

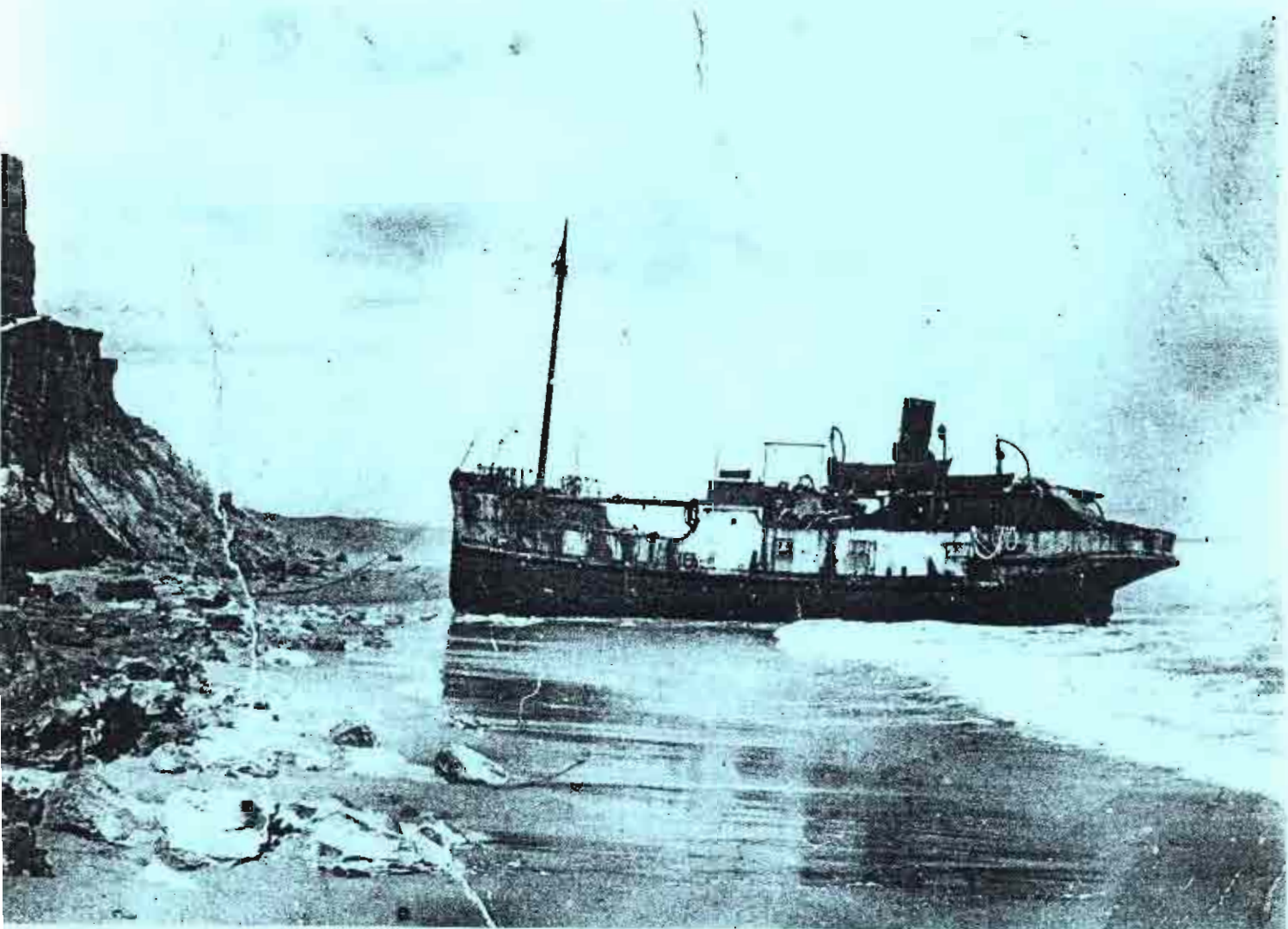


Western Australian
Maritime

museum

MEMORIES OF MARITIME ALBANY

Les Douglas et al.



By

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©

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I have been much impressed by the trouble people have been prepared to go to to make sure I could copy their photographs and artefacts and to assist in other ways. Here I must mention Nobbie Pannet, and in particular Eric Douglas, Les Douglas' younger brother, who at very short notice drove from Denmark to Albany with the *Awhina's* bell, the paintings of the *Grace Darling* and the *Dunskey*, and many original photographs, and then spent a long time with me in the tiny museum darkroom while I photographed and made copies.

I must also thank Stan Austin, who readily loaned his outboard and dinghy, so that the excavation of the *Kingfisher* could take place, and who led us out to the *Ada*, and John McBride who kindly showed us where the 'Stern Post Wreck' lies.

Grateful thanks are also due to Hazel Flugge, Les Douglas' sister, who has always been delighted to undertake requests relating to this work, and who located the *Agnes'* figurehead. To Dunstan West for going to a lot of trouble to make sources available, and to Adam Wolfe for research assistance. Last but not least to Mike McCarthy whose endless enthusiasm for this project has led it to its present condition.

FOREWORD

By Les Douglas

In July 1990 Gordon Marshall along with a group of students was diving on old wrecks in Frenchmans Bay, Albany, and wanting to establish more about other wrecks in and around Albany was told to contact myself.

Several meetings later, after Gordon had viewed many of my photographs, artefacts and spent endless hours listening to my recollections he suggested that it all be recorded for the Fremantle Maritime Museum and the Battye Library.

I was only too happy to assist Gordon in his project, as so much of the early south coastal history was incomplete or had never been recognized or recorded.

I was honoured to be able to help Gordon fill the gaps and especially record the Douglas family's contribution to coastal shipping.

I believe such recollections as contained herein are important to record as such history often stands outside the mainstream of the recorded history of the period.

If not for people like Gordon who had the infinite patience in detailing and researching these recollections, and the long hours he spent in the dark room reproducing the many photos, much of this fabric would have been lost forever.

As a boy and later as a youth, I had spent so many hours on the boats with my grandfather and father, that even today the memories are still vivid. It was not difficult to remember the events, the difficulty was in selecting the most relevant - a task I left to Gordon.

In some way I hope I have helped to capture some of the maritime atmosphere of Albany in those days. Finally, I wish to thank the people already mentioned by Gordon in his acknowledgment for assistance with this project.

PREFACE

This project began with the intention of recording the memories and experiences of Mr Les Douglas (B. 1909) who is the third generation of a ship owning family of Albany, Western Australia. The family had at various times owned well known vessels such as the *Grace Darling*, the *Awhina* the *Silver Star*, and the *Dunskey* and many others, and Les Douglas had had first hand experience of working on some of them. In addition to his knowledge of Albany and local shipping, Les Douglas possessed a vast quantity of shipping photographs, many of them original, and a number of artefacts associated with the Albany vessels.

My object therefore became threefold:

- (1) *To record as many of Les Douglas' memories as possible.*
- (2) *To copy the photographs for archival purposes*
- (3) *To photograph and record artefacts in Les Douglas' possession.*

From this arose a fourth object, namely *the location and where possible survey of surviving maritime archaeological sites, such as the Jessie and the floating dock, as well as some shipwreck sites.*

Much of the information supplied by Les Douglas was incomplete, and it proved necessary to research the people, vessels, events and places as far as possible. Certain details still elude me and errors may have occurred, but this information is as complete as time and circumstances have allowed.

In the course of documenting this information I have followed several themes, including the history of the Armstrong and Waters Company which was intricately interwoven with that of the Douglas family, and detailed the stories of the vessels they were associated with. In addition I have also included a few other vessels not associated with either, but for which either photographs existed or memories were supplied by Les Douglas or other people who contributed information.

The resulting list of local vessels is necessarily incomplete, nor is it a complete account of local maritime history, but it does give an interesting picture of people, ships and events, including areas of life which have completely vanished.

Many of the vessels mentioned, in particular the *Awhina* and the *Silver Star*, both of which Les Douglas worked on, inspired considerable local affection and continuing interest, while the *Grace Darling*, well known for her long career as a coastal trader and admired for her smart appearance, has been declared an historic West Australian shipwreck.¹

Some of the vessels mentioned - *Agnes*, *Dunskey* remain as unsurveyed wreck sites, and while the wreck of the *Grace Darling* has been located and certain items recovered, the wreck remains unexcavated. As a result of this research, the *Escort* wreck site has been surveyed.²

Other relics, such as the *Awhina's* steering wheel, were quite well known locally, but its whereabouts were unknown, and it is only through this exercise that it has been located and photographed.

The account of the visit of Prince George (later King George V) and his brother the Duke of Clarence, to Albany is part of a family document in Les Douglas possession; while it does not form a part of this story it does add local colour and for this reason has been included in the Appendix.

The result of all this has tended to be historical rather than archaeological, but where possible, I have attempted to follow up archaeological remains, giving a wider perspective to the whole.

The resulting information has so far led to the discovery of two new shipwrecks - the *Ada* in Oyster Harbour and the 'Stern Post Wreck' in Princess Royal Harbour, with a third one, the *Waratah* at Nornalup in the offing. William Douglas' *Victory*, which sank in 1875, remains undiscovered.

¹ M. McCarthy *et al.*

² See Marshall, 1992: 126.

In addition to the pictures and artefacts listed herein, Les Douglas has the original Pilot Records for Albany for 1895 – 1900 which have been copied on microfilm by the Museum. Les Douglas mentioned that these were taken from a pile of rubbish in a former Port Office on the Albany waterfront which was being demolished at the time.

Gordon de L. Marshall
November 1991.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is now almost a year and a half since I first contacted Les Douglas and embarked on these pages, little thinking that my notes would become first a thesis and then a published work, culminating with the presentation of historical objects and photographs to the Albany Museum. [See Appendix XIX.]

I first met Les Douglas when I was researching a wreck in Frenchman Bay, Albany, with a group of students as part of a Post Graduate Studies programme. Several fits and starts and many meetings later, this text has resulted.

Les Douglas said initially that he had been poor for the first forty years of his life and rich for the second forty, and at eighty-three remains modest about his achievements and generous to family and friends alike.

In this edition it has been possible to correct several errors and omissions in the first edition, as well as add new material and photographs. It has been particularly difficult to alter put together from oral sources, and sentences have a habit of remaining short and staccato. Owing to time constraints it was not possible to proof-check the first edition, but this has now been done, and with additions and improvements a more worthwhile text has emerged.

Gordon de L. Marshall
February 1992.

INTRODUCTION

The period of activity is roughly from the end of the P & O (Peninsular and Orient Lines) period in 1881 to just before the Second World War, by which time Albany had declined as a port and the Armstrong & Waters and Douglas companies had ceased to operate.

Les Douglas (b. 1909) lived through what were effectively the last years of Albany's life as a port.

The Albany he describes was a far more remote and isolated place (as was Perth) than is readily easy to understand with today's communications, and was one in which people were prepared to work long hours for low wages, as indeed there was no alternative, and where traditional values held sway.

In compiling this record I have gained considerable respect for the early pioneers of the south-west coast, who navigated a very rough, remote and inhospitable coastline in very small and frail craft. Some idea of their voyages can be gained from the accounts given in the Appendix.

I am aware that many vessels and people who may have been significant to Albany must have been omitted, but this does not pretend to be a complete account.

Gazing over the empty expanse of Albany Harbour it is hard to believe that it was a once-busy port, and of the many vessels mentioned herein only one or two of the very small ones survive.

The Albany foreshore is changed, and not for the better, while the jetty at which so many stout sea wagons once tied up is now virtually empty. The past will not return, but memories of Albany's sea faring times survive and I hope that this compilation will contribute to that.

ALBANY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During most of the nineteenth century Albany enjoyed a unique position among Australian ports as the main port of an Australian State which had its capital city, Perth some two hundred miles away.

Albany was founded in 1826, partly as a possible penal settlement and through fear of the French. Lack of a proper harbour at Fremantle led to mail steamers calling at Albany, which was in any case the older settlement, and a coal depot and steamer port was established there in 1851 by the newly formed Australian Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company. The mail services and coal depot were soon taken over by the Peninsular and Orient Company, which built a jetty in 1859, and whose steamship services were to last, with intermissions, until 1880. There after Albany remained a port for mail and passengers. The Albany harbour had one big drawback for sailing ships; the possibilities of an easterly wind which could delay departure from the harbour. Hence a situation evolved where most sailing vessels called at Fremantle, but most steamships continued calling at Albany.

Albany did have certain disadvantages; a flat shallow harbour shore and a very small tide meant that ships could only be careened at Emu Point and slips and docks could not be constructed in Albany Harbour. As a result the unusual wooden floating dock was built. The Albany "Terminal" was the Town Jetty, construction of which began in the 1860s. The Deep Water Jetty was begun in the 1880s.

Steamers did little more than drop mail and pick up coal and passengers, and most imports and exports took place through Fremantle. Perth was nevertheless jealous of Albany's position as the main mail port and gave only minimal financial support to its development.

In 1880 economic measures forced P & O to close its coaling station at Albany and sell everything off. Apart from a large pile of coal and its jetty, P & O's floating assets consisted of four barges and two hulks, plus a number of smaller boats and the floating dock. The coal hulks were taken over by McIlwraith, McEarchen, while the other assets were taken over by local operators, including the Armstrong and Waters and Douglas companies. Albany remained the main arrival and departure point for mail and passengers. The mail from the eastern colonies, which was four times greater than that from Britain, arrived in Perth faster by being landed at Albany and sent by rail rather than the long journey round Cape Leeuwin.

However Perth remained determined that Fremantle should be Western Australia's main port, with the result that in 1892 work began on improving the Fremantle harbour, and this was completed in 1897. The mail steamers transferred, somewhat reluctantly, to Fremantle in August 1900. But from the same year Albany was visited by increasing numbers of steamers trading with South Africa and carrying passengers on the "Cape Route" to England. Albany's coal bunkering and water supply trades increased considerably. Transports to the Boer War also contributed to this, and there were ten coal hulks in Albany in 1901 and the new water supply dam in Frenchman bay was constructed at this time. Although the Boer War ended in 1903, the White Star Line also increased its calls as its ships were too big for the Suez Canal and had to go around the Cape. Albany's bunkering trade resulted in the visit of the American Great White Fleet in Sept 1908 to coal, to the chagrin of Fremantle.

After a brief boom period during World War 1 when the convoys assembled at Albany, its decline continued as oil replaced coal as the main shipping fuel. The 1921 Navigation Act further restricted trade, and Bunbury had become a larger export port. The fact that Albany was not an export port apart from items such as sandalwood, whale oil wool and fruit meant that it could not survive the end of the coal era, and by the late 1930s had ceased to be a major port.¹

¹ Garden, Donald S: *Albany a Panorama of the Sound from 1827*. Thomas Nelson Australia Ltd., West Melbourne 1977.



Above : Albany and the Town jetty during the visit of the Great White Fleet, 1908. The floating dock can be seen to the far side of the jetty. (Photo Albany Museum)

Below : Launches from the great white Fleet at Albany. The floating dock is on the right, water lighter on the left. (Photo Albany Museum)



WORLD WAR I

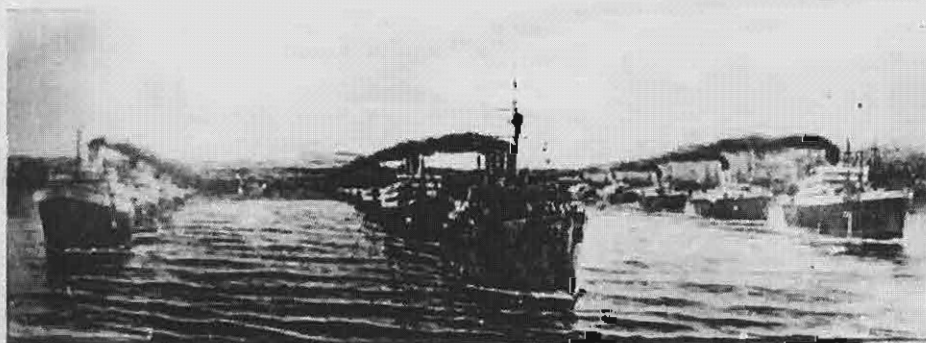
During World War I all the convoys leaving Australia gathered at Albany. The first convoy of twenty-six Australian and ten New Zealand ships carrying 20,000 Australian and 10,000 New Zealand troops left Albany for the Middle East on 1st November 1914. A second convoy of 16 ships carrying 10,000 Australian and 2000 New Zealand troops left on 31st December, 1914. With the convoys there would be as many as 30 or 40 ships in the harbour at once. The shipping lines were Blue Funnel, White Star, P & O vessels and others. The convoys were amassed at Albany in preference to Fremantle as it was more protected plus it had the coaling facilities.

Everyday, soldiers would be brought ashore by the hundreds for exercise, and the *Awhina*, *Silver Star*, *The Bruce* and the *Dunskey* worked non-stop as personnel carriers. According to Les Douglas, thousands of soldiers would go on a route march through the town along Marine Drive, and the local children would follow them trying to get cigarette cards. The soldiers would then be returned to their ships after the exercise. The soldiers were not allowed ashore by themselves, presumably to prevent desertions and other troubles.

All the ships had to take on water, and the Armstrong and Waters Company carried water, coal and occasional stores to the vessels. There were about 12 coal hulks in Albany at the time, and activity was more or less constant, day and night, resulting in a boom period for Albany. Even after the war, Albany remained busy with bunkering up to the late 1920s.

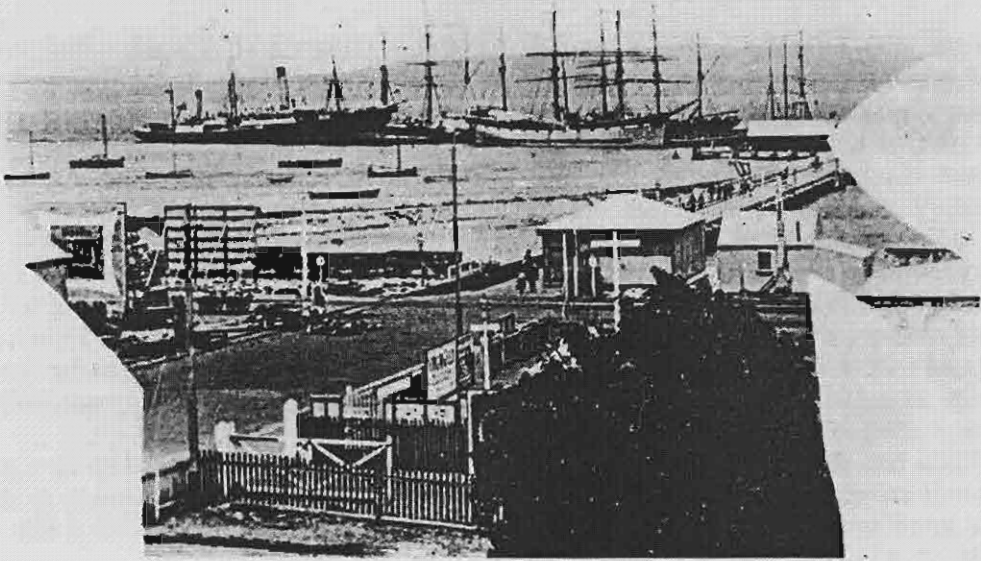
Interestingly enough, Anzac Day Dawn Services first began at Albany. The Rev. Arthur White of St. John's Church, Albany, had sailed with the first convoy as chaplain and was instrumental in setting up the first Dawn Service on April 25th 1923. It was considered highly appropriate since for the troops Albany was the last sight of Australia, and for many it would be the final one.¹

The great convoys of the First War were not to be repeated; during the Second World War the convoys assembled off Fremantle, using the huge liners *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Aquitania* and *Ille de France*.



The ANZAC Convoy leaves Albany Harbour. After a painting. (Photo Albany Museum)

¹ *West Australian*, April 24th 1991.



*Above : The Town Jetty at the turn of the century (Photo Albany Museum)
Below : The Albany Town Jetty in the late Nineteenth Century (Photo The Batye Library)*



THE INTER WAR PERIOD

The dislocation of trade during the First World War put an end to Albany's pretensions as a major port. The need for ships to assist with cargo for the war effort diverted many ships from Albany, and most concentrated on Fremantle. Only enough called at Albany to provide Albany's immediate needs. The bunkering trade also dropped off in the absence of the convoys, except for the returning troopships at war's end. There was only a monthly interstate service.¹

Poor servicing by the government contributed to Albany's decline as it discouraged importers and exporters.

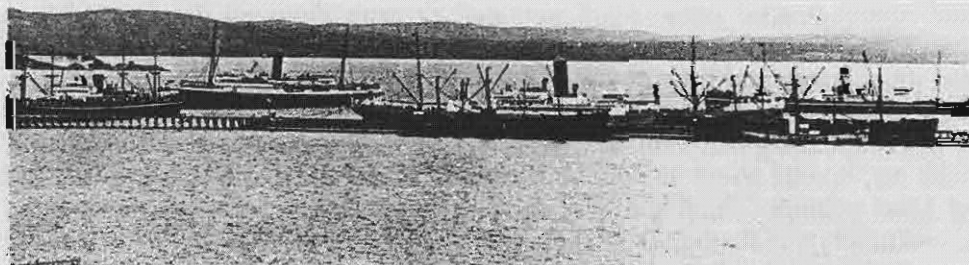
The navigation act of 1921 also damaged Albany's trade, as this required that vessels in the Australian coastal trade had to meet certain standards and conditions.

The 1930 International Load Line Convention set new Plimsoll Lines for shipping and imposed a winter zone on areas of the Southern Hemisphere subject to difficult weather and sea conditions between April and October. Vessels loading or travelling within that zone were restricted to carrying smaller cargoes. The border of the zone ran along the south coast of Western Australia from Cape Leeuwin to Cape Arid near Esperance, thus placing Albany at a disadvantage with the ports on the west coast. This further contributed to Albany's decline since vessels calling at Albany had to load either less cargo or bunker less coal. Usually they chose to take less coal and moved on to Fremantle in the permanent summer zone to bunker. This was a serious blow to the bunker trade and reduced coaling to just two hulks, Adelaide Steam Ship Company's *Sierra Colonna* and McIlwraith, McEarchen's *Kelat*. The number of lumpers (Stevedores) dropped.

Vessels were increasingly powered by oil in any case, and Albany did not possess oil bunkering facilities.

State imports and exports were increasingly centralized on Fremantle and Bunbury during the 1930s. A bulk wheat terminal was installed at Bunbury in 1937, but one was refused to Albany which had to continue using bagged wheat loading from railway trucks. Exports from Albany actually increased with fruit, bagged wheat, wool and meat.

In the 1930s the number of overseas vessels calling dropped, although there were still some interstate ones. Coastal shipping was becoming less important with the increase in cars, buses and even aeroplanes. The Albany harbour Pilot was not replaced after 1936, his position being filled by the Harbour Master.²



Above : The Deep Water Jetty in 1937; the *Bonthorpe* is visible at the end of the jetty.
This was an unusual number of vessels for this period. (Photo Albany Museum)

¹ Ibid Garden, *Panorama*

² Garden, D. A., *Southern Haven; A History of the Port of Albany, Western Australia*, published by the Albany Port Authority, 1978.

THE ALBANY WATERFRONT

Before the First World War the Albany waterfront was very different to what it is now, since there was a beach of white sand and clear water on either side of the jetty, popular for swimming with public swimming baths along the pier. According to Howard Hartman waves used to break on the edge of shallows, some fifty yards from the edge of the bank, which was an embankment made of old sleepers. Fish used to come in, including tons of whiting. Where the *Amity* is now there was a white beach similar to Middleton, the water offshore had a white sandy bottom and there were oyster beds about 50 yards out from there. Where the small cottage next to the *Amity* is there was a little bend and the bay had rocks of all sizes. There was a change shed around here. The rain used to bring sand and mud from Parade Street. The gravel made a difference as did deposits of ash and tar from the gas works. The bottom became unpleasant and swimming gradually ceased.

Les Douglas writes :

"Howard Hartman is correct, as late as the 1950s you could bathe on a nice sandy beach where the overhead bridge meets the end of the town jetty, and when the tide was in even catch small whiting there. And under the jetty, about 200ft from where the overhead meets the jetty was a small boat landing and stairs up to the jetty. We often tied our small dinghies there.

The new land backed wharf was a great disaster. The town people should never have allowed the foreshore to be destroyed, it was the most beautiful part of the harbour, completely different from the southern side.

The road and wharf cut the town off from all the little beaches and bays, rocky outcrops, fishing spots, and the lovely walk along the railway line to the pilot station. The boats, yachts and launches all moored in the lee of the town jetty, are now all at "Little Grove".

Now they are going to try to bring the harbour close to the foot of York Street with an overpass over the rail and road.

The new wharfs should have been built on the west end of the harbour, and they could have gone on extending it as required for ever. Not only has the most picturesque part of Albany Harbour been destroyed, but by putting the wharf so far out in the channel, interfered with the natural flow of the current and are now spending millions to clean the harbour.

Princess Royal Harbour, Oyster Harbour, King George Sound, Frenchman's Bay and all its surrounds are noted as among the best in the world. I have travelled widely and cannot ever remember seeing a harbour where they would have destroyed so much natural scenery for so few ships as use the Albany Port.

The town's playground gone, road and rail passing through the town, I can remember many occasions spreading a rug out on the beach at the foot of York Street and picnicking, and little children paddling and swimming. You could walk along the white bank at low water, half way up to your knees from *Kingfisher*, past the coal jetty, spearing flat head and flounder, dragging a line with a couple of dozen fish on it, and there would be small children paddling, swimming and building sand castles. Their mothers sitting on the beach watching the older children venturing out further with their buckets gathering cockles. Between the Residency Point and the Town Jetty was a favourite picnic area. At low tide the bigger boys would be out a further 200 yards, on the white sand bar, spearing fish. Many a time I have walked along this sand bank, starting anywhere between the *Kingfisher* and the Albany Municipal Baths, which were below Lawley Park. With a line tied to my belt, as I went I would spear a flounder or flathead, thread the line through its gills and go on, dragging my fish behind. It was possible to get anything from one to a dozen fish. The depth of water varied from just over your ankles up to your thigh. All along this stretch of water, almost anywhere, you could gather cockles up to 2" in diameter.

As young boys (8 and 9 years old) there were the Norman Boys and the McBrides (a bit older) who lived right on the beach. We gathered these cockles by the sugar

bag and you could get a half bag each in half an hour. We lit fires amongst the rocks and boiled them in kerosine tins. We used them for burly. The whiting loved them. We fished from the big rafts that we made from timber we gathered around the harbour. There was always plenty of dunnage about. This is wood that the ships used to put between the cargo. We fished all over the old dock and around the boats moored in the lee of the Town Jetty.

Once we built a raft about 18' long and 7' wide. We rigged a mast and sail on it and had kerosine boxes nailed on it for seats. The raft could carry five or six of us. We sailed it all around the harbour and as far as Little Grove. We had it for quite a long time. Until our experience with old Dick McBride. Dick McBride used to be over at Lime Burners Creek a lot. He had a jetty he'd built about 70' long in front of his house, just across the railway line. The mistake we made was that for the centre plank of the raft we had used a long piece of timber, about 18' x 10" x 3" that was left lying on the rocks, alongside his little jetty. When he missed the plank he went mad at us and broke up the raft to get his plank back. His young son Jimmy got into a bit of trouble as he was in it. We gave him a wide berth for a while after that.

That was the end of our rafting. We made tin canoes after that until we graduated into small dinghies and fished further out. We made long spears and on clear days speared the big mowying that fed around the mooring anchors strewn all over the areas between the jetty and the beach. We also had small boat races.

We built our big bonfire in between two high rocks on the beach, below Lawley Park, close to the McBride's house. We worked for weeks. It was always the biggest in the town. We dragged the bushes along the railway line from as far away as the old Coal Jetty and from the hill side. The McBride Boy's uncle was the caretaker of Lawley Park. He used to tell us when to come and get the tree loppings. I think he used to organise the trimming till close to Guy Fawkes Day, so he didn't have to remove them. He used to have plenty. We didn't mind doing it for him. We would leave the bushes scattered about among the rocks until Bonfire Day and then work like galley slaves to build it. Passing the bushes up to some of us standing on top of the high rocks on each side until we couldn't go any higher. It would be twenty feet or more high, and fifteen to twenty feet at the base. We dare not build it until the day for fear someone set it alight. It was one of the biggest in Albany.

All the parents would turn out to watch we didn't catch alight. We gathered bottles and sold fish to buy crackers. You could buy a lot for about one or two pounds. Next morning at daybreak we would be back to gather the "fizzers" and the ones that didn't go off.

ALBANY PORT AND DOCKING FACILITIES

Les Douglas Writes :

"When the Peninsula and Orient Steam Navigation Company established their depot at Albany in the 1830s it was for the purpose of coaling and providing water for their ships.

Albany provided a safe and sheltered anchorage. Fremantle was considered very unsafe as there was no inner harbour only a long jetty exposed to all weather. Also Albany was several hundred miles shorter on the voyage from Capetown, the last port of call, and as the mail boats were all coal burners this was very important as carrying sufficient coal and water for long voyages and allowing for bad weather made Albany the ideal Port to set up a depot.

Some time during the 1850s the P & O Company built a long jetty. It was always referred to as "The Coal Heap Jetty". It was built of Jarrah and all the piles were squared to about 10". These piles had been squared with the adze or broad adze, as were all the piles in the first section of the Town Jetty. The jetty was only about 8 - 9 feet high and twelve feet wide.

The jetty commenced at a point about 600 yards to the east of Lawley park. There was a large area of flat rock that sloped gently to the water's edge. The flat sloping rock would have been an ideal place to have built the wooden dock making it easy to launch down the slope at high tide. The P & O floating dock was the first and only one built in W.A. I would imagine that the four steel lighters that we know for sure that they had would have been pre-fabricated in England and assembled here, whether they were put together in the dock or on the rocks at the depot is not known. The jetty was about 200 yards long and finished with a "T" end in about 14ft of water. I have fished from the end. For squid it was a good spot. You would always be sure of as many as you wanted.

I remember there being remains of a portion of a stone wall with signs of coal having been stored there. When the cutting for the railway line was put through the rock cliff the line went to the deep water jetty. They would have destroyed the rest of the stone wall and any buildings.

Towards the end of the jetty was a few planks of decking left. All the rest had gone and at the shore end it was not possible to get onto the jetty at all. This would have been dismantled to stop people getting on to the jetty as it was dangerous.

Armstrong & Waters used to have a shed on the beach - a long one which used to be near the overhead bridge. The shed was on the beach until it burnt down. This was where the bear punch came from.

The overhead bridge across the railway line from Lawley park was built for access to the municipal baths. Armstrong and Waters shed was built near the foot of the bridge. A large area of flat sloping rock ran down into the water which was very handy for getting boats out as small dinghies could come up on the rock. The steam launch *Loch Lomond* came to her end on these rocks.

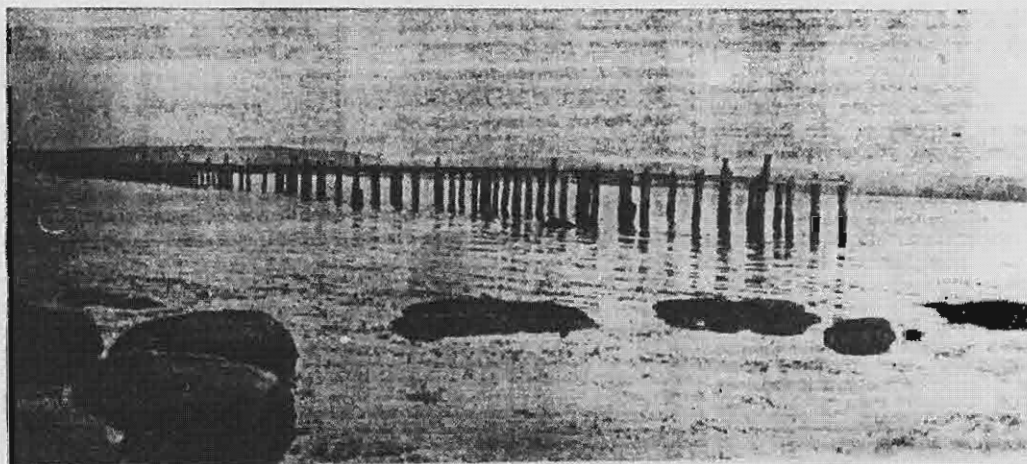
The bear punch which is mentioned several times in these writings would have been used when repairing the steel lighters. There were no air or electric drills in those days and all the drilling would have been done with a stand clamped on to whatever had to be drilled and using a ratchet. But for the thin 1/4 inch plates that the lighters were built of, it was ideal. The die could be changed for different size holes.

One man would set it on the plate and another man would put a big crowbar through the hole in the clamp and pull down. It was very quick and punched a clean hole. We used it to build two new funnels, one for *Awhina* and one for *Silver Star*. Armstrong and Waters would have acquired it when they bought the P & O plant. It was stored in their shed, which was on the beach near the overhead bridge

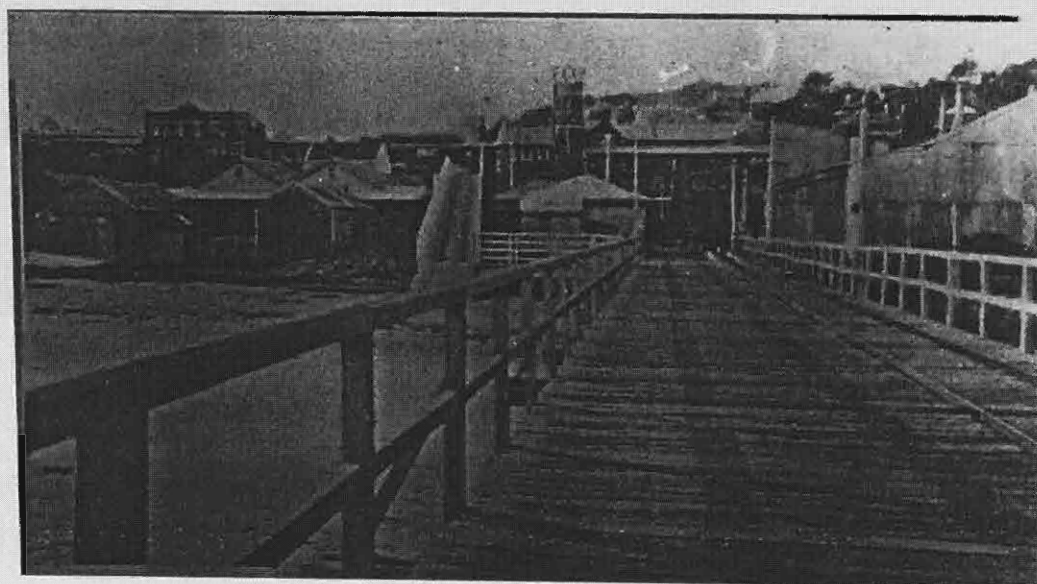
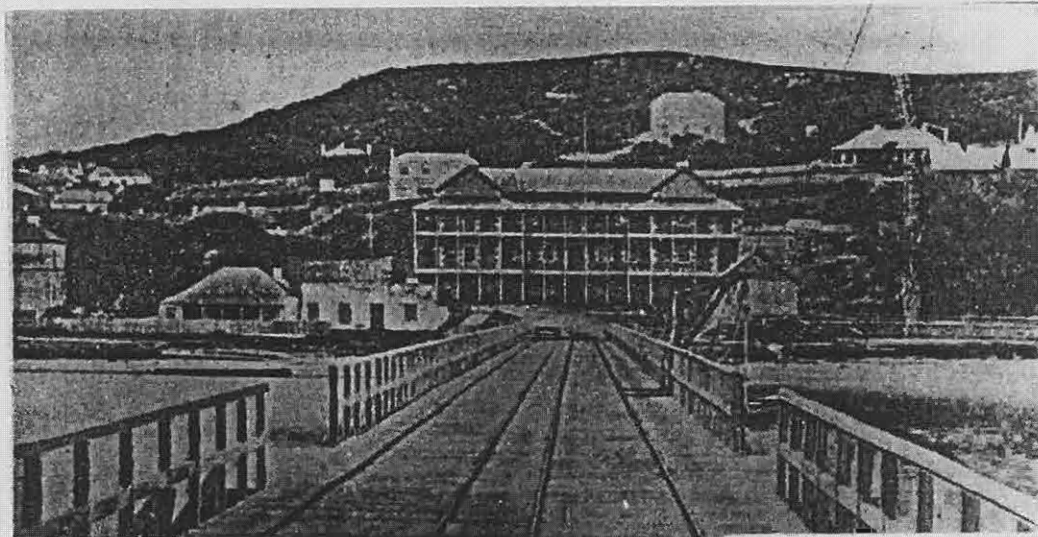
that led to the Albany Municipal Baths. You entered the bridge through Lawley Park. The shed was burnt down about 1925-26, and we salvaged it from the ruins a year or two later.



*Above : Albany in 1937 showing the two jetties with the remains of the old P & O jetty in between.
Below : The old P&O jetty in 1937 (Photos Les Douglas)*



Below : The Albany Waterfront : The first photograph shows the Post Office before renovations, the second the Post Office with its tower and Armstrong and Waters' shed and Foresyth's boat building shed. The bottom photograph shows bagged wheat awaiting loading.



FRENCHMAN BAY

The needs of ships calling at Albany to take on water led the Armstrong and Waters company to establish supply from a spring at Frenchman Bay. The P.&O. Company's lighters were, for the most part, used to transport it. The needs of the Boer war transports calling at Albany induced the firm to erect a fine dam at Frenchman bay, this being serviced from a fresh spring supply in the adjacent hills.¹ There is some dispute as to whether the dam was actually dug by the Norwegians for the whaling station. A long narrow jetty with two water pipes was established, although no trace of this now remains. This spring was used until an alternate supply of water was developed in 1912. Frenchman Bay was home to the Norwegian Sperm Whaling Company, which began operations in the late 1900s. A large whaling station was established with two whale chasers. There were no roads connecting Frenchman Bay to Albany, and it must have been a lonely life for the whalers, described for the most part as clean young men. The station remained in operation until 1917, when it closed after various restrictions were imposed by the government, as they were suspected of being German sympathizers. An attempt to re-open the station by other operators after the war proved unsuccessful, and the station became derelict and was eventually sold after it had been partly wrecked by a storm. Les Douglas' father, Clem Douglas, his grandfather William and his uncle Bert successfully tendered to dismantle it, and proceeded to do so. There was a vast quantity of wood around, and some of it was taken to build the wooden lighter mentioned elsewhere. The decking for this was supplied from the *Rip* a pilot schooner wrecked further along Vancouver Beach, and at that time with fairly substantial remains. There were also hundreds of wooden barrels, for whale oil, some in good condition which they were able to sell. The boilers and equipment from the whaling station went to the Point Cloates station, while the buildings were demolished and the wood removed. The station's jetty was in such a poor state of repair that the Douglasses had to construct a makeshift one of their own to bring the wood off. Some of this wood is still in storage, in good condition on a property at the place where the wooden lighter was constructed. Les Douglas' father also obtained a small boat from this purchase.



The Norwegian Whaling Station at Frenchman Bay, about 1917. The vessel is the Clem. (Photo Albany Museum)

¹ *The Western Mail* March 14, 1940

LES DOUGLAS WRITES :

"As I remember, Frenchman's Bay Whaling Station was operated by Norwegians at the beginning of the First World War.

In 1915 the station was closed down and the Norwegians interned.

After the War the Station was dismantled and some of the machinery sent to the new Whaling Station being constructed for the Federal government, at Point Cloates. The boilers were sealed up, floated out and hoisted aboard a ship in the Bay.

There was no road from Albany and no jetty big enough for a ship to berth at.

The large winches and other machinery had to be dismantled to small pieces for easy handling.

There were a large number of big sheds stretching along the beach front, behind a very long brick retaining wall.

A long flight of concrete steps led to the top of the hill. At the time of writing,[1991] the steps are still there.

The steps were always there. They would have been built for access when the factory was first built. The path went straight up to the first building on the hill which was the kitchen and mess room for all the workers. It was only about 100 ft from the top of the steps.

The men's quarters comprised of 5 huge houses including the kitchen and mess room. The four other buildings were spaced about 20 ft apart, to the right. These were the sleeping quarters and contained many rooms. I remember clearly, each room was painted a different colour. Being young I had never seen so many colours and to this day every time I think of Frenchman's Bay Station I see this rainbow of rooms.

All the buildings were built of Norwegian Pine, resting on long Spruce Pine timbers, supported on brick pillars about 2' off the ground. We made a mast for the "Lighter" out of one of the timbers (35' long)

There was not much of the Flensing Deck left. It had gone by the time the Douglasses got there.

There was also the remains of a large ramp that went out into about 10ft of water. It must have been held in position under water with large wooden crates because scattered about the bottom were 8 - 10 of these about 8 x 8 ft square. They were full of large pieces of granite. The crates were open type. The timbers looked about 6" x 3" spaced 6" apart. They appeared to be constructed in this manner so the underwater surge could pass through. They must have served as some protection for the underwater part of the ramp used to pull the whales up onto the large flensing deck. There was a very large winch on this deck.

We also bagged a lot of coal, and whale manure [mashed whale parts], which was sold in Albany.

All the houses and material that was not wanted for the Point Cloates Station was sold to Capt. Bert Douglas, Capt. William Douglas, Clem Douglas and a Mr. Johnson. Bert was Captain of the SS *Eucla*, owned by the State Steamship Service.

He was their first Captain when the service started with a converted Grimsby Trawler called the *Una*

The *Eucla* made several trips into the Bay and loaded material using the *Eucla's* surf boats. Loading from the small jetty that was built from the beach out to about 5' of water.

We built this jetty by first using timber 6" X 6". Pointing the ends with an adze, cross bolting them together on the beach, about 5' apart. Then standing them up in the water starting at the water's edge, two of us standing on them the other working the frame backwards and forwards. By doing this they would gradually go down into the sand.

The old jetty has long since been washed away by heavy storms, leaving only a few piles standing.

When the Station was closed down by the Government, they left two Norwegians as caretakers - the brothers Hurbert and Lans Larsen. These two built a double ended boat 30' long, about 9' beam and used it for sailing into Albany for their stores. These two men must have been naturalised. [These are the two Norwegians mentioned who tried to salvage the *Dunster Castle*. See Page 117.]

When the Station was all cleaned up my Father kept the boat the *Margaret*. Many an enjoyable fishing trip we had and we would race in the Annual Regatta.

Teddy Davis, a fisherman, bought the *Margaret* from my Father, Captain Clem.

When the Station was in operation, the two Whale Chasers, the *Clem* and the *Finn* caught the whales and towed them to the base. The oil was then stored in large wooden barrels.

Every now and then a ship from Norway would anchor in the Bay.

The barrels would be lightered out to the ship. I am not sure if the barrels would be emptied into the ship's tanks or not, but I am almost sure that they were and then would be sent ashore to be filled again and wait for the next ship.

There was no jetty able to berth overseas ships.

There was however a small jetty about 200' long with a large "T" Platform at the end which provided a good working area.

There was also a derrick for loading. A light gage railway line ran down to the jetty and connected to all parts of the station. Hand operated trolleys were used.

When we dismantled the Station we used these trolleys and later pulled up the rails.

In 1988 I saw some of these rails, also some of the jarrah planking that we boated up the river to build the lighter.

This was at the old Douglas Homestead, Top Kalgan Bridge.

For a short period my cousin by adoption, Lenny Powell (Uncle Bert's wife's brother's boy), about the same age as myself, camped with us. One day Grandfather started gathering timber and sheets of galvanised iron. We followed him around and loaded it onto the trolley and pushed the trolley to the end of the railway line which was at the end nearest to the Pipe Jetty. This seemed very strange to us as the loading jetty we had built was at the other end of the line. He picked up a couple of pieces of timber and said to us boys "Carry some pieces and come along with me." With Lenny on one end and me on the other, we picked up some long pieces and chatted about what was going on. Grandfather was half way along the beach by this time.

On the west side of the Pipe Jetty, about 50 yards high up on the bank was a nice grove of peppermint trees, with a clear patch in the middle. It had been used many times before as a camp site. Probably first when they built the dam and many times after for other purposes.

For a couple of days after we went on carrying the material. We knew by this time he intended building a new camp. A few days later we had completed a nice camp with a big fireplace in one end and a wooden floor. It was a beaut camp - we became quite thrilled in anticipation of shifting. High up on the bank you could see all over the bay. It was close to the fresh water and we would be able to shower under the pipe. We would not have to carry water. At the old camp we could not drink the water because the seagulls used to perch on the roof.

Finally, when all was ready, Grandfather shifted his gear in, but never said to us "Bring your gear along." When we asked him about it he said "You boys stay where you are. I am tired of your whistling and talking half the night."

But we reckoned that was not the only reason. The other was that we had started bagging the whale manure a couple of weeks before and it was alongside the camp. The whalers had dumped it at the east end of the works. There was a big hollow and it had been partly filled with the residue of boiling down the blubber to extract the oil. There was no smell until we started digging. we never knew it was there because over many years it had been covered with sand and there was a lot of scrub growing on top. It was only by chance that we found it. We were following a big galvanized pipe, about 4" in diameter and unscrewing it as we went. The pipe led us into the heap, and the pipe had been extended as the heap grew. It was

like discovering gold. It was an extra not reckoned for and sold easily to gardeners and small farmers.

It was awful to handle. You couldn't get the smell out of your hair or clothes. Even after boiling the clothes in a kerosene tin every couple of days. Every night after work we'd have a dip in the ocean and stand under the fresh water pipe at the dam.

And talking about gold, there had always been a story about men at the station striking some "ambergris" and hiding or burying it at the Station. It was worth more than gold at that time. Lenny and I spent a lot of our spare time searching but didn't have any luck.

Back to the camp. A few weeks after Grandfather moved camp Lenny went back to the country and I was allowed to move to the new camp. We had a big black cat at the old camp. Grandfather didn't like cats. Some time before I had coaxed the cat around the camp by giving it tinned milk and fish. Fish were plentiful and could be caught off the beach or rocks. The cat had become fairly tame - but not when Grandfather was around.

Well, the cat followed me to the new camp. One morning Grandfather woke up to see the cat on the table eating into a pound of butter. He reached out from his bunk and picked up one of his work boots. People wore big heavy working boots with iron horse shoes on the heel in those days. He sent the cat flying. The cat never showed up again. It went back to the bush."

According to Les Douglas the bricks used at Frenchman Bay by the Norwegians were all imported. The steps leading up to the tea rooms were built by the Norwegians. During their demolition of the factory, the Douglasses lived in a large shed built at the foot of the stairs by William Douglas. The existing tea rooms were built in 1928 on the site of the living quarters.

The wrecked vessel at the north end of the bay is the lighter *Elvie* (See alphabetical section of vessels) the launch *Fram* was also wrecked there and the schooner *Rip*, and an iron water lighter lies sunk off the beach. To the north the adjoining Goode beach contains the wrecks of the whalers *Fanny Nicholson* and *Runnymede*.¹ (q.v.)

Frenchman Bay Revisited. 20/1/91

The P & O Company dam is now extremely difficult of access owing to the intense undergrowth surrounding it. The dam cannot be more than five or so metres above the level of the beach, but so thick is the undergrowth that it was necessary at one point to crawl for about two metres on hands and knees. The thick undergrowth goes up to the water's edge, in some places overhanging it, with the result that one comes upon the dam suddenly, noticing it only when the ground becomes wet underfoot. The best method of approach appears to be up the creek bed, then veering to the right.

There is a small corrugated iron pumphouse on the left shoreward side, housing an engine that looks newer than 1912, and giving the name on the inside wall of Bates & Co. The stream discharges just next to this and again further along the dam, the two joining further down the hill. The dam itself is long and narrow, as long as a big swimming pool, but it is difficult to see its full length owing to the overgrowth. The stream enters at the north end, and there are two or more wooden barriers across the dam, and a pipe running across it from the pumphouse. According to Les Douglas there are pipes leading to the whaling station just past the south corner of the dam, but these could not be seen owing to the undergrowth.

The water is clear and fresh looking, and it is possible to see down it for a distance of six or eight feet, except that it is full of freshwater grass. The sides are lined with wood of a more recent date than the photograph, at the north end supported with buttresses. The wood looks only forty or so years old, but may be older.

It is difficult to locate where the men were standing in the 1890 photograph. The pipes have been replaced, and I tend to think that they stood on the landward side of the dam, in which case it may be opposite the present pumphouse, where an old pipe can be seen. It was not possible to go to the other side of the dam and check this, owing to the undergrowth.

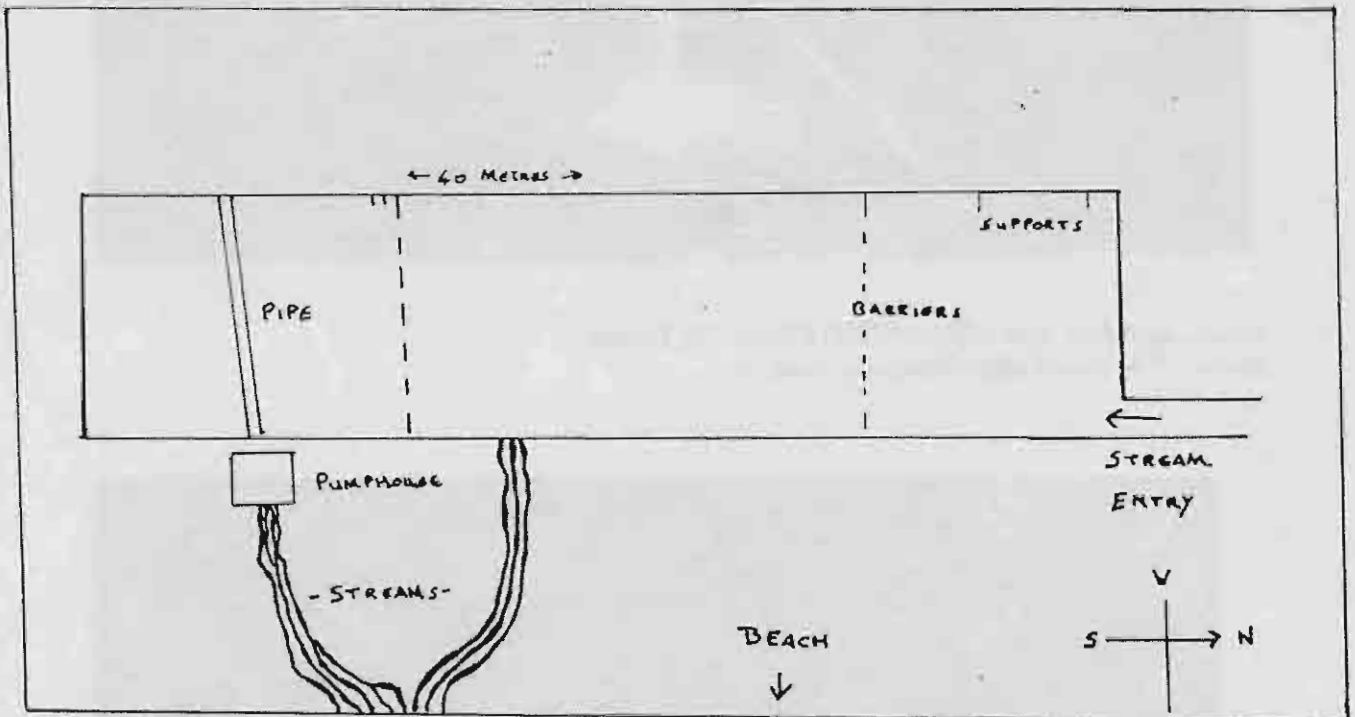
¹ These wrecks were surveyed, as far as possible, by students at the W.A. Maritime Museum in 1991. See *The Wrecks of Frenchman Bay* (Unpublished. W.A. Maritime Museum Report No. 49).

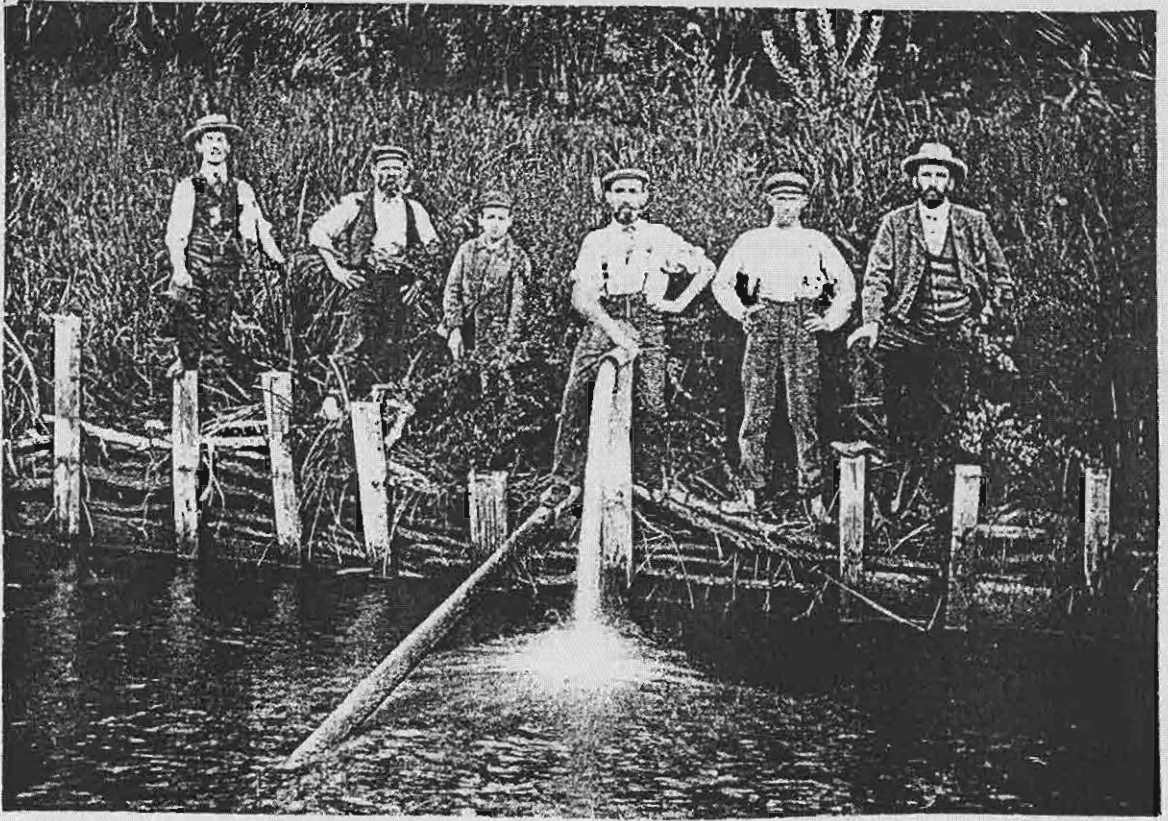
CONSERVATION SUGGESTIONS

The dam is protected by the almost impenetrable bush barrier and by the total ignorance of its existence by the local populace. Nevertheless, without maintenance, sooner or later the sides will collapse into it.

At the present time the dam serves no useful purpose, and it would make an excellent freshwater bathing place and enhance the attractiveness of Frenchman Bay as a bathing beach. A visit on a Sunday found the beach very crowded, and a freshwater pool of this nature would certainly be an added attraction. However, because of the tendency of children to drown themselves in it and the propensity for people to dump rubbish, it would probably be necessary to reduce the depth of the dam, perhaps by filling it with sand.

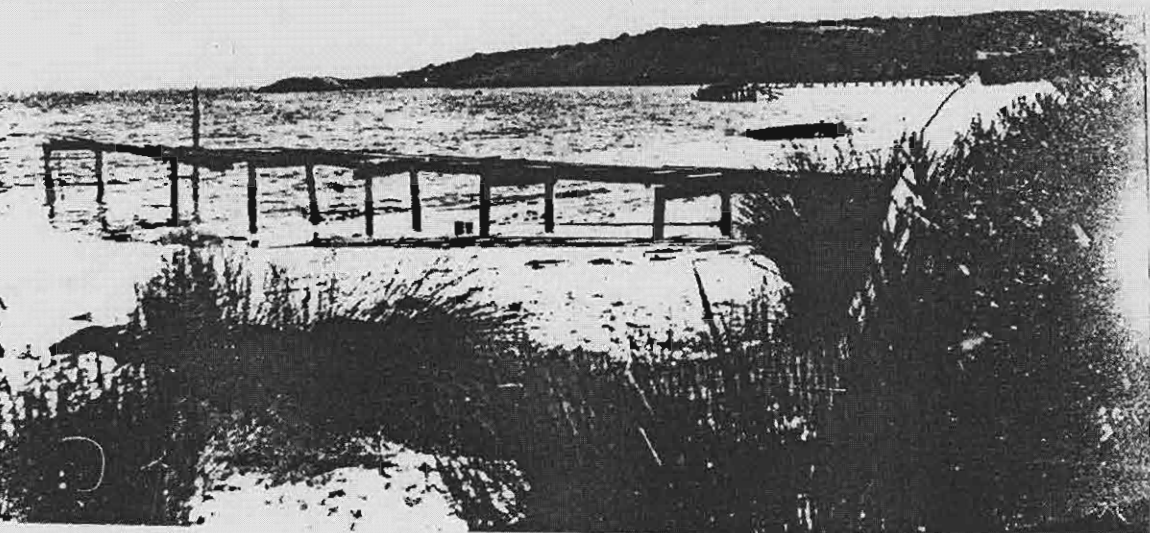
SKETCH MAP OF THE DAM AT FRENCHMAN BAY





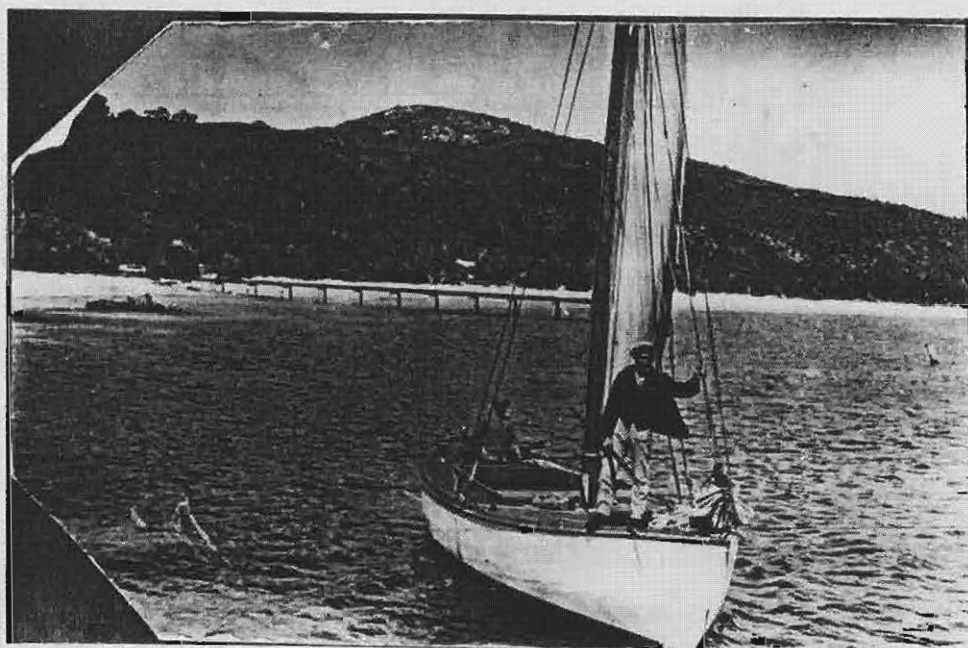
Frenchman Bay dam 1890 or 1900 (Photo Les Douglas)
Below : The dam today (Photo the author)



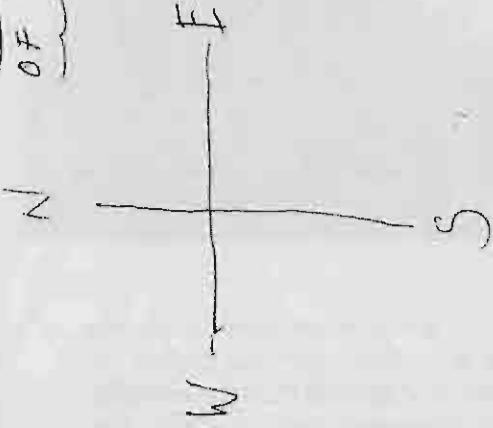


Above : Frenchman Bay in 1920. The the old water lighter jetty is in the foreground, the beached iron lighter can be seen in the middle distance and in the distance is the temporary jetty built by the Douglasses and behind that the whaling station jetty. All these were destroyed in the great south-east gale of 1921. The water pipe to the right of the photograph has also gone.

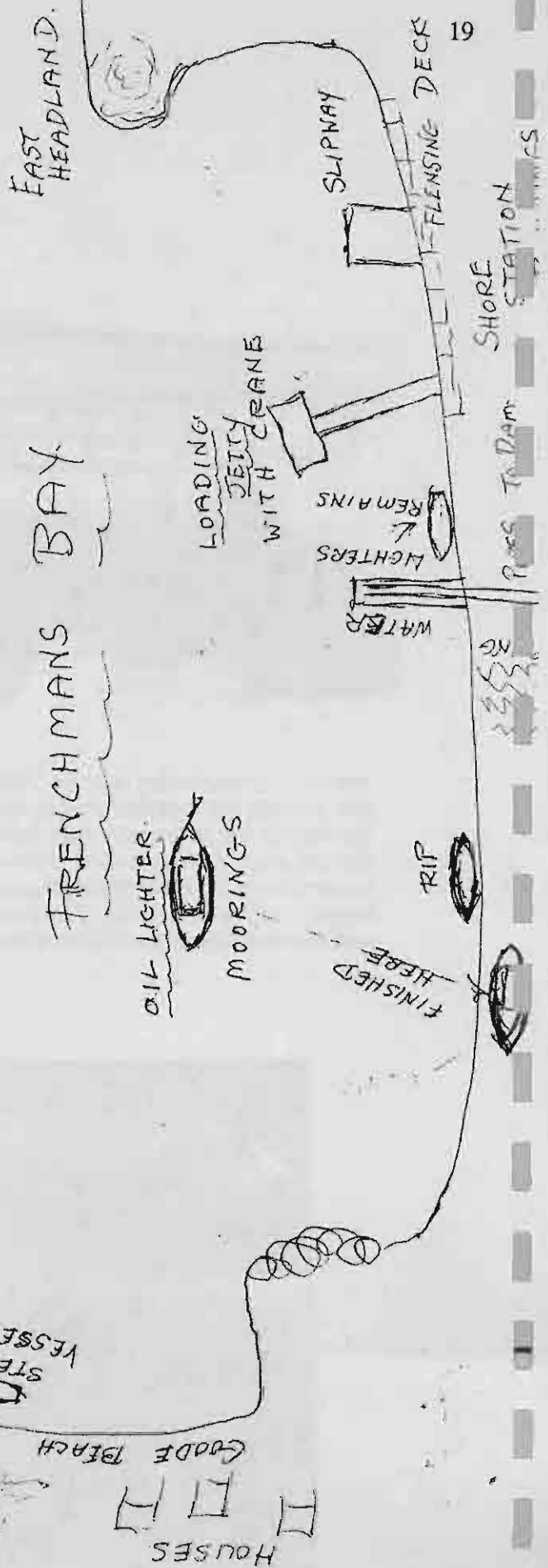
Below : Frenchman Bay. The two Norwegian brothers aboard the Margaret, with the iron lighter and lighter jetty in the background. (Photos Howard Hartman)



VERY ROUGH SKETCH
TO SHOW APPROX POSITION
OF WRECKS



FROM
 H.L. HARTMAN
 34 VANCOUVER STREET,
 ALBANY, W.A. 6330



SKETCH MAP OF FRENCHMAN BAY AND GOODE BEACH BY HOWARD HARTMAN

THE MARINERS

After the end of the P & O period in 1880 two families in particular contributed to the maritime development of Albany and its coastal trade and communication. They were the family of Alex Armstrong (d.1901), who later in association with George Waters (1864-1926) formed the Armstrong and Waters Company, and the Douglas family, of whom the two notable pioneers were William Douglas and his brother Frederick.

Alex Armstrong began a harbour transport service in 1883 in partnership with George Waters with the launch *Loch Lomond*, and came to take over much of the P & O Company's stock, such as the coal deposit, lighters and the floating dock. As time passed Armstrong developed a harbour tug and transport service with the purchase of the steam tugs *Escort* in the 1880s, *The Bruce* in 1898 and the *Dunskey* in 1901. Later purchases were the ferry *Silver Star* in 1910 and the steam tug *Awhina* in 1912.

The company operated a coal and water supply service to vessels calling at Albany, in addition to its tug and ferry service. After a period of intense activity during the First World War the company gradually declined, and folded in 1926 when the heirs of Alex Armstrong merged with the Douglases to form the Albany Tug Company, which lasted until 1936.

William Douglas (1848-1932) started in competition with Alex Armstrong in harbour service with the launch *Perseverance* in 1883 and later with the steam tug *Jessie*, which he brought over from Melbourne. He also owned the ketch *Perseverance*, sold in 1893. In 1896 he purchased the large steam tug *Dunskey*, later sold to Armstrong and Waters, and in 1904 the schooner *Iris*. His most famous exploit was his rescue with the *Dunskey* of the crew of the *City of York* in 1899. His son Clem Douglas (1881-1954) and grandson Les (b. 1909) continued the family business and on the closure of the Armstrong and Waters company in 1926 formed The Albany Tug Company with the *Silver Star*, *Awhina*, *Bonthorpe* and several smaller vessels.

Fred Douglas (1852-1916) was responsible for pioneering the South Western coastal trade and packet service to Esperance with his schooner *Agnes*, which was wrecked in 1892 and he continued in the schooner *Grace Darling* until 1910. Fred Douglas and the *Grace Darling* were a much admired combination as a crack mariner and a smart vessel, and Douglas' most famous exploit was the rescue, in the *Grace Darling*, of the 196 passengers and crew of the steamer *Rodondo*, wrecked near Middleton Island in 1894. His last vessel was the *Laura* sunk in 1916.

His obituary stated:

"Captain Fred Douglas, a pioneer of the South East shipping, spent the best portion of his long and useful life by conveying to the settlers between Albany and Eucla their daily necessaries. The deceased navigator knew every reef, haven and inlet along the Southern Coast as familiarly as a citizen knows the terrace and piloted his popular schooners *Agnes* and *Grace Darling* in all weathers without a mishap. During one of his voyages Captain Douglas rescued the passengers and crew of the wrecked steamer *Rodondo* ¹ which struck the Pollock reef south of Israelite Bay one rough night."

(Douglas Collection)

¹ In this record spelt *Rhodondo*

ARMSTRONG AND WATERS

Alex Armstrong came to the colony in 1861 as a Sergeant and was stationed in Perth for two years and then came to Albany.

For the first 14 years he filled the position of warder in charge of convicts, and then retired from the service on a pension. He then entered the boating business which he carried on successfully up to the last six years when his son and son in law Mr. A. Armstrong and Mr. Geo Waters took over the business. Prior to coming to Western Australia Mr. Armstrong was in the Blackwatch Regiment, which he joined at the age of 20, and served with them through the Crimean War, taking part in the siege of Sebastapol also the battles of Balaclava and Alma, for which he holds medals. He was also a recipient of a medal from the Sultan of Turkey in 1855. He left a widow, one son and five daughters.¹

In 1882 Alex Armstrong senior bought the launch *Loch Lomond* and entered into the partnership of Armstrong and Waters at Albany. Mr. Alex Armstrong (His Son) was about seven years old when his family left Scotland, and he later continued with his parents' concern. He was a former Mayor of Albany. Through failure of the fisheries, the family with others suffered reverses and young Alex took a trip of 150 miles across the country to engage in shearing. On the revival of better times father and son concentrated on shipping and in 1883 *Loch Lomond* was purchased. In 1888 the *Escort* was added to the fleet, and the *Jessie*. Seven years later *The Bruce*, and then came the *Dunskey*,² *Silver Star* and the *Awhina*. A Master Mason, Alex Armstrong also served as Mayor of Albany and was a member of the Albany Chamber of Commerce.³

George Waters died in Perth on 15/10/1926 at the age of 62, while under medical treatment. He was a native of Wick, Scotland. He was a son in law of Alex Armstrong Sen. who founded the firm in 1883 - admitted to partnership a couple of years before the death of the founder. An active sportsman, he was well known as the finest local exponent of the game of bowls.⁴

"Black Alex" was born in 1884, the nephew of A. Armstrong. He was also on the *Dunskey* at the time she was wrecked and worked on the *Awhina* and *Silver Star*, later in partnership with the Douglasses in The Albany Tug Company.



Alex Armstrong ("Black Alex") and Frank Eliot on the *Castlemoor* (Photo Eric Douglas.)

¹ *Albany Advertiser*, 22.10.1901.

² *The Western Mail*, March 14, 1940.

³ *Dictionary of Western Australians, 1829 - 1914, Vol 4. Part A - K. The Challenging Years 1868 -1888.* University of Western Australia 1984.

⁴ *Albany Advertiser*, 18.10.26



Above : Members of the Douglas family. From left to right : Clem Douglas, William Douglas Sen., William, Albert (Bert), Thomas (Seated), Edward (ted) Emma and Percy Douglas.

THE DOUGLAS FAMILY

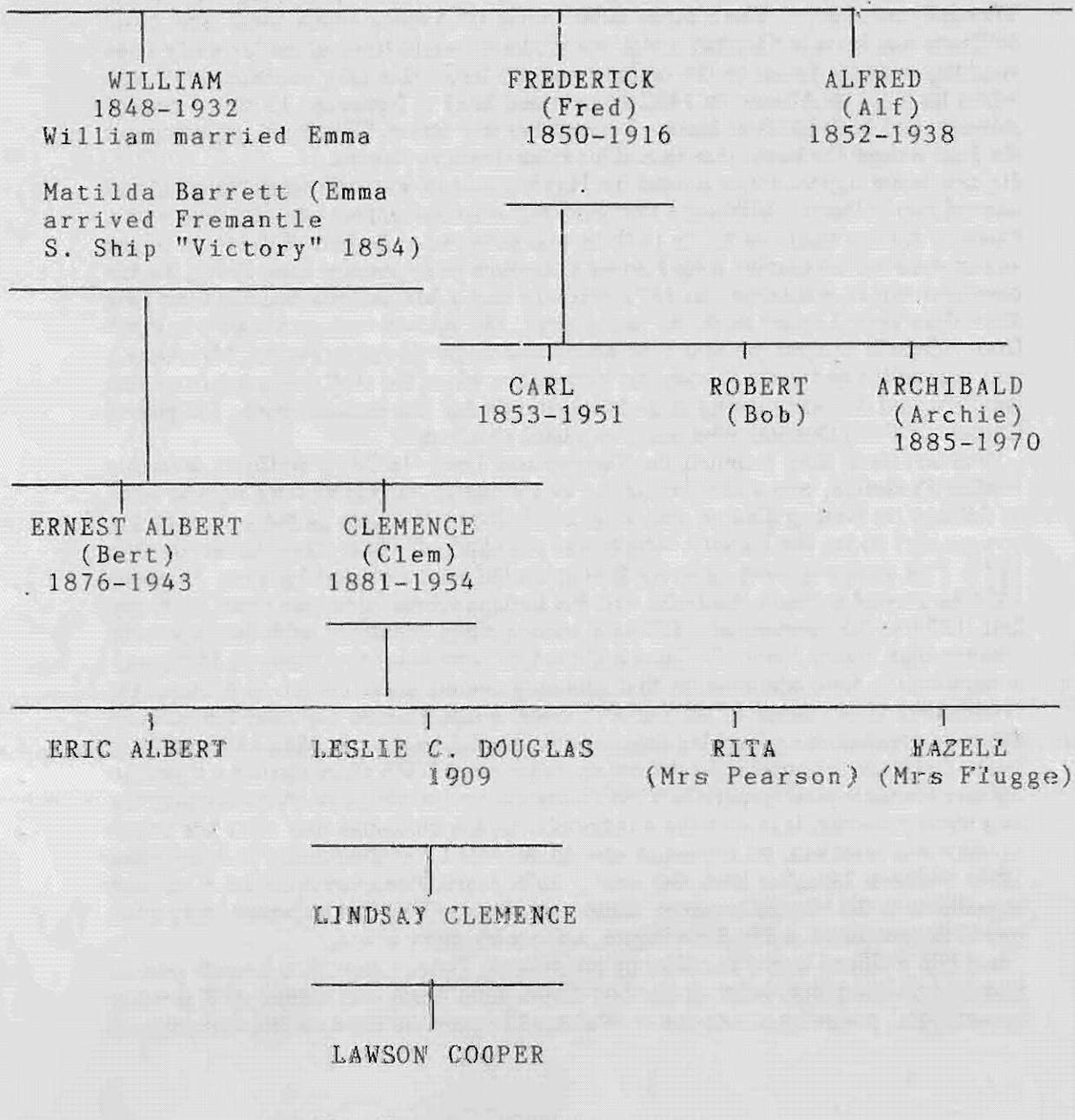
THOMAS DOUGLAS
1823 to 20/02/1897
Born at Cambridge U.K.
Died at 4 Robinson Avenue
Perth, Western Australia.

PHEOBE DOUGLAS (nee Wisbey)
1826 to 26/05/1910
Born near Cambridge U.K.
Died at 4 Robinson Avenue
Perth, Western Australia.

Married on: 25/12/1847

Arrived in Fremantle on the Sailing Ship "Sabrina" 1852.

THOMAS & PHEOBE



WILLIAM DOUGLAS

The following biographical sketch of William Douglas was written by his grandson Les Douglas.

Captain William Douglas was born 22nd January 1848 at Hinxton near Cambridge, England. He was the first child of Thomas and Phoebe Douglas and emigrated to Western Australia with his parents on the vessel *Sabrina*, arriving in Fremantle, 19th June 1852. His parents settled on the south side of the Swan River and became the third family to settle in South Perth. Douglas Avenue carries the family name. Thomas Street runs close to Douglas Avenue and it would be interesting to discover if this street was named after Thomas Douglas. Thomas held a large area of land extending along the river. On some he planted orchards and gardens. He rowed his produce along the river and established a shop on about the site of the Town Hall. In later years his gardens were worked by the Chinese. As late as 1914 one of his sons, Arthur, held 20 acres of land. That land now forms most of 'The Sir James Mitchell Park'. William was educated at Bishop Hale's Perth Boys School, which he attended by rowing across the river from his home in South Perth.

On July 5th, 1868 William married Emma Matilda Barratt in Perth. They were to have eight children of which six survived. William, Edward, Bert, Clemence, Thomas and Percy. The couple were living in Albany when their first child William was born in October 1869. As William would have spent his early days working with his father in the orchard and gardens, this may explain the reason when he went to Albany in 1882 he selected land at Nanarup, 11 miles east of Albany, and built his first home. I remember my father, Clemence, pointing out the land around the house that he and his elder brothers cleared.

He saw better opportunities around the Port because he lost interest in Nanarup and moved into Albany. William's first recorded employment was as a co-driver on a Perth to Albany mail coach. In 1870 he was believed to be part of the crew of the vessel *Adur* which carried John Forrest's supplies to Esperance from Perth, for his overland trip to Adelaide. In 1872 William and a Mr. Alcock founded the first Rechabite Tent [Lodge] in W. A. at Albany. Mr. Alcock was on his way to Perth from Adelaide to open the first Tent which was to have been in Perth. Mr. Alcock was compelled to stay in Albany for a few days while his ship sheltered from bad weather, and disliking living at an hotel (the Order is a teetotal one). He joined Captain William Douglas who was also a total abstainer.

Between them they founded the Plantagenet Tent. In 1873 William, with his brother Frederick, was a member of the victorious Christmas rowing regatta team in Albany on Boxing Day of that year. 1873 shows William as the owner of the one-masted cutter the *Victory*, which was wrecked off West Cape Howe in June 1875. This seems to have been the first recorded vessel owned by him. In about 1876 he moved to South Australia with his family, where he served from February 2nd, 1876 to 5th September 1879 as a second class constable with the Adelaide Metropolitan Police Force. William and his family returned to Albany in 1879, and is supposed to have operated the first privately owned steam launch in Albany. He is recorded as the owner of the *Perseverance*, a small steam tug used for harbour duties in competition with Alex Armstrong's *Loch Lomond*. In May 1885 William in the *Perseverance* rescued a drowning sailor from HMS *Opal* during a squall in Albany Harbour. (See Appendix V) William was to use the name *Perseverance* for two more vessels. It is perhaps a reflection on his character that after his initial *Victory* was wrecked, its successor should be called *Perseverance*. In November 1890 William Douglas took the newly built ketch *Perseverance* on a sealing expedition to the islands between Albany and Eucla. This had to return early after one of the members, a Mr. John Hayes, was accidentally killed.

In 1889 William was a member of the Albany Town Council, a bronze plaque fastened to the clock work in the Old Town Hall bears the names of 9 serving councillors. Amongst the names is William Douglas. In 1894, in the company of

his son Bert, and others he took part in a gold prospecting trip to the Dundas and Coolgardie goldfields. They may have been employed in the Douglas Prospecting Company, a South Australian registered company which had its offices in Albany at that time.

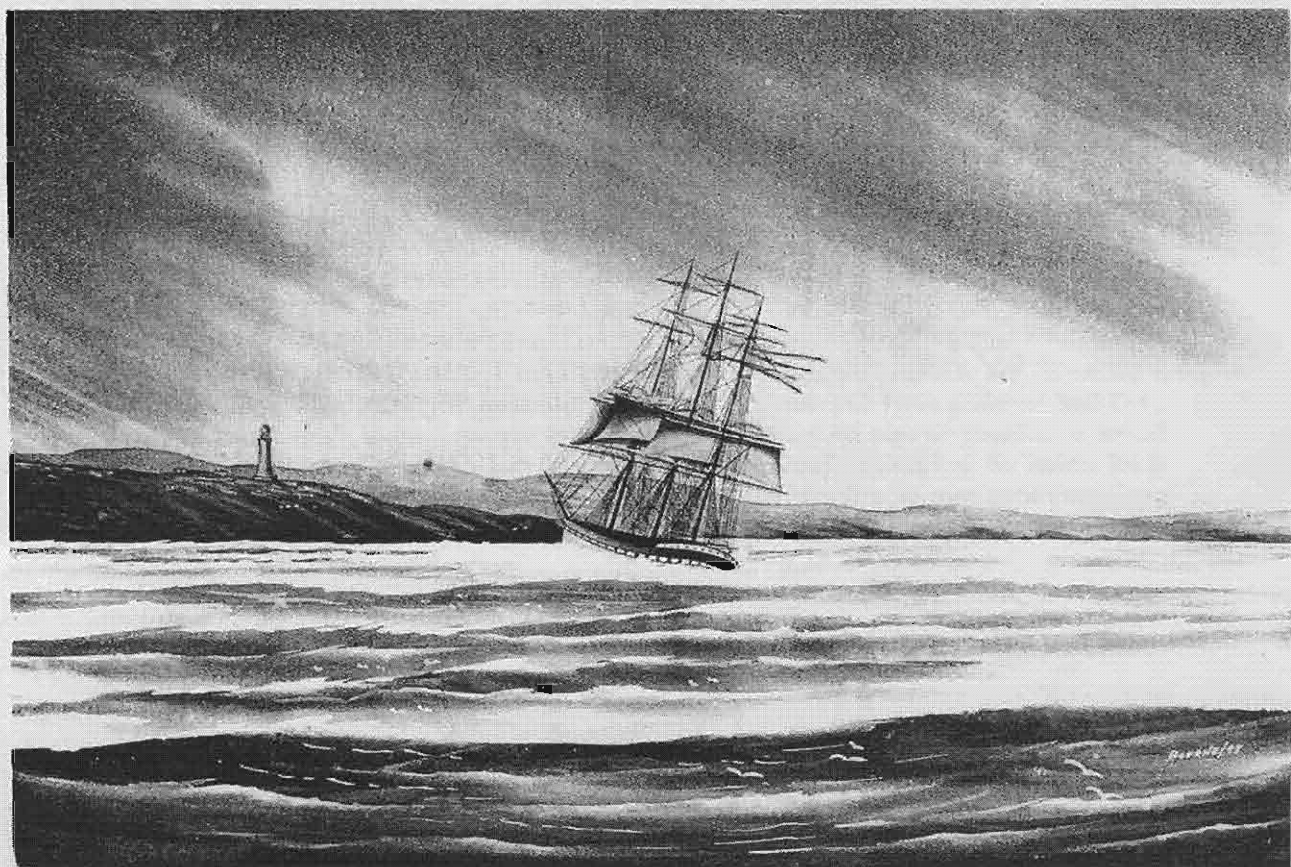
Several letters from William and his son Bert to William's son Ted survive, graphically depicting the rigours undergone by the company during 1894 and 1895. The trip does not appear to have been very successful. In 1886 William sailed as assistant engineer on the vessel *Jessie* on a voyage from Melbourne to Albany. Discharge papers for that voyage, between 14th August and 27th September, still survive. William had purchased the *Jessie* for use as a steam tug in the Port of Albany. In the same year, he received his Masters Certificate for the Port of Albany. In 1896 he purchased the steam tug *Dunskey* in Sydney, and sailed and steamed it to Albany, arriving at 11. 30 pm on December 24th 1896. The vessel was floated in the P&O Company's floating dock, when necessary. A photo of The *Dunskey* in that dock in 1897 still survives. The tug was used for carrying passengers, as well as her more mundane tasks as tug and tender. A photo of the vessel taken in 1897 shows a sign on her bridge railings offering return journeys for one shilling. On Thursday September 1st 1898, the small steamer *Gertie* ran aground in the entrance to Wilson's Inlet, following a south-east gale. Already engaged to tow the *Gertie* to Albany, that vessel having signaled she had run out of coal, Captain William at once put off in the *Dunskey* to rescue her. Bad weather forced a postponement of the attempt, but by Sunday 4th it had cleared sufficiently for another attempt. The stranded vessel was reached at 5 pm and preparations commenced the next day to haul her free.

