial anodes (below the waterline) and rust conversion paints.

The *Santiago* is a rare example of an early iron-built sailing ship and is recorded in the *International Register of Historic Ships* as 'Probably the oldest iron-hulled sailing ship still in existence'. The vessel is of keen interest to many local and overseas maritime enthusiasts.

Historic shipwrecks are protected by legislation so that present and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.

MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

GARDEN ISLAND SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

1 *Seminole* (1865 – 1909)

Seminole circa 1880s
(Edwardes Collection, State Library of SA)

Three masted barque; wooden hull; 1511 tons gross
Length 59.9m; Breadth 12.7m; Depth 7.6m
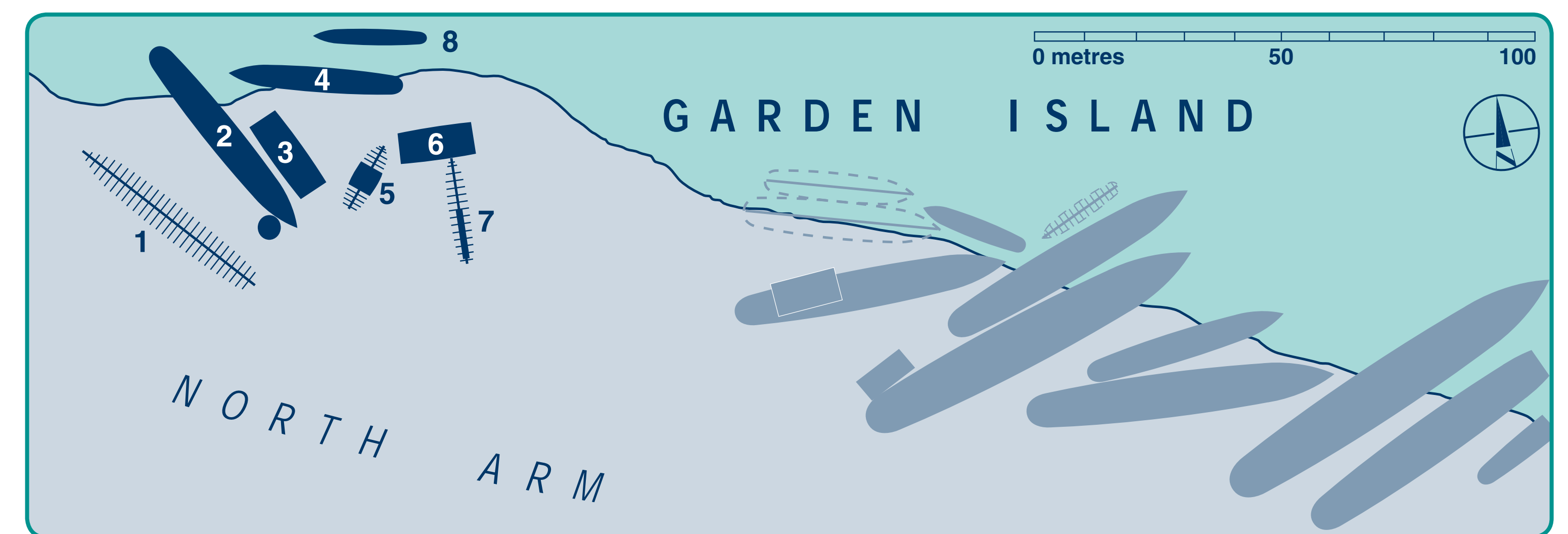Built: 1865 – Mystic, Connecticut, USA

The *Seminole*, built in 1865 for the California trade, was highly regarded for its impressive voyage times from New York to San Francisco. Originally ship-rigged, it was sold in 1887, altered to a barque and transferred to the Pacific trade.

In 1899 the vessel carried a cargo of lumber from Alaska to Newcastle, Australia. Soon after its arrival, the *Seminole* was sold as a coal storeship, and towed to Port Adelaide. During the voyage the barque began to sail away, forcing the towing steamer to cut it adrift. The *Seminole* then reached the port several hours ahead of its would-be helper!

