

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES

Port Adelaide boasts one of South Australia's most significant archaeological treasures – the largest and most diverse ships' graveyard in Australia accessible to non-divers. Dispersed over five sites, in quiet backwaters of the Port River, are the remains of a varied group of sailing, steam, motor and service vessels which ended their working lives in Port Adelaide.

As these vessels fell into disrepair or were no longer viable, harbour authorities needed to cater for their disposal. Because of South Australia's relatively shallow Gulf waters, scuttling at sea was not generally an option. The alternative was that most obsolete vessels were beached and broken up at various sites around Port Adelaide. The legacy is that Port Adelaide now has a unique cultural heritage site representing significant chapters in South Australia's maritime history and providing insights into ship-building and propulsion technologies from the era of sail and steam.

Today the remains of at least forty vessels lie embedded in silt and washed by the tides. The diverse collection, ranging from majestic windjammers and steamships to coastal traders and harbour craft, represents maritime activity from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. It is a substantial reminder of an era when shipping dominated world transport and trade, and when the Port of Adelaide was a thriving commercial centre.

Maritime Heritage Trails have been established by Heritage SA in many coastal areas of South Australia and along the River Murray to promote the State's maritime history and to encourage community involvement in the protection and conservation of historic shipwrecks and related sites.

Shipwreck remains are non-renewable resources which provide unique windows into the past. Shipwrecks and shipwreck artefacts are protected under Historic Shipwrecks legislation.



Schooner *Dorothy S*
State Library of SA

For further information or to report a wreck or shipwreck relics contact:

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Funding for this brochure was made available by



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Produced by
Heritage South Australia
Department for Environment and Heritage
January 2002

Text: Robyn Hartell
Designer: Martin Green

PC&M (Design) • Jan 2002 • FIS 16780

The Port River Basin c1920
State Library of SA

South Australian Shipwrecks

PORT ADELAIDE SHIPS GRAVEYARDS

Garden Island

Jervois Basin

Mutton Cove

Angas Inlet

Broad Creek



Heritage South Australia
Government of South Australia



CITY OF
Port Adelaide Enfield

GARDEN ISLAND

The Garden Island Ships' Graveyard, in the Port River's North Arm, is the largest abandonment site in Port Adelaide, with at least 25 vessels known to have been scuttled in the area between 1909 and 1945. The majority of these wrecks lie along the southern shore of Garden Island with two vessels (the *Dorothy H Sterling* and the *Santiago*) further east.

The collection includes the wooden and iron remains of large and small sailing and steam ships as well as ferries, dredges and pontoons. Many of these vessels plied international and Australian waters while others remained within South Australia or even locally within the Port River. Many were built in Europe or the United States, others interstate and two at Port Adelaide yards. They carried cargo and passengers or were service craft which supported the functions of the harbour.

Today their extensively salvaged remains lie on the mudflats, shielded by encroaching mangroves and partially covered by the tides. The area is a playground for dolphins, a feeding ground for many bird species and habitat for a host of marine creatures.

Dorothy H Sterling (1920-1929)

The six-masted wooden schooner *Dorothy H Sterling* was built in Oregon, USA. It was one of the largest sailing vessels ever built, but became a victim of the Great Depression after arriving in Port Adelaide in 1929. It was eventually sold and dismantled before the hull was broken apart for firewood by the unemployed. Today the remains are covered by silt and colonised by mangroves, forming a small island at the eastern end of the North Arm.



Santiago (1856-1945)

The last and oldest vessel abandoned in the Graveyard was the barque *Santiago* which was hulked in Port Adelaide c1900 and used as a coal lighter until 1945. Today the mostly intact hull is exposed above the river level, at the eastern end of the North Arm. The *Santiago* is a rare example of an early iron-built sailing vessel and has been declared an historic shipwreck under the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981.



Glaucus (1873-1935)

The steamer *Glaucus* traded internationally until the early 1880s when it transferred to the Australian coastal run, transporting goods and produce between the states. It became a grain hulk in Port Adelaide in 1929 and was abandoned at Garden Island in 1935. Although the bow section has been completely salvaged, the intact stern post and rudder make this vessel easily identifiable in the Graveyard today.



Sunbeam (1857-1910)

The barque *Sunbeam* was built in Scotland in 1857 and traded internationally before being converted to a coal hulk in 1886. It was the first iron vessel abandoned in the Graveyard and today is generally intact along its entire length. *Sunbeam* is easily recognisable with its bow facing the water and a boiler of unknown origin lying on the starboard side.