The *Gertie* was floated off at 1200 pm on the 6th, and towed back undamaged to Albany, arriving there at 2. 20 pm. Captain William received 1000 pounds for the salvage. July 1899 found Captain William Douglas and the *Dunskey* operating out of Fremantle. With him in the crew was his son Clem. On July 12th 1899, following a terrible gale, the sailing ship *City of York* ran onto Rottnest Island's northern shore to become a total wreck. On the next day, in the *Dunskey*, William effected a daring rescue of the eight crew still aboard the wreck. While his son Clem and a young assistant named Bill Riley manned the *Dunskey* beyond the rolling surf, and in several perilous journeys, laid his dinghy under the stern of the *City of York* to rescue the men. (According to some accounts he made eight journeys; according to others, three.) Recommended to the Royal Humane Society for his bravery, he nevertheless received little more than the acclamation of his contemporaries for a courageous and very dangerous rescue. In about 1904 William purchased the three masted barquentine *Iris* from J & W Bateman of Fremantle, and chartered this vessel between South Australia and southern coastal ports. Not having a seagoing Master's Ticket, (He had a costal Master's Ticket) William could not command the vessel, but remained "close to their action" by sailing as Purser. A discharge paper for the voyage between January 21st and August 24th 1904 survives. During one of these voyages, the *Iris* was dismasted in bad weather and a photo of her at Port Adelaide shows her with her foremast broken at the topsail yard and hanging over her starboard side. 1906 found William back at the Kalgan River in Albany where he built the 5 ton timber steam launch *Perseverance*, the third vessel of that name. Surveyed on January 11th 1907 as a "propelling" launch, equipped with one oil engine, naptha burning 6 hp, the *Perseverance* was licensed to carry up to 40 passengers in the Port of Albany.



Above : William Douglas (Centre) with the crew of the *Dunskey*, 1897. His son Clem Douglas is on the extreme left of the picture. (Photo Les Douglas)

Below : The *City of York* the day after the wreck. Painting by G. Brown, 1899. Collection the Western Australian Museum. By permission.



In 1910 William and his Son Clem sailed in the motor launch *EMD* (Emma Matilda Douglas) to the Leeuwin looking for salvage from the RMS *Pericles*. The ship had struck a rock and sunk a few miles off the Leeuwin. The launch *EMD* had been built for William by an Albany Boat Builder Bill Geary about 1908-1909, 30 ft long, 9 ft B, 3 ft draught, powered by a 14 hp, 4 cyl Wolverine petrol engine. Fitted with a mast and sail, the mast could be lowered so as to pass under the lower Kalgan Bridge.

In December 1912, with many other residents of the district, many of whom were his descendants, William and his wife Emma attended the opening of the (Upper) Kalgan Hall, as guests of the Kalgan River Settlers Association. 1915-16, William commenced building a home high on the bank of the river at the Top Kalgan Bridge. The house was built of stone. The house still stands. The writer as a young boy helped him to build it.

In July 1916-1918 William was again attempting to salvage a vessel on the South Coast. This time at Fanny's Cove east of Albany. This time however the attempt to pull the stranded vessel, the *Dunster Castle*, from the beach ended in failure. She eventually became a total wreck.

1919 -1920

"The Lighter"

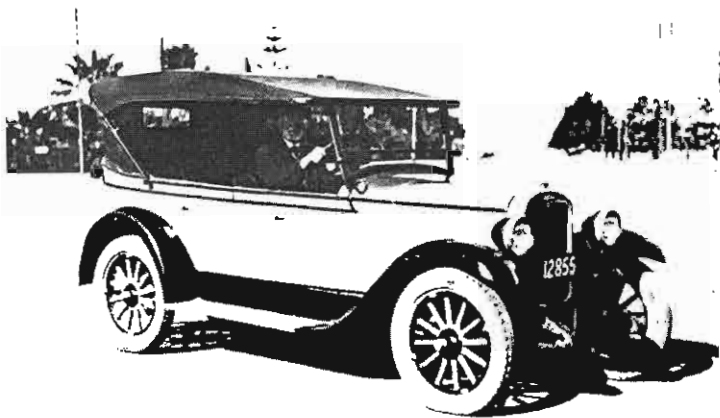
William built the lighter on the bank of the river just below his home. The lighter was built for his Son, Captain Clem Douglas and was built to "lighter" or carry the fruit from the river to Albany. It was built of Jarrah planking and bush timber. The planking came from the old whaling station at Frenchman's Bay. Its dimensions were 40' long X 12' broad, 12" draught, depth of hold 7'. The same year William dismantled the Frenchman's Bay Whaling Station.

The housing, sheds and workshop were bought by William Douglas, Bert Douglas and a Mr. Johnson. The lighter was used to ferry the material from Albany. The writer, Les Douglas, helped his Grandfather through all of this period. William built many small craft including the lighter of up to 40 ft during his years on the Kalgan River, first while living at Killarney and then at Maitland. This property belonged to his son, Captain Bert Douglas, who at this time was employed by the State Steamship Coy as Master of their first vessel the *SSUna* and then the *SS Eucla*.

While living at Maitland he built his last home at the Top Kalgan Bridge. Here he built the lighter and several other small boats. It seemed that if William wasn't on a boat, he had to be building one. He was also very happy at the Kalgan. Five of his sons had land and orchards there. Three of them and their families lived within a mile and he had plenty of river and always a boat. Late 1924 William and Emma's sons, Percy and Thomas, sold the Kalgan River property. Thomas had bought a 20 acre orchard property at Bedforddale. Percy bought a house in Leederville. Percy was on the State Ship *Kybra*. William and his wife moved to Perth to be near many of their old family friends. They lived in Percy's house. It was there that they celebrated their Diamond Wedding. In 1929 William's wife Emma passes away. William, at the age of 80, William moved to Bedforddale to live with his son Thomas and daughter in law, Irene. In early 1932 he suffered a severe stroke which left him incapable of many activities and made his last days sad and frustrating.

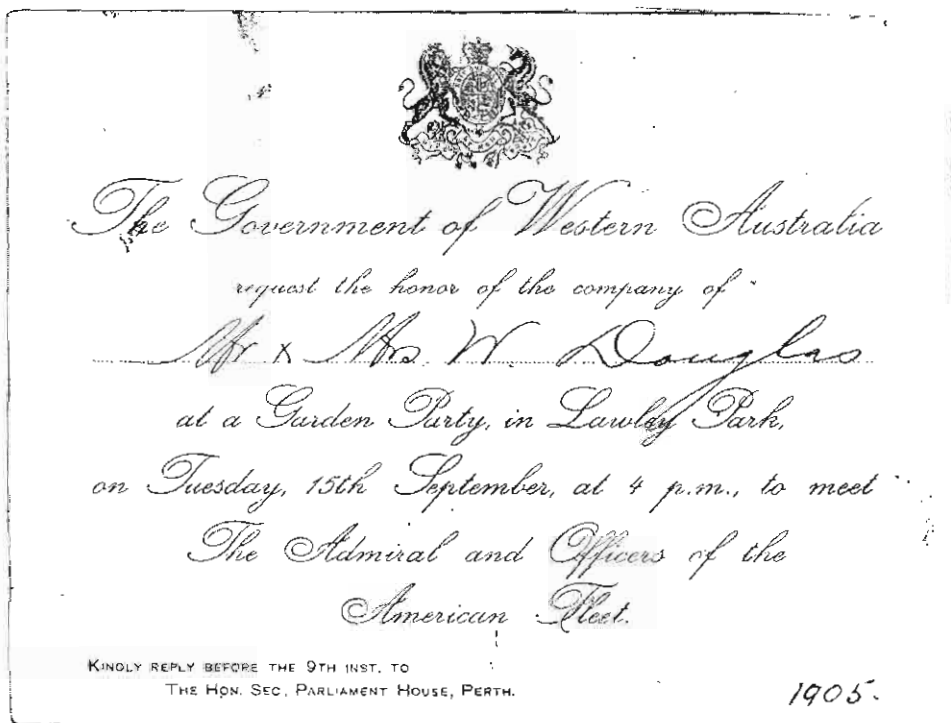
On November 11th 1932, while tended by Percy's wife Eunice, at 4 Thomas Road Armadale, William suffered a final fatal stroke and passed away that day. William Douglas was buried in the family plot at Karrakatta, in Wesleyan section, BA, #254.

Some idea of how intrepid William Douglas was may be gained from the fact that he obtained his driving licence at the age of 80, promptly bought a car and proceeded to drive it down to Albany.



Above : William Douglas with the Chevrolet. (Photo Les Douglas)

Below : An invitation to William Douglas to meet officers of the Great White Fleet, 1908, wrongly dated 1905. Original in possession of Les Douglas.



MAITLAND

Les Douglas writes :

As a very young boy I helped Grandfather William Douglas to build the old Douglas Homestead, Maitland at Top Kalgan bridge from foundations and then lived there while we built the lighter.

The house is built of granite on top of a large rocky outcrop. I remember we lit big fires on the stone to crack it, and would throw water on it and then break it off with big sledge hammers. There was plenty of stone on the site.

One wall of the kitchen is solid granite and at the bottom Grandfather built a seat along it. When sitting on the seat your heels would be against the base of the rock and the kitchen table was in front of the seat.

It was summer time when we started to build. We had no water on the site. I would carry two tins of pug (Clay similar to brick clay, usually a rich red colour.) from the river bank with a yoke across my shoulders and then back to the river for two tins of water to mix with it. He would always be waiting each time I got back (Would the day never end). It was along up hill walk from the river. One had to cross the road and go down to the fresh water side of the bridge. We would work from about 7 am to dark and then have to walk back down the track along the riverbank to the old house on Uncle Bert's property. "Maitland". Grandfather and Mother were living there. It would be at least a mile each way. It seemed about 5 miles going back after work.

It was not long before we built a small shed and caught some water from the rains, but we still had to supplement it from the river because the storage was only abig barrel.

After he had two rooms finished and roofed he got a 1000 gallon tank and he moved in and built the rest of the house over several years.

"Maitland" was called after the Melbourne Coy's Steamship, *SS Maitland* of which Bert Douglas was one of the early coastal Captains.

I remember on one occasion rowing and sailing a "long boat" Grandfather had built of River Oak at the Kalgan. His sons, Thomas and Percy had a saw mill and they cut the timber. The boat was about 18' long and 5' wide, the side planking was vertical (about 12' wide). The bottom was vee shape and the planking was crossways, not for and aft, because no long trees of oak were available.

We rowed and sailed (mostly rowed) as it was very calm from the Top Kalgan Bridge to Frenchman's Bay, a distance of about 35 miles. Leaving the Top Kalgan at 3 am and arriving at the Bay at about 6 pm.

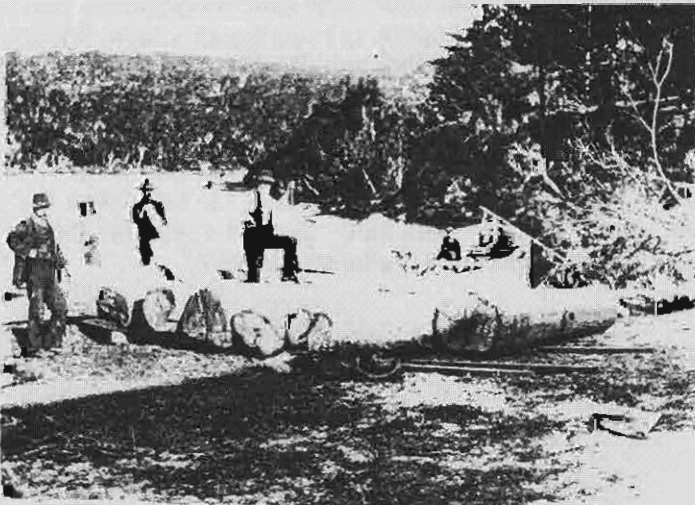
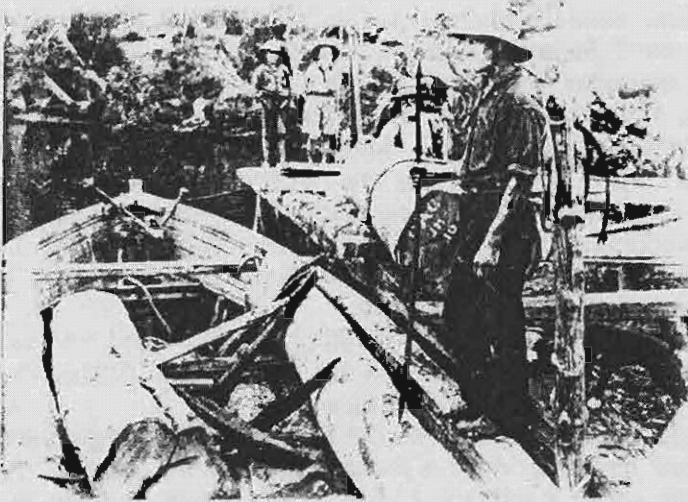
Some years before this Clem Douglas (my Father) and I, boated the machinery for the Tom and Percy's Mill from Albany to the Top Kalgan Bridge in the Motor Launch *EMD*, owned by my father at that time.

We had to rig a tripod of bush timber on the bank to lift the engine and flywheel from the launch and lower it onto a forked bush timber sledge. It was then dragged up the bank about 2 miles to Uncle Tom's house by three horses. The house and property later became "Maxton". On another occasion I remember my Father and I sailing the lighter from Albany to Frenchman's Bay. We left at about 3 am one morning. Father said we would have to leave early so as to catch the wind off the land which was North Westerly. We sailed down the Albany Channel, out through the narrow passage between Rabbit island and the mainland. We had to negotiate through the passage with the sail down using two long sweeps (oars). About 18' long, these sweeps were used a lot going up and down the river. We would go to the bow, one person on each side - put the sweep on the bottom of the river bed and walk along the deck, pushing as we walked."



Above "Long boat" on the Kalgan made by W. Douglas, who can be seen in it with his family
(Photo Les Douglas)

Below : Shipping timber to Germany from William Douglas' property at Killarney.
The funnel in the second picture is that of the Mary.
(Photos Les Douglas)



FREDERICK DOUGLAS

Les Douglas writes :

'Captain Frederick Douglas will be longest remembered on the south coast in connection with his schooner, the *Grace Darling*, with which he rescued the passengers and crew of the steamer *Rodondo*, which sank after striking a reef in 1894

Frederick Douglas was born on the 8th of July 1850 at Hinxton near Cambridge, England. He was the second child of Thomas and Phoebe Douglas, and with his parents emigrated to Western Australia on the vessel *Sabrina*, arriving in Fremantle in June 1852.

His parents settled on the south side of the Swan River and became the third family to settle in South Perth. The population of South Perth at that time comprised the Douglasses, the Tonduts and the Puseys.

Frederick Douglas was a pupil of Perth's Government School when William Adkinson was its Headmaster. Here he won a poetry reading prize awarded by the Colonial Secretary. His first recorded job was with the Fremantle Post Office.

It is believed that he went to Albany at about the same time as his brother William in 1869, and took part in Albany's Rowing Regatta team on Boxing Day 1873. It is believed that he spent time sailing vessels along the coast, as well as spending time on William Douglas' vessels *Victory* and *Perseverance*.

Frederick Douglas married Priscilla Elizabeth Keyser in Albany on 7th December 1879. They had five children, Ida, Carl, Frederick, Archibald (Archie) and Grace. Priscilla Douglas died in 1889. Frederick married again in 1890 to Susan Rebecca Wellstead, whose parents farmed at Bremer Bay. There were six children of that marriage, Faith, Evelyn, Robert (Bob), Mona, Frederick Arthur (Fred) and Coral.

Frederick Douglas must have gained some knowledge of the south coast, as the records show that the schooner *Agnes* of 43 tonnes, built in 1874 was purchased in 1881 by Captain Fred Douglas for use in the coastal trade. This seems to have been Fred's first vessel, and appears to have had charge of the mail delivery to Esperance, as a newspaper account states that in 1891 Esperance was for five months without a letter, as Captain Douglas had gone to the Eastern Colonies to pilot the Millar Brothers' yacht across the coast to Albany.¹ Captain Douglas sailed the *Agnes* for eleven years before she was wrecked at Bremer Bay in April 1892. His wife Susan was with him on this occasion. Esperance was again without mail for two months. During this time he carried material for the construction of the Overland Telegraph and for the rabbit-proof fence. Frederick Douglas was back on the coast two months later with the *Grace Darling*, which he purchased in Adelaide. For eighteen years Fred Douglas and the *Grace Darling* became a legend along the south coast. At his retirement the local newspaper said:

"It is possible that no name is better known on the coast of Western Australia than that of Captain Fred Douglas. For 35 years he has traded between Fremantle and Eucla in his own sailing ship, and it is safe to say that he and his schooner, the *Grace Darling*, have entered intimately into the lives of the settler in the vicinity of the seaboard, at any rate so far as those situated to the coast of Albany are concerned. To him they have mainly looked for their supplies and in some cases he has been the one link between the back country man and the outside world. Many indeed have been his acts of kindness in meeting the wants of friends on shore, and the relationship between the two has consequently contained as much sentiment as business."²

In 1894 Captain Douglas rescued the crew of the SS *Rodondo* and 196 passengers. The *Rodondo* struck Pollock Reef and sank 12 hours later. Passengers and crew had managed to get onto Middle Island, from which they were conveyed to Israelite Bay. Accounts appear under the section on the *Grace Darling* and in Appendix I, II and III.

¹ *Australian Advertiser*, April 13, 1892, under Esperance Bay News.

² From : *Thirty Five Years On The Coast : Presentation to Captain Fred Douglas*. (Source Unknown)

Many young men commenced their careers with Fred Douglas on the *Grace Darling*.

To mention a few :-

Captain Harris served on the *Grace Darling* and the *Iris*, later to become Chief Harbour Master for Western Australia.

Captain Winzar, Chief Harbour Master, Western Australia.

Captain Bert Douglas. When the State Shipping Service was inaugurated in 1912, Bert Douglas was their first Captain taking charge of their first vessel, the SS *Una*, and later the SS *Eucla*. Retiring from this line he served as Pilot at Esperance, Bunbury, Geraldton and Albany.

Also Captains Carl Douglas, Clem Douglas, Archie Douglas.

The *Grace Darling* virtually became a training ship. Captain Fred Douglas, after a total of 40 years, 29 in command of the *Agnes* and the *Grace Darling*, retired in 1910 owing to ill health.

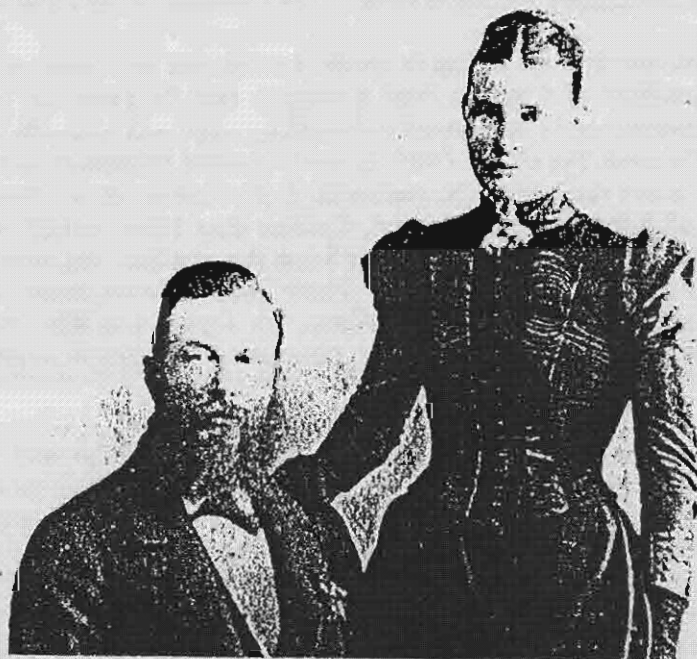
On his retirement he was presented with a gold Waltham watch and 50 sovereigns by citizens of the south coast from Fremantle to Eucla, in appreciation of his long services to them and his many acts of kindness, and this was presented at the Albany Town Hall by the Mayor, Mr. A. Armstrong. This watch is still in possession of descendants.

At the presentation Mr. A.H. Dickson of Henry Wills & Co. said :

“Captain Douglas had been generous, kind and considerate in every way and along the coast his name was a household word. No man knew the coast between Fremantle and Eucla better than he did and no matter how unpleasant the circumstances he had always done his duty, ever mindful of the needs of those among whom he traded.”¹

Captain Frederick Douglas first lived in Albany, and his first home was built on the corner of Brunswick Road and Lawley Park. It was the only house on that corner, and still stands. In about 1890 moved to Esperance. There he built the two story house “Fairhaven” in Dempster Street, next to the Dempster’s old homestead. Much of the stone was brought from the off shore islands, which the *Grace Darling* often carried for ballast. The limestone was quarried from near the Pink Lake. He also owned a large property near the lake. Also he built the old *Grace Darling* hotel in Esperance, and several other buildings. He died in 1916.’

Below : *Frederick Douglas and his second wife, Susan Wellstead. (Photo Hazel Flugge)*



¹ *Thirty Five Years On The Coast* Opt. Cit.

BERT DOUGLAS

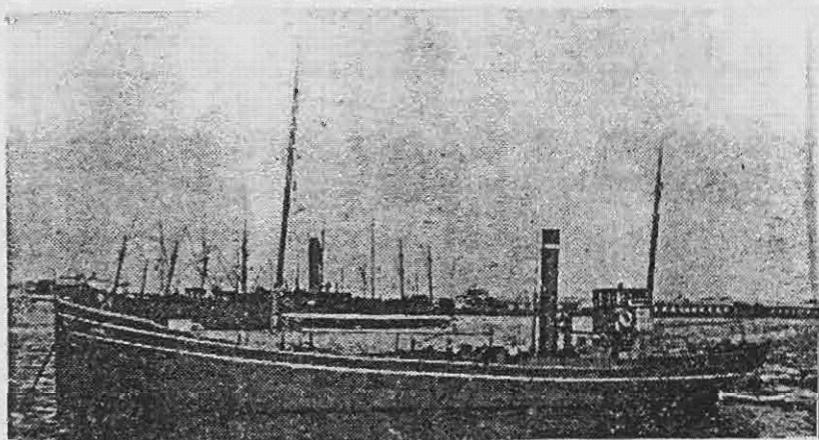
Ernest Albert Douglas (Bert) was born in Port Adelaide in 1876 and arrived with his parents in Albany in 1880. The son of Captain William Douglas he first saw service aboard the *Grace Darling*, trading to the southern coastal ports with his uncle Fred Douglas. The vessel was at this time engaged in running the monthly mail service for the West Australian Government along the south coast. In 1901 he joined the schooner *Laughing Wave* carrying machinery from Fremantle to Hopetoun to be used on the well-known Floater and other mines off the Ravensthorpe field, then coming into prominence. Much cargo was also exported from Albany to Hopetoun. Captain Douglas then transferred to the barquentine *Iris* trading between Fremantle, Albany and Port Adelaide, at times carrying cargoes of copper ore to the Wallaroo smelters.

In December 1905 Captain Douglas was engaged by the Melbourne Steam Ship Company to pilot the steamer *Maitland*, then running the mail contract on the south coast. He continued in the service of that company until the expiration of the contract, having charge of the steamer *Julia Percy*. He then chartered the *Grace Darling* and was engaged in transporting cargo to Hopetoun. In 1910 he joined the SS *Heina*, later known as the *Kurnalpi*, at Fremantle and proceeded to Melbourne to superintend her refitting for the W.A. coastal trade. He returned west with the vessel and his itinerary included Esperance in the south and Geraldton in the north.

He left April 1912 to start work with the State Steamship Company. He was its first employee and officer and was given charge of the 68 ton steamer *Una*, a former Grimsby trawler, with which he conducted the south coast mail service until August 7th of that year. The *Una* was replaced with the *Wexford*, a 564 ton steamer brought from England by the Scaddan Administration. She was subsequently re-named the *Eucla*. Captain Douglas remained with this vessel until his retired in August 1925 to take up a pilot appointment at Bunbury.

Captain Bert Douglas counts as a pioneer of the south coast trade and mail services. During the eighteen years he had command on the south coast the running of the vessel continued with unfailing regularity and without a mishap on a coast noted for pitfalls to mariners. It was said the Captain Douglas could pilot a vessel blindfolded through difficult approaches to Esperance and other South Coast ports, so familiar was he with every inch of the coastline. It was a further testimony to his skill as a navigator that he never once had a mishap in a lengthy career.

He finally retired from the service in 1935, and for the most part resided on his Kalgan River property "Maitland" until his death in 1943.¹



The Una. (Photo Les Douglas)

¹ From Obituaries, Douglas Collection.

CARL DOUGLAS

Carl Douglas was born at Albany December 26 1883. He was the eldest son of Captain Fred Douglas, owner and Master of the *Grace Darling*, by his first marriage. Carl Douglas went to sea with his father at the early age of twelve years starting his career on the *Grace Darling* and was on her at the time of the *Rodondo* shipwreck. He was on watch when at midnight he saw a light from a small boat in which the chief officer and some of the *Rodondo's* crew were trying to make towards Cape Arid for assistance.

Later on becoming a shipmaster his ship landed new settlers at remote parts of the South West, including the Thompsons at Nornalup, and carried cargo that helped build the Trans Australia railway. He also helped rescue gold seekers when their ship was wrecked near Salisbury Island.

When Fred Douglas sold the *Grace* in 1910, Carl Douglas spent a couple of years in Albany and sailed the small vessel *Laura* to the Leeuwin looking for salvage from the wreck of the RMS *Pericles*. He served on tugs with Armstrong and Waters at Albany for two years. In 1912 he served on the SS *Una* and SS *Eucla*, the first two ships owned by the Western Australian Government. His cousin Bert was skipper. In 1914 he served on the SS *Penguin* as Mate when this Government owned vessel was surveying on the south coast. He was later Skipper on the *Silver Star* when this vessel was sent to Hopetoun with supplies to relieve the settlers who had run out of provisions. (See story Appendix XIII)

In 1915, when McIlwraith, McEarchen brought the tug *Wyola* to Fremantle, then the largest tug in Western Australia, Carl Douglas was given command. During the First World War he skippered the *Wyola* when she served in the Mediterranean and the Dardanelles.

In 1918 Carl Douglas married Vera Potts in Albany, and they had three children, Ken and Winfred and Lloyd.

After 36 years continuous service on the *Wyola* he retired at the age of 68 and died in 1955.

Fremantle, August 26th 1910

"This is to certify that Carl Douglas has served in the *Grace Darling* from a boy to Able Seaman for a period of over 15 years & the last four years served as mate & has given every satisfaction. He has a thorough and complete knowledge of all Ports in the State as far as Fremantle, & is quite capable of handling any vessel in seamanship & is of strict sober habits & attentive to his duties."

F. Douglas, Master of the *Grace Darling*.¹

¹ Hazel Flugge.

ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS

Born in Albany in 1885, son of Frederick Douglas and Priscilla Elizabeth. He began his career by spending four years with his father Captain Frederick Douglas, on the *Grace Darling* in the late 1890s, beginning when he was thirteen. At the age of 15 he skippered a five-ton vessel, the *Mary Elizabeth*, from Port Adelaide to Albany with Jack Schuman, who had ordered it. The voyage took eighteen days.

In his own words :

"We went to take delivery and sail it back to Albany; the crew were as follows, Skipper Archie Douglas, then fifteen years of age, Jack Schuman, Owner. Alf O'Keefe, Billy Burr, deck hand. I was elected skipper because I was the only one that could read a chart, or at least I was supposed to, through watching my Dad on various trips to Adelaide, which was the only time my Dad used a chart. The chart was in two parts on one sheet, and with my scant knowledge of navigation, it almost completely baffled me as to how I was going to get from one chart to the other. I solved this by cutting the chart in halves and joining the two pieces together when I had reached the end of Part One and was prepared to embark upon Part Two.

My other navigational instruments consisted of an ordinary table fork with the prongs spread out to represent five miles according to the gauge at the side of the chart, and two ordinary wooden school rulers joined together with two pieces of tin which served as parallel rulers.

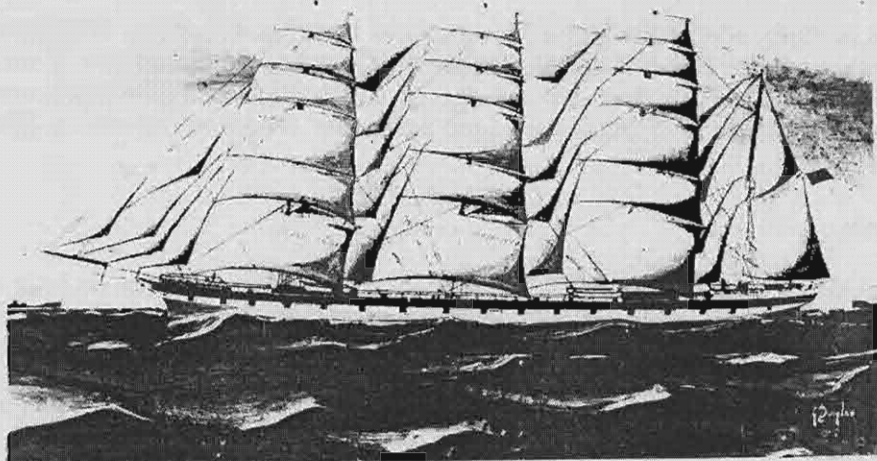
One night about midnight, it being Alf's and my Watch, Alf said "Skipper, I can smell land", and sure enough, when daylight came we were heading direct for Noonera, which was distinguishable only by a drum on a post on top of the ridge. Eventually we reached Port Malcolm, the port for Pontons Wool Station "Balladonia". We finally arrived in Albany 18 days after leaving Port Adelaide."¹

After this Archie Douglas served with his uncle, Captain William Douglas, who owned the three-masted barquentine *Iris*, and sailed from Albany for south-eastern coastal ports, Wallaroo and Port Adelaide. On his return he rejoined the *Grace Darling*, but left at the age of seventeen to sail on the full-rigged ship *Erin's Isle* in May 1902 with a cargo of Jarrah for London.

After serving on a number of ships, including one of the largest ships at the time, the 20,000 tonne *Caronia*, he then returned to Australia on the three masted barque *Formosa*. in 1909.

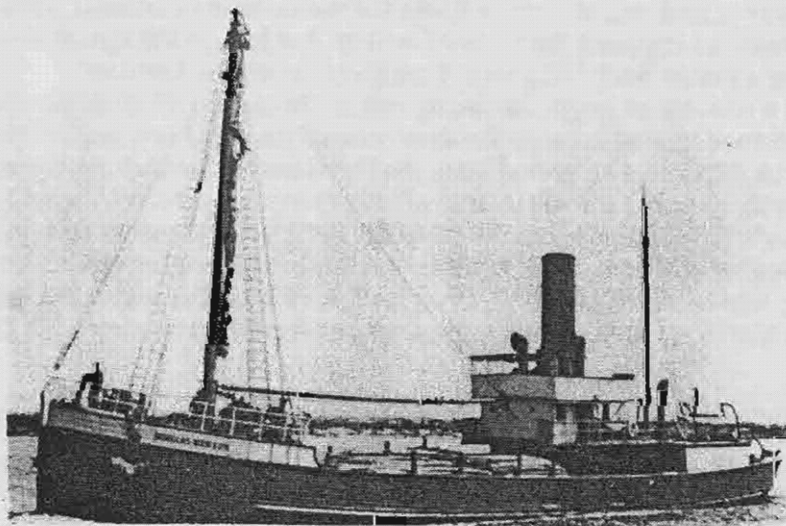
After returning to Australia he sailed with the Melbourne Steamship Company's SS *Monara*, trading between Sydney and Fremantle and all intervening ports. While in port at Bunbury the *Monarna* left suddenly to pick up survivors from SS *Pericles* at Flinders Bay. All the survivors from the *Pericles* were landed at Fremantle. After this Archibald Douglas served on SS *Kurnalpi* in the W.A. coastal trade, under his cousin Bert Douglas for 14 months, thereafter working for the Swan River Shipping Co. for 18 months, conveying cargo between Fremantle and Perth.

¹ From autobiographical notes by Archibald Douglas (Unpublished) Hazel Flugge.



The Erin's Isle. (Photo Les Douglas)

Archibald Douglas then served on the *Douglas Mawson*, a little wooden steamer of 300 tons trading between Fremantle, Surabaya, Borneo and ports en route. He skippered this vessel for a couple of voyages to Port Gregory for cargoes of salt. In 1915 he joined the State Steamship Company on the SS *Eucla*, again under Bert Douglas. He then transferred to the *N.2*, previously the captured German ship *Prince Sigismund*, later re-named *Bambra*, on the Fremantle-Darwin run. She ran aground on the Rob Roy reef, but got off and continued her voyage. After this he joined the Public Works Department and was in charge of the *Parmelia* and other dredges, dredging Cockburn Sound and Fremantle Harbour. Archibald Douglas then served as Harbour Master for Albany for six months and was Master Stevedore for Millar's Timber Yards for two years, and retired after serving on the SS *Mauritius* for a voyage to Mauritius.¹



The Douglas Mawson, which sank in a storm in 1923.

¹ Archibald Douglas *ibid.*

CLEM DOUGLAS

Les Douglas writes :

"Born in Albany on Aug 5th 1881, the fourth son of Capt. William Douglas. He was educated in Albany and in 1896 sailed on the schooner *Grace Darling*. On Aug 12 1898 he was working on the steam tug *Dunskey* when his father pulled the steamer *Gertie* off the beach at Denmark. In February 1899 he was on the *Dunskey* when she left Albany for Fremantle and was one of the three members of the crew when William rescued eight men from the wreck of the *City of York*. After the *Dunskey* was sold he sailed for a time on the schooner *Iris*, also owned by his father. In 1903 he worked for Armstrong and Waters and was a member of the crew of the tug *Escort* when it was lost at Deep River in 1903. He was again working on the *Grace Darling* when he met Ella Jessepher Jarrett who was living at Hopetoun, and married in Albany in 1906, this union resulted in six children - Iris, Leslie, Rita, Harold, Eric and Hazel. The same year saw him as skipper of *The Bruce*, again working for Armstrong and Waters. He also helped to build the *Perseverance*. In 1910 Clem Douglas and his father William sailed the launch *EMD* to the Leeuwin looking for salvage from the wreck of the RMS *Pericles*.

In 1912 he was again working with Armstrong and Waters and was on the Albany tugs when the burning tea ship *Janus* came into the harbour. In 1913-14 he sailed on the state ship *Eucla* of which Bert Douglas was the skipper and the first Captain employed by the State Shipping Service.

During 1915-16 he was employed by Wigmore & Sons of Perth, who had started a smoked fishing enterprise at Pallinup at the mouth of the Salt River. Clem was in charge of a launch the *Ventura* that made a weekly trip from Albany to take supplies down and bring back fish. The business was not successful and after about twelve months closed down.

During 1916-18 Clem Douglas, with his father and brother Ted Douglas, and Ted's son Walter, was unsuccessfully attempting to refloat the small steamer *Dunster Castle* which had run out of coal and beached at a place near Fanny's Cove, on the south coast. From 1919 - 1920 he helped build a lighter to cart fruit from the Kalgan River to Albany and also helped dismantle the Norwegian Whaling Station at Frenchman Bay. 1921 to 1926 saw him engaged with the lighter and the launch *EMD* in general harbour work including driving the piles for the new town baths, and replacing new steel beacons in the Albany channel and pulling the old wooden ones down.

1927 - 1934

In 1927 Armstrong and Waters sold their Albany boats and all equipment to a Mr. E. M. Christie. Clem Douglas was engaged as Captain and master of the floating plant, the *Awhina*, *Silver Star* and the launches *Mary* and *Georgic*. At about the end of 1927 Christie sold the entire plant to Captain Clem Douglas and Engineer Alex Armstrong who formed a partnership. In 1928 their newly formed *Albany Tug Company* performed a very successful pump operation to extinguish a fire on the vessel *SS Castlemoor*, which had fires in two of the holds filled with English coal.

In 1933 Captain Clem Douglas secured a number of baby seals from Eclipse island at the request of the President of the Perth Zoological Gardens; the price to be paid was five pounds or ten dollars for each seal. This was successfully established. 1932 was also the year that the Albany Tug Company bought the old steam trawler *Bonthorpe* and commenced converting the vessel to a tug to replace the *Awhina*. Late 1934 saw Captain Clem Douglas' wish was realized when the *Bonthorpe* berthed her first ship at the Deep Water Jetty, the Royal Australian Naval Cruiser *HMAS Australia*.

In 1935 the partnership between Armstrong and Douglas was dissolved. Armstrong took the *Bonthorpe*, and Clem Douglas took the *Silver Star*, *Awhina*, the launches *Georgic* and *Mary* and all their diving gear. The same year Clem Douglas sold and

delivered the *Silver Star* to the Cossack Lightering Co., and at the end of the year sold the *Awhina* to a scrap merchant in Fremantle, by the name of Hall, not Ball as the writer knew the Balls well.

In 1936 Clem Douglas bought tea rooms in York Street, Albany, next to the Albany Hotel, which he named after the *Silver Star*. Together with his wife and daughters Rita and Hazel conducted this business. Also about the same time he established the Douglas Guest House on the opposite side of the street. This was later re-furnished and became the temporary offices of the Albany Town Council, until the present Council Chambers were built on the same site.

Some time in 1940, during the Second World War, Captain Douglas was sent to Fremantle and was in charge of SS *Emerald*, carting material to Garden and Rottnest Islands. This was Clem Douglas' last active sea job.

In 1947 Captain Clem Douglas sailed from Fremantle on the 35ft auxiliary ketch *Allanah*, with Denis Robinson owner, and Bob Robinson. A stay of two days had to be made at Hamelin Bay north of Cape Leeuwin to avoid bad weather off the Cape. Then, rounding the Cape during a brisk blow the boat was dismasted and they had to put into Flinders' Bay while an emergency mast was fitted. Leaving Flinders' Bay in good weather the boat encountered a south east wind three months out of season and had to use the engine to make headway. Off West Cape Howe the petrol supply ran out and they had to beat against the wind until they were off Eclipse Island. Then the wind died away and it took more than twelve hours to cover the remaining distance to the town jetty. Denis Robinson, later Mayor of Albany, who bought the boat in Fremantle paid tribute to Captain Douglas. As navigator, his landfalls were made perfectly and his intimate knowledge of the coast was shown repeatedly. The trip lasted 14 days. This trip placed a great strain on Douglas as he was constantly at the helm as the others were sick most of the time. As a result, shortly afterwards he suffered his first heart attack.

Returning to Albany the Silver Star Tea Rooms were sold and Clem Douglas retired. Later he bought one of the first of the new Holden Cars and was always to be seen at the Guest House tinkering with the car. He made many trips to Perth and stayed with the writer. From 1948 onward he had suffered from heart trouble, and on ANZAC day, 25th April 1954 he passed away in his seventy third year. Clem Douglas was buried in the family plot in the Wesleyan Section of the Albany Cemetery. Six weeks later his wife Ella, at the age of 63, suffered a heart attack and passed away the same day. She was buried in the family plot.

Les Douglas.



*Above : Clem Douglas
Below :Les Douglas in 1929 . (Photos Les Douglas)*



LES DOUGLAS b. 1909

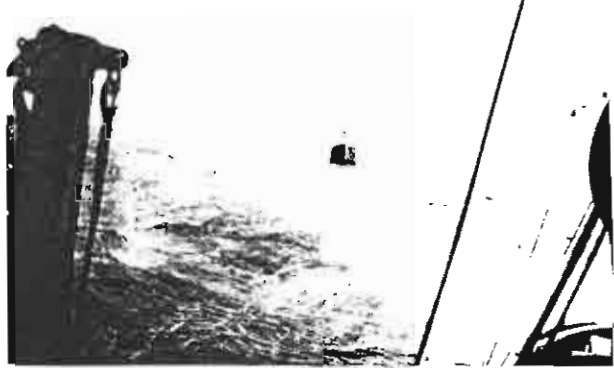
The major informant for this work, Les Douglas was born in Albany in 1909. He was educated locally and after helping his father and grandfather in various capacities started work as assistant engineer on *The Awhina* in 1928, acting as engineer when "Black Alex" Armstrong was not there. He assisted with the re-conditioning of the *Bonthorpe* and worked on this vessel as engineer, as well as the *Silver Star*, and the launches *Dorothy* and *Mary*. He lived through what was, effectively, the major part of Albany's last years as a port. In June 1932 Les Douglas worked on the tug *Uco* when she rescued the freighter *Milluna*. The *Milluna*, bound for Port Lincoln and broke her propeller shaft drifted helplessly for five days in the Australian Bight until the arrival of the tug *Uco* from Fremantle as none were available from Albany. The *Milluna* rolled heavily and owing to South-Westerly gales it was not possible to tow the ship to Albany, so it was decided to run before the gale and tow the ship to Adelaide, a distance of 740 miles. The *Uco* was away from Fremantle for 25 days, 21 of which were spent at sea. During this tow three different gales were experienced, and with the *Milluna* in light trim, the *Uco's* task was extremely difficult. At one moment the *Milluna* would be 100 feet away, the next would be almost on top of the tug, and she frequently almost broached to broadside on.¹ All photographs of the tow were taken by Les Douglas, the only person with a camera aboard - an old box brownie. Les Douglas was paid only 25 pounds as his share of the salvage money. The award was not high as the vessel was empty of cargo at the time. The photographs of the *Milluna* were used in the salvage court.

Below: Les Douglas and the Uco's crew at the end of the tow in Port Adelaide. (photo Les Douglas)



¹ *Daily News* Friday July 1 1932.

*Below : The Milluna during the tow. The tug Uco is in the bottom picture.
(Photos by Les Douglas)*



When Clem Douglas sold the *Silver Star* to Cossack Lightering Co., the contract was to deliver the vessel to Fremantle, and Les Douglas sailed with her as engineer. On arrival in Fremantle he was employed by the company as an engineer to convert the *Silver Star* to handle cargo. This involved cutting the fore and aft cabin deck out to make cargo holds, and installing steam winches on the fore and aft derricks.

After working as engineer on the *Silver Star* trading out of Cossack for a year, he came back to Fremantle and did a period as a shift engineer in freezing work for the Fremantle Cold Stores. The firm bought the Albany freezing works and he was sent down to install the chain system. He also sailed on a Liberty ship during the war.

During the war Les Douglas worked on the Cunard liner *Aquitania* during her visits to Sydney, on one occasion fitting a 4" gun on her stern. He went out through the heads for gun trials, returning on the pilot vessel. At this time the *Aquitania* was the largest ship to enter Sydney

In early 1937 Les Douglas returned to Fremantle and worked with the Fremantle Engineering Foundry while waiting for a ship. Later in 1937 he sailed from Fremantle on a Danish vessel, *MV Tacoma*, as 4th Engineer. *Tacoma* was under charter to the British Phosphate Commission loading phosphate at Nauru and Ocean Island to Australian and New Zealand ports.

In January 1939 *Tacoma* dry docked in Woollich Dry Dock in Sydney and Les Douglas paid off as 3rd Engineer. *MV Tacoma* was powered by two Burmesters Wain 6 cylinder 4 stroke single acting diesel engines.

Les Douglas then worked at Cockatoo Dock for a short period before securing a job at Port Kembla as Section Engineer on construction at Lysaghts new galvanised rolling mill. On completion he returned to Sydney and was working at Morts Dock in Balmain. His first job at the dock was on a motor ship with identical engines to *Tacoma*.

Les Douglas writes :

After several days the engineer in charge could see I was so conversant with the job, and having found out I had spent sometime on *M.V. Tacoma*, he left me in charge and went off to other ships. The job entailed stripping one engine completely and replacing the broken crank shaft. The crank shaft was in two sections . On the front end of this type of engine was a 5ft diameter fly wheel, weight about 5 tonnes, it also served as a turning wheel. This was not new to me, as I had already helped to take *Tacoma's* wheel off at sea, which had worked loose. We took it off, replaced the key and put it back on. It was not successful, so we took it off again and bolted it to the engine room bulk head. It was still on the bulk head when I signed off.

I mentioned all this because it was a lucky break for me, starting work on an engine exactly the same. The estimated time for the job was 5 weeks, it was completed in four and a half weeks. Many ships were coming to the dock for repairs and alterations as the war had just started. The engineer in charge of the ship repairs was a Frenchman his name was Giette. He asked me if I intended to stay in Sydney "Yes" I said. He promoted me to engineer in charge of a number of gangs which meant working on ships anywhere at all in the port. The dock had their own motor launches to service the gangs.

During the period 1940-42, the dock was very busy, ships were being overhauled and converted for war service, even old Sydney and Manly ferries. I had gangs working on 4 - 5 ships at the one time. We worked 7 days a week, 14 to 16 hours a day. Hardly a week passed that you didn't do a 24 to 30 hour shift to get a job finished. There was a lot of pressure those first couple of years. I mention a few of the well-known ships : *MV Westralia* and *MV Duntroon* had complete engine overhauls and went away as troop ships. The Union Company. *MV Wanganella* was converted into a hospital ship. Another Union Steam Ship Company. vessel,

SS *Maunganui* was converted to a troopship. Then there was the Shaw Saville passenger liner SS *Arawa*, ex Australian Commonwealth Line *Esperance Bay*, usually known as "Billy Hughes Boats", after the Prime Minister during the 1914-18 war. After the war he established the line - 5 beautiful passenger ships. There was the *Esperance Bay*, *Hobson's Bay*, *Morton Bay*, *Jervis Bay* and *Largs Bay*. He had these ships built so as they could be quickly converted to armed merchant ships. The decks were especially reinforced to take five 6" guns, one on the bow and each side of the foredeck and one each side of the after deck. They also carried the Gun Ring aboard. This is the steel ring about 4ft diam, 9" wide, 6" thick. We fitted the rings and mounted the guns. It meant taking a portion of the wooden decking up, grinding the 3" decking plate already there, fitting the gun ring to within 1000th of an inch, drilling the deck and bolting down the gun. Gun trials would then be carried out. This was done 5-6 miles out to sea after firing a number of rounds. The bolts would have to be checked and tightened, this would be done a number of times. It was a sister ship, the *Jervis Bay*, that gallantly fought the German battle cruiser *Bismark* during the war. Cockatoo Dock put the guns on her at the same time as we were doing the *Arawa*. Prime Minister Menzies later sold the 5 ships for one and a half million pounds.

Among the many other ships were the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Queen Mary*, and the *Aquitania*, right down to the Sydney pilot vessel *Captain Cook*, the fourth *Captain Cook* to be built at Mort's Dock, which was the first dry dock to be built in Sydney. The ship that impressed me the most was the *Aquitania*, she was a stately old ship. On her first trip to Sydney I had the job of putting the 4" gun on her stern, the only gun she carried. She went across to New Zealand and picked up troops, and called into Sydney on her way back. We also had a lot of work in her engine room. She made 3 trips to Sydney, we would go aboard each time and the gang would be the last to leave before she sailed. She was old and about to be scrapped when the war started.

Some years ago I saw the *Queen Mary*, the only one of the big ships left, she is alongside a special wharf at Long Island, California and used as a floating hotel. In 1980 I was in Hong Kong, and there was the largest ship ever to be built, the *Queen Elizabeth*. She had caught fire and was towed outside the harbour to be scuttled. It was very sad to see a ship that was once the pride of the British ship builders lying on her side and the waves breaking over her. While she was in Sydney we had worked on her high pressure turbine for several days.

I was also in charge of the installation of the boilers and accessories on eight of the corvettes, and sea trials on all these vessels. Towards the latter end of this period I was getting a bit fed up, as a lot of the work was repetition on the corvettes, and also long delays in getting parts. I wanted to get back to sea.

I had made up my mind to sail on an American ship as the money paid was more than double that in other ships. Also, they paid overtime, and \$5.00 U.S. a day for being in a war zone, that started north of Townsville. The food was first class, they got anything they wanted, and then only the best. Uniforms and clothing were also of good quality, and then inexpensive.

As all dockyard personnel were man-powered it meant applying to the naval authorities for permission to leave the dock. I made several applications and was refused. Finally on the 3rd time I was released.

I had made many contacts around the port because my position had brought me into contact with a lot of shipping agents, after a couple of weeks I secured a position on a ship SS *West Cactus* built just prior to the war, but came under the Liberty ship classification, controlled by War Shipping Administration.

I sailed as Third Engineer and saw service all along the New Guinea Coast and the islands. I had a number of trips back to Australia and we were one of the ships that left Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea) in the convoy when MacArthur went back to the Phillipines and landed on the beach at a place called Tacloban on the island of Leyte.

Saw quite a lot of action at the various places as we carried mostly high octane gas and bombs for the planes so we had to move in quickly as new air strips were made or old ones left by the Japs repaired and extended. I signed off as 1st Engineer.

In Brisbane when the war finished all the 1945 Australian crew members were paid off as the ship was returning to America and only American citizens were required. There were three besides my self.

When I sailed as 1st Engineer my monthly salary was double what a Chief Engineer was getting on Australian or British ships and more than Ben Chifley the Prime Minister was getting.

In 1945 I worked for a ship repair firm, Sydney White Company, of Balmain. I did boiler and ship repairs during my time there. I made a number of trips as relieving engineer on SS *Coramool* and another ship the SS *Canopus*. These ships were on the coal run Sydney - Newcastle - Sydney - Melbourne - Newcastle. Sydney White & Coy. held an interest with Millar & Coy. in these ships.

1947 to late 1949, I was employed by Groom Bros. Engineering Coy., Berry's Bay, North Sydney, as engineer in charge of all shipping repairs, and often had as many as 40 to 50 men working on various ships in the harbour. We did all the Blue Funnel ships, P & O Orient Co. and many other shipping lines. All shipping repairs meant working around the clock."

Les Douglas married in 1949-50 and returned to W.A. aboard the P & O liner *Himalaya* after an absence of 14 years. It was *Himalaya's* maiden voyage. He has two children a son, Lindsay and a daughter, Joanna, who is a lawyer.

In 1950 Les Douglas and his wife Ethel bought a business in Mt. Lawley in retail liquor which developed into a number of retail outlets, plus suburban and rural subdivisions. In 1973 Lindsay Douglas entered the business and in 1980 Les Douglas sold some retail properties and purchased the "Criterion Hotel" in Hay St, Perth. In 1983 he bought the "Victoria Hotel" in Subiaco. The business trades under the name "Douglas Group Hotels" and other Company Names.

In 1970 Les Douglas bought rural land at Millbrook, King River, Albany, and had the land subdivided into 5 acre blocks. The area was named "Douglas Downs Estate". There is a "Douglas Drive", the main street running through the property. A "Bonthorpe Road", "Awhina Court", "Silver Star Road" and "Clem Court" after his father.

It was intended that the *Dunskey's* and *Grace Darling's* name should be there, but somehow the *Bonthorpe* got in instead. Les has always regretted this because the *Bonthorpe* was a sort of "Johnny come lately" - the last vessel to have any association with the Douglasses, and then only for several years.

ARMSTRONG & WATERS AND THE DOUGLASES

The *Australian Advertiser* for 4th June 1888 states :

"W. Douglas issues monthly tickets to passengers wishing to visit the mail steamers by his steam launches"

The *Albany Observer* for 5th June 1890 states :

"Application for Messrs Douglas & Gibson to erect a shed 20 ft x 30 ft on the beach at the foot of York St. for the purpose of storing lime. Permission granted at a monthly rental of 2s 6d."

The interchange of vessels between Armstrong and Waters and the Douglas family is interesting but makes it difficult to tell what the fleets of the respective companies were at any given time.

We find W. Douglas selling the *Jessie*, (Along with a lighter, a pontoon and a small boat) to T. Plaice in July 1890,¹ who again sold the *Jessie* to Armstrong & Waters in the same year.

But the *Dunskey*, purchased by W. Douglas in 1896 was sold to Armstrong & Waters in August 1901. Les Douglas considers that the Armstrong & Waters purchase of *The Bruce* in July 1898 may have created considerable difficulties for his grandfather, from a point of view of competition, possibly leading to her sale. William had by this time already moved to Fremantle in search of business, although the mail steamers would not start calling there until 1900. The new Fremantle harbour had just been opened and he could see that more work for the *Dunskey* would be available. There was also a lot of river work towing barges up to the Barrack Street wharfs from Fremantle. *Dunskey* remained in Armstrong and Waters possession until wrecked in 1917. After her sale William Douglas purchased the schooner *Iris*. The *Awhina* was purchased by Armstrong & Waters in November 1917 but sold to E. M. Christie in March 1927 and again to C. Douglas in association with A. Armstrong jun. and others in June 1928. The *Silver Star* was purchased by Armstrong and Waters in May 1910 and sold to E. Christie in March 1927 and sold again in April 1933 to C. Douglas and A. Armstrong trading as *The Albany Tug Company*. She was sold again in March 1935 to Cossack Lightering and Trading Co. It is also interesting to note that the vessels names were not changed despite repeated sales. The Douglas family was remarkably fortunate in the small number of shipwrecks it experienced. The only vessels lost during its ownership were William Douglas' *Victory* in 1875 and Fred Douglas' *Agnes* in 1892 and *Laura* in 1916. The *Dunskey*, *Iris*, *Grace Darling* and *Silver Star* had all been sold to other owners by the time they were wrecked. Armstrong and Waters were in this respect fairly unfortunate since they suffered quite a few shipwrecks. *Escort* 1903, *Dunskey* in 1917, *The Bruce* in 1918.

¹ *Albany Observer*, 8.7.90

Armstrong & Waters,

Launch Proprietors, Albany.

REMEMBER! During Summer months we run Excursions to Kalgan River, Emu Point, Little Grove, Frenchman's Bay and the Quarantine Station.

WE also run during Summer months Moonlight Excursions, with Albany Brass Band on board.

FLEET:

BRUCE
DUNSKEY
SILVER STAR
JESSIE

MOTOR LAUNCHES:
DOROTHY. MARY.

IN order to cater for the Public we are now running the fine up-to-date Passenger Launch Silver Star.

FISHING and private Picnic Parties may arrange for hire of Launches at prices to suit requirements.

An advertisement for Armstrong and Waters which appeared in a brochure entitled Alluring Albany produced by W.F. Forster & Co., Oct 1911.(2nd year of publication)

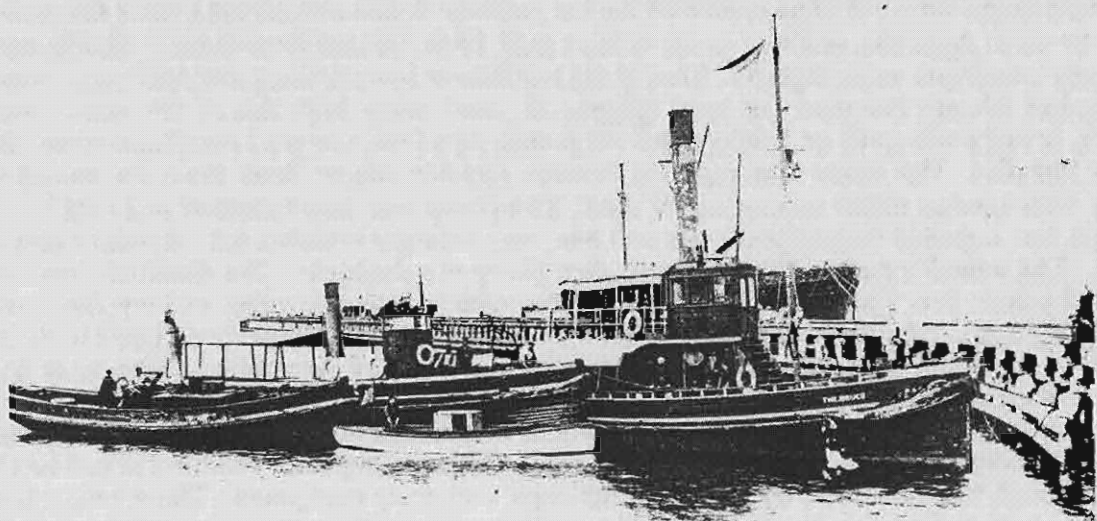
The Armstrong and Waters colours were a yellow funnel with a black top.

During World War I the Douglasses did not have any boats except the *E. M. D.*. Fred Douglas from the *Grace Darling* had retired, Archie Douglas, his son, was on the South African Government's Ships *Erica* and *Dahlia*, running between South Africa and Bunbury. Carl Douglas was Master of the tug *Wyola*, of Fremantle, and she went to the Mediterranean for a period of service in the Dardanelles. William Douglas worked on the Kalgan River and the *Dunster Castle* 1916 - 18. Clem Douglas worked on Armstrong & Water's Tugs and on the *Dunster Castle* again from 1916-18.

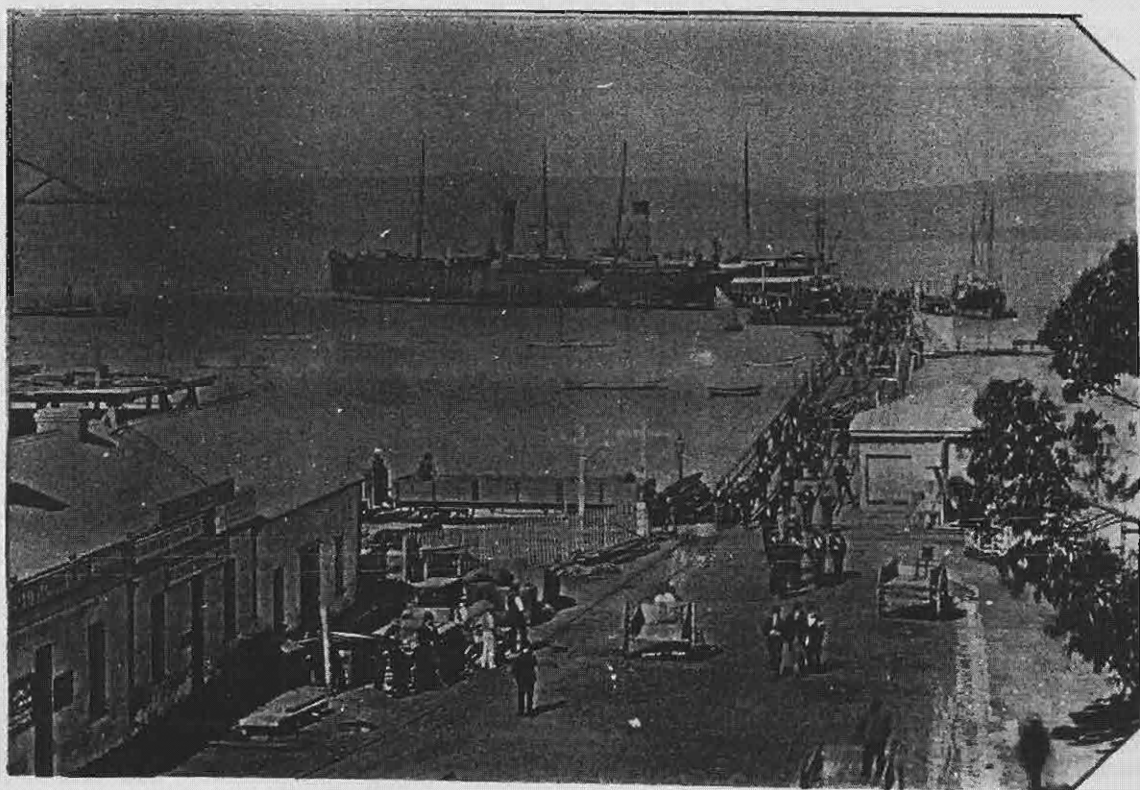
Armstrong and Waters folded in December 1926 after the death of George Waters. The Armstrong sons were not interested in continuing with the company, leading to sale of floating stock. The Albany Tug Co. was formed in 1927, and in association with a person called Christie bought the *Awhina* and two motor launches from Armstrong and Waters, with Clem Douglas as skipper and Alex Armstrong as Engineer. Christie ran the tugs for about a year, although there was no money in it for him, and then sold them to Clem Douglas and Frank Elliott, who was at this time the stevedore for McIlwraith and McEarchen at Albany. Clem Douglas and Alex Armstrong bought him out in twelve months and continued in partnership until 1934.

The Albany Tug Company's Colours were a light blue funnel with a black top.

Les Douglas has the original contract of 6th June 1928 and the Bill of Sale to Elliott, Douglas and Armstrong. Charles Whitnoon, the Mayor of Albany, plus a large number of people were guarantors for 500 pounds for the Albany Tug Company. 1934 saw a change in partnership as a result of a dispute with Les' father Clem Douglas taking the *Awhina*, *Silver Star* and *Georgic*, of which the *Silver Star* was sold to Cossack lightering, while Alex Armstrong and Elliott bought the *Bonthorpe* from Clem Douglas. After the sale of the *Silver Star* Clem Douglas was on the ferry *Emerald* on the run to Garden Island during some of the war years.



Above : The Armstrong and Waters Fleet in 1903 . From left to right : Loch Lomond, Escort, Dorothy and The Bruce. Clem Douglas is on The Bruce. (Photo Les Douglas)
Below : The Town Jetty at the turn of the century with the Ferret on the nearside. The Escort is on the extreme left of the picture. (Photo Richard McKenna)



FLOATING DOCK

This unusual dock, built of jarrah for P & O in 1866 by Charles Louis Van Zuilecom, (d. 1867) a former P & O Captain, was the first of its type for W A. Van Zuilecom was transferred to Albany in Dec.1862 in charge of P & O's land depot. The dock was launched April 1866. Built at a time when many floating docks were old ships converted for the purpose, it was considered to be a technological "first" for Western Australia, and was in use at least until 1906,¹ probably until later. It was used for the Company's coal and water lighters. After P & O withdrew from Albany the dock was owned by Armstrong and Waters and used for local vessels. It stood fairly high out of the water, perhaps twelve feet. It had a windmill on it to operate the pump. At a later stage a centrifugal steam driven pump was installed. The steam was supplied through flexible copper hose from the vessel being docked, or from another tender moored to the dock. This pump was later removed and sold.²

The dock had a double bottom and gates and was very strongly constructed. It would sink to let vessels in. The vessel's pumps/engine would then pump the dock out. The windmill was on the dock from the start. It is visible in the earliest photographs and was required to keep the dock dry when not being used. They could never really get the doors on it to close tightly and seal it. A certain amount of water would always leak through. According to Sonny Armstrong there were several windmills on the dock over the years.

Later on it started to leak, and there was no-where they could dock the dock, and eventually it sank. When Howard Hartman saw it (on the bottom) it still had a big steel rudder and rudder chains inside it, although this may have been some other craft's steering equipment. There was a heap of galvanized wire on it. The bottom was broken through in places, and he saw a cuttlefish going down into one of these holes, and caught it. For him, the sunken dock became a source of bait. It was 100 yards from the town jetty to the old coal jetty, in line with the coal jetty. It was later blasted flat so that other vessels could not get stuck on it.³

According to Les Douglas the rudder was unnecessary as the dock was never moved, but kept on permanent moorings with a bridle leading to three anchors, and swung to the wind. On the occasions when it may have been necessary to move it, it was steered by tugs. He thinks that the rudder could have been of one of the old water lighters as they had large steel rudders. The chain was used to lower the door and would have been attached to a windlass. The dock was shallow draughted and it did not need much water to float in.

Les Douglas can still remember seeing it afloat as a small child, and there is a photograph of it afloat alongside *Silver Star*, which did not come to Albany until 1910. The dock appears to have sunk at its moorings during the First World War. Les Douglas saw it lying flat under water, sides spread out in a collapsed condition. It may still be there, buried under harbour reclamation.

Howard Hartman writes of it :

"Incidentally the worms got the dock and when she started to leak too badly Armstrong and Waters had a full time job keeping her pumped out and afloat.

Finally she beat them and settled down just between jail rock and the landing stage where she was a menace. There was a lot of gear aboard her when she sank and they picked up what they could get easily and then dynamited the sides away.

The bottom was double and it remained there for many years. In fact bits of it remained there until recently." ⁴

According to "Alex" Sonny Armstrong, the younger son of "Black Alex" the engineer on the *Awhina*, his father considered the floating dock was allowed to decay through sheer carelessness and neglect and was always rather indignant about it. He said that vessels were put on it which were far

¹ Garden *Panorama* opt cit p. 142.

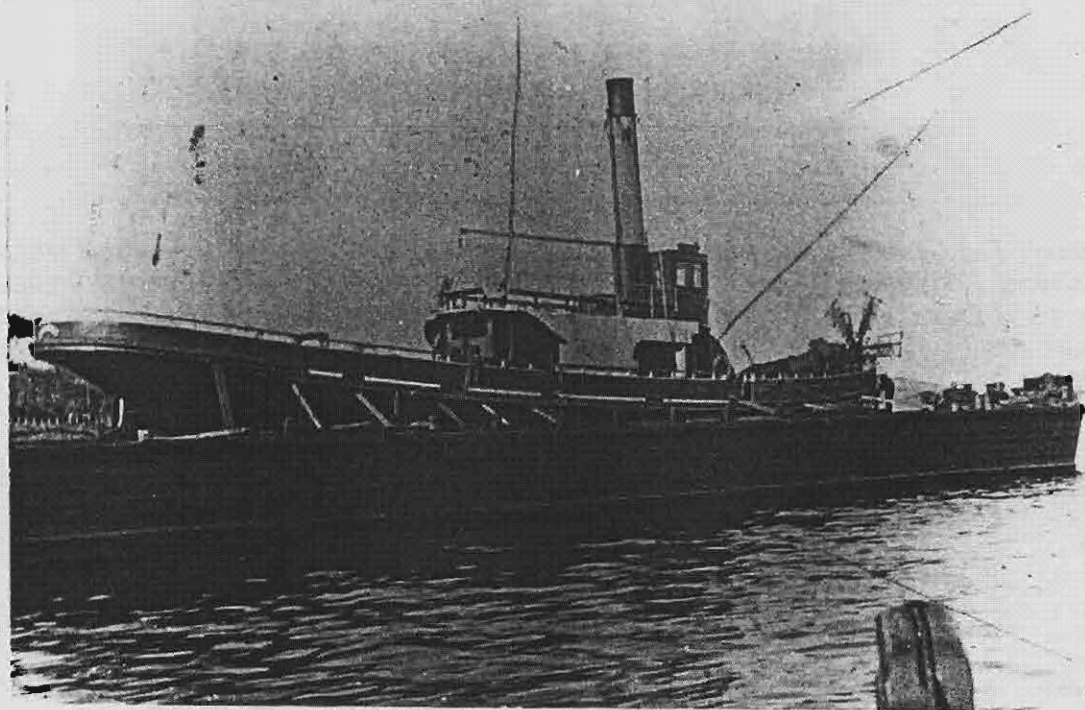
² Les Douglas

³ Howard Hartman, letter to the author 19.2.91.

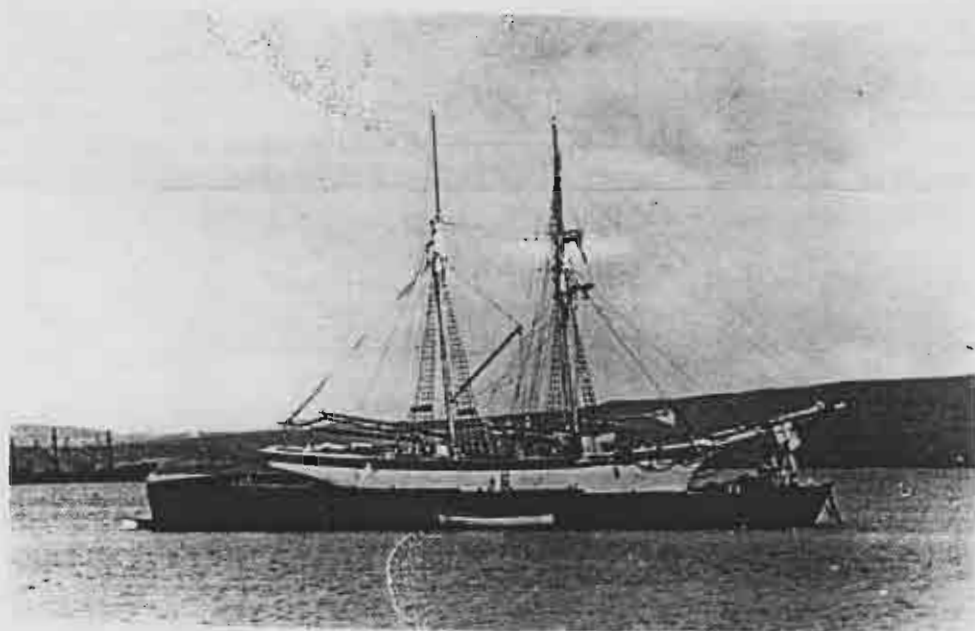
⁴ Howard Hartman, letter to Les Douglas 20.9.1971.

too heavy for it - such as *The Bruce*, - and presumably with proper attention the dock would have lasted much longer. Les Douglas says that the dock could be located half way along the jetty, almost in line with a zig-zag on the side of the hill. This can be seen from the jetty. The dock would appear to be still there under the fill, possibly with pylons through it, and may well be worth excavating for the information it could yield. Docks of this nature, especially wooden ones, must be few and far between. It would be impractical to house such a large object, but excavation with intent to re-bury would be feasible.

See map of waterfront for location of dock . (P 66)

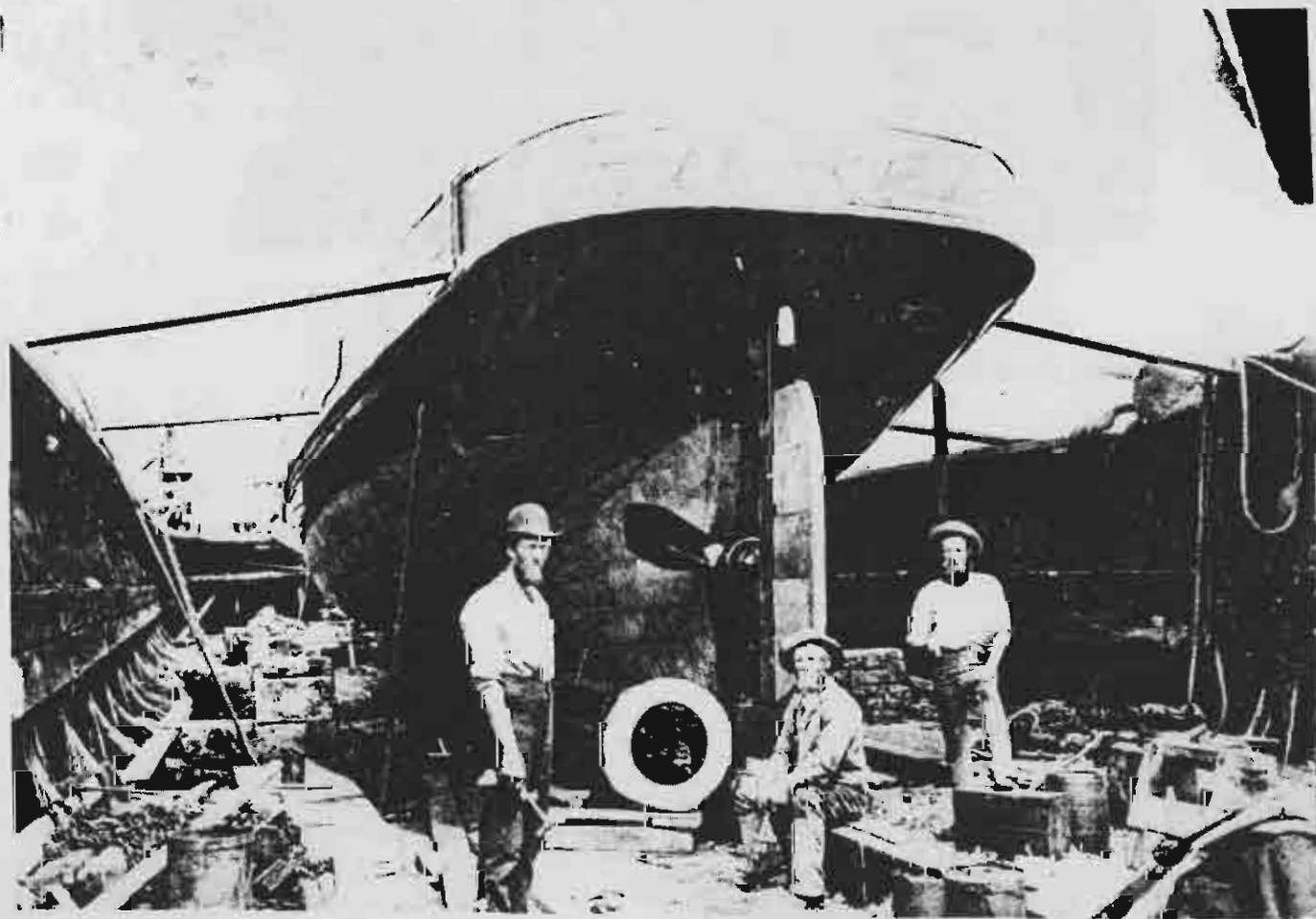


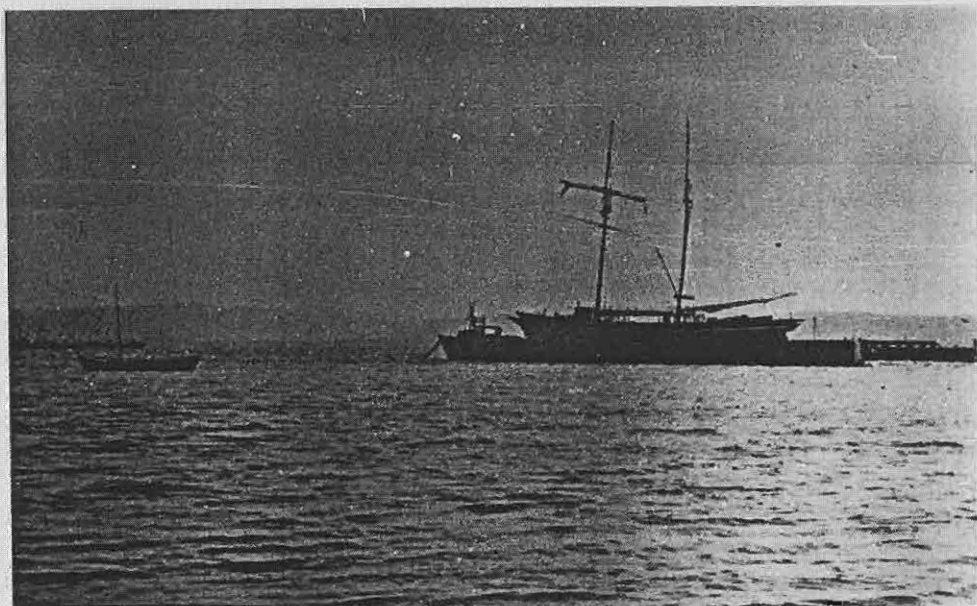
The Bruce in the floating dock, c.1900. (Photo Les Douglas)



Above : The Grace Darling on the floating dock c.1890. Since we know the length of the Grace Darling (83ft) we can get some idea of the length of the dock. (Photo Les Douglas)

Below : The Dunskey in the floating dock, c.1897. Captain William Douglas is standing in the foreground, and Captain Frederick Douglas is seated. The windmill can be seen on the left. (Photo Les Douglas)





The Grace Darling on the floating dock C. 1890's. Her bowsprit has been removed, possibly so it would not be in the way. (Photo Albany Museum)

Below : The Silver Star with the floating dock, C.1910. This photograph proves that the dock was still afloat after Silver Star's arrival in 1910. Les Douglas thinks the photograph was taken from the Avon Dredge. (Photo Albany Museum).



COAL HULKS

Coal hulks were a part of Albany's maritime life from the 1850s until the end of the coal era. They were for the most part once-proud sailing ships, usually steel ones, still reasonably complete but with their masts cut down to half length or removed. They served as coal storage units. Coal had previously been stored in a heap by the jetty or on lighters. The sailing ship hulls were usually relatively complete, although occasionally the decks would be reduced and the hatches widened for the purpose. The first of Albany's coal hulks was the former East Indiaman the *Larkins* which arrived in July 1853. Built of teak in India in 1808, it was broken up in 1876. The second was the iron hulled *Kingfisher* which arrived early in 1860. Coal was originally carried between ships and stores by lighters, but as more and more hulks were used, the hulks were brought to the ships for coaling purposes. As the oil replaced coal in ships their number declined, and the last two were moored on either side of the jetty. The last hulk, the *Sierra Colonna* was towed out and sunk for target practice in 1951. Les Douglas was present when two hulks, the *Copeland* and the *Marius Ricoux*, were towed out and sunk in 1928. Les Douglas account of the hulk keepers and hulk coaling provides an insight into a way of life which has completely passed away. It would be interesting to make comparisons with hulk life in other ports.

The coal hulks were moored on the centre of the harbour or sometimes lay alongside the jetty. Sometimes the bow would be cut and the bowsprit removed to prevent it fouling any of the ships the hulk was towed to. This usually left a "V" shaped gash on the bow, into which wood would be fitted, although in the case of the *Copeland* this does not appear to have been done. The hulks had very big open hatches. The hatches had been cut lengthways and sideways, cut out about 8 feet on either side. The larger hulks had four hatches, the smaller ones had three hatches. When the coalers arrived from the eastern states they would always discharge into a hulk on each side. Steel hulled sailing ships were preferred to wood or composite-built ones for coal hulks as they were stronger since coals hitting the sides of the hold would tend to loosen fastenings and planks. Also, as hulks they were far more heavily loaded than they had been as sailing ships, and wooden hulls were more inclined to leak and fall apart with age.

The hulks had a family living in the officers' quarters as caretakers and a donkey boiler on deck to raise steam for friction winches. When coal was needed they would slip moorings and be put alongside steamers to supply coal to them. Sometimes two if the steamers wanted a lot of coal. Most hulk keepers had wives and tended to be middle aged men or couples without any children. Very few had children because of the difficulties of getting them to school. The quarters of the hulk keepers were magnificent. They inhabited the Captain's and the first-class passengers' quarters. As there were only a few first-class passengers, and their quarters and the Captain's quarters were pannelled - not one was plain. They were usually polished English teak or Bird's-eye maple. Today these quarters would be priceless.

Hulk keepers duties were to keep steam in the boiler, attend to all the winches, lighting and flares and other gear, and were kept fairly busy with coal bunkering. There were 6 or 7 coal hulks in Albany until 1925. In the earlier days they had to work practically every day. The hulk keepers had to keep steam up on the donkey boiler to operate the friction winches. There was no electricity on board - it was all done by flares, and they had to trim these. There were of course no electric lights - only kerosine lamps. Bunkering ships would have cluster lights which were hung over the hulk during coaling. Once the hulk left the moorings they would have flares burning all round it. These never blew out, even in strong winds. The hulk keepers had to discharge coal into the steamers every day or were loading coal from the colliers. They were also kept busy greasing winches and maintaining steam.

They all owned an 18ft sailboat that hung over the stern for commuting purposes. One day a week was allowed for provisioning from town in the skiff. With the wind in Albany it must sometimes have been a job getting on board, the more so as the south west winds could last three to four days.

The Adelaide Steamship Company's hulks were painted red, MacIlwraith, McEarchen's were painted black. According to Les Douglas it cost five pounds to tow a hulk from its moorings to a waiting ship, and five pounds to tow it back. Sometimes a hulk would be worked around a jetty by ropes to avoid paying this amount.

Les Douglas writes :

"Many times I have watched them going back in easterlies and south westerlies, fully reefed down. Sometimes only under a jib. With a big sea running down the side of the hulk they couldn't use the gangway. They would have to use the rope ladder that hung over the stern (just in case)".

BUNKERING

On the coal hulks the hatches were enlarged, usually leaving about 8' of deck on both sides. After the collier had filled the hulk it was not unusual to see two or three high pyramids of coal, 15 - 20 feet above the decks. The old ships had very high bulwarks (Coamings) - as high as a man. So the coal could run over the deck and 2-3 feet up the bulwarks. It would not be there for long, maybe start coming off the next day.