On 21 July 1906, in an attempt to quell a coal fire which had begun while the hulk was moored at Birkenhead two days earlier, the burning *Seminole* was towed to the North Arm. It was beached and subsequently pumped with water until the decks were awash. Damage was extensive and the hold considerably charred.

The *Seminole* was later resold and refloated for further use as a hulk until its final abandonment at Garden Island on 16 March 1909, becoming the first vessel to be placed in the Graveyard.

2 *Sunbeam* (1857-1910)
Three masted barque; iron hull; 443 tons gross
Length 43.1m; Breadth 8.3m; Depth 5.1m
Built: 1857 – Kircaldy, Scotland

3 Unidentified wooden barge

4 Unidentified hopper barge/dredge

5 *Killarney* (c1910-1928)
Screw steamer, ferry; wooden hull; tonnage unknown
Length 16.8m; Breadth 4.3m; Depth 1.2m
Built: c1910 – Port Adelaide, South Australia

6 Unidentified iron pontoon

7 *Lady Daly* (1876-c1926)
Two masted schooner; wooden hull; 68 tons gross
Length 27.7m; Breadth 6.0m; Depth 1.9m
Built: 1876 – Williamstown, Victoria

8 *Enterprise* (1868-1913)
Screw steamer, iron hull; 36 tons gross
Length 24.0m; Breadth 3.8m; Depth 1.6m
Built: 1868 – Sydney, Australia

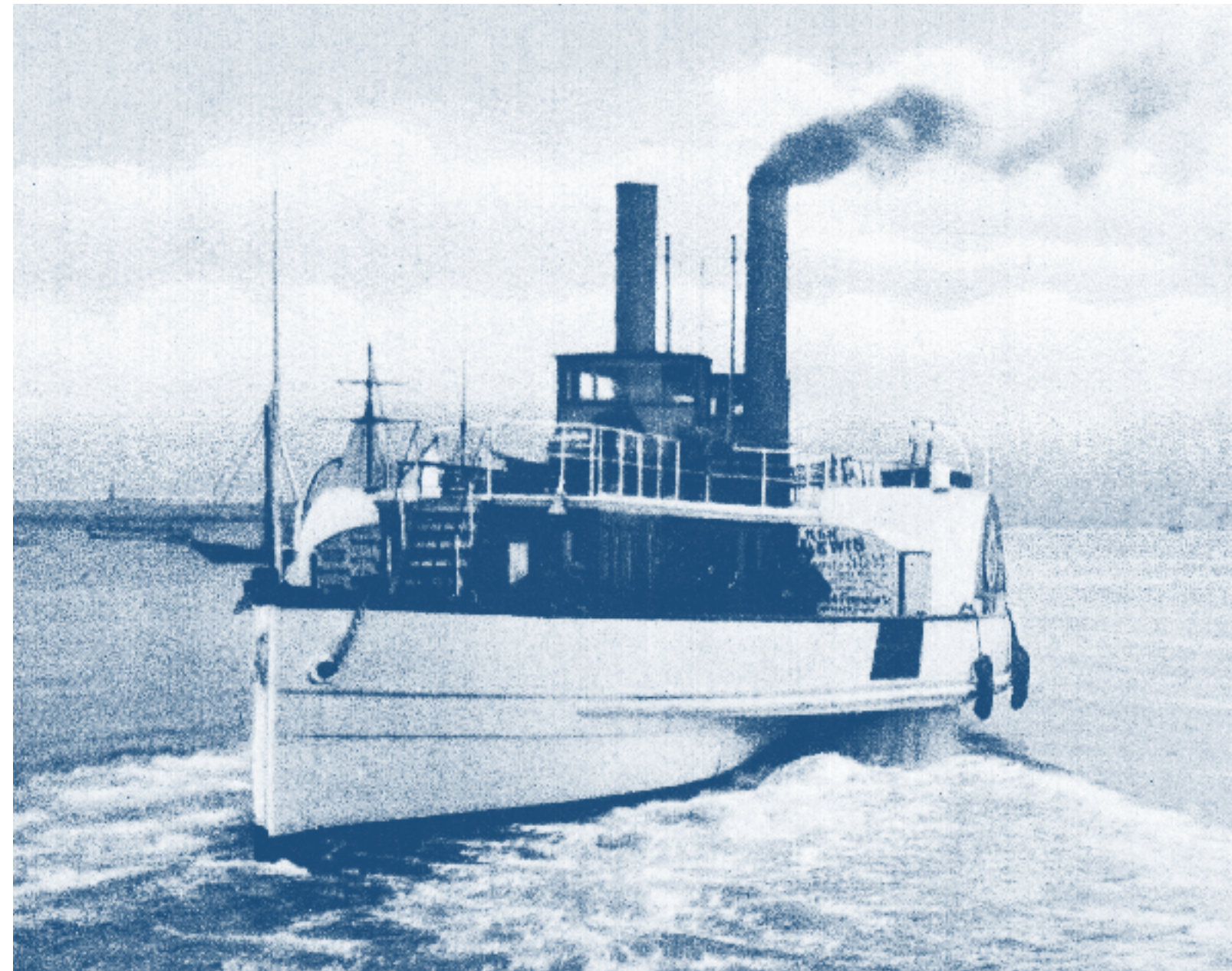**Historic shipwrecks are protected by legislation so that present and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.**

