

Herald Bay, King George Sound whilst being used as target practice by the Royal Australian Navy.

### *Athena*

The masted barque *Athena* was built in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK in 1868. Originally a trader on international routes, it was bought as a coal hulk in 1897. It arrived in Albany in 1898. *Athena* required pumping out and was moored shorewards at the town jetty in order to be kept dry and afloat. Historical evidence is contradictory, but the majority suggests it was burnt by fire in 1912. It is thought to lie near Bull Creek west of Herald Bay.

### *Anna Melhuish*

*Anna Melhuish* began its life as a coal hulk in Albany in 1883 when it was purchased by the newly formed King George Sound Coal Company to sell coal to steamers visiting the port. In 1899 it sank in the harbour. Its remains were subsequently recovered in March 1903 by a dredge. All large sections remaining were recovered and dumped off Bald Head.

### *Marius Ricoux*

Formerly named *Sollectio* and *Rising Star*, *Marius Ricoux* was an iron hulled vessel. It was built in 1887 by Birrell Stenhouse in Dunbarton, Scotland. A trade ship until 1911 it was then towed to Albany. Here it was employed as a coal hulk for 17 years until in 1928 it was sunk with explosives just off Bald Head.

### *Sierra Colonna*

*Sierra Colonna* was built in Stockton-upon-Tees, UK in 1878. Hulked in Adelaide in 1914 it was bought by the Adelaide Steamship Company and brought to Albany in 1917. It came to Albany to replace the hulk *J.L.Hall*. It was sunk by the RAAF reserves in 1952 off Bald Head, and was the last coal hulk to service the port of Albany.

### *Copeland*

Formerly named *Jane Sprott*, *Copeland* was an iron-hulled, 688-ton barque-rigged vessel. Built in

Harrington, UK in 1868 by R. Williamson and Son, it was employed on the former China-South America trade route until 1900, when it was purchased by Norwegian owners and renamed *Copeland Island*. In 1902 it was purchased by the Adelaide Steamship Company and sailed to Albany to be used as a coal hulk. It was blown up with explosives off Gull Rock in 1928.

### *Kingfisher*

*Kingfisher* was an iron barque built in Renfrew, Scotland in 1854. It arrived in Hobart in January 1855. After trading between Hobart and the mainland cities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Newcastle, it was sold to the P&O company in April 1859. In April 1833, it was blown ashore on the western side of the Town Jetty. By July it had been refloated and towed to the western end of Princess Royal Harbour near its present position. Proposals to replate it and turn it into swimming baths never materialised. *Lloyds Register* first shows it as a wreck in 1895. Clearly visible, it has always been one of Albany's most prominent maritime landmarks and one of the oldest iron shipwrecks in WA.

For further information on historic shipwrecks contact the WA Museum Shipwreck Galleries or the WA Heritage Council:  
<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/march.asp>  
<http://tourism.heritage.wa.gov.au/>

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#### Diving notes

Wrecks are often hazardous. Access to the wrecks requires a boat. Divers need to be fit and qualified. A diver's flag must be displayed. Never dive alone or leave a boat unattended. Persons using this trail do so at their own risk. These wrecks are part of Western Australia's heritage. They are protected under legislation. Please enjoy them but do not disturb them.

# ALBANY'S COAL HULKS

## Introduction

By 1950 the port of Albany was largely inactive. Whaling had become relatively insignificant and fewer traders were using the port. The town's future appeared bleak. How then, did Albany re-establish itself to become the colony's main link with the wider world from the 1850s until the turn of the century? The answer lies in the technological developments which provided the transition from wind-powered



The hulk, *Margaret*

ships to coal-powered steamships and the suitability of Albany as a refuelling and mail service depot for the new steamships. Sailing ships and steamers which were strong but too old for further service, or that were unseaworthy, were converted to coal hulks to store the vital fuel. Evidence of this era may be gleaned from the wrecks of the coal hulks in Albany's waters.