The top masts have been taken off and only the lower ones left. The main yard arms, that is the lower ones, are stepped into the lower deck beams, in between two hatches. It can be used for each hatch. Its main purpose is to carry one end of the tram beam, that the tram sits on. But when the trams are not in use, one end is hoisted up against it and the other end rests on the deck. The other end of the tram beam is hanging on a wire from one of the two derricks. The other derrick is used for lifting the coal.

When the hulk was put alongside a ship one end of the tram track rests on the deck against the coaming of the bunker and is blocked up level with the top of the coaming. The track cannot slip because it is hard against the coaming (this is most important). The other end of the track rests on the tram beam which is held up by a wire from the other derrick. Running alongside the tram track is a plank about 12" wide for the runner.

The tram track is always at a slight angle and sloped down into the vessel being coaled, so that the trolley ran down hill. This helped the trolley boy get the speed up and the basket tipped early. The slope needed to be adjusted every now and again, as the hulk rose up and the ship went down. This was caused by transferring coal from one to the other. This was easily done, as one end of the tram beam was lifted up or down by the wire from the derrick to the winch and the other end was pulled up or down by block and tackle on the tram post.

Imagine you are standing on a deck looking up. High above running fore and aft you would see a long oregon beam about 30 ft long and 12" diameter hanging anything up to 35 ft above the deck. With one end of the tram sitting on it and the other end of the tram level with the top of the ship's bunker hatch.

The tram is made from two pieces of oregon timber 12 ft x 6" about 60 ft long and 2 ft apart. 2 x 2 angle iron is used for rail on which the trolley runs. Along the side of the full length is an oregon plank 12' wide. The trolley boy runs along this.

The trolley is about 2' x 2'6" wide, 12" high. Bolted across the back of the trolley is a 6" X 6" piece of oregon, so that when the basket is on it, it sits at an angle. This makes the basket easy to tip when the trolley hits the wooden block on the end of the tram. The tram is very stoutly constructed because its only support is one end

on the deck of the ship and the other is the tram beam - no other support. You can imagine the trolley boy with a big basket of coal (3 baskets to the ton), running along the plank as if he is on a spring board, bouncing up and down. That is the reason oregon timber is used. It is strong, light and springy. The trolley boy had to be very nimble and sure footed to run along a springy plank. Sometimes 50 ft up above the coal in the hulk. Not many wanted this job, it was very dangerous and the trolley boy was generally a young small man. The whole gang depended on the speed that the trolley boy (sometimes referred to as the runner) could operate. Plus the skill of the top man. He was the one who stood on the end of the tram with the wire running through his hands. On them depended the number of baskets per hour. The lumpers would know when a ship was coming in and would be waiting at the pickup which was on the footpath opposite the Royal George Hotel.

The stevedore would come along and order the number of gangs he required. each shipping Company had their own favourite gangs. That meant they were the best and fastest. There was no rotating. The gangs were known by the surname of the headman. He would call the names so and so, 7 am, bring 2 meals or as many as 5 or 6, depending on how long the job was expected to last. If it was for bunkering it would mean the landing Stage Town Jetty. Or he would say "Deep Water Jetty". If it was jetty they would have to walk there, if the job was cargo.

The company launch or sometimes the tug would take one gang, usually the No. 1 gang, out to the hulk to help move the hulk and tie it up to the ship bunkering. They boarded the hulk by a gangway which was always hanging down the side close to the stern. It was always there for the hulk keeper and his wife to use.

If it was rough, the other gangs would be put aboard by a rope ladder after the hulk was tied alongside the ship. The work would start immediately, 9 men to each gang. The top man, winch man, trolley boy. Six of the gang were shovellers or diggers. Four baskets were used, 2 men to each basket. The basket would be laid at an angle against the coal face one man on each side, with his hip pressing against the basket to keep it steady. Both would reach out together, dig their big pointed shovels deeply into the coal and scoop together to keep the coal running down into the basket. The basket would be 1/2 to 3/4 full without much effort. Both men would pull the basket upright and top it up. As they went further down they always tried to keep the coal face running so they could fill the basket without too much digging.

The topman stands on the end of the tram with the wire rope in his hand. They used to make a leather guard out of an old boot or any other piece they could get with a hole cut in it for the thumb. He could be anything up to 50 - 60 ft up in the air if the ship was high sided and the coal low in the hulk. He was in a very dangerous position. Especially at night. It might be raining and blowing a gale. Work never stopped. They were paid by the ton and the ships were always in a hurry to sail. And don't forget they had to hold their position as one of the top gangs.

With the rope running through his hand he would steer the basket down to the men in the hold, swinging it over to the next basket that had to come up. Each had their turn. One man would grab the basket, unhook it, hook the full basket on while his mate stood the empty one in place. Up would go the full basket. Friction winches were used and they are fast. The topman would blow his whistle - it was never out of his mouth. The winchman hoisted the basket very fast. The baskets were being steered with the wire running through the topman's hand so it did not foul the tram and tip them off. Don't forget, one mistake and they are both down in the bottom of the hulk. It was very dangerous.

A shrill blast of the whistle and the basket is landed onto the trolley. The empty basket had already been taken off the trolley and is standing on the tram on the front

of the trolley. The front of the trolley is the only place that the basket can go, it also holds the trolley in place while they put the basket on it. The rope from the empty basket is quickly placed on the hock. The trolley man pushes it clear, a shrill blast from the whistle and down it goes. The trolley boy runs down the plank.

The trolley bumps into the wooden stopper at the end. The boy has one hand on the top of the basket and the other on the bottom of the basket. Sitting at an angle and helped by the trolley boy the basket tips easily. The basket is empty and is then pulled back onto the trolley.

Back the boy runs - the topman has another basket hanging there waiting for him. The speed at which the trolley boy can run back and forth along that narrow plank tipping the basket and the skill of the topman is the secret to the number of baskets per hour that each gang can shift.

If a ship has a hulk on each side and three or four gangs working at a time, all you can hear is the shrill noise of the whistles and fast running winches. Many a time, while lying alongside in the *Awhina* waiting to tow the hulk away, I have watched with amazement at the smooth action and timing of these hard working men. It was very impressive at night with the many oil flares positioned all round the hulk. The hulk did not have electricity.

Sometimes a ship would hang a cluster light over the side to throw light down to the men digging in the hold. A cluster light is 4 or 5 globes fitted into a half-moon shaped enamelled shade, not much good as a reflector with a long rope and cable attached. In many cases it was just a light as most of the old freighters only had 110 volts, DC and they didn't have much of that. So the whole atmosphere was phantom-like. The flares, the dim lights, the noise of the winches and hissing steam-straight into the atmosphere. The shrill sound of whistles and the silhouette of the men high up on the tram.

They worked in all weathers. The top man standing up there in his oilskin coat and sou-wester hat. The trolley boy the same only his coat was a bit shorter in case it fouled the trolley wheels. Raining and blowing, no-one would work like that today and take those risks. I never remember any top man or trolley man getting hurt, so skilled were they.

Coaling was a good job because they could make more. It was all piece work, they were paid by the ton and could on a long shift, earn three or four pounds. The ordinary rate for general cargo was one shilling and six pence per hour. For wheat, one shilling and nine pence. It was very hard to get into a gang because very few men dropped out.

Coaling was very dirty. Especially trimming which meant working in the ship's bunkers. The trimmers would come on the job towards the end as the coal in the bunkers started to fill up. They would have to shovel it back as the trolley boy tipped his baskets. It meant working with candles for light in cramped and stooped conditions. Sometimes lying on their bellies, shovelling the coal back, working it up to the deck head between the deck beams. The worker had to get as much coal in as possible. It meant more money for them, also for the gang. The trolley boy would keep tipping the coal in so the trimmers would have to push it away to get a bit of air. The trimmers were paid more.

There was great rivalry between the gangs because each company had their own gangs. MacIlwraith & McEachern and the Adelaide Steamship Coy. Some of the gangs could shift 60 baskets an hour. That was 20 tons, three baskets to the ton. Every now and again if there happened to be a careful ship's engineer, he would stop the work and weigh a basket. That's if he thought the baskets weren't full enough.

It was usual to weigh a basket before starting to load. A set of hanging scales was used. Some coal weighed heavier or lighter, depending on what area of N.S.W. it came from. The number of baskets an hour depended on how high it had to be lifted from the hulk and a deep loaded ship meant a very short hoist. If it was the reverse it meant a very long lift. The coal baskets were made of cane, long strips, about 5/8 diameter, woven to a height of about 4' and a diameter of 3'6", tapering to about 3' at the bottom.

They were made in the company's gear shed. Each company had their own shed. They stood side by side at the foot of the town jetty, built up on piles. High tides and water would lap under them. Chippy Forsyth's boat shed was next to them. All the gear, tackle, etc, was kept here. The Company's launch driver's - Dick Johnson-MacIlwraiths *Kia-Kia*. Charlie Burton-Adelaide Steamship Coy *Alert*. They were also in charge of the sheds and would make the coal baskets and all other gear, rope and wire slings, rope cargo nets, new tram tracks, trolleys etc, with the help of some of the older lumpers who had been at sea and could splice the wires and ropes. The work was carried out during slack periods.

The names of the hulks were *Colonna*, *Copeland*, *Marius Ricoux*, *Margaret* and *Kelat*.

Sometimes the hulks in later days would lay for fortnights, perhaps weeks without coaling a ship. But in the early days Albany was a very busy port.

There were around 200 lumpers employed at the port. Many of these did not get much work. The 12 leading gangs always came first. Most of the lumpers depended on what other jobs they could get. Some had small farms and others were fishermen. During the wheat season they would be employed unloading wheat from the rail trucks and stacking it, 20-30 bags high, in the sheds, waiting for the ships. So the lumpers would stack it and then unstack it back into the rail trucks. It was double handling, but it did make a lot more work. Ordinary cargo rates were one shilling and sixpence per hour, and wheat, one shilling and ninepence per hour.

Carrying wheat, they would split down the seam of a sugar bag, to protect the sides of their heads against abrasion. The bottom of the bag would go over their heads and the side flared out over their shoulders. The sugar bags were made of jute. A sugar bag was carried by all the lumpers. It was their crib [lunch] bag. They all went to work carrying a bag over their shoulder. The coal shoveller would have the shovel over his shoulder and the bag tied to the shovel.

Lumpers working on the wharf were controlled by old Tom Wilson, the Supervisor. He would say to the lumpers having a smoko or towards the end of their meal break, "Come on boys, bump 'em up while you're having a spell". There would be a number of empty trucks on the line. They would have to be moved onto another clear line, and full or empty ones put in their place, ready to start work. The shunter, (engine) may not come for several hours so the trucks were moved by the whole gang and old Tom controlled them, so they had to keep on side.

Shifting the Hulk

The hulk would be at its moorings. A tug would go alongside and a heaving line would be thrown up. A "heaving line" is a small long rope about as thick as one's small finger with a piece of lead inside a turk's head. A "turk's head" is a line of the same thickness woven around the piece of lead to form a circle about as large as

one's closed fist. The hulk keeper would then tie the end of the heaving line to the end of the hulk's tow rope. The tow rope would be 2" to 3" in diameter. The tow rope would always come through the hulk's hawse pipe, one end on the tug's tow hook. The tug would steam out ahead and gently take the strain.

The hulk keeper would then shackle a rope from his small boat to the end of the hulk's anchor chain. He would then let the cable go and the small boat would be left on the hulk's moorings. The tug would then take the hulk and put her alongside the ship to be bunkered. One hook on the tug's tow beam would be a collapsible one. You would hit a pin in the side of the hook with a hammer and it would tumble and off came the tow rope. In fine weather we would tow the hulk by tying the *Awhina* alongside as far to the stern of the hulk as possible. That way you had more control as *Awhina's* prop would be like one on the hulk. Hulk keepers would steer the hulk and take orders from the tug master. Taking the hulk back to the moorings was a different procedure. The tow line would be taken aboard the tug at the tug's bow. The tow line had a large shackle attached and about three fathoms of the line would be left at the bow, the rest of the line taken along the top of the tug's gunwale outside. Clear of everything, the bight of the tow line was then taken over the big open tow hook and a number of turns put around the hook. The tug would steam away with the hulk back to her moorings. The man in the bow of the tug with a long boat hook would pick up mooring rope attached to anchor cables, shackle the tow line to the wire rope and then run back. Or the fireman standing by would undo the tow line from the hook, throw all the line overboard clear of the propeller, and the tug would back off astern and stand by. The hulk keeper would be pulling the tow rope up the hawse pipe and so up came the ship's cable.

Sounds very complicated but very simple in operation.

But a very nasty job on a bad night with a stormy south-west gale and heavy rain. It did not matter how bad the weather was. Work went on, just as the play must go on, so the ships go on."

They only burnt Newcastle gas coal in the tugs. South Coast coal from Wollongong etc. It was all right for big ships with forced draught, but not smaller vessels. One hulk was always kept for gas coal from Newcastle. They could not burn Collie coal as there was too much ash, and a forced draught was required to burn it.

This period was nearing the end of the coal burning era. Bunkering had dropped off. Fremantle was all coal. Coal was cheaper than oil - one pound per ton. Newcastle coal was used and coal from Blumba and Corromel - Pt. Kembla was not too bad. South coast coal was good coal, but not good gas coal.

Coal hulks were ones like the *St. Laurence, Zephyr, Ellen, Priscilla, Margaret, Athena, Herschel, J.L. Hall, Mary Moore, Maria Schwab, Copeland, Marius Ricoux Kelat* and *Colonna*. The last two coal hulks were kept moored to the jetty. Les Douglas knew Jack Langwig, who was in the Salvation Army, one of the last if not the last coal hulk keeper. He was on the *Copeland* for many years.

Copeland was sunk off Cape Vancouver. She was towed out by the *Awhina* and a charge was put in the hold and covered with sandbags. The photo sequence shows her going down and bits coming up two miles west of Vancouver island.

LINKS WITH THE PAST

As far back as 1928 the writer recorded their obsequities in these words:
 "Seventy one years ago the *Jane Sprout*, to Albanyites the *Copeland*, was regarded as one of the trimmest crafts sailing the Southern Seas. Today she rests 15 fathoms down off False Island, [Rock Dunder] outside the broad stretches of King George's Sound at Albany. Two well-placed gelignite

charges sent her to her last resting place on Friday last. Blasts from the siren of the tug *Awhina* - destined to follow her charge to Davy's locker about ten years later - denoted that the *Copeland* had entered upon her final voyage of an eventful career extending over three quarters of a century. Slowly she took the strains of the tow lines and headed through the channel. Captain Donaldson (harbourmaster) directed operations and manoeuvred the hulk close to West of Cape Vancouver. Her dispatch was humane and painless, and cameras clicked as she settled down for the final plunge. The *Copeland* came to Albany in 1899 for service as a hulk, having been in commission under sail for the Adelaide S. S. Co. prior to that."

"The following day the harbour lost an other old identity in the *Marius Ricoux*, which had to that period served as a hulk for 15 years for McIlwraith, McEacharn and Co. She was taken to a point well round Bald Head and sank in 13 fathoms, well out of the track of shipping. The sinking of a lighter on the rock stretches well south-east of Middleton Beach ended operations for that week, leaving only the *Kelat* and *Colonna* at the anchorage. It is regrettable indeed that the bunkering trade of the port has at the moment fallen to such low ebb that hulk replacements are not deemed essential, but there are many who believe that such a course will eventually be found necessary (their wish has not been fulfilled).¹

Les Douglas said that these hulks would have been towed with the *Awhina* with Clem Douglas and himself on board. He also says that in this instance the lighter would have been towed with a 20 ft motor launch, not a tug.

Other hulks sunk at Albany were The *J. L. Hall*, used as target practice by the R. A. N. and sunk in the Sound, The *Parramatta* and the *Yarra*, also sunk off Bald head, and the last hulk, the *Sierra Colonna*, was sunk by the R. A. A. F. Reserves in 1951.

Les Douglas states that the *Kelat* would have been the biggest coal hulk they had in Albany. A very strong, heavy vessel. She was towed to Darwin during W.W.II and sunk by enemy action shortly after arrival.

¹ R. G. (Reg Greenwood)

SINKING OF THE HULKS - COPELAND

Les Douglas Writes :

'In the year 1928 the bunkering trade had declined to such an extent that it was no longer economical for the two Coys to maintain 4 hulks in the port, so they decided to get rid of one hulk each. The two smaller and older ones *Copeland ex Jane Sprott* and *Marius Ricoux* were the ones to go. This left the *Kelat* and *Colonna*, these two being larger and in very good condition.

Preparation for the sinking began. They were both put alongside the Town Jetty. The boilers, winches, and all useful fittings were taken off. Father got three good oregon derricks from the *Copeland*. Two finished up as masts on the *Silver Star*. The other was in our back yard for a number of years. What became of it ?

Charges of dynamite were set on the skin of the hull (right on the bottom plate). A quantity of sand, coal, and any other junk aboard was piled on top. At 6 am on the morning of the 18th November 1928 Captain Clem Douglas put the *Awhina* alongside. The men were already on the hulk to let the lines go, steer the vessel, and light the fuse.

A tow line was lowered down through the hawse pipe and the end put over the *Awhina's* tow hook. *Awhina* steamed slowly ahead. A short blast of the whistle indicated to the men on the *Copeland* not to pay over any more rope. *Awhina* took the strain. What was to be *Awhina's* longest tow since arriving in the Port in 1912, and *Copeland's* last trip off to Davy Jones' Locker had begun.

As soon as we cleared the channel *Awhina's* engines were stopped. A short blast of the whistle and the men on the *Copeland* payed out more rope. Approximately 400 feet. Another blast and they made fast the rope. *Awhina* took the strain and away we went.

It was a perfect morning, a light wind off the land and no sea. *Awhina* was doing about 6 knots. Aboard were Captain Clem Douglas, Alex Armstrong the engineer, Bill Ralph the foreman and myself. The Adelaide Steam Ship Coy. stevedore, Charlie Burton and another man Burton had brought along to row our small dinghy to the *Copeland*, to take the two men off after they had lighted the fuse.

The Harbour Master, Captain Donaldson, was also on board. He was there to tell Captain Douglas where to sink the vessel. After about five hours steaming and about a mile to the North West of False Island, in about 25 to 30 fathoms, *Awhina's* engines were stopped. A blast from the whistle and the men let the tow rope go. We hauled it in and steamed close to the hulk and launched our small dinghy. The same one we used for working at Eclipse Island.

When the dinghy got in a handy distance to the rope ladder hanging over the side of the hulk, the man on top standing near the rope ladder shouted to his mate down in the hold : "Right, light the fuse." By the time the man in the hold had lighted the fuse and was back on deck, the other chap was in the dinghy leaving the ladder clear for his mate to come down.

The length of the fuse leading to the charge was calculated to allow the men to get well clear before lighting the charge. Just the same, they didn't waste any time pulling away after lighting the fuse. They were still in the dinghy close to the *Awhina*, which had drifted away, when there was a loud blast sending pieces of timber rubbish high into the air. *Awhina* stood well clear when picking the men and the dingy up.

See photo 6 - Bill Ralph had caught a nice Queen fish.

We pulled the dinghy aboard. After 5 - 6 minutes the *Copeland* started to settle by the stern. I was on the bridge with my Box Brownie and asked Father to go in a little closer so I could take my photos. As you can see I was very successful.

I think the sinking left us all a little sad momentarily. Four hours later we were back at the empty wharf. I say "empty" because for a long time *Copeland* used to lie close to our usual berth.

The next day it was the *Marius Ricoux's* turn to go, although the weather was not so good, it was decided to proceed with previous arrangements. The wind came in from the west. we followed the same procedure only we had a brand new manilla tow line. A whole coil of it doubled.

Frank Elliot, MacIllwraiths stevedore was aboard the *Awhina*, and Dick Johnson was also with us. He used to drive the launch *Kia-Kia*. It was going to be windy and a bit rough today.

The reason for the double tow rope was that the Coy. did not have a heavy enough one. The rope was one of their usual mooring ropes. We had one end of the rope over our hook and the other on the tumble hook. The bight of the rope was over the hulk's bollard so that we could let one go and pull the other out.

The Harbour Master, Captain Donaldson, was along to say "Right, sink her here."

Captain Donaldson decided with the wind from the west and likely to swing to south west, it was no good going down Cape Vancouver way. It was decided to go around Bald Head and sink her off Salmon Holes. Why Captain Donaldson didn't put the *Copeland* in the Salmon Holes I will never know, it was much closer.

By the time we got round to Bald Head the wind had swung away south west. It was getting a bit squally coming in across the hills in Salmon Holes. The tow rope broke and somehow jammed in the hawse pipe, leaving us with a single line likely to pull out at any time.

The original idea was to let one end of the line go, steam ahead and pull the line out, thereby saving the whole coil. It was intended to take her well in, but now in view of what had happened and with her likely to break away at any time with the two men on board, it was getting a bit ugly, so it was decided to blow her up where she was and get the men off.

We put the dinghy over which was a signal to the two men aboard to get set and get off. We were still hanging on to the vessel until we saw the men get in the dinghy. We then chopped the tow rope. Away went a brand new coil of manilla rope which the stevedore Elliot had hoped to save.

Whersa the sinking of the *Copeland* the day before had ben quite a leisurely job owing to the fine weather, *Marius Ricoux* proved a little more hazardous. We were in a nasty position with a strong wind and strong tide running around Bald Head. The sea was getting choppy, making it more difficult to get the men off the rolling empty vessel. Both the *Marius Ricoux* and the *Awhina* were rolling by this time.

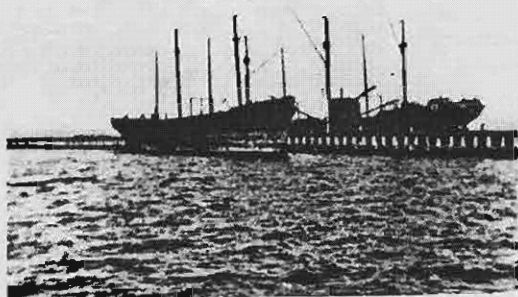
The sinking was not quite so spectacular as *Copeland*. We were in a hurry to get it over and get out of a nasty corner. *Awhina* went in close to pick up the men I was helping to get the dinghy aboard when the charge went off so was unable to get set with my camera. We stayed around for a couple of minutes until she started to settle down. She also sank stern first. I did manage to take a number of photos but unfortunately over the years they, like many others, have disappeared.

I think I am lucky that those appearing in this publication survived because when I left Albany I was away for 14 years before returning in 1950 - and then only for a few weeks.

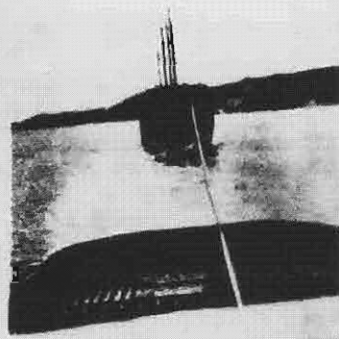
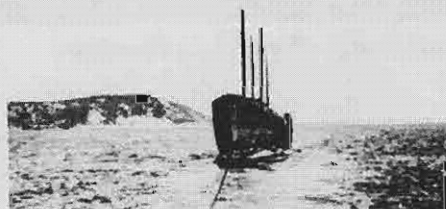
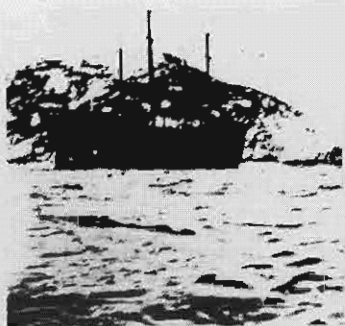
The harbour was not the same. *Colonna* and *Kelat* had gone. The end of the coal hulking era.'

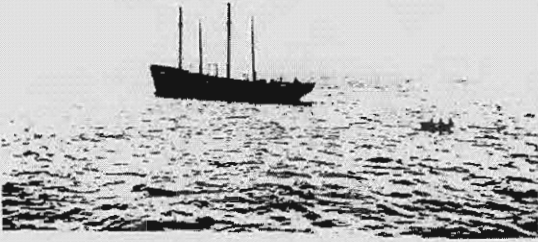
Hulk Sinking Sequence

(1) *Two hulks at the wharf; Copeland on the left . (Photo Les Douglas)*

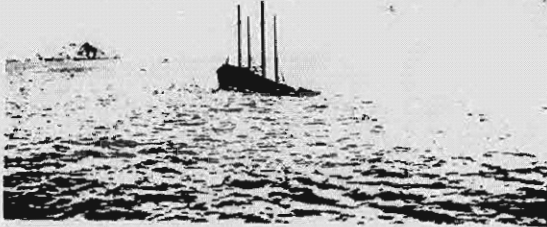
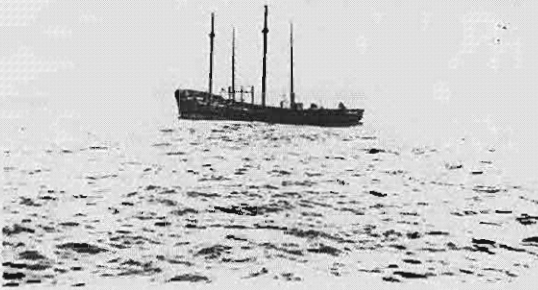


(2), (3) & (4) *The Copeland is towed out to False Island behind the Awhina
(Photos Les Douglas)*

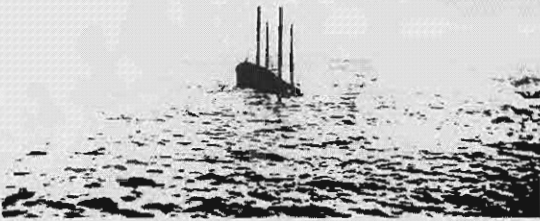




(5) & (6) *The Copeland's crew leave and the charges are exploded.*



(7) & (8) *The ship settles and begins to sink stern first. (Photos Les Douglas)*



(9) & (10) *The Vessel Sinks. (Photos Les Douglas)*



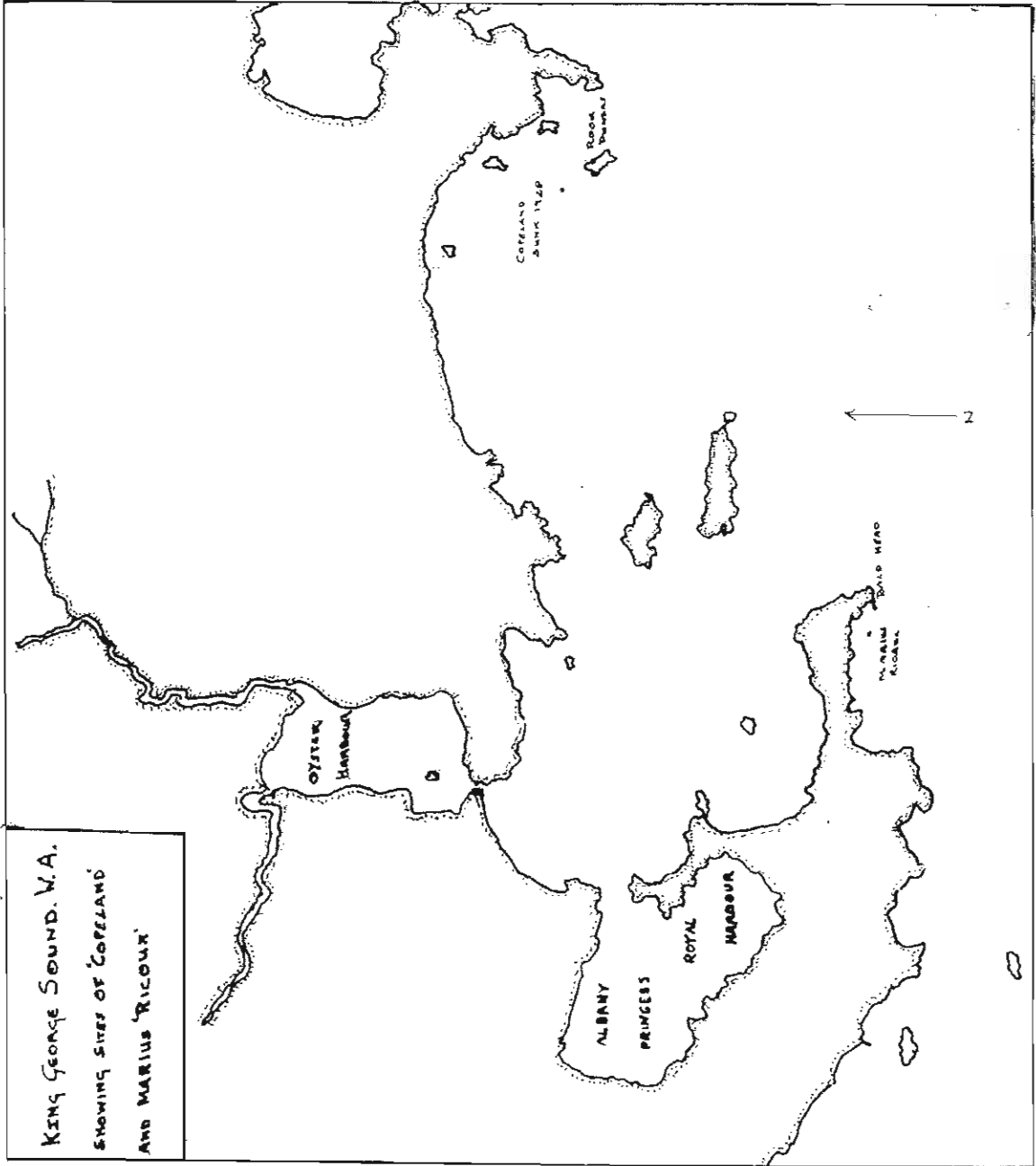
(11) *Bits float up after the Vessel sinks (Photo Les Douglas)*

MAPS

(1) King George Sound showing location of *Marius Ricbux* and *Copeland* as described by Les Douglas

(2) Map of Princess Royal Harbour after H.Hartman showing location of wreck sites.

(3) Map of the Albany waterfront showing location of *Jessie* and *Floating Dock* by Les Douglas



Remains of No. 10 Iron hulled
Vessel: FAIRY (70 long)

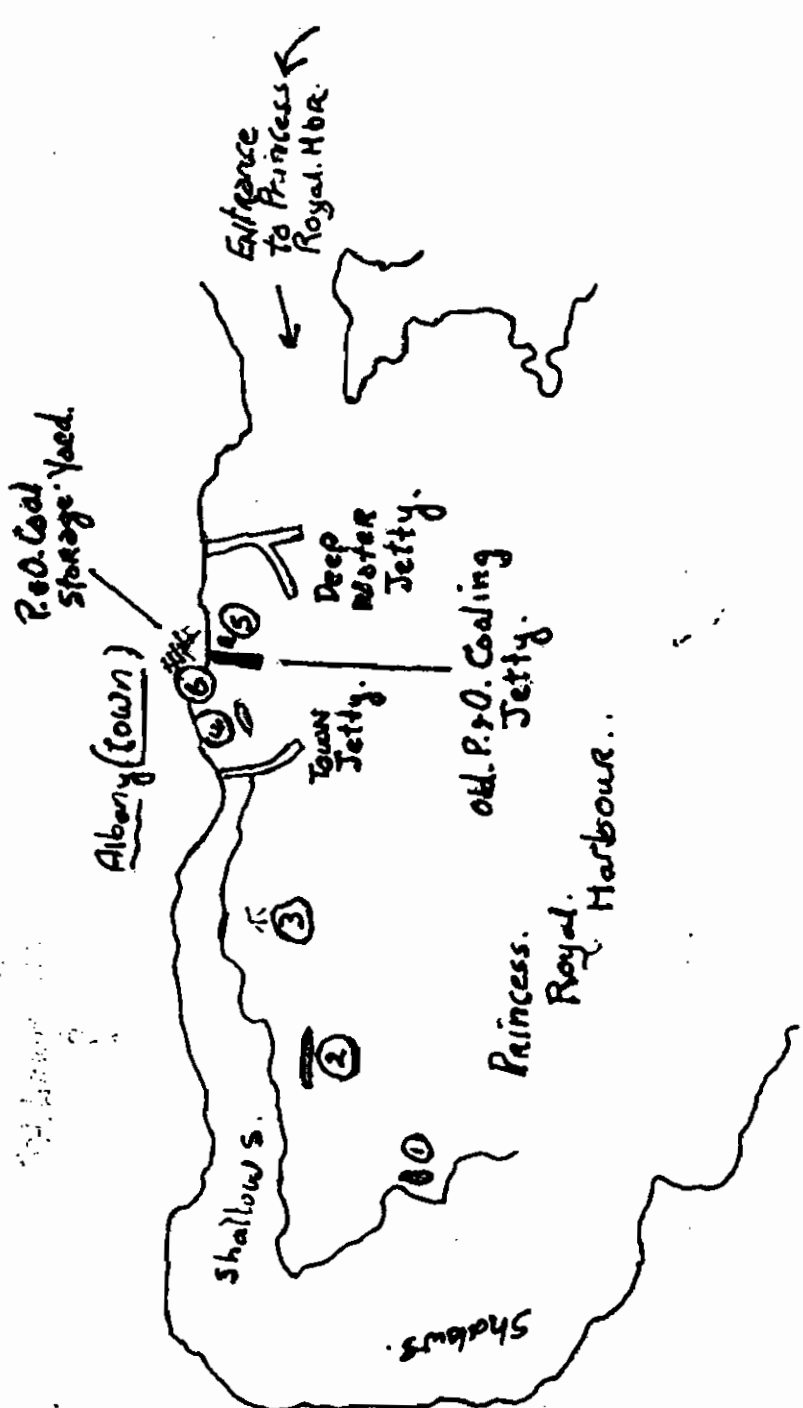
Remains of Iron hulled
Coal HULK. KING FISHER
(1977. Position of Remains still
Visible above Water..)

Remains of (Unknown Name)
Wooden hulk still coal in it.
(When sunk.) I hull had muntz
metal in it..

Remains of Iron/steel hulled vessel
with steel/iron. Sailing ship stays etc.
on Board. (Known early 1900's.)

Old steel Barge sunk by old
P.O. Jetty towards shore..

Tug "Brude" after catching fire & cut adrift
from Town Jetty Drifted ashore below Lawley Park
& BURNT out..



MCLWRAITH'S, ADALAIDE SIM, AND FORSAITH'S BOAT SHED

PUBLIC WORKS SHED, PILOT STATION
LOU BOOTS FOUND HERE
TAKEN FROM SMULDARNEY
FIND SHEDS BURNING DEMOLISHED
1928

ARMSTRONG AND WALTERS SHED
LAWLEY PARK
AND TENNIS COURTS

THE McBRINEY AND KENNEDY'S

ALBANY MUNICIPAL
AND OVERHEAD
BRIDGE
WILLIAM
DOUGLAS

POJNETT
AND COAL HEAP

STERLINGS ICE

BARK MILLS
OFTEN FIELD
WHEAT

BRUNSWICK RD

MILLARS TIMBER

LOCHLOMOMO

OVERHEAD
BRIDGE

RAILWAY

RAILWAY

SMIL BOAT RAMPA

Town Development
FROM VERY OLD JETTY
40' ROAD

DOCK

RS BUILT IN 1926
CAP, CLEM DOUGLAS DROVE ALL
THE PILES, PILES DRIVEN
FROM PILE DRIVER ON THE
DECK OF THE LIGHTER PILES
CUT AND BROUGHT FROM ALBANY
RIVER ABOARD THE LIGHTER HAVEMPHOS
PANNETT'S BUILT SUPERSTRUCTURE

Stone Embankment

MARY

PRSC
SLIPWAY

RAIN

LANDING
STAGE

ORE DGE
AVON.

SPRING
DRAWING

TEIGS

Town Jetty

POND RAIL

Existing Shore Line.

BRUCE

Port Boundary Fence

DOCK

X JAIL
ROCK

CAMEL
MOORINGS

RO-LIGHTERS
SILVER STAR

Port De

Future
Extension
of
Quay
Line

LIST OF ALBANY VESSELS

<i>ADA</i>	<i>GRACE DARLING</i>
<i>AGNES</i>	<i>IRIS</i>
<i>AWHINA</i>	<i>JESSIE</i>
<i>BIG LIZZIE</i>	<i>KINGFISHER</i>
<i>BONTHORPE</i>	<i>LADY LYTTLETON</i>
<i>BORONIA</i>	<i>LAURA</i>
<i>THE BRUCE</i>	<i>LOCH LOMOND</i>
<i>CAMEL/CAMILE</i>	<i>MARGARET</i>
<i>COPELAND</i>	<i>MARIUS RICOUX</i>
<i>DUNSKEY</i>	<i>MARY</i>
<i>DUNSTER CASTLE</i>	<i>PERSEVERANCE</i>
<i>ELVIE</i>	<i>RIP</i>
<i>E M D</i>	<i>RUNNYMEDE</i>
<i>ESCORT</i>	<i>SILVER STAR</i>
<i>FANNY NICHOLSON</i>	<i>VICTORY</i>
<i>GEORGIC</i>	<i>WARATAH</i>

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Unless otherwise stated, specifications for vessels quoted here come from the *Register of British Ships for the Port of Fremantle 1856 - 1982*.

O/N refers to the Official Number of the vessel, which was usually on the beam in front of the bridge. In the case of a wooden vessel, it would be burnt on, in the case of a metal one, welded.

B/S refers to Bill of Sale.

M.M. refers to Master Mariner

Measurements are quoted in feet unless otherwise stated.

VESSELS

ADA

Sailing Vessel, Cutter.

O/N 75321

Reg. Fremantle 1/1886 27th March 1886

Sailing Vessel built by John Peters of Albany January 1886

1 deck, 1 mast, cutter rig carvel build Billet head wood hull. 54 ft long x 14. 33 ft x 5. 23 ft

Depth 26.40 tons gross and net.

Owners : John Conti of Albany M. M. and John Bruce of Albany M. M. 64 shares

(16. 7. 1913) Vessel sunk and abandoned in Oyster Harbour Albany February 1888.

Certificate lost.¹

A cutter about 50ft long. Submerged in Oyster Harbour about a mile up on the east shore. Sunk while crew was ashore cutting poles and sank when they were ashore. Reasonably deep water.² Mentioned by Stan Austen as a wreck he knew the location of.

Fred Swarbrick said that there was some of her still there - sunk in the S. E. Corner of Oyster Harbour. The stern post used to stick up. His father sent 3 people who took on the job of cutting posts and loading her with them. When they loaded her it was low tide and she was resting on the bottom. Someone who was supposed to bail her out, had neglected to do so and she filled with water at high tide. There she stayed³

The *Ada* is recorded in the *Albany Mail* of 25th December 1883 as capsizing and sinking near the P&O floating dock,⁴ however the Register of British Ships for the Port of Fremantle gives her year of construction as 1886, so the identity of the vessel is uncertain. Howard Hartman also mentions hearing about a similar vessel which capsized in Oyster harbour, drowning a man named Ward. The owners got frightened of the vessel and left her there to rot.⁵

The *Albany Mail* for wednesday August 1st 1888 states :

"The cutter *Ada* left for Bremer Bay at 6 a.m. Monday morning"

As this is after the alleged date of sinking, there may well have been more than one *Ada*.

Stan Austen duly led the author and members of the W.A. Maritime Museum to the site, and the wreck of the *Ada* was located in the S.E. corner of Oyster Harbour. A dive and site survey on the vessel (7/7/91) by Adam Wolfe revealed that quite a lot of the wreck survives, mainly covered. This vessel would be useful for comparative purposes with the *Fairy* since they are both locally built vessels some forty years apart. Wood analysis revealed that the *Ada* was constructed from jarrah.

¹ R. McKenna.

² Stan Austin Pers. Comm. 4. 2. 91.

³ Fred Swarbrick Pers. Comm 7. 1. 91.

⁴ Adam Wolfe pers comm. 1

⁵ Letter of Howard Hartman 30. 6. 1975, in M.A. file

AGNES

Sailing Vessel, Schooner

O/N 71 814. Reg. No. 2/1879.

8th August 1879 previously transferred from Adelaide 10/1877. Formerly of Sydney N S W 11/1875

Sailing vessel built at Brisbane Water, north of Sydney, N. S. W. in 1874

1 deck 2 masts fore & aft schooner. Elliptical stern. Carvel built. Head female bust and wood hull.

62 ft long x 18 ft x 5. 4ft Tons 43. 78 Gross & Net.

Owner: Fred Douglas of Albany 32/64 and Cuthbert MacKenzie 32/64 shares.

B/S 10/9/81 - 32/64 Fred Douglas 64%

Reg. Notes. Parted cables Bremer Bay (Johns Cove) S. W. Coast.

Total Wreck

Schooner, built in 1874 and purchased in 1881 by Captain Fred Douglas for use in the coastal trade. The *Agnes* also had a packet licence to deliver mail to Esperance.

An advertisement in the *Albany Mail* for Wednesday February 11 1888 says:

"The Schooner *Agnes* 45 Tons Captain W. Miles will leave this port for Esperance and Israelite Bay today (weather permitting). Good accomodation for passengers. For freight or passengers apply to McKrule & Co, Agents.

F. & A. DOUGLAS
Owners

Agnes ran aground at Twin Peak in May 1886, but got off.

The Australian Advertiser for October 3 1890 , quoting arrivals of Oct 2, states :

"The Shooner *Agnes* which arrived yesterday from the Eastern Ports, met with boisterous weather and was away a month instead of a fortnight."

She called at Bremer Bay 24th April 1892 with a cargo of Sandalwood. The cables parted and she went ashore on the beach. Parted from 3 anchors. The vessel was flat bottomed so she was driven far up on beach. All the cargo and some of the fittings were saved. Two men aboard at the time. The loss was caused by pulling away of the windlass by the heaving of the vessel in the heavy roll of the sea. Douglas at this time intended to buy a larger vessel, and replaced the *Agnes* with the *Grace Darling*.¹

Captain Douglas is said to have swam ashore and walked to Albany.²

As a result of the loss of the *Agnes*, Esperance was without mail for two months, after which it arrived regularly in the *Grace Darling*.³

According to one account Captain Douglas' wife was with him on the *Agnes* when she was wrecked. ⁴

Remains of the *Agnes* were still visible high up on the beach in the 1930s according to Richard MacKenna, who visited John's Cove as a child. There was quite a lot of her left.

However, according to other sources ⁵ the wreckage of the *Agnes* was purchased by one John Wellstead and used the timber for various household constructions. Wreck completely dismembered, but this may not be correct.

¹ *Australian Advertiser*, 25,27 & 29 .4. 1892

² Maritime Archaeology File 195 /72/ 2

³ *Australian Advertiser* 13/6/9

⁴ Obituary Douglas Collection

⁵ Maritime Archaeology File 195/72/2

According to an Article in the *Albany Advertiser* for April 1973, the *Agnes* broke up over the years and became buried in the sand. The keel appeared in 1953 and was dragged into shallow water, but disappeared in floods to re-appear in 1973 and was moved to the caravan park. It mentions that one of the *Agnes*' anchors is still in John's Cove. The *Agnes*' keel was inspected by members of the W.A. Marine Museum on 5/12/91. The impression given is that this is the keel of a much larger vessel, possibly of 200 tons. Wood analysis indicates that this keel was made from pitch pine, normally a north American wood. There appears to be a second wreck in John's Cove from which the keel may have come.

The *Agnes* had the bust of a woman for a figurehead. This is still in existence and was given by the Wellsteads to the father of Mr. Eric Stone of Albany, who now owns it. (See photo).

See Appendix IV for an account of one of the *Agnes*' voyages.



The Agnes with the steam tug Jessie, circa 1890 (Photo Les Douglas)
Figurehead of the Agnes, now owned by Mr. Eric Stone of Albany. (Photo Hazel Flugge)



According to Max Wellstead of Bremer Bay some rigging blocks and a sail-sprit from the *Agnes* survive at the Wellstead Homestead in Bremmer Bay, although much of the material recovered from the *Agnes* was stolen when temporarily dismantled. He has a rail from the *Agnes* which is apparently very badly riddled with teredo worm holes, and teredo damage is, it seems, is the reason the vessel broke up when grounded at John's Cove. Mr. Wellstead also states that he has the "Official" salvage or insurance photograph of the *Agnes* wrecked on the beach at Bremer Bay.

Mr. Wellstead stated that at the time of the wreck the body of a 13 year old girl was brought ashore from the *Agnes*. She had died of scarlet fever and was buried on the Wellstead property. Mr. Wellstead remembers being taken to the grave site by his grandmother. It was unmarked apart from two big logs on either side of it and was surrounded by old-fashioned flowers. Unfortunately the exact location of the grave has now been lost owing to a bushfire burning over the area. Mr Wellstead also said a child from the property who had died supposedly from yellow fever contracted from a sailor working on the *Agnes* wrecksite was also buried on the property. The location of this grave is quite well known.¹

Given the fact that the *Agnes* did indeed carry bodies for burial from remoter areas, as detailed in Appendix IV, means that this story is not impossible, but it is unusual that no other documentation has survived. As Scarlet Fever (Scarlatina) was highly contagious, it is also unusual that the body of a victim would be carried.

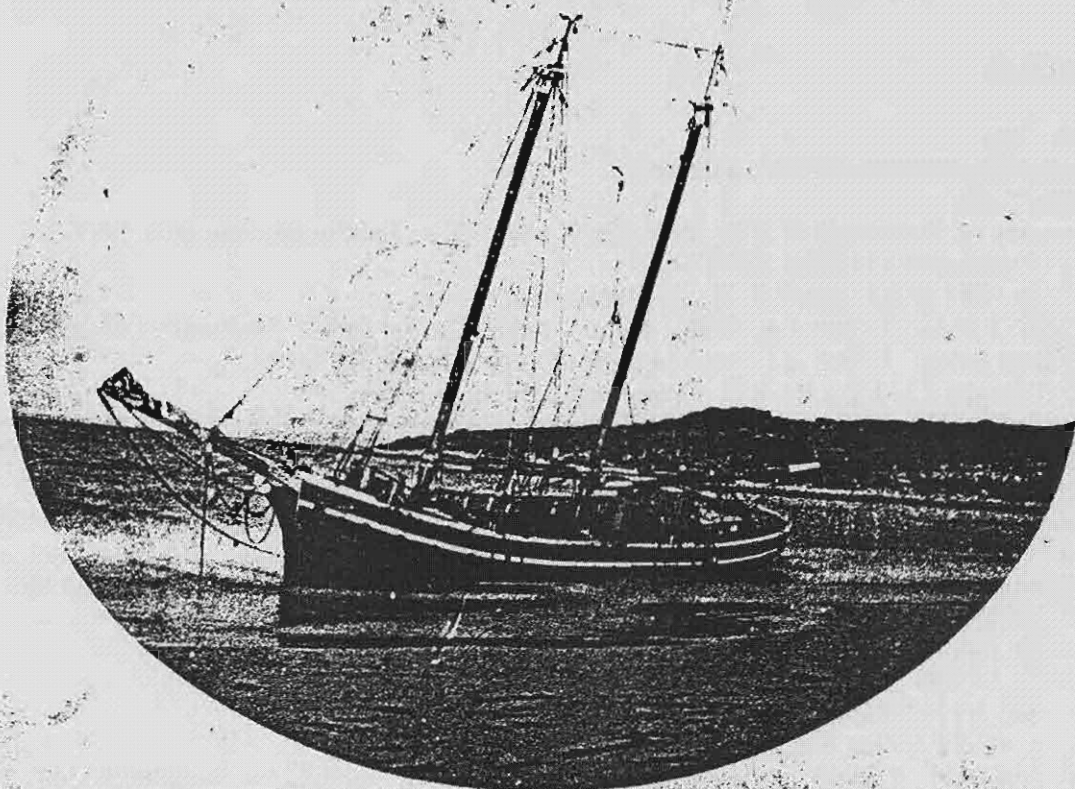
According to Mr. Wellstead one of the *Agnes*' anchors is still in situ at John's Cove.

The following account of one of the *Agnes*' voyages appears in the *Australian Advertiser* for October 21, 1889 :

THE SCHOONER AGNES

"The Schooner *Agnes*, Captain F. Douglas, arrived here at 2.am. on Sunday after a rather rough run from Bremer Bay, which she left at 11 p.m. on the 18th Inst. She brought up Corporal McGlade and family with his tame black swan and mountain devil. Mr. J. Wellstead, a native boy (Corbin) who has been sentenced by Mr. Dempster to 3 months at Rottnest, for robbing, a shepherd and a very miscellaneous cargo of goods and animals. The cargo consisted of sandalwood, kangaroo skins and sheepskins, with a few ornamental whale vertebrae and ribs and about a dozen skins taken by the crew among the islands. The live stock taken on board was of a very miscellaneous character, 27 wild geese, one tame black swan, three wild ducks, two young eagle hawks, and a mountain devil, known in some places as a York devil."

¹ Max Wellstead, pers. Comm 18.2.1992.



Agnes on the beach at Bremer Bay. Photograph taken for insurance purposes. (Photo Max Wellstead)

AWHINA

Steam Tug

"Awhina" meaning a friend, a helper.

O/N 87528

Formerly of Newcastle N S W Reg. Trans 4/6/1900 to Fremantle. Formerly 5/1891.

Reg. Fremantle 11/1900. 27/6/1900.

Built in 1884 at Auckland N. Z. by Hector Macquarrie.

1 deck. 1 mast. Cutter rig. Sails. Round stern. Carvel build. No head. Wooden Hull.

135 tons gross. 4. 865 reg. net. Length of engine room 12. 5/10.

100 ft long x 21. 2 ft x 10. 4 ft. Draught of 10 feet. 5 inches.

Machinery : One compound engine (2 Cylinder) steam engine. British Built by Messrs Bowen and Maclauchlin & Co., Paisley, Scotland. 18 1/2 x 23" with 24" stroke 50 H. P. 50 R&M Speed 10 knots.

1st owners: F. E. Compton 1884-1887; Tug Boat Company Ltd of Auckland 1887-1891

Edwin Alfred Mitchell of Sydney N. S. W. Mercantile broker. Andrew Dalton M. O.

Shipping. Manager. W. H. Baker solicitors. Joint Owners. 64 shares Newcastle 1891-1891

B/S 2/6/1900 John Bateman Fremantle Shipowner.

B/S 23/12/1904 Awhina Steamship Co. Ltd. Fremantle.

B/S 6/12/1909 Swan River Shipping Co. Ltd Perth. (Lighterage)

B/S 19/11/1917 Alex Armstrong & Waters, Albany.

B/S 2/3/1927 Ernest MacGregor Christie

B/S 5/6/1928 Francis Lesley Eliot of Albany M. M. with Clem Douglas M. M. and Alex Armstrong junior, Marine Engineer Albany. (No Indication of joint owners.) Mortgage.¹



Awhina at Fremantle c.1900s (Photo: Richard McKenna)

¹ R. McKenna

Built in Auckland 1884. A 100ft screw tug of 136 tons, had a 21 foot beam and a draught of 10ft 5inches. Speed 10 knots. Designed by Mr. Trevithick, a well known naval architect.

Launched on Dec. 4 1884 from the shipbuilding yards in Mechanics Bay, Auckland. Christened by Miss Batger, daughter of one of the part owners. Messrs. F. McCroakrie & Son fitted her engines. Trials by Hector Macquarrie, May 1885.

The New Zealand Herald of December 5 1885 states :

“Great attention was paid during the building of the hull so that strength should form its chief feature with the result that the craft can be said to be the staunchest yet built in Auckland”

Clear deck space was left fore and aft with commodious cabins so that she was suitable for excursion purposes, while intended for towing.

Initially ordered and owned by Mr. F. E. Compton who formed *The Tug Boat Co. Ltd* of Auckland and used the *Awhina* for towing duties in Auckland Harbour, with Captain Alex Campbell as Master. First commission was on May 29 1885 when she returned from Kawau towing the barge *Una* which had gone ashore on Pakiri. Mr E. W. Alison, a veteran of Auckland shipping gave the following particulars :

“My own remembrance of the *Awhina* is that she was launched in 1884 for Mr. Compton. She was successfully and profitably run as a tow boat for some time, towing vessels in and out of Auckland Harbour, and rafts of logs from places along the coast, including Tairua, Mercury Bay, Thames, Great Barrier, Whangarei, and other seaports north and south of Whangarei. Mr. Compton later formed a small company which was registered as the *Tug Boat Company Ltd.* of Auckland, and it purchased the *Awhina* for similar duty as earlier outlined. Mr Compton acted as Manager, and Captain Allan Campbell was Master.”

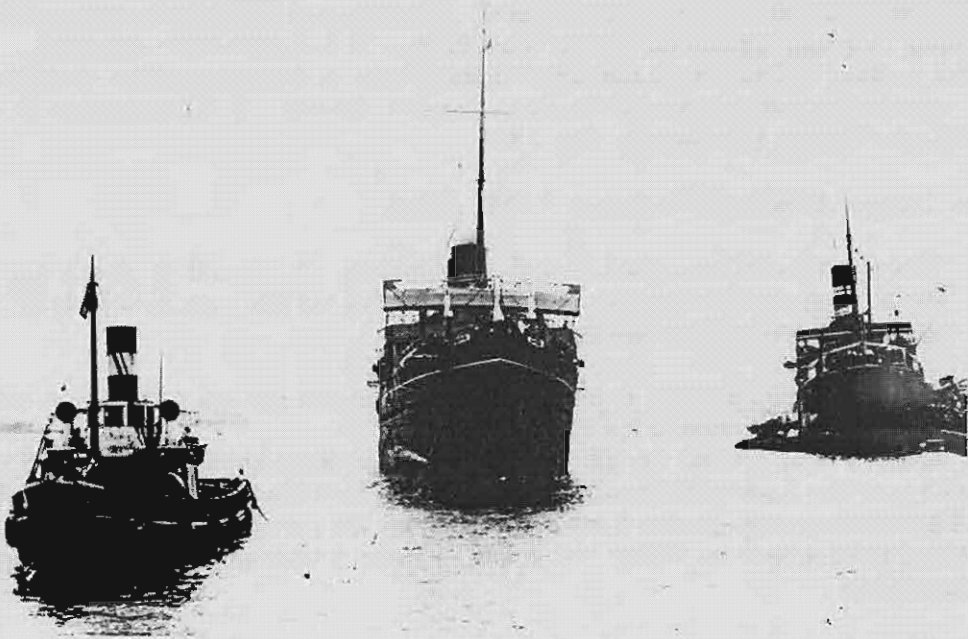
During her time in Auckland part of her job was to tow in from outside Rangitoto the four-masted clippers of the New Zealand Shipping Co, and was also involved in the New Zealand timber trade.

Owing to keen competition the *Awhina* was sold in 1891 to a Newcastle (NSW) buyer,¹ Mr. John Dolton, for 4,300 pounds. She left New Zealand Feb. 1891. Initially overhauled and prepared for the long trip, the NZ Herald of Feb 23 1891 stated :

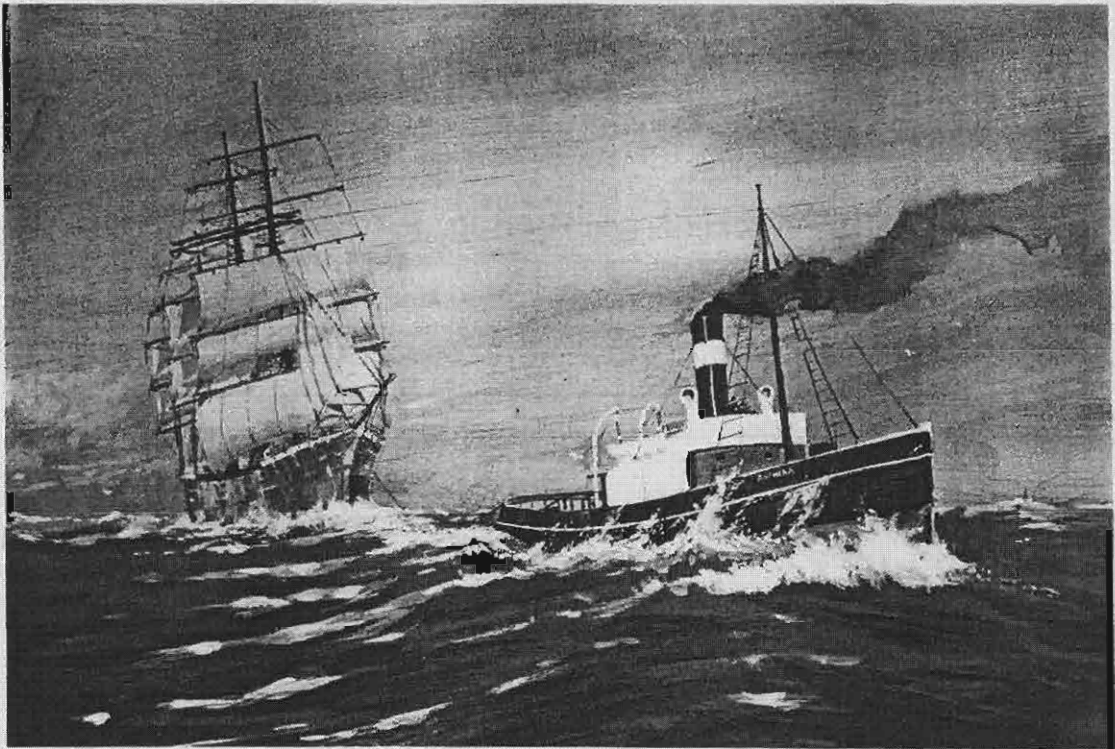
“On Saturday last the erstwhile Auckland Tugboat *Awhina* took her departure from this port to her new sphere of activity in the busier harbour of Newcastle where she will undertake towing duty. A good many persons gathered at the wharf to see the last of the familiar craft. Her old Master (Captain A. Campbell) who is going over with her gave a farewell blast of the well known siren horn as the tug moved off”²

¹ Greenwood, R. *Fifty Years Afloat - Career of the Tug Awhina*, *West Australian*, 9/11/34

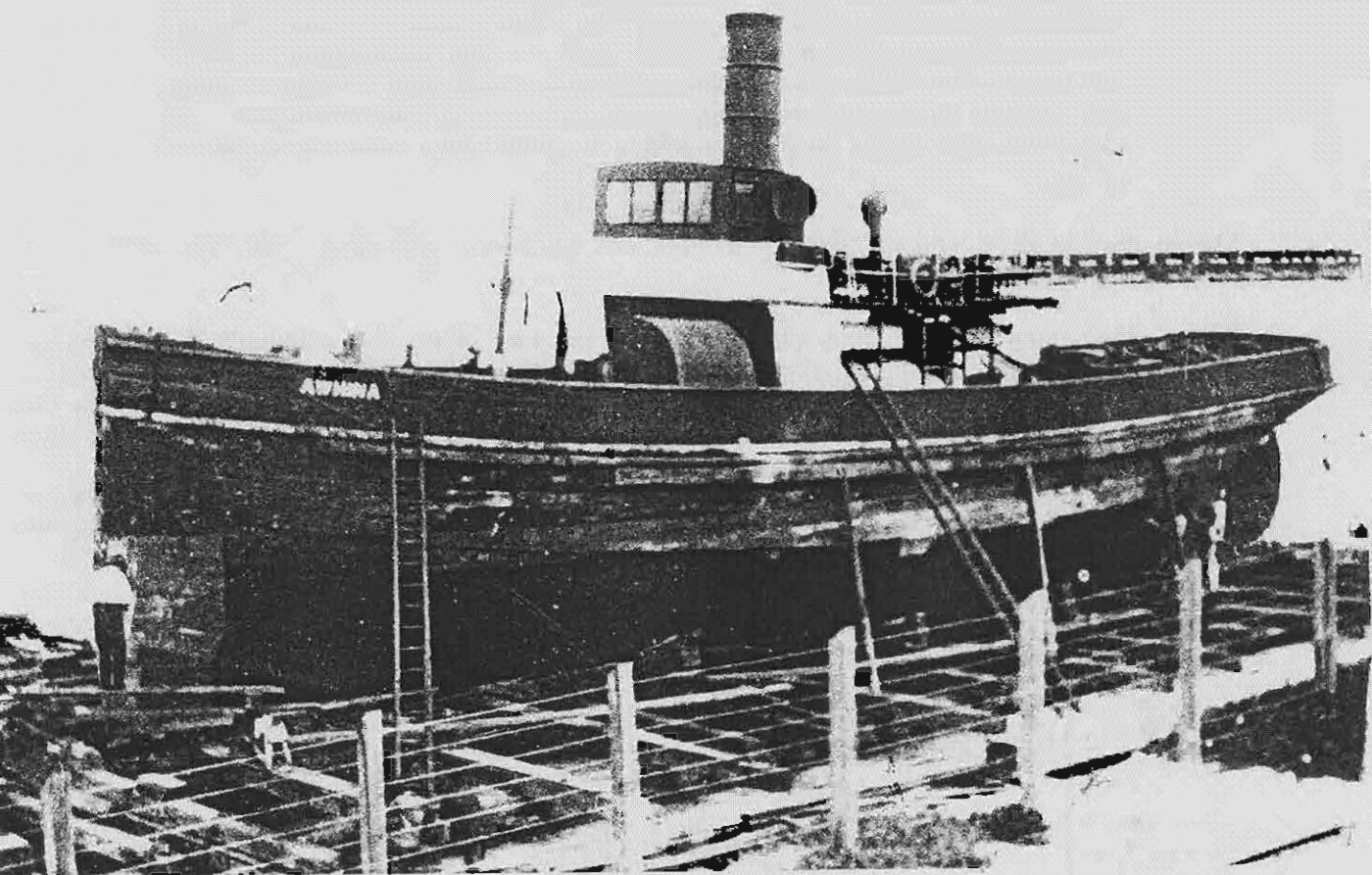
² *Ibid.*



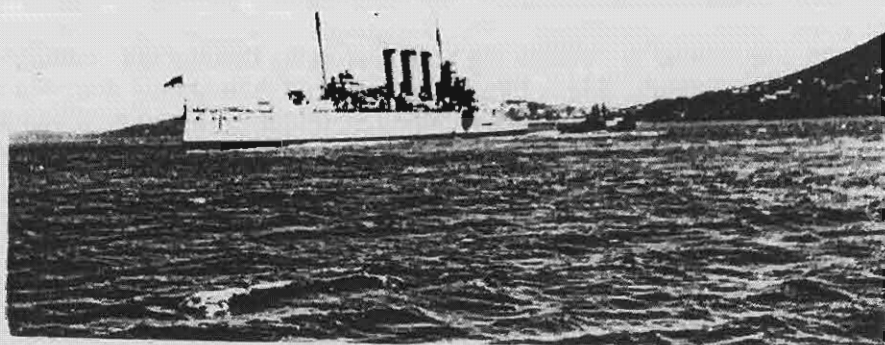
The Awhina at Fremantle with the China and Kyarra. Looking at this photograph it is difficult to believe the Awhina was built more than a hundred years ago. (Photo Richard McKenna)



A modern reconstruction of the Awhina towing a sailing ship by Newcastle artist Terry Callan. This painting is in the Newcastle Maritime Museum, and this copy is reproduced by kind permission of the museum, and of the artist.



*Above : The Awhina on the slip at Fremantle, 1924. (Photo Les Douglas)
Below : Awhina towing HMAS Australia at Albany. (Photo Les Douglas.)*



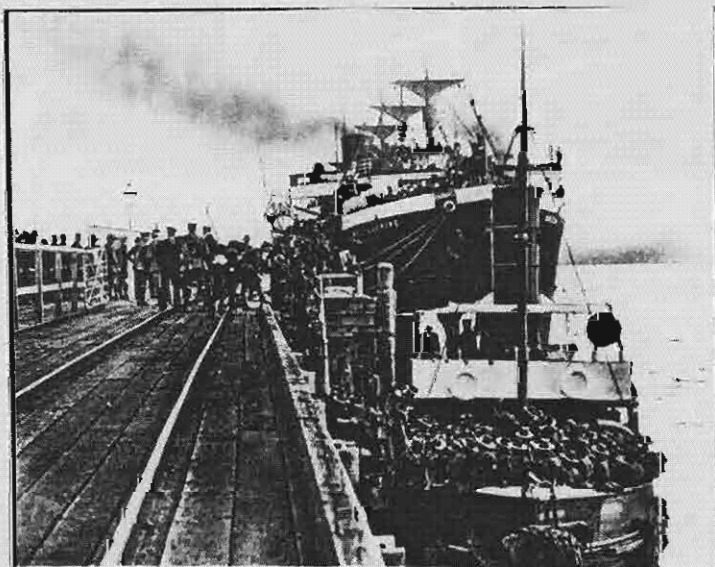
Awhina was purchased by John Dalton of Newcastle, becoming part of a fleet of 11 tugs. The *Awhina* used to lie off the Newcastle coast and wait for sailing ships coming in to port, in competition with J. and A. Brown's tugs, also of Newcastle.

"In October 1891, the partly dismantled American barque *George F. Manson* arrived off port and signalled for a tug. The *Gamecock* and Dalton's *Awhina*, scenting salvage, raced out to the vessel. Both tug skippers bargained with the shipmaster. The Yankee captain refused to pay more than ordinary towage rates. When the tugmasters failed to drop their price, the American turned his ship about, and sailed for Sydney where he could make port without the aid of tugs."¹

Dalton died in 1898, and in 1899 the *Awhina* was auctioned in Sydney.² She was sold to John Bateman's of Fremantle.

The *Awhina* came to W. A. from Newcastle under her own steam. She arrived in Albany on July 1st 1900 from Adelaide and sailed the next day for Fremantle. She commenced work in Fremantle both as a tug and a week-end pleasure craft. One of her more unusual missions was on June 21st 1906, where she met the crippled steamer *Norfolk*, which had lost her propeller in the Indian ocean and travelled nearly a thousand miles under sails made from awnings and hatch covers.³

The *Awhina* came to Albany in 1912, where her duties were many and varied. In addition to harbour duties such as towing and servicing the ships in port, she was also used to supply the Eclipse Island lighthouse keepers, described later and towed the hulks *Copeland* and *Marius Ricoux* out to be sunk, as shown in the photograph sequence. During the First World War she ferried innumerable troops to and from the troop transports. She also towed the floating targets for firing practice by the Princess Royal Fort.



The Awhina loaded with troops for a convoy vessel. (Photo Dunstan West)

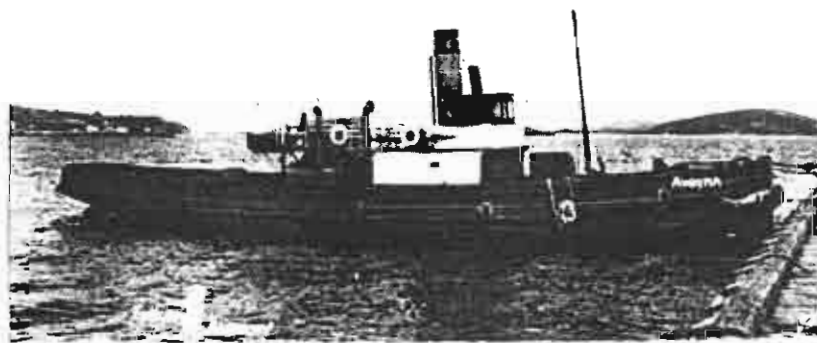
The *Awhina* was purchased by Armstrong and Waters to replace the *Dunskey*, which had been lost in March of the same year - 1917. George Waters, of Armstrong and Waters, was the usual skipper after she came to Albany, but was at times relieved by his son, "Bombay" Waters. Alec Armstrong was in charge of the engine room for years, known as "Black Alec" because of his beard.

¹ Terry Callen, *Bar Dangerous: A Maritime History of Newcastle* Sydney, 1986, p87.

² *Ibid* p86.

³ *The Daily News*, July 2 1932.

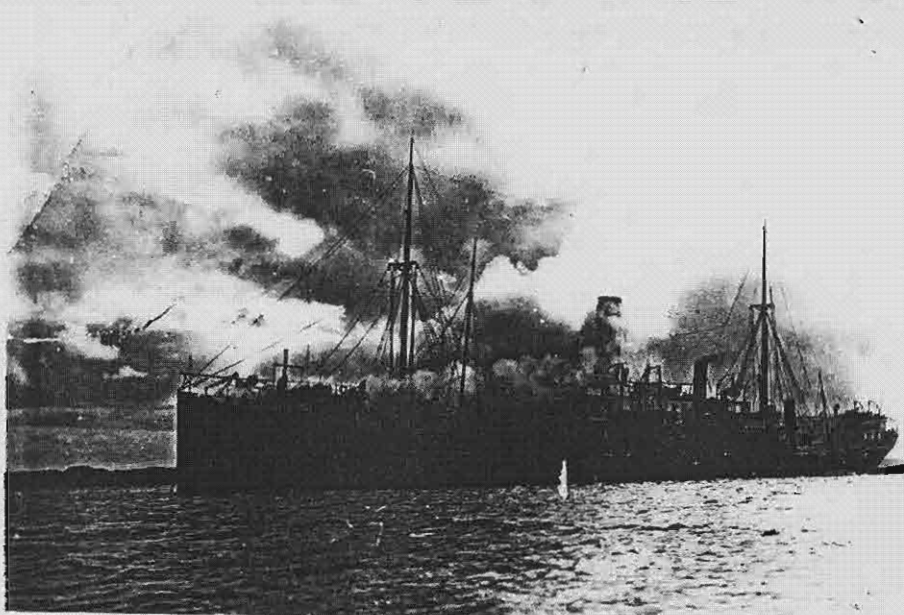
The *Awhina* became well known for her piercing siren to call lumpers to service the hulks. Les Douglas remembers the *Awhina*'s siren as a very unusual and uncanny sound, high pitched, similar to the siren on a police car during a chase, and mentions that the photograph showing the *Awhina* with *The Voice that breathed o'er Eden* was a skit on her siren.



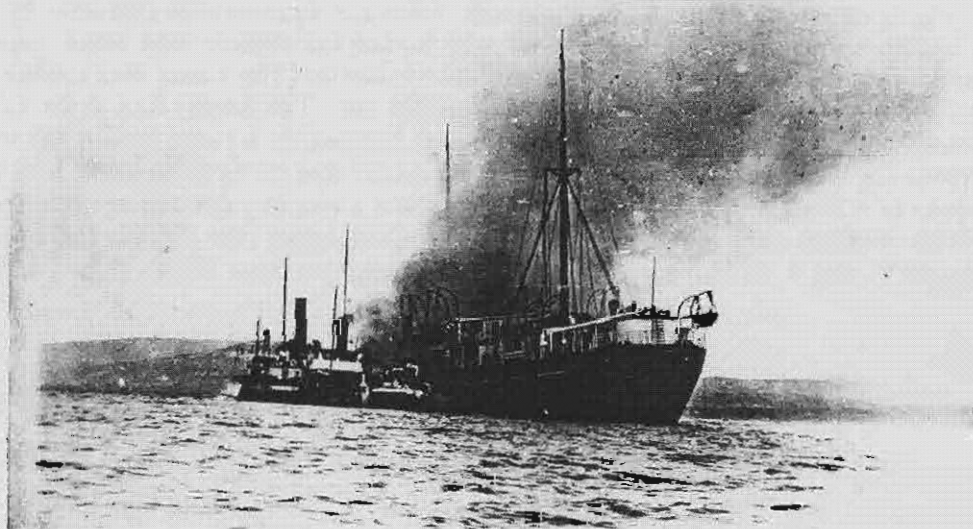
The Voice that breathed o'er Eden. (Photo Les Douglas)

Les Douglas was present at the time of the *Castlemoor* incident, one of the *Awhina*'s better-known achievements. On Saturday, Sept 8 1928 *Awhina* went to aid of the SS *Castlemoor*. The *Castlemoor* had a cargo of 9000 tons of Northumberland coal from England for Adelaide which was on fire, *not* her bunkers, as reported in the newspapers. This was due to the 1928 coal miners strike, which lasted for five or six months and resulted in coal imports from England. In this case the rescue crew stood by for a few hours until they had been guaranteed payment on a contract of 10 pounds per hour. This was because another vessel, the *Janus* (Not the *Aparima* as reported by Bob Selby.) came in on fire in August 1914 and it took months before the rescue crew were paid for it. Les Douglas' father was on *The Bruce* at the time the *Janus* came in. (The *Janus* was loaded with tea, and also jute and coconut fibre which had apparently caught fire. The vessel had to be flooded, and a huge quantity of what must have been spoiled tea was dumped in a pond by the railway line. The pond was brown for weeks afterwards. Les Douglas stated that his family never had to buy tea, as they had a chest of it from the *Janus*. His family also have a wooden fire bucket from the ship. (The *Dunskey* and the *Awhina* were also present at the time of the *Janus* fire. During the First World War a burning troopship, the *A 41* also came into Albany harbour, on New Year's Eve, 1915.¹)

¹ *The Daily News* Ibid.



Above and below; the burning tea-ship Janus, August 1914. In the lower photograph the Awhina and The Bruce can be distinguished with a coaster, among the rescue vessels. Photos Albany Museum)



Below : The pond in which tea from the *Janus* was dumped. (Photo Les Douglas)



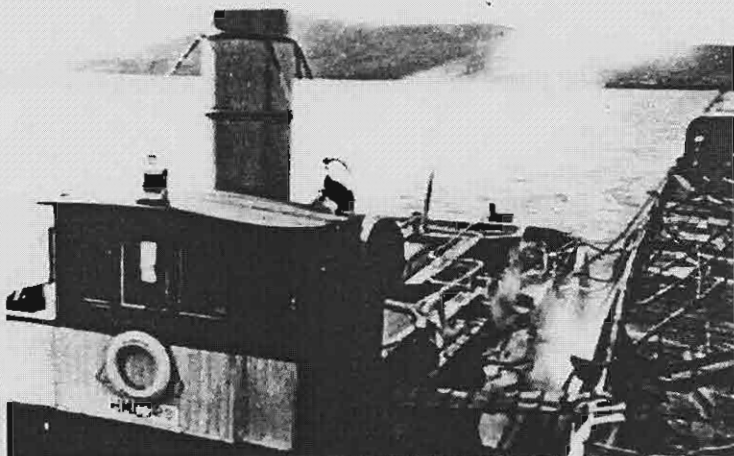
When the Master of the *Castlemoor* would not sign a contract, Clem Douglas ordered his crew to cast off. He said that they would not do anything until the agreement was signed stating how much they would receive for the salvage work. They had barely gone two or three lengths when there was a blast on the *Castlemoor's* siren to return and the contract was signed. They then pumped water into the *Castlemoor* for six or seven days. Les Douglas says that you could see the sides of the ship and No. 2 hold glowing at night because they were red hot. When the *Awhina* went alongside it was necessary to train a hose on the *Castlemoor's* side the whole time to keep the woodwork on the *Awhina's* side from burning. Hence the steam coming up in the photos. The photograph shows the *Awhina* lying alongside *Castlemoor* with the deep-water jetty in the background. Later on wharfies came aboard and shifted the coal. While she was engaged in controlling the fire, the Albany auxiliary fire engine sat on her deck to assist the pumping. (See photo sequence) This was the old town fire engine which was normally horse-drawn, even in 1928. (It is referred to as the fire-brigade pump *Lady Forrest* ¹.) The launch alongside is the *Ki-Kia*, built by MacIlwraiths. The *Awhina* had huge pumps in order to transfer water from water lighters to ships in the harbour. The *Castlemoor* had an Arab or Indian crew aboard. They panicked and wanted to leave. When the *Awhina* went alongside the *Castlemoor* the crew all wanted to jump aboard the *Awhina*, and the mate had to keep them back with a revolver. As the fire was controlled, The *Castlemoor* was moved out of the basin towards the quarantine station into shallow water where she could sit on the bottom. Her decks buckled with the heat. According to Bob Selby, The *Castlemoor* fire occurred at the time of the Great Southern Football Carnival time, at the other end of The Great Southern Circuit and several leading Albany footballers were also volunteer firemen and there was consternation in the local football camp when these players remained in Albany to fight the *Castlemoor* fire.²

¹ *Albany Advertiser* Sept 8th 1928.

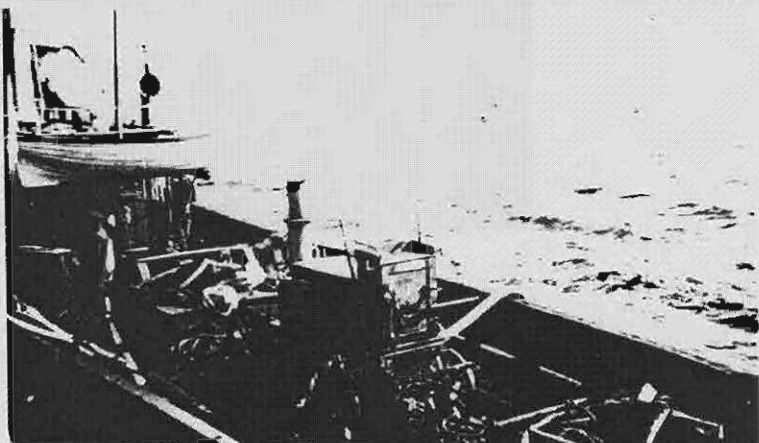
² *Memories of the Town's Tug the Awhina* From *Out Among the People* by Bob Selby.

The Castlemoor Fire

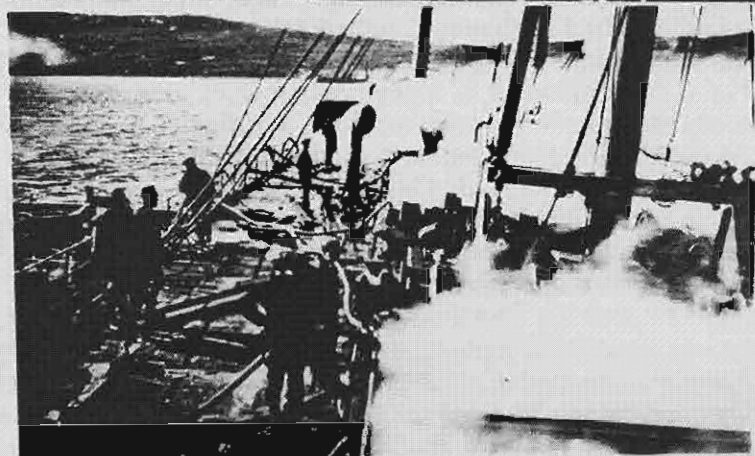
(1) *The Awhina beside the burning Castlemoor.*



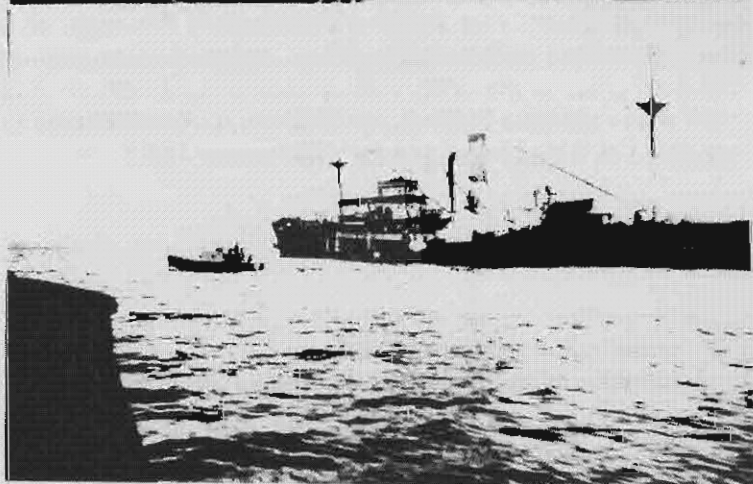
(2) *Albany's auxiliary fire engine stands on Awhina's deck.*



(3) *Fire fighting on the deck*



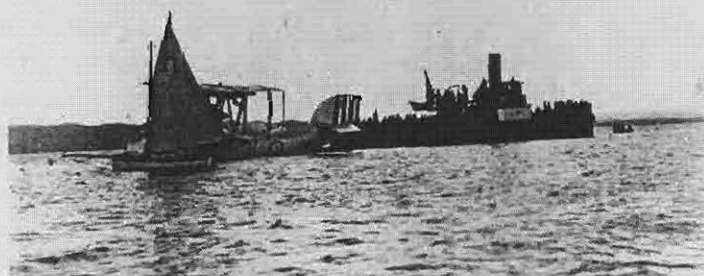
(4) *The burning Castlemoor from the Awhina*



Photos : Les Douglas

Shortly after this there was the wharf labourer's strike at Fremantle. All the big vessels, P & O etc. all went to Albany and would not come into Fremantle. They only discharged light cargoes in Albany. Passengers were brought ashore on the *Awhina* and other tugs, for which they were charged 4-5 shillings. Les Douglas says that he never saw so many gold sovereigns in his life for which he had to give change. What with these strikes they had quite a good year.