10 *Gem* (1868 – 1927)

Gem as the Williamstown Ferry
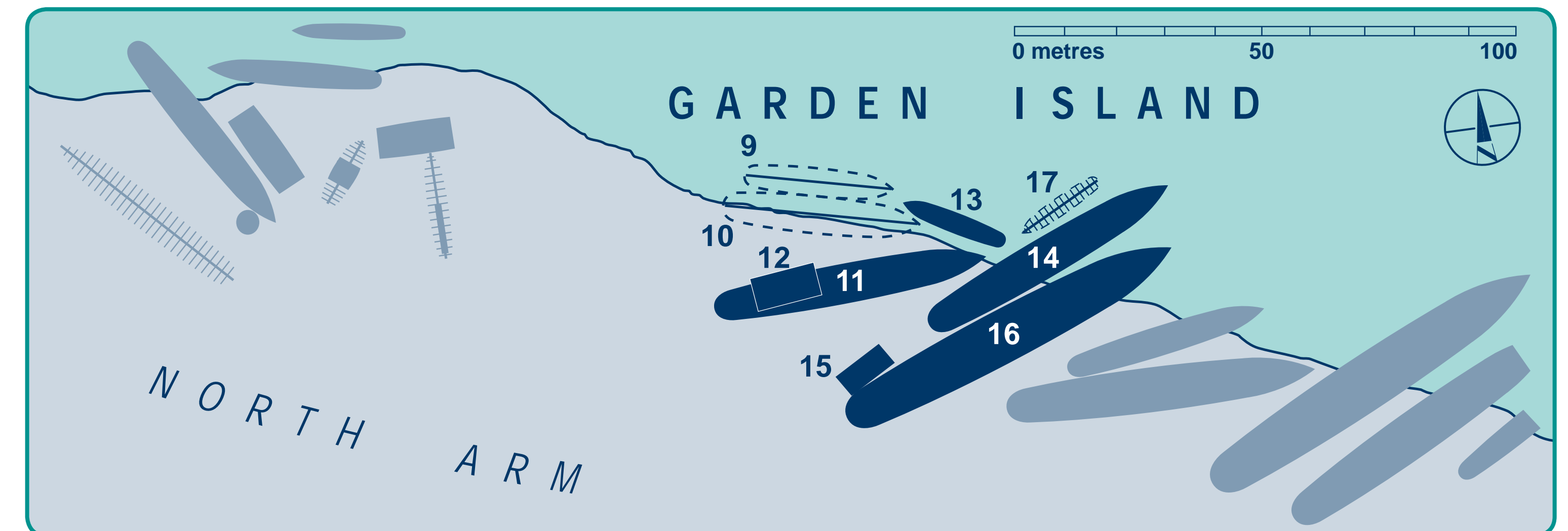*(Courtesy of Ron Ritter)*