In 1851, the first mail service contract was signed, establishing Albany as the colony's only port of call for the overseas mail service between England and Sydney. This initial venture proved unsuccessful and it was to be the P&O company contract, finalised in 1852, that was to provide the base for Albany's

prosperity for the next 50 years. As the colony's main coal depot and steamer port, harbour facilities were improved; lighthouses were established at Preaksea Island and Point King and a new jetty was built and later upgraded. P&O built its own depot and jetty and the Quarantine Station was established.

Understandably, Albany became the most outward-looking settlement in the colony. Its close links with the eastern colonies were both economic and attitudinal. This generated even further rivalry between Albany and Perth/Fremantle. Finally, it was the improvements to Fremantle Harbour that resulted in Albany's loss of status as the colony's premier port in 1900. The increased efficiency of steamships and later the introduction of oil as a fuel hastened the demise of the port and its hulks.

In exploring the coal hulk wrecks, the lives of those who tendered the hulks come to life. After being demasted, the coal hulks were stripped and then hulked. Their cabins were the living quarters for the families of the men who operated them. The hulk-keepers had the task of keeping up a ready head of steam in order to move alongside any ship needing refuelling. The wrecks in this pamphlet are the historical reminder of Albany's heyday as the colony's principle steam port and their invaluable service to it.



*Sarah Burnyeat*

### *Sarah Burnyeat*

The brig *Sarah Burnyeat* was built as a barque at Southwick, Durham, England in 1862. It sailed to Australia in 1879 only to be driven ashore at Lockeville, WA during a heavy gale. Refitted in Fremantle in 1880 as a brig, it sprang a leak sailing to Port Adelaide. It was then purchased as a coal hulk by the Adelaide Steamship Company in 1882. In 1894, whilst coaling a ship, it caught fire and was abandoned at its present position off Residency Point. The wreck is one of the best preserved and most accessible mid-19th century wooden hulls in WA. It is also the only coal hulk with its cargo intact.

### *St. Lawrence*

Built in 1861 by T and W. Smith of Newcastle upon Tyne, in the UK, *St Lawrence* was a 1094-ton, wooden hulled barque rigged vessel. A former passenger and cargo ship, *St. Lawrence* travelled mostly to Calcutta and London. In 1888 the ship was carrying cargo and passengers en route to Fremantle, when it hit a gale and was demasted just off Cape Leeuwin. It was towed to Albany by Captain Douglas. From 1889, it was owned and operated as a coal hulk by the Adelaide Steamship Company in Albany. It sank in the Princess Royal Harbour in 1898.

### *Elvie*

The remains of the wooden lighter, *Elvie*, lie towards the north end of Vancouver Beach, Frenchman Bay. It was constructed as a work boat for the whaling station, and was probably built around 1912. It was used to transport barrels of whale oil into Albany and ferried supplies back to the whaling settlement on return. When not in use it was at permanent moorings in the middle of Frenchman Bay. Left at its moorings by departing Norwegians in 1917, *Elvie* was driven ashore, dragging its anchors in a south east gale in 1921 and filled with sand. Although it could have been easily refloated, it was in fact left to serve as firewood for visitors to Frenchman Bay. All that is visible are the tops of the frames with the

stern and bow post prominent, although it is mostly buried in sand.



*Elvie*

### *Camel*

The wooden lighter *Camel* was built by G. White in Melbourne in 1861. Previously at the port of Melbourne until 1897, it was the last water barge brought to Albany. It got its name from its role as a fresh water supplier to ships. It was a wooden ship with big brass straps strengthening the hull. It was damaged in the same south east gale as *Elvie*. In the south east gale 1922–1923, it suffered further damage when it collided with an Avon dredge. Both boats drifted into a corner near the landing stage. It was never repaired. Later it was brought as decking, then following an accidental fire which resulted from an over enthusiastic party held on board, it was deliberately burnt in order to salvage what was thought to be brass and later discovered to be muntz metal. The wreck can be located in Oyster Harbour, adjacent to Emu Point.

### *J.L.Hall*

The 682-ton iron hulled barque rigged *J.L.Hall*, was built by the Marshall Brothers at South Shields, Newcastle upon Tyne, England in 1859. In 1895 it was purchased by the Adelaide Steamship Company, ending up in Albany to be used as a Coal Hulk. The *J.L.Hall* was sunk in 1916 on the western side of