Les Douglas remembers going out on the *Awhina* at an early age to Breaksea Island lighthouse, to which the stores had to go monthly, including the firewood. The donkeys on the island were used as pack donkeys to carry the stores. The light on the lighthouse was at this time a kerosine lamp, later made into an automatic solar-activated gas lamp. On one occasion a new donkey was needed for Breaksea Island so the donkey was sent down from Perth by rail. It arrived a week before the *Awhina* was due to go out to Breaksea, so it was put in the Douglasses back yard. On the morning it was due to go to the island it did not want to leave the garden, and it took three or four men to move it - and a small donkey at that. There was a hand truck to carry goods to the long jetty, and the donkey was dragged down around the post office, its legs were tied up and it was lifted aboard the trolley and carried aboard the *Awhina*. The *Awhina* had a davit hoist, and when they got out to the island this was used to hoist the donkey into the small boat. They finally got the donkey onto the island, to the consternation of the lighthouse keepers who found it was too small for what they wanted. Breaksea Island lighthouse closed down in about 1917, when the light was converted. Les Douglas was only 11 or 12 at the time. Sad to relate, when donkeys ceased to be used on Breaksea, the last three were taken to the edge of a sheer cliff two or three hundred yards from the lighthouse, shot and pushed over as shark feed. Possibly there would have been no food for them.¹



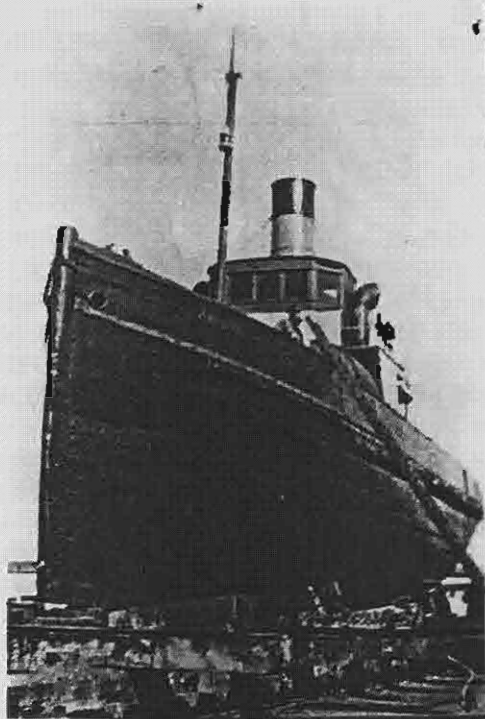
The Awhina carrying sightseers on the visit of the Southampton Marine's Flying Boats in 1927. The Commander name was Cave Brown Cave. The Awhina took all the aviation spirit out, special aviation fuel which had been sent to Albany especially to re-fuel the aircraft. (Photo Les Douglas)

Twice a year they took firewood out to Breaksea Island. They used to borrow the *Eucla*'s two surf boats (Les Douglas' uncle Bert was the skipper of the *Eucla*) which were also used to bring apples down the Kalgan

The *Awhina* made periodic trips to Fremantle for overhaul. On one occasion she was forced to run many miles south out of her usual course to escape the mountainous seas off Leeuwin, and alarm was felt for her safety, but Captain Shepherd safely made port with his tiny craft some days later.²

¹ Another story states that a 30 year old donkey was taken off the island on closure of the lighthouse. See Garden, *Southern Haven*.

² *West Australian* 9.11.1934



Awhina on the slip at Fremantle

Les Douglas recalls how in 1932 they received a telegram (Which he still has) from the Master of the *Milluna* which has broken down in the Bight requesting a tow from The Albany Tug Company. They did not have a sea-going certification at the time so they passed it on to the Adelaide Steamship Company, who gave it to the *Uco*, formerly called *St. Kitts*.¹ She later reverted to her former name.

The *Awhina* was also used to take stores out to the lighthouse on Eclipse Island once a month, a hazardous job since the island had neither harbour nor jetty. Stores and passengers were landed by means of a dinghy which carried them to a derrick mounted on the rocky shore in a comparatively sheltered cove. During rough weather the dinghy could be swamped.² Les Douglas had the job of rowing the dinghy for many years, and states that the dinghy was a small 12' one and that

“One had to watch for a patch of smooth sea before backing the dinghy in. The basket would be quickly lowered into the back of the dinghy, the man in the back would unhook it. You would then row out clear of the white water. Stores would be placed in the basket, this was no easy job because the man would have to steady the basket and put the stores in. You would then wait for a smooth patch and back the boat in again.”

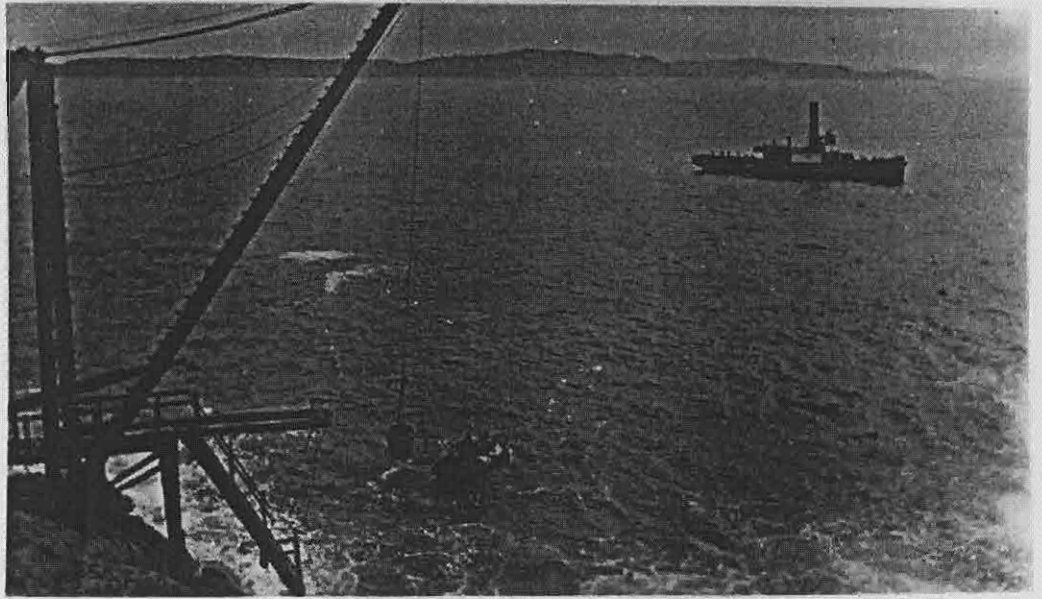
Les Douglas adds that the basket was only used to transport lighthouse keepers wives, who were sometimes portly, and a canvas or rope net was used for the stores.

The small structure appearing on The *Awhina's* forward deck was a toilet and paint locker. Les Douglas recalls how on one occasion going over to Eclipse Island a sea hit the *Awhina* and she rolled, and the toilet fell flat on the deck, (Its supports were rusted) trapping the occupant, a large man called Bill Ralph.

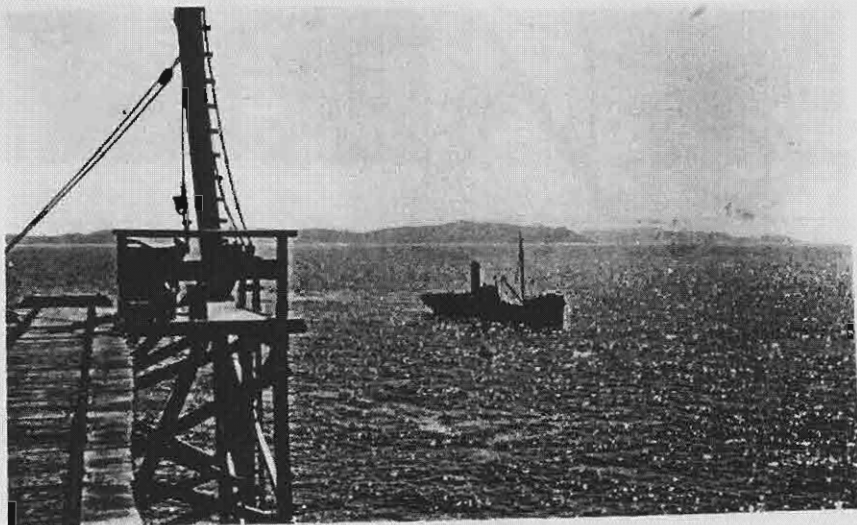
Later the tug *Bonthorpe* was used to service Eclipse Island.

¹ For a description of this see biographical section of Les Douglas.

² *Eclipse Island; a lonely outpost amid watery wastes. Albany Advertiser 1932.*



*Above : Awhina at Eclipse Island; Below : Bonthorpe at Eclipse.
(Photos : Les Douglas)*



(1) *Eclipse Island lighthouse*



(2) *The dinghy goes ashore*

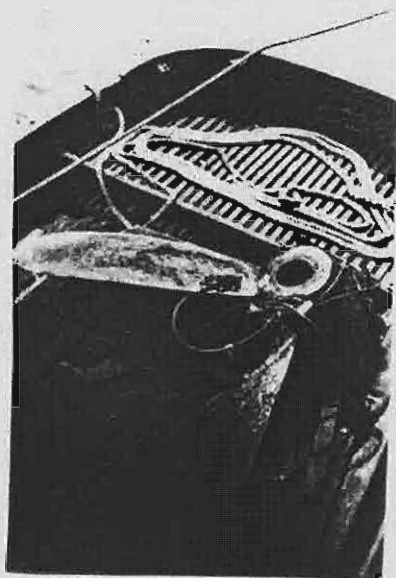


(3) and (4) *The view from the jetty*

Photos : Les Douglas



Albany's lack of slippage was to prove a disadvantage to more than the local shipping. In 1930 the steamer *Fiskus* came in to load wheat, but with a broken propeller blade. There was no where she could be slipped, so she was laid alongside the town jetty on the south side and the forward hold loaded with wheat until the propeller was brought out of the water. A local Albany engineering firm, Fergusson's Engineering Company, was engaged for the job of taking the propeller off and fitting the new one. They had a hell of a job getting the propeller off. It refused to budge. Usually the propeller is moved with wedges between the boss and the stern post. They even bored a hole in the cast iron boss and filled it with vinegar to try to get it off. They got some sheets of iron and put them under the propeller boss, and lit a big fire under it. (There were no blow torches) After it warmed up it jumped off. They hoisted the prop and put it on the *Awhina's* deck. There was no crane - everything had to be done with wires leading back to the ship's winches to ease it out from under the counter stern. The new propeller was on the *Awhina's* deck and they were getting it into position to slide on when the wire supporting it snapped and the propeller went to the bottom. There was only about 20ft of water, but the diving set had to be brought down from the shed and Les Douglas had to go down and shackle the wire to it so they could lift it up again. They had to get the propeller up and start all over again. Eventually the task was completed.



The broken propeller blade from the Fiskus on the stern of the Awhina
(Photo Les Douglas)

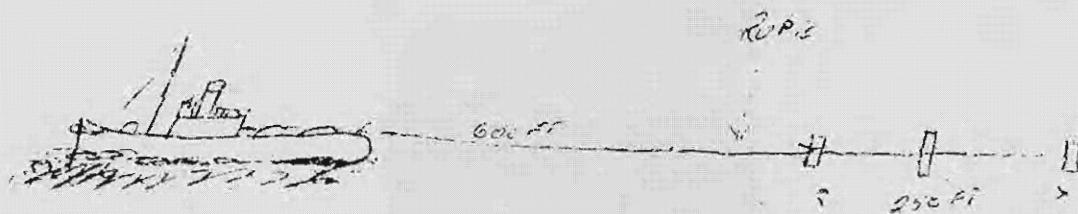
Les Douglas writes :

"Another job I did was to locate the SS *Katoomba* anchor. She was berthing on the east side of the Deep Water Jetty and the wind was a light easterly. To keep her head or bow from bumping too hard she dropped the starboard anchor. Years before they used to have two large buoys anchored off the jetty because of the strong Easterlies, and ships would run a line to them to keep off the jetty. The buoys had long disappeared but the major chains were still there. *Katoomba's* anchor fouled one and her cable snapped. She went on to Fremantle and left the anchor.

I was employed to locate it and shackle a wire to it. Father owned the diving gear, but to save a few pounds the Company used their own launch, the *Kia-kia* with Dick J. Johnson. I was put down, located the anchor and shackled the wire around the stock and out around the flukes because it had to be pulled out from under the buoy chain. *Katoomba* called in on her way east the following week and picked up the float and pulled the anchor out upside down.

We were paid ten pounds for this job. There was father, two men to turn the air pump, and myself. Four in all - one pound each for the two men; balance eight pounds, for father, myself and the use of the diving gear : all in all about five and a half hours work."

The *Awhina*, as well as the other tugs, was used to tow the target used for target practice by the guns at Princess Royal Fort. A very long towline of about 600 ft was used, made of coir rope (made out of coconut fibre, it is very light and springy and floats.) The target was in three separate sections - a bow target to represent the bow of the ship, a mid-target known as a banderol after the chest strap worn by soldiers at the time, and a stern target. The targets were a piece of raft wood with a light frame made of hessian, about ten feet wide. Les Douglas states that to his knowledge they never actually hit the targets, but they did strike pretty close to them. On the *Awhina*'s stern during target practice was a Seargent-Major who would measure the accuracy of the shooting with a rake shaped piece of wood, and would write down the position of the strikes - hit or miss. They would fire a dozen rounds - eight or ten from each gun. The guns would fire on an alternating basis, in competition with each other. The *Awhina* would steam due north from Rabbit Island, and the range would have been three to four miles. According to report one hit once came very close to *The Bruce*, when she was doing target work, and went between the funnel and the mast.



Awhina towing the target. Drawing by Les Douglas.

The engineer on the *Awhina* was "Black Alex" Armstrong, and from 1927 Les Douglas was the assistant engineer, and the engineer in Armstrong's absence.

The *Awhina* was extremely strong, and very solidly built, a veritable "Forrest of wood" and should still be around. She was built of kauri pine, painted black, copper sheathed, and had a wide keel protruding only about 4" from the hull. Her hull was double lined. She had very wide kelsons and sister kelsons and the stringers were also very big. She had, flattened ribs, or flattened hull, so that she could slip over sand bars. Her ribs were only about 6" apart. She was built for doing extremely rough work, and was a coal burner. Her boiler, which was not stayed, as it would have been for deep-sea work, was said to move from side to side in rough weather. As it was the *Awhina* was supposed to be used only for harbour work, and the boiler used to move on the way to Eclipse Island. It had wooden wedges driven between the boiler and the coamings to try to minimize this. The *Awhina* always had ventilators on the bridge, but as these are missing on the last photographs they must have been removed. She is shown with a mast in the photographs taken during her time at Fremantle, but she did not have one later on, so it may have been removed or it may have caught or been broken under the stern of a ship.

Awhina had well appointed cabins. The crew used to sleep on her as they worked all night on Albany Harbour, waiting for ships to come in. No one actually lived on her, although she had very nice quarters. She would have had a crew of ten if she had been sea-going, but as it was had a crew of only four for harbour duties.

(See drawing P.92)

Les Douglas writes of the *Awhina* :

"Built in Auckland in 1884 - a screw tug, 136 tons, 100 ft long by 21 ft beam, draught 10'5.

She was built of kauri pine, and there was no shortage of timber then - everything about *Awhina* was big and strong. She was especially constructed for work along the New Zealand coast and was said to be the staunchest yet built in New Zealand - and I believe that.

The *Awhina's* engines were built by Bowen McLauchlin and Coy, Paisley, Scotland in 1884 and was two cylinder, compound 50 n. hp, 50 rev per min cylinders, hp cyl 18 and a half inc 1p 23", stroke 24", steam pressure 120 psi. Cylinders were lagged with hair felt, teak cladding strips secured by brass round head screws and washers, covered the insulation.

A steel open grating surrounded the entire top of the cylinder heads. Standing on the grating the engine top was hip high, very spacious and plenty of room for working. The engine room casing was 7' high. From the deck one could work on the engine tops standing upright. There were four skylights on the top of the engine room casing. The engine columns were of cast iron, square, taped and bolted down, on to a massive cast iron bed.

The condenser was integrally cast with the back framing of the engine. The circulating pump was bolted to the back of the condenser, as was the main feed pump, air pump and bilge pump. The air pump was of the bucket type, all driven by rockers and links from the low pressure cylinder cross head. Double cross heads, the cross head plates were 10" wide.

Reversing was by Stevenson's link motion. Manually operated by a lever from the engine room floor. Main throttle valve, cylinder drain valve and impulse lever were all mounted on the engine column on the starboard side. The tail shaft was 6" diameter, 12' long. The propeller was bronze, 7 ft diameter, four blades bolted on the boss. *Awhina* did not have a generator. All lighting was by kerosene lamps.

The boiler backed onto the engine room. No bulkhead. A ladder between the boiler and engines on the port side led to the engine tops and the deck. Only about 2 ft floor space, the boiler sides came out at shoulder height and if it was a bit rough, even in the harbour you strike it rough, you would find yourself with one hand on the boiler lagging and the other on the ship's side - not much room.

There was no access to the boiler room from the port side as blocking the passageway was a couple of Worthington pumps. One for the boiler, the other bigger one for pumping water and general purpose. Both could be switched over and used for the bilge.

The boiler was a single ended marine return tube Scotch type, with two corrugated furnaces. The boiler was about 10 ft diameter and approximately 10 ft long. It was a large boiler for a vessel *Awhina's* size and was not the original boiler. M. J. Bateman brought her over to Fremantle from Newcastle NSW They did a lot of repair work on her. I seem to remember someone telling me that it came from the RMS *Orizaba*, wrecked off Fremantle. *Awhina* was in Fremantle at that time.

The boiler room was big and roomy. About 9 ft from the boiler to the bunker bulkhead which was steel. It went across to about 3 ft from each side, then back, leaving just enough room for one to get past into the boiler room. This made two short side pockets, each with a steel slide up door. The side pockets were open to the main bunker and filled at the same time. There was also a steel sliding door in the centre of the bulkhead for the coal to run out of or be mostly shovelled out.

Newcastle coal was always used because it was a good gas coal, as *Awhina* and other small vessels had natural draught. That is you depend on the volume of air coming down the ventilators, passing through the furnace into the back end, then passing through the nest of tubes into the smoke box and up the funnel. The more air passing through the better the combustion and more efficient coal consumption. The longer the funnel, the more draught created. You notice the small ships had long funnels. Large ships had forced draught fans in the top of the smoke box. The amount of air could be regulated.

Awhina had two long ventilators. One on each side coming down to within 7 ft of the stoke hold plates and extending up to the top of the wheel house. They were 18" in diameter. Access to the deck was by a ladder on the starboard side. The top had open grill bars. One section opened through this. The fireman hoisted the ash buckets and dumped the ashes over the side.

The front of the bunker bulkhead was wooden. On the other side was the crew's quarters. Access was from steps from the deck. Three bunks on each side, a small table in the middle. Then in the forward part was the chain locker. The anchor chain ran over the old hand operated windlass, sailing ship style, worked by a wooden pole.

The engine room was very comfortable. There was a large work bench. A long wide seat about 2'6" wide and 5'6" long. One could lie down while waiting between jobs. There used to be plenty of that. It was very comfortable on cold nights, waiting for the hulks to finish.

To go into the aft cabin from the engine room, you went up two steps which were built over the turning gear. You were then walking over the tail shaft covering and down a central passage 14' long, 3' wide. You had to stoop a little on account of the very large deck beams 8' x 8' and 2 ft apart. On each side of the passage were the water tanks. These tanks comprised 12, 6 down each side. Galvanized tanks about 4'6" square. All the tanks were connected and held 36 tons. The tanks had originally held cargo, mostly tins of English biscuits and other breakable goods. They were then sold locally and were in great demand, particularly with farmers for carting water. And on the gold fields. Between the top of the tanks and the deck head, about 2' was a very useful storage area, for a lot of light gear.

Entering the after cabin on the port side was the Captain's Cabin. Starboard side, the Engineers. All woodwork was nicely grained. Access to the cabin from the deck was by steps. The steps came down between the two cabins. I have in my possession two lamp gimbles from these cabins.

Aft of these cabins in the centre, was a long triangular table with seats down each side. The back of the seats formed the bunkboard of the lower bunk. One stood on the seat to get into the top bunk. There were four bunks.

When at sea the cabin would have been occupied by the Captain, First and Second Mates, Chief Engineer, Second and Third Engineers. The cabin was large with plenty of air and light. Skylights on the cabin top could be opened in fine weather. Heavy glass around the sides of the cabin top, which was about 3' high but the glass was only about 12" high, protected by brass bars.

Aft of the cabin bulkhead was the after locker. Two spare bronze propeller blades were stowed here together with the rope and towing gear. Access to this locker was by a small hatch in the deck about 2'6" x 3'.

The bulwarks around *Awhina* were 3' high with a heavy top rail 10/11" wide. One could walk along it.

The engine room housing was about 7' high and 7' wide. The tow beams or horse was on the back of the engine housing and the ends of the beams were fastened down the side of the housing. Where the engine room housing joined the boiler housing were two salvage pumps on brackets fastened to the boiler housing close to the engine room entrance. Round on the starboard side of the engine room was a davit. It used to swing the tug's small dinghy from its cradle on the top deck. Directly above hung the ship's bell. It was not the original, but had the name *Tocopilla 1865* inscribed on it.¹ Eric Douglas, my brother, still has this bell.

Access to the top deck and wheel house was by a ladder on the starboard side where the engine and boiler casing joined. The boiler casing being much wider than than the engine room casing. The ladder was hard against the engine room casing. It left plenty of side deck space.

The wheel house was enclosed with a door on each side. The steering wheel was hand operated. Alex Armstrong told me that Batemans installed it when *Awhina* first came to Fremantle. They gave her a big refit. It was a crab winch, cut and closed in to about 15", with a couple of extra cogs fitted. The steering wheel was from another vessel, probably a sailing ship. 4'6" diameter, it was rather heavy to turn as *Awhina's* steering wheel. *Awhina's* whistle operated from the wheelhouse. It was not really a whistle, it was a siren - a high piercing noise. It could be heard for many miles. I have never heard anything like it.

In the boiler room casing, on the starboard side, was a small wood or coal stove and a steam kettle. This served as the galley with the exception of the steam kettle. The stove was rarely used. There was practically no shelter, one often stood on a wet deck. There was no storage for food here. Fortunately for the crew *Awhina* never went to sea in the time she was in the West.

From 1912 when she came to Albany from Fremantle, until 1924, she only made 3 trips to Fremantle for slipping. On her last trip in 1924 she was "hove to" for three days off the Leeuwin in a gale. Her owners were concerned about her whereabouts.

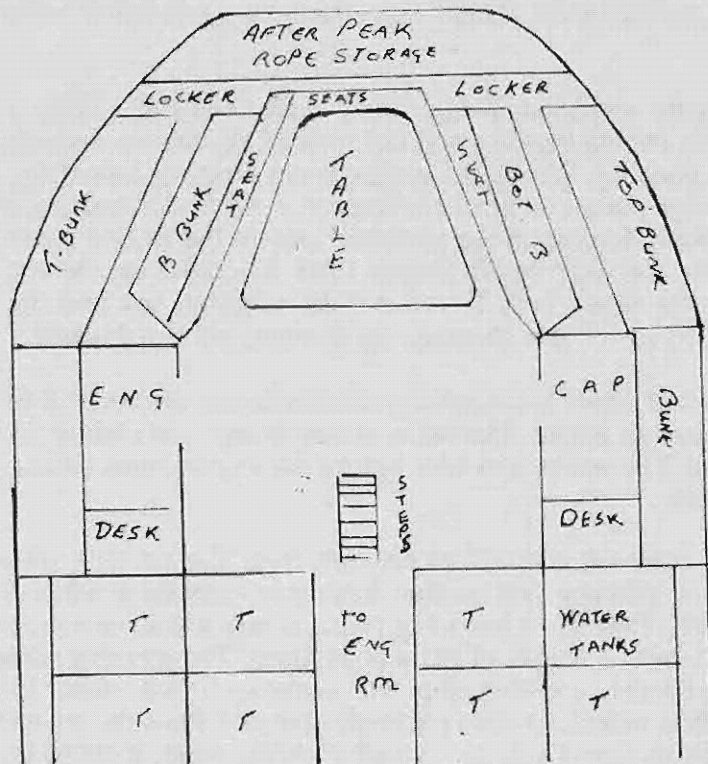
Shipping was wirelessed and asked to keep a look out and report her position. He told me that he only saw one ship, a big mail boat. And when her bow came up on the big seas that were running, they could see right under the forefoot (under the bow). However, so bad was the weather, the ship never saw little *Awhina*, or if they did, no report was sent.

The sturdy little tug steamed into Albany on the fifth day out of Fremantle.

What jogged my memory about this trip was describing the primitive little galley stove on deck. Because it could not be used, they managed to get some hot food by cooking it in the stoke hold using hot coals from the furnace on a big coal scoop. On the deck port side, was the paint locker and toilet, a large bunker hatch and entrance to forecastle and windlass. On one trip to Eclipse a large sea hit the paint locker and laid it in the deck, door down. Trapped inside was our fireman.

¹ *Tocopilla* was a steel sailing ship built in 1865, hulked in 1907, and later used as a coal hulk at Fremantle. she was finally sunk off Rottnest Island in 1924.

Awhina had plenty of deck space. In fact, everything about *Awhina* was big, heavy and well made. Had slipping facilities been available at Albany, it is quite possible that *Awhina* would still be afloat. She was far from being worn out. It was only lack of work and the above mentioned facilities that brought about her demise."



Awhina's cabin. Drawing by Les Douglas
Below : *Awhina* at Frenchman's Bay. (Photo Les Douglas.)



The bear punch was last used in 1930 to rivet the *Awhina's* funnel.



Bear punch used for the Awhina's last funnel Property of Les Douglas. (Photo Pat Baker) It was also used for the Silver Star's telescopic funnel.

Her bell is owned by Les Douglas' brother Eric in Denmark. It bears the inscription *Tocopilla 1865*. It was not the original. The original is believed to have disappeared when the *Awhina's* boiler was replaced, and replaced by this one. The bell was the easiest part of a ship to steal. She always carried two spare blades at all times, which were taken off before she was scrapped. The *Awhina* always had a great deal of rubbish in the forecabin, which may account for some of the things found on her during the *Awhina Survey*.¹

The *Awhina* was last slipped in 1924 - otherwise she should have lasted much longer. 50 years was nothing for a vessel as solidly built as the *Awhina*. She was scrubbed, but not stripped. She had to be taken to Fremantle to be slipped, which was expensive, and the owners could not afford to bring her to Fremantle. The cost of taking her to Fremantle for slippage so far outweighed the value of doing it that this was not done after 1924.

The tail shaft had to be drawn for survey and removed every three years. When this occurred they put her on the beach at Emu point. Her head went down and her tail came up and the tail shaft would be removed. The tail shaft had a 6" diameter. The ship surveyor would come down to inspect the tail shaft and issue certificates. There was a standard fee to have the vessel surveyed, i. e. two pounds. One year in order to draw the tail shaft, (this was the last year it was done) they took her out to Emu Point and then to lighten the vessel they blew the boiler down. (On Emu Point on the right hand side the navy started a submarine base during the First World War, at the place where the *Camel* is now. This had a slip, although never completed or used.) Part of the bank goes down fairly steeply, and before the *Awhina* was taken out eight or nine tons of granite were put on the bow. They put the stern up on the beach on the high side pivoting to get the head down further with the stone on the bow. They could only get within two feet of the stern tube. The propeller shaft had to be drawn inside the vessel, and they had to take up half the cabin floor and work in the bilge. The surveyor came out and surveyed. They put a big wooden plug in the hole in the stern, and put a plate over it on the inside to keep the water out. When they took the plate off, a stream of water shot in. The shaft was hanging on chain blocks; it was 12ft long 6" in diameter, not so easy to handle down in this confined space, in a greasy bilge. They hurriedly put a tarpaulin over the outside of the hole; it was sucked in and the water stopped pouring. With water pouring in and the vessel down by the head they eventually got the shaft in. However, they could not get enough water to fill the boiler, so they towed her across the sound with three motor launches.

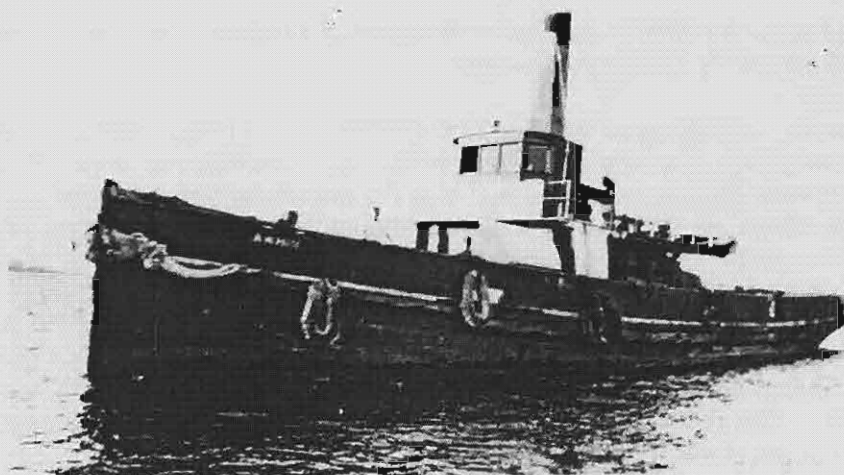
The *Awhina* used to be scraped a couple of times a year. Les Douglas and company used to scrub her bottom with a piece of oregon timber 3ft long to which they nailed a steel scrubbing brush. It had a hole in each corner and a rope through each corner which passed under the vessel. This was then

¹ *The Awhina Survey*, by students at the W.A. Maritime Museum, 1990. (Unpublished)

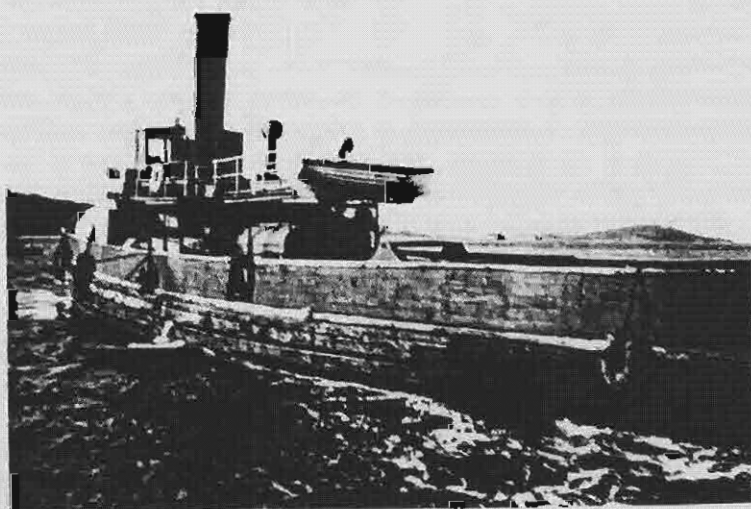
pulled this up and down to scrub the sides, but could only go as far as the keel. The rest would be scraped on the outside. It was possible to get right down at the bow, and it was fairly flat under the bilge. They had to be fairly careful so that the equipment did not pull out the nails on the copper sheathing and cause it to come off. The *Awhina* would be put on a bank off the town jetty, on the beach or on Emu Point and scraped right down to the keel. Otherwise this was done when she was lying alongside the wharf, in which case they could not reach so far.

A new rudder was built for the *Awhina* on the wharf in 1930 as worms had got to the old one. The new one was built out of Jarrah. The teredo worms were now starting to get to her at the wind and water lines. What would happen was that the teredo borers would tend to go along a piece of wood rather than deep into it, and the practice was to dig out the affected piece of wood, put red paint behind it and put in another piece that fitted the hole. The copper sheathing would then be put back over the new piece. But this never reached the point of causing a leak. The *Awhina*, however, was getting old.

When the *Bonthorpe* was offered for sale, Clem Douglas saw in her the opportunity of getting a good steel hulled vessel, to spend money on something worthwhile, and which could be converted for use as a minesweeper.



Above and below : Awhina in old age : Ventilators are missing on the bridge in the upper photograph, and the wear on the hull visible in both.(Photos Les Douglas)



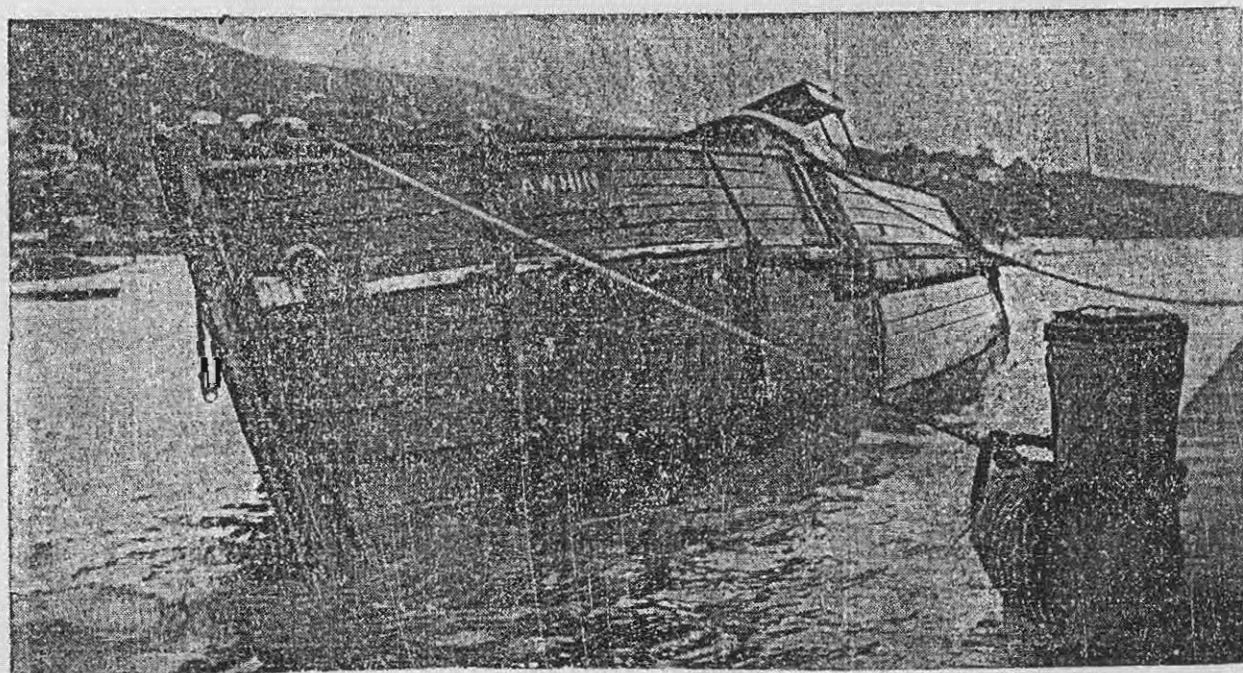
In a letter to the Premier dated 1st June 1933, tendering for the *Bonthorpe*, Clem Douglas stated that in a year or two the *Awhina* would be too old to continue doing the work of the Port of Albany, and that they intended to use parts from her if needed in renovating the *Bonthorpe*.¹

There was no work for the *Awhina* in the depression, and she was last used in 1933. After the *Bonthorpe* was in commission, in between calls to service ships, the *Awhina*'s tow bars and tow hooks were removed and put on the *Bonthorpe*. Thereafter the *Awhina* was not used, and lay alongside the wharf. She probably lay at the wharf for the best part of twelve months.

There were no buyers for her at this time (1936) and there were already big tugs at Fremantle. She was sold to scrap metal merchants, a Mr. J. Hall of Fremantle, who paid 50 pounds for her, and was being stripped and scrapped at the jetty when she sank. He took the engines out and dismantled them, which is how she came to sink. Either he had taken the pipes off the side and broken one of the cocks, or the tail shaft may have been interfered with or otherwise removed. The water was only 12-14ft deep. Les Douglas was north at Cossack when this happened.



Above and below : Awhina after sinking (Photos Les Douglas and Western Mail)



¹ In possession of Les Douglas See Appendix XII

After sinking at her moorings a diver was sent down to plug the leak and she was pumped out by the *Bonthorpe* and then taken to another mooring so that salvaged parts could be put ashore. The *Awhina* was then towed to Gull rock by the *Bonthorpe* and beached. The tug's crew went ashore and a strong charge was exploded in her timbers. She was then liberally sprinkled with tar and oil; prior to being set alight. The *Awhina* then blazed merrily, but was not completely destroyed.

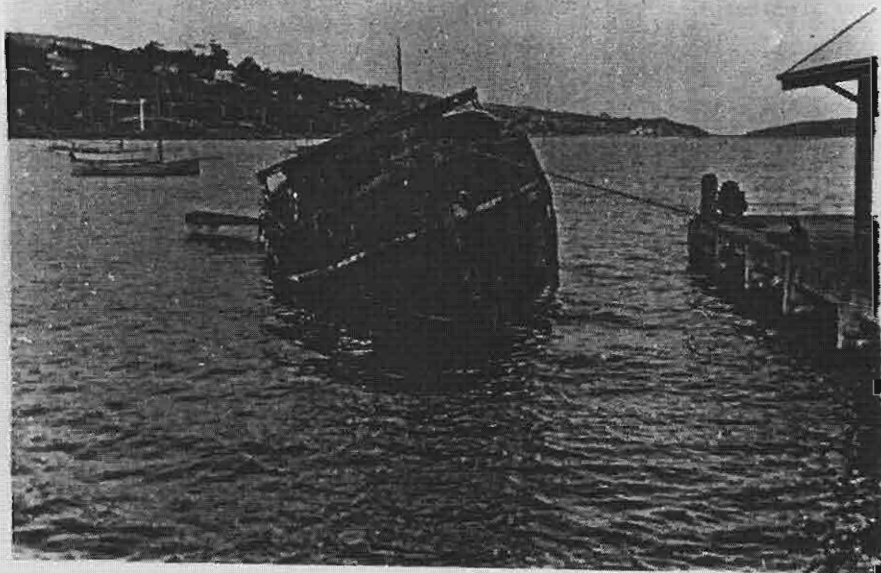
"The old *Awhina* is well bedded down" was the parting remark of one of the party as he pronounced the benediction with a salute from the siren on the *Bonthorpe*"¹

"It is predicted that the strong westerlies of the coming winter will then quickly entomb the remains of one of the stoutest craft of her kind to give service on the New Zealand and Australian Coasts"²

Nevertheless the ribs, boiler and other remains can still be seen off Gull Rock.

Les Douglas has the *Awhina's* steering wheel, now on loan to the Albany Museum. This was not the original, but came of a sailing ship. The *Awhina's* last log book was more a register of jobs, costs and wages rather than anything else - was in Les' father's writing and disappeared when he was living living at Mt. Lawley. Les Douglas also has two lamps on gimbles from the *Awhina's* engineers cabin for kerosine lamps. Some of these things have since been donated to the Albany Museum.

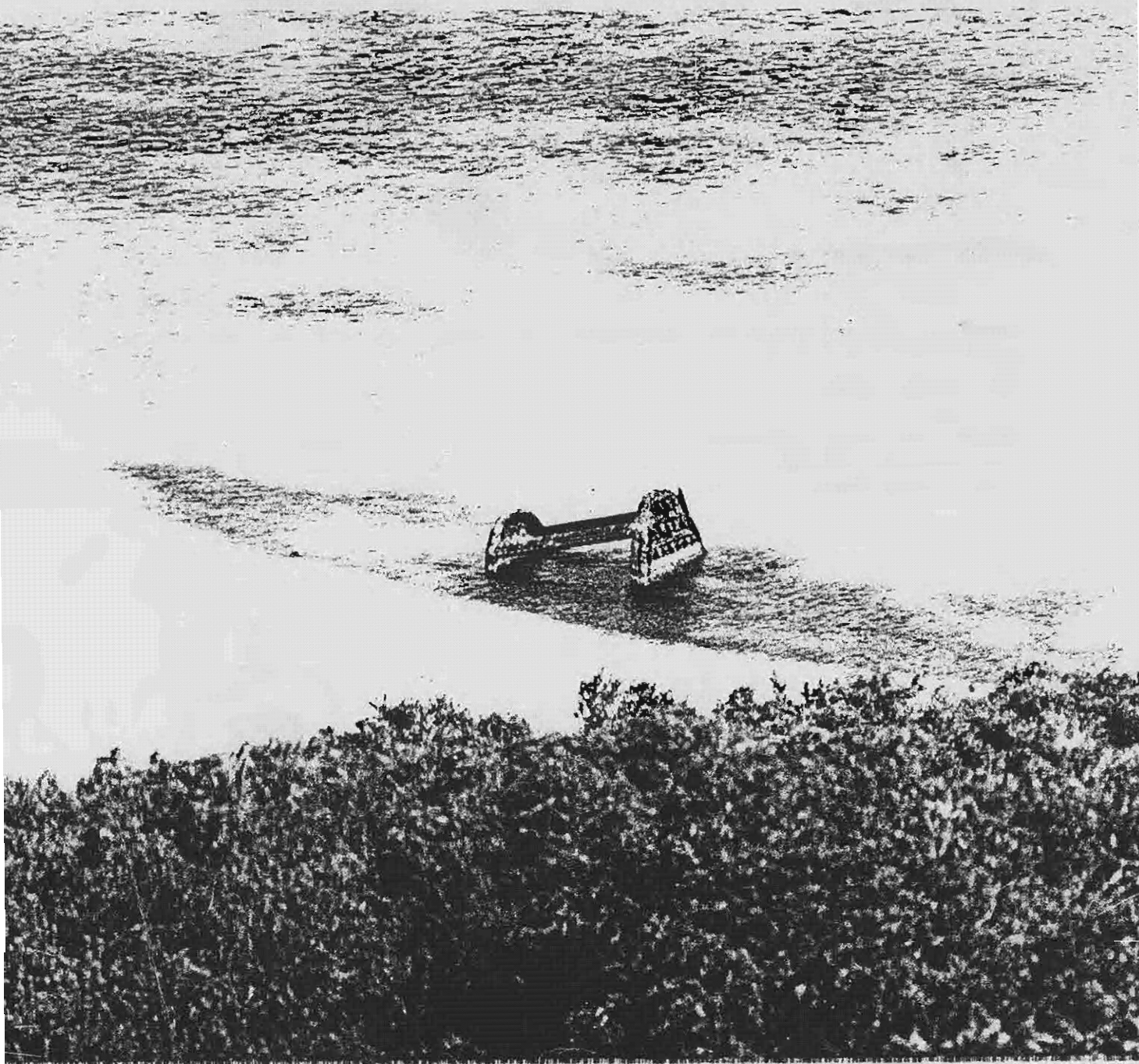
The *Awhina* was surveyed in 1991 by students at the W.A. Maritime Museum. The results were collated in *The Awhina Survey* in *The Albany Report* (Unpublished, W.A. Museum Report No.50).



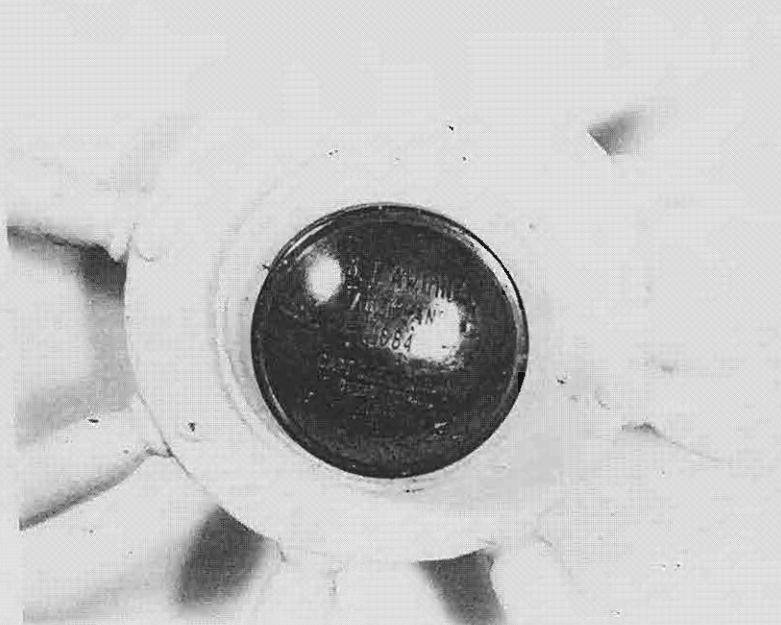
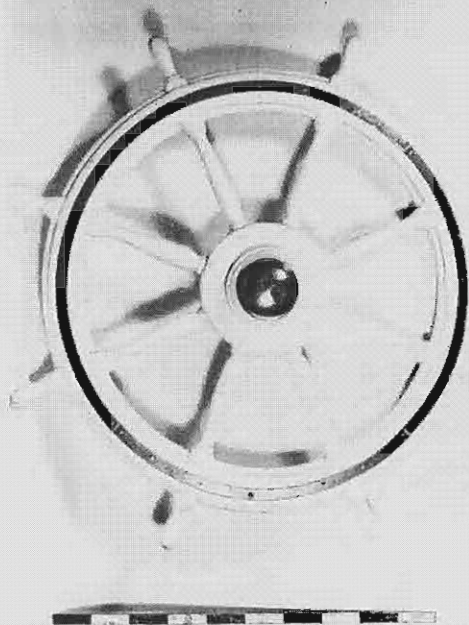
Above : *Awhina* beside the jetty after sinking. (Photo Les Douglas).

¹ Albany Advertiser August 1980 Quoting "Journey's End : The passing of the Tug *Awhina*" from early 1940s.

² Albany Advertiser P. 10 1936.



Awhina as she is today. (Photo Patrick Baker)



Awhina's steering wheel; in possession of Les Douglas, West Perth, who put the inscription on.

(Photo Patrick Baker)

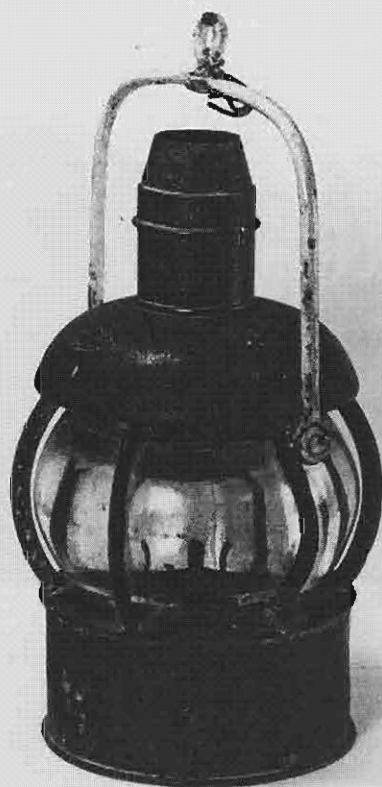
Awhina's last bell, in possession of Eric Douglas, Denmark

(Photo Patrick Baker)

Awhina's riding lamp.

Les Douglas

(Photo Patrick Baker)



"BIG LIZZIE"

Double ended cargo boat that could carry bales of wool etc. Used to transport cargo to Eclipse island.¹

The *Eucla* had a small and a big surf boat. The small surfboat was about 25ft long and 14ft beam. It was double ended and about 1 metre high.

The larger of the two was about 30ft long and would have had a 13ft or 14ft beam. About 5ft high. Built for the wool industry. There were only certain trips she would go on with the *Eucla*. Otherwise stayed at her moorings. Sometimes taken on the deck of the boat.

Used to take firewood to the quarantine station about once a year and to Breaksea island twice a year.

Les Douglas says that that the *Big Lizzie* in the Albany Museum is not either of the *Eucla's* boats.

"It appears to me to be one of the boats used by the lighthouse tenders *Cape Don* or *Cape Otway*. I have seen them so many times working the island."

¹ Roy McCartney Pers comm.

BONTHORPE**Steam Tug, trawler**

O/N 148/219 - Signal post VJLL

Reg. no. 3/1949 - 23/5/49. Previously reg. 5/1926 at Fleetwood U. K.

Steamship, single screw.

Built at Collingwood, Ontario, Canada, 1917 by Collingwood shipbuilding Co. Ltd.

1 deck 2 masts ketch rigged. Elliptical stern. Clinker built. Steel hulled. Fishing trawler. 5 bulkheads.

Measurements : 125. 5 ft x 23. 5 ft x 12. 5ft (Depth of hold)

272 . 86 tons gross 105. 80 tons net.

Machinery: 1 double acting vertical reciprocating compound steam engine built 1917

by the ship builders. 3 cylinders 12 3/4, 21 i/2" x 35" x 24" stroke = 61. 6 nominal horsepower = 500 indicated horsepower = 10 knots. One cylindrical boiler, steel, built by the builders 1917.

180 lbs. Length of engine room 33. 2 ft.

Possibly bought from Navy as redundant.

Worked out of Albany 1930 as a fishing trawler.

Ist owner in 1949 - Mary Dakkas of Broome. 64% A pearler. Married woman. B/S 3/4/1951 to Marine Contractors Pty. Ltd. of Cairns Qld. Reg. trans to Port of Cairns 17/9/1951.

17/9/1951 - alteration of tonnage as follows:

Cert of Survey Fremantle 17/7/51.

Straight stern. Delete fishing trawler: insert tug.

94. 06 tons net.

Christos Dakkas d. 1950.¹



The Bonthorpe newly arrived at Albany. (Photo Les Douglas)

The *Bonthorpe* was a Canadian trawler which, according to some accounts was initially built and used as a mine sweeper during World War 1. Owing to similarities of design it was easy to convert minesweepers to trawlers, and vice versa. She later trawled out of Fleetwood, England. The *Bonthorpe* was brought to Albany by the West Australian Trawling Company, and she was employed trawling new fishing grounds in the Great Australian Bight. She trawled east of Albany as far as Esperance. She made many trips searching the area for suitable grounds as the area had never been trawled before. She returned home with some good catches, and used to berth on the opposite side of the Town Jetty to the Douglas' tugs, and they saw all the action. She had an experimental engine and

¹ R. McKenna.

boiler. Difficulties then arose because of the Institute of Marine Engineers. State regulations stated that vessels with engines over a certain horsepower had to carry a certified engineer. Owing to union regulations she had to carry a fully qualified engineer on every trip, a deep water man, with the result that there was a new engineer on every trip as they could not adapt to life on a small trawler, and used to get sea sick. The skipper that brought her out to England stayed with her to the finish.

The engineers did not know what they were doing and finished up salting up the boiler. When salt water is used in boilers, it is necessary to blow the boiler down frequently. It should be blown down everyday, otherwise the salt crystallises. This was not done on the *Bonthorpe*. They salted it up completely, and Les Douglas remembers seeing steam pouring out of the vessel on this occasion.

Les Douglas writes :

"The Skipper stayed on for some time as Caretaker, but finally the Company could not pay his wages. They were bankrupt, so the *Bonthorpe* was left unattended alongside the wharf for several years. Anything moveable was stolen along with many parts of machinery in the engine room. The entire steam generating set was unbolted and removed and there was a danger of the vessel breaking her mooring lines and drifting away. The Government decided to call tenders for the ship to be towed out to sea and sunk."

Les Douglas' father Clem Douglas had eyes on her for possible use as a tug, as the *Awhina* was getting old. He came to Fremantle to negotiate a sale. In correspondence he stated her suitability for conversion to a minesweeper and tendered 200 pounds for the vessel on the grounds that it was not to be dumped but to be reconditioned and used. This was accepted. (See Appendix XII) There were 120 tons of coal in her, which sold at a pound a ton, so they virtually paid only for the coal. The Douglases then had to get all the salt out of the boiler. There was salt between the tubes of the boiler - no space at all. The boiler was, in fact, a solid block of salt. It took four or five days to warm as it could not be heated quickly. They tipped in bags of potatoes at a time (potatoes absorb salt) and warmed the boiler and poked the salt free from between the tubes. It took months and months to complete.

"It meant filling the boiler with water, lighting a small fire in each furnace, leaving the manhole open on top, tipping 7 - 8 bags of potatoes in and keeping the boiler hot for about 10 days. Then blowing the boiler down. This was repeated many times. After each warming we would get inside and chip away the salt between the tubes with long chisel bars. It was essential that we clear the tubes to allow the water to get around them. Once that was done we could gradually increase the temperature. Finally we were able to get up a few pounds of steam. This took about 3 months. Finally we had a full head of steam, 170 lb sq. inch.

Fortunately many spare parts for the ship were stored in the Customs House on the ground floor of the old Post Office. Just as well because they were safe from pilfering. For other parts I had to come to Perth, have patterns made, and get castings made and machined.

We cut five-eighth steel plates to make straps eight and a half feet long and 9" wide. These were bolted to the boiler room plating at the back of the funnel. The tow beams from the "*Awhina*" were then bolted to these straps."

All trawlers, including the *Bonthorpe*, had big funnels for natural draught.

"All the trawling gantrys had to be stripped and the deck made clear. The Tow Horse we took off the *Awhina* and fastened it just behind the funnel, strapping it down around the boiler room casing. We then had to make tow beams across the engine room casing so as the tow ropes would slide from side to side. Light railway line was used, bent inside out so as to be able to fasten wood on top for the rope to slide over. These also had to be made so as to lift out when not engaged in towing. the railway lines came from the frenchman's Bay whaling Station. Some were still stored at Kalgan River.

We had no electric welders, oxy cutters, electric drills, power saws or grinders. No modern tools. Everything was done by hand the hard way, ratchet, drills, coal chisels and sledge hammers. We would light fires on the beach to bend the tow beams, bars and steel

plates. To bend the half inch and five-eighth steel plate straps to fasten the towing gear to the deck housing and to bend the railway lines inside out. Incidentally, the railway lines came from the Kalgan River, some were left at Captain Douglas' home at the Top Bridge. Originally from the old Frenchman's bay whaling Station. We used anything that could be adjusted to suit. Looking back it seems incredible that we did so much with so little money. But with determination you can achieve almost anything.

The *Bonthorpe* had 170 tons of Newcastle coal in the bunker (good steaming coal) worth one pound (\$2) per ton - so we bought the ship for thirty pounds, taking the price of coal off. We used the coal to list the ship, shovelling it all first to port and then to starboard. By heavily listing we could scrape and chip and paint well down to the turn of the bilge. Further down we just scraped the barnacles and weeds off with long poles, scrapers attached.

I remember the first ship we towed R.A.N. HMAS *Canberra*. They gave us a wire rope (Usually you get a rope from the ship). There is some spring in the rope, its got more to give in it. But wire has none so the Master of the tug has to take the strain very gently, which is not always easy to do in rough weather. When the crew of the *Canberra* passed the wire down on the end of the heavy line, I thought Father would ask them for a "rope" tow. It must have passed through his mind. "It will be a good test on our workmanship of the towing gear." We had done a good job."

After re- conditioning the *Bonthorpe* replaced the *Awhina* on all her duties, including the visits to Eclipse island. According to Les Douglas, the *Bonthorpe* proceeded to be all that was expected of her. She was still a comparatively new vessel, only 16 years old, and was very comfortable with good cabin accomodation. The Captain's quarters were below the Bridge, with the Engineer's cabin and crew's quarters aft. Entrance to the quarters faced aft as did entrance to the galley. Food from the galley could be taken downstairs to the quarters without going on the main deck. This was essential as trawlers stayed at sea during all weathers. The same entrance not only led to the galley and the quarters but to the engine room.

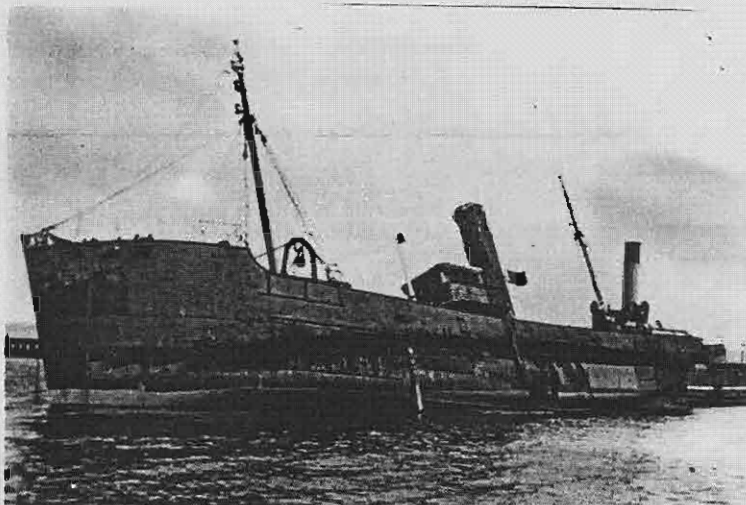
"our monthly trip with stores to Eclipse Island was like being on an ocean liner compared to the many rough trips on the *Awhina*. Also at the Island she was so stable it was much easier to coma alongside with a small dinghy as she had straight sides wheras *Awhina* had a very wide belting and was very dangerous rolling in a heavy sea. The dinghy could get caught under the belting. It was sometimes more dangerous alongside the *Awhina* than under the swinging derrick at Eclipse Island Landing, dodging the breakers."

The *Awhina* was no longer used, and the *Bonthorpe* towed the *Awhina* out to be burnt in 1936. Every year contracts were called for servicing Eclipse Island, and the *Bonthorpe* filled this function until she left Albany in 1939. Stan Austen's vessel *Kestrel* used to supply Eclipse Island from 1939 to 1952.

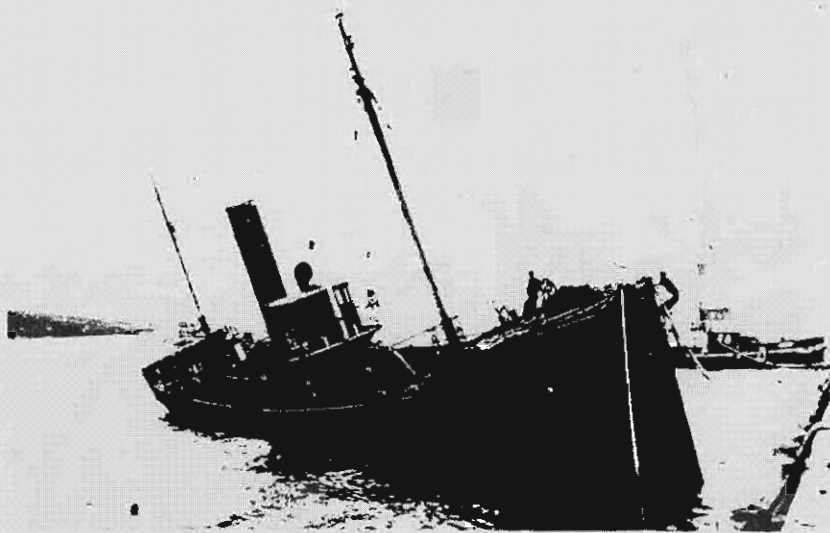
Alex Armstrong and Eliott bought the *Bonthorpe* from Clem Douglas when the company dissolved. Les Douglas was north at Cossack at this time. There was a dispute with Alex Armstrong. Clem Douglas took the *Silver Star* and Alex took the *Bonthorpe*. The *Bonthorpe* was commandeered by the Navy, taken to Fremantle and there slipped. Some old plates were replaced with new ones, she was given a complete overhaul and commissioned as Minesweeper and patrolled off Fremantle and the owners were paid big cheques by the navy for her use, justifying Clem Douglas' claim that she was too good to destroy and could be used in times of war.

After the war, the *Bonthorpe* went to Queensland and initially commenced fishing operations, but was arrested and held for bankruptcy; the vessel lay deteriorating against the wharf for many years, and then sank and was buried under the fill for the new sugar terminal at Senrab Point during the 1950s.¹

¹ I am indebted for this last piece of information to Dr. Rod McLeod of the Queensland Maritime Museum. Pers. comm 12/2/91 and 1/3/91.

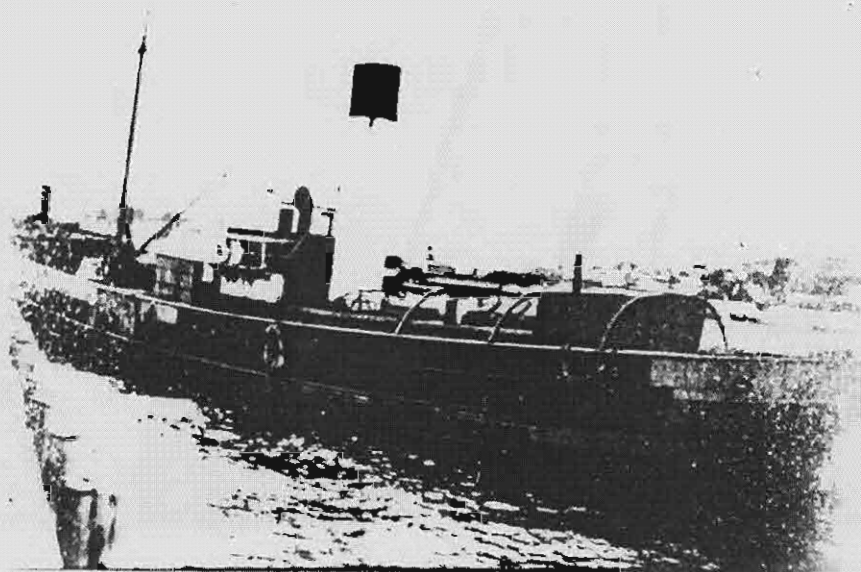


*The **Bonthorpe** (above and below) careened beside the jetty. The two figures in the top photograph are chipping rust off the plates. **Awhina's** funnel can be seen in the background. (Photo Les Douglas)*





*Above : Bonthorpe in the harbour. (Photo Les Douglas)
Below : Bonthorpe beside the Albany jetty after re-conditioning (Photo Albany Museum)
The "Tow rails" which can be seen in this photograph were put on by Les Douglas and
co-workers. They used the light rails from the whaling station at Frenchman Bay to
support the rails, which were made of wood.*



BORONIA

Wooden Launch

Built on the Swan river. Of interest because she had a "Swan River Cabin" unsuitable for Albany owing to the wind. This cabin previously ran right along the boat was taken off and reduced when brought to Albany.

The *Boronia* was owned by Clem Douglas and later sold to Bob Douglas in Esperance about 1925, who re-named her *Grace Darling II*.



Boronia at Albany (Photo Les Douglas)

THE BRUCE

Steam Tug

O/N 106158.

Formerly 49 of 1897, Sydney N S W Now 5/1898 Fremantle.

Screw Steamship.

Built 1897 by Ernest and Charles Dunn of Browne's Bay, Sydney, N S W.

One deck. One mast. Cutter rig. Elliptical stern. Carvel built. Billet head. Wooden hull. Three Bulkheads.

Dimensions : 75 ft x 18. 6/10 beam x 8. 4/10 depth 54/29/100 Gross tons 36. 92/100 Net tons Register.

Machinery: -(2) Compound steam British Built 1892 by Moss and Duncan of Govan, Glasgow. Each engine was 11" diameter and 22" by 16" stroke = 25 nominal horsepower - 250 indicative horsepower. One steel boiler of 120 lbs per square inch.

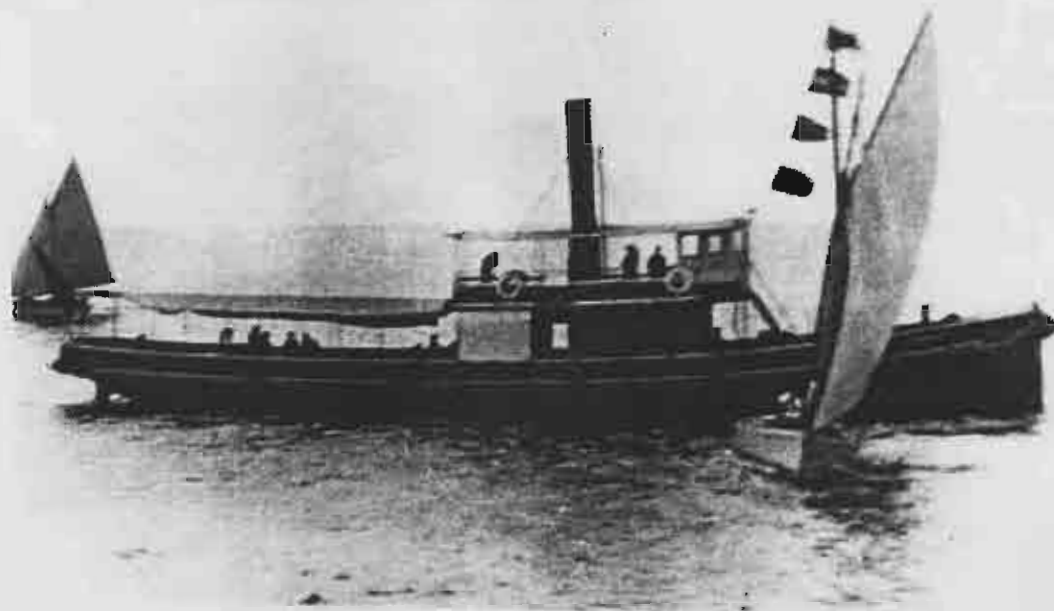
First owner John Frederick Tasman-Hassel, of Albany - ship agent. Owned 64/64 shares.

Registered at Fremantle 26/4/98

No 1 JFTH 64B/S 1/7/98 to Alex Armstrong of Albany. No mention of Senior or Junior. Mortgage.

No. 2 64/64 B/S 14/9/1900 to A. Armstrong senior on 21/10/1901

Vessel totally destroyed by fire 19/3/1918.¹



The Bruce C. 1900. (Photo Richard McKenna)

Brought over from Sydney by Armstrong and Waters in 1898, who found William Douglas' newly purchased *Dunskey* a threat, so they bought *The Bruce*. She rescued the crew of the *Escort* in 1903 and was used for excursions and harbour duties, and assisted at the rescue of the *Janus*. Les Douglas' father Clem Douglas was skipper of *The Bruce* from 1906-1909.

¹ R. McKenna.

The *Albany Advertiser* for Wed 20/3/1918 states:

"Armstrong and Waters steam launch *Bruce* berthed alongside the hulk *Margaret*. Was seen to be on fire, and broke loose and drifted out in the stream. *Awhina* stood by and towed her to the Municipal Baths."

However Les Douglas writes:

"*Bruce* was cut adrift and the wind blew her to the east side of the municipal baths.

Awhina did not tow [her]. As a young boy I stood with my mother and sisters out on the footpath opposite our home and watched her burn.

We were living at the time in Spencer Street, in the second house up on the right hand side. The house still stands. We had a good view.

Clem, my father was down at the *Dunster Castle* at that time. I remember it so well. I was nine years old at the time"

In a letter to Les Douglas of 22/9/1971 George Stonell writes :

"I remember the night the *Bruce* was on fire at the Town Jetty, a calm night, say 9 o'clock, and the *Bruce* all in flames, and you could hear poor old George, Sarah Waters, yelling out on the jetty, from where I lived in Burgone Rd, just by the park, and the fisherman had to turn the hose, on poor Sarah to get her out of the road, my foreman boss told me at the time, as he was Captain of the firebrigade, Jimmie Anderson (a plumber)."

The incident was given only a few brief lines in the Albany newspaper. *The Bruce* must have been stripped of her boiler and funnel and anything else that could be rescued above surface. The wooden hull must have been too badly damaged by fire, and the engine and propeller shaft left there for a number of years.

Les Douglas remembers the boiler lying on the beach in front of Armstrong and Water's shed about 1920.

Her funnel and boiler were used on *Silver Star*. The funnel was later cut off and telescoped, and another piece was made to fit over the lower piece. The boiler can still be seen in creek in Cossack, at the *Silver Star's* wrecksite (See photo P. 172)

The Bruce's engines lay there where she had sunk for a while. Not much of the engine was taken out. She was well out from the beach. She drew about 7-8ft of water and was in about 8 or 9 feet of water near the high jump diving board.

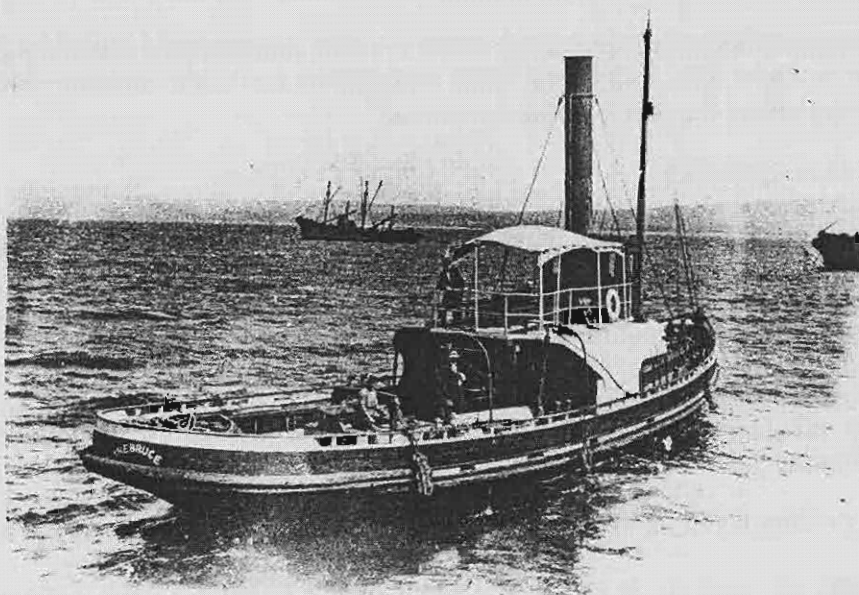
Stan Austen's father took the propeller off and sold it in the late 1920s, using the *Waratah*.¹ N. Pannet stated that his father had demolished *The Bruce*. She was on the east side of the Municipal Baths. They put a charge over the crankshaft to clear it and took the brass off her. They dragged the lot away, hull and shafts all gone, also the condenser, the plate with all the tubes in it. They broke that up. The hull was completely gone.² He further states that some seven plugs of T.N.T. were used to clear the propeller shafts and blew a considerable amount of water up in the air. He had a photo of it being blown up, which appears in the photo section.

The Bruce was only two and a half metres deep. There was nothing left.³

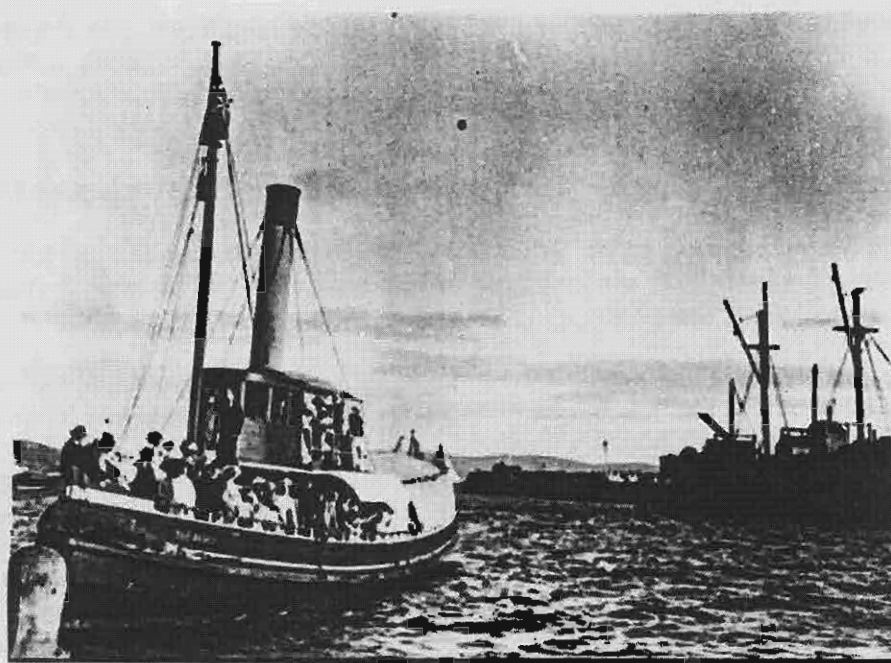
¹ Stan Austen pers com. 4.2.91.

² N. Pannet pers comm. 4.2.91.

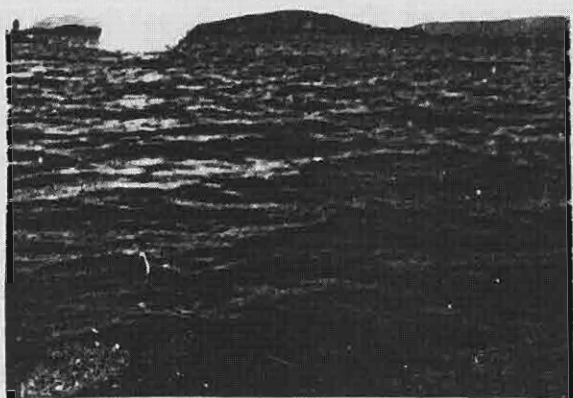
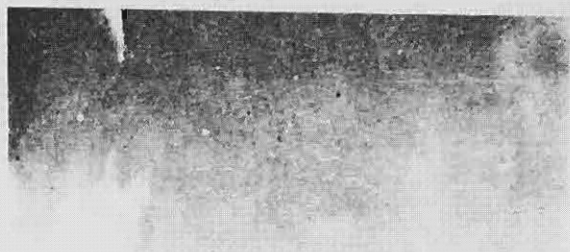
³ N. Pannet, pers. comm. 4.2.91.



The Bruce in 1910 with Captain Clem Douglas on the bridge. (Photo Les Douglas)



Bow view of The Bruce at Albany, near one of the coal hulks. (Photo Albany Museum)



The Bruce is blown up. (Photo N.Pannet)

CAMEL

Wooden Lighter

O/N 101716, previously 8/1897 at Port of Melbourne.

Built 1861 at Williamstown, Victoria by G. White of Williamstown.

Reg. transferred 26/03/07 Reg No. 4/1907.

1 deck 1 mast lighter reg. round stern, carvel build, wooden hull.

Dimensions : 86. 2ft x 21. 8ft x 11. 3ft.

135. 79 tons gross x 129. 9 tons net reg. 12/4/1907

Owned by McIlwraith, McEachern Albany.

Vessel reg. Consequence of survey 7/1/07.

Refer reg 12/1907

"Barge to be towed," 5 bulkheads 85 feet long x 21. 66 ft x 11. 5 ft (12. 75 moulded).

136 tons, 83 tons gross, 116. 53. tons net. reg 3/7/07. Same owners.

B/S - alters McIlwraith's name 7/2/1915 - to James Ball lighterage, and then to Armstrong & Waters Albany.¹

Some confusion exists as to whether there were two vessels, one called *Camel* and one called *Camile*, or *Camilla*, or if they are simply names for the same one. The Princess Royal Sailing Club has a race round Green Island for the Camille Cup, supposedly named after the barge.²

Les Douglas states that the *Camel* contained a great deal of brass, and had big brass straps going round under her hull, holding her together. From memory he says there were four chain plates or straps on each side about 5' wide and about one and a half inches thick.

Les Douglas has a reference to to the *Taylia Ferro* with lighter *Camel* in tow draught inwards 17'4" arriving from Melbourne 11. 45 p. m., reported 9 p. m. June 21 1897.

Sailed June 25th midnight for Mount Kembla after discharging a full cargo of coal. Brought the hulk *Camel* in tow.

Records exist that the owner, A. Ball, was involved in a court case as the *Camel* was used for supplying fresh water to ships and during a period of heavy rain delivered 30-40 tons to a ship but refused to pay the Port Authority as he claimed it was all rainwater.³

Camel was the last of the water barges brought to Albany. She was made of wood and known as the "*Camel*" because she was a water carrier. She was damaged in the big south east gale of 1921 when she dragged her moorings and came in on the tug landing and smashed her stern off, including the upper part.⁴

Roy McCarthy of Great Southern Agencies has a photograph of *Camel* as a water lighter, just behind the *Silver Star*. In this photograph she appears with a raised stern only, no superstructure except for a small shed on the stern. This photograph was originally a postcard, and shows Miller's timber mill in the background. Les Douglas says that the photograph would include the *Silver Star* and the *Camel* because the *Camel* was immediately behind the *Silver Star* as she lay at her winter moorings.

The *Camel* had no superstructure apart from the shed visible in the photograph.

¹ R. McKenna

² Vosmer T and Wright J, notes on the *Camel*. (Unpublished)

³ R. McKenna Per Comm.

⁴ H. Hartman Pers. Comm

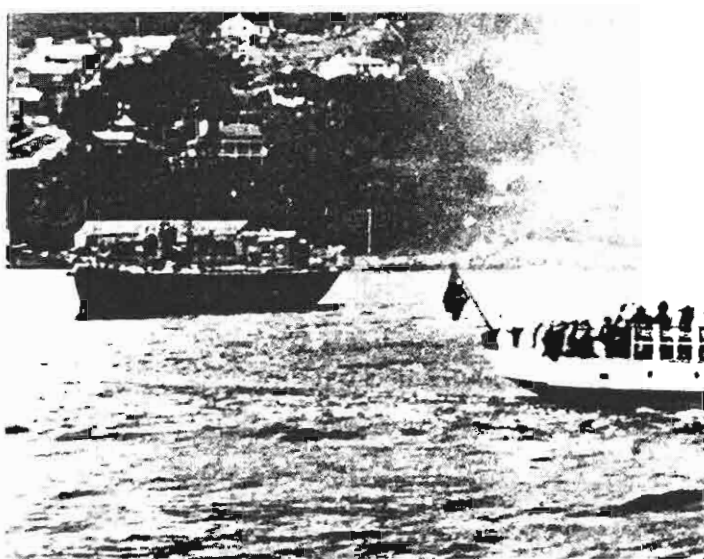
Les Douglas says he could never remember the *Camel* actually being used, even during the war. Water was transferred in the three P & O lighters.

He says she collided with an *Avon Dredge* in the great S. E. gale of 1922-23 and they both drifted into the corner near the landing stage. She was never repaired, and had a gaping hole above the water line for years. He says she was burnt near Emu point for her brass. Her remains are still there, probably under water

Fred Swarbrick said that his uncle Alf bought the *Camel*. He was building a small slipway at the time at Emu Point. It was to run into the harbour. Bought the *Camel* to use the decking, but found it was full of white ants. He towed her around the corner and some lads had a party on her one night and accidentally set her on fire. She burnt down to the waterline and is still there. He said she was not covered with brass but with Muntz metal, which many mistook for brass. He had it tested with a jeweller called Hartman.

Fred Swarbrick and Stan Austen said the remains could still be seen some 300 metres beyond his house. Fred Swarbrick said that it was purchased from Armstrong & Waters 1920, burnt to the waterline 1926.¹

The wreck of the *Camel* was located in Oyster Harbour and surveyed on 3rd December 1991 by a team from the Maritime Museum led by Mike McCarthy and including the author. The remains consisted mainly of the wooden bottom of the vessel with charred timbers on the sides. The muntz metal lining was still in evidence. A large bollard was located near the bow. A layer of ash surrounded the vessel, suggesting she had been burnt to the waterline.



Enlarged photograph of Camel from photograph of Silver Star. (Photo Eric Douglas)

¹ Letter F. Swarbrick 29/8/9 in Maritime Archaeology File 195/71s

COPELAND

Steel Sailing Ship, later coal hulk

O/N 58900.

Built in 1868 by R. Williamson & Sons Harrington.

Hulked at Albany 1903.

Owner: Adelaide Steamship Company.

Original Name: *Jane Sprott*; became *Copeland Island*.

N. C. MacKellar at Albany. Formerly in the South African /South Australian Trade.

Lying at Adelaide for some years when purchased by the Adelaide Steamship Co.

Boiler certified 1916. As *Jane Sprott*; Barque rigged (Lloyds 1869 - 70) Iron Hull. J. Sprott Master. 680 tons gross. 670 tons net. 176.4 ft x 30 ft x 19.1 ft.

Built June 1868 by Williamson & Sons Harrington. 1 bulkhead.

Owner was Master. Reg. Liverpool.

Usual destined voyage : China, Liverpool, S. America. 1879/80 HFVJ Flag Sign.

Master was Osborne - J. Sprott as owner.

11900 Sold to Norwegian owners. Renamed *Copeland Island*. Still owned by D. Sprott Family.

T. K. Metcalfe the owner.

Copeland Island - Lloyd's register 1899 - 1900.

Owners are Akties - *Copeland Island* (John Bricke).

Registered at Sandfjord, Norway.

New deck fitted 1899.

Towed by the tug *Awhina* and sunk with two charges off False Island in about 1928.

See photos of sinking. J. Dyson collection.

Hulk keepers at Albany :

Mr. Jack Langwig. (1920 s)

Mr. Charlie Burton.¹

Les Douglas writes that Jack Langwig was keeper on the *Copeland*, and that after she was sunk he became keeper on the *Colonna*. After about 1933 the coal trade became very bad and Jack was put of and C. Burton had to look after the *Colonna* and the *Alert*. But he did not live on her. She was always tied to the wharf.

See Hulk sinking sequence of photographs , Ps 61 - 62.

¹ R. McKenna

DUNSKY

Steam Tug

O/N 101022.