JERVOIS BASIN

Jervois Basin, in the upper reaches of the Port River, was the major ship-breaking site in Port Adelaide between the early 1900s and the late 1960s.

Little physical evidence remains of the many vessels broken up in this Basin as most were entirely dismantled with the sites completely cleared. It is also likely that reclamation has covered other vessel remains, including the historically significant wooden ship *Fitzjames* (1852), which became a floating reformatory at Largs Bay.

Wooden and some iron wreckage is evident however, on the western bank. The remains of four vessels have been identified - the wooden ketch *Alert* and four-masted schooner *Fides*, the composite paddle steamer *Trafalgar* and a wooden pontoon. Other unidentified material has also been located.

Today the vessel remains are uncovered on the mudflats at low tide. Pelicans, ibis, cormorants and dolphins are frequent visitors to this part of the Port River where an adjacent stand of mangrove has been successfully regenerated.

Fish Market Pontoon

For many years this wooden pontoon was moored at the Port Adelaide Fish Market, beside the Jervois Bridge. Today lower sections of the barge are still intact and form a predominant feature on the site.



Trafalgar (1877-1947)

The composite paddle steamer *Trafalgar* originally carried passengers and cargo on the River Murray and was later converted to a barge. It was brought to Port Adelaide in 1947 for conversion to a ketch but was instead beached and broken up in the Jervois Basin. Today the *Trafalgar's* remains are a major feature in the Graveyard, with substantial framework and timbers still on site.



BROAD CREEK

From the early to mid 1900s Broad Creek was associated with the importation and distribution of explosives stored in magazines at Dry Creek.

Two abandoned vessels have been identified in the area. A wooden schooner *Dorothy S* is located in Bream Creek, a branch of the larger Broad Creek, while the remains of an iron hulk lie near the jetty at the end of the Creek.

Today Broad Creek is adjacent to the Penrice salt fields. The relatively shallow waterway is a natural estuary bounded by stands of mangrove and home to a variety of birds and marine creatures.

Iron Hulk

This vessel was originally a dredge which was converted for use as a floating explosives magazine. In 1915 the hulk was condemned and floated ashore west of the Broad Creek jetty, where it continued to store explosives for some years. Today the vessel shows evidence of salvage but is largely intact, with construction timbers and dredge structure evident.



Dorothy S (1868-1928)

The small schooner *Dorothy S* was built in Victoria in 1868 and transferred to Port Adelaide in 1922. By 1926 it was derelict at Garden Island but was moved to Bream Creek (off Broad Creek) in 1928, for the unusual purpose of housing two hydroplanes. Today substantial wooden remains, including an intact bow stem and wooden planking, are located in the mangroves above high water mark.

MUTTON COVE

In the 1940s Mutton Cove, at the northern end of Lefevre Peninsula, was the abandonment site for two derelict vessels - an iron steamer and a composite ex-Murray paddler.

Today the area is a samphire swamp, isolated from the Port River and adjacent industries by reclamation and embankments. Timbers from the paddler are mostly covered by mud, but the steamer's extensive remains are evident at all times.

Excelsior (1897-1945)

After many years service in the Pacific and South Australian waters, the steamer *Excelsior* was converted for lightening coal to the steam-powered dredges working in Port Adelaide. In 1945 it was laid up and abandoned in a tidal creek at Mutton Cove. Today the rusting vessel is a predominant feature east of Outer Harbor. The bow is intact but sections of the stern have collapsed.



Jupiter (1866-1940)

The composite paddler *Jupiter* was the last mail steamer on the Murray Lakes. In 1935 it was brought to Port Adelaide and converted into Australia's first floating crayfish depot, but was eventually abandoned at Mutton Cove in the 1940s. Today the hull is basically intact to deck level, but is predominantly covered by silt and water. Some detached iron superstructure is lying off the stern.

ANGAS INLET

Angas Inlet lies between Torrens and Garden Islands. It was originally accessible from the North Arm but this entry point is now blocked by the causeway to the Torrens Island Power Station.

At low tide the unidentified wreckage of at least seven vessels is exposed in the Inlet. A small wooden and iron pontoon is located in a sidestream, but other wrecks all lay along the southern shore of Torrens Island, east of the power station outlet.

Most vessels in this collection appear to be small recreational craft. However, significant timbers and other material suggest that at least one of the sites contains the remains of a large wooden sailing vessel built in the mid to late 1800s.

Today this quiet backwater provides a mooring basin for the Garden Island Boat Club. It borders the region's mangrove forests and is a favourite haunt of dolphins and seabirds.



