



Cheynes III

Ben Dearg

Built in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1925, the iron-hulled steam trawler *Ben Dearg* was brought to Albany in 1949. After many years of service it was scuttled just off Swarbrick Beach very close to the coal hulk *Margaret*. A propeller from the *Ben Dearg* is on display outside the Western Australian Museum, Albany.

Northumberland

The wooden barque, *Northumberland* was built in 1864 in Newcastle, England. In 1868, *Northumberland* was on a voyage from Newcastle to Albany laden with 2,000 tons of coal for the P&O company. On June 14 it grounded on a reef off Bald Head during a strong gale. The ship was freed and continued sailing even though a broken rudder made it almost unmanageable. The crew struggled but failed to keep it afloat. Eventually they took to the lifeboats and landed at Breaksea Island. A short time later, *Northumberland* foundered somewhere in a line between Cape Vancouver and Breaksea Island.

Arpenteur

Arpenteur was a 95-tonne brig, built in 1839 in the Seychelles. It was owned by John Ridley and Willam Owen who was also master of the vessel. During the 1840s the vessel traded mainly between Mauritius and Australian ports. Early in October 1849, *Arpenteur* arrived at Fremantle only to find that the winds made it impossible to dock in the harbour. The vessel was forced to continue to King George Sound. On October 28 *Arpenteur* attempted to sail into Princess Royal Harbour in a violent gale. This attempt was unsuccessful

and *Arpenteur* was forced to shelter at Two People Bay. On November 7, while still in the bay, taking on oil, a strong northeast gale totally wrecked the vessel. *Arpenteur's* crew narrowly escaped with their lives.

Wave

Wave was a 103-tonne Brigantine, built in Bermuda in 1838. It was a trader *en route* from Adelaide to Shanghai via Singapore in 1848. During a violent northeast gale, it was forced to anchor at Cape Riche. It dragged its two anchors and ran ashore at Cheynes Beach. After unsuccessfully attempting to get it off the beach, the captain went to King George Sound to get help from the schooner *Champion*. *Champion* succeeded in getting the *Wave* off shore, but it sprung a leak, filled with water and was wrecked.

Agnes

The 45-tonne wooden hulled schooner *Agnes* was built at Brisbane Water in 1874. It was bought by Capt. Fred Douglas for use in the coastal trade. Whilst anchored in Bremer Bay on April 1892, heavy seas caused its cables to part, and it was driven ashore. It was a flat-bottomed vessel and was swept high onto the beach. The crew salvaged the cargo of sandalwood and some fittings.

Cheynes II & Cheynes IV

In contrast to *Cheynes III* which was scuttled, the whalers *Cheynes II & IV* were preserved at the end of the whaling era. *Cheynes IV* is now displayed at Whale World, the old whaling station southeast of Frenchman Bay. *Cheynes II*, however, blew ashore off Geak Point in Princess Royal Harbour and is still there today.

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

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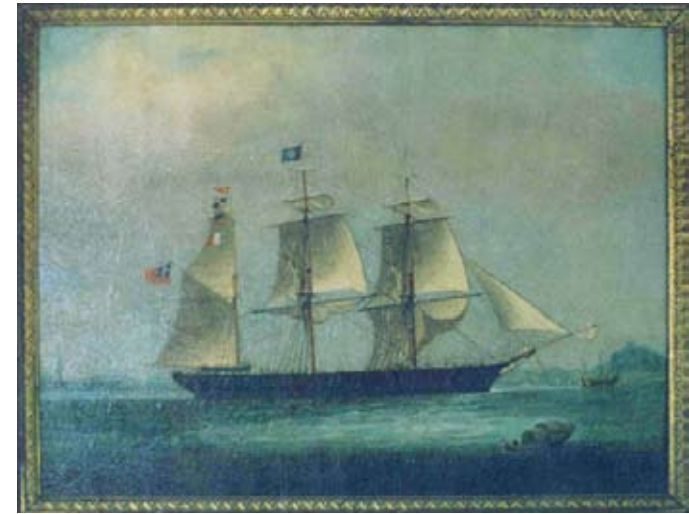
Diving notes

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

SHIPWRECKS OF THE SOUTHERN COAST

Introduction

The shipwrecks in this pamphlet are located between Point D'Entrecasteaux in the West, to Bremer Bay in the East. This stretch of coast is often very dangerous and subject to heavy storms and severe gales. King George Sound and its two connecting harbours were well known as a safe haven to the early British and French navigators. In 1791, George Vancouver described King George Sound as one of the best natural harbours in the world. It was used mainly by the early sealers and whalers hunting along the south coast.



Fanny Nicholson

In 1826 the Sound was chosen as the site for the first European settlement on the Western side of the continent. Safe, accessible and capable of harbouring many large ships, Albany was later chosen ahead of Fremantle as the Australian port of call for the overseas mail services for the Swan River Colony. The establishment of Albany as the Colony's main coal depot and steamer port from 1851 ushered in the busy steam era in Albany's history, with its coal hulks and other bunkering activities.

During this time Albany became the vital link connecting the WA colony to Europe, Asia and the eastern Australian colonies. In 1900 the mail steamers transferred somewhat

reluctantly to Fremantle after improvements to its harbour. Albany's coaling and trading activities were hardly affected as an increase in international steamer trade took place about that time. Albany's decline as a bunkering port set in after WWI as oil increasingly replaced coal as a fuel. The *Navigation Act 1921* further restricted trade and Bunbury became a larger export port. The fact that Albany had never had a large export trade meant that it could not survive the end of the coal era. By the 1930s it had ceased to be a major port.