Formerly of Sydney, NSW transferred 3/9/1897 to Fremantle. Reg at Fremantle as 8/1897 on 14/10/1897. Classified as a steamship/screw.

Built 1891 (Launched 14/9/1891) builder David Drake of Bold Rock, Balmain, Sydney.

1 deck, 1 mounted derrick. Elliptical stern. Carvel built. Billet head. Wood hull. Schooner rigged

Dimensions L.74.ft 2/10 x B. 16/ft 10 x 7/2/10 50. 37/00 34. 25. Overall length 96 ft. Depth of hold 7 ft 6"

Net Tonnage 34 tons, Gross Tonnage 50 tons.

Machinery : 2 steam engines: compound surface condensing British made in 1891 by Bowen MacLauchlin Co.

Paisley 12 inches bore and 24 inches x 16' stroke = 35 Nominal Horse Power

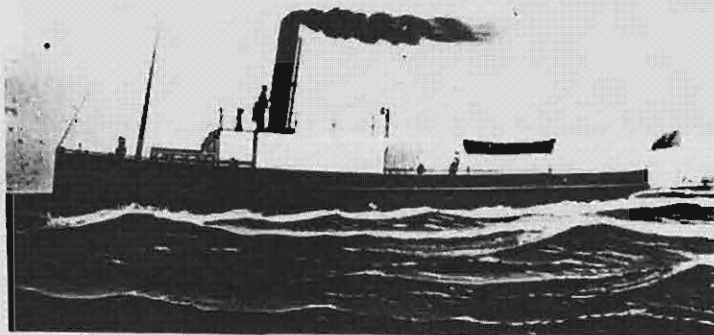
Owner : William Douglas of Albany. Mortgage 800 pound to J. Mckenzie of Albany.

Bill of Sale 3/8/1901 to Alex Armstrong senior and junior and George Waters. Mortgage..

Transfer 1901 to West Australian Bank. Discharged 22/3/1904.

Owners A. Armstrong.

Lost 10/3/1917.¹



The Dunskey in 1904, after the watercolour by R. Dunn in possession of Eric Douglas.(Photo the author)

The *Australian Advertiser* for December 26th 1896 said of *Dunskey's* arrival at Albany on 24th December :

“A fine looking craft, schooner rigged and furnished with very powerful engines of first class make. For her size she is considered a very fast and powerful boat”

She was greatly admired by many who visited her on her arrival in Albany and Captain Tooker spoke highly of her sea going qualities.

She left Sydney on Dec.10 th. She was compelled to jettison 10 tons of coal off the deck as a result of foul weather. Arrived in Adelaide on the 18th of December to re-provision. Captain William Douglas was the Master and owner. To commence harbour and towing service.²

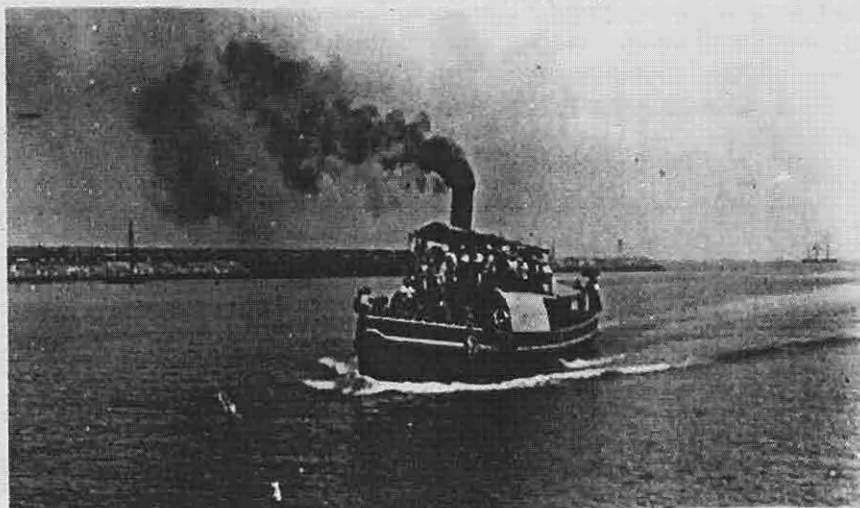
¹ R. McKenna

² *Australian Advertiser* 26th December 1896.

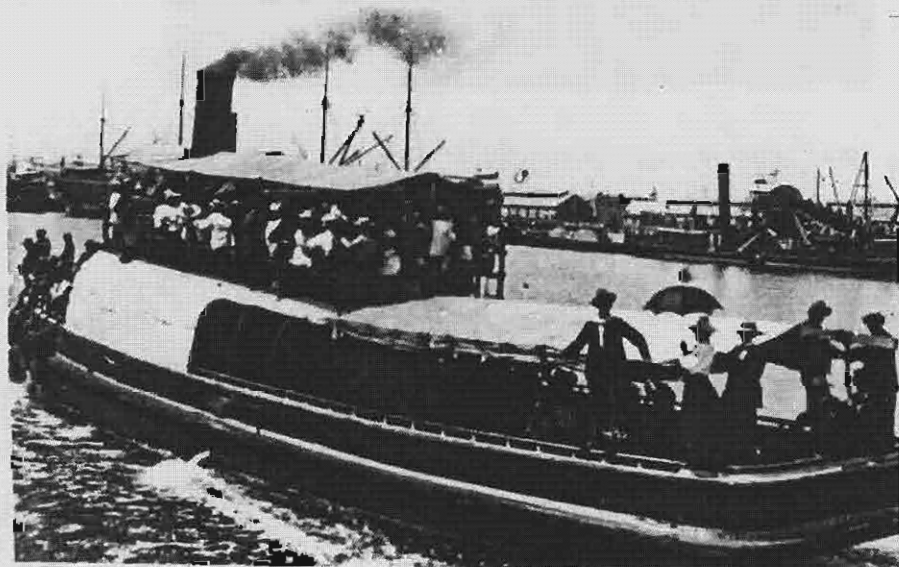
W. Douglas in the *Dunskey* was responsible for putting out a fire in the hulk *Zephyr* in April 1898, but *Dunskey's* most dramatic achievements were towing off the *Gertie* in 1898 and the rescue of the crew of the *City of York* in 1899.

The steamer *Gertie* was stranded on the bar near Denmark as a result of a storm on Friday 29th July 1898. She had left South Africa on June 31st, her coal was running out and her flooring had been ripped up to use in place of it. Brooks inlet was reached and she anchored off Denmark. The gale came along and put her high and dry in 5ft of sand, hard on to the sea in 2 ft of water at high tide. She sustained no damage as the gale carried her over the bar. The ship's launch could not tow her off. Captain Douglas in the *Dunskey* arrived and attempted to tow her off; he first towed her three times her length when the cable snapped, and she went aground again, but he returned on subsequent days and succeeded in towing her off.¹

Captain Douglas had a great deal of difficulty getting paid for this exploit, and ended up nailing a writ to the *Gertie's* mast before payment was forthcoming.



Two views of *Dunskey* as a pleasure craft in Fremantle, about 1899. The second photograph shows her unusual square stern (Photo Les Douglas)



On the 12th July 1899 the 1218 ton steel sailing ship *City of York* struck a reef off Rottneest island and became a total wreck. Morning found her crew clinging to the sloping deck with surf breaking over them. After news of the disaster got out, the government steam packet *Penguin* encountered the *Dunskey* under the command of Captain, William Douglas, which followed her in the hope of

¹ *Albany Advertiser* 2nd of August 1898

obtaining some salvage business. The Harbour Master of Fremantle, Captain Russell, asked Douglas to try to tell the stranded men to await the return of the *Penguin* when they would be taken off. Douglas sailed as near as he could to the wreck. He told the crew on the *Dunskey* to return to port if anything happened to him. Then in a heroic action he put his 10ft dinghy under the stern and took the eight stranded men off in three trips, three men each in the first two trips, and two men in the third. (According to some accounts, eight trips.) He brought them into Fremantle at 2 pm on the day following the wreck.¹

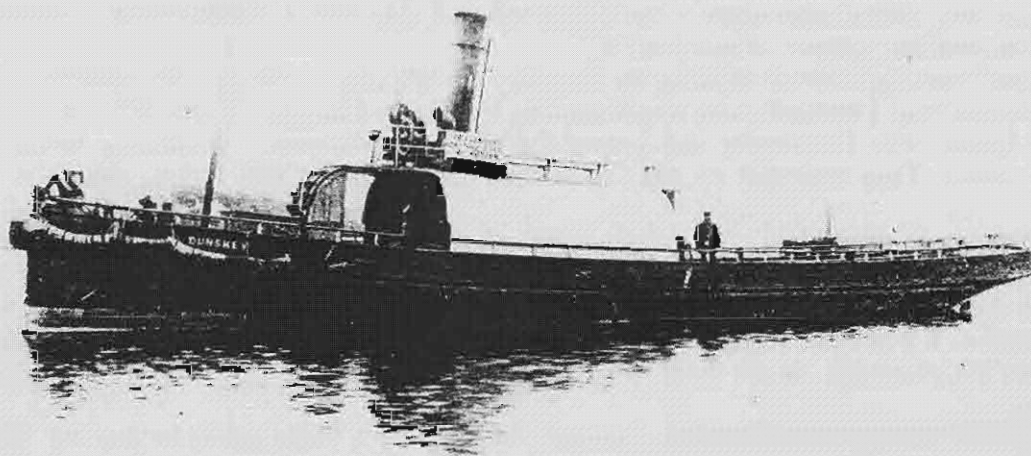
According to the last survivor of the *City of York* tragedy, Bill Riley, who was the acting engineer on the *Dunskey* on the night of the wreck, there were only three people on the *Dunskey* at the time of the tragedy : Captain Douglas and his son Clem, and the young Bill Riley who tended the engine while the other two got the survivors on board.

Bill recalled that there was little to see. It was dark and rough. The outline of the wrecked ship could be seen and he has a strong memory of flares on the beach.

Had no one left the ship no lives would have been lost. The negro cook, named Alex Burke mentioned in Appendix IV only survived because he re-boarded the *City of York*.²

(For Captain Douglas' account of the rescue see appendix II)

Douglas' bravery was acclaimed in the press, in Parliament and at public meetings. There was mention of recommending him for an award for bravery. The Royal Humane Society's Western Australian lists of recommendation for, and granting of, awards for 1899 are still held in Melbourne. Douglas' name is not on any list.³



The Dunskey at Albany about 1897. (Photo Les Douglas)

¹ John Moynihan, *All the News in a Flash Rottnest Communication 1829 - 1979*, Published by TELECOM, Ch. 3 *A Needless Tragedy 1899*, *Morning Herald* 14. 7. 1899 6A ch 3 note 2.

¹ From: *Last living man to see an Historic Wreck* *Sunday Times* Jan 12 1969, P 32.

² *All the News opt.cit.*

The *Dunskey* was sold to Armstrong and Waters in August 1901, and was used for harbour duties in Albany and general work on the surrounding coastline. She was also used for carrying excursionists up the lower Kalgan River.¹

She attempted to tow the stranded coaster *Dunster Castle* off the beach at Fanny's Cove in 1916, but was unsuccessful.

The *Dunskey* left Albany on the 8th March 1917 with a railway party for Nornalup Inlet, for surveying work under the repatriation scheme. She was still owned at this time by Armstrong & Waters. Alex Armstrong Sen. was on board, plus Alex Armstrong jun. as engineer. Also on board was some six tons of cargo, including stores and instruments for the survey party, manure and a sewing machine for Mr. J. Thomson, a settler at Nornalup. The *Dunskey* anchored for the night at West Cape Howe and left at 2 a. m., arriving at Nornalup at 9 o'clock the following Friday morning.

However, the motor launch that was expected to meet them did not put in an appearance, and a sailboat encountered with the son of a local settler in it set off to look for the launch, which was not expected for about four hours. While waiting for the sailboat to return, the weather freshened, causing the *Dunskey* to snap her cable. The anchor being lost it was decided to run for the open sea, and it was then ascertained she was leaking, evidently having strained herself when she broke from her anchor.

The wind increased in force, and as the pumps could not keep down the inflowing water, cargo, stores, theodolites and personal effects were jettisoned. The pumps were kept going all night. She sailed in the direction of Albany. When daylight came, there was 4 ft of water in the engine room and 6" in the stoke hold. The impossibility of continuing was realised, and they decided to make for shore and beach the vessel. The wind had veered to the South East, and later on the sandy beach along the coast would be replaced by rocks.[Les Douglas says he was told by "Black Alex" Armstrong, the Engineer at the time, that the crankshafts were turning underwater, but considers that 4ft of water in the engine room would be unreasonable since this would have meant 4ft in the stoke hold, which would have put the fires out.]

By freak of good fortune she ran on to the bar at the mouth of Wilsons Inlet, and took ground 50 yards from safety, at 8 p. m. Terrific surf was running and the *Dunskey* was battered beyond recognition. The funnel went before those on board could leave her, and soon afterwards the deck house followed. Everyone on board had a lifebelt and some life boats and planking. Two attempts were made to get a line on shore, including one by young Armstrong. Hente then made it. Armstrong senior was carried seawards in the backwash and sang out "Goodbye boys" thinking all was over, and was washed ashore semi-conscious.

In half an hour from the time of striking the *Dunskey* completely broke up. The spot of landing was some five miles from Denmark, and a local settler, Mr. Harry Morgan, happened to be spending the day on the beach with his family and helped the shipwrecked men. Armstrong senior was suffering from shock. They returned by train to Albany. The *Escort* was lost at about the same spot.²

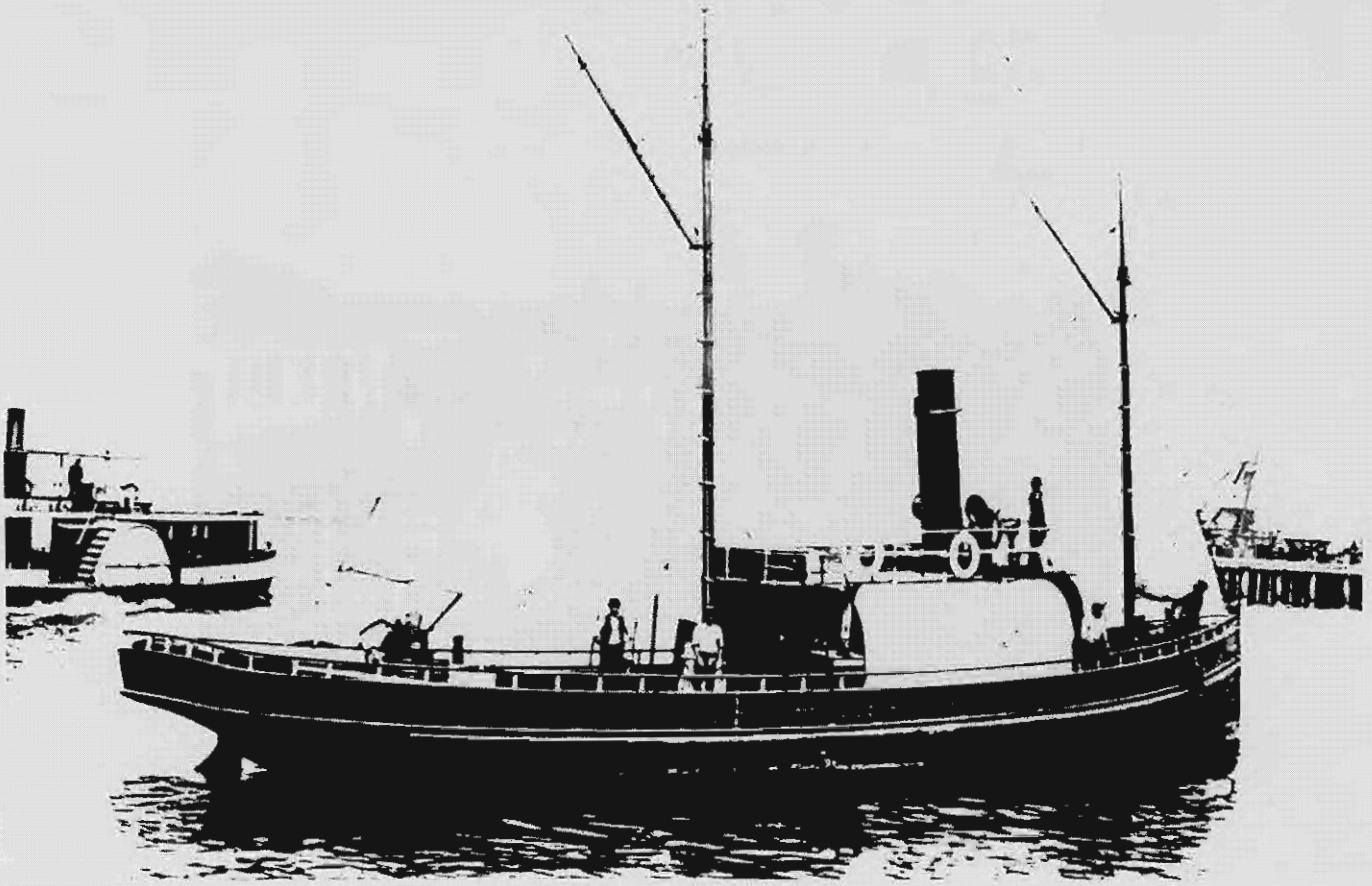
[Actually 23 kilometres away]

Les Douglas thinks it is unlikely that damage to the hull would have been caused by the vessel straining at the cable; it was more likely to have been caused by the storm as the *Dunskey* was already quite old - twenty six years old - at the time.

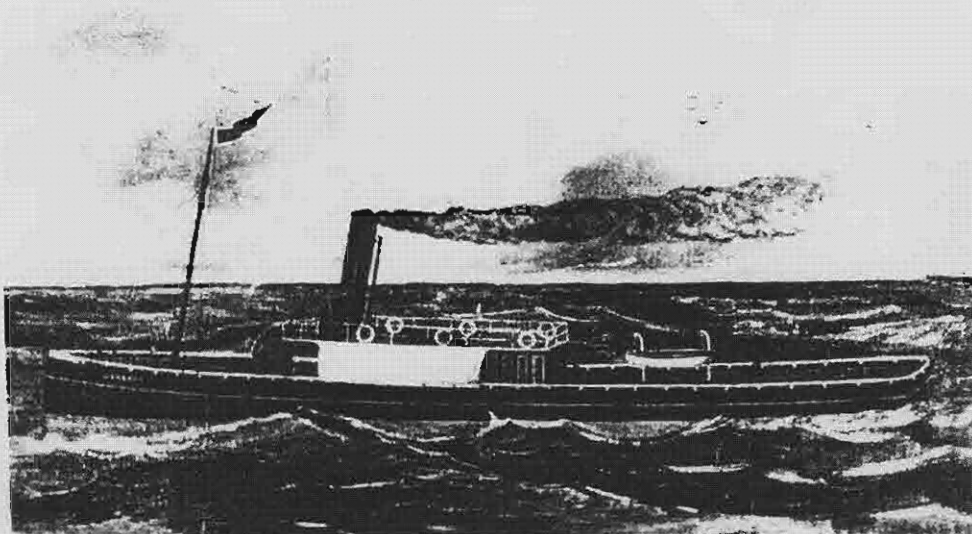
According to Eric Douglas, Les Douglas' brother, the *Dunskey's* boiler could be seen up to about twenty years ago, after which the wreck site became covered with sand.

¹ Advertisement in the *Albany Advertiser*, March 22 1903.

² *Albany Advertiser* Wed 14. 3.117.



*Above : Schooner-rigged, the **Dunskey** leaves Sydney December 10th 1896. Captain Douglas is on the bridge (Photo Les Douglas)*
*Below : **Dunskey** at Albany about 1897. (Painting courtesy Lindsay Douglas)*

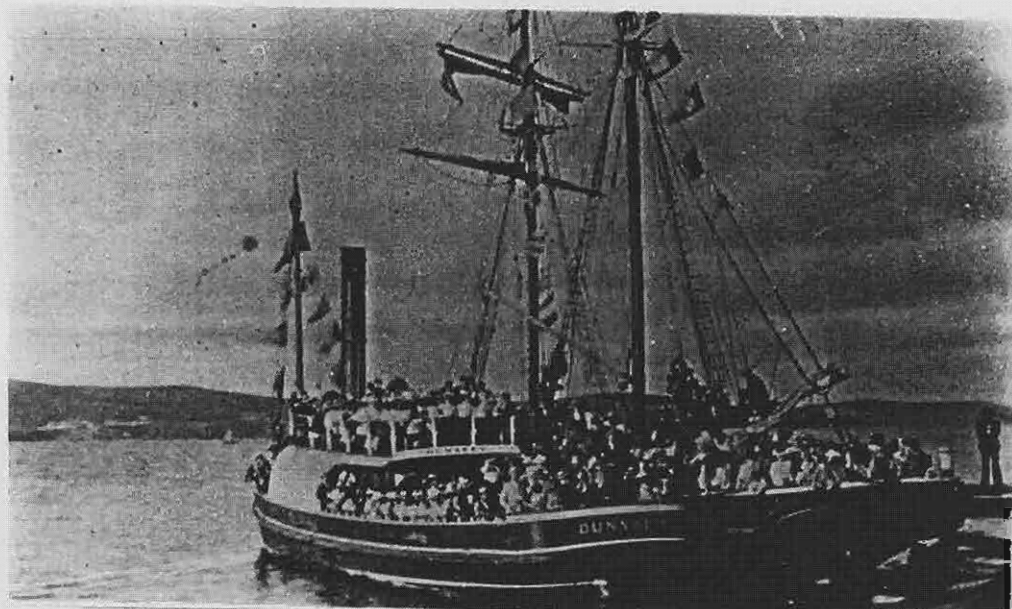


Dunskey at Fremantle Harbour, W. A.



Above : Dunskey and Awhina at Fremantle early 1900s. The Dunskey now has a wheelhouse which must have remained on the vessel for the rest of her career. (Photo : The Battye Library 2377b/12)

Below : The Dunskey on excursion in Albany, with the Grace Darling, which she sometimes towed to Little Grove. (Photo Les Douglas.)



DUNSTER CASTLE

A small coastal steamer, fairly new at the time of grounding, ran ashore July 7, 1916 at Fanny's Cove. After unloading at Esperance on July 4th she sailed into a gale. By July 7th she had proceeded only 60 miles, and with coal and water nearly exhausted, Captain Schroeder sought refuge in Fanny's Cove, used for landing station supplies. He missed this, and lost both anchors trying to anchor in white water. He then drove his vessel on to a sandy beach beneath a limestone cliff.

The crew walked inland to pick up and follow the Overland Telegraph Line to Esperance. One of them picked up a horse at the Moir homestead of Fanny's Cove station and rode the 52 miles to Esperance.

Marine surveyor Captain Arundel of Fremantle, with Captain Bert Douglas in the coaster *Eucla* attempted to pull her off, with the aid of the Albany diver Jack Schuman, but he gave up after several months and the *Dunster Castle* was purchased by E. G. Everatt, an Albany storekeeper, who recruited a team led this by Captain William Douglas, now retired, with his sons Ted and Ted's 18 year old son Walter, and his other son Clem, Les Douglas' father. They had to finance themselves and were to be paid only if the ship was salvaged. They brought the tug *Dunskey* from Albany, and the shallow draughted *Silver Star* to get close in with salvage equipment. However the *Silver Star* had to race for Fanny's Cove whenever the weather deteriorated. A trench was dug around the *Dunster Castle*, and her engines were overhauled to help pull her off. The ship was got afloat, but unfortunately sand had entered the stern tube and seized the propeller shaft. The ship went ashore again in the same place.

In a letter to his wife of 22 June 1918 Clem Douglas wrote how it made him sick to hear the sea roaring day and night, week after week, and how very glad he would be when the ship finally moved. He goes on to say how tired he was as that evening as he had had to carry a 50lb sack of flour seven miles from the Moir homestead. "But", he writes "We have got to do it."

The team freed the propeller shaft and tried again. Their fishing lugger *Alita* was wrecked on entering Hopetoun anchorage on its way back to Albany and Ted Douglas broke an arm. There was then a long wait for conditions to be right for another attempt, and it was more than two years since the time of the stranding that they had the *Dunster Castle* afloat again. The propeller shaft again jammed. As the weather deteriorated the team flooded the vessel in order to pump her out in deeper water, rather than have her thrown high on the beach. This also proved unsuccessful as she slewed broadside on to the breakers. She now started to fill with sea and sand, and at his point the salvagers abandoned her. It took the Douglasses years to pay off the debt.

Others tried, including a syndicate from Esperance, using horses and wagons to try to winch the vessel ashore, burying anchors in the cliff and attaching cables to the mast. They also left after several months. The two Larsen brothers from the now-closed Norwegian Sperm Whaling Company at Frenchman Bay tried next, going there in the *Margaret*.¹ Their idea was to build a timber bulwark around the deck to keep the waves out and clear the sand and water. They were able to clear the engine room and float the ships stern, but were unable to pump out the sand and water in the fore part. The Norwegians said that they had got her afloat again, but were unable to get the engines going, and she went ashore again. This information came via Jack Schuman, the diver, who was assisting them at the time.²

After this no-one else tried to rescue the *Dunster Castle*, and she lay there for a long time with her nose down and stern in the air. There is now little trace of her above water, and her remains lie off the cliff.³

When members of the W.A. Maritime Museum located the *Dunster Castle*, they found plenty of evidence left by the would-be salvors. These include a line of wooden posts on the cliff top and a

¹ H.Hartman, letter to Les Douglas, 20.9.1971.

² H.Hartman *ibid*.

³ H. Hartman, *The Ship That Would Not Die* Parade Magazine, July 1974. Reprinted *Albany Advertiser* 12th January 1991.

large iron anchor with only one arm left from attempts to lever the ship upright. Badly deteriorated iron pulley blocks and cables lay littered - some still in place around the posts suggesting that the salvors must have been quite dispirited not to remove their equipment. Over a high sandhill was found the artesian soak used for fresh water.

Surf was continually breaking over the wreck and only a few iron frames at the midships section show above water at low tide. The sand is of a large particle size, and has abraded the wreck to the point of losing most of its iron plating. The vessel is intact along its keel and the engine and boiler are still in place.¹



Above : The Dunster Castle aground at Fanny's Cove(Photo Les Douglas)

¹ Maritime Arachacology File 69/ 72/ 1.

ELVIE

Wooden Lighter

A distinctive wreck towards the North end of Vancouver beach, Frenchman Bay, the *Elvie* is mostly buried in sand. According to Howard Hartman she was a double-ended, flat-bottomed lighter used to transport barrels of whale oil from the Norwegian whaling station to waiting vessels in the bay. As she was constructed for the whaling station she was probably built around 1912. When not in use she was at permanent moorings in the middle of Frenchman Bay. Howard Hartman remembers being towed out on her during World War I behind a launch called the *Fram* to select fishing spots.

Left at her moorings by the departing Norwegians in 1917, the *Elvie* was driven ashore, dragging her anchors, in the great south-east gale of 1921, and filled with sand. Although she could easily have been refloated, her ownership was in doubt and she was left to serve as a source of firewood for visitors to Frenchman Bay.

Exposure of the wreck by recent storms (July 1991) has confirmed that the *Elvie* is flat-bottomed and double ended, with much of the hull remaining beneath the sand. Of particular interest is the fact that bottom was constructed first, and the keel (kelson) put on inside the bottom, presumably for strength.

The stern of the wreck is on the landward end, and has a rudder with a large brass gudgeon. Wood analysis by the W.A. Maritime Museum has indicated that the *Elvie* is made of jarrah, suggesting local construction. Survey work in July 1989 revealed the full length of the vessel as 30.10 metres, and the greatest width as between 4.10 and 4.50 m. There is supposed to be a large anchor from the wreck in a corner of the bay.¹

Les Douglas adds that the *Fram* was also wrecked on this beach, between the whaling station and the lighter jetty. He remembers her remains, which soon broke up and dispersed. If they were on the shoreline, the remains would now be under water. Les Douglas added that the engine and propeller were in all probability salvaged while the vessel lay on the shore.

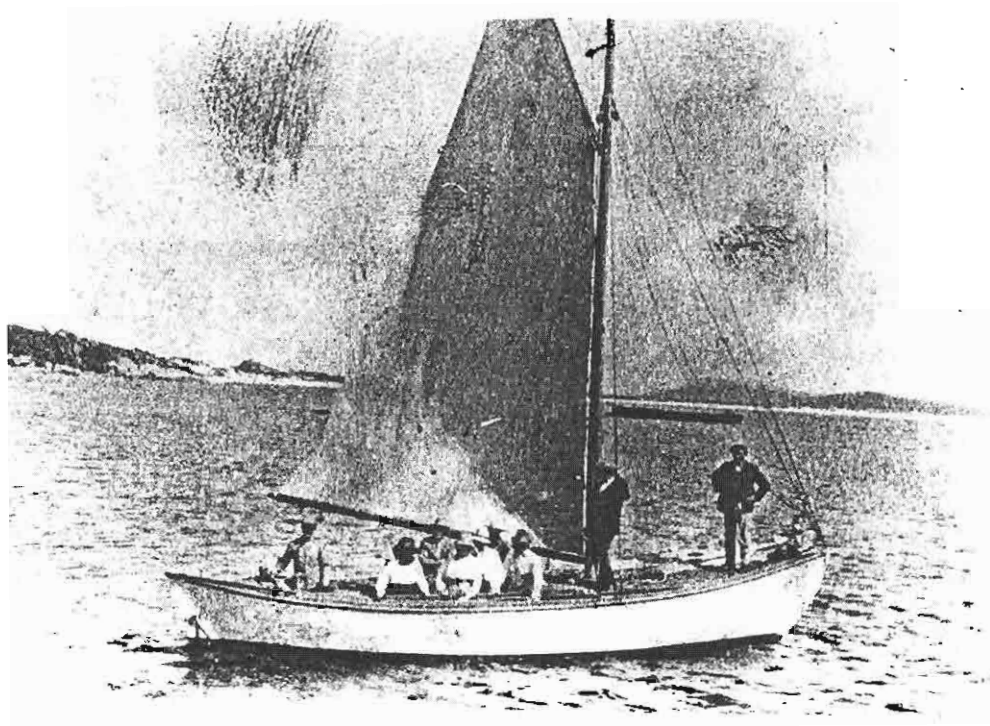
The *Fram* (Norwegian for *Forward*) is described by Howard Hartman as a 40 ft long launch used to tow whale carcasses. It had a single cylinder crude oil engine which was left on when the launch stopped at the jetty. It was started with a blow lamp. It was slow turning over, with a big prop. The vessel was very much a utility, with a house over the engine and the rest of her an open boat. She was brought out from Norway, and there was another, smaller launch besides. The *Fram* was used more, and was used to tow the *Elvie* out to the waiting vessels in the sound to load barrels of whale oil.²

Below : Elvie from the south; photographed by a local resident, July 1991.



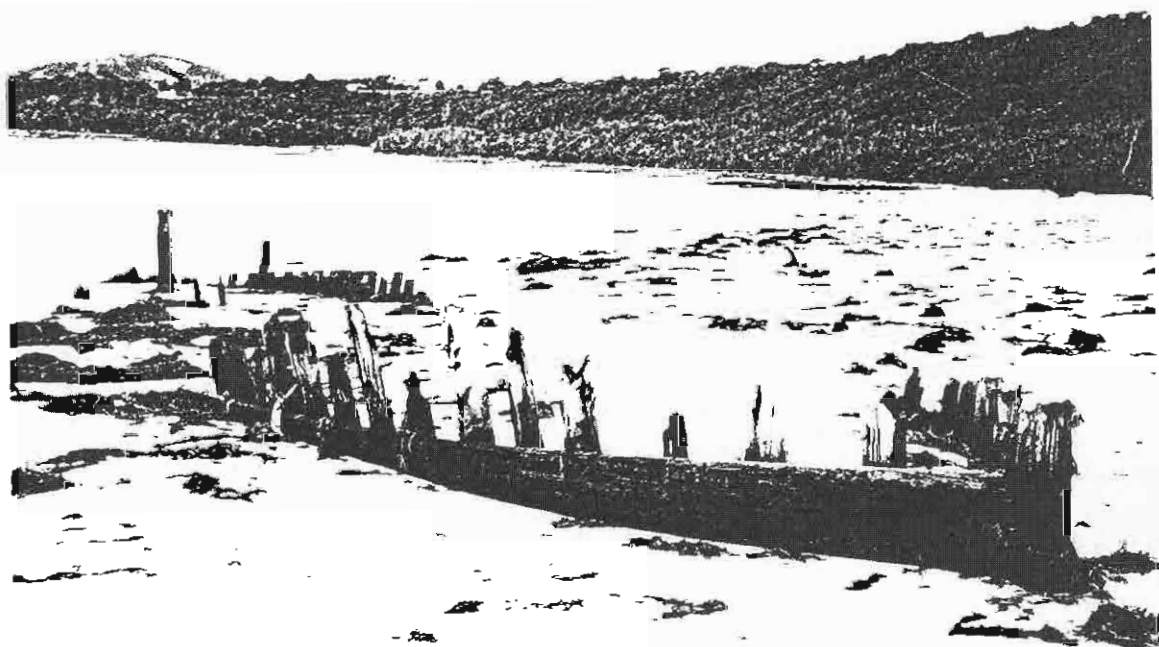
¹ For an archaeological assessment of the *Elvie*, see *The Wrecks of Frenchman Bay* W.A. Maritime Museum.

² Howard Hartman pers. comm. 8/10/1991.



Above : The Elvie at her moorings in Frenchman Bay, behind the sailing vessel Margaret, about 1919. (Photo Howard Hartman)

Below : The Elvie on the beach August 1989, exposed by storms. (Photo by a local resident.)



*EMD**Wooden Motor Launch*

The *EMD* - Emma Matilda Douglas (William Douglas' wife's initials).

The *EMD* Motor Launch was built about 1909 for William Douglas by an Albany boat builder named Bill Geary. The launch was 30ft long with a 9ft beam and a 3ft draught. She was clinker built on the top sides with a nice long counter stern.

Powered with a 4 cylinder Wolverine engine (petrol). Originally fitted with a mast and sail that could be lowered to pass under the Lower Kalgan Bridge.

In the year 1910 William and his son Clem sailed to the Leeuwin looking for salvage from the wreck of the RMS *Pericles*.

They went in the *EMD* which was fitted with a mast and sail. This could be lowered to go under the Lower Kalgan Bridge.

I remember my father telling me as a young boy that they saw all the lifeboats on the beach and a lot of things floating about including cases of butter, and the beaches for miles around were strewn with wreckage.

Some years later he sold the *EMD* to the Albany firm, Drew & Robinson, one of the main general store keepers. (Drew & Robinson later changed their name to D. R.)

They used her for taking stores to ships lying in the Port.

In 1920 my father (Clem Douglas) bought her back from D. R. 's. He used her for towing the lighter. He later sold her to a fisherman, Teddy Davis. After him I don't know what became of her.

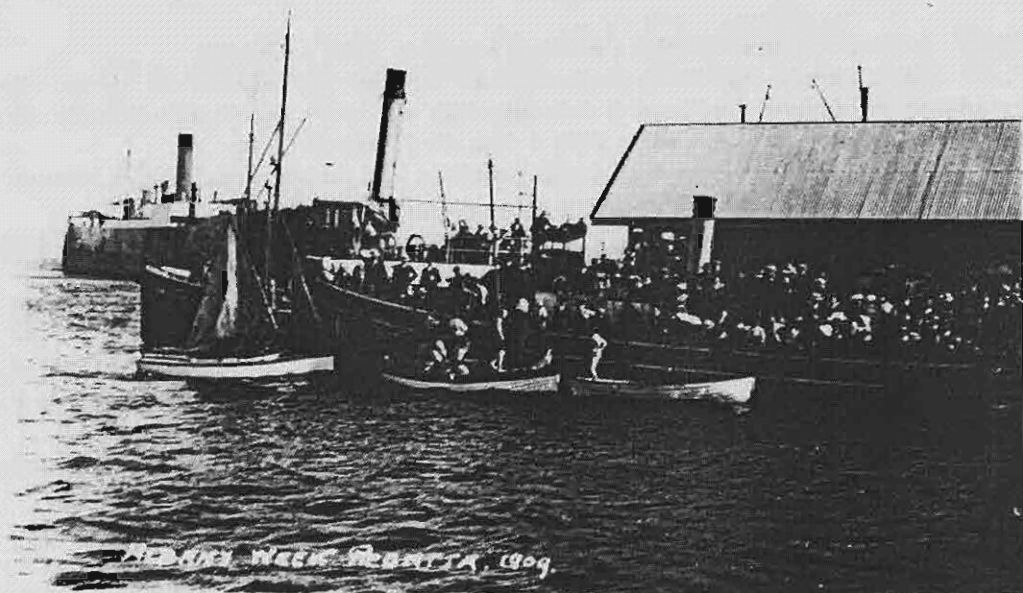
Les Douglas 15/12/90

Stan Austen said that the *EMD* was taken up to Fremantle during the Second World War, so she may still be around.¹



The Launch EMD on the Kalgan River with Captain Douglas and family (Photo Les Douglas)

¹ Stan Austin pers comm. 8. 7. 91.



Above: *Escort* loaded with passengers at the jetty in Albany with *The Bruce*. 1909 is incorrect. (Picture Albany Historical Society)

ESCORT

Small Steam Tug

O/N 89597

Reg 1/1901 16/1/1901 Fremantle

Transferred from London 13/12/1900

Formerly reg. 1011 /1884 London

Built 1884 by R & Green of Blackwell in Middlesex, England.

I deck, 2 mast schooner rig; head: nil

Machinery Space Steam screw. Round stern. Iron Framework.

49. 6/10 x 12. 6/10 . Hold 7. 0.

L. of Engine romm 19.5. Engine built 1884 by I. Stewart & Sons, Blackwell, England.

Engines - one compound.

Diameter of cylinder 10" x 22" length of stroke 18." No. of horsepower ; 20.

27. 85 tons gross less 21. 21 tons machinery tons -6. 64 tons reg.

Ist owners in W. A. Alex Armstrong Sen & Jun & George Waters - joint owners 64 shares. Mortgages

Vessel wrecked in Nornalup Inlet on 18/10/1903.

The *Albany Mail* for Saturday June 16th 1888 states :

"The Steam tug *Escort*, of 36 tons, the property of the Orient Steam Navigation Co., formerly the Company's tug at Diego Garcia, left Colombo on May 25th, via Penang, for Australia, where she is to be sold. We may therefore expect to see her in port any day."

The *Escort* left Diego Garcia on the 25th of March, stayed at Colombo for a month, then sailed to Singapore, Batavia and Fremantle under the 70 year old Captain Story and a Mauritius - French crew of one engineer, two firemen, two sailors and a cook. She arrived in Albany to take up

harbour duties on July 5th after being delayed at Careening Bay on her way from Fremantle and was described as being 50 ft length X 12 and a half foot beam and 7ft depth of hold.¹

The *Albany Mail* for Saturday July 28th 1888 states :

“The *Escort* towed the ship *Andora* to the Land Company’s jetty from the outer harbour yesterday. This was the first occasion on which the little vessel showed her power in this port, and she is said to have proved herself admirably adapted for the work, bringing the heavily-laden ship in with ease against a fresh breeze and tide.”

The *Escort* was apparently carrying stores to settlers in the Nornalup district when she met with heavy weather near Albany and was beached at Nornalup Inlet 18/10/03.² She is believed to have been carrying supplies for settlers at Walpole at the time. Les Douglas' father Clem was on of the crew of the *Escort* at the time of the wreck, and attempted to walk 80 or 90 miles to Denmark with news of it.

Escort was beached at 11 a. m on Saturday August 16th. The vessel had eight men on board including Alex Armstrong. Left Albany on Wednesday 13. 8. 1903 at 5. 30 p. m. Got as far as Saddle Island on August 15 and put back finding too heavy a sea. Anchored with two anchors in continuous rain and heavy squall. At 8 p. m. squalls heavier and rising sea. At midnight conditions rougher still. Watch of two hours per man maintained during night.

The *Escort's* Log at the time of the wreck reads :

“Saturday August 16 - At 1 a. m. blowing south-east gale, heavy rain squalls, parted port chain. Stood by engines and put man to wheel. At 3 a. m. the starboard chain parted, and took to dodging sea between Rocky point and the reefs, with sea getting heavier and squalls harder. At 10. a. m., wind and sea worse; concluded to put the ship on the beach to save the lives of crew. 11 a. m. grounded on sandy bottom, drew fires and opened everything to let her fill. Launch filled standing perfectly upright on even keel. Got on shore with all hands, clothes, sails and stores. Launch made fast with two head lines to the rocks. Made tent with sails and camped for the night.”

On Monday August 18th Clem Douglas and A. Robeson left for Denmark, arriving at 6 p. m. on Wednesday, then starting for Albany, where they were intercepted at Torbay Junction. They left the Deep River with 10 biscuits and an overcoat each. Although favoured by a good moon their walk was not without danger and it was certainly very trying, for apart from the rough nature of the country traversed, they must have covered at least 80 miles during the three days they were afoot. *The Bruce* left Albany on Tuesday night to search the coast for the *Escort* and arrived at the scene of the shipwreck on Wednesday evening. The *Escort* had been secured with lines to the mastheads to keep her upright. *The Bruce* returned to Albany at 8.30 on Wednesday evening with Mr. A. Armstrong and Mr. W. Nelson on board. The *Escort* was not insured, and four men were left standing by as *The Bruce* was to return with the intention of getting her off the beach, but this was not done.³

Terry Swarbrick of Walpole B.1918 was brought up near the wrecksite and says that the remains have changed little over 60 years. The wreck is in about 10 ft of water and rests on a sandy bottom within only a few feet of rocks. There is a vertical donkey boiler which sticks up out of the water and the engine, covered in weed.⁴

¹ *Albany Mail*, July 7th 1888.

² Les Douglas.Í

³ Article from the Douglas collection, undated.

⁴ Terry Swarbrick pers. comm 7/7/91.

The wreck of the *Escort* was surveyed on December 1st 1991 by a team from the Maritime Museum led by Mike McCarthy and including the author, Les Douglas, his son Lindsay and grandson Lawson. The *Escort* lies offshore from a rocky coast on a sandy bottom, parallel with the rocks, bow pointing inland. The vertical boiler breaks the surface. The hull is estimated to have broken in two places and to tilt in different directions. Remains of the hull are iron, although photographs suggest wooden topsides. The propellor has been removed, and it seems likely that the vessel was extensively stripped. The wreck has been scoured by the waves, and only iron remains are apparent. The *Escort's* engine and boiler are intact, and could be recovered



Above : The Escort at the town jetty with The Bruce in the background. Circa 1900. (Photo Albany Museum)



Escort about 1903, with the Loch Lomond and the Dorothy, enlarged from Armstrong and Waters fleet photograph. (Photo Les Douglas)

FAIRY

Sometimes spelt Fairey, also known as Rudderhead Wreck.

Schooner

70 tons. built by Captain Thomas Symers at the Kalgan 1840s.

Never left Albany.¹

Built on the Kalgan river. She was a fair size, but not a big ship. The site she was built at can still be located on old maps. Construction commenced early in 1844 as a schooner.² She was built by a Syndicate who had a row; the argument was over rigging her and she was moored off York Street for a long time until her rope was cut and she drifted on to a bank and broke her back.³

H. Hartman said a gale piled her up on the bank where the ribbon weed finished.

Owners were Symers and Dunn - used to trade in Timor. Symers had already built another two ships. Symers quarrelled about the rigging of the vessel. In a letter of 1854 Symers said that Dunn had done a "job" on the *Fairy*. Among the Symers papers.⁴

The wreck was frequently confused with that of the Stern Post Wreck, (q.v.) off Residency Point, which had an upstanding rudder post.

To quote Donald Garden :

"To regain some of his former wealth and life-style Symers threw himself into building a 70 ton vessel, *Fairy*, on the Kalgan. Fighting considerable financial difficulties, including a dispute with Phillips, who cut off one source of finance, progress on the vessel dragged on to the end of the decade. Finally in 1849 he was forced to take in two partners, John Thomas and the one-armed James Dunn. Nearly completed, the *Fairy* was brought into Princess Royal Harbour in 1850. Then a complication set in regarding a deal between Dunn and Thomas and work stopped. Deeply concerned that he would lose yet another ship, Symers took a strong stand against Dunn which made him thoroughly unpopular with the population. The end result tragically for all, was that the ship was never completed, but allowed to rot at the eastern end of the harbour."⁵

As she was in shallow water, it is slightly surprising that no-one tried to get her off.

A dive on the *Fairy* (7/7/91) revealed that a considerable amount of her remained, albeit in a collapsed condition. Surviving timbers were extremely hard and resistant and the keel measured some fifty feet. The wreck resembled the classical shipwreck form of ancient shipwrecks - keel with central pile of ballast stones, hull timbers on either side. Wood analysis on the *Fairy* showed her to be built from jarrah. A rigging sheave was recovered, suggesting that the vessel had in fact been rigged.

The *Fairy* should contain considerable information about early shipbuilding in W A, as there can be few surviving local shipwrecks of this age, and merits further study.

¹ WAHS *Albany Yesterday*.

² Henderson G. *Unfinished Voyages* P.231.

³ Stan Austin pers comm.

⁴ Dunstan West pers comm.

⁵ Donald Garden, *Panorama* P. 101.

“Captain Symers left the beach house and with his family moved to the Kalgan, where he located himself near the river about a mile from the mouth. There was a very nice vessel built near Captain Symers Kalgan House.

I am speaking of the fifties now. The contractors were a Mr. Solomon Cook, Mr. Metcalf and my step-father Mr. Covert. The vessel would have been 100-150 tons and she was to have been rigged as a brig. After the construction of the hull and the masts had been stepped into place she was brought into Princess Royal Harbour to be completed. Some dispute occurred between the owners, who, I think were then Captain Symers and Mr. James Dunn (Some others were also mixed up in it) and the dispute ended by running the vessel up to the east end of the harbour, and there she remained until she was eaten by the sea worms and rotted away. She would have been a very good vessel and well suited to trade between Albany and Adelaide. Her name was the *Fairy*.”

From *Memories of the late Captain James Sale*, compiled from letters written by him in 1932. Captain Sale was for many years engaged in whaling and other maritime activities along the South Coast. Published in a series of articles in the *West Australian* in 1936, of which this article appeared on the 21st March.

The same article mentions that the first ship to be in or near Albany was the 200 ton *Emmelia Sheratt*, built by Captain Sheratt at Torbay, which unfortunately broke her back in launching.

Howard Hartman writes :

“Now about the *Fairy*. I can tell you more - once again hearsay although I got it from the grandson of the original Sherratt who came here with the pioneers - was a merchant and a whaler and owned the Sherratt family inn.

The grandson Walter Sherratt was a storekeeper who had his shop close by and our families were close friends. He was a mine of information on the early days i.e. the *very* early ones.

According to Walter and as far as *my* memory serves me, two men had the vessel built locally and got her completely rigged and sails went on ready for sea. Then they had a row and both got silly stubborn. The vessel was anchored off Yorke Street or Parade Street, but finally broke away and went ashore on the west end of the harbour not far from the remains of the *Kingfisher*.”¹

¹ From a letter to Les Douglas, 30th June 1975.

FANNY NICHOLSON*Sailing ship, barque.*

Built in Durham, England
L. 108 ft, W. 24 ft, Depth of hold, 14 ft.
wooden frame, one deck with poop, three masts,
elliptical stern, standing bowsprit,
Figurehead of a woman.

The *Fanny Nicholson* was a barque of 285 tons, built in Hartlepool, Durham, England. She was brought to Australia in the 1860s and used as a whaling vessel based in Hobart from 1870. According to the Hobart *Mercury* of 31st December 1872, on 16th December 1872, the vessel was driven ashore at Goode Beach, Frenchman Bay, during a southeasterly gale. At the time, the *Fanny Nicholson* was commanded by captain Goffin and owned by Captain McArthur and others. The 70 tons of sperm oil on board was saved, as was the rigging and whaling gear.¹

See Runnymede, and map P.19

¹ From *The Wrecks of Frenchman Bay*, W.A. Maritime Museum, 1990 (Unpublished)

THE FERRET

Small Steam Ship

O/N 63864

Tonnage 445 g. 246 reg.

L.170.9 X 23.2 X 12.7.

Built 1871 by J & G Thompson, Glasgow.

G & J. Burns re. Glasgow.

Purchased 1873 by Dingwall & Skye Railway Co. Ltd. which was absorbed into the Highland Railway Co.

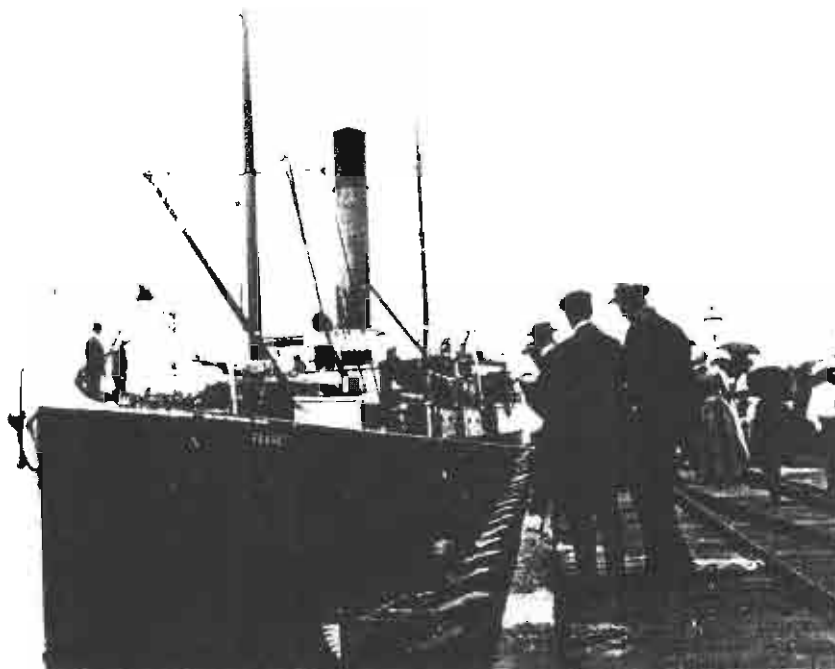
The *Ferret* was a small steam ship which operated for many years on the West Australian coast, calling at Albany. The unusual story of how she came to be in Australia is given in Appendix XVII.

On arrival in Pt. Phillip under a false name, the *Ferret*, posted as missing, was recognised by a Const. James Davidson, recently arrived from Scotland who was on duty at the township of Pt. Philip Head. He became suspicious of the *Ferret* and kept the ship under observation. The movements of those on board were considered suspicious. The ship had breached Port regulations. The crew never landed, fires were kept banked. The Customs eventually decided to seize the ship. The technical reason was the failure to lodge a clearance from the last port of call. Once aboard the vessel was soon discovered to be the *Ferret*.

After legal matters had been settled, the ship was purchased by William Whinlan for his operations in the South-East of South Australia. When he sold his business to the Adelaide Steamship Company in November 1883, the vessel was re-registered in Port Adelaide. The Adelaide Steamship Company employed the vessel for some time in Western Australian services, with some work in Queensland, but she became quite well known operating out of Pt. Adelaide to S.A. outposts.

The *Ferret* was wrecked at Reef Head, Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, November 14, 1920, when she ran ashore in foggy weather.

Below : The Ferret at Albany, c. 1890s. (Photo Albany Museum) See photo P.47



GEORGIC

Motor Launch

A motor launch built in about 1913 by Bill Geary, an Albany boat builder. She was wide and chubby with a bluff bow and full square stern, built to carry about 35 passengers. She was specially built for Armstrong and Waters, who used her to carry passengers up the Kalgan River to Hopsons Tea Rooms. These were past the Lower Kalgan Bridge, about two reaches down. Everything there was made with bush timber.

The *Georgic* would be left at the Lower Kalgan Bridge all through the summer, waiting for passengers from the *Silver Star*.

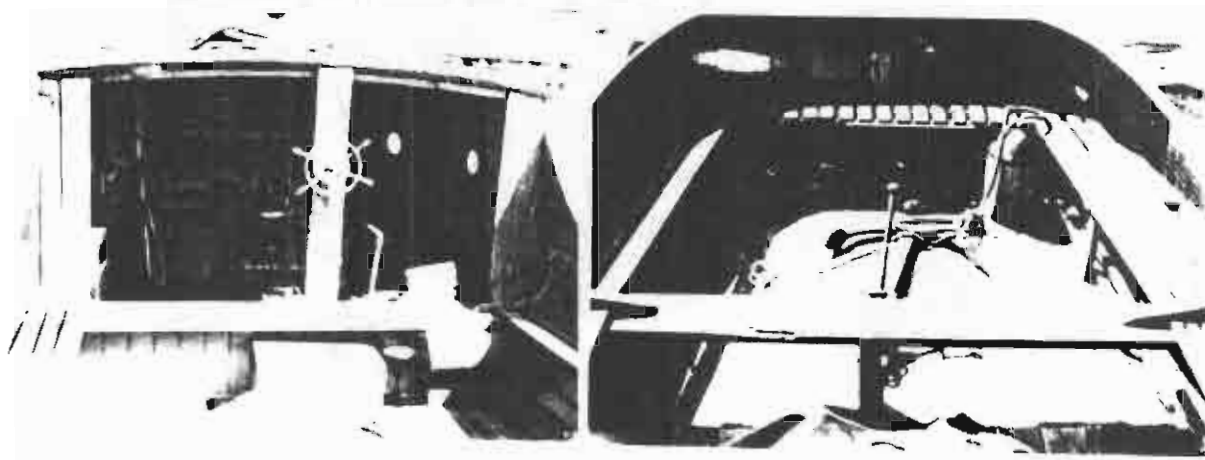
Lionel and Stan Austin bought the *Georgic* from Turner and Chester who had used her for carrying passengers from Albany up the Kalgan and back. Stan Austin said that his family had used the *Georgic* from 1952 onwards for towing whales from the chasers to the rocks. They put a whale backed cabin on her- she had previously a square cabin- and sold her when they bought two new steel launches.

After that someone took the engine out and gave the vessel to the Whale World Museum, where she can still be seen, on the far side of the station, painted bright blue.¹

Les Douglas made the exhaust on the *Georgic* was constructed from an old piece of cast iron water pipe 9" in diameter from the Two People's Bay pipe line. The engine was aways difficult to start, so he fitted an impulse starter to the magneto for easy starting.

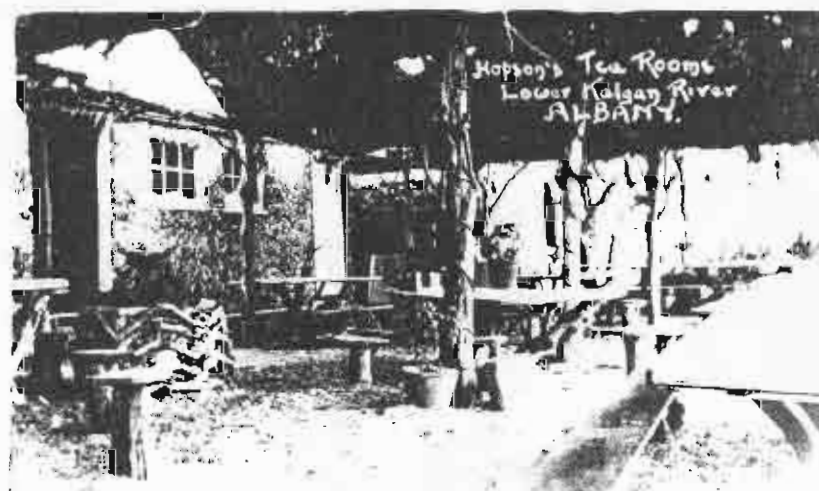


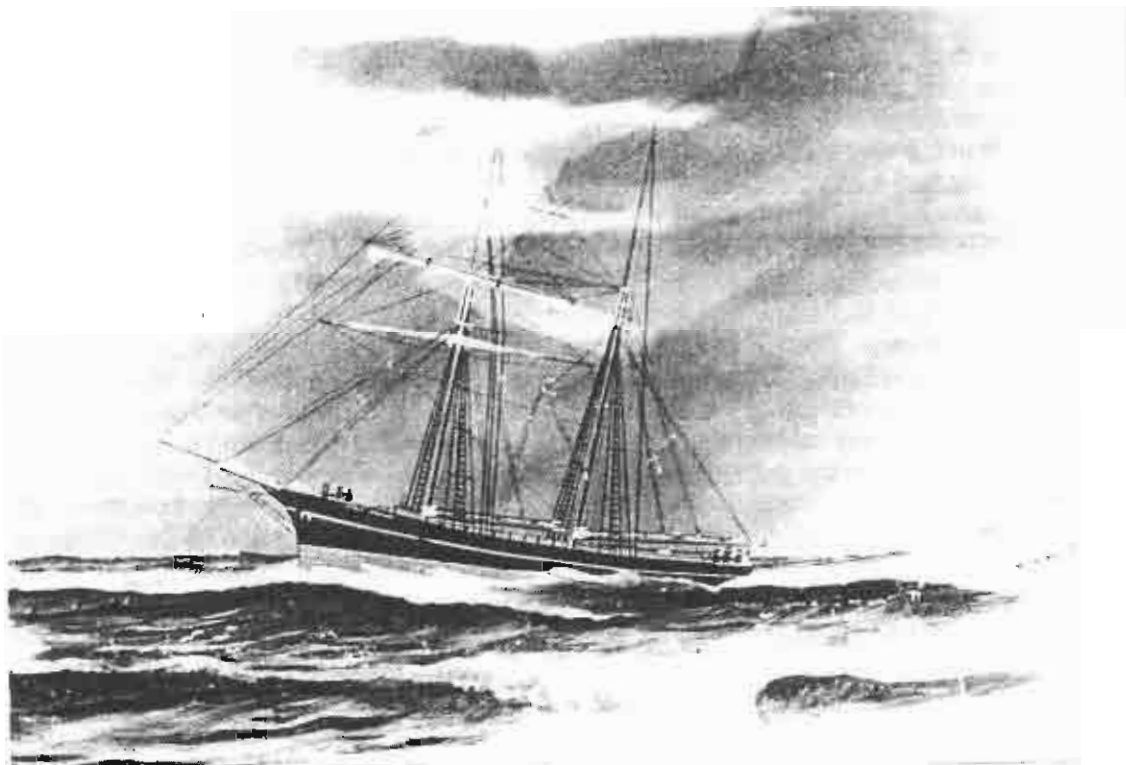
The Georgic. Interior and exterior (Photos Les Douglas)



¹ Stan Austen pers.comm. 29 & 31. 3. 91.

Below : Hopsons Tea Rooms on the Kalgan River; the first photograph shows the Mary at the jetty.





Water colour of the Grace Darling at the Esperance jetty. After the watercolour by R.Dunn 1890. In possession of Eric Douglas, Denmark. (Photo the Author)

GRACE DARLING

Wooden Sailing Ship, Schooner

O/N 57 502 - Reg 3/1892, Fremantle 21/6/1892.

Built in Hobart, Tasmania 1869.

Wooden two masted schooner.

Length 83.2'. Breadth 20.3'. Depth 8.1'. 82 tons.

Square stern, medallion head.

One deck, carvel built, wood frame.

From Pt. Adelaide 19/1873 trans 12/5/92 to Fremantle

Ist owner in Western Australia Fred Douglas of Albany.

B/S 1/9/1910 to R. J. Lynne - Mowat St. Fremantle. Ship Owners and Coal Venders.

Mortgage. Lost 4/2/1914.

Named after Grace Horsley Darling (1815 - 1842) daughter of a Northumberland lighthouse keeper who assisted her father in the rescue of passengers from the *Forfarshire* which was wrecked on Harkers Rock, part of the Farne Island chain in September 1838. Grace Darling became famous as a result, appealing to Victorian ideas of romantic heroism. Several ships were named after her.

The *Grace Darling* was purchased by Les Douglas' great uncle Fred Douglas in Adelaide, after the loss of the *Agnes* in 1892, and pioneered the south coast trade. She was owned and sailed by Captain Fred Douglas from 1892 to 1910.

She first arrived at Albany on 12th June 1892 from Adelaide, having been welcomed at Esperance with the mail on the way across, meeting heavy weather off Eucla. She was described by the local newspaper as :

“A smart schooner rigged vessel and a good sailor”¹

¹ *Australian Advertiser* 13/6/92.

She traded on the south coast Fremantle / Albany Esperance / Eucla and Port Adelaide and had the packet service to Esperance. After she was sold in 1910 she was in the Fremantle / Geraldton trade until she was wrecked in 1914.

The *Grace Darling* was greatly admired in combination with Fred Douglas, who was regarded as a crack sailor. He had a terrific knowledge of the coast and was reputed to be able to take the *Grace Darling* into any bay on the coast in pitch darkness and a gale. His seamanship with the *Grace Darling* was very widely talked about.¹ He would bring the *Grace Darling* into the Albany channel under full sail, and would think nothing of knocking the ship's false keel off.² Les Douglas adds that the false keel had just a few spikes in it so it could come off easily.

At one time she was at Middle Island, of pirate fame, for six weeks, having been blown ashore while making a trip to Eucla. On another, sailing in a gale, she completed the trip from Esperance to Albany in nineteen hours. Once the *Grace Darling* left Adelaide at the same time as a steamer, Douglas remarking to the captain that they would see each other in Albany, which they did. Captain Douglas was walking on the jetty when the steamer pulled in. Pleasure trips with the *Grace Darling* were often arranged from Esperance to Cape Le Grande or around the islands. During 1908, when the Great White Fleet visited Albany, the entire Douglas family came across from Esperance in the *Grace Darling* to see the fleet. Fred Douglas was paid fifty pounds for this.³

Fred Douglas built a two-storied house in Esperance, and the purpose of the upstairs was so that he could see the *Grace Darling* at her moorings. The house, "Fairhaven" was built from stone carried from the islands in the *Grace Darling*. For a long time this was the only house in Esperance with an upstairs.

The *Albany Advertiser* for Tuesday 18/9/90 says :

"The schooner *Grace Darling* arrived from Mary Ann Harbour on Sunday. When sailing up the harbour she ran foul of one of the coal hulks and smashed her fore top mast"

The photograph on floating dock dates from approx 1899.

Probably her most famous exploit, in combination with Fred Douglas, was the rescue of the crew of the *Rodondo* (Sometimes spelt *Rhodondo*) and 196 passengers in 1894 from South East Island 80 miles from Esperance.

Rodondo Rescue

The *Australian Advertiser* for Oct 10 1894 states :

"SS *Rodondo* was an iron screw steamer of 1107 tons built in 1878 by Messrs W. H. Patten & Son of Liverpool, England. 239 ft long. The SS *Rodondo* left Adelaide for W. A. Ports with 200 passengers and struck the Pollock Reef on Saturday morning. She belonged to the Howard Smith line of Steamers. She was 30 miles out of her course when she struck the reef and kept afloat for 12 hours. When the steamer struck passengers rushed to the davits and their weight had the davits down and smashed the boat, throwing the lot into the sea. Four are known to have drowned. Passengers were all evacuated on to the island. A lifeboat was sent to Middle Island and met the schooner *Grace Darling* with Capt. Fred Douglas in command, which was on her way from Esperance to Israelite Bay. She straightaway sailed to the site of the shipwreck. Owing to heavy seas rescue

¹ Howard Hartman pers. Comm.

² A. Armstrong pers Comm.

³ From *The Story of the late Captain Fred Douglas* (as told by his son Mr. Robert John Bremmer Douglas) April 1971 (Unpublished) in M.A. FILE 69/72/1.

work was postponed until Monday, and 4 persons were drowned attempting to lower a boat from the *Rodondo*. 196 persons were then conveyed on the *Grace Darling* for Port Malcolm, which was reached on Monday evening. The *Grace Darling*'s provisions were swiftly exhausted but there were plenty at Port Malcolm owing to shearing operations at Pats Station, the survivors were provided with wool packs to sleep on. The weather was mild but virtually no shelter apart from dense scrub. The passengers proceeded by train to Adelaide."

While the *West Australian* for October 10 1894 said :

"Too much praise cannot be accorded Captain Douglas of the *Grace Darling* for his prompt departure for S.E. Island and the way in which he and his crew laboured to rescue the unfortunate people.

One of the *Grace Darling*'s crew, an Albany lad named Andrews, single-handedly brought off several loads of people, five at a time, in a small dinghy. Half an hour later the last load came off, and all the schooner's provisions except a few scraps of meat and some tinned stuff were consumed, and the *Grace Darling*'s people had to put up that day with half a meal only, which they did without a murmur.

The cabin of the schooner was turned into a telegraph office, and for hours two operators, who were passengers by the *Grace Darling*, were fully occupied in writing out telegrams to friends and relatives of the passengers, many of the latter spending their last shilling in order to acquaint their friends with their safety.

The first boat ashore at dark contained Captain Hill, Captain Douglas and the two operators. Immediately on landing Mr. Ponton, one of the owners of the station, was interviewed, and one of the operators, left within fifteen minutes on a fast camel for Israelite Bay Telegraph Station, 12 miles distant, which he reached at 9.45 p. m.."

In a letter to the *Albany Advertiser* of 14/11/96, John O'Brien called for a Humane society Award:

"In conversation with Captain Hill of the *Rodondo*, he said had it not been for the indefatigability of Captain Douglas and the smartness of the vessel the unfortunate people would have suffered considerable privation not unattended with danger."

He went on to say that had it occurred off the English coast, Captain and crew of the *Grace Darling* would have received considerable monetary reward and immeasurable kudos, and no more than their due, and says they would have been exhibited on many a theatrical stage throughout the country. He regarded the name of the *Grace Darling* as entirely appropriate. He pointed out that it had resulted in considerable monetary loss for Captain Douglas.

According to Captain Douglas, he never got a penny; instead, the passengers souvenired the *Grace Darling*, or all that was movable, as mementos.¹

(A full account of this is given in Appendix II)

According to some accounts Captain Douglas was obliged to broach some cargo in order to keep the survivors alive, and as a result of the rescue arrived late at his destination. He was then fined 40 pounds for being late with the mail and 40 pounds for broaching the cargo, causing a lot of controversy at the time. This seems like injustice added to ingratitude as he received nothing for the rescue.²

¹ *Western Mail* September 8th 1949

² From : *Goodbye to Fred and Christina Douglas ; The Esperance Advertiser*, Friday, April 19, 1974.

According to Archie Douglas, Fred Douglas' son who was serving on the *Grace Darling* at the time, during the storm in which *The City of York* and the *Carlisle Castle* were wrecked, the *Grace Darling*, which was at Eucla, required four anchors to prevent her from drifting. This was one of the most violent storms ever experienced over so vast an area of the W.A. coast.¹

Fred Douglas used to take the *Grace Darling* to Middle Island to load salt, which used to be harvested from the lake there. On one occasion, in 1908, members of the crew wandered over the island and left a shell with their names written on it in a cave. This was recovered 65 years later by Father Glover of Esperance, and is now in the Esperance Historical Society. It was dated January 5th, 1908, and bore the names of Fred Douglas Snr, Fred Douglas Jnr, R. Chapman, E. Douglas and W. Hogan.²

When Fred Douglas retired and sold the *Grace Darling*, the citizens of the south coast presented him with a gold watch and 50 sovereigns in appreciation of his long service to settlers. The watch is now in possession of his grandson, Ken Douglas.

The *Grace Darling* was sold to R. G Lynn & Co of Fremantle in 1910 for the Geraldton trade. She was wrecked off Lancelin Island some 70 miles north of Fremantle in 1914.

She left Geraldton on 18th January with 3ft of water in the hold bound for the Abrolhos where she loaded a thousand bags of Guano for Fremantle. She commenced her journey to Fremantle eight days later on 28th February and immediately got into heavy weather and leaked badly. She struck a reef on 3 February 1914 sometime after four o'clock and commenced to fill. Shortly after rescue of the crew the vessel broke up and disappeared. The crew of six were all saved by the fishing boat *Wanderer*. The vessel was under 100 tons, therefore not required to have a fully qualified mate.

The Master, Captain F. Schroeder, was found guilty of negligence and his certificate suspended for three months.

(A full account of the wreck of the *Grace Darling* is given in Appendix VII)

This Master is credited with losing another boat, the *Mandalay* which went up on beach near Nornalup.

The wreck of the *Grace Darling* was found in the early 1950s and certain items recovered.

The compass and small bell recovered from the wreck was purchased by Les Douglas in for 20 pounds and inscription put on the bell.

Several coastal features preserve the name of the vessel and her owner - "Grace Shoal", "Darling Shoal" and "Douglas Patch."³ "Douglas Island", however, is named after Flinders' navigator.

The *Grace Darling's* log book was in possession of one of Fred Douglas' daughters, and disappeared in a fire in the country.

There was a Grace Darling Hotel in Esperance, built by Fred Douglas. It was closed in about 1912 and has since been demolished, but the name may be used on a related building.

Ballast from the *Grace Darling* from Fred Douglas' house in Brunswick Rd, Albany, is still used by locals.

Stan Austen says that in Esperance at the museum there is a picture of the *Grace Darling* on the pier at Port Adelaide, but it is actually Albany, not Adelaide.⁴

A contemporary of the *Grace Darling*, the schooner *May Queen*, built in Hobart in 1867, still survives in Tasmania and would be useful for comparative purposes.

For details of the *Rodondo* rescue, plus the *Grace Darling's* other voyages, see Appendix I, II, and III.

Right : Captain Douglas' House
"Fairhaven" at Esperance.
From the upper floor he
could watch the *Grace
Darling* at her moorings.
(Photo Les Douglas)

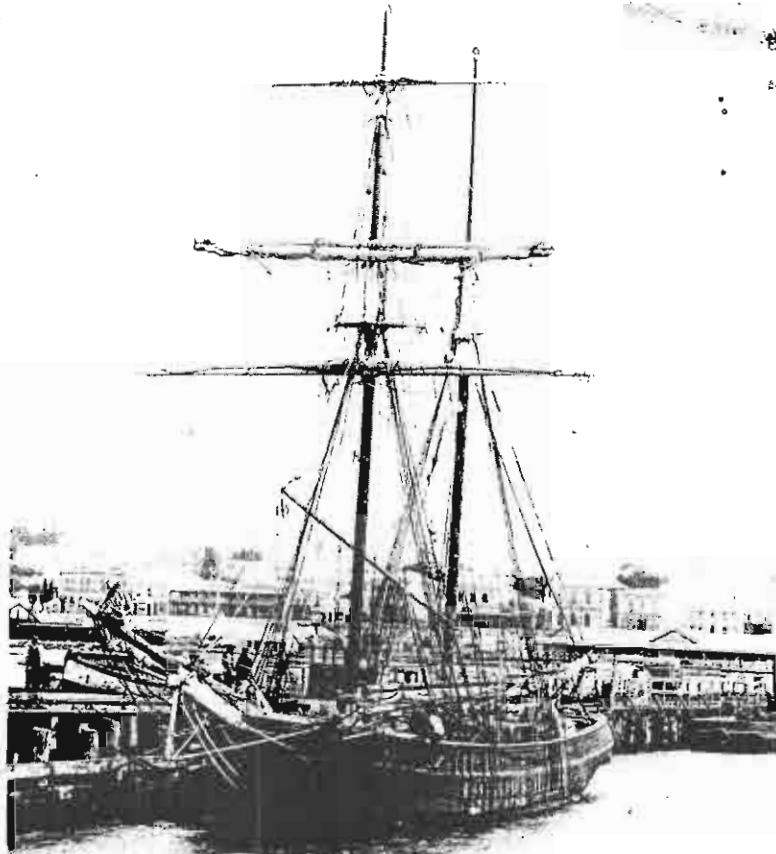


¹ Writings of Archie Douglas, unpublished MS, *ibid*.

² *Goodbye to Fred and Christina Douglas* opt. cit..

³ R.J.B. Douglas *ibid*

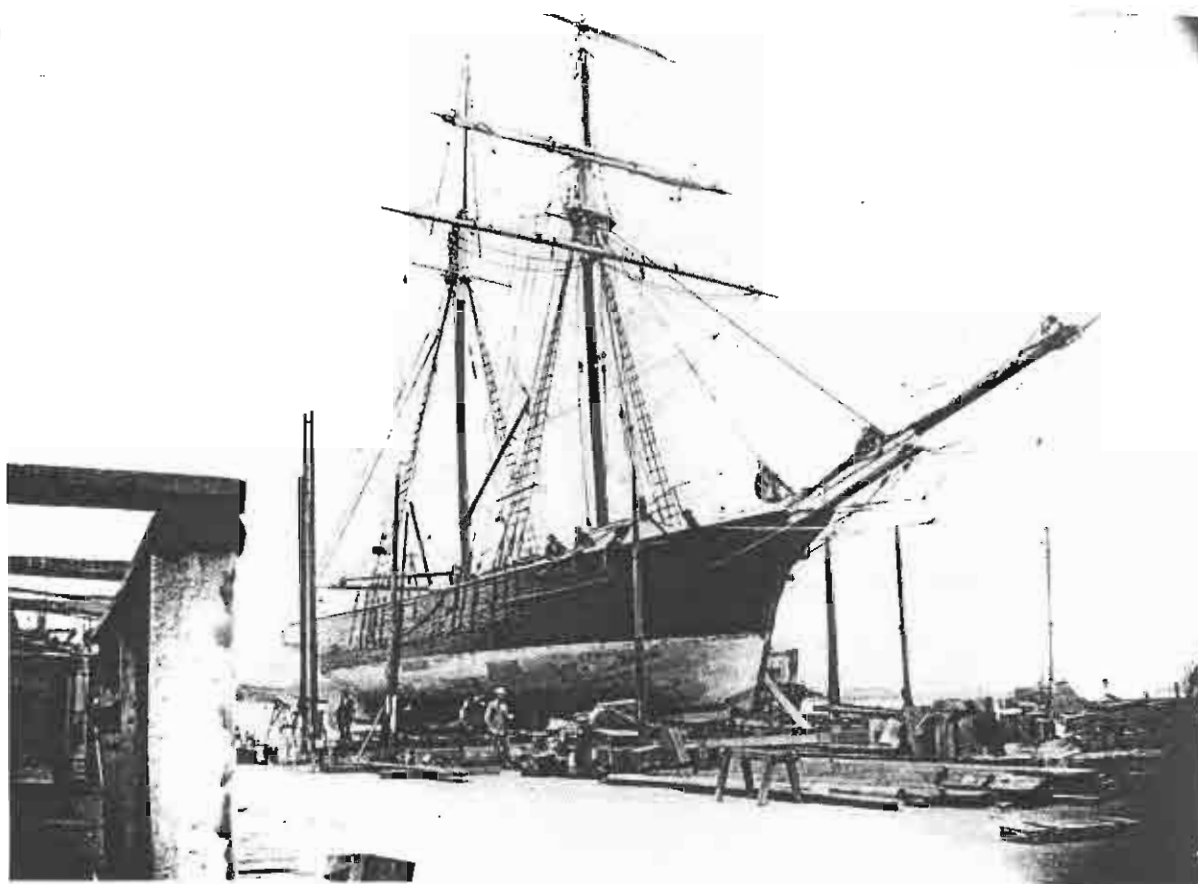
⁴ Stan Austen *psers. comm.*



WITH BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND A BRIGHT NEW YEAR

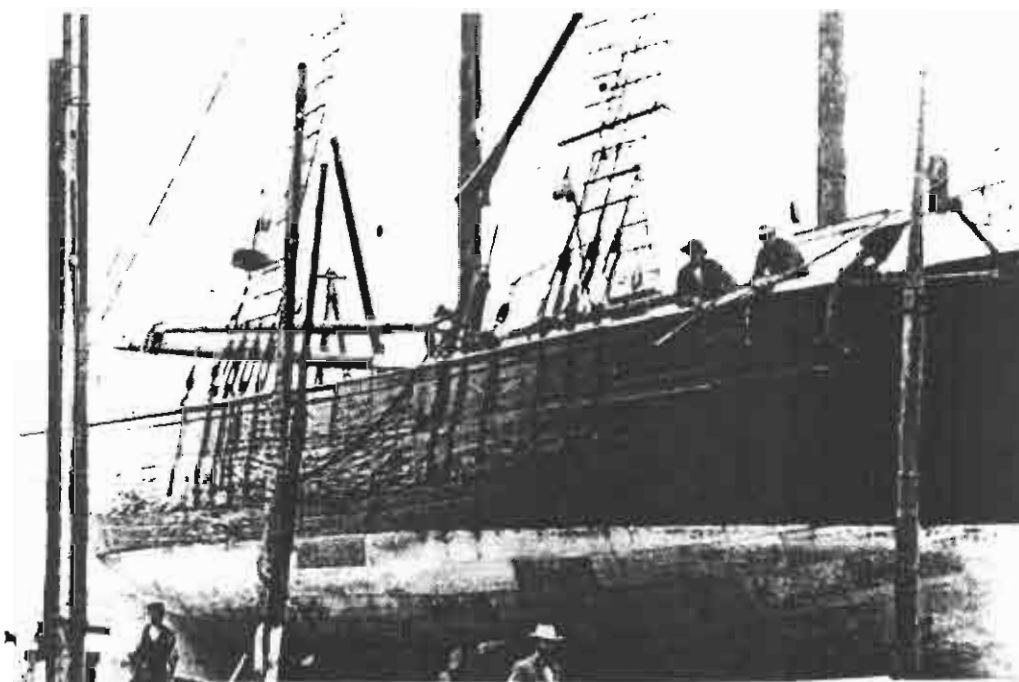
Above : The Grace Darling at the wharf at Albany. The fact that this photograph has been used as an early Christmas Card attests to the popularity of the vessel. (Photo Les Douglas)
Below : The Grace Darling under sail. (Photo Ken Douglas)





Grace Darling on the slip at Port Adelaide about 1890. Captain Douglas with the walking stick. (Photo Les Douglas)

*Close up photograph showing showing wear along the wind and water lines.(Photo Pat Baker)
The ship was already twenty years old.*





Above : The Grace Darling under sail . Painting by E.J. Miller 1887. (Photo Richard McKenna.)

Les Douglas Writes :

AS TOLD ME BY MY FATHER

METHOD OF LOADING WOOL IN THE EARLY DAYS
ALONG THE SOUTH COAST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Station owners would build a ramp about 3ft high on the beach above high water mark. They would then bring the bales of wool from the Station either by wagon or a dray and leave them on the platform. As there was no means of communication the owners would not know when the vessels would arrive.

The vessels would anchor as close as possible and launch the surf boats with as many men as could be spared from the vessel. At least five men were required, and they would row in and drop anchor as near as possible to the beach. Remember, there is at most times a fair amount of surf breaking on the beaches.

One or two men would stay in the surf boat, the other four men would carry the bales one at a time out to the boat which would be just beyond the break of the surf. The wool was carried out to the boat on a platform which was built of two long round oregon poles about 8ft long, bolted across the middle with a number of boards. Four men would carry the platform, one at each end, and if there were only four men on the beach they would rest the end of the poles on the ramp, two men holding the other end of the poles and the bale was rolled onto the platform.

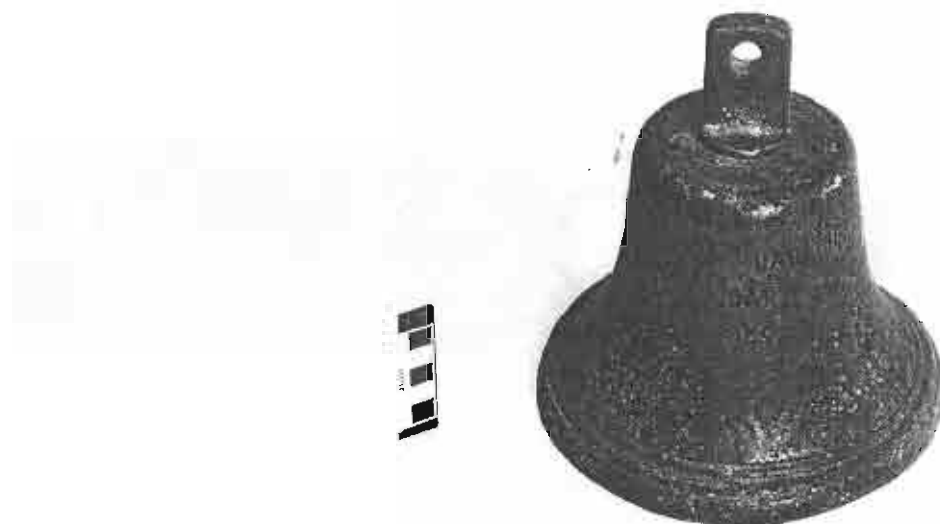
The four men would then carry it out through the surf with the poles on their shoulders; it had to be high on their shoulders to keep it clear of the surf and also to tip it into the surf boat. This was very hard work, especially if there was a bit of surf running. Can you imagine four men in the surf, up to their neck with a bale of wool on a platform, cold and wet, hour after hour, working for about four pounds a month? You have heard the old saying : "The ships were wooden but the men were iron." - How true !

