

weeks later, on May 2 the ship's anchor chain broke and the unlucky vessel drifted to its present position, only 270 metres from the same beach where it had been previously stranded. Eventually it was sold for scrap. In October 1969, a fire broke out while salvors were dismantling the hull and they were forced to swim to safety. Over the last 30 years the wreck's hull plating has collapsed, exposing the interior of the hold and the bridge. Due to the weakened state of the hull structure, the wreck is not considered safe.

WH-301 Gemini 1993

WH-301, also known as *Gemini*, was one of two identical steel hopper barges built in 1962 and registered as *WH-301* and *WH-302*. In 1980 the 36.5 metre barges were joined to form a pontoon drill barge for a dredging company in New South Wales. At a later date the 'twins' were separated and eventually sold to Mr D. Ceray of Western Australia. In 1993 *WH-301 Gemini* was sold to a local charter boat operator to create a recreational dive site for advanced divers. The barge was towed by the Naval tug *Tammar* to a site near Two Rocks Marina and scuttled. In the process of sinking, the hull capsized and now lies on a sandy seabed in 30 metres of water. For more information about *Gemini*, please contact local charter operators.

Eglinton 1852

The three-masted wooden barque, *Eglinton* was built in Quebec, Canada in 1848. In April 1852 this fast and graceful ship of 469 tonnes sailed from Gravesend, England under the command of Capt. Bennett with 23 passengers and 20 crew. It was carrying a cargo of general merchandise and a consignment of 65,000 gold sovereigns intended for the Government of the struggling Swan River colony. Eight more passengers embarked at Capetown for the voyage to Fremantle. As everyone aboard celebrated the last night of the voyage, *Eglinton* struck an offshore reef, losing its rudder. Westerly winds drove the stricken vessel over the first line of reef and onto another, 1 km inshore. Here, the vessel stuck fast. The ship's guns were fired to raise the alarm but to no avail. The next morning the captain gave the order to abandon ship. Salvors made desperate attempts to retrieve the valuable cargo and all the sovereigns were recovered before the wreck was broken up by winter gales. A subsequent investigation revealed that a navigational error and negligence on part of the captain was responsible for the disaster. The wreck lies on Quinns

Rocks Reef 2.4 kilometres from Eglinton Rocks. Delicate drinking glasses and other tableware from the wreck are displayed at the Gloucester Lodge Museum at Yanchep. An anchor and other artefacts can be seen at the Western Australian Museum Shipwreck Galleries in Fremantle. GPS location 31° 38.54' S 115° 39.53' E.

Lalla 1917

Built in 1874 in Nova Scotia, Canada as a three-masted wooden barque, the 1,087-tonne *Lalla* was converted for use as a hulk in 1906. It was lost on August 17, 1917 while being towed away for scuttling. The tow-line parted and the hulk disappeared somewhere off Halls Bank, pushed along by a strong south westerly wind. Iron framework and a section of decking that may be from *Lalla* lie 20 metres off Ocean Reef Beach, 1 km north of Ocean Reef Marina. In 1913 the ship's bell was presented to the Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club for use as a shark alarm.

Centaur 1874

The 25-year-old iron brig *Centaur* was wrecked on December 9, 1874 on Centaur Reef North Beach, (about 24 km north of Fremantle). It carried a cargo of 200 tonnes of galena (lead ore) and four passengers. Capt. Brabham gave the order to abandon ship and in about 25 minutes, all hands had taken to the boats. The 191-ton *Centaur* was built in Aberdeen in 1849. The wreck lies in the Marmion Marine Park, on the southern end of Centaur Reef at a depth of 7-9 metres. On the port side of the wreck, sections of iron frames and hull plating stand 2 metres above the seabed. Small amounts of galena can be seen scattered over the site. GPS location 31° 51.8' S 115° 42.66' E.

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>

By M. J. Lapwood, Year 10, Craigie Senior High School. Work experience, WA Museum, December 1992. Updated by Jessica Berry, Tracey Miller and Jessica Reynolds, WAM 2008.



Diving notes

Wrecks are often hazardous. Access to some wrecks requires a boat. Divers need to be fit and qualified. Persons diving on these sites do so at their own risk. A diver must show a dive flag. Do not dive alone or leave the 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 WANNEROO COAST

Introduction

European mariners visited the coast adjacent to the City of Wanneroo long before the British established the Swan River colony in 1829. The earliest known wreck is the Dutch United East India Company ship, *Vergulde Draeck*, that foundered in 1656. Only 75 crew reached shore with a few provisions. Seven sailed to Batavia for assistance, leaving 68 survivors stranded on a barren shore. Over the next few years, every VOC ship passing the Western Australian coast was ordered to search for signs of the castaways. In March 1658, Abraham Leeman van Santwits, first officer and navigator of *Waeckende Boey* and 13 sailors came ashore near Wanneroo Beach where they found wreckage from *Vergulde Draeck* but no sign of survivors. Unable to return to their ship because of foul weather, and abandoned by the skipper of *Waeckende Boey*, Leeman set sail for Batavia in an overloaded open boat. He and three sailors survived the journey. A plaque on a limestone obelisk at the end of Marcon Street Two Rocks, marks Leeman's Landing, the place where Leeman and his men came ashore.