Paddle steamer; composite hull; 145 tons gross
Length 39.4m; Breadth 5.4m; Depth 2.7m
Built: 1868 – Melbourne, Victoria

The double ended paddle-steamer *Gem* worked as a ferry between Port Melbourne and Williamstown, until the early 1900s when it was converted to a silt-pumping barge. In 1911 the vessel was towed to Port Adelaide to assist with the construction of the Port River's No. 2 Dock.

Once this project was completed, public appeals for pedestrian access across this new dock resulted in yet another conversion for the *Gem*. The wheelhouse, engines and paddles were removed and the funnels cut down. A gangway was built across the hull and the vessel was moved across the entrance to the new dock. The *Gem* now served as a floating footbridge for Port Adelaide workers. The hull could also be swung about by a tug to allow access for ships into and out of the dock.

With the widening of No. 2 Dock, the *Gem* was removed on 19 July 1927 and laid up at the Glanville Dockyard, before being towed to the Ships' Graveyard. It was later sold and broken up for firewood.

9 *Sarnia* (1878-1927)
Dredge; composite hull; 180 tons gross
Length 36.0m; Breadth 6.4m; Depth 3.1m
Built: 1878 – Port Adelaide, South Australia

11 *Moe* (1876-1931)
Three masted barque; iron hull; 765 tons gross
Length 57.3m; Breadth 9.4m; Depth 5.7m
Built: 1876 – Liverpool, England

12 Unidentified iron pontoon

13 *Stanley* (1876-1930)
Paddle steamer; iron hull; 85 tons gross
Length 24.4m; Breadth 5.3m; Depth 2.6m
Built: 1876 – Paisley, Scotland

14 *Grace Darling* (1907-1931)
Screw steamer; steel hull; 622 tons gross
Length 53.3m; Breadth 8.2m; Depth 3.9m
Built: 1907 – Hardinxveld, Netherlands

15 Unidentified iron pontoon

16 *Flinders* (1878-1931)
Screw steamer; iron hull; 948 tons gross
Length 69.3m; Breadth 8.6m; Depth 6.1m
Built: 1878 – Glasgow, Scotland

17 *Thomas and Annie* (1874-1945)
Two masted ketch; wooden hull; 21 tons gross
Length 14.8m; Breadth 4.9m; Depth 1.3m
Built: 1874 – Port Cygnet, Tasmania

Historic shipwrecks are protected by legislation so that present and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.

20 *Garthneill* (1895-1935)

Garthneill (ex Inverneill) under sail

(Edwardes Collection, State Library of SA)