In some of the bays where the water was deep the *Grace* dropped anchor as close as possible to the beach and the surf boat would run into the beach with a light line attached to the *Grace*. One man in the surf boat would pay out the line until the boat was close enough to the beach. Then another man would jump into the water taking a line from the bow to the beach. In this way the surf boat was held in position, head out to the surf. This way it was possible to land more wool as the men did not have to leave room to row. They pulled the surf boat back to the *Grace* using the light tow lines.

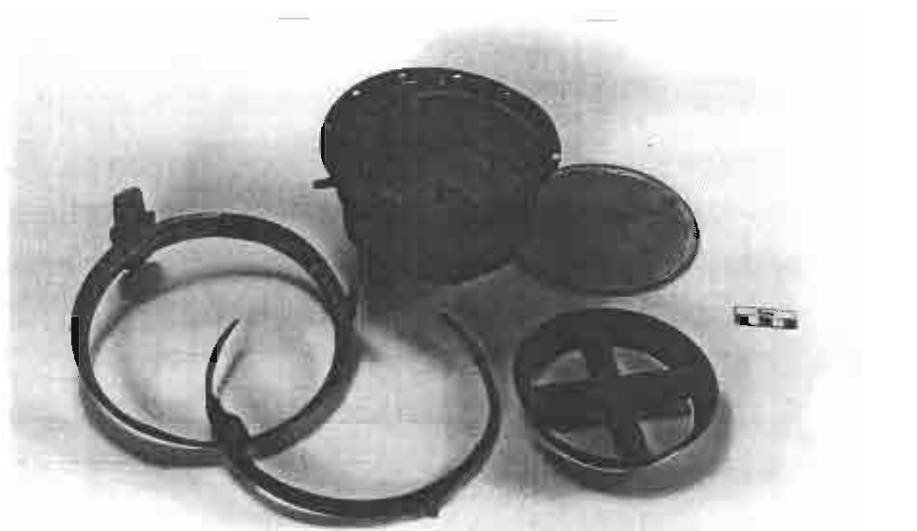
The Grace Darling loading wool bales from a country wool port. Circa 1890s (Photos Albany Museum)



Bell recovered from the wreck of the Grace Darling. In possession of Les Douglas, who put the inscription on. (Photo Patrick Baker)



The Grace Darling's compass, also recovered from the wreck. Les Douglas. (Photo Pat Baker)



*IRIS**Wooden Sailing Ship, Barque.*

O/N 75304

Reg 1/1879 date 7/7/1879.

Sailing vessel built Fremantle 9/4/1879 by Robert Howson.

1 deck 3 masts schooner rigged. Oval counter. Carvel built.

Head : Woman's Figure. Wood hull.

116. 75 x 22. 7 ft x 10. 3 ft.

206. 33 tons gross.

1st owner - John Bateman, merchant of Fremantle. Owner of 64 shares.

Unsuccessfully tried to sell the vessel in Hong Kong.

B/S 3/4/1901 John Wesley Bateman Fremantle.

B/S 21/11/1904 - William Douglas Albany.

Reg. transferred to Melb. 12/12/1906.¹

The *Iris* was bought by Les Douglas grandfather William Douglas from Bateman's 1904, purchased with the prize money from towing the *Gertie* off the bar at Wilson's Inlet. Douglas bought the *Iris* after selling the *Dunskey* as he wanted to go into coastal work. The photograph of the *Iris* dismasted at Port Adelaide dates from this period.

She was sold to Victorian interests in 1906. Owned by W. Robinson (Launceston) and L. G. Atwell, registered in Melbourne.²

In June 1914 she left Adelaide for Smithton, Tasmania, in ballast to load timber, and on the 4th June, while entering the Duck River, Tasmania, she went ashore on the western spit and soon had two metres of water in her holds. Efforts by SS *Toroa* to tow her free failed, and after being abandoned she was eventually dismantled.³

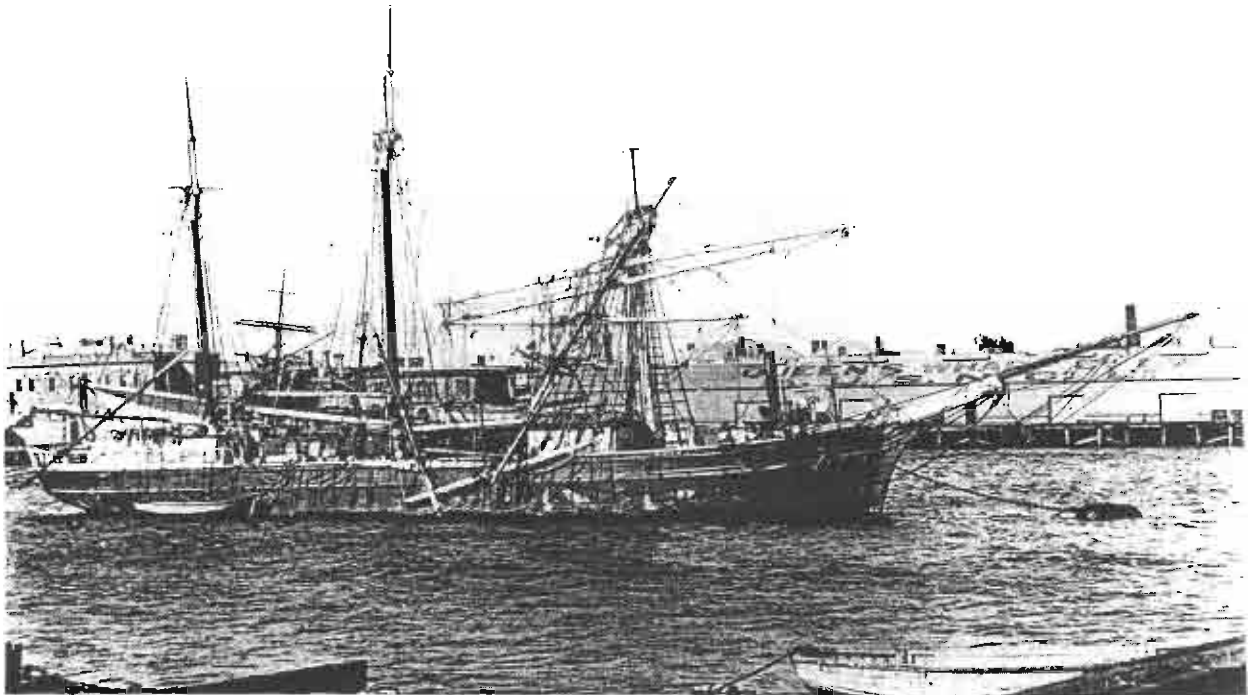


A painting of the Iris. (Photo Les Douglas)

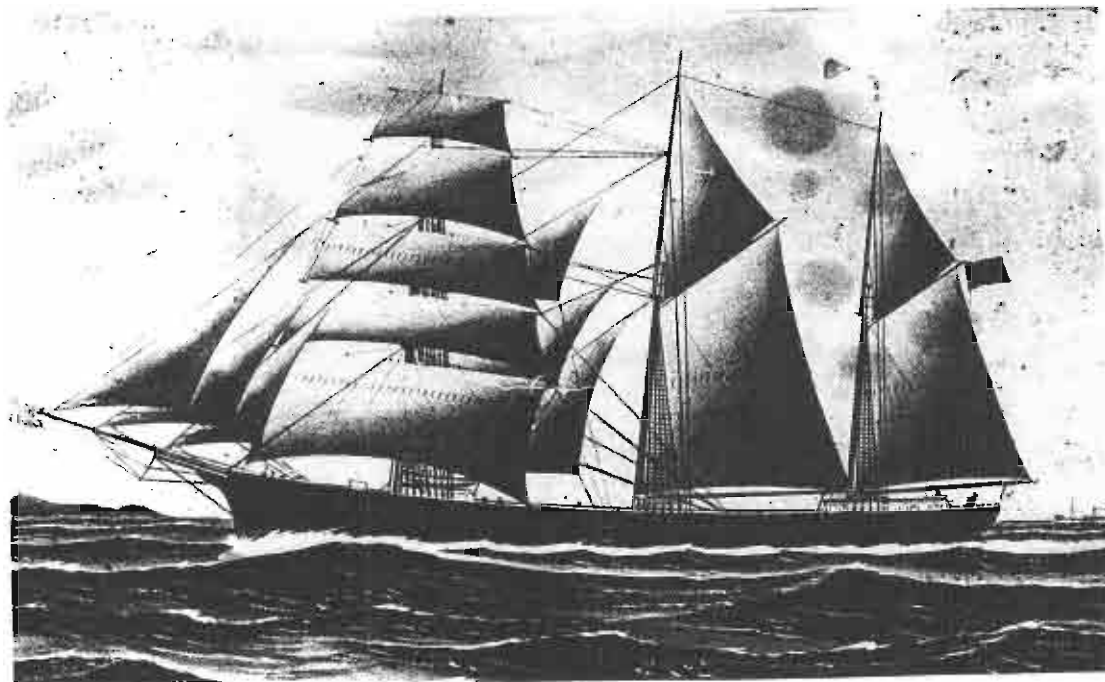
¹ R. McKenna.

² *Australasian Shipping Record*.

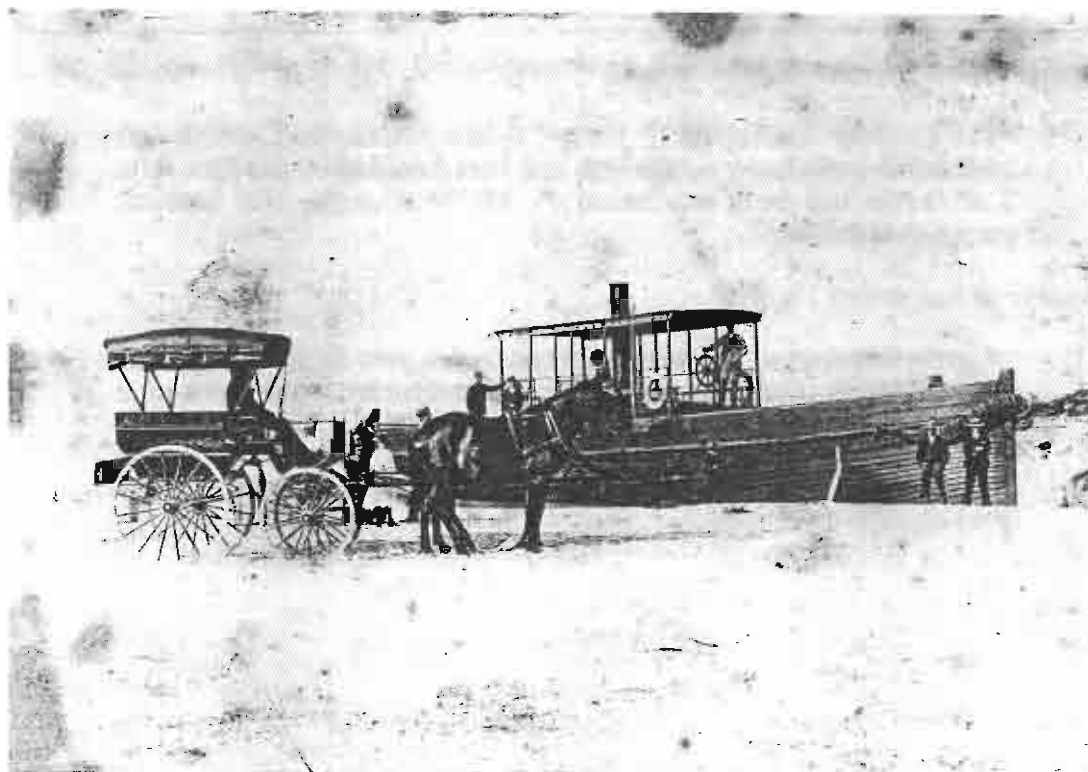
³ Jack Loney, Vol. 4.



The Iris dismantled at Port Adelaide. (Photo Les Douglas)



Painting of the Iris at Albany in 1902. Artist was called Boorne. In possession of Les Douglas. (Photo the author)



The Jessie at Emu Point, C. 1890. William Douglas is at the wheel with his sons in front of the vessel. From left to right: Clem, Edward, and Albert (Bert). (Photo Albany Historical Society)

JESSIE

Small Steam Tug

O/N 88940.

Owned by W. Douglas.

Reg No. 2 of 1892 Fremantle 18/5/1892.

Steam Screw.

Formerly of Melbourne, Victoria.

As No. 8/1886 Melb. Transferred to Fremantle 14/10/90 (reg).

Built at Williamstown Victoria 5/5/86.

I deck. No mast. Round stern, clinker built.

Straight head. Wooden hull.

61ft x 14. 7/10 by 5. 6/10 - 12. 97/100.

24.77 tons Gross. 12.97/00 tons. Reg.

Tons less propelling power : 11.80.

Machinery: Length of engine room 18ft 6/10 1 steam engine. Vertical British built.

Engine built 1886 by George Laker (or Saker) of Williamstown Victoria - engine maker.

Diameter of cylinder 14" 14" stroke (Very unusual).

14 nominal horsepower.

Mortgage from Hassel. 10/8/86-Mortgage B to decure 1300 pounds at 10% by 1/9/86.

From John Friedrich Tassia/Hassel.

Registered 12/9/1890.

B/s 12/9/89 Thomas Glace (or Plaiçe) of Albany, Shipowner. Discharged mortgage 1892.

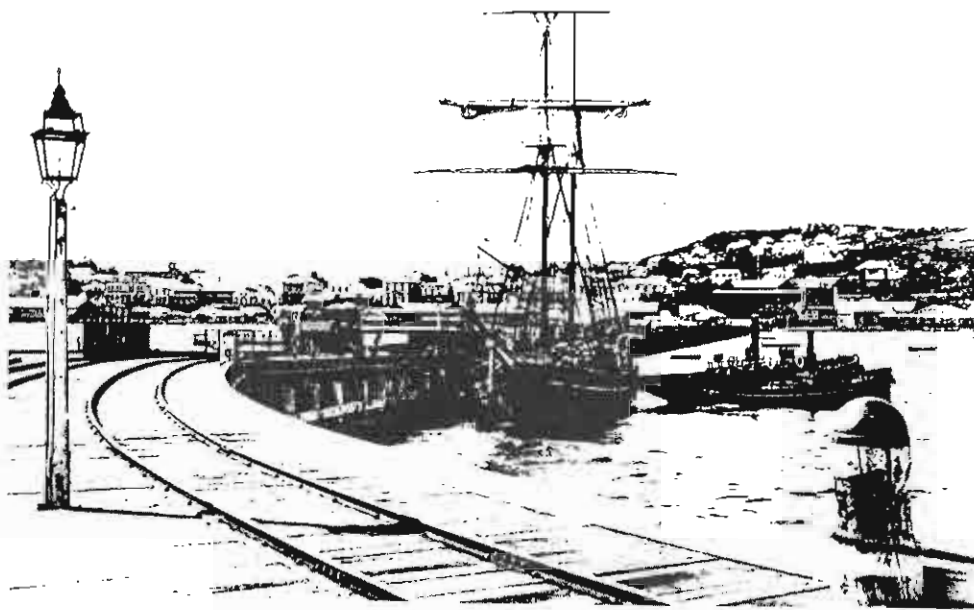
B/s 29/4/1892 to Alex Armstrong of also another mortgage discharged 1898.
 Alex Armstrong 14.9.1900 to Alex Armstrong Senior and John and George Waters - joint owners. 21/3 shares each.
 Certificate cancelled and forwarded to Register-General in London July 4 1913.
 Vessel beached and dismantled long time -letter of Armstrong and Waters 2nd July 1913.
 (88940 in Merchant shipping Files - in Edward Miller House?)

The Inquirer of 8th September 1886 states:

“The steamer *Jessie*, of 13 tons, Captain Mclaughton, which left Melbourne for Albany on the 18th and Port Adelaide on the 27th July. The *Jessie* has been purchased by Mr W. Douglas, for harbour purposes at Albany.”

The Inquirer of November 17 1886:

“A great acquisition has been afforded to this port by the energy and pluck of Mr W. Douglas; in bringing a steam launch from Melbourne which now plys between the steamers and the shore. She appears to be a strong and powerful craft, and suitable for all the requirements of Princess Royal Harbour. Mr. Douglas steamed the little launch round from Melbourne himself.”



Jessie (foreground) with the *Escort* and *Grace Darling*. (Photo Albany Museum)

Les Douglas' Grandfather William bought the *Jessie* - purchased new - perhaps ordered - and was in competition with Armstrong and Waters.

The *Australian Advertiser* for 27th March 1889 states that Captain Douglas towed in the barque *St. Laurence* with the *Jessie*; she was a large vessel with the mainmast gone, the stump only of her mizenmast and the foremast alone standing. The *St. Laurence* was loaded with coals from

Newcastle for Fremantle, and had been caught in a gale off the Leeuwin on Sunday morning at 2.a.m., causing the loss of her masts.

The *St. Laurence* remained in Albany as a coal hulk.

23rd September 1889 Douglas advertised as owner of steam launch *Jessie*, available for all harbour work and could be hired for pleasure trips etc.¹

14/5/90 The *Jessie* towed the damaged German schooner *Meta* into port. The vessel was 16 days from Adelaide and was leaking and had to throw over part of the cargo. A storm resulted in the fore top gallant mast coming down and bringing with it the jibboom and damaging the bulwarks and rails. The wreckage could not be cut adrift, and she sprang a leak. The crew were at the pumps eight days. Captain De Vrijs.²

The *Albany Observer* of 8th July 1890 states :

“Mr Douglas has disposed his steam launch the *Jessie*, a lighter, a pontoon, and a small boat to Mr. T. Place.”(A councillor)

On 29/4/1892 Armstrong & Waters purchased the *Jessie*.

During the time Armstrong and Waters owned her, the *Jessie* was used to transport gold bullion in the form of sovereigns from the Perth mint to ships bound for the eastern states. On one occasion a box of sovereigns vanished during transport. The engineer was suspected but nothing was ever proved until the 1930s, when renovations were made to Bayview House, the guest house which he had been living in, and the remains of the sovereign box were found hidden under the building.³

The *Jessie* was used at least until 1911 by Armstrong and Waters as an advertisement from that year lists her as part of their fleet.(See P.44), but is not mentioned in their advertisement for 1912.⁴ At that time she must have been abandoned because there was no further use for her or because of structural or mechanical problems.

She was left to go to pieces on the beach. Les Douglas has a photograph of *Jessie* at Lawley Park about 1912 showing the *Silver Star* newly brought from Fremantle with *Jessie* lying on the beach. He says that there was quite a fair bit of her above the water when he was a child.

According to Howard Hartman she went ashore and was left as obsolete. There were bits of engine still sticking up - nothing worth taking away. Rusted up old engine. Wooden bottom.⁵

The foreshore road now runs over the *Jessie*.⁶

Howard Hartman writes :

"I remember the *Jessie* quite well. When I knew her she was an open boat with a vertical boiler and reciprocating engine, all open to the view. No deck. Whether they had removed the deck or whether she was always like that I don't know, but she was leaking badly and they finally put her on the bank in front of the Park where she went to pieces. There were bits of her there for many years."⁷

¹ *Australian Advertiser*, 23/9/89.

² *Australian Advertiser* , 14/5/90.

³ Les Douglas.

⁴ *Alluring Albany* 1912, Facsimile edition by the Town and Shire of Albany 1991? Unpaged.

⁵ H. Hartman pers comm 7/2/91.

⁶ H. Hartman *ibid*.

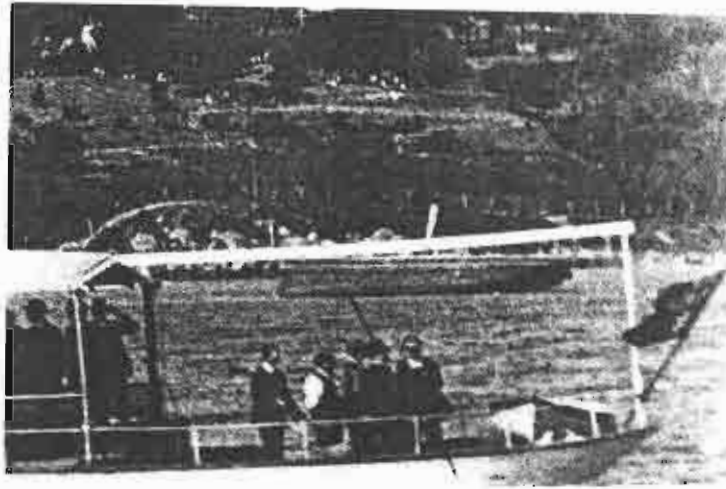
⁷ H. Hartman letter to Les Douglas 20th September 1971

In the photograph with the *Silver Star* the *Jessie* still has her funnel which means that the boiler and probably engine were still in place. Les Douglas says that by the time he remembered seeing her there would only have been about 2ft of hull visible.

Les Douglas says that the *Jessie* lay quite far (500 ft) from Armstrong and Water's shed, and lay in front of MacBride's and Kennedy's house, who must have taken the boiler out. He does not know why the vessel was so far away unless she drifted from her moorings.

It is possible that the remains of the *Jessie* do include the boiler and engine, in or near the remains of the hull. In which case, since the *Jessie* had an unusual Australian-built engine it would be worth excavating if the location can be clearly identified. This would depend on its condition as it must be borne in mind that the engine and boiler would have been exposed or half-submerged in shallow water for over forty years before being buried in the fill.

Conservation suggestions would include establishing the salinity of the soil, whether it is in an aerobic or anarobic environment, and conservation ideas followed accordingly.



Jessie lying on the beach about 1912. Enlarged from photo of Silver Star .(Les Douglas)

See photograph on p.71.

KINGFISHER***Iron Sailing Ship, later a coal hulk.***

Official No. 31991

Built 1854. Hulked around 1860.

Built at Renfew U. K.

Lloyds 1897/98 99/100 - Vessel iron hulled.

Barque rigged.

120. 4 ft; long x 18. 8 ft wide x 9. 3ft depth.

Reg. Melbourne 164 tons gross & net.

3 masted, round stern, clincher built.

Wrecked at Albany 1895.

P & O History P. 58 1854 Landed at Renfew

1857 John Bogle was her Master. 48/64 shares

Richard J. MacArthur 16/64 shares. Registered at Hobart 4/1857. June 1858

Sold to William Patterson on 30th June 1858.

Sold to William Henry Hawke - Agent for P & O on 18th August 1859

1859 P & O reg. as no. 16,1859, Melbourne.

Reduced to lighter.

Hulk Driven Ashore and broken up 19 May 1883.¹

1895 wrecked at Albany Harbour.²

The *Kingfisher* is a distinctive wreck towards the east end of Albany Harbour, where her iron frames can still be seen above water.

An iron vessel Built 1854 she was built as a sailing ship. She is one of the oldest iron shipwrecks in Western Australia. She was converted to a coal hulk after only a very short time in service, and was the second coal hulk in Albany, arriving in June 1859.³

The *Kingfisher* blew ashore on either the west side of either the Town Jetty or the P & O Jetty on Saturday 7th April 1883. She remained in this position for a number of weeks and was eventually towed off. the *Albany Mail* for July 10th 1833 reports that she was removed to the head of the harbour.

Information of 1885 reveals that the hulk *Kingfisher* was considered to be in need of re-plating and was towed to a site near the now-vanished *Fairy* by W. Douglas in the steam launch *Perseverance*. However, a severe storm drove her to her present position as a wreck.⁴

The *Kingfisher* was originally schooner rigged but was converted to barque rigg on her arrival in Tasmania. This may be an indication of poor sailing qualities which led to her being hulked after only a short career.

Les Douglas writes:

“There was a lot of the old *Kingfisher* there when I was a young boy. We used to go around to her on our rafts, that we used to build and sail and poke all around the harbour.”

Howard Hartman remembers fishing off the *Kingfisher* as a boy, when she still had some steel deck left.

The *Kingfisher* has one apparent bulkhead. A winch is visible the bow of the wreck. Les Douglas suspects that she was built of Lowmoor iron.

The *Kingfisher* was excavated on 31/ 3/ 91 by Adam Wolfe assisted by the author and Brunhilde Prince. A water dredge was used and revealed that more remained of her than was obvious, and that she was lined with wood, in remarkably good state of preservation.

¹ *Australian Shipping News*.

² From Register of British Ships for the Port of Hobart. Registry closed March 1 1905.

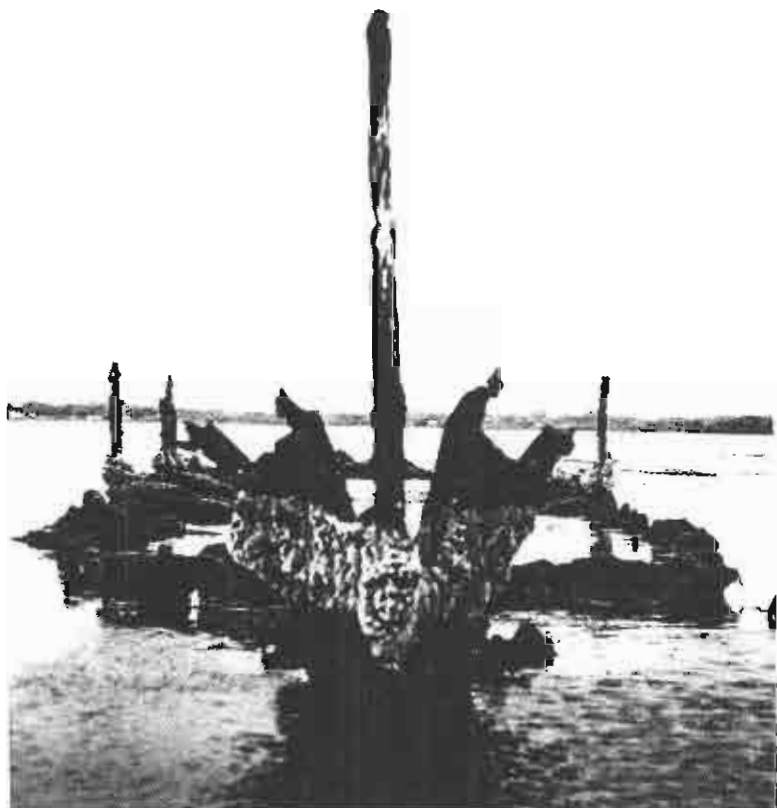
³ Colonial Secretary's Records Vol 439/109. Per. Adam Wolfe.

⁴ Adam Wolfe pers. comm.

Much of the information for this account was supplied by Adam Wolfe, from whom a fuller account of the *Kingfisher's* history and excavation will be forthcoming.



Wreck of the Kingfisher in Albany Harbour, photographed by Adam Wolfe in January 1991, during a period of exceptionally low tide.



LADY LYTTLETON ex *SULTAN**Wooden Sailing Ship, Three Masted Barque.*

First registered in Sydney in 1861.¹ Previous history unknown.
 Owned by Alex Young and John Howard, Master Mariners of Sydney.
 Length 94.4 ft, Breadth 21.1ft, D. 9.7ft.
 178.30Gross Tonnage.
 3 masts, single deck, figure head, carvelbuild, wood frames.
 Place and date of building unknown.

Lady Lyttleton was sunk at Emu Point in July 1867, just inside Oyster Harbour. The vessel had been careened on the south side of Emu Point for repairs to leaking planks, and while careened slipped down the bank into the channel. It is believed that ropes attached to the mastheads prevented the ship from righting herself, and she filled and sank.

The *Lady Lyttleton* was on her way to Fremantle from Melbourne via Adelaide, with a cargo from Melbourne. The vessel made an unscheduled stop at Albany on 16th June 1867. The Captain, John McArthur, stated on the arrivals form that he "Put into Sound in a leaky condition. Part cargo hove overboard."² On 30th July the Albany Resident described the vessel as being "in an almost sinking condition." He goes on to state that the vessel "was taken to Oyster Harbor to be hove down & repaired, but sank as soon as she was heeled over."³ About a year after the sinking the police received a report that "a quantity of wreck had drifted ashore....from the the ship *Lady Lyttleton* and they recovered sundry items."⁴

The ship's figurehead was recovered and used as a gatepost at Candyup farm near Albany, and is now in the Albany Museum, heavily restored. There is also a wooden seat at Spencer Park School at Albany supposed to be made from the rudder post, and an anchor was recovered, believed to be from the *Lady Lyttleton*..

Most of the foregoing information is from *Lady Littleton - A search for origins*, by Tom Vosmer and Jim Wright.⁵ *Lady Lyttleton* is the source of ongoing research and excavation by Tom Vosmer of the W.A. Maritime Museum.

Les Douglas remembers seeing the *Lady Lyttleton* in about 1920. Viewed through a water glass, the ship was still complete, but collapsed in on itself.

It should be noted that the depth and width, as well as present appearance of the Emu Point channel have been subject to change. Earlier drawings and photographs show a narrower channel with more sandy beaches. It is understood that the great South-East gale of 1921 caused considerable changes and carried away half of Emu Point. While a small cove exists where the *Lady Lyttleton* could have been careened, it is quite possible that the area presented a very different appearance in 1867, possibly far more suitable for careening vessels than the present time.

Emu Point was so named after HMS *Emu*, which anchored there in the 1800s.

¹ Sydney Register of Shipping 40, 1861.

² Report for the port of Princess Harbour for June 1867, CSR Vol. 606/66, Acc. 36, Battye Library.

³ Letter from Albany Resident to Colonial Secretary, 30th July, 1867, CSR Vol.602/186, Acc 36, Battye Library.

⁴ Albany Police Station Occurences Book, November 1863 - June 1866, with entries for 28 August , 1868.

⁵ Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Vol 15. No.1Ps 19-30

LAURA

The last vessel owned by Captain Fred Douglas. Described as a "big open boat" purchased from the Hamelin brothers and refitted. Supposed to have been taken to the wreck of the *Pericles* by Carl Douglas in April 1910, and recovered a large quantity of butter. Used by another of his sons, Jim Douglas, to take sheep to Figure of Eight Island she was wrecked there during a storm in 1915. Her loss is supposed to have contributed to Alfred Douglas' death in 1916.¹ Les Douglas states that the loss of the *Laura* would have had nothing to do with Fred Douglas' death as he was already a very sick man and for some years his nephew Bert skippered the *Grace Darling* while she was still owned by Fred.

The remains of what may be the *Laura* were found off Boxer Island by members of the W.A. Maritime Museum in 1972. The bow was much broken up and the stern ran under a high sand ridge, but it was possible to assess and take samples from the mid-part of the vessel.²

¹ From *The Story of the late Captain Fred Douglas*, as told by his son, Robert Bremer Douglas, April 1971 in Maritime Archaeology File 69/72/1.

² M.A. File *ibid*.

LOCH LOMOND, sometimes *Lochlomond*

Small steam launch

A small steam launch of 10 tons purchased by Armstrong and Waters in 1883 and used as a launch in Albany Harbour. She was not as big as the *African Queen* of the popular film. Her specifications are not available, suggesting that she was not registered owing to her small size.

She was used to transport passengers and also as a small tug in conjunction with William Douglas' launch *Perseverance*, which was about the same size.

The *West Australian* for May 31 1884 mentions that the launches *Loch Lomond* and *Perseverance* were chartered to visit the Hobart whaler *Derwent Hunter* in King George's Sound by passengers who wanted to see a recently caught sperm whale cut up.

In July 1885 the *Loch Lomond* and the *Perseverance* towed the schooner *Walter and Mary* while she laid the telephone cable to Breaksea Island from Albany. According to Sonny Armstrong, "Black Alex's" son, it took 1000 gallons of water for the *Loch Lomond* to go to Breaksea Island and back - she had no condenser.¹

She apparently came to an end on the beach at the Albany waterfront, and was left to fall to pieces. Les Douglas remembers seeing old engine parts and a very small boiler sticking out of the water in a sandy patch in front of the rock near Armstrong and Waters' shed at Albany, which were said to be from the *Loch Lomond*. These were 500 feet or so from the *Jessie* remains. Captain Donohue, who served on her, mentions her remains as still possibly visible on the shore below Lawley Park. (See Appendix VIII)

Loch Lomond was advertised for use until January 1906², but does not appear in Armstrong and Waters list of vessels for 1910 (P.46), so it is assumed that she came to an end between those dates. It therefore seems likely that whatever remains of the *Loch Lomond* is now buried in the land backed wharf.

There is a *Loch Lomond* point marked on older charts of the South Coast.



The Loch Lomond. Enlarged from photo of Armstrong and Waters tug fleet. (Photo Western Mail)



Loch Lomond ends her days on the rocks at the Albany waterfront, in front of the Municipal Baths. (Photograph from Alluring Albany, 1912 reprinted (?) 1991)

¹ Sonny Armstrong pers comm. 7.2.1992.

² Albany Advertiser, January 20th, 1906.

Les Douglas writes :

‘The *Loch Lomond* on the rocks near the Albany Municipal Baths appears to be close to the jetty. Actually she is about 300ft to the west of the jetty on the sloping rock in front of Armstrong and Waters storage shed. She would have been placed here for dismantling as the photo shows the funnel and deck structure missing.

It was this small outcrop of rocks which can be seen close to the hull where I remember seeing her small boiler half submerged in the sand. This would have been about 1915.’

The *Albany Mail* for January 30th 1889 carries the following advertisement.

“The Steam lunch *Loch Lomond* runs regularly between the Jetty and the mail steamers when in port, and is open for charter for Picnics, Excursions and Fishing Parties. Orders for Thursdays and Saturday afternoons should be received on the day previous.

Vessels towed in or out of the harbour.

Moderate Charges.”

Alex Armstrong

Owner.

MARGARET**Wooden Sailing Ship, later coal hulk.**

O/N 101148

Built 1875 by Brun Horst of Dekke, Bergen.

Owner : McIlwraith, McEachern

Hulked at Sydney 1896 (*Seabreeze* 11. 1930)

Built 1875 at Bergen, Norway. Barque rigged 1143 tons.

1897 - 1900 - Wooden hull. 2 decks.

1218 tons. gross 1143 tons net. 201 ft long x 39. 2 ft x 23. 1.

Former name : built as *Mordstjernen*

Hulked at Albany 4/1/1901

Margaret 101148 4/1896. Sydney N S W.

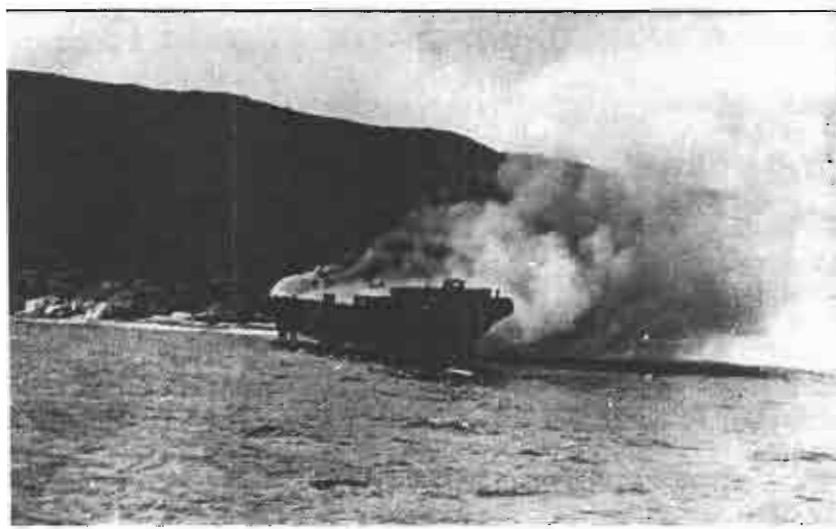
Elliptical stern. Carvel built. Billet head. Wooden hull.

Reg. closed 7.8.1945. Vessel condemned at Albany W. A.

Burnt at Swarbrick's Beach near Gull Rock. also the remains of the *Ben Dearg* are there.

Scuttled after W. W. II.¹

A big wooden vessel set on fire at Nanrup beach. Burnt to get the bolts. Burnt to the waterline, so not much left.



The Margaret is burnt at Salmon Beach, near Gull Rock. (Photo Richard McKenna)

¹ R. McKenna

MARIUS RICOUX

Steel Sailing Ship, later a coal hulk.

O/N 76139

Reg. No. 30/1911 at Port of Sydney, N. S. W.

Purchased from foreigners - French subjects.

Sailing hulk.

Built by Birrel Stenhouse & Co., Dumbarton, Scotland 5/1877

1 deck, 3 masts, no rig.

Counter stern. Clincher built. Clipper head. Iron framework and hull.

Dimensions : 198 9/10 ft x 32. 6/10 ft x 18. 5/10ft depth of hold.

Tons 892. 77 803. 34 tons net.

Owners 17/10/1911 McIlwraith's Melb. Vic.

reg. Note - closed 7/8/45 condemned and sunk at Albany. Registry closed 1945.

A.N.Z. reg. 1914

Liverpool 1877

Former names *RISING STAR* and *SOLLECITO* Signal letters SJFV

Rising Star was barque rigged Master H. H. Melrose

Registered at Mary Port

810 tons gross 835 tons net.

Dimensions ; 195. 9ft x 18. 5 ft x 10. 6 ft (Draught)

Lloyds reg. 1904/1905

Named *SOLLECITO* 1902 *SCIAFFINO* ex *RISING STAR*. 1 bulkhead, 1 deck.

Tons 870 Gross.

838 tons net. Owners C. S Solari.

Vachijghizola & Co. of Raggio.

195. 9ft x 32. 6 ft x 18. 5 ft (Depth of Hold)

Reg. Genoa. Italy

Quarterdeck 40 ft. Fo'cusle 21ft.

Moulded depth 19ft 9' Freeboard 3ft 6'

Owned McIlwraith, McEarchen, Albany.

Built as *RISING STAR*

Italian Name 1902 (*MARIUS RICOUX*)

1897 -1898 on Lloyds register

Pitsa & Co. Reg. Liverpool. Prior to being bought for hulking. Owned by M. Riccoux & Co.

Reg in Marsailles, France.

In Albany 1916 - 1918. Vertical stationary boiler.

Hulk keepers : Mr. W. Hayes.¹

Towed and sunk at Bald Head by Douglasses on the *Awhina*. Towline lost. Sunk off Bald Head the one hole blown in the middle hold. Covered the charge with sandbags when detonated. Still had masts and steering wheel.

Built 1877 (MAY) Hulked 1911.

¹ R. McKenna.

MARY

Small Motor Launch

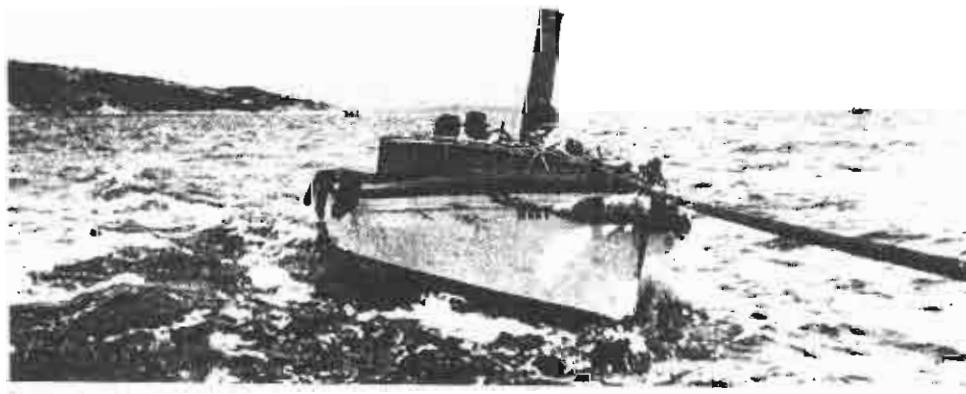
A small steam launch built sometime during the 1900s by Chippie Foresyth at the foot of the Albany town jetty. He also built the *Dorothy*, a small double ended launch. Originally owned by Armstrong and Waters with the *Dorothy*, and used to carry passengers. The *Dorothy* appears in the picture of the Armstrong and Waters fleet in 1903, (p. 45) giving some idea of when she was built. The *Mary* was purchased by the Douglas family in 1927 and used to take holiday makers up the Kalgan River to Hobson's tea rooms. Built of Kauri pine with the same type of engine as the *Alert* - a two cylinder one. She had a very nicely shaped long counter stern. Her funnel always remained in the Armstrong & Waters colours - yellow and black.

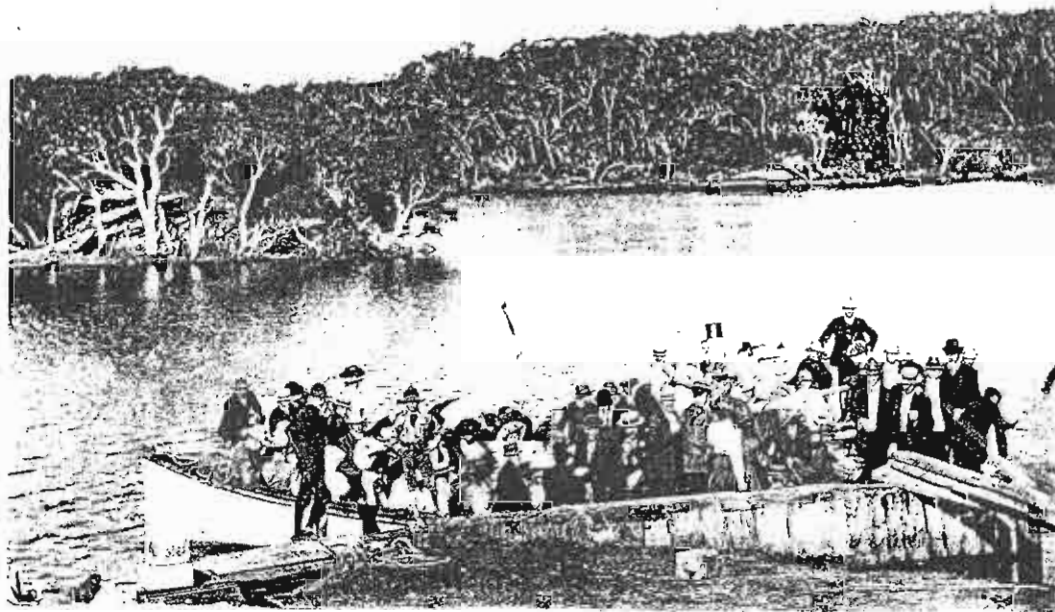
After the Douglases purchased the *Silver Star* she was used to take passengers to the tea rooms. If she had a large load of passengers, they would tow the *Mary* behind up the river.

The *Mary* was later sold and brought up to Fremantle, and may still be in use as Les Douglas believes he saw her on the Swan fairly recently, about 1966.



The Mary (top) as seen from the stern of the Awhina, (Photo Les Douglas) and (bottom) towed up the Kalgan behind the Silver Star. The person on board is Les Douglas. (Photo Albany Museum)





*Above: The Mary loaded with holidaymakers, behind another vessel. (Photo Les Douglas)
Below: Douglas' Landing, Kalgan River. From a postcard. (Photo Albany Museum)*



Douglas's Landing, Kalgan River, Albany, W.A.

PERSEVERANCE

This name appears to have been favoured by Captain William Douglas as it was used on three of his vessels.

The first *Perseverance* appears to have been a motor launch which he used for harbour work in competition with Alex Armstrong's *Loch Lomond*.

The second was a ketch sold in 1893, and the third a motor launch built in 1907. The fate of all of these vessels is unknown.

There is a cancelled entry in the Register of British Ships for Fremantle for 12th December 1881 for a vessel called *Little Perseverance* owned by William Douglas of Albany. The vessel was given an official No. of 75. 309 and recorded as a steam vessel of 13. 39 tons built by Kennedy & Son, Melbourne, Victoria, in 1881. It is recorded as a wooden open boat with one mast, carvel built, square sterned and lug rigged, with no head. Dimensions were 35ft by 8 ft with a hold depth of 4ft. The engine is recorded as two horsepower. The entry has been cancelled as "Not to be registered." This vessel's name must subsequently have been shortened to *Perseverance*.

The *West Australian* for May 31 1884 says:

"On 20th inst. the Hobart whaler *Derwent Hunter* killed a whale of the sperm species
On the following day the launches *Perseverance* and *Loch Lomond* were chartered to visit the vessel and were crowded with passengers eager to see the novel process of cutting up. Before reaching the whaler they were surprised to see the carcass of the whale drifting into Frenchman's Bay, nibbled by sharks."

On May 24th 1885 Captain Douglas in the *Perseverance* rescued a drowning sailor from HMS *Opal* during a storm in Albany Harbour. (See Appendix V.)

In July 1885 *Perseverance* and *Loch Lomond* were used to tow the schooner *Walter and Mary* when it laid the telephone cable from Breaksea Island to Albany.¹

The *Albany Mail* for Wednesday Feb 11, 1888 carries the following advertisement :

"The Fast and Favourite steam launch PERSEVERANCE Plies between the Jetty and the Mail Steamers when at anchor, and is available for charter for Picnics, Excursions and Fishing Parties. Vessels towed in and out of harbour.

CHARGES MODERATE

Passengers' luggage, including travellers' samples. & c. taken care of and stored free of charge.

W. DOUGLAS
Owner"

The *Albany Mail* for June 23rd 1888 states :

"During the heavy weather on Sunday last, Mr. Douglas' small steam launch parted from her moorings and went ashore."

¹ Garden: *Southern Haven* p27

The fact that the last reference to the steam launch *Perseverance* appears in 1888, and the fact that William Douglas had another vessel of that name in 1890 suggests that he must have disposed of the first between these dates. She may have been badly damaged when driven ashore, and thereafter sold or scrapped.

The *Australian Advertiser* for October 24th 1890 states that :

“The Ketch *Perseverance* had a trial trip in the harbour this morning and behaved herself well.”

Suggesting that this vessel was built in Albany in 1890.

The *Australian Advertiser* for November 5 1890 refers to to a sealing party with William Douglas which left in the ketch *Perseverance* two or three weeks ago for the islands between Albany and Eucla. However, after successfully taking 69 seals in the first four or five days, a Mr. John Hayes, one of the party, was accidentally shot dead, the expedition returning with his body.

The *West Australian* for 7/1/1891 records the ketch *Perseverance* arriving at Albany from Esperance.

The *Australian Advertiser* for 1/3/93 says under Esperance Bay news:

“Hannet Bros. ketch The *Perseverance* purchased from Mr. W. Douglas appears to be a good and strong sea boat. Intended for working the Eastern group of islands, they having been leased by Messrs Hannett They intend to stock them with sheep in the winter. I expect sealing will be carried on by them.

PERSEVERANCE

Motor launch built by Captain William Douglas and his sons, on the bank of the Kalgan River at “Killarney.”

William was living there at the time - the year was 1906.

The launch was propelled by a 6 h. p. “Union” engine, naphtha burning and in March 1907 was registered and licensed to carry 40 passengers in the Port of Albany.

The site where the launch was built is on the up river side of the creek. Just past the landing stage at “Killarney”.

When I was a boy the site was clearly visible and my Father, Clem Douglas, often said “That’s where we built the *Perseverance*”

The photo shows Captain William Douglas standing at the stern, and two of his sons at the bow, near the winch.¹

A licence (No. 0158) dated 13. 3. 1907 exists for the M. L. *Perseverance*, of 5 tons, which was licensed to carry not more than 40 passengers, inclusive of crew. A certificate for machinery gives the Official Registered No. as 0993 and refers to it as Kaphra 6 hp. (11th Jan 1907)

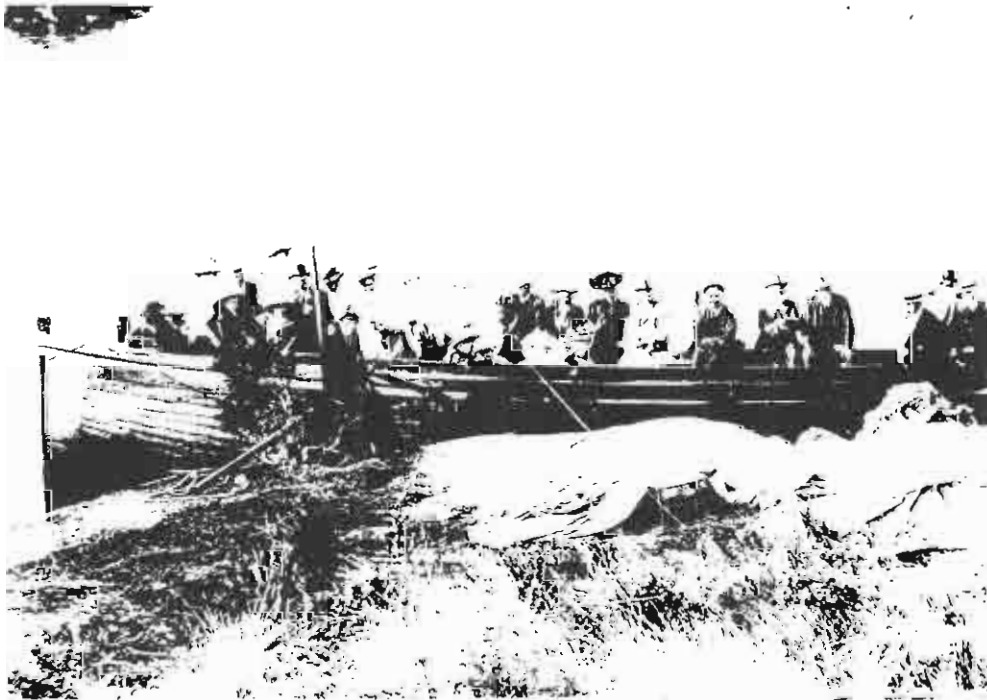
Les Douglas never knew what happened to the *Perseverance*.

Les Douglas remembers his grandfather referring to the motor launch as *Perseverance II*.

¹ Letter of Les Douglas to Curator of Fremantle Maritime Museum 8.1.1991



*Above : The launch Perseverance II on the bank of the Kalgan river. Captain Douglas is on the left with three of his sons, right.
Below : The Perseverance loaded with day trippers, c.1900s. (Photo Albany Museum)*



RIP**Wooden Schooner**

The Schooner *Rip* was built to order in New Brunswick, U.S.A., as a pilot schooner and is said to have been a sister ship to the Schooner *America* which won the first America's Cup. The *Rip* arrived in Port Philip on the 2nd may 1860. She was an exceptionally good sailer, and served as a pilot schooner until an accident occured on 15th July 1873, when she almost capsized and several people were drowned. After she was brought to Albany she was purchased by Armstrong and Waters who took her to Frenchman Bay to careen her to check her condition as she had a worm - eaten keel and garboards. Why Frenchman Bay was chosen for this purpose is not known, since Oyster Harbour would have been a far more suitable location. Apparently on carrening her she was found to be in such poor condition that the owners attempted to burn her. Only the seaward side burned, leaving her lying broadside on to the beach canted toward the sea at a steep angle. She then went rapidly to pieces. Howard Hartman (b. 1902) recalls fishing off her as a child, and said that her deck planking hung in long streamers that went up and down with the waves. Some of it was used at their camp, presumably as firewood. She was only accessible at low tide, with sweep and John Dory swimming about inside.¹

See map P.19

¹ Letter of Howard hartman 1975

RUNNYMEDE

Wooden Barque, Whaler.

A 284 ton wooden barque built in Hobart, Tasmania, in 1849 by John Watson for Askin Morrison. Her length was 103ft 6" and her width 23ft 2". She was originally owned by Askin Morrison, a Hobart merchant, and was named after Morrison's estate on the east coast of Tasmania. Later (prior to 1874) bought by James Bayley who commanded the vessel during much of her 32 years service as a whaler operating out of Hobart. She was considered for most of her life to be a lucky and profit making ship. On one voyage her crew captured three whales at one time. The Hobart Town newspaper of July 30th 1866 reported the arrival of the *Runnymede* in command of Captain Bayley with 87 tons of sperm oil after being out 17 months, a cargo worth 5,000 pounds. She made a fortune for her owners, the Bayley brothers, whose red grid-iron flag she flew for years.

During the voyage the Captain when looking out for whales fell 90 feet from the main top-gallant yard, striking the lee braces and going overboard; the second mate, a coloured man named John Bull, instantly dived in after him and brought him back safely. Bull was presented in Hobart with a gold watch in recognition of his bravery.

On a subsequent voyage the ship was out 18 months without striking a whale, and the Captain refused to open the slop chest to serve out new clothing, as the men had no money due to them and would not be able to pay their debts when the ship reached port. As a result the crew became afflicted with lice. One of them composed a verse which was sung lustily in the inns and streets of Hobart :-

"Shout boys, hurrah boys.
We welcome it - Godspeed!
We've had 18 months starvation
In the lousy *Runnymede*."

William Lanne, known as King Billy, the last male aborigine of Van Diemen's Land, made his last voyage as a whaler in the *Runnymede*, being paid off in 1869, just before his death.¹

Some confusion exists over the circumstances of her wrecking. According to the Hobart *Mercury* of January 27th 1882, the *Runnymede* was driven ashore and wrecked in Frenchmans Bay during a gale on 21st December 1881, while stopping for water, despite the fact that she had three anchors set. The vessel was at this time owned by Bayley and McGregor, and commanded by Captain J.B. Travis. The *Runnymede* was driven up alongside the wreck of the *Fanny Nicholson* at Goode Beach

The Hobart *Mercury* of unknown date reports the wreck as being above high water mark, that it was completely stripped and the remaining cargo of barrels of whale oil removed by the Captain of the *Emily Douglas*.

Shortly afterwards she was bought by a Mr. Gillam, and according to the *West Australian* of 5th May 1882 she was pumped out, the leaks repaired, and she was floated off. The *Inquirer* of 24th May 1882 states that she was used as a coal hulk and then returned to Frenchman's Bay and burnt.²

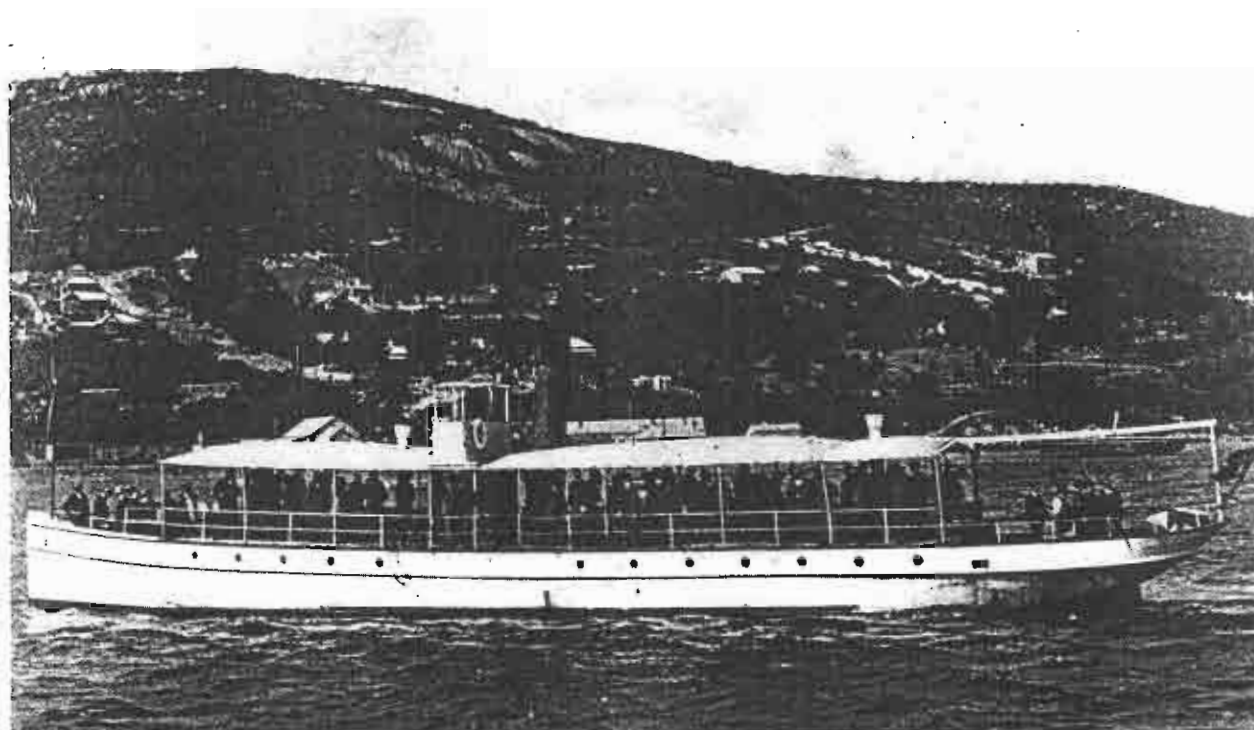
The remains of the *Runnymede*, along with that of the *Fanny Nicholson*, are exposed for about two days a year. H. Hartman records seeing them during exceptional low tides during the 1900s, and that there used to be a steel rudder post sticking out of the water at all times, and the remains of two vessels, one wood and one iron were exposed. The wooden one is believed to be the *Runnymede*, the iron one the *Fanny Nicholson*. He cut timbers from the wooden wreck, which he thinks was Oregon pine. The remains were exposed in the 1960s, and again in 1984, when they were photographed. According to a local resident they are exposed for a few days each year. The *Fanny Nicholson* is described as being merely iron plates (bottom of the hull) exposed in the sand. According to Valerie Milne of the Albany Museum there is a third wreck beyond the other two.

¹ This and the foregoing information on the *Runnymede* is from *Whale Ships and Whaling*, in M.A. File 195/72/1.

² From *The Wrecks of Frenchman Bay*, W.A. Maritime Museum, 1990. (Unpublished)

A local resident stated that after a heavy storm some years ago, a number of clay pipes were washed ashore from the *Runnymede*, some broken some as new. sailors from the *Runnymede* are supposed to have built a camp in the sand dunes while salvaging material from the wreck. Howard Hartman describes finding fireplaces and other odds and ends, brass from doors, etc, in this area in the late 1900s.

See map P. 19



*"Silver Star had the trimmest lines of any boat on the river."¹
Silver Star after her arrival in Albany about 1912. The beached tug Jessie can be seen on the right. (Photo Les Douglas)*

SILVER STAR

Steam Ship, River Boat

O/N 120 009.

Reg 7/1906 - 7/5/1906.

Steamship single screw.

Built Perth 1905 by Messrs Simpson and Strickland of Devonport, England (Prefabricated).

1 deck counter stern. Carvel built.

Straight stem Wooden Hull with steel topsides 4 bulkheads.

92. 251 x 16. 33 x 8. 5 ft (9. 25 ft molded) Overall length 104 ft. Beam 16.33. Draught when loaded 7ft, draught when light, 4ft 9 in. Hold capacity 4,500.

96. 42 tons gross x 66. 53 tons net.

Machinery 1 triple expansion (T/E) British built in 1900 by the builders.

3 cylinder 7" 12" x 18" x 9" 51 nominal horsepower. Ten knots.

1 boiler built 1903 of steel. Builder unknown 170 lbs per square inch.

L. engine room 20.25 ft.

1st owners London & W. A. Investment Company Ltd of London and Perth.

B/S 31/5/1910 to A. Armstrong & G. Waters, ship owners of Albany. Mortgage.

Reg. 18/3/27. - 64 shares

B/S Armstrong & Waters 2/3/1927 to E. McGregor Christie, Secretary of Albany.

B/S 21/4/33 Clemence Douglas & A. Armstrong trading as Albany tug owners.

Re-registered on same on 3/7/35 in name of Albany Tug Co.

¹¹ Murray, K.O. *From Oar to Diesel on the Swan*. W.A. Historical Society 1949 p.64

B/S 9/7/35 to Clem Douglas Master Mariner of Albany.
 Again 9/3/35 to Cossack Lightering and Trading Ltd. of William St. Perth Merchants.
 Mortgage 500 pounds Clem Douglas 36.
 Registry Closed 27/10/42 except mortgage.
 Vessel sold as wreck. ¹



An early photograph of the Siver Star on the Kalgan River near the old hump-backed Canning Bridge. (Photo Les Douglas)

The suggestion is that she was pre-fabricated, and brought out from England in sections.

[The *Silver Star* had a wooden hull, carvel built with steel topsides and could do more the eight knots. Well decked fore and aft.]²

She was built at Coffee Point near Canning Bridge, now the site of the South Perth Yacht Club. The site was owned by the South Perth Land Company. She was built in 1905 according to Register of British Ships for Fremantle. Her engines were older, dating from 1901, her boiler from 1903.

Les Douglas says that he had heard Alex Armstrong tell him that the *Silver Star*'s engines were on display and running at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 or thereabouts, and that the *Silver Star*'s engines were "the prettiest he had ever seen."

"Beautiful little engines with 360 revs on a 9" stroke. Fairly fast for a steam engine on such a short stroke."

The *Silver Star*'s career, first as a plush river ferry, in Perth then as a passenger transport at Albany and finally as a wool carrying cargo vessel at Cossack, over a period of almost thirty years, makes an interesting account of the life of a coastal vessel. Owing to the many photographs, it is particularly well documented.

The *Silver Star* was first operated as a ferry on the Swan River by The Melville Water Park Estate Co. Ltd, which had bought large tracts of country in the Melville District and started a ferry service with headquarters at Coffee Point. The company's ferries plied between the headquarters, Applecross, Canning bridge and Perth, giving a regular service to those settling on the estate.³

There were a lot of ferries on the Swan River at this time, and the *Silver Star* was similar to the *Manx Fairy*, as they both possessed long, curved stems.

According to K.O. Murray :

"The *Silver Star* had the trimmest lines of any boat on the river."⁴

¹ R. McKenna

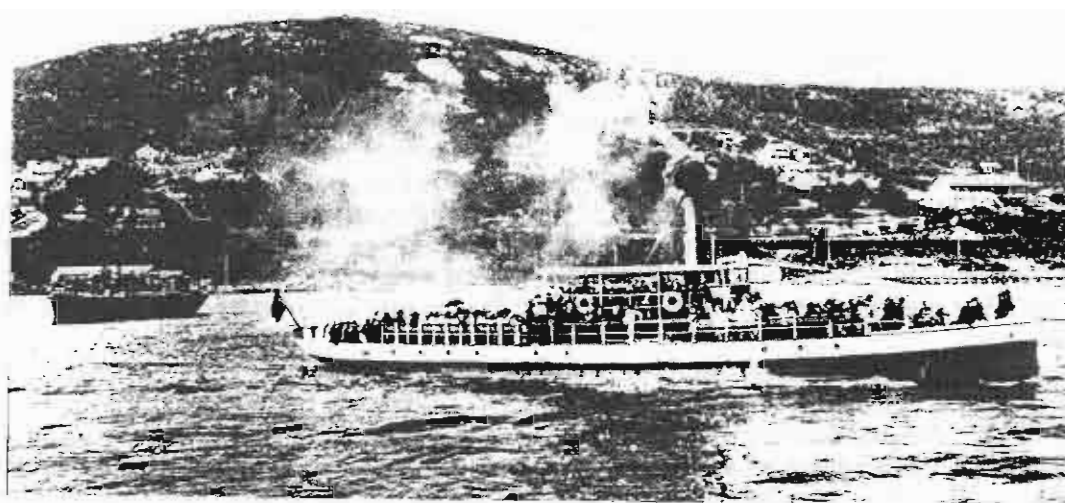
² LD

³ Murray, K.O. *From Oar to Diesel on the Swan* p.64

⁴ Ibid p.65

With the advent of better roads and faster road transport, the Melville Company's ferry service was closed down in 1909 and the *Silver Star* sold to Armstrong & Waters.¹ The *Silver Star* served at Albany as a ferry, and in other capacities, from 1910 until 1934. For the greater part of this period she was owned by Armstrong and Waters, and then by Clem Douglas and the Albany Tug Company.

Silver Star came to Albany in 1910. Les Douglas has heard that she may have been lying over at Canning Bridge for a couple of years with water in her, but thinks this is unlikely as she was a fairly new vessel at the time, when Armstrong and Waters bought her.



The Silver Star about 1920, working as a ferry in Albany. The Camel is on the left. Originally a postcard. (Photo Eric Douglas)

The *Silver Star* was only used as a ferry in summer. The only cruises in summer were up the Kalgan river twice a week, and for fishing trips to Bremer Bay, and Sunday afternoon cruises and Lodge cruises. The *Silver Star* also did round trips to Rabbit Island and Moonlight cruises with a jazz band and dancing, to Middleton beach jetty and occasionally to Emu Point. In addition to ferry duties she also made excursions to Frenchman's Bay, Little Grove and other popular picnic areas. The flag she is shown as flying in the photographs is not a house flag but the flag of whatever club was being carried. She was also used for Sunday School picnics for fishing trips to Bremer Bay with the *Awhina* on long weekends.



Silver Star on an excursion to Frenchman Bay. (Photo Les Douglas)

¹ Ibid Ps. 64, - 66

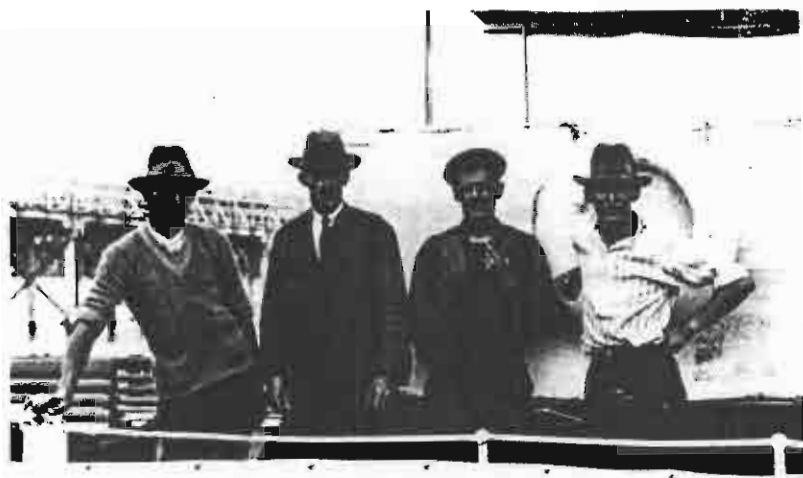
In 1916 she was taken over to Esperance to assist in refloating the *Dunster Castle* but owing to the rough seas had repeatedly to run for cover in the cove.

During this time the *Silver Star* was also used by the government to relieve Ravensthorpe, which had run out of food supplies. Owing to the rough seas the *Silver Star* proved totally unsuited to the journey and had to shelter at Doubtful Island. (see Appendix XIII)

The *Silver Star* never had much superstructure originally. The deck awnings were not used for long owing to the winds at Albany, and the frames supporting them were removed in about 1920 when the boiler was replaced with the *Bruce's*. There was an engine room covering steel plate some two feet high. When *The Bruce's* boiler was put in the engine room covering was stripped off and not replaced because the boiler was too big and the deck had to be cut back on each side. The cover lay on the rock at Armstrong and Waters shed for many years. It was replaced with a wooden cover. The old boiler did not last long after it was abandoned and rusted away 12 or 13 years after it came out of the *Silver Star*. It used to carry 170 lbs of steam pressure but with *The Bruce's* boiler the *Silver Star* only had 120 lbs.

When she was purchased by Les Douglas' father the funnel was cut down and telescoped to allow the *Star* to pass under the lower Kalgan bridge. This would have been in 1928. The lower Kalgan River was at its shallowest at the start of the summer season, and it was always necessary to clear some of the mud. They made a heavy plow from an old steel girder and towed it behind the *Star* up and down, thereby making a channel for the *Star's* keel to go into. On a clear day, standing on the bridge, you could see the line where the *Star's* keel cut through the mud.

A photograph shows the *Silver Star* with her funnel down approaching Kalgan bridge. When the *Silver Star's* funnel was telescoped her funnel (*The Bruce's* funnel) was cut off level with the top of the roof and another light funnel was made and fitted outside the existing funnel so that it could be pulled down around it. It was bolted to a pulley with wires going down and had a windlass. Who ever was firing it would pull it and the funnel went down outside the other funnel.

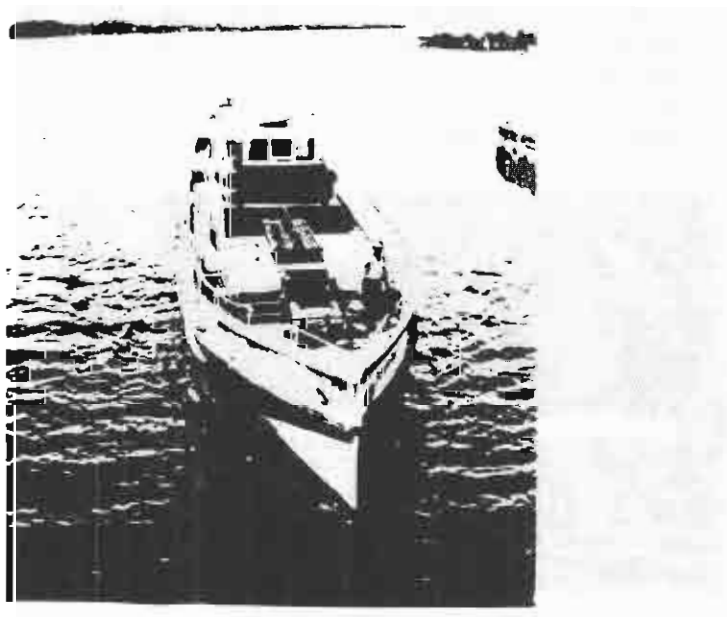


Above : Crew of the *Silver Star* taken at the lower Kalgan Bridge during the boating of the material to rebuild the entire bridge. (1929) From left to right : Frank Kalahan (Deckhand, Fireman), Clem Douglas (Master) Alex Armstrong (Engineer) Les Douglas (Relief Engineer).

The piles were too long to go on deck so three piles each side of the *Silver Star* were fastened by chain and rope. Deck planking and all of the material was carried on deck. The piles were dropped into the water and dragged onto high land by a crab winch set up at the foot of the jetty. Other timber was loaded onto a jetty trolley. All this work was carried out by hand.



Silver Star at the lower Kalgan; as she approaches her funnel retracts allowing her to pass under the bridge. (Photos Les Douglas)



A view from the bridge showing Silver Star approaching with her funnel down. (Photo Eric Douglas)

Les Douglas writes :

The *Silver Star* was composite built with steel frames, wooden planking and steel topside. She was fastened with two and a half inch x 1/2 brass bolts, the same as the *Grace Darling* except the *Grace* did not have steel topsides. The *Star's* aperture was brass cast in one piece. The rudder and rudder stock were also cast in one piece.

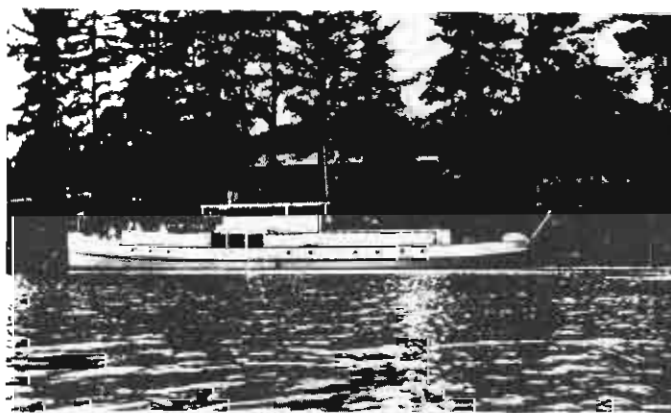
The Gentleman's Cabin was in the front, but no accommodation for the crew. The Ladies (passengers) Cabin was aft and the seating along each side and down the centre was upholstered in green plush velvet and all buttoned. The walls above the back of the seating were paneled and decorated and painted in champagne colour, trimmed with gold and silver picture frame ornate timber. Each panel could be lifted out to get to the skin of the vessel for painting. The ceiling was of stamped metal and all deck head beams were decorated to resemble an ornate picture frame.

A broad staircase led down from the deck with a polished brass rail on each side. I still have the rails which were removed when the cabin was turned into a cargo hold. Along each stair was a polished brass plate. At the bottom of the staircase you turned aft and one side was a toilet and the other side was the ladies' vanity room with a large mirror, one on each side, built in a dressing table and fold down padded seat.

The Men's cabin forward was plain compared to the ladies. It had a similar staircase leading down. Black leather upholstery packed with horse hair and buttoned. The paneling and ceiling was less ornate but still very nice.

On the Port side originally was a small bar, while on the Swan River the *Star* had a Packet Licence (that is a liquor licence). But this was removed sometime after Armstrong and Waters brought the vessel to Albany.

There would have been no finer ferry (even to this day) ever on the Swan River so elaborately fitted out or with such graceful lines. In my opinion the *Silver Star* should never have left the Swan River. There must have been a place there somewhere for her. She was virtually wasted in Albany, only used for three months every summer.



Silver Star on the Kalgan River (Photo Les Douglas)

The *Silver Star* was a river steamer and used to roll around.¹

According to Les Douglas the *Silver Star* had no stabilizers except one on the waterline.

Les Douglas does say that Armstrong and Waters had cemented the *Silver Star* across the bottom, presumably to increase her stability. She was lightly constructed, and the cement came up to the bilge, with a central gutter left so that water could run to the pumps. He thought that as a result of this the bottom of the vessel had probably rusted, the frames becoming very corroded.

There were bags of replacement parts in the forepeak when the *Silver Star* was purchased from Armstrong and Waters, although they never used any of them.

Once a year before the season started the *Silver Star* used to be made ready for the summer by being scraped. The crew would wait for a full moon and high tide and then take her in up the beach as far as they could. They then let her lie full length along the sand bar. She would then be scraped down on one side, preferably all on the same day, and quickly given a coat of anti-foulant. The other side would then be done in similar manner. They also removed the propeller and drew the shaft once every three years when the inspector came down and issued certificates.

The *Silver Star* operated as a ferry and as a cargo vessel, although she never carried fruit. The crew slept on her when she went fishing off Cheynes beach during the depression.

She was in service as a ferry at Albany until 1934 when there was a dissolution of partnership, and his father Clem Douglas took the *Awhina*, *Silver Star* and *Georgic*.



Silver Star leaves the jetty at Albany. (Photo Les Douglas)

Les Douglas writes :

“Albany 1931.

Things were bad in Albany. It was the Depression years of the 30s. Few ships were calling at the Port.

Clem Douglas [His father and part-owner of the *Silver Star*] decided to have a go at the smoked fishing business, using the *Silver Star* as a fishing vessel and smoke house. Boans store in Perth assured him they could handle all the fish caught.

So the passenger deck above the engine room was closed in using canvas, and smoke racks were built on each side leaving a central passage to facilitate easy hanging of the fish on the racks. These were made from 3/8 steel rods. An old 40 gallon oil drum on the deck served as the smolking unit. Saw dust came from Millars Timber Mill. It all worked very well. A long net was made and dyed with tanning bark This was done on the beach like all the fisherman did. The bark was boiled in a big drum.

Clem Douglas got plenty of fish - Two Peoples Bay, Cheynes Beach and Wychiniap. He even took the *Star* into Wychiniap which was a very daring

¹ Roy MaCarthy pers. comm.

thing to do if you have ever been there. You would not think the *Star* would go in as she was 100 ft long.

After a few months Boans could not handle the fish that Clem sent them. Just another disappointment. But Clem was used to such things - after all it was the Great Depression."

After the Great Depression there was no more work for her in Albany and so she went to Cossack. There was no deep water port, and the *Silver Star* was wanted for this work because of her shallow draught.

He sold the *Silver Star* to The Cossack Lightering and Trading Co. Ltd. for use as a cargo vessel.

Les Douglas continues :

"1935. Clem sold the *Star* to Cossack Lightering Coy for five hundred pounds and part of the deal was to deliver the ship to Fremantle.

The *Silver Star* was prepared for the trip to Fremantle. All the port holes were boarded up. The run between Albany and Cape Leeuwin, 180 miles, is at the best of times, a nasty stretch of water. No safe shelter until you get into Flinders Bay and the Bay only from NW, West and Sou Westerly winds. Two masts were fitted. The masts were originally oregon derricks from the old coal hulk *Copeland* that Clem had towed out to False Island off Cape Vancouver and sunk in 1928. These derricks had been pared down to make good masts. Two sets of were purchased. The sails were obtained from a lugger.

The masts and sails that had been purchased for the smoked fishing venture were again fitted for the trip and were sold to Cossack Lighter Coy. as they required them for the trip from Fremantle to Cossack.

The *Silver Star* left on 4th June 1935.

Crew : Clem Douglas - Captain
 Les Douglas - Engineer
 Frank Cooper - Fireman and Relief Engineer
 Bill Ralph - Deckhand and relief Helmsman.

We left Albany just after midnight. The following day the wind came in from the west, and by the afternoon we were pushing into a head sea and the wind freshening and veering to the south-west. We arrived at Flinders Bay at 9 pm and dropped anchor. Wind strong and south westerly. We sheltered in the bay for four days, and on the morning of the fifth day the wind had gone down but there was still a big sea.

Father decided to go on, after getting out from the shelter of the bay we found that the seas were running too high, and that it would be unwise to continue. So we waited for a smooth patch, turned around and came back to the shelter of the bay, and stayed in the bay that night. The following morning we set out again. There was still a big sea running but no wind. The *Star* rolled quite a bit going around the Leeuwin.

But once we got clear and set the two sails, and the wind and the sea on our quarter. I have never seen the *Star* go so fast. The following morning we had to slow down for daylight in order to come through the south passage. We made Fremantle at midday."

At Fremantle the *Silver Star* was slipped on Brown's Slip North Fremantle, up river past the traffic bridge, and converted to handle cargo. This involved cutting the fore and aft cabin deck out to make cargo holds, and installing steam winches fore and aft and derricks. The engines and all the machinery was given a complete overhaul.



*Silver Star leaves Albany for Fremantle. Awhina can be seen on the right
(Photos Les Douglas)*



Silver Star on the slip at Fremantle



Silver Star's Stern



Silver Star on the slip at Fremantle. She returned in a very different condition to that in which she left twenty-five years before. (Photo Les Douglas)



FREMANTLE TO COSSACK

Early August with alterations completed we were ready to sail north to Cossack. The shipwrights had done a good job, the *Star* had been converted from a harbour ferry to a cargo vessel. The fore and aft deck above the cabins were cut out and a hatch about 8 x 12 created.

The top deck above the engine and boiler room had been fitted with 6 bunks, and a small stove for cooking. Very rough accommodation by today's standards. But not bad for those days. The *Star* was never meant to be at sea over night, except for the trip up, and a couple of trips to Onslow and back. Cargo for "Mauds Landing", Onslow and Cossack was loaded.

A plentiful supply of bagged coal was on deck, as no coal was available until Cossack. All bagged coal was shipped up from Fremantle, by the Blue Funnel ships MV *Gorgon* and *Centaur*, and State Ship *Koolinda*. These ships made regular calls with general cargo, and loaded wool and bagged blue asbestos from Whitnoom. The asbestos was taken to Singapore by the Blue Funnel ships, and every now and again on their way from Singapore to Fremantle they would call into Cossack and discharge several thousand cases of petrol. I have a photo of a large stack on Cossack wharf.

All Cossack Lighter Co. vessels would be used on these occasions, *Silver Star*, *Nicol Bay*, *Roselle* and *Uribes*. These vessels would anchor about a mile out from Jarman Island.

We sailed from Fremantle on 15th August 1935, we had loaded our cargo and were berthed alongside one of the harbour dredges, moored on Victoria Quay, close to the railway jetty. The weather was bad, north westerly gales, so we were lying there out of the way waiting for a break in the weather.

After 3 - 4 days the weather cleared, Captain Patterson decided it was time to sail, although there was a big sea running. So he cast off, it was 5.00 am, still dark. The tide was running in strongly, and he let the *Star's* head drift off towards the railway bridge before he rang down for full steam ahead. It was too late; he did not know that there was a sand bank just near the bridge. He drove her hard onto it, it was almost a full tide and we were stuck fast. The tug *Wyola*, Captain Carl Douglas, had just berthed a ship and was returning to the wharf, saw our plight and pulled us off.

After a consultation between Patterson, myself and the owners, it was decided that we would not sail that day, but wait, and that I should watch the bilges closely to see if we were making any water. We were lucky the *Star* was not making any water, so apparently no serious damage to the hull. The Company was not very pleased with the delay, we were wanted in Cossack.

We sailed next morning, although the weather was not looking the best. At 11 o'clock, and about 20 miles north of Rottneest, the wind was blowing strongly from N.West and the seas rising, we were making heavy weather of it.

We did not have a very good crew, apart from Frank Cooper, my fireman and relief engineer, all the others were untried. My other fireman was a Captain Courthope, a deep sea man. A brother of Captain Courthope, one of the

owners of the Company, who was at that time working in the Fremantle Pilot Service (his brother) had never lifted a coal shovel in his life (but out of work). We were still feeling the effects of the depression.