Eglinton artefacts

Twenty years before the arrival of the British settlers, this region was visited by whalers. After the establishment of

the Swan River Colony, local settlers carried on a profitable trade with the whalers, exchanging fresh meat and vegetables for whale oil, cloth and cash. It was not long before settlers started their own whaling operations. In 1849 Patrick Marmion employed four boats as whale chasers and built a small whaling station in the area. It operated for about five years. The chimney of Marmion's try works stood to the south of the existing Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club. It was a landmark for many years and was used as a navigation beacon by local fishermen.

In early years the waters north of Fremantle were used as a ship's graveyard and the remains of many scuttled wrecks are scattered along the Wanneroo coast. There are 15 shipwrecks listed below in geographical order from north to south. Two of the vessels below have not been located and three have not been positively identified. A GPS position is given where the exact location of a wreck is known.



Alex T. Brown

Alex T Brown 1917

The 800-tonne *Alex T Brown* ran aground south of Wreck Point on May 30, 1917 after leaving Fremantle the previous day. The American-built four-masted schooner was bound in ballast for Puget Sound, California via Manila. News of the stranded vessel reached Fremantle the next day when the ship's mate, Mr F. Knutsun arrived in Perth to request assistance of a tug. After several unsuccessful attempts to refloat it, it was sold as a wreck for £420 to Mr Findlayson of Perth. Several of the early homesteads in the area were

built with the timbers salvaged from the ship. The hulk was eventually burned by the owners of the Lindsay homestead, angry because people were trespassing on their property in order to reach the wreck. For much of the year it remains covered in sand but wreckage can be exposed after severe gales. Access to the beach is via a sand track to 'The Spot', a local surfing area. The wreck site can also be accessed by walking north along the beach from Club Capricorn.

Klaraborg 1982

Built in Sweden in 1852 as a Baltic trader, *Klaraborg* was reputed to have been the oldest ocean-going sailing vessel in the world. The double-masted schooner was built of Baltic pine over oak frames with an overall length of 36.5 metres. In 1965 it was converted to a pleasure yacht for charter work.



Klaraborg

The 130-year-old vessel left Fremantle, bound for Singapore on July 13 with a crew of ten, three cats and a parrot. The vessel began taking water from the beginning of the voyage but was in no immediate danger until the pumps failed the following morning. A fire broke out in the galley while the crew was busy trying to keep the vessel afloat. Attempts to lower a portable pump from a helicopter failed, as the swaying masts and rigging prevented the pilot from maneuvering close enough to the ship's heaving deck. It had to be abandoned and all on board were rescued by the State ship *MV Koolinda*. Only personal items and a small quantity

of the ship's gear including the wheel and bell could be saved before the schooner sank in deep water some 55 km west of Yanchep. GPS location 31° 33.5' S 114° 53' E.

SS Alkimos 1963

On March 20, 1963 the ill-fated Greek freighter and former Liberty ship, *SS Alkimos* struck a reef near Beagle Island, some 240 km to the north of Fremantle, while on a voyage from Jakarta to Bunbury. This mishap was the start of a disastrous chain of events that saw the vessel impounded in Fremantle Harbour, run aground on two further occasions and finally sold for scrap in the following year. Five days after running aground at Beagle Island *Alkimos* was freed and towed into Fremantle for temporary repairs, only to be impounded in May for non-payment of debts. This matter was quickly resolved and a tug was chartered to tow *Alkimos* to Hong Kong for further repairs. The vessel finally left on May 30, but within hours of leaving Fremantle the tow-line snapped and gale force winds drove the ship ashore near Wreck Point, 56 km north of Perth.



Alkimos

For four months the ship remained stranded, left to ride out the winter storms. A caretaker was put aboard and during that time stories of bizarre and ghostly events appeared in the press. In January 1964, the tug, *Pacific Star* arrived to pump out *Alkimos* and tow it to Manila. Two attempts were made to refloat the 7,291-ton ship but each time the tow lines parted and it again ran aground. A month later the tug succeeded in securing *Alkimos* but before it could be towed away, *Pacific Star* was arrested and escorted back to Fremantle, leaving *Alkimos* anchored in deep water. Eleven