Three masted barque; steel hull; 1470 tons gross
Length: 72.6m; Breadth 11.0m; Depth 6.6m
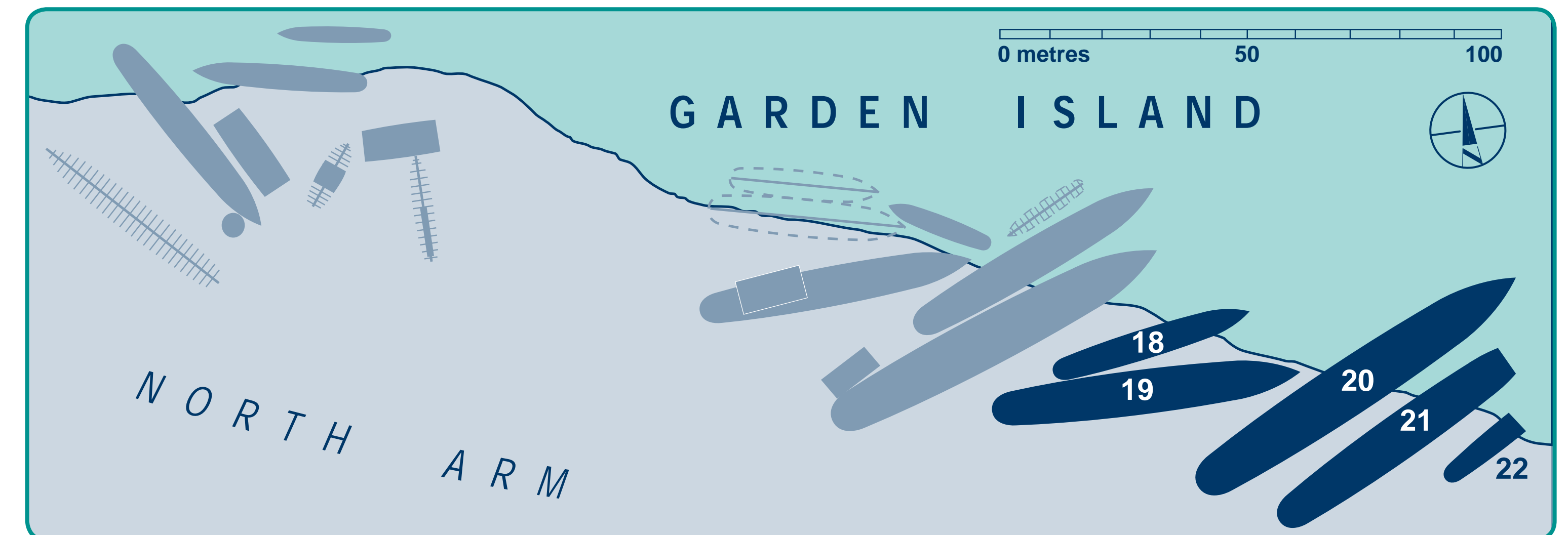Built: 1895 – Glasgow, Scotland

This majestic steel windjammer (originally named *Inverneill*) carried mainly cargoes of timber, wheat and wool between Europe and Canada, before arriving in Australia. It was sold, renamed *Garthneill* and on 6 July 1919 sailed in ballast from Melbourne for Bunbury, Western Australia.

The barque battled relentless westerly gales, ultimately turning east with the weather, towards Cape Horn. When the vessel eventually arrived in Bunbury, it had almost circumnavigated the world to collect its cargo of jarrah!

In July 1926 the *Garthneill* was one of the last British square-rigged sailing vessels to be decommissioned. It was sold, sailed to Port Adelaide and converted into an electric barley-grading mill and storeship – the only floating grain mill in Australia.

On 29 November 1935, with most fittings removed, the hulk was towed down the Port River to the North Arm. The bow plates were cut away and the vessel holed fore and aft with explosive charges.

The *Garthneill*'s figurehead is displayed in the South Australian Maritime Museum, Port Adelaide.

GARDEN ISLAND

NORTH ARM

0 metres   50   100

18 *Juno* (1903-1931)
Screw steamer; steel hull; 241 tons gross
Length 39.6m; Breadth 7.0m; Depth 2.6m
Built: 1903 – Greenock, Scotland

19 *Mangana* (1876-1931)
Screw steamer; iron hull; 752 tons gross
Length 63.5m; Breadth 8.3m; Depth 5.9m
Built: 1876 – Glasgow, Scotland

21 *Glaucus* (1878-1935)
Screw steamer; iron hull; 1363 tons gross
Length 72.7m; Breadth 10.4m; Depth 5.5m
Built: 1878 – Sunderland, England

22 **Unidentified iron dredge**

The Garden Island Ships' Graveyard Maritime Heritage Trail includes five interpretive signs which communicate the history of the Graveyard and its abandoned vessels. Two of these signs have been placed at the Garden Island Boat Ramp with a further three erected on piles in the North Arm, adjacent to the main accumulation of vessels. Further information is also provided in the booklet, *Garden Island Ships' Graveyard*, available from the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre and the South Australian Maritime Museum in Port Adelaide.

Historic shipwrecks are protected by legislation so that present and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.