Captain Patterson would not have been on the *Star* if he could have got a deep sea ship. Two other seamen, one an elderly fellow who Patterson had picked up because he said he knew the coast between Fremantle and Carnarvon. The other sailor did not prove to be much good, 6 of us in all. Patterson had selected this elderly chap, his first name was Jack, I can't remember his surname. Paterson had the idea of pushing on, and if the weather worsened, of sheltering in Jurien Bay. The weather was getting worse, and Patterson was doubtful of Jack's knowledge of the coast, and his ability to show us the way into Jurien Bay if it became necessary.

We were all strangers on this part of the coast. After about another hour's steaming, we were shipping a bit of water, the engines had to be slowed down, and we were not making any headway. My fireman, Captain Courthope, was sick, and Patterson was getting anxious. He wasn't used to this sort of weather in a small river boat.

He called me through the speaking tube to come up, he had just made a pot of tea. He said, "Douglas, what do you think of the weather?" I said "I don't like the look of it." His reply was "Neither do I. The glass is still going down." Referring to the barometer. "I have decided to run back to Fremantle." That was the best decision Patterson ever made, because it blew a gale that night. Had he gone on into the weather that night, I doubt I would be writing these memories. Four days later we sailed out from Fremantle, and had a good run up to Shark Bay.

We entered Shark Bay through the South Passage. Going through the bay we had to stop the engines many times, because the bay for miles was full of whales, and they didn't seem to be in any hurry, just playing around. We had to pick our way through, sometimes they would be right alongside and underneath, there were a lot of them, hundreds of them, all going the same way as we were : north.

We started having trouble keeping a full head of steam. Original steam pressure was 170 psi, when *The Bruce's* boiler was installed, it was dropped to 120 psi. The engines were designed to operate at 170 psi. We were having trouble to maintain 80 - 90 pounds of steam pressure. I discovered the trouble. Captain Courthorpe the fireman had thrown so much coal into the furnace that he'd filled the back end right up to the bridge. "The bridge" is the row of firebricks built up across the back of the firebars, to a height of about 12". Coal would not burn in the back end, and we could not rake it out through the small hole at the back of the ash pit, it was only meant to get the fine ash out. We decided to go into Carnarvon, stop there overnight and fix it. There was only one way to get it out, and that meant drawing the fire, letting the steam run down and waiting for the boiler to cool down a bit. Covering the hot fire bars with wet bags and crawling into the furnace and taking it out by hand. It would still be very hot to handle. Until this was done we could not increase the pressure. This could have been done at sea in an emergency, or we could have anchored in the bay, but Carnarvon wasn't out of our way.

We arrived Carnarvon one day and sailed the next.

We carried stores for "Mauds Landing" about 1/2 way between Carnarvon and Onslow near Coral Bay. Not clearly marked, especially for strangers, the skipper couldn't find it. All we could see was a long beach, no landing, no

marks or posts, no signs of life of any kind. We were steaming slowly along looking through the glasses. After about an hour, he decided to put the stores ashore on the beach. This was done using the *Star's* dinghy. I often wondered what happened to the stores. Patterson did, however, ring the station owners from Onslow.

Next stop Onslow.

There was only a short section of the long jetty standing about 200 ft. The rest of it had been blown away in a cyclone 6 months before.

I remember reading about the new jetty at Onslow some years before, the old wooden one had been blown away. The new one had been built of concrete and at the time of building it was said to be cyclone proof. However, the first big blow proved them all wrong.

Only one day in Onslow, sailed the same evening. Up through the Mary Ann Passage. I have never seen so many lights, lots of islands and lots of lights. In the early days many small ships were lost around this part of the coast. The passage gets its name from one *Mary Ann* sunk nearby.

There is a lot of magnetic disturbance as you get closer to Cossack. Being close in shore the compass can become unreliable due to the large amount of iron ore on the mainland, and apparently extending to the sea bed. Therefore, so many lights are needed which the early navigators never had. We arrived in Cossack the following evening.

About 12 days Fremantle to Cossack, I can't remember exactly.

I did keep a log book for the entire period, which was kept in duplicate. And a weekly report posted to head office in Perth. Office got the top copy, I kept the book which I had until a couple of years ago. I still think its around somewhere, and hope to come across it any day."

At Cossack the *Silver Star* was used as a powered lighter to carry wool bales out to waiting cargo vessels.

Les Douglas says :

"When the *Silver Star* was loading wool along side the wharf in Cossack, the engine room temperature often reached 150 degrees farenheit. The boiler backed to within about 5 ft of the engine (there was no bulkhead). It was not very heavily lagged and so gave off a lot heat. When *The Bruce's* boiler was installed no provision was made for ventilators in the engine room, only two in the boiler room. There were a couple of port holes in the engine room casing. While in Albany this was quite all right, the weather was cool, and mostly plenty of breeze, whereas in Cossack summer temperature was always over 100.

Working in the engine room I found one never need to wear more than a pair of shorts and long leather gloves. You could not touch any of the machinery - itwas all too hot. And then you did not stay down there any longer than was necessary. Once you left the wharf it wasn't so bad, you generally got a little breeze."

While the *Silver Star* was at Cossack, she was loaded with wool bales while the tide was out and she was sitting on the bottom. She was overloaded. The Skipper was the same Captain Patterson. He ignored Les Douglas' warning that the vessel was overloaded, and they left the wharf while the tide was coming in. Eight or twelve lengths from the wharf the keel started to smell the bottom of the creek. The *Silver Star* lay broadside on to the tide and tipped the wool bales off. They floated up the creek and had to be picked up later and went on the next ship. When she rolled a bale dropped into the mouth of the engine room door, blocking it completely, and a deckhand called Cooper pushed it away. The *Silver Star* had to return to the wharf. The basis of the problem was that she was loaded when sitting on the bottom, not when afloat.

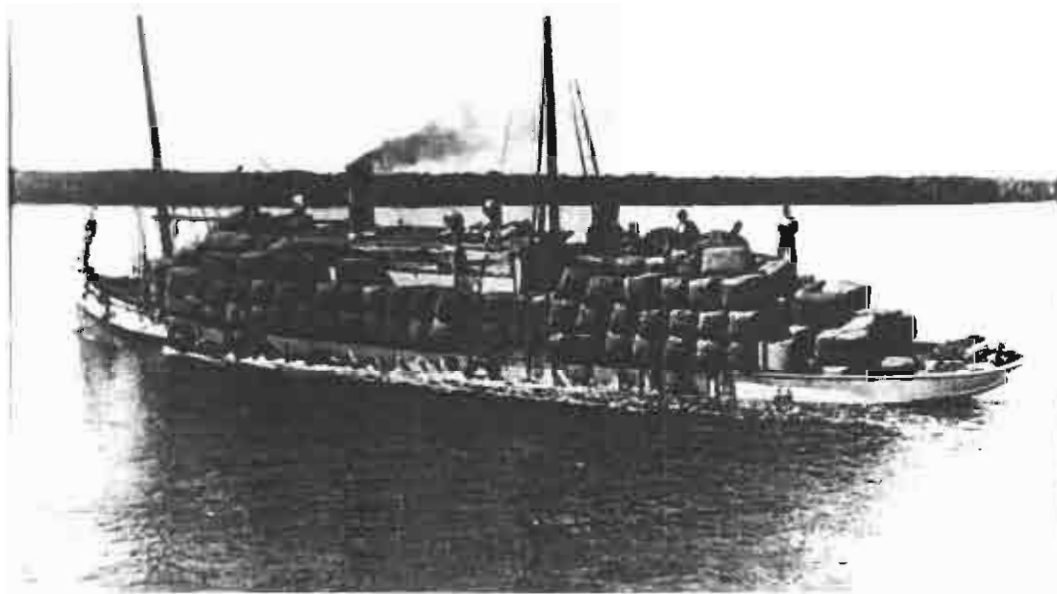
Les Douglas writes of this :

“When they left the wharf, the tide was running in strongly, and there was not enough water under the keel. He could not get The *Star* to answer to the helm, we were going sideways. Just out from the wharf was a small outcrop of rock. The keel fouled and the *Star* heeled right over broadside to the strong current. Off went half the deck load. We straightened up the load and went out to the waiting ship. After unloading we came back and picked up the rest of the wool, which had floated up the creek, among the mangoes.

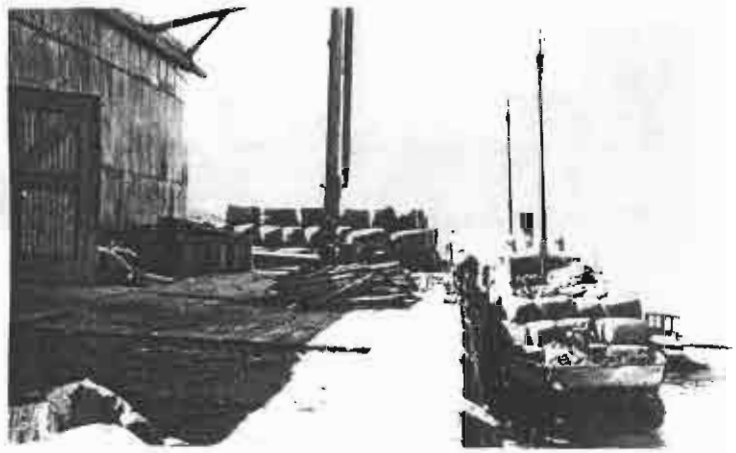
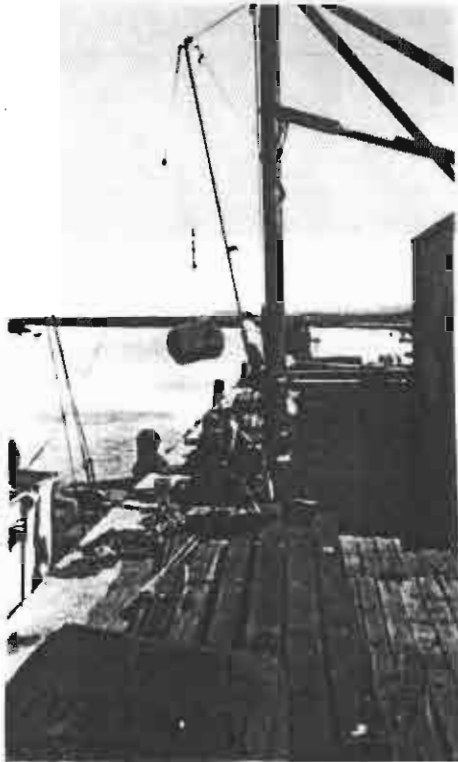
You may wonder how I came to have these photos. Well, I wanted to have some evidence of how overloaded the vessel was, because even if we cleared the creek, we were in for trouble as soon as we cleared Jarman Island and got into open water. It could also prove dangerous getting alongside the MV *Koolina* with a bit of wind on top of the swell.

So I gave my camera to the wharfinger and asked him to oblige. Fortunately we never got out into open water and all the action happened in the creek.”

Silver Star carrying wool at Cossack. The vessel has been so heavily loaded that the water is almost on a level with her deck. (Photo Les Douglas)



Silver Star loading wool at Cossack, and along side a ship. (Photos Les Douglas)





Silver Star loads wool at Cossack

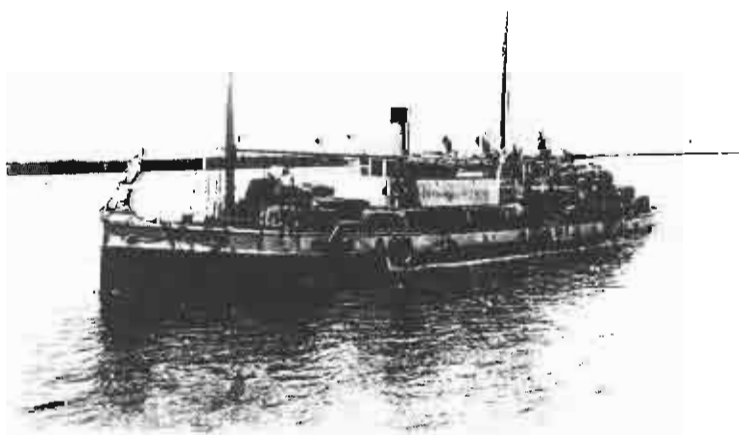


This was regarded as a "Nice 'average load."

She leaves Cossack with the wool.....



.....and returns after losing some



Les Douglas Writes :

1935

"Cossack had a population of about 35 people, it doubled when the pearlers came in. There were six pearling luggers working out of Cossack. They were owned by a Japanese named "Muramat" who lived in Darwin. His local manager was a Japanese, he lived in a small house about 100 yards south of the wharf. About half way between the post office and the cemetery was a row of tin shacks, which was called Jap Town. The crews of the luggers lived here during the lay up season, which was from November until March. They would come in, unload their shell, take everything out of the boat, then at high tide go up the creek round near the old leper station, and sink the boats by pulling the plug out or opening the seacocks. This was a yearly event; the boat sank and cleared out all the vermin, cockroaches etc. The boat would lie on its side at the bottom, and as the tide ran back all the water would run out. The lugger crews would then close the seacocks so the boat floated again on the incoming tide. The boat would then be left floating in the deep hole, sheltered among the mangroves until the cyclone season passed.

The *Star* was based in Cossack as were the company's other vessels, and when in port would be tied alongside the stone wharf. A slight list was always kept to port to ensure that when the tide was out she sat upright against the wharf. Sand flies and mosquitoes were a big problem as we had no protection from them, and many nights were spent walking around the wharf beating them off. Other nights would be spent at the hotel, which was operated by a young couple - a relative of Mr. Sholl, the licensee of the Victoria Hotel in Roebourne, which had just installed refrigeration.

There was no refrigeration in the Cossack hotel, all the beer came by boat, and we brought it ashore. Bottles were packed 5 doz to a crate, individually wrapped in straw. All kegs were 10 gallons (wooden). The Hotel would put the keg on the bar with wet bags over it, all the beer was warm, no such thing as a cold drink. The drinkers would buy their bottles, put them in bags and hang them in the creek, which was the coolest spot.

There was always an old prospector or two about town, they would come down to the seaside, spend about a week or two and then disappear.

We looked forward to the arrival of the steamers, as Patterson and I would go aboard for a short while and enjoy a cold drink, and if it happened to be meal time, a good meal.

A portion of the Port Samson jetty had been burnt away prior to our arrival in Cossack. We boated a lot of new piles from the steamers for the rebuilding. The piles were attached to 40g oil drums on the steamer's decks. Lowered over the side and we towed them ashore.

The rail line between Cossack and Roebourne had been pulled up. We had a load of old rail aboard one trip, as it was being shipped north. It was stacked on the *Star's* decks (too long to go in the holds).

We had tied up alongside the steamer and had started to unload, taking the rails off the after deck. After a short while I thought : "She seems to be down by the head too much." I went forward to have a look, and there was the forepeak, which also contained the men's toilet 3/4 full of water. And there was the fluke of the anchor sticking through the side and water streaming in. Instead of the skipper pulling the anchor clear above the water line, putting the *Star* alongside the ship he had poked the fluke right through the *Star's* planking. Carelessness on his part.

There was no way we could get the anchor out without allowing more water in. We quickly had to get the rails off and get back and put the *Star* on the

beach alongside the Turtle pen, which was just off the end of the wharf. There was a good sand patch there, in fact it was the Cossack beach.



Silver Star careened at Cossack. (Photo Les Douglas.)

The turtle factory had ceased business shortly before our arrival. It had been operating from the Customs House and the turtle pen was right outside on the beach. The two men, or turtle catchers as they were commonly referred to as they were still living in Cossack, were from Sydney and didn't have any money to get back (they both drank). They had a small dinghy about 12 ft long with a short mast and a short derrick which was used for lifting the turtles aboard. It had a small outboard motor on it, and one of the chaps, a very big man, he would stand on the bow with nothing on, only sandshoes. They would get close to the turtle, he would then dive on it, grab it with both hands, one on each side under the turtle's shell as the turtle made for the bottom. The water would not be very deep, and he would then turn the turtle on its back and up they came. The turtle was helpless on its back. The other chap in the dinghy would put a sling round it, and hoist it aboard. They kept them alive in the pen.

Les Douglas Writes :

"Towards the end of 1935 an Englishman, a Mr. Salt visited Perth and had talks with Mr. McLarty who was one of the principals of Cossack Lightering Company. Mr. Salt was sent to Perth by Brassett and English Steel Coy, they were interested in shipping Iron Ore from Koolan Island to Japan. Australian Iron and Steel Coy, later to become B. H. P. Coy, held the leases on Cockatoo Island. And a Perth man held the lease.

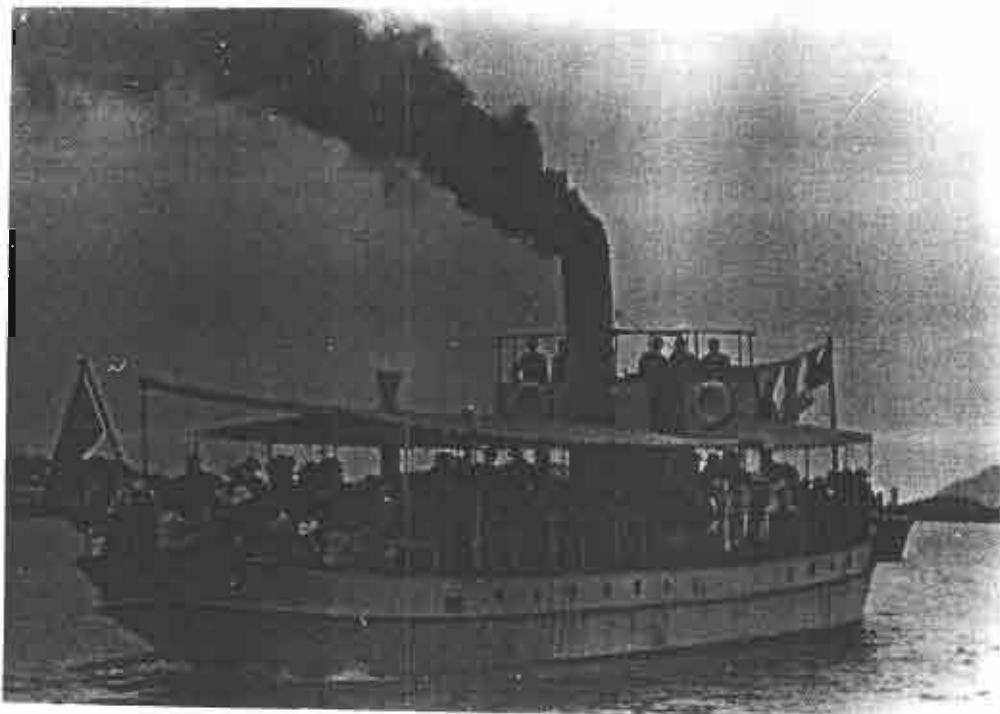
Brassett's intention was to ship the ore to Japan in the lower holds of the ships and take cattle on the 'tween decks, dropping the cattle off at the islands on the way to Japan, which seemed a feasible idea.

Where did we come in ? Well, we were to take the *Silver Star* to Broome, fit her out to accomodate about 20 men for the initial preparation of the project. Mr. Bert Hawke was the Labour Premier at the time, he was all for it. But he had to get the permission of Federal Government. The answer was no.

The excuse was that there was insufficient iron ore in Australia and what we did have, had to be preserved for future use. This seemed a very weak excuse, for at this same time Australian Iron and steel held the lease of Cockatoo Island. So as to hold these leases, they had a two-masted 40 ft yacht manned by 3 men, it used to cruise around the north, it came into Cossack several times. The purpose of the yacht was that, to hold the lease of the island they would have to spend some time ashore on it.

After the war, B.H.P. commenced mining the ore on Cockatoo Island, and as everyone knows, there is enough ore in the north west of Western Australia to last for many years."

"Sometime late in 1936-7 I heard that the *Star* had hit the Cossack wharf head on and split the stem open, (the wharf was built of stone), and that she had been put on the bank up the creek."



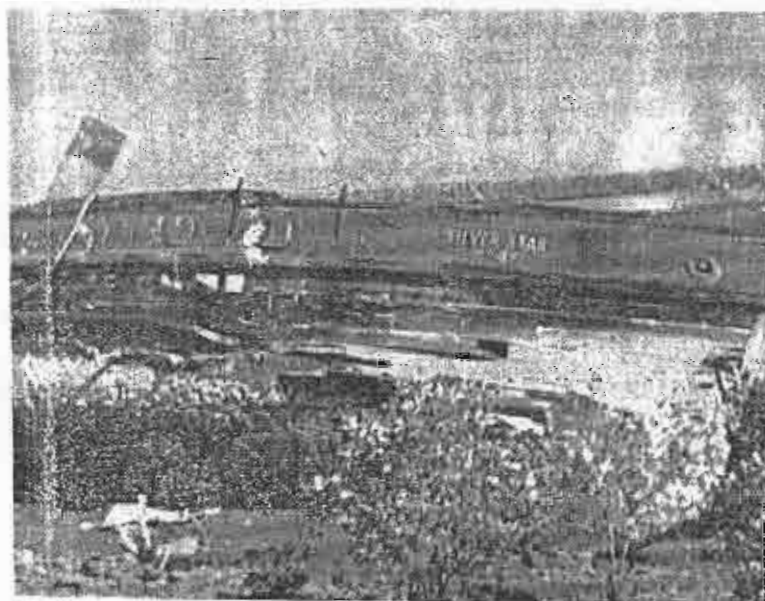
Silver Star at Albany. (Photo Albany Museum)

In 1936 the *Silver Star* ran into the wharf at Cossack and split her stem post. At a later stage she was then taken up the river and left on the bank and set on fire to get the brass. When Les Douglas last saw her she had been burnt and split open like a fish. The boiler should still be there.

A story exists via Bill Miller of Pt. Samson Fisheries that when the RAN was preparing for a possible Japanese invasion in 1942, a number of luggers were burnt at Cossack, while the *Silver Star* was deliberately holed and abandoned, and by the end of hostilities was too badly damaged to be refloated.¹ This appears to be incorrect.

A newspaper account exists to the effect that the *Silver Star* capsized when heavily overloaded, and was later beached. Then her hull was hacked open and her engines removed to make it impossible for her to be used if the Japanese attempted an invasion.² This also appears to be incorrect.

Les Douglas says that the *Silver Star* was already a wreck well before 1942, and would have had her accident in late 1936 or 1937, unless she was patched up and left lying around the creek. Les Douglas heard the story of her hitting the wharf well before 1942. Had she been intact, she would have gone somewhere else instead of Cossack by 1942, owing to scare of a Japanese invasion.



Silver Star on the bank at Cossack. (Photo Hazel Flugge)

One of her anchors is preserved in the Cossack Museum.

The bollard from *Silver Star* is not original. She had small galvanized ones. Bollards of this time were fitted when the *Silver Star* went down to the *Dunster Castle*.

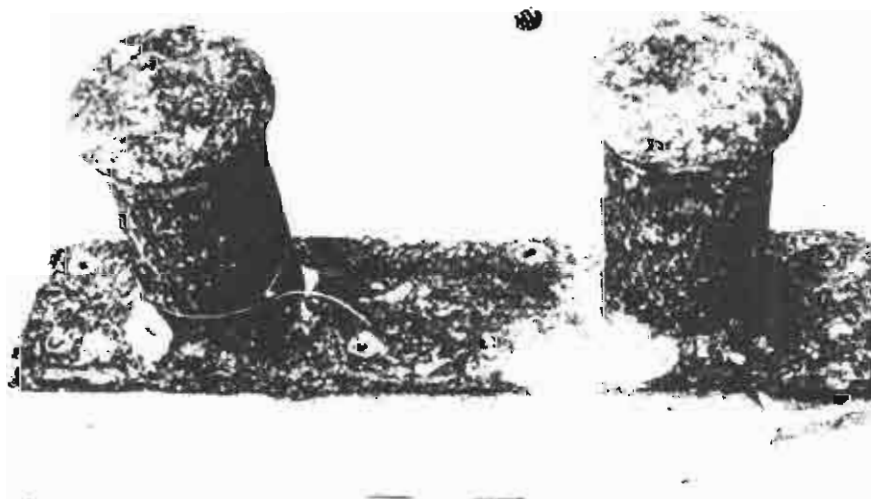
There is now a new *Silver Star*, a catamaran, operating as a ferry in Oyster Harbour.

¹ Maritime Archaeology File

² Newspaper Cutting. Hazel Flugge.



*Wreck of the **Silver Star** at Cossack. In the photograph are Les Douglas and his son Lindsay.
(Photo Les Douglas)*



***Silver Star's** bollard from the wrecksite, donated to the W.A.Maritime Museum by Les Douglas.(Photo the author)*

STERN POST WRECK,

Composite Sailing Ship, later a coal hulk

Rudder post upstanding on wreck.

Howard Hartman remembers seeing the *Fairy* out of Residency Point in 14-15 ft of water. A wooden vessel. Gudgeons on sternpost 8-9 inches. Little disturbance of the water around her. (See map)

A local resident, John MacBride, remembers diving on her as a child for lumps of coal as she was in only nine or ten feet of water and had coal in the hold,¹ which suggests that she must have either been a collier or carrying coal for engines.

However, the wreck described by John MacBride turned out on investigation to be in a different location to the *Fairy* (See Map of Harbour) and is apparently something else. Les Douglas remembers this as "The Stern Post Wreck" from his childhood and stated that it was a big, heavy timbered wreck with big gudgeons, much larger than a coal barge. The stern post was 8-10 inches in width. Some of the coal recovered from it used to blow up when burnt. According to Howard Hartman the wreck contained muntz metal. It is possible that this wreck may be the remains of the *Larkins* of 1808 supposedly broken up in 1876. Wood analysis should soon determine this since the *Larkins*, as an ex-East Indiaman was built of teak.

A local resident met on the site said that there was another wreck to the left (East ?) of this as well, which had been seen from the air and could be located by its shape outlined in the weed.²

Howard Hartman says that the stern post had two prongs on it which were covered at high tide, and several boats came to grief on it.³



One was a 14ft dinghy, newly made by Bill Torsy for an old Mr. Winterhalter, who had bought the first outboard which came to Australia. On his first trip he went flying along the bank and spiked the dinghy on the projecting prongs. He was unable to get the boat off the prongs, which acted like a barb. Finally a fisherman came to his rescue and they both jumped up and down in the stern until the boat pulled free.⁴

Les Douglas says that the barb had become one-pointed when he was a child.

A dive on the wreck (7/7/91) involving the author revealed the remains of a coal hulk, some hundred feet long, in a remarkably good state of preservation. The vessel was definitely not the *Larkins*, as the hull shape was different, and proved to be a composite vessel with steel frames. The fact that the vessel had a wooden hull indicates that she is older than the later steel hulled sailing ships used later on, and she was also smaller. The vessel was overflowing with coal, suggesting that she was wrecked, not scrapped, especially when compared with the amount of coal found on the *Kingfisher*, which was scrapped. Her close proximity to the shore also suggests an accident. Her copper sheathing is in a remarkably good state of preservation, and preserves the shape of the bow. The condition of preservation indicates that there is not much tidal or wave movement about the wreck. The vessel stands upright on the sea bed, and at its highest point rises to within about four feet of the surface. There is, however, no trace of the stern post, rudder or gudgeons, which may have been removed.

Charts for Princess Royal Harbour showing a wreck at this location date from 1877.⁵ Her identity remains a mystery; there are several possibilities. The *St. Laurence*, a wooden hulled coal hulk, was reported as stranded in Albany Harbour in 1899, which is

¹ John MacBride pers. comm, 18th February 1991

² Pers.comm, 31st March 1991

³ Howard Hartman, letter of 30. 6. 1975, in M.A. File

⁴ Howard Hartman, letter to Les Douglas 29.7.1991.

⁵ Adam Wolfe Pers. Comm.

too late for this wreck. *Priscilla*, *Zephyr* and the *Camile* were also supposed to be wrecked in Albany Harbour.

There is also the *Priscilla*, built in 1856, hulked in 1884 and stranded in Princess Royal Harbour in 1895. (Although this date appears to be too late.) The vessel was burnt and supposedly buried under foreshore reclamation, but this does not appear to have been the case. The coal hulk *Ellen* was laid up at Woodman's Point, near Fremantle, in 1890.

The *Albany Advertiser* for March 25th 1903 observes that the wreckage of the coal hulk *Anna Melhuish* had been recovered by a dredge; this foundered in the harbour a few years ago. Material recovered included the keel and other large pieces of wreckage.

Also buried in the foreshore area are the remains of a large wooden vessel supposed to have been built by William Douglas, and a large iron vessel. The wooden vessel, however was definitely not the *Priscilla*.

According to Les Douglas there is also supposed to be a wreck near the Quarantine Station.

VICTORY**O/N 61. 119. No. 11 of 1874*****Sailing Vessel***

One deck, one mast, cutter rigged, elliptic stern, carvel built, wood framework.

Built in Albany in 1873.

46 ft l, 6 ft width.

Owner : William Douglas of Albany.

Vessel wrecked at West Cape Howe, 25th June 1875.

Registry closed 19th July and certificate cancelled and returned to Registrar General.

This was the first recorded vessel owned by William Douglas.

Victory was the name of the vessel William Douglas' mother, Emma Matilda

Douglas nee Barrat came to Australia on, with her parents, in 1854, and probably the name comes from this ship.

From : *Register of British Ships for the Port of Fremantle.*

The *Victory* left Albany on 26th June 1875 bound for Fremantle, but was driven ashore and wrecked by bad weather at West Cape Howe. Captain and crew were saved.¹

¹ Henderson, G. *Unfinished Voyages* Perth 1988 quoting *The Herald* of 3 July 1875.

WARATAH

O/N 101.771. No. 3 of 1893. Entry 26/6/1893.

Steam Packet, later sailing vessel.

Built 1893 at Launceston, Tasmania.

One deck, two masts, schooner rigged. Carvel build, no galley, no head.

Elliptical stern, wood framework.

L. 48ft 6/10 Beam 11ft. Depth 4ft 9/10. 13.81 tons gross, Reg.Tonnage 7.96/100.

Powered by steam.

Built by Edwin A. Jack of Launceston, Shipbuilder.

Length of engine room 5ft 6/10

1 engine high and low pressure horizontal diagonal built 1893.

Diam. of cylinder 6" high, 12 1/2" low., L.of stroke 8".

5 nominal horsepower.

Engine Builder : C.F. Saul.

Owner : George Fraser of Trevalyn, nr. Launceston, Tasmania.

B/S 15/1/1897 to H.M. Government of Western Australia.¹

Came to Western Australia in 1896.

According to K.O. Murray she was:

"A 50 ft steam launch which had very fine fittings of tallow wood and kauri. She was built in Melbourne and brought from Tasmania for the Fisheries Department. The police acquired the launch in 1906 and for years she was skippered by W. J. Kestel, who obtained his ticket while on the *Manx Fairy*. Bill Lyon was the engineer serving with Kestel. The Fisheries Department fitted a 25 h. p. steam engine in the *Waratah*, which drove her at about 11 knots. She went to Albany in 1909 for use as a pilot launch in the harbour." ²

Initially brought to Albany for use in pilot services. Les Douglas says she was not satisfactory as a pilot launch, possibly because she was too big and tended to roll. She was then purchased by owners of a shellgrit mill on the other side of the Kalgan River, who used her to bring shellgrit to Albany. When this closed she lay on her side on the Kalgan River between the little jetty and the bridge for years. Then bought by Charley Farley. He later sold her to a person who wished to sail around the world. Obtained the services of a skipper called Downie and set off. Sheltered at Nornalup and returned to Albany. Purchased by another person who also intended sailing around the world. Used the same skipper and they also sheltered at Nornalup but this time were wrecked.

Stan Austen says that the *Waratah* was re-rigged as a schooner with two masts in the 1930s by Captain Farley and Lionel Austen, his father. He went on a test run on her at Albany. After she was wrecked Swarbrick at Nornalup got the spars, and sold a mast to a yacht that had a broken one.³

¹ From : *Registrar of British Ships for the Port of Launceston, 1855-1982*

² Murray K. O. *From Oar to Diesel on the Swan*, W. A. Historical Society, 1949 p. 75.

I contacted K.O. Murray who stated that his information for the *Waratah* came from a retired policeman named McNally, who had served on the vessel. Murray also obtained a photograph of the *Waratah* as a police boat in the Swan, which he gave to Connie Hooker of the *West Australian* newspaper's archives for safe keeping.

Unfortunately the present librarian was unable to find this photograph.

³ Stan Austen pers comm. 31.3. 91

The *West Australian* for 16.11.96 states:

The *Waratah*, steamer of 8 tons net, 15 gross, property of the Master Capt. McCallum, reached Albany last night from Hobart; licensed to carry 52 passengers in rough weather, 30 in smooth. Proceeding to Fremantle to work in the Swan river.¹

Before the Second World War the *Waratah* was used to service the Eclipse Island Lighthouse.

According to Howard Hartman :

The *Waratah* was turned from a steam packet to an auxiliary. She was a smart little ship when she came to Albany. The vessel had been purchased for a lime concern at Oyster Harbour on the east side of Kalgan Bridge to grind cockleshells. This never got off the ground. The factory was built and then got into financial difficulties. The *Waratah* sank at the foot of the jetty, and looked past sailing. Farley bought her and brought her up to town. She was put on the beach at the foot of the town jetty and repaired pretty well. She rolled a great deal.

She was turned into a two masted schooner with a big truck engine in her. Howard Hartman went over to Eclipse Island in her on several occasions. The *Waratah* sailed quite well with the wind behind her, but otherwise sailed sideways.

She was nearly wrecked on Breaksea Island when the engine would not start. The Breaksea light, which started automatically, was out, and it was necessary to take a mechanic to repair it. They went out to the island with a falling barometer. The *Waratah* was hurtling along. They reached the island and put the dinghy over the side and got the mechanic on it with a bag of tools. (They were not paid for this.)

There was a little jetty sticking out from solid rock. The mechanic climbed up to the lighthouse and Howard Hartman stood on the edge of the jetty with a fishing line. The *Waratah*, close hauled, sailed up and down. If the motor stopped, she was not good under sail. Howard Hartman threw some barnacles in and saw three huge groper eating the barnacles. He fished them up and had them on the floorboards of the dinghy when he saw the storm coming up.

They were waiting for the mechanic to come back, and Farley on the *Waratah* was getting agitated. The mechanic came back on the run (He was fairly elderly) but would not come down the jetty to the dinghy except when the rope was tied around him. The *Waratah* was not there. She was heading for the far end of the island with the motor going. The 9ft dinghy bounced up and down on the waves shipping a lot of water. The mechanic was bailing the water out of the dinghy with his bowler hat. The *Waratah's* motor had stopped and she drifted to the end of the island and out of sight and Howard Hartman decided to row ashore and light a fire on top of Michaelmas thinking that that was the end of the *Waratah*, and she had been wrecked. Then she re-appeared. She had scraped on the rocks. They got the dinghy on to her. Got the mechanic aboard and the swamped dinghy and sailed for Albany with the motor going. It blew and howled all the way into Albany Harbour. The wind dropped at the mouth of the channel and the motor stopped - out of petrol. Arriving at Albany someone remarked "Hard life for a sailor."

The *Waratah* was bought by Bill Germaine, a vegetarian surviving on nuts, etc. He proposed to go on a world trip with a Captain Downie as Skipper, who returned to Albany to re-stock when offered vegetarian fare.

They arrived at Nornalup with a wind blowing from the S. W.. They bumped over the bar and got into calm water.....Came back to Albany to have the rudder etc. repaired. She was then sold to another person who also set off with Downie. Downie began by dumping the owner's expensive guns overboard The owner was not pleased. Went into Nornalup, hit the bar and broke up.

¹ Lynn Cairns

Swarbricks salvaged masts, spars and other things.

The *Waratah* was wrecked in April 1934.¹

Stan Austen, who supplied the photograph of the vessel at Nornalup, writes:

"I knew Captain Vernon Farley who purchased her (in the late twenties I think) as my father did considerable repairs to her in the shallows. This was near the east side of the town jetty and later ditto the old coal jetty. I was aboard her quite a lot and also sailed on her with Capt. Farley. Farley had ideas of using her to transport sheep to and from Bald Island he had a grazing lease. This did not eventuate.

He then gained a contract to transport supplies to Eclipse Island lighthouse for a short time.

My father also borrowed her to lift and transport the propeller of the burnt out tug, *The Bruce*, from the east side of the Municipal Baths of Lawley Park. Dad used gelegnite to separate the prop from shaft.

I think Farley sold her to Bill Germaine and younger brother (Scotsmen). They sailed her to Nornalup and back, having entered the inlet. I can't remember who then took over, I think two farmers from Yealering way who engaged Capt. Downie to take her to Fremantle. From there they proposed a world voyage. However, she was stranded and wrecked on the bar on the east side of the entrance to Nornalup Inlet; no loss of life.

Tom Swarbrick and sons salvaged much gear. They ran a guest house, Rest Point, Walpole Inlet.

She had an old car or truck engine auxiliary. At one stage they were taking turns pouring buckets of water on same as circulating pump cut out.

I think she was about 50 feet length, schooner rigged (Gaff). There is an old film (I believe owned by Albany Library) showing her sailing during a yachting regatta at Albany. 1930s or late 1920s"²

Contact with Terry Swarbrick, ex Walpole, revealed some interesting information.

Mr Swarbrick was born in 1918 and stated that his father bought the *Waratah* after she was wrecked for seven pounds ten shillings, from the 22 year old owner, Everett.

Everett had sailed with a Captain Downey with the intention to sail to Fremantle to fit the vessel out for a world cruise. They noticed that there was something wrong with the rudder as the vessel was slow to answer the helm. This was because the rudder stock was coming off. They anchored off the Nornalup inlet and the rudder fell off. The next day she dragged her anchors and went ashore. Mr. Swarbrick says that his father attempted to tow her off with his launch, but this proved impossible.

The vessel soon listed to seaward. The hull filled with sand and split open down the stem. The topside then broke open along the waterline. There was no visible sign of her within a couple of days of the shipwreck.

The Swarbricks began by salvaging what had come ashore in the way of masts, rigging etc. The weather and tides of the winter were against them. They had a rope around the stern post and pulled the stern post out. The engine, screw and tail shafts were all taken off. The original steam stern tube with lignum vitae bearings was still in her. This had 180 lbs of brass casting in it.

Materials from her were used in the construction of the *Lady Walpole*, a houseboat built in 1934 by the Swarbricks and now at Rottneest Island. This vessel was decked with the *Waratah's* planking, which, although old, was still in good condition as it was huon pine. It is still possible to see the rib marks looking under the deck on the *Lady Walpole*. The brass stern tube

¹ Terry Swarbrick pers. comm.

¹ Stan Austen letter to the author 9/8/1991.

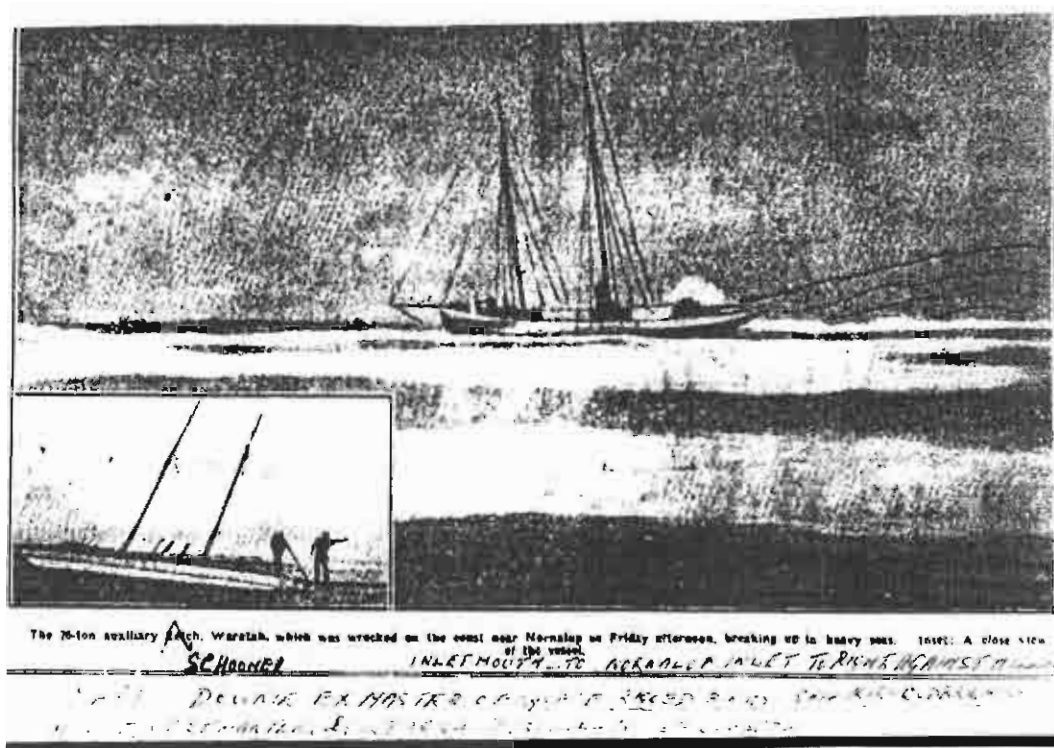
was melted down and is also incorporated in the *Lady Walpole*. The Swarbrick family had their own boat building - boat renting business at Walpole. The engine was an ex- London bus engine, a Hawley engine, very old even then. They took it apart and used the bits where they could. It never ran again.

Terry Swarbrick never saw a sign of her above water after this. He said the keel would still be there and a lot of iron ballast, with the hull under this. His family still has bits of her.

During the war in the winter of 1942 Terry Swarbrick was on leave in Launceston, Tasmania, and walked into an old boat yard near the bridge over the gorge. It was, he said, the night the submarines came into Sydney harbour. He talked to the old boat builders - men of about 75 - who said that the *Waratah* had been built right there in that yard, and that they had worked on her as apprentices. This places her at about 1885 - 90.

He said that she was a beautiful little vessel with beautiful lines, a counter stern and ram stem. She was 56 ft long, 11 ft 6' wide and drew 5 ft of water. His brother has photographs of her as a wreck.

She is just across the channel on the Nornalup spit, about a quarter of a mile down walking east. ¹



The Waratah on the beach at Nornalup (Photo Stan Austen)

¹ Terry Swarbrick pers comm, 7th August 1991

THE IRON LIGHTERS

Lighters formed an essential part of the Port of Albany as they were required to carry water, coal and stores to ships in the harbour. Two were imported in 1859, but in 1862 P & O brought in four iron lighters from England, which were prefabricated, and they were assembled on the flat rock mentioned earlier, by the jetty. A. Van Zuilicom was sent out to supervise the construction which took place 1863 - 64. Two of the lighters were named the *Albany* and the *Fremantle*.¹ According to Les Douglas the lighters were punched with a bear punch imported for the purpose. (See photo P.93)

As time passed and P&O withdrew from Albany, Armstrong and Waters and W. Douglas entered the lighterage business. At one time Armstrong & Waters had half a dozen lighters. Some were the old P&O lighters but others were later additions, sometimes made of wood. Some, such as the wooden *Camel*, were purpose built, but others were other vessels converted for the purpose. The *Camel* was the last such lighter brought to Albany.

As fresh water was in short supply, the fresh water spring at Vancouver beach, Frenchman Bay was used by Armstrong and Waters, and a long narrow jetty with two water pipes was constructed. This was used until 1912 when another supply was established, and water was loaded at the Town Jetty. The lighters continued in use until about the 1920s, when the last ones disappeared. The last iron lighter was an old P&O one left lying on the beach by the Town Jetty. It was purchased by N. Pannet and used to pull out the pylons from the old public baths. He said that when he bought it the lighter had holes in the sides which had to be patched with the remains of kerosine tins, and had no visible relief on deck other than the wooden frame for a bow winch. It was sunk at the end of this time, not at Whale Rock, but towards Middleton Beach, near where Howard Hartman found green granite but was not allowed to quarry it. The bottom of the lighter proved so strong that charges let off to sink it failed to make any holes, and it was necessary to chop holes with axes. (See photo P.197)

Apart from this, there is one iron lighter sunk of Vancouver Beach, Frenchman Bay. Les Douglas says that this vessel was visible when he was a child, lying on the beach. It was reasonably intact except the deck was missing, although the sides and deck frames were still there. (See photos P.18) He thought that it had probably fractured and the owners had been unable to repair it in the days before welding. This lighter was largely broken up by the great south-east gale of 1921. The beach profile appears to have changed, and the wreck is now underwater,² or possibly subsequent gales may have moved the pieces of the wreck around. Also according to Les Douglas the remains of two iron lighters lay on the east and west side of the coal jetty, accounting for four altogether, perhaps the original four from 1862. This seems quite possible since Captain Ernie O'Donohue mentions three steel lighters of 130 tons used at the turn of the century to take water from Frenchman's Bay to the Town Jetty for shipping. (See Appendix VIII). Assuming that the lighter in Frenchman's Bay had already been wrecked before 1900, these would have been the remaining three.

Howard Hartman remembers seeing the remains of an iron lighter at the coal jetty. The deck was taken off to prevent people fishing off it.

Appendix XI makes mention of one of the old P & O lighters being used to carry the 7-ton damaged rudder from HMS *Bacchante*, so we can get some idea as to how sturdy these vessels were.

Photographs of lighters are few and far between, since little account was taken of these during their period of use. N. Pannet has the photograph of the last iron lighter being sunk, and has also a photograph of himself at an early age with a lighter in the background. This appears to be the same lighter that appears in the photograph of the *Silver Star* with the floating dock. There is also the photograph of the *Camel* in the possession of Roy MacCartney, and Howard Hartman has photographs of the Frenchman Bay lighter lying on the beach.

Les Douglas remembers the lighters being towed, sometimes one or more on either side of the tugs out to the waiting liners.

¹ Garden : Albany : *A Panorama of the Sound from 1827* p. 142

² See *Survey of Wrecks, Frenchman Bay, Albany* W.A. Maritime Museum 1990, unpublished



Iron lighter sinking, owned by N. Pannet (b. 1913), (Photograph Richard McKenna from N.Pannet)

This photo was not taken at Whale Rock as recorded. Stan Austin identified it as towards Middleton beach, towards where H. Hartman found green granite but was not allowed to quarry it. Bulkhead and ship same angle as on the photo, with water half way across the boat. The object sitting up is not on the lighter. The only structure on the lighter is the bow winch, which N.Pannet said was missing - only the wooden frame left. Les Douglas says that the lighter would have been towed out with a motor launch, not by one of the tugs. (See section on hulk sinking.)

WOODEN LIGHTERS

The 'Lighter' was built on the banks of the Kalgan River just below the Douglas home at the upper Kalgan Bridge, by Captain William Douglas. It was used for carting apples from the Kalgan River to Albany - the apples were then shipped overseas. In addition the 'Lighter' was used for general work at the Port. It was built from local bush timber. The jarrah planking was from the old whaling station at Frenchmans Bay, which was closed down during World War I. (The Norwegians working there were interned). After the war the whaling station was sold and dismantled. Some of the plant went to the new Point Cloates (Whaling) Station. The remainder was purchased by Captain Bert Douglas, Captain William Douglas and Mr. Johnson, the father of Katie Johnson who later married Edwin Douglas.

As a young boy I stayed with my Grandmother at the Kalgan River to help Grandfather construct the 'Lighter'.

The 'Lighter' was not completed when the fruit season began and had to be used undecked. (With 40 cases to the ton this was roughly 33 tons) One night it swamped in the Albany Channel with 1300 cases of apples on board. I was with my father on this trip. I remember that the 'Lighter' was being towed by the *E M D*, my father's motor launch which had been built about 1909 for Captain William Douglas. It was a calm night, with the threat of a storm - very dark with some lightening. It was very smooth coming across King George Sound, but half way up the Albany Channel the wind came in from the South West at gale force and whipped up a big choppy sea. The 'Lighter' had only about 12' of freeboard and the seas rolled over the top, swamping the 'Lighter.' The cases of apples floated out. Tommy Dickenson was steering and father called for him to pull himself along the tow rope and we dragged him up over the stern of the launch. We then towed the 'Lighter' onto the bank near the Pilot Jetty. When daylight came we baled the water out with buckets as no pump had been fitted at that time.

The weather cleared about midday. We floated the 'Lighter' and went around the rocks. Then with the aid of the 12' dingy, we rescued the floating cases of apples. They were sold locally.

Before the next fruit season we raised the sides of the lighter 3 planks, 18', and decked her with decking from the wreck of the schooner *Rip* which had been wrecked at Frenchman's Bay. The planking had ben washed up to the foot of the sand hills many years before.

During the apple season the apples were unloaded at a small jetty at the Albany Freezing Works. We would have to trans-ship some of them into a small dingy so as to get over the sand bank at high tide. Every case had to be handled four times from the lighter to the jetty, over the railway line and to the coal store. Most of the river work had to be carried out on high tides.

Apples were only shipped down the river for about 4 years. The motor truck had arrived.

The lighter was the last boat to be built on the Kalgan River.

The lighter was also used for general work around the Port. One of the jobs was carting timber piles down the Kalgan River and driving them into the seabed to rebuild the Town Jetty Baths. Another was placing the steel beacons in the Albany Harbour Channel.

(See photos p.)

The 'Lighter' was 40' long, 12' beam, and flat bottomed. Depth of hold, 6'6".

The *EMD* motor launch was 30' long, 9' beam, draught 3'. She was built in Albany by a boat builder Bill Geery, for Grandfather William Douglas about 1909. Powered by a 14 hp Wolverene engine, William Douglas and my father Clem went to the Leeuwin looking for salvage from the wreck of the Aberdeen liner *Pericles*, in April 1910.

EMD stood for Emma Matilda Douglas, William's Wife's name.

About 1930 the 'Lighter', after some years lying on the beach at the foot of the old Town Jetty, was finally broken up and some used for firewood and the rest set on fire.

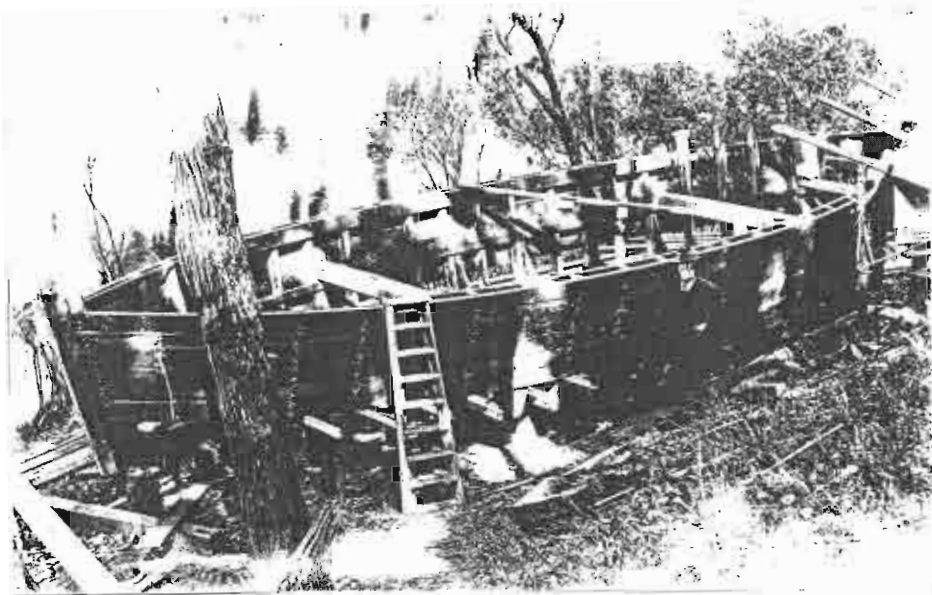
Picture 1. The 'Lighter' under construction. William Douglas is standing in the centre of the lighter.

Picture 2. The Launching Party.
The person in the centre is Clem Douglas, William is sitting, Les Douglas is on the stern with the white shirt. On the left is Emma Douglas, William's wife.

Picture 3. The 'Lighter' is shown carting piles down the river. Clem Douglas had the contract to re-pile the Town Jetty Swimming Baths.
Photo 1924.

Les Douglas.

LIGHTER CONSTRUCTION



Photos Les Douglas



KALGAN RIVER AND THE LIGHTER 1920

The Kalgan River lighter mentioned in the previous section appears to have been the last wooden boat constructed on the banks of the Kalgan River. This account of searching for the timbers is therefore unique.

Les Douglas writes :

'One morning after breakfast (breakfast was always at 6.00 am) Grandfather said to me

"Go along to the shed and bring that axe and adze that we sharpened last night." It was late evening the day before I had turned the big stone for him to sharpen them. I wondered why he was sharpening late afternoon, because it was mostly an early morning job. I got them and brought them to the house. He took the axe and said "You carry the adze."

He was living in the new house at top Kalgan bridge. We crossed the road and set off in a north westerly direction, past uncle Tom's house (now "Maxton"). It was all bush .

"Where are we going Grandfather ?" I asked,

"Looking for a long tree suitable for a kelson for the Lighter."

We had to walk a long way back from the river.

In the early days I think the Kalgan River must have supplied all the timber for boat builders and others.

The river was navigable with depth of water about five feet at high tide. For about six miles there must have been good strands of jarrah, the river banks high enough for the logs to be rolled down to lighters. There were lots of sawpits, particularly on the higher banks, and thousands of stumps about 2 ft high to be seen. All the best of the jarrah had been cut, but there was plenty of young growth. The soil was good and younger trees were fairly plentiful.

We walked about three miles, (I walked behind him, as I did not want to step on a snake), and came to a patch of redgums. Apparently Grandfather knew they were there. The early loggers were not interested in redgum. He started to look up and walk every now and again, stop, walk around the tree, sighting it from all angles, to see how straight and long it was. What he was looking for was a long straight one about 45 ft. It could not be too thick as this would require a lot of dressing down, and squaring up to 10" x 10" x 40 ft.

After a long time and a lot of walking and looking up, he said

"This one will do."

I was glad because it was getting on for lunch time, and my legs were scratched from walking through the thick scrub. And I was thinking of the walk back. He cut the tree down, stepped it out (He never had a tape with us), and chopped the top off, because after we had walked a mile he said

"Did you bring the tape Leslie ?"

My reply was "No Grandfather, you didn't ask me to."

He said no more; I reckoned he had just remembered it. We barked the log and he started on the thick end with his adze. He was good on the adze, and used it for almost everything. After about one hour he had all the heavy end lightened.

Next morning, bright and early with me riding "Blossom", the horse, with her collar on but no saddle. She used to roam the bush all day, and come home every afternoon about 5.00 pm. On the way we stopped at Uncle Tom's to get one of his horses, "Lassie", and a sledge. A sledge is made

from the fork of a tree, about 6" in diameter. A platform is bolted across the fork and is used for heavy things that cannot be lifted into a vehicle. Used a lot in the early days, especially for carting water from the river or dam. It usually had a 100 g. water tank on it dragged by one or two horses and would stand near the back door of the house. Nearly every farm had one.

(Tom was having breakfast !)

Capt. William would think nothing of walking 14 miles to Albany and having breakfast at our place at about 9 o'clock.

We dragged the log back to the river bank and the next day he squared it down to 10" using his adze. He had 2 adzes, a large one and a small one. When it was finished you'd think it had been done with a plane. A few days later he borrowed Uncle Tom's horse and spring cart and we spent a couple of couple of days cutting and carting loads of knees from Banksia trees, and these were all dressed down with an adze.

Before the building of the Lighter could begin, we had worked for some time preparing the site on the river banks. The site was close to the entrance of the pool at the top bridge, on the same side as the Douglas House. The bank is rather steep there and an area about 60 ft long and 20 ft wide about 3" above high water was levelled. I visited the site in 1987 and you could still see the high side where we'd cut the bank down about 5'. It was all shovel and wheel barrow work.

It is only about 200 yards from the house. I remember one day we were planking the Lighter up and I was holding one end of a plank about 20' long 6" wide one and a half inches thick. The other end was up against the stem Grandfather had an auger boring holes. I was getting a bit tired holding it up. I reached out with my foot and pulled up a horse that we had been dressing the plank on and sat on it. I was getting tired. The plank moved out of alignment. He looked around, saw me sitting down.

"Stand up, stand up son, you can't build a boat sitting down."

I have never forgotten those words. What he meant was that you would never get anywhere sitting down. How true, for those days you wouldn't. Its so different today.'

The lighter is used to sink piles for the new Albany swimming baths. (Photo Les Douglas)



KALGAN RIVER

The wooden lighter that used to sit on the slipway at Uncle Ted's property. "Myola", still owned by Ray Douglas.

This slipway was well constructed and ran down into about 2 ft of water at low tide.

It was constructed of log timber and solid sawn timber, heavy railway line tracks, a sawn timber cradle with cast iron wheels.

A hand operated crab winch, bolted to a concrete base. The slipway was properly made with timber, a railway line and a cradle. It was built by William Douglas for his son, Bert. It was washed away by the flood.

Ever since I could remember a large wooden lighter sat on the cradle.

It was made of softwood, oregon and pine. I think it was about 50 ft long. Very high sides - at least 8'. The lighter was decked and had a large hatch. (Painted black - probably tarred).

The lighter sat there for at least 20 to 25 years and was finally washed away down the river, finishing up at the lower Kalgan Bridge, the year the floods washed the Top Bridge away.

The lighter I have heard it said, was the lighter that Captain William Douglas built for his son Clemence Douglas in 1920. It was not. I know this as I helped Grandfather build the one for Clem Douglas, my Father.

The lighter that sat on the slipway, the one that was washed away, belonged to Captain Bert Douglas who at that time was Captain of the State Steamship Services Ship the *Eucla*.

Les Douglas

EPILOGUE

WORLD WAR II

With the advent of World War II shipping using the Port of Albany died away almost completely as interstate runs ceased.¹ The tug *Bonthorpe* left in 1939 to become a minesweeper at Fremantle. She did not return.

Albany offered sanctuary to numerous ships of allied nations, but owing to strict official secrecy little is known or written about it.

On November 2nd 1941 a German mine was found on the beach at Frenchman Bay by Stan Austen and company and was detonated by crew from the ill-fated HMAS *Sydney*, which arrived the following day. On June 27th the British battleship *Duke of York* arrived and HMS *Anson* arrived in July, both of which refuelled from the Vacuum Company's tanker *White Rock Canyon* in Frenchman Bay.

Howard Hartman mentions looking at the harbour one morning to find it chock-a-block with vessels of all descriptions, some damaged, following the American loss of the Philippines. This must have been because Albany was the only really safe harbour in the west. Virtually the same day the Americans arrived by road, bumper to bumper, with equipment to set up the submarine base. The small vessels all disappeared soon enough. No-one was able to discuss the situation as questions could not be asked, owing to the official secrecy, and the locals were not "In the Know" with what was going on. Later a first American "mother ship" came loaded with professionals, the second with enlisted men.²

Many units of the American navy gathered in Albany and the deep-water jetty throbbed with activity day and night for many months during 1942. A submarine net was stretched across the harbour entrance to prevent enemy attack. The 11,600 ton submarine tender depot *Holland* arrived in March with 12 submarines of "Group S": *Seal, Sailfish, Salmon, Saury, Sculpin, Spearfish, Sargo, Snapper, Skipjack, Stingray, Sturgeon and Swordfish*. The *Peleus* came in July and stayed until October. With her came the minesweepers *Lark* and *Whippoorwill* with 13 submarines of the G.T. & P. groups, which were: *Perch, Pickerel, Garfish, Greyback, Grayling, Gudgeon, Grampus, Tarpon, Triton, Tuna, Thresher, Trout and Tauby*.

The submarines tied up at the long jetty and the crew were housed at the quarantine station.³ Used to tropical climes, the crews called Albany "Little Siberia."⁴

The Americans appear to have created a favourable impression with the local populace, who made efforts to entertain them.

"The Americans were casual, and even prodigal, in many cases, with their money, of which they always seemed to have plenty."⁵

Howard Hartman said that the Americans lived for the day, and were extremely free with their money, gambling, buying cars and running around everywhere.⁶

They undoubtedly contributed a great deal to Albany's economy. The likelihood of a Japanese attack on Fremantle eased by August, and the submarines left. Many would never return, to Albany or anywhere else.

¹ Garden: *Southern Haven*

² Howard Hartman pers. comm 8/10/91.

³ Garden: *Panorama* P.321

⁴ Johnson, Les *The Guns of King George's Sound : The Albany Forts*. Published by the Town of Albany, 1989, P. 36

⁵ Reg Greenwood : *Wartime Albany: Rort as a Naval Base : American Assemblages*. Article the Douglas Collection.

⁶ H.H. *ibid*.

After the fall of Singapore the aircraft tender *Heron* accompanied by the destroyers *Paul Jones*, *Chilet* and *Parrot* arrived in Albany in March 1942. Also in March came the arrival of a Dutch Dornier and Catalinas manned by Dutchmen carrying many women from Broome. A Qantas Sunderland flying boat also came.¹ On March 15, and of particular interest was the arrival of the badly damaged destroyer *Vendetta* towed by the Chinese river steamer *Ping-Wo*. The *Ping-Wo* was carrying European settlers escaping from Singapore and had been refused entry at Fremantle and Bunbury because she had been unable to give the correct recognition signals. At Albany the local people took up collections of clothing etc. for the passengers. The *Ping-Wo's* voyage was regarded as a feat of navigation.² The *Vendetta* departed for the eastern states on March 24th towed by the aptly-named *Islander* from the islands, accompanied by the *Ping-Wo*. The boom vessel in commission at Albany was the HMAS *Lanakai*, of romantic film fame. The net across the harbour was not unnecessary as on the 4th August 1942 the SS *Katoomba*, on her way from Adelaide to Fremantle, was attacked by a Japanese submarine about 20 miles south of Albany but escaped without damage.³ Howard Hartman says, however, that the net was not put across the harbour until the war was practically over and any invading forces could have entered the harbour.⁴ In March 1944 the *Peleus*, *Orion*, three M.L. boats and the U.S. salvage tug *Chanticleer* sought Albany waters for a few days owing to an alarm at Fremantle. HMAS *Tarakan* was based at Albany for sometime.⁵ During the war the well-known coal hulk *Kelat* was towed to Darwin by the tug *Uco*, and sunk by enemy bombers shortly after her arrival. Many of Albany's smaller vessels were towed up the Kalgan River to hidden moorings to prevent their possible use by invading Japanese forces.⁶ Albany's coastal defence. Princess Royal Fort, only fired in anger once during its history, and that was during the Second World War, apparently at an illegally departing Dutch vessel.⁷ After the war, tons of munitions stored in the state for an offensive against the Japanese that did not take place was brought to Albany and dumped there.⁸ A history of Albany during the Second World War would be a worthwhile exercise if enough information was forthcoming.⁹

THE POST WAR PERIOD

The end of the war signaled a final change in Albany's life as a port. As a passenger port and coaling and calling place for interstate vessels Albany was now finished and her last coal hulk, the *Sierra Colonna*, was disposed of in 1951. The Shell Company established new facilities for oil bunkering. As a result of the 1948 Tideman Report the land-backed wharf was built at the cost of much of Albany's maritime heritage, including the original P & O Company's wharf, which was buried, and at the risk of blocking the harbour's natural flow, which the growth of algae in the sea grass seems to bear out.

Restrictions on the Winter Zone Load Line were lifted in 1958, but the days of cargo vessels it applied to are now largely passed. The Deep Water Jetty was finally closed as a financial proposition in December 1982, and is now only used for recreational purposes. The surviving section was built in 1915-16 as the earlier part has been buried in the land reclamation.¹⁰ Albany was still visited by large ships, but only a few, and these were to export wool. Very occasionally a cruise ship calls. But the days of the busy harbour and merchant and passenger vessels from interstate and abroad and little coastal traders had gone and would not return.

¹ Reg Geenwood.

² Dunstan West pers. comm.

³ Maritime Archaeology File 195 /72 /2

⁴ H.H. ibid

⁵ Hull L.L. *Albany Forts in W.W. II. Albany Advertiser* 25/10/63

⁶ From photographs in the Albany Museum.

⁷ Howard Hartman pers. comm.S

⁸ Hull ibid

⁹ Reg Greenwood opt cit.

¹⁰ Adam Wolfe pers comm

APPENDICES

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NOTES ON THE APPENDICES

Appendix I was written in 1936 by Alfred Douglas, Les Douglas' uncle and was published as an article entitled *Israelite Bay ; Harry Clark's Early Days*.

Appendix II appeared in the *Western Mail* on September 8th, 1949, and was written by E. J. McCarthy. It is of interest as it quotes Frederick Douglas' first-hand details of the *Rodondo* rescue.

APPENDIX I

SHIPWRECKS

A number of small ships were lost on the Southern Coast; some in Harry Cooks time, others before then. The Schooner "*Brothers*" left Esperance in 1878 and was never heard of again, *Twilight* was wrecked at Twilight Cove in 1876 when carrying malere for the telegraph line, a Dutch ship *Batto-Bassi*, was wrecked 70 miles east of Esperance in 1881, In 1895, the Schooner *Swift* also met her end in Twilight Cove, 180 miles east of Israelite Bay.

In 1890 the Schooner *Agnes* foundered at Bremer Bay, its skipper was Captain Douglas, who had been one of the crew on the *Walter & Mary* (Capt Sherrit) which were to rescue the crew of *Batto-Bassi*. Douglas was later master of the *Grace Darling*, well known for 20 years on the coast.

The Schooner *Hettie* was wrecked on Black Island near Esperance in 1895 and in 1910 the Steamer *Franklin* was wrecked at Point Malcolm 110 miles east of Esperance. Some time after the 1914-1918 war, in which she had been Fremantle's guard ship, the *Penguin* was wrecked in a gale on Middle Island east of Esperance. Mr Cook also referred to the loss of the *Rodondo* in 1895 at South East Island 80 miles from Esperance. The 196 survivors were rescued by Captain Douglas.

Very little of the Goldfields was ever seen by Harry Cook but he well recalls seeing the hundreds of miners coming in from the East by sea and overland by camel and horse teams, his mother's brother, however, was the discoverer of gold at Norseman.

Here is the true story of the wreck of the Steamship *Rodondo*, 41 years ago on the 23rd of May. 340 miles east from Albany and 43 the Great Australian Bight is an island but more like a huge rock and a shorter distance from this island lies Pollock Reef which the *Rodondo* struck with great force at three o'clock one morning with 447 people aboard. When she struck this reef it was the finest of fine weather with a calm sea, but the vessel was found to have knocked a hole in her bottom and they just had time to land every one on this barren island before she sank in deep water. The *Rodondo* had 4 boats on board and 3 of them got stove in badly while landing the passengers on the rocks of the island. These 3 boats are still on this island and likely remain there for all time.

When all the people had been landed on the island the 4th boat that was not smashed on the rocks set off towards the mainland to report the wreck & try to get aid and this is where my brother's boat the *Grace Darling* was sighted coming in from sea. If the *Grace Darling* had missed this boat what a fearful tragedy must have followed. When this boat came alongside the schooner at 3 P. M. and heard the news, my brother who was master and owner of the *Grace Darling* made straight for the island through the night and at dawn hove too off the island by 10. A. M. All those 447 people were aboard and a course set to Israelite Bay 60 miles to the north of Adelaide was telegraphed for a steamer to pick them up and a steamer anchored in 3 days and took them all aboard for Adelaide.

(signed) Alfred Douglas

From *Harry Clark's Early Days*: The Douglas Collection

APPENDIX II

They served the outposts in little ships

COAST CAPTAINS

by E. J. McCARTHY

At the turn of this century a large fleet of sailing ships, besides steamers, served ports from Fremantle to Esperance and even further east.

Amongst those once well-known windjammers were the *Rachel Cohen*, *Woolomi*, *Ettie*, *Agnes*, *Swift Nell*, *Iris* (barquentine) and *Grace Darling*. The last two were owned and sailed respectively by the brothers William and Frederick Douglas, two of an intrepid band of coastal skippers.

It was Frederick Douglas who brought rescue to the wrecked steamship, *Rhodondo*. This is how I heard the story. Four of us were sailing out of Esperance with Douglas en route for Middle Island where Mr. McCarthy was raising lake salt for export. One of the party was Alexander Mackay, foster brother of the popular novelist Marie Correlli.

One night were we gathered in the cabin. The *Grace Darling* rolled gently to the swell and a large brass indicator, labelled SS *Rhodondo*, recorded the degree of list. I recalled reading of the wreck in a Melbourne paper, when it was said that the *Rhodondo* was put off her course because of compass deflection caused by a large steel boiler carried as deck cargo.

"Yes" said Captain Fred Douglas "She hit a rock off South-East Island, near where you are going. And that" - he pointed to the indicator - "is all that was left of her."

Rhodondo's Survivors

"We were beating up through the islands, bound for Esperance, when we picked up a boatload of her survivors," said Captain Douglas when pressed for the yarn. "I sighted the *Rhodondo* fast on the rocks which now bear her name within view of South-East Island. The ship's crew and passengers - 300 all told- were safely on the island. I took them off in two trips and sailed to Point Malcolm, near Israelite Bay, and landed them at Ponton and Mason's sheep station. That seemed the most likely place to feed a starving crowd. In all we were three weeks. Some said I should be compensated, but I never got a penny. Instead the passengers souvenired the *Grace*, or all that was movable as mementos. That indicator is all that I got. Ponton and Mason received nothing for all they did for the starving crowd."

Captain Fred Douglas with his 60-ton two-masted schooner, gave wonderful service to the thousand-mile coastline over a long period of years. I sailed many times with him. Once, I remember, he put into Thomas River with a single caddy of tobacco that had been wired for. On another occasion, I remember, his son Carl was shot in the foot at Ben's Island. Returning to Esperance for medical attention Captain Douglas engaged two deep-sea sailors in place of the wounded Carl. One sailor refused to go aloft to make fast a top-yard stay. Old as he was, Captain Fred kicked off his slippers and, with whiskers blowing, went aloft to do the job himself. "Call yourselves deep-water sailors," was his disgusted comment.

City of York

It was Captain William Douglas, Fred's brother, who saved survivors of the *City of York* when she ran on the rocks at Rottnest in July '99. The *York's* captain ordered the ship to be abandoned. The first boat swamped, drowning six. The captain then put off with ten men, and all were drowned. Attempts to launch boats from the shore also failed through swamping.

Then Captain William Douglas, in charge of his well known tug *Dunskey*, rescued eight men who had regained the wreck. Douglas personally transferred them from the wreck to the tug in his dinghy, making three trips at the height of the gale to do so. In shipping circles the feat was recognised as one of the most daring on our coast.¹

(*Douglas Collection*)

¹ *Western Mail*, September 8, 1949 P. 12

APPENDIX III

SOUTH COAST MEMORIES

Voyages of the *Grace Darling*

by Ernest McCaughan
11/12/1916

The obituary notice of that fine character and smart seaman, Captain Alfred Douglas, published in *The West Australian* recently, evoked many memories.

In the early nineties the sparse population along that long stretch of coast which extends from Albany to Eucla was dependant fro mail and supplies almost entirely on the schooner *Grace Darling* and no man was better known than her skipper Fred Douglas.

Considering that the vessel relied solely on sail the regularity with which the monthly mail usually was delivered at Cape Riche, Bremer Bay, Mary Ann Harbour - now Hopetown Roads - Fanny's Cove, Esperance, and Israelite Bay was a testimony to her commander. Every third month the voyage extended to Eucla.

Between 1894 and 1897 I made several passages in the little vessel - she was only 80 tons - and can testify to her sailing qualities. The first time I travelled by her the 240 miles from Esperance to Albany were logged off in 24 hours, notwithstanding we hove - to and lowered a boat to pick up the mail at four intermediate ports.

SIGN OF A WRECK

But we were not always so fortunate. On one passage we encountered exceptionally heavy weather which, having carried away one of our head sails and split the mainsail, compelled us to run for shelter to Starvation Boat Harbour.

In that desolate but welcome place of refuge three days were spent in effecting repairs. While the crew were busily engaged making a new inner jib and patching the mainsail we passengers used to land and go kangarooing, or wander along shore and watch the league-long rollers sweeping up from the South-West crash on to the rock-bound coast in a thunderous fashion that reconciled us to the enforced delay. Years before a vessel from the East must have foundered or gone ashore in the vicinity, for strewn about above the high water mark were numbers of huge weathered logs of teakwood. Though worth a king's ransome it would have been futile to have attempted get them off, for even in the calmest weather a heavy surf breaks along the coast.

Towards evening we would return aboard and after tea used to pass the time fishing, playing cards in the cabin, or sitting in the galley yarning with Charlie, the Norwegian cook, whose seamanship was no whit inferior to his cookery. Charlie, who had been on the vessel for years, had gone to sea when twelve years old. There were few countries he had not visited, and he had had some strange experiences. His great delight was doctoring, and he was always recommending remedies for barcoo rot and other ailments. Some of his cures were distinctly drastic. One was to bathe sore eyes with neat spirits.

STEAMER ON A REEF

Another member of the *Grace Darling's* crew was an Albany lad, Clarence Andrews, known as "Monkey Andrews" from his agility aloft. The duty of taking the boat ashore to pick up and drop the mail was always assigned to him, and no one surpassed him in handling a boat in the surf. This was demonstrated in 1894, when he, single handed, brought off all the passengers and crew of the steamer *Rhodondo* from South East Island. The vessel, which had struck the dangerous Pollock Reef, 28 miles from shore, had foundered 12 hours later. The crew and all the passengers, with the exception of four, who were drowned through too precipitately lowering a boat, succeeded in landing on South East Island. Captain Douglas returned from Israelite Bay to Esperance, having fortunately picked up a boat that had been sent away in charge of the mate for assistance, put about and went to succour the stranded passengers and crew.

On the five passages I made by the *Grace Darling* there were few places between Esperance and Albany which we did not visit. Once we put into Doubtful Island Bay to discharge stores for Hassell's Station, and on another occasion we were weatherbound for two days at a bleak little haven, Plum Pudding Cove, so called from numberless small, perfectly rounded, granite boulders strewn about the shore. But the most vivid recollection I retain of the many places visited is that of Two People's Bay, some 18 miles from Albany.

A SCENTED SWAMP

It was a beautiful afternoon and the schooner, with everything set, was romping along before a fine breeze from the north-east. Michaelmas and Breaksea Island were plainly discernible, and we passengers were congratulating ourselves on being alongside the town pier in three hours at most, when the wind suddenly chopped around to westward and blew big guns. Captain Douglas, who unless there were some urgent reason, believed in the old nautical adage, "Better to take it out of the ring of the anchor than the clew of the maintopsail," decided to put into Two People Bay, some three miles to windward. We had a hard thrash up to the anchorage, and I can see the staunch little vessel now. The Captain at the wheel, luffing her up in the vicious squalls; the crew standing by the halliards, and as I write there comes wafted across the years the scent of boronia. It may seem exaggeration, but we actually could smell the perfume a mile off shore.

Towards evening the wind took off and we landed. The Mackenzie brothers once had a shore whaling station in the bay, and near a shallow fresh water swamp we came across evidences of their sojourn, the rotting remains of a whaleboat, a discarded trypot, a broken steer oar, and part of a rusted harpoon. It was not, however, these relics of an abandoned industry that interested me, but the swamp, an acre or more in extent. It was a thicket of boronia. The plants, from diminutive ones, their tops hardly three or four inches above the shallow water, to those five or six feet high, were all in full bloom, and the fragrance - well, since those far-off days, I have visited two of the principal scent producing districts of the world, such as Grasse, in France, and the oasis of El Fayoum, in Egypt, but for fragrance neither place excelled Two People Bay.

Douglas Collection

According to Les Douglas shaped teak logs etc. were carried as deck cargo, and jettisoned during storms. Therefore the logs at Starvation boat harbour are unlikely to have come from a wreck.

APPENDIX IV

VOYAGE WITH A DEAD MAN

To the Editor, "*The West Australian*"

Sir,

Some early history of the bushranging days and a sea voyage combined 48 years ago. At that time there was an outlaw shot not fatally. He died two days later in the police cells at Esperance Bay. This outlaw was shot on the beach 30 miles west of Esperance. At that time my brother, the late Captain Douglas, and myself owned the smart top-mast schooner *Agnes*, 44 tons registered, and we were sent to Esperance by the West Australian Government to bring this man to Albany, dead or alive. We were ordered to leave Albany as soon as possible, which we did at 3 p. m. in a gale of wind from the north-west, arriving at Esperance, 240 miles away, at 4 p. m. on the following day. On this occasion a member of the Albany Water Police was sent with us.

When we arrived at Esperance the outlaw was still living, but died during the night. My brother made a coffin and in the meantime we boated ten tons of sand off to the schooner to bury the coffin, and to act as ballast as we ran down from Albany under the schooner's regular ballast - 5 tons of flat stone.

Ready for the sea on the return voyage with the dead man on board, we found the wind still blowing hard from the north-west. We had to go to sea however and we did so at 5 p. m. under close reefed sails. Early the following morning, at 8 o'clock, we found ourselves 40 miles south-west of Esperance with a wind blowing a gale due west. We were forced to heave to. We were hove to for five days and blown 170 miles out of our course into the Great Australian Bight, all the time getting into mountainous seas. Four days without a fire in the galley, wet and cold, four days of condensed milk, whisky and water, water that was nearly salt. The seas were towering 30 ft high and a tremendous surf was breaking on board, flooding the deck knee deep. How the schooner successfully mounted these seas was difficult to understand, but good seamanship aided by Providence enabled us to negotiate them.

The last three nights were awful, and we never expected to see the following dawn from day to day as the wind used to shift to the north-west during the night and put us die on to the waves. We used to look at these big seas with terror in our hearts, and wonder if they would knock us over, but the vessel plunged through and over them, and God only knows how we did it. The dead man a few yards away from us was always in our minds, and we never knew if he was in the coffin or not as we could hear things shifting at times under the hatches. At 4 p. m. on the fifth day that we were hove to, wind and sea moderated, getting lighter through the night. Despite heavy seas, however, we got under way next morning at 8 o'clock, steering north to get out of the seas. At 4 p. m. we were 40 miles east of Christmas Island, which is 120 miles east of Esperance. We arrived back at Albany at 11 a. m. on the eleventh day out of Albany.

Yours etc.,

ALFRED DOUGLAS

South Perth

This article came from the Douglas collection and was undated, however another article by Alfred Douglas entitled *Israelite Bay : Harry Clark's Early Days* identified the outlaw as Jim Coady, reputed to be guilty of no more than horse stealing and petty theft of rations on the Midlands, but for this he was outlawed.

APPENDIX V

FATAL BOAT ACCIDENT

Albany Mail, Tuesday, May 26th 1885

A fatal boat accident occurred in the harbour yesterday, about 12 o'clock, to two young fellows from the gunroom of H.M.S. *Opal*. It appears that Mr. Beattie, Assistant Engineer, and Mr. Johnson, Senior Midshipman, put off from the man-of-war shortly before noon, and stood in to shore on the starboard tack, and on nearing the coal jetty they went about.

At this time the warships were firing the royal salute. A squall at this moment came down and struck the boat, but she recovered the first shock, but the next gust sent her over. The midshipman clung to the boat's mast, but Mr. Beattie struck out and must have gone down. The steam launch *Perseverance* was just returning from towing out the P & O lighter and came up to where Mr. Johnson was floating and picked him up very much exhausted. Owing to the roughness of the weather we have not been able to obtain further particulars from the ship. A number of shore people went along the beach to see if they could find the body of the unfortunate young officer, and it was thought that there might have been a bare possibility of his reaching the shore in an exhausted condition.

Mr. W. Douglas, of the steam launch having rescued the midshipman, placed him on board a man-of-war's boat which had put out from the *Opal*. This melancholy incident has cast quite a gloom over the town, and much sympathy is felt for his friends and mess mates, among whom he was a favourite.

Albany Mail, Tuesday June 2 1885.

Mr. James H. Beattie, Assistant Engineer of H.M.S. *Opal*, who was drowned by the capsizing of a boat on Monday May 25th, was 25 years of age and married having one child. The body of the deceased has not yet been discovered, though a number of boats and two steam launches have been dredging for several days. In our last issue we omitted to mention that the accident was witnessed by some men near the jetty and they immediately put off to the rescue in a whale boat, and would have been at the scene of the disaster before the steam launch and there had been some delay in starting as no gear was in the boat. The officers of the *Opal* subscribed together and rewarded the man in charge of the steam launch and the crew of the whale boat for their services. Mr. Johnson, Senior Midshipman, who was in the boat when she went over, is none the worse for his long immersion. On the recovery of the body of the unfortunate young officer an inquest will probably be held and he will be buried with naval honours.

The body was not found until June 14th, at the Sand Patch, by Joseph Andrews, a teamster, and was buried in the cemetery. (*Albany Mail* June 16 1885)

Albany Mail, June 16th, 1885.

At the inquest Senior Midshipman Johnson deposed to the capsizing of the boat on May 25th, when he held on to it, but Mr. Beattie swam about twelve yards away with an oar and the rudder. He called him back to hold on to the boat, but he said at first he was all right. He then asked him to give him some assistance. He tried to do so, but found he could only just keep himself afloat, so he swam back to the boat. After that he saw the deceased go down, and about five minutes after he was picked up by the steam launch.