The shipwrecks along the southern coast are a result of a number of factors. For example, the search for new lands and commerce, human and navigational errors, the rugged nature of the coastline, violent storms and gales, the attraction of Albany as a haven and its importance as the Colony's main coal depot and steamer port.

Shipwrecks of the Southern Coast

Michael J Goulandris

Michael J Goulandris was a 6,669-tonne steel steamer built in 1921 at Sunderland, England. It was originally under Norwegian registry and named *Hallgyn*. Later, it became the French registered *Lina L.D*, and finally *Michael J Goulandris* in 1934. On December 21, 1944 *Michael J Goulandris*, struck the South West Reefs near Point D'Entrecasteaux. On board were 700 tonnes of coal for the Fremantle Gas Works, 2,000 tonnes of general cargo and 36 crew. The crew were rescued by the naval vessel, *St. John*, which battled heavy seas to save the men on the sinking ship.

Escort

Escort was built in 1883 at Middlesex, England. It was a small wooden steam tug with a two masted schooner rig. On August 16, 1903, while carrying supplies for settlers at Walpole it struck heavy seas. The captain decided to beach the vessel in order to save the lives of his seven crew. *Escort* grounded on a sandy bottom. The crew then opened all the sea-cocks so as to flood the ship to hold it steady. The tug filled quickly, standing perfectly upright close to shore. The wreck lies in about 3 metres of water resting on a sandy bottom. Both a vertical donkey boiler and the engine can be seen sticking out of the water.

Harlequin

Harlequin was lost at Knapp Head west of Albany on September 4, 1850, during a violent northwest gale. It was

on a voyage from Adelaide to Singapore with a cargo of flour, sugar and copper. Aboard *Harlequin* was the master, Mr. Walsh, his wife, and eight crew. Three of the crew lost their lives. Seven survivors (including Mr. and Mrs. Walsh) walked overland to Albany. Little of the wreck can now be seen as it lies in turbulent and difficult waters.

Runnymede

Runnymede was a wooden barque built in Hobart, Tasmania by John Watson in 1849. It was originally owned by Askin Morrison and later bought by James Bayley. The vessel was used as a whale ship, operating out of Hobart from 1870. *Runnymede* was driven ashore on Goode Beach in Frenchman Bay during a heavy gale on December 21, 1881. The remains can be seen in shallow water after heavy storms.

Fanny Nicholson

Fanny Nicholson was a wooden-framed barque built in Hartlepool, England. It was brought to Australia in the 1860s to be used as a whaling vessel and was based in Hobart from 1870. The vessel was driven ashore at Goode Beach, in Frenchman's Bay during a south easterly gale on December 16, 1872. The 70 tons of sperm oil on board and the rigging and whaling gear were saved. The remains can be seen in shallow water after heavy storms.



Lady Lyttleton porcelain

Fairy

Fairy was built during the 1840s on the Kalgan River by Capt. Thomas Symers. The financially troubled Symers

was forced to take in two partners in the hope of seeing the ship completed. When nearly finished, the 70-tonne schooner was brought into Princess Royal Harbour in 1850. Unfortunately, a row broke out between the partners over the rigging of the ship, resulting in it being tied up off York Street for much of 1850. Its rope was cut sometime that year and it drifted onto a bank at the west end of Princess Royal Harbour. It was abandoned in its present position in shallow water in the Harbour.

Lady Lyttleton (ex Sultan)

The 178-tonne wooden barque, *Lady Lyttleton* was originally a whaler. The vessel was on a voyage from Melbourne to Fremantle when it sprung a leak and was forced to put into Albany, on June 16, 1867. The vessel was taken to Oyster Harbour to be careened and the leak repaired. While keeled over and under repair, the vessel sank in July. It was subsequently abandoned.

Ada

Ada was a 15 metre, 26-tonne cutter made from jarrah and built by John Peters of Albany in 1886. John Conti and John Bruce, both from Albany, had a joint ownership of *Ada*. In February 1888, the crew were loading posts onto the vessel in the southeast corner of Oyster Harbour, while it was resting on the sea-bed at low tide. With the coming of the high tide, it filled with water and was abandoned.

Gio Batta Repetto

The 1,147-tonne Italian barque *Gio Batta Repetto* was built in Pra, Italy in 1883 and was used to carry timber. Setting out from Albany to London, in March 1899, with a 1,130-tonne load of timber, the vessel struck Michaelmas Reef, damaging the hull and almost causing the vessel to sink. It lost part of its keel and hull, traces of which are still visible today on the reef that now bears the vessel's name. It was later towed into Princess Royal Harbour where repairs were carried out. *Gio Batta* was later sold and renamed *Thistle*. In 1905, it was reported missing on a voyage from Bunbury to East London in South Africa.

Cheyne's III

A local diving identity, Les Bail arranged for *Cheyne's III* to be scuttled in 1982 to create a good diving site. After the engines were removed, it was taken to the western end of Michaelmas Island and sunk. The wreck has broken in two and lies in 30 metres of water. It is one of WA's premier dive sites.