An account of this rescue by E.A. Henderson appeared in *The Countryman* for February 29th, 1968, attributing the rescue to Captain Alfred Douglas, and stating that the latter went on board one of the warships and was rewarded with a purse of money which he forwarded to the drowned seaman's mother in England. This apparently did not take place, however a Mr. A. Kakoner of Albany, described as a "respectable storekeeper," shot dead one of the sailors from the *Diamond*, and the public took up a subscription for *his* mother in England. Mr Kakoner later served two years in prison for manslaughter. (*Albany Mail*, June 16th and 25th, 1885.)

The warships HMS *Opal* and HMS *Diamond* were both in Albany in 1885 for a period of four months, apparently on account of a Russian scare. The *Opal* left on August 20th for Adelaide, The *Diamond* on August 27th for Sydney. During their period in Albany the men from HMS *Opal* gave a concert to raise money for the St.John's Church building fund.

APPENDIX VI

A LINK WITH EARLY NORNALUP

BY K. D. PARKER

Over 40 years ago, in 1910, when the Bellanger family landed from the *Grace Darling* at Nornalup to take up the first holdings in that area, one of the seamen on the *Grace Darling* was Gavin Keyser.

During his duties, Keyser often came in contact with the Bellanger children. A fortnight ago on February 3 - Mr. Keyser, the jubilee relay cyclist from Walpole to Albany, stopped at Nornalup and, for the first time in those intervening years, met one of the children who were aboard that ship - Mrs. T. R. Price of Nornalup.

Memories of pioneering days were revived as Mrs. Price recalled the exciting but hazardous day when the *Grace Darling* discharged her cargo and passengers on the wild uninhabited coast. She remembered how they came ashore through the surf in small boats. There were big seas running at the time and the children had to be practically dropped from the decks of the *Grace Darling* into the waiting ship's boats.

That night the Bellanger family, surrounded by stores, building material and all the equipment necessary for a large family to settle and live in an uninhabited, isolated area, camped on the beach. Next day and several days after came the big task of moving the family and equipment to a site four miles up the Frankland River which had previously been chosen by Pierre Bellanger. Row boats were the only means of transportation and this meant many long trips across Nornalup Inlet and up the Frankland, a return distance of about 14 miles. There, on the preselected site the pioneers built themselves a dwelling overlooking the beautiful river.

Today, on the highest point of the old settlement, a granite cross marks the place where Pierre Bellanger, the pioneering Frenchman who led his family, remains for all time in the foreign soil he loved so much. His wife, Madame P. Bellanger, still lives close by. It is feats like this, as undertaken by the Bellanger family and other pioneers, that are well to remember in this Jubilee Year.

The trip in the *Grace Darling* was not to be Mr. Keyser's last to Nornalup. He returned again as a crew member in the vessel *Dunskey* in 1917. The ship was carrying stores for the Thompsons, another pioneer family on the west side of Nornalup Inlet. This was to be the *Dunskey's* last trip. While she was standing off preparing to unload, a terrific south east gale caught her. With her engine room awash and in trouble, the cargo was jettisoned and the ship fought her way out to sea in an endeavour to escape the treacherous coast. But the *Dunskey* was doomed, and after a losing battle with the gale and smashing seas she was wrecked off Denmark. Her hulk is still visible and is a reminder of venturesome men and the hardships they faced.

Mr. Keyser is a fine example of the calibre of those men, when today, 34 years after he survived the *Dunskey* wreck and now aged 65 years, he thinks little of riding a bicycle 80 miles in the Jubilee relay from Walpole to Albany.

Article from the Douglas Collection, undated.

APPENDIX VII

WRECKED NEAR FREMANTLE

SCHOONER *GRACE DARLING* LOST

CAPTAIN BADLY HURT

After a long life at sea the locally-owned schooner *Grace Darling* ended her career at 4.10 a.m. on Tuesday on a reef lying about 70 miles north of Fremantle. The crew of five were last night brought to Fremantle in Mr. Johnson's fishing boat *Wanderer*, along with the captain, who was at once taken in the ambulance to the hospital, where he was found to be suffering from shock and bodily abrasions. From an account of the wreck told by members of the crew, the passing of the *Grace Darling* was full of incident, and her crew are indeed fortunate in being alive to tell the tale. Sixteen days ago the *Grace Darling* left Geraldton bound for the Abrolhos islands, where she loaded a thousand bags of guano for Fremantle. She commenced her journey to Fremantle yesterday week, and almost immediately got into heavy weather and leaked badly. When about 70 miles from her destination at change of watch yesterday morning she struck a reef and commenced to fill. The crew at once made ready to leave the sinking vessel and reach the mainland about half a mile away. Four of the men were successful in getting safely into the lifeboat, which was launched from amidships, but the captain and cook tarried to collect provisions, and in the meantime the breakers almost filled the lifeboat, and her occupants, unable to obtain a hold on the schooner, were gradually drifted ashore. The fishing boat *Wanderer*, was lying at anchor some two miles distant awaiting a moderation of the storm, and when day broke her master saw the plight of the *Grace Darling*, and went off in a boat to the assistance of the men on the mainland. The latter having only an oar and a broken paddle, were unable to brave the breakers and bring off the captain and the cook, who therefore were alone on the sinking ship for over four hours. With the assistance of Captain Johnson and another of his fishermen and their two oars a party of four successfully got to the schooner and endeavoured to take off their mates. This was accomplished only with great difficulty, for the captain was in a state of semi-consciousness, and had to be pulled into the small boat just as the latter was swept away by a breaker. For some hours the captain remained in a state of senselessness, having been washed under the wheel and against the deck and mast of the schooner by the heavy breakers which continually swept the wreck, and which the cook with his comparative youth and greater strength was able to resist. After standing by a little while to see the last of their ship the crew left for Fremantle in the *Wanderer*, and were landed just after seven o'clock last night. The *Grace Darling* broke up and heeled over into deep water about ten minutes after the rescue of the captain and cook.

The men saved nothing of their belongings, and arrived in Fremantle bootless, coatless, and hatless. They pay a high tribute to Captain Johnson, to whom they say they owe their lives for the manner in which he risked his own to save the captain and cook. The crew were accommodated with beds and food at the Sailor's Rest, and the captain was admitted to hospital and detained for treatment.

The crew of the *Grace Darling* consisted of Captain Schroeder, who resides at Pleasant-road, Fremantle; L.Mclean, mate; Andy Neilson, cook; Peter Anderson, J.Doherty, and T.Johnson, seamen. By a singular coincidence these men, with the exception of the captain, were all making their first trip in the ill-fated schooner. Four of them signed on at Geraldton, where the previous crew left the vessel.

The *Grace Darling* was a small wooden schooner of about 150 tons register. She was formerly owned by Captain Douglas, of Albany, and ran a south coastal trade. For some time past she has been one of the fleet of Messrs. R. J. Lynn and Co. and has been engaged in taking cargo to the smaller North-West ports from Geraldton and Fremantle.

The matron of the Sailor's rest states that the men are badly in need of boots and clothing, donations of which will be gratefully received.

From an unidentified Newspaper account of 3rd February 1914: (Hazel Flugge.)

APPENDIX VIII

CAPTAIN DONOHUE'S MEMORIES

By R.G.

Memories of Albany's shipping prosperity in the early years of the present century were revived when I ran into Ernie Donohue in Stirling Terrace the other day.

Ernie is now master of the South Perth ferry steamer *Duchess II* and has been in the ferry service for many years. He was holidaying at his birthplace (Albany), where he commenced his seafaring career at an early age. From launch deckhand he negotiated the various grades to master of craft. Although now 60 years of age, much of the agility he displayed as a youth remains, and he looks good for many more years of service in his responsible position.

Naturally, we talked of Albany's shipping heyday, of the Boer War activity in the port, the American Fleet in 1908, Millar's timber milling at Torbay and Denmark, the south coast trade, the Great War of 1914-18 and on to the present day when the port's shipping had dwindled to but a skeleton of that of earlier days.

"Shortly after I started as a deckhand on the tug *Jessie*, owned by the firm of Armstrong and Waters, the Boer War broke out in 1899. Ted Brown was my skipper and Bill Williams the engineer. We had a busy time going night and day in servicing the transports calling at Albany, en route to South Africa with troops etc. The old White Star liner *Medic* then on her maiden voyage, picked up the first contingent of WA troops. These came from the city by special train and were embarked from the Town Jetty by the old *Rob Roy*, then in the south coast service, and taken to the *Medic* out in King George's Sound. The men had previously paraded in the Parade-street Reserve. Excitement was at a great pitch, and an atmosphere of patriotism prevailed. I also recall the famous old vessel *Drayton Grange* (she made history on the return run owing to a sickness epidemic, with many deaths on board) the *Grafton Grange* and many other ships.

Even greater port activity prevailed on the return home of Australia's troops during 1902. The troopships coaled and provisioned at Albany, and the harbour was just athrob with life. I had never previously seen so much money in circulation. Sovereigns were then the currency, and everybody seemed to have plenty. Troops came ashore on leave in thousands, and many and varied were the episodes I witnessed. The port had seven or eight coal hulks at that time, and as quickly as a vessel bunkered her place in the line was filled by another. Our little launches darted in and out of the jetty at all hours, and it was a case of snatching a few hours' sleep when one could manage it."

"I also served in the *Loch Lomond*, another little launch of the harbour fleet," said Ernie. "Portions of her remains may still possibly be seen ashore near the rocks below Lawley Park. Another sturdy little launch of that period was the *Escort*, commanded by the late Capt. Skinner, who has a son doing well on the land at Mt. Barker. She was lost at Deep river, near Nornalup, about 1903. Capt. Clem Douglas (still in Albany) was then aboard her, and the late Bill Nelson was engineer. No lives were lost when she was beached. I was serving on the launch *Bruce* at this time. She was brought to Albany from Sydney, and I assumed command of her from the late George Waters (a member of the firm), who had succeeded a well known figure of that period, the late Capt. Evie Woods. A brother of the latter, Capt. Rowley Woods, was in command of the *Loch Lomond* at one stage and now lives at Fremantle. *The Bruce* later caught fire when berthed at the Town Jetty one night. Her lines were cut and she piled up near the then baths at the foot of Lawley Park."

DUNSKEY ARRIVES

"Much has been written of the tug "*Dunskey*" continued Ernie. "She was also brought to Albany from Sydney, much ahead of the *Bruce*, in command of the late Capt. Bill Douglas for local harbour work. She went to Fremantle when the mailboats transferred, but returned.....

.....until October of 1916, the last war then being two years in progress. We had to maintain hourly contact with the large flotilla of troopships which assembled in King George's Sound on that memorable occasion. The ships coaled and provisioned at Albany, and it was a case of long hours and ceaseless vigilance for all."

THE WARATAH

"I'll never forget the Lund Blue Anchor liner *Waratah*, on her maiden voyage, when she anchored in the Sound to coal. The hulk was towed out to her, and I was then engaged as a crew hand on a tug. She later foundered between Durban and Cape Town with the loss of all hands - one of the mysteries of the sea that has never been fully solved. Albany had a fleet of hulks in the stream in those days of my youth. There was the *Margaret, Athena, Herschea, J.L.Hall, Zephyr, Mary Moore, Marie Ricaux, Kelat, Maria Schwab* and *Copeland*. Only one remains today. What a wealth of sea lore could be written about those ships of past days. Stoutly built, they sailed the Seven Seas for years and carried every sort of cargoes before being converted to coal hulks. Albany was then perhaps one of the busiest of Australia's outports, and about 600 men found various forms of employment on the waterfront - coaling, handling cargo, timber, etc - Millar Bros. were then operating their Denmark timber mills, and the old Jubilee and other engines daily hauled large consignments to Albany for shipment to various parts of the world. What an industry that was; a revival on similar lines today would assuredly restore Albany to the shipping map. The south coast trade with Albany was also booming, and the Ravensthorpe copper field employed many men. Some of the small steamers I recall operating on the south coast, right on to Eucla, were the *McGregor, Wyralla, Rob Roy, Flinders, Maitland, Ferret, Dawn, Julia Percy*, and later the *Eucla* and *Kybra*. The late Douglas Bros - all well known seafarers - also sailed the *Agnes, Iris* and *Grace Darling* up and down the coast with skill and daring in all kinds of weather. Another of our jobs in the small launches at the beginning of the century was towing three steel lighters of 130 tons each from Frenchman's Bay outside Albany to the Town jetty full of water for shipping callers. There was no town water supply as we know it in those days and during the Boer War vessels took water drawn from the old fish ponds, delivered by the lighters which were towed alongside....."

Article from the Douglas Collection, incomplete and undated.

APPENDIX IX

ROMANCE OF THE *KELAT*

The *Kelat* was built in 1881 and regarded as a crack sailer of the 'eighties, and was towed to Albany in 1916 after being dismasted in a gale and then dismantled in the Eastern States. A versifier of the day penned the following lines to commemorate the towing of the *Kelat* to Albany.

From : *Serving The Nation*

Jerking the tow lines in efforts to
linger,
Hidden from view by shades of the
night;
Towed at the stern of the plodding
Kooringa,
Slowly the *Kelat* is crossing the
Bight.

Out to the Eastward the dawn is in
motion,
Tingeing with colour the clouds
sombre hue;
Sleepy old Sol rises out of the
ocean,
Bringing the shape of the *Kelat*
in view.

Ghost-like a gaunt in her humilia-
tion,
High on the wave-crest her grey
form is seen,
Bearing the traces of sad mutila-
tion,
Cut on her prow where the bow-
sprit has been.

Never again will she speed on her
duty,
Braving the seas and the wind's
angry roar,
Gone are her topspars-her pride
and her beauty,
Left to decay at the Company's
store.

All that remains of her rigging is
scanty,
Silent the lookout's once cheery
"All's well";
Never again will the sailor's wild
chanty
Rise from her deck on the ocean's
broad swell.

Sol shows his head through a rift
 in a cloud bank,
 Warming the air with his genial
 rays;
 Slowly the old hulk jogs after the
 coal "Tank"
 On to the Westward to finish her
 days.

- Tubbie

The *Kooringa* was one of MacIlwraith's colliers.

During the Second World War the *Kelat* left Albany for Darwin, towed by the tug *Uco*, and was sunk by enemy bombers shortly after her arrival there.

Kelat is said to be a Burmese word for lightening, and the following sentiment certainly seems to apply to her.

"A sailing ship, to me, was always a beautiful, vibrant, living thing, perhaps Man's greatest creation, and to end her days as a filthy dead hulk, rusting and rotting in a harbour, is abhorrent to me. But that's the way of the world."

So wrote Captain Douglas Strath about the *Clevedon*, a sailing ship he had served on which was reduced to a hulk at Fremantle in 1922.¹

The figure head of the coal hulk, ex-sailing ship *Mary Moore* now adorns the replica of the *Amity* on the Albany foreshore.

¹ In a letter to David Hutchinson of the Perth Museum, 24th August 1974, in Maritime Archaeology File 194/79/1.

APPENDIX X

Laudatory verses appeared in various sections of the popular and local Albany press following Douglas' rescue of the crew of the *City of York*

TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM DOUGLAS

(Hero of the "*City of York*")

We'll remember the "*City of York*" Douglas,
 And our minds will proudly dwell,
 On the heroic deeds of our sailor friend,
 Who faced the storms of hell
 Wiry and strong and ever alert,
 Ready to do and to dare,---
 A Christian Sailor---We don't forget,
 And God-like men are rare !

We'll remember you, Captain Douglas,
 Not for one deed alone,
 For heroism is part of your life,
 And your sailor skill is known.
 Yet in every storm from the south-west,
 In the voice of every shell,
 Will the fame of William Douglas
 Resound with the ocean's swell

We'll remember the wrecks of '99
 And the part which Douglas played,
 When in his dingey he braved the seas,
 When others were dismayed.
 Time after time he braved them,
 Each time with human freight,
 He bravely forced his dingey
 While Russel dared--- *to wait*.

We'll remember, we West Australians,
 And when our heroes' roll
 Is filled, we'll put William Douglas
 At the very top of the scroll

etc.

Albany 23rd July

H. C. H.

In an interesting sequel to the rescue Les Douglas relates how years later, in Albany, he and his father met a negro cook who was on the *Kooligar* but who had been the cook on the *City of York*. The cook had heard the name "Douglas" on board ship and came over to speak to the Douglasses on their tug.

WRECKED OFF ROTTNESST ISLAND - NIGHT JULY 12th. 1899

BY DRYBLOWER

"THE CITY OF YORK"

Yes Sir, That's Rottnest Island, just
fourteen miles from here,
You can see the shore quite plainly
whenever the weather is clear.
Her coast is rough and rugged, and
her passage is narrow, but deep,
And ships when entering from
Southward the lights on their port
must keep.

But then its not safe in winter for
its always blowing a gale.
They not only depend on the Engines
but often as well the use of sail.

You've heard of the wreck of the *City
Of York*, 'tis two years come this June,
She'd battled her worst from Sound,
'Twas there she met her doom.
The night that she struck was reckoned
the worst we've ever had.
And that is the place in winter Sir,
where the weather's awful bad.
We'd got no word from the Island
although we waited till late,
And never expected at daybreak to hear
of the barque's sad fate.

We lost no time in sending such aid
as we had to lend,
A Government tug, a score of men,
was all that we had to send,
The wind had ceased to blow sir,
but the sea ran mountains high.
And the *Penquin* stood it bravely as
towards the wreck she drew nigh,
Captain Squeaker was in command Sir,
his of the Government show,
And he is always on the alert Sir,
whenever we have a blow.

They saw the boat a total wreck,
her mast and rigging gone.
They saw the crew won the forecastle
head, from which one dim light still shone.
The *Penquin* steamed about Sir, but oh,
she did no good.
She blew her horn, she pitched and
rolled, then off the wreck she stood,
Not a word was given to lower a boat
the truth is always true.

And not one of them ventured to
save the barque's poor crew.

We've another tug in the harbour, and
her you will always see
Ever ready to lend a hand Sir, and
they call her the old *Dunskey*.
She is only a handful at the most Sir,
but oh she can beat the small,
And the gallant old Captain Douglas,
ever awaits the call.
He heard of the wreck on the Island,
and ever on duty bent,
With his crew of five and the *Dunskey*,
straight to the wreck he went.

He could see he had no easy task,
for the sea was running wild,
He thought of those in peril then, the
widow and the child.
He knew if he ventured 'twould perhaps
cost him his life.
He thought of those so dear to him, his
children and his wife,
But he scratched his head a-thinking,
and to his mate he said,
Perhaps I will see you again Reed,
when the sea gives up its dead.

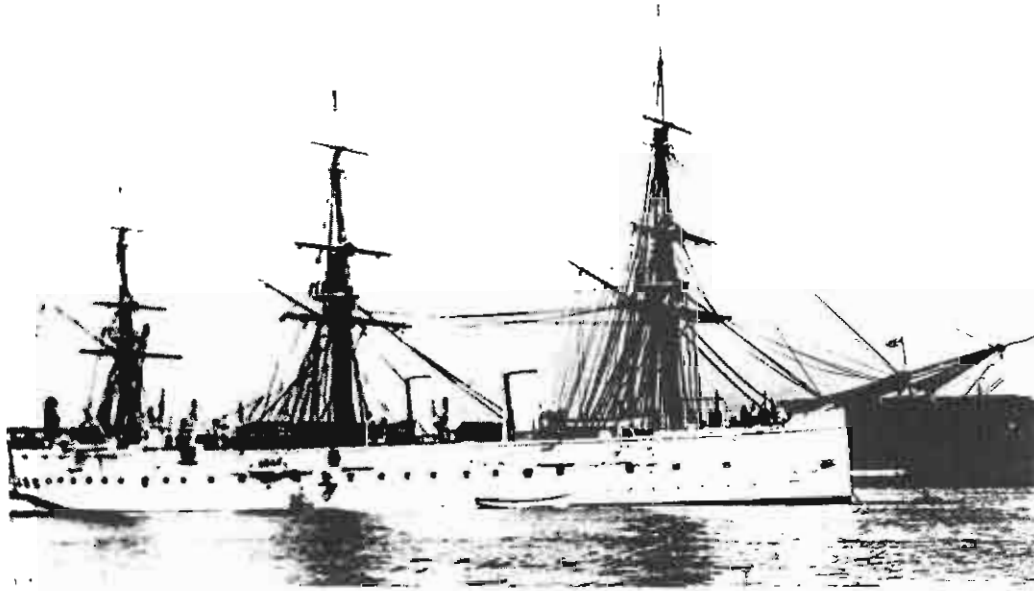
He launched his boat on the billows,
and death appeared to view,
and none on board the *Penguin*,
fancied the dinghy could see it through.
But oh, she stood it bravely, and he with
courage born,
Defied the seething billows, and the cruel
raging storm.
At last he got beside her, they'd
watched him from the wreck,
But they never thought he would reach
her, nor stand upon her deck.
He could see the pangs of sorrow, had found
a tender place,
Not on of them even answers, but the cook
stepped out and said
Last night we got on the rock Sir,-
and there our Captain lay dead.

We've got no word from the land Sir,
no line was sent from the shore,
And some have tried to reach her,
but we will see them never more,
And then he took them one by one
until the crew were saved.
And snatched them from a home of peril,
and a seaman's watery grave.
And then he came over and landed,
he landed them all just here,
and when they got ashore again,
they gave one hearty cheer.

But their hearts were sore with grief Sir,
when they thought of their chums sad fate,
How ten of their crew were drowned,
and the Captain and the mate.
And that night we'll never forget,
nor the morn that the boat's a' sailed
to the wreck at yonder Island,
in the teeth of the raging gale.
How one man did it alone Sir,
when none other there would do.
When the waves were breaking over the deck,
he nobly saved the barque's crew.
And as time goes on, and we are gone,
the children still will talk.
Of Douglas and the *Dunskey*,
and the wreck of the *City of York*.

Douglas Collection, undated

APPENDIX XI



HMS Bacchante

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**The *Bacchante* in a Gale
When King George V was in Danger**

Recollections of Captain Alfred Douglas.

Vivid recollections of the visit of the late King George V and his brother, the Duke of Clarence to Albany in 1881, are still held by Captain Alfred Douglas, of South Perth, for he was in contact with them, perhaps more than any other West Australian.

It will be 55 years next May that HMS *Bacchante* with the two that brought her through the terrible storm.

As stated, there were grave fears of the *Bacchante* broaching. To even the officers later told Captain Douglas, that would have meant "The end of her".

When the *Baccante* eventually reached Albany, there was nobody capable of undertaking the repairs under water. As the ship's engineers got to work, unshipped the rudder and got it aboard a P and O Company's lighter. This was towed to a jetty from where it was

Dragged on Rollers
to the foreshore, where the repairs were duly

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affected and a really good job was made to it.

The rudder weighed about seven tons so the magnitude of the task in shifting it and getting it back in position can readily be understood.

The late King and his brother remained in Albany for three weeks and then went East on the P. and O. steamer *China*.

It was during their stay in the southern port that Captain Alfred Douglas and his brother the late Captain Frederick Douglas had the honour of taking the Princes for a sea cruise to some adjacent islands on an exploratory tour of Oyster Bay Harbour.

This was the occasion on which the present Alfred Douglas carried King George in his arms from the boat to the shore, a distance of 100 yards. Can anyone else in Australia today claim to have had that privilege?

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Princes slept in Gaoler's Quarters.
When an Albany Publican Would Not Admit Them
An Episode During the Present King's Visit in 1881

(By W. J. B.)

“Their Royal Highness Prince George and Duke of Clarence are here! They want accommodation!

Come down and let us in!”

Delivered at dead of night, such an imperative summons would ordinarily have brought a hotel keeper tumbling downstairs to open the door in trembling haste to admit the Royal visitors.

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But the Albany publican was the exception. Surlily he refused, and banged the window.

With nowhere else to go for shelter, the two Princes of England slept the hours till morning in the gaolers quarters.

It was a memorable experience for the little party which attended on them.

What caused the princes to be wandering about the streets in Albany in the small hours of the morning?

The circumstances are well known to Captain Alfred Douglas, of South Perth. He happened to be a witness of the incidents which led up to their Highnesses staying in apartments next to the lodgings reserved for unwilling guests of their Royal Father, the King.

Fifty four years ago his majesty King George V., who is now celebrating the Silver Jubilee of his reign, and his elder brother, the Duke of Clarence, visited these shores as naval trainees.

Their ship, the *Bacchante*, had put into Albany with a damaged rudder. While repairs were being done, the Princes made a number of excursions ashore.

On such occasions they were welcomed and feted, but the Princes themselves like nothing

3

better than to go kangaroo shooting. Such expeditions were usually undertaken under the supervision of the late John McKenzie.

One day, to vary the sport, rabbit shooting was decided upon. At that time Breaksea Island

Fairly Swarmed

with the rodents, so it was agreed that the Princes should be taken there.

The Party left the *Bacchante* at 9 o'clock in the, headed by Fred and Alfred Douglas of Albany, who had placed their trim little sailing ship [The *Agnes*] and themselves at the Princes disposal for the day. In addition to their Royal Highnesses, five gentlemen from the *Bacchante* were included in the party. An hour after their departure they were at Breaksea island starting the echoes with the explosions from their guns and revelling in the fun.

They lunched round a fire kindled on the beach; and Alfred Douglas still proudly recalls that once in his life he ate a meal with the present King of England. Orders were to set out on the return run to Albany at 3 o'clock, but a sou-wester sprang up and freshened, making departure impossible

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The Douglasses counselled waiting till sundown, the wind would drop a lot then they advised, a pleasant sail back to the *Bacchante* would be possible under these better conditions. The Princes, who were enjoying the shooting, leapt at the opportunity to remain a few hours longer.

For once, however, the Douglasses' judgement was at fault. A stiff breeze still blew at six o'clock, when the cast off from the island. And once beyond the lee of the land, where the wind whipped the sea into

Angry Rollers

they had hurriedly to revise their plans. To beat against it back to the warship was quite out of the question. So they set a course for Oyster Harbour and ran into a cosy sheltered cove. The navigable waters of this place ended in long shallows, through which the party had to wade in order to reach the beach. Alfred Douglas still proudly recalls that he carried Prince George, the present King of England, ashore on his shoulders.

In the hope that the wind might yet abate enough to allow them to steer from Oyster Harbour, the party beguiled the time until

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10 P. M. with yarns about their various excursions. One of the gentlemen happened to ask wasn't there an ancient well near the harbour entrance. Alfred Douglas knew it perfectly and guided them to the spot. An old board bearing its history interested them immensely, and they took notes of the particulars which it conveyed.

By 10 o'clock the weather had not improved. There was still no sign of the sou-wester changing direction and blowing from a northerly quarter. In the circumstance nothing else remained but tramp the distance into Albany.

The part covered the six miles in good time. At 12. 30 a. m. they were knocking up residents in quest of accommodation. But all to no avail. After one unsuccessful attempt - the citizen had no vacancies - they took themselves to a well known hotel and rapped on the door.

No Response !

After repeated thumpings the publican stirred and opened a window "Get out of it!" he growled sleepily.

35

preparatory to withdrawing his head.

"We want accommodation!" called Fred Douglas from the street below.

"Too late !" retorted the surly hotel keeper.

Then the Princes disclosed themselves. "We are the Duke of Clarence and Prince George", they informed him.

Whether sleepiness or sulkiness at being pulled out of bed at dead of night made the publican forget his good manners was never satisfactorily settled. But in emphatic language and in many words he told the Princes and the others to go to a

Torrid Place

compared to which the sun temperature at Marble Bar is like an Arctic blizzard. Then the window banged. The party was as far as ever from finding beds that their indignant remonstrances and haranguing of the publican fell on deaf ears.

Conceive the dilemma of the Douglasses! They had in their care two Princes of the Blood and several distinguished gentlemen. Albany had gone to bed for the night, and time was nearly half past one and they

had just been rudely insulted by a drowsy publican.

Fred Douglas was all for going to the magistrate, but presently the party found hospitality in the most unexpected of places. Mr. John McGovern, the gaoler, came to the rescue like a good Samaritan. He took the Princes into his own private house, made up the fire and cooked them a meal. Their Highnesses remained

In the Gaol Precincts

until 5 a. m., when they caught the *Bacchante's* boat at the jetty. Thus ended their rabbit shooting expedition, and its unique sequel.

The Princes did no more hunting.

Within a few days after being away from the hotel at 1. 30 am they were travelling to the Eastern States on the P. and O. R.M.S. *China*, escorted by the warship *Cleopatra*. The *Bacchante* followed later.

As for the surly hotel keeper, he found that his incivility let him into a heap of trouble. Not the least of his difficulties was summons to appear before the magistrate to explain his bad manners to Royalty. The experience cost him five pounds.

(Douglas Collection)

Appendix XI is part of a family document written in 1935 by a female member of the Douglas family, copied from an unknown source. It is somewhat quaint both in grammar and manner of presentation, but apart from correcting a few spelling mistakes, I have left it as it was written. The manner in which the paragraphs are headed suggests that this may have been copied from a newspaper article, and it did in fact appear in May 1935. There is some doubt as to the veracity of this story, since there is no trace of it in Prince George's diary other than a mention that a party including the later Admiral Fisher had gone to Breaksea Island to shoot rabbits and had failed to return one evening. Midshipmen were required to keep diaries of all their activities. Prince George was apparently responsible for supervising the work on the *Bacchante's* rudder. The story may be fictitious, but is added for local colour.¹

¹ Dunstan West pers. comm.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER FOR THE PURCHASE FOR
DESTRUCTION OF THE TRAWLER BONTHORPE NOW
APPENDIX XII LYING AT ALBANY HARBOUR.

1. The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.
2. The title of the vendor to sale arises under a letter from the owners of the ship in England and a copy of this letter can be perused at the Premier's Department.
3. That the ship is sold as she is for removal of any valuable parts and fittings which the purchaser may desire within a period to be arranged,
4. The purchaser must undertake to tow the ship out to sea under the supervision of some official of the Government to some place to be approved of by that official and there destroyed by explosion.
5. The purchaser shall pay all expenses attending on the removal and the destruction of the ship, and must undertake in carrying out such destruction not to create any obstruction to navigation.
6. The purchaser shall furnish a bond with some insurance company or other acceptable nature in the sum of £100 for the fulfilment of the purchaser's obligations in regard to the destruction of the ship.
7. The purchaser must understand that as the ship is sold simply for the removal of any valuable parts and subsequent destruction in terms of the foregoing conditions that no title whatever can be given to the ship by way of transfer of the certificate of registry.

The Hon. the Premier,
P E R T H.

Sir,

re Trawler "Bonthorpe"

With regard to the tenders that are being called for the purchase of the Trawler "Bonthorpe" for the purpose of breaking up in order to obtain all parts and fittings and to recent conversations with yourself, I now beg to state that the trawler in question, although in a very bad condition, is too good to break up and sink.

In Albany we have only one tug, the "Awhina" which is an old boat. In a year or two the "Awhina" will be too old to continue doing the work and the Port of Albany will then be left without a tug.

As you know, there is not enough shipping in this port to justify the purchase of either a new tug or a first class second hand one. It would be a calamity for this port to be left without a tug of any description.

The "Bonthorpe", although requiring a lot of money to be spent in repairs, would make quite a passable tug for the port. To destroy it would be an economic waste and a blow to the Port of Albany by depriving us of the chance to get a tug to replace the "Awhina".

I understand that application has been made for remission of the customs duty on the "Bonthorpe" through Mr. J. H. Prowse M.H.R.

In view of these facts I beg to request that the conditions of the tender be altered and that the matter of accepting a tender for wrecking be reconsidered and that the "Bonthorpe" be made available to purchasers for use as a tug in Albany.

I would point out that practically all the parts that were of value on the "Bonthorpe" have been either removed or wilfully destroyed and that the value of what remains would be less than the cost of towing the vessel out and destroying it by explosives.

If the vessel is sold for a tug there will at least be something to go into the State treasury, otherwise I venture to think there will be nothing.

If I should happen to become the purchaser, I would be able to supply some of the missing parts from the "Awhina" and by so doing get a better boat from the two.

Yours faithfully,



C. Douglas, Albany Tug Company

LETTER 3.

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ALBANY.

15th June 1933

To the Under Secretary,
The Hon. The Premier,
PERTH.

Dear Sir,

re Trawler "Bonthorpe"

I beg to tender for the straight-out purchase of the trawler "Bonthorpe" free of all liability, including duty, the sum of £200.

It is understood that this tender is a price for the purchase of the trawler which if accepted will enable me to deal with her in the manner set out by me in my letter to you of the 1st inst. and is entirely outside the conditions under which you have called for tenders through the "West Australian" newspaper.

Yours faithfully,

N.

PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT
PERTH

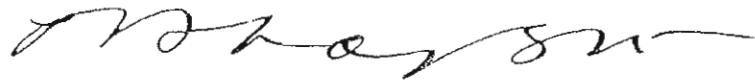
16th August, 1933.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your tender of the sum of £200. for the trawler "Bonthorpe", free of all liability, including duty, I have to advise you that this tender is now accepted.

I should be glad to receive your cheque for this amount, payable to the Secretary, Premier's Department, at as early a date as convenient, when immediate arrangements will be made to hand over the trawler to you for the purpose of conversion into a tug..

Yours faithfully,



SECRETARY, PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT.

Captain C. Douglas,
The Albany Tug Company,
ALBANY.

H.

PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT
PERTH

26th August, 1933.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your cheque for £200. in payment for the s.s. "Bonthorpe".

I also acknowledge receipt of your telegram asking for permission to remove the vessel to the town jetty to which I replied that there was no objection.

With regard to the transfer of registry, certain difficulties arise owing to the conditions under which the vessel was abandoned, and the Customs Department has been asked to have the English register cancelled, so that you may register the vessel locally.

Yours faithfully,



SECRETARY, PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT.

Captain C. Douglas,
The Albany Tug Company,
ALBANY.

A L B A N Y

16th Sept. 1933

Arthur Wansborough Esq M. L. A.,
A L B A N Y

Dear Sir,

On or about the 23rd day of August last I and others being the Albany Tug Coy., purchased the S. S. "Bonthorpe" from the Government of W. A. for the purpose of converting the vessel into a tug for the port of Albany.

It was a condition of the final agreement that the purchase price was to be free of all liability including duty.

I have now received a form of recognisance from the Customs Department, a copy of which I enclose herewith for your information.

I cannot sign the recognisance as it is contrary to my contract of purchase of the vessel. I do not want any trouble to crop up and I would be greatly obliged if you would get in touch with Mr. Frowse M. H. E. and ask him to put the matter right with the collector of Customs.

A copy of my letter to the Secretary to the Premier of W. A. is also enclosed for your use and information.

You will understand that the terms of the recognisance are unworkable as I will be taking internal fittings and engine parts out of the "Akwinna" down the jetty to be repaired and back on to the "Bonthorpe" also some fittings and engine parts out of the "Bonthorpe" for repair and/or alteration and back on to her again.

If I am to notify the Customs Department whenever a part is to go along the jetty I cannot proceed with the work in a practical manner.

I am being held up at present and therefore trust that you will treat the matter as urgent and endeavour to get instructions sent through to allow me to proceed without this delay.

Yours faithfully,

Encls:

Copy

Canberra
25th July, 1933 234

Dear Sir

Adverting to your letter of 5th June, 1933, relative to the question of the payment of duty in connection with the trawler "Banthorpe" I desire to inform you that your request for a remission of the Duty on this trawler under a warrant No. 471 of 10th September, 1929, under Tariff Item 424 (G) under Security that the vessel would be utilised for a period of five years from the date of entry only for bona fide trawling for fish or any other use under special conditions which the Minister may approve has now received consideration.

I am pleased to be able to inform that my colleague the Minister for Trade and Customs has decided that the Security be regarded as being satisfied, and that the vessel may be broken up or may be used as a tug in the port of Albany after refitting and the transfer to her of rigging from a tug at present in use, subject to duty being paid on any dutiable goods landed from the vessel.

Yours faithfully

(Sgd)

A. J. MacLachlan

for Revenue Director

J. H. Prosser Esq MP
Department

Warrant with compliance

APPENDIX XIII

RELIEF FOR RAVENSTHORPE

It will be remembered that representations having been made by residents of Ravensthorpe, whereby relief was solicited owing to food supplies running short, the Government decided to send the *Silver Star* down the coast on charter. Some little difficulty was, however, experienced with the Labour bodies, which were eventually overcome on communication with the executive of the Seaman's Union in Melbourne, and the embargo lifted. The vessel was ready loaded and so no time was lost once the necessary permission had been given, and accordingly the vessel put to sea on Tuesday night. In the ordinary course of events she should have reached Hopetoun early in the evening of the following day, but no news coming to hand regarding her whereabouts up till a late hour on Friday night a little uneasiness was felt regarding her safety. More hopeful people, however, were inclined to the opinion that she was in all probability sheltering under the lee of Doubtful Island, and as events proved this surmise was in some measure correct. The news that she was safe came to hand on Saturday morning, and the vessel arrived home on Sunday morning.

In an interview with Captain Carl Douglas, (who had with him as his crew Messrs. R. Williams, S. Fisher, A. Douglas and son, and L. Waters), the following facts of the voyage were gleaned :-

The *Silver Star* left Albany at 10.30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 19, under apparently fine and favourable weather conditions. This state of affairs continued until Cape Vancouver was abeam, at 1.30 a.m., when the wind gradually increased and heavy rain squalls prevailed. Captain Douglas was on the point of turning back from here, but on second consideration he decided to go on till daylight, hoping that the weather would moderate. A slight improvement occurred about 7 o'clock, and he then determined to run for Doubtful Island. The weather at this time freshened up considerably, and terrific beam seas caused the little craft to roll heavily, but despite the buffeting she behaved in a most marvellous manner, in fact little or no heavy water was shipped over the decks. Unfortunately, however, this was not the case in other directions, as a considerable quantity was shipped through the portholes. About 8.30 the engineer made enquiries regarding the nearest anchorage, and he was informed it would take something like three hours to reach the nearest port, and it was then decided to make for Cape Riche. About fifteen minutes later he reported that all hands would have to use the buckets to bale the engine room, or he feared they would soon be brought to a standstill. The bilge pipes were choked, and the pumps were thus rendered useless. The work of baling was then proceeded with, and the crew were thereby enabled to keep the water down sufficiently to allow headway at the rate of a mile an hour, and Cape Riche Island was eventually reached at 11.30. After dinner an inspection was made of the vessel, and it was soon made apparent, that although she may be all right as a pleasure craft engaged in no more serious work than ferrying people about a closed harbour, the *Silver Star* was utterly unsuitable for the dangerous mission then engaged on. In this respect it may be mentioned that an utter disregard for "safety first" was evident on all sides, and the fact that she was in experienced hands goes a long way towards her ultimate return home. The gale blew from the S.S.E. all day Thursday, with no apparent abatement, and, of course, no idea was entertained of venturing out. On Friday, about 9 in the morning, the conditions abated slightly, and it was decided to make another attempt. Leaving the lee of the island, progress was only slow, owing to the heavy sea still running, in which the little craft laboured heavily, but ultimately Doubtful Island was made towards dusk, and another anchorage was effected. She stayed there until 11 p.m., and as the weather had then appreciably moderated, the voyage was resumed. Nothing serious happened from then on, and Hopetoun was reached at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning. Here a hearty welcome awaited the venturesome crew, and congratulations were showered on them by an eager and expectant crowd of residents. The work of unloading was commenced at 7.30 and the cargo was all out by 11.45. The *Silver Star* then took in a quantity of luggage, water and coal, and the return voyage was commenced at 2.30 p.m. Luckily fine weather was met with for the whole of the journey, and Albany was reached at 11.30 a.m. on Sunday.

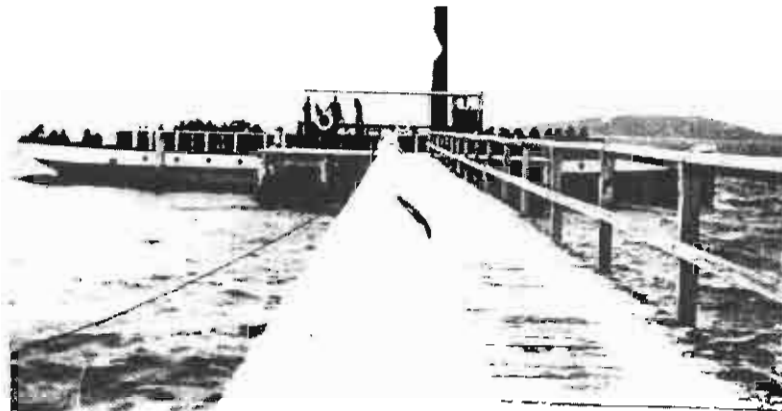
CONDITIONS AT RAVENSTHORPE

That there was need of the relief she carried to Phillips River is proved by the following letter received by Mrs. A.Y. Hassel from her daughter, Mrs. Canny, wife of the manager of the West Australian Bank at Ravensthorpe :-

"I was thankful to hear the *Silver Star* had reached Hopetoun. This has been a great place the last six weeks. First we had to order our meat two days beforehand, and pay cash when we got it, or no meat. No one could be quite certain of getting the joint ordered. A sort of first order first served. Lately things have been really very serious, so it's a good thing the boat is really at Hopetoun. All the flour has run out. I got my last loaf today, and found there was enough flour in the house for a day or two's scones. Even the little wheat in the district could only make about two day's supply of flour. There has been no sugar for the last ten days. Potatoes, onions etc., are non-existent, and we have depended on our garden for any vegetables. I am thankful for my station experience in that line, but living has been most difficult for the last month. Quite a number of people have been on the verge of starvation, and it's a horrible position to be in. I think I have a good idea of what the people in England have been going through. A lot of people have been going to bed with the sun - no candles or kerosene. I filled the lamps yesterday, and have half a bottle left. The storekeepers have been wearing a worried look. I thought I would be rather clever and wrote to Ednie to send me a little flour and sugar by a man who was motoring through, but his car broke down, so my luck was out, as he decided not to go. Everyone seems to think they can't get away from the place quick enough."

Undated newspaper article. (Ken Douglas.)

Below : Two views of Silver Star at the time of the Ravensthorpe rescue. (Photos Les Douglas)



APPENDIX XIV

AN OLD DUTCH WRECK
Remains may lie near Esperance
VISITORS YEARS BEFORE DIRK HARTOG

By W.J.B.

Although history credits Dirk Hartog, the Dutch navigator, with being the first skipper to make a landfall on the Western Coast of the Australian Continent, on October 25th 1616, some vague knowledge did exist of outlying portions, such as the Abrolos, before the year 1530. As yet no evidence of a Mariners contact with the mainland, either the western or the southern parts, has been admitted; but some future Historian, when searching among the archives of the Dutch and Portugese, may turn a somewhat remote probability into a certainty. Records may still be extant of a ship which set sail for the Southern Continent that seamen believe existed, and which never returned years before Dirk Hartog sighted the western sand dunes from the bridge of the *Eendracht*.

What lends support to this belief that at least one vessel visited this coast before 1616 is the definite opinion that the wreck of a Dutch ship lies in Victoria harbour, 20 miles east of Esperance Bay.

Captain Alfred Douglas, of South Perth, who spent many years of his life sailing the Southern coast, and knows many of its secrets, is confident that the bones of a Dutch vessel rest at this spot, and he believes that the vessel went down in 1600, or 16 years before Dirk Hartog lifted the veil of secrecy on the Western Waters.

Campbell Taylor who settled in the Thames area in the early '30s and who subsequently started sheep raising in the Esperance district, was personally acquainted with Captain Douglas. Long contact with the blacks had made Campbell Taylor familiar with their tribal legends, and from the full blood aborigines he learnt that a big *Kibra* (Ship) had a long while ago been wrecked on the coast, either in Victoria Harbour or the Duke of Orleans, about 32 miles east of Esperance. The definiteness about the actual position of the wreck was, of course contributable to the long span of years governing and the inevitable distortions and exaggerations of the truth which invariably intrude in recollections of long and almost forgotten legends.

Campbell Taylor did not actually take the natives story as the final proof and made investigations on his own. As a result of these enquiries he was able to show Captain Douglas what may be regarded as irrefutable evidence of a Dutch visit in 1600.

With Victoria Harbour on one side of his little schooner, Captain Douglas was overtaken by a south easterly wind and ran to the shelter of Station Island under the lee of the shore in order to let go five fathoms of cable, but the vessel continued to drift. More chain was run out until 60 ft of cable had been released, but this still was insufficient to hold her. The ship still dragged towards the surf on the shore, but a second anchor with 24 ft of cable, eventually brought her up into the wind. The ship's company remained there for two days and two nights before the fury of the gale abated. But when the schooner came to leave the second anchor held fast, and no amount of manoeuvring or strain would move it. After resisting the efforts of five men on the windlass, the cable was slipped and probably remains at the bottom of the harbour to this day.

It is Captain Douglas' opinion that the anchor fouled an old wreck at the bottom of the sea; the mere fact that the anchor caught in some obstruction is in itself no evidence at all of the presence of the skeleton of a ship, for a jutting piece of rock would keep it in captivity; but a very important event occurred that makes the wreck not only a possibility but a probability.

Campbell Taylor, who had joined the crew during their sojourn in the harbour, happened to mention the aborigines' legend about the ill fated "Kibra" (Ship). One thing led to another, and he offered to give the schooner's company an ocular demonstration of the reason why he himself believed that some Dutchmen had come to grief in the vicinity. Off they started, Campbell Taylor, Fred Douglas, Alfred Douglas, Edward Pettit and a Netherlander, the latter a member of the crew. Campbell Taylor led them to the East side of the harbour, where there lay a flat rock partly encrusted with shellfish. The guide told him that the natives had shown it to him years before.

After knocking off some of the encrustations, the little party could make out the figures 1600, quite distinctly. There was also an inscription, which could not be distinguished. Wind and weather had done their work of destruction only too well, but the Netherlander believed that it was the name of a ship, possibly a Dutchman. Who did the carving, and why? A likely explanation is that a Dutch ship did meet with disaster in Victoria Harbour, which Captain Douglas admits is a death trap and some survivor left this evidence. Mariners of a couple of hundred years ago did leave plates or cairns, upon newly discovered coastlines as proof that they had touched there. And the contention that the carved stone does not necessarily mean a ship foundered in Victoria Harbour can be answered, though not conclusively. If the vessel did make such a landfall, and left the date and its name on the stone and departed, why was nothing heard of it afterwards?

The Western Australian coast may hold other secrets like this one. Perhaps one day researches among other documents and records will shed light upon this interesting mystery. ¹

(Continued next page)

¹ Marked "Extract Sunday Times" (Undated) on letterhead paper of Southern Underseas Diving Services, Esperance. In Maritime Archaeology File 69/ 72/ 2

**FURTHER NOTES ON STRANGE FINDS AND WRECKS ETC
ON THE WEST AUSTRALIAN COAST. (March, 1940 - D. Cowan)**

**CURIOUS REPORT RELATING TO THE LOCALITY OF ESPERANCE OR
VICTORIA HARBOUR NEARBY.**

(Some distance east of King Geo. Sound W.A.)

On 4th February 1937 The *West Australian* newspaper published a condensed report of an address by Mr.M.J.L.Uren who was reported as stating:

"A high pooped Dutch ship, whose name from a worn inscription found on a rock appeared to have begun with the letters M-I-S met her doom in the Victoria Harbour near Esperance...."

In The *West Australian* of 24/2/1937 Captain Alfred Douglas referred to this statement and contradicted the statement that he had ever seen the letters M-I-S etc - Mr.Douglas wrote as follows - (in the newspaper)

(of Esperance district) [SIC]

"Mr Campbell Taylorhappened to mention the ABORIGINES' LEGEND about the ill fated Kibra (Mr Campbell Taylor being our guide) With him was the late Captain Fred Douglas, myself, Edward Petit, and a Dutch officer, he being a member of the crew. Mr Taylor led us to the east side of the harbour, where there lay a flat rock partly encrusted with shellfish. Mr Taylor had told us that the natives had shown it to him years before. After knocking off some of the encrustations, the little party could make out the figures 1600 quite distinctly. There was also an inscription which could not be distinguished, as wind and weather had done their work of destruction only too well, but the Dutch officer believed that it was a Dutch name, as he could make it out better than we could; but where Mr.Uran got the letters M-I-S from I don't know. I definitely say that they had nothing to do with the Dutch ship's name lying in Victoria Harbour east of Esperance. It was 53 years ago on the 15th of this month since we first saw this name on the flat rock in Victoria Harbour."

Note by D.C. Cowan :

"On 13th March 1937 Capt. Alfred Douglas called to see me - he was a very old man - He reiterated the statement that the letters M-I-S were NOT to be seen on the rock, and that no actual wreck was seen by him or his party.

He, however, insisted that he had actually seen the shelf or piece of flat rock on which the figures 1600 could be seen after the shell encrustations had been knocked off. He also said that below this was an inscription carved or cut into the rock (he said granite rock) consisting of about three lines of characters but they were so water and weather worn that nothing could be distinguished. A Dutch member of the party believed a ship's name was written but he could not say definitely. The inscription was shown to Capt. Douglas and party by Mr. Campbell Taylor to whom the aborigines nearby had told a legend of an ill fated ship, which long before had become a "*Kibra*" or wreck, either at the Victoria Harbour or at the Duke of New Orleans [SIC] Harbour further away. The Bay is said to be about 32 miles from Esperance."

Mr or Capt. A. Douglas also told me that the rock on which the inscription had been cut by a chisel, had once been upright or sloping, and had fallen flat.

Capt. Douglas also stated (but was tired and rather vague in his statement to this effect) that during a storm or bad weather while in Victoria Harbour at this time the 2nd anchor of his ship fouled in something and had to be cut away, while the other anchor would not take a firm hold - he wondered if the obstacle could have been the hulk of the old wreck - but it was on opposite side of the harbour to the inscription - Capt. Douglas was so tired and vague regarding the

trouble with the anchor of his ship etc. that his memory may have been confused in this latter part -

He was most clear and definite about the finding of the inscription and the figures 1600.

Note and Query - D.C. Cowan

It has not been possible to find out whether Vancouver, Flinders or other voyagers left inscriptions on our southern coasts - or what course the Dutch ship *Gulde Zeepard* in January 1627 took along the coast, and whether she left tablets of any kind there.¹

Writing in an article in the *Countryman* for 23/5/68 Marcus Conrad stated that in Old Dutch Maps indicate that in Jan. 1627 Peter Nutys and Francis Thijissen discovered what is now called King George's Sound in their vessel the *Gulden Zeepaerd*.

"Thirty years ago a rather belated report reached the Western Australian Historical Society that back in 1883 Captain Alfred Douglas had found what could have been just such an inscription. He saw three lines of badly water worn indecipherable characters, cut into a granite rock near Esperance.

Malcolm Uren, the well known author, is reported to have examined the stone in 1937. He later claimed that the inscription contained a ship's name but he could make out nothing definite. Also he detected what appeared to be the letters M-I-S and the date 1600. However, in the case of a "badly water worn" inscription, the date 1627 could easily be mistaken for 1600.

"Nothing seems to have been done to protect the rock from vandals and the elements and apparently no photographs were taken of the inscription. Yet that old rock may be a valuable relic of one of the great Dutch voyages of Australian exploration."

¹ From Maritime Archaeology File 69/ 72/ 2

APPENDIX XV

MESSAGE FROM THE SEA

Mr. W. Douglas, of Nanarup, has handed us a piece of paper found in a bottle on Nanerup Beach by one of his sons. It is written on the back of an application form for admission to a juvenile lodge of the I.O.O.F., the form having been printed in Adelaide. The message is as follows : -

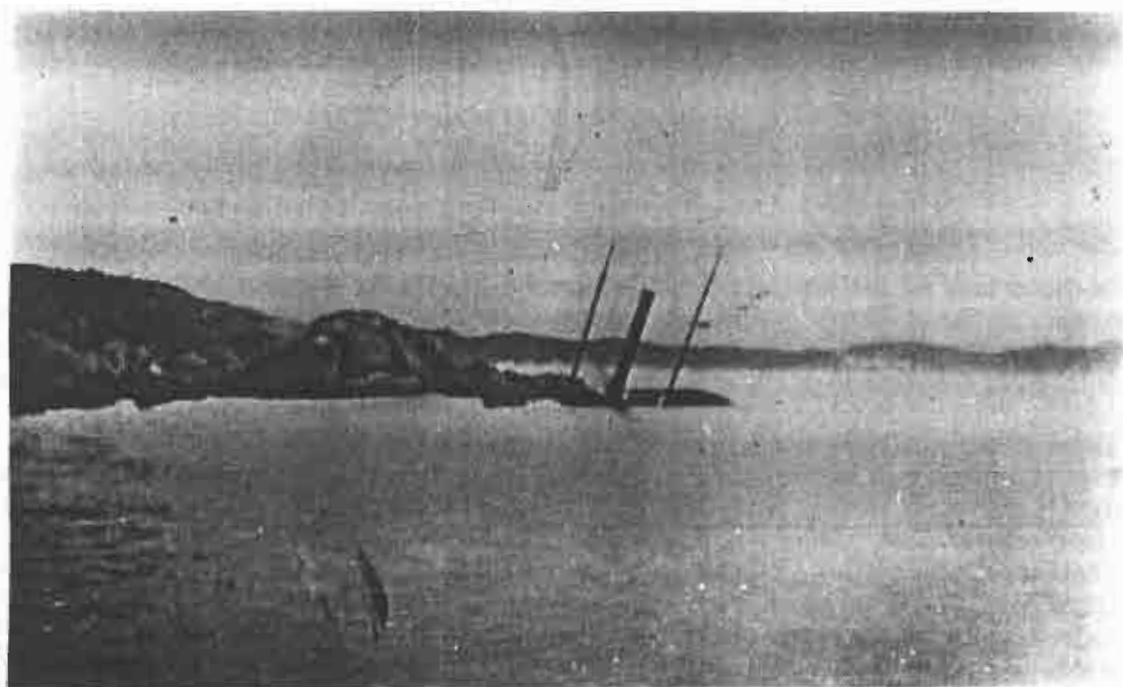
“May 1889. The ship *Dundee* wrecked off the coast of Africa. All drowned except three, myself and two seamen. Left entirely to the mercy of our Maker, on a small island, latitude 17. If this should meet with honest people, make it well known. I am, but not for long, EDWARD KIRKSEY.”

Australian Advertiser, April 13, 1892.

This bottle must have taken almost three years to drift across the Indian Ocean from the African coast to Nanarup. I.O.O.F. stands for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

APPENDIX XVI

UNKNOWN SHIPWRECK



This photograph was discovered in the Battye Library labelled "Steamer wrecked at Frenchman's Bay". There is a copy in the Albany Library. However, investigation has revealed that the location is not Frenchman Bay or Cheynes' Beach, both of which have similar rock formations. Suggestion has been made that the vessel is the *Electra* wrecked near Bunbury, but this has also proved incorrect.

Otherwise the site remains unidentified, if indeed it is in Western Australia.

APPENDIX XVII

CONCERNING THE *FERRET*

An Audacious Adventure

(By "Sinbad.")

In the course of his article on the Kimberley gold rush, Warden Owen made a passing reference to the ss. *Ferret* and the conspiracy which led to that vessel's presence in Australian waters. The facts of that audacious adventure, as elicited in the criminal archives of Victoria and published at the time in Melbourne newspapers are worth recalling, since they transcend in strangeness the wildest romance.

Three principals were concerned in this dare-devil conspiracy. Their names were James Stewart Henderson, alias Smith, alias Bernard; Edward Rashleigh Carlyon, alias Wright, alias Leigh; and Joseph Walker, alias Wallace. Of these three rogues Henderson was the arch villain of the piece.

The *Ferret* was built at Glasgow, was owned by the Highland Railway Company, and was originally engaged in the Clyde ferry service. In October, 1880, she was chartered by Henderson, under the name of Smith, who represented himself falsely, as was afterwards proved, as a relation of the Rt. Hon. W.H. Smith then First Lord of the Admiralty. He was not exactly a man of straw, for on the Highland Railway Company's agents inquiring as to his financial standing he was able to refer them to a banking house in which he had deposited a considerable sum of money. This fact, and the man's plausibility, seem to have convinced them of his bonafides, and a deal was effected. The *Ferret* was leased for six months, cash being paid over for one month's charter and bills, which, on maturity, were to prove valueless, were given for the remainder of the charter money.

The ship was overhauled and well stocked with provisions and choice wines at a cost of 500 pounds, and with stores, plate and coal to the value of 1,400 pounds. Henderson had an office in London under the name of Henderson and Co., a purely bogus firm masquerading, as shipbrokers. Two of his co-conspirators, Walker, who also posed as a shipbroker and had an office in the city, and a man named Carlyon, were entered on the *Ferret's* articles as purser and chief officer respectively. A coloured man, named Watkins, was made sailing master, and a man named Griffin, who ultimately was to prove the principal witness for the Crown when the conspirators were indicted for their felonious offences, was appointed chief engineer. Other officers were engaged, and as soon as a scratch crew could be got together the *Ferret* sailed from Glasgow for Cardiff. Here the officers and stewards were provided with gold-cuffed and gold-buttoned uniforms and here, or at another Welsh port, 260 tons of coal were bunkered, the *Ferret* sailing thus ostensibly for her Mediterranean cruise.

An essential part of the conspirators' deep laid scheme was to engender a belief that the vessel had foundered with all hands. In pursuance of this plan she was taken through the Straits of Gibraltar in daylight signalling her number to the signalling station and reporting "All Well." But during the night and in the darkness and without showing her lights, she passed through the Straits unobserved. After entering the Atlantic her funnel, which when she sailed was yellow, was painted black and her boats, originally blue, were painted white. Some lifebuoys and buckets bearing her name were thrown overboard; and to complete her transformation her wheelhouse and chartroom on the bridge were dismantled and re-built on the deck aft. Naturally the effecting of this metamorphosis excited comment among the crew. Henderson, on learning of the discussions on the subject in the fo'castle, mustered all hands and addressed them in an impassioned speech. He told them he was the owner of the ship, that he was engaged on a secret expedition and, after threatening to shoot any of them who might betray him, exacted from them a pledge that they would be true and faithful. He led Griffin to believe that he was a man of great wealth, that he had been a Colonel in the United States cavalry and that in consequence of

a political offence for which he was wanted he had determined to destroy all traces of his identity.

Re-named

There were two other steamship's on Lloyds Register of similar tonnage to the *Ferret*, namely the *Bantam* and the *India*, and the first of these two names was now conferred on the stolen ship. The name *Ferret* was filed out of both the ship's bells and was planed out on her bows and counter, that of the *Bantam* being substituted.

A call was then made at one of the Cape Verde Islands for water. Meantime, fresh ship's papers were being forged, all hands were given fresh names, and enjoined to state, if questioned on the subject, that they had come from Singapore. From the Cape Verde Islands the *Ferret*, under the name of *Bantam*, cleared for Santos in Brazil, which was reached on Boxing Day.

At Santos a cargo of coffee was obtained under a charter party for Marseilles. But leaving Santos a course was set for Cape Town, another set of ship's papers were forged, fresh bills of lading made out and the *Ferret's* name was again changed. She was no longer the *Ferret* or the *Bantam* but the *India*. Further disguises were also resorted to. A yard and square sail were added to the foremast the ship having previously carried no yards.

At Cape Town the greatly daring Henderson sold for 13,000 pounds the cargo of coffee which had been entrusted to him by the consignors at Santos for delivery at Marseilles. Part of this sum was, it is believed, remitted to accomplices in England or America.

The *Ferret*, alias *India*, next proceeded to Mauritius where, after being docked, she sailed for Melbourne, calling at Albany only en route. She arrived at Port Phillip on April 20, 1881, where she reported having come from Bermuda in ballast.

In the interval between October and April the owners of the *Ferret* had had no tidings of their ship. She was not posted as lost, however, and the fact of her being missing was widely advertised. As she lay in Port Phillip, a resident of Queenscliffe familiar with a description of her which he had read in a newspaper, suspected her identity and communicated his suspicions to the Customs authorities. This led to immediate investigations by boarding officers of the Department and resulted in their pronouncing the ship the missing *Ferret*. The arrest of the vessel and of the conspirators soon followed, though the latter, realising that they had come to the end of their tether, had made off to the country where they were run to earth by the police.

Henderson, Carlyon and Wright were charged with conspiracy on the high seas to defraud the owners of the ship and to represent the ship to be the *India*, and further with conspiracy at Melbourne to cheat and defraud such persons as might be purchasers of the ship and conspiracy to report the *Ferret* in the port of Melbourne as the *India* and to defraud the Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

The Purser's Story

On being brought to trial, the three men were found guilty. Henderson and Walker being each sentenced to seven years and Carlyon to three and a half years' imprisonment. The accused relied for their defence on a cock and bull story of the purser, Walker, who stated that he had acted as agent in procuring the ship to carry a cargo of arms to Peru for which the Peruvian Government was to pay 5,000 pounds; that the name of the ship was changed to deceive the Chilean agents, Chili at the time being at war with Peru; and that since no Peruvian ship had turned up to meet them the agent for the Peruvian Government on board, the coloured sailing master Watkins, had sent them to Australia to sell the ship, alleging that the terms of the charter allowed them to do this. Watkins himself left the ship at Cape Town, Carlyon succeeding him and navigating the ship to Melbourne.

Under instructions from the Highland Railway Co. the *Ferret* was sold, the purchasers being the Adelaide Steamship Co., by whom for some years she was employed on this coast.

It only remained to be added to this amazing story that Henderson, on his arrest, had in his possession 130 pounds in sovereigns, that Mrs. Trump, the land-lady of the United Services Hotel, situated in what is now exhibition street, handed to the police a bag left there by Henderson containing 626 sovereigns and six bills of exchange for 100 pounds each, three of 500 pounds each and one for 120 pounds.

The West Australian, Saturday October 22, 1932.

APPENDIX XVIII

SHIPPING MOVEMENTS AT ALBANY

The following pages are from the Pilot's Record mentioned in the preface and give some idea as to how busy the Port of Albany was in the late 1890s.

ALBANY SHIPPING DEPARTURES.

189

Date of Departure.	Time.	For.	Draught Outwards.	Remarks
Sept 5		Adelaide S.S. towed to Lion Jetty		B. Bruce @ 6 A.M.
" 6		Ship "Erin Gale" grounded E. side of channel near Outer Red Beacon @ 1 P.M.		Hoisted 1.30 P.M. Draught 24 ft 6 in
7	6	Yardie S.S. towed back by "Sunshy" having blown main hole door out of boiler		6 P.M.
Sept 10		S.S. "Adelaide" sailed for Melbourne in company of S.S. "La Serena"		
Oct 20		"Pilbara" S.S. Adelaide to Fremantle Port from Point Hillier main steam pipe burst arrived 11.15 P.M.		
Oct 25		S.S. "Pilbara" towed off to anchorage by "Sunshy"		6.30
Decr	4	Cutter Reported Lost on West Coast about Point Yerrin named "Piche"		
Jan ¹⁸⁹⁹	11	Capt. Rees reported that "Michaelmas" buoy was adrift		7.30 P.M. 11.1
March	10	Boat "S. Batta" Repetta towed out at 6 am returned at 9.30 am leaving very badly impounded to name "Stank" on "Henry Reef" anchored in Inner Harbour there being no water in the reef		March 11 th 12 th 13 th 14 th 15 th 16 th 17 th 18 th 19 th 20 th 21 th 22 th 23 th 24 th 25 th 26 th 27 th 28 th 29 th 30 th

ALBANY SHIPPING ARRIVALS.

1897-8

Date of Arrival.	Sailing Vessels only	Draught Inwards.	From.	Time.	
				Reported.	Arrived.
Nov 30	Barque Carlele Castle		Cape town	3-10 PM	5-30 PM
Dec 6	Bq. Johanne	11	Fremantle	10:00	2:15 PM
" 6	Ship Superb		"	1 PM	8:30 PM
" 12	Schnr. Grace Darling		Euclypsa Ports	1 PM	4 PM
" 16	Barque Pomona		Fremantle	4-50 am	11-40 am
" 21	Barque S. M. Tucker		Cape town	3-45 PM	6-30 PM
" 25	" Alm ^{Sued}		Baltic	2-10 PM	5-2 PM
Jan 17	Dione Barque ^{Sued}		Beira East Africa	6-45 PM	9-15 PM
" 21	Grace Darling Schnr		Esperance	4-2 am	4-30 am
" 25	" " ^{B.}		Cape Riche	4-30 am	5-30 am
" 29	Barque Samoa ^{Nor}		Fremantle	5-40 am	11 am
" 29	Ship Ada ^{B.}		Melbourne	8-30 PM	11 PM
Feb 13	Grace Darling Schnr		Pt Malcolm	2-45 PM	6-30 PM
March 7	Gladstone Bque ^{Dan}		Delagoa Bay	6-15 PM	9-30 PM
" 10	Sidney Bque ^{Nor}		Cape town	7 PM	9-30 PM
" 12	Bonaventura Bque ^{Nor}		Algoa Bay	11-45 am	3-15 PM
" 16	Grace Darling Schnr		Euclypsa Ports	9-50 PM	11 PM
" 27	Barque Musing ^{Ger.}		East London	9-25 am	1-45 PM
April 4	Barque Gronowier ^{Nor}		Delagoa Bay	6-45 am	11-20 am
" 9	Schnr Grace Darling ^{Sued}		Esperance	7-40 PM	9 PM
" 16	Ship Suesu ^{Sued}		Fremantle	8-20 am	11-5 PM
" 22	Barque Solweg ^{Nor}		Port Natal	7-25 am	12-5 PM
" 27	" " Prospect		Delagoa Bay	12-20 PM	2-20 PM
May 1	" " Dumeraig		"	6-55 am	11 am
" 3	Schnr Grace Darling		Israelite Bay	No report	3 am
" 14	Barque Carlele Castle		Cape town	7-15 am	9-20 am
" 14	Barque S. H. Nicolai		"	4-30 PM	7 PM
June 8	Schnr Grace Darling		Euclypsa Ports	6-55 am	9 am

of ture.	Time.	For.	Draught Outwards.		Remarks
29.	4 P.M.	Antwerp	23.	3.	Loaded By A. S. J. Hulks
30.	5 a.m.				
1.					Deep Water fuel loaded By A. S. J.
1.					loaded By A. S. J. Hulks 350
<p>Total 55 Steamers arrived 4 Sailing vessels arrived 4 " " sailed 1 Steamer passed</p>					
<p>Total of Steamers arrivals & Departures From Nov 1st 1895 to Nov 30 1897.</p>					
<p>Steamers arrived & departed: 1296</p>					
<p>Sailing vessels ditto 92 arrived 89 departed</p>					
<p>Steamers passing 41</p>					
<p>Warships arrived & departed 6</p>					
<p>& Departures & passing vessels Total <u>1,435</u> From Nov 1st 1895 till Nov 30th 1897</p>					

APPENDIX XIX

DONATIONS TO THE ALBANY MUSEUM



Many of the items in the above photograph were donated to the Albany Museum by Les Douglas on December second 1991, and the remaining ones will be donated at a future date.

The items are from left to right :

Iron wheel from the diving machine used at Albany; the *Awhina's* steering wheel; (on loan) diving machines' wheel.

Fire bucket from the *Janus*; the *Awhina's* riding lamp; the *Awhina's* compass, lamp gimbles from the *Awhina*, and a sextant.

Traveller with wooden block attached, from the *E M D*. The *Grace Darling's* Compass recovered from the wreck, small bell from the *Grace Darling*, diver's knife, fish plate from *Grace Darling*, fish plate and brass bolts from *Silver Star*, ship's barometer from *Dunster Castle*, parallel rule.

Valve seat from Gould deck pump, recovered from *Grace Darling*; bracket for compass gimbal; head of caulking mallet, bear punch; compass from *Awhina* and compass glass, Bosun's rule, small wooden fid for splicing rope.

The iron wheels are from a Seibe German Diving Pump said to have been used at the wreck of the *SS Orizaba*, and later used at Albany. Property of Clem, later of Les Douglas. Will be donated.

The *Awhina's* anchor or riding lamp was hoisted on the forestay or foremast so as to be visible on an arc of 360 degrees.

The large boxed compass from the Awhina was last used by Captain Clem Douglas on the 35 ft auxiliary ketch *Allanah* - Fremantle to Albany in 1947.

In addition a large number of photographs, mainly of ships, were donated to the museum. Many of these appear in this text.

The donation co-incided with the presentation of the first edition of *Memories of Maritime Albany*, and other items on loan were on display at the time, such as the *Agnes*' figurehead and paintings of the *Grace Darling*, *Dunskey* and *Iris*. The photograph below shows Les Douglas with his grandson Lawson, some of the donated items and the painting of the *Grace Darling*.



APPENDIX XX

SOME REMINISCES

by

STAN AUSTIN

I am delighted that at last the history of the exciting early years of sail and steam at Albany have been brought before the public. This through the efforts of author Gordon Marshall and Les Douglas, the latter being one of the few remaining, who were active during part of the period being recorded.

I was not old enough to have known the pioneers of tug and launch companies in this area but learned a great through the many yarns from my father and mother, Lionel and Olga.

As shown in this history the principal operators were Armstrong and Waters and the Douglas families.

My grandmother, a Keyser, was a sister to Priscilla, first wife of Captain Frederick Douglas. Their seafaring sons Archie and Carl were well known to me as was their sister Grace Thorp whose children Beryl, Joyce and Barney live today in Perth.

I also had the pleasure of association with the seagoing descendants of Captain Fred's equally famous brother William.

In 1939 I travelled overland to Esperance with my father and Captain Bert Douglas whose mission was to pilot a fuel tanker into port. There I met Bob Douglas a son to Captain Fred by his second marriage, to Susan Wellstead. Bob owned a launch *Grace Darling II* in which he ran pilots and agents to and from ships.

A great amount of reminiscing went on during our Esperance stay. Bert told a tale of his uncle, Capt. Fred who was known as "Fredda" to many on account of his adding a small "a" to many of his words. When in the vicinity of Chatam Island in the *Grace* an object of interest was noticed on a nearby mainland beach. The Master ordered the boat to be lowered and was amongst the shore party. When the boat hit the water it was easy to see that the bung was missing. As a temporary measure Fred put one of his toes in the hole but couldn't extract it when the real plug was found. It is said that he had to sit out the entire excursion until on return the boat was lifted aboard. There no doubt a push from underneath relieved the situation.

Some time later, Bert, during another conversation, pointed to his head :

"See all that white hair ? That came from bringing the *Grace* in and out of the reefs of Hopetoun at night."

Captain Bert's brother, Clem, father of Les, Rita, Hazel, Bill and Eric was also well known to me, he working a great deal of his life in local waters as master of tugs and pleasure steamers. It was at the end of his seafaring career, just prior to War II that my father and I took over McIlwraith McEarcharns and Adelaide Steamship's duties of attending shipping with the launches *Kia-Kia* and *Alert*. These consisted of running ships lines and general work plus conveying waterside workers to and from the coal hulk *Sierra Colonna* under control of stevedore Charlie Burton.

Another Douglas I met during the war was Arthur, a nephew of Fred and William. He passed through Albany en passage to the Recherch Archipelago. He was in charge of Thompson brother's ketch *Moonraker*, his mission on behalf of the Government to investigate the possibility of obtaining rock phosphate from Salisbury Island. Nothing came of it.

I recall often meeting in the street a little old fellow who I presume was Alex Armstrong the second. A bit confusing with their being four of that Christian or given name plus a William Alexander. I gathered he was the father of : "Black" Alec (Alex II) who was engineer on tugs and ferries. I knew him well. Very proud of his engine. Often would call out to bystanders on the Town Jetty; "Would you like to come below and inspect the 'chinery." His sons Dinty, Malcolm and "Hopper" or "Sonny," otherwise Alex IV were at school with me. Present day residents of Albany Ron Armstrong and sisters Chris Adams and Jenny Sinclair are members of

the clan. "Black" Alec would have been the last of the family to have engaged in maritime activities in Albany. The *Bonthorpe* was his final vessel.

On the Waters side I did not have much personal contact. George the first and wife Sarah lived in the large two story house opposite Spencer Inn. Their sons "Acky," "Donny" Georgie and "Bombay" were in business with their father. The family departed Albany in the 1920s. Son Georgie returned briefly to take charge of a small tow boat the *Hercules* during construction of Albany wharves in the 1950s. Father George was the inaugural Vice Commodore of the Princess Royal Sailing Club when it was founded in 1909.

I am very pleased to have been able to assist the authors in a small way with compiling details for this valuable record, so long overdue. My help has come from conversations with old time waterfront friends, Nobby Pannet, Howard Hartman, Fred Swarbrick, John McBride, "Coggie" Norman and the Westerberg and Mouchemore families. I have had the pleasure of meeting up with many members of the Fremantle Maritime Museum plus our local marine archaeologist Adam Wolfe.

Last but not least through becoming involved in this publication I have had the pleasure of a reunion with Les Douglas after some forty years.

Stan Austin

Big Grove, Albany.

14. 2. 1992.

APPENDIX XXI

A VETERAN COASTER

The Career of the *Julia Percy*

By "Matelot"

A former mail steamer on the west and south-west coast of this State, a veteran of even longer standing of the western coastal trade in Victoria and a vessel with considerable service on the Queensland coast, the old iron steamer *Julia Percy*, was scuttled outside Port Phillip heads a few days ago. Built of stout Lowmoor iron she was launched in 1876 and spent all her active service on the Australian coast, for which work she was especially designed. Those were the days of packet steamers - passenger carriers with a adequate cargo space and a good turn of speed - and *Julia Percy* was certainly one of the best and one of the prettiest of the type. Her Glasgow builders, Messrs. T. Wingate and Co., gave her a clipper bow and raking masts and funnel and when later she was altered in Victoria, her appearance was made even more yacht-like. Masters, engineers and agents, who knew her well, will remember her as a "coal-eater." At 10 knots she was economical; at 12 she had an insatiable maw.

The Western Steamship Company brought *Julia Percy* to Australia operating her between Melbourne, Portland and Warnambool in conjunction with the steamer *Nelson*, which was lost in 1890 on a voyage to Launceston for the Huddart, Parker Co., who acquired her for the Tasmanian trade. *Julia Percy's* appearance caused something of a commotion because she outstripped her competitors and commanded the greater proportion of the business. It was decided to increase her capacity and in Melbourne she was lengthened and slightly altered, the result being that her tonnage was increased from 496 tons to 580 tons.

Howard Smith and Co. were her next owners. They bought her for the Queensland coastal trade and operated her in it for a number of years until replaced by larger vessels.

In 1903 the West Australian Government called for tenders for a steamer service between Fremantle and Geraldton. The successful tenderer had to maintain a regular service making two trips from Fremantle to Geraldton and back each week and calling periodically at Dongarra. The steamer service was intended to be a very active competitor with the Midland Railway Company. The successful tenderers for the service were James Bell and Co. and that firm acquired the *Julia Percy* to take up the three years mail contract. *Julia Percy* arrived at Fremantle on July 6th, 1903, in charge of Captain A. Landgren, formerly of the steamer *Perth*, and the service began the following day. Messrs. Denny Bros. and Lynnn were the agents, but the management of the service was retained by James Bell and Co., for whom Mr. W.H. Evans (now of W.H. Evans and Co. Perth) was manager. Mr. Evans strangely enough had previously been associated with the storing of the *Julia Percy* when a boy in Victoria. The firm by whom he was then employed held a contract for the supply of stores to both the *Julia Percy* and the *Nelson*.

By making some particularly smart runs, the *Julia Percy* soon established a reputation for speed on the coast. She had accommodation for 94 passengers and was very well patronised. Her chief steaming rival was the *Paroo*, then being operated on the North-West and Singapore run.

In 1904 *Julia Percy* met with a mishap on the Stragglers' Reef near Rottneest Island and captain Landgren was relieved of his command, Captain Coe, formerly of the barque *West Australian* taking over.

The inclusion in the contract of the call at Dongarra seriously embarrassed the contractors because Dongarra was an open port where navigation was chancy. on a number of occasions the port had to be passed because of the risk of attempting wharfside activities under exposed conditions. On May 25th, 1905, *Julia Percy* called at Dongarra to drop some overcarried cargo and when rounding up to the jetty bumped heavily against projecting stringers which holed her plates between wind and water. She began to make water quickly and Captain Coe put her in the shallows where she foundered in 18 feet of water.

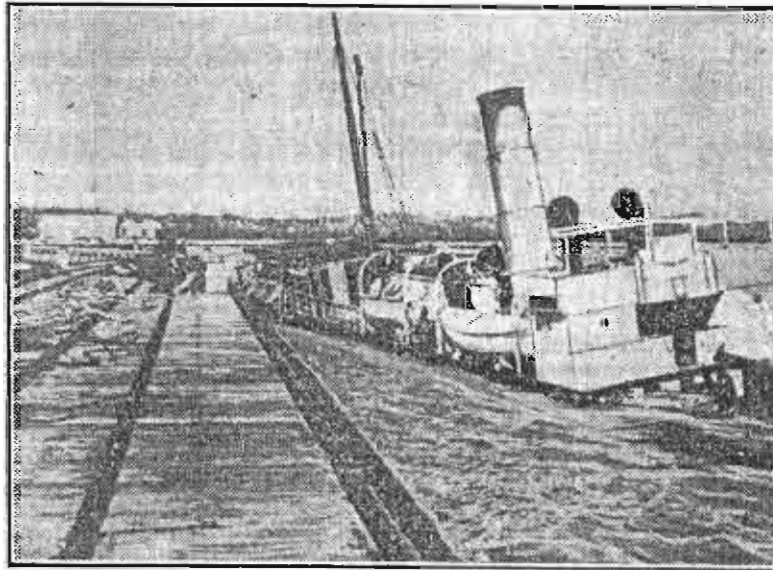
At first it was thought that she would be a total wreck but the first attempt made to raise her was successful, the work being undertaken by Captain R.E. Arundel as surveyor for the Marine Underwriter's Association of Western Australia. Towed to Fremantle by the tug *Uraldia* she was slipped and recommissioned. The chief damage was caused not so much to the ship's hull - a few new plates remedied that - but the fittings and the upholstery in the saloon which was an unrecognisable sodden mass.

Julia Percy completed her contract and in 1906 was purchased by the Melbourne Steamship Co., for use in the south - west coastal trade, the Melbourne Steamship Co. having been successful tenderers for the mail service to Esperance. When that contract expired she was sent back to Victoria and an effort was made to establish with her a service between Melbourne and Eden. Her capacity to eat coal growing with years, she was found to be too expensive, and was withdrawn from service.

A few months of idleness followed and it was then decided to hulk her. In 1910 her smart stern was cut off and she was fitted with a coffin - like appendage that ever since has been the subject of disgusted comment by saltwatermen, who knew *Julia Percy* in her youthful days of maritime loveliness.

Newspaper article dated January 19, 1935. Max Wellstead, from Robert Douglas.

Below : Julia Percy sunk beside the jetty at Dongarra.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations may be considered as arising from the previous pages.

(1) SHIPWRECKS

- (a) The *Escort* and *Dunskey* remain as unsurveyed shipwrecks, while the *Waratah* and the *Victory* have yet to be located. *Escort* and *Waratah* are within the same area and could be located and surveyed in the one time.
- (b) The Stern Post Wreck should be identified, while further work should be done on the *Ada* and the *Fairy* as these are good examples of locally built vessels forty years apart, and should yield information on the shipbuilding technology of the 1840s and 1880s.
- (c) The unidentified shipwreck should be checked for possible locations.
- (d) April 1992 is the centenary of the wreck of the Schooner *Agnes*. As her figurehead has come to light plus some new photographs of her, it would be an idea to survey her remains at Bremer Bay with the idea of publicising the occasion.
- (e) Closer aerial photographs should be taken of Albany harbour with the intention of locating the wreck or other wrecks that are mentioned on p.186 and duly followed up.
- (f) A search should be made for the inscription and wreck mentioned in Appendix XIV.
- (g) Since the *Grace Darling* wreck has been located, it would be interesting to try to recover her medallion head as a relic from this famous local vessel.
- (h) Research for the foregoing pages revealed the original watercolours appearing herein of the *Iris*, *Grace Darling* and *Dunskey*, all in private hands. With the owners consent these would make worthwhile postcards and help stimulate public awareness and interest in these vessels, and others.

(2) ALBANY FORESHORE

The floating dock lies buried under the land-backed wharf; it would be worthwhile to locate and excavate this for measurements and whatever information it can yield, and then be re-buried. There may be some urgency if a road is to be constructed over the site. The P.&O. wharf should also be located and studied. If the *Jessie's* engine could be located, this could be recovered for the Museum

(3) HERITAGE TRAIL

Wrecks in and around Albany Harbour could easily be listed for a heritage trail, if one has not already been compiled, and it could be possible to arrange underwater archaeological training weekends, as are held in other states.

(4) MUSEUM EXTENSIONS

The sum total of these suggestions would be further extensions to the Albany Museum resulting in greater awareness and appreciation of Albany's Maritime heritage, with due credit given to pioneers such as the Douglas and Armstrong families. While this would undoubtedly take further funds these could be forthcoming from increased public awareness. A start at any rate should be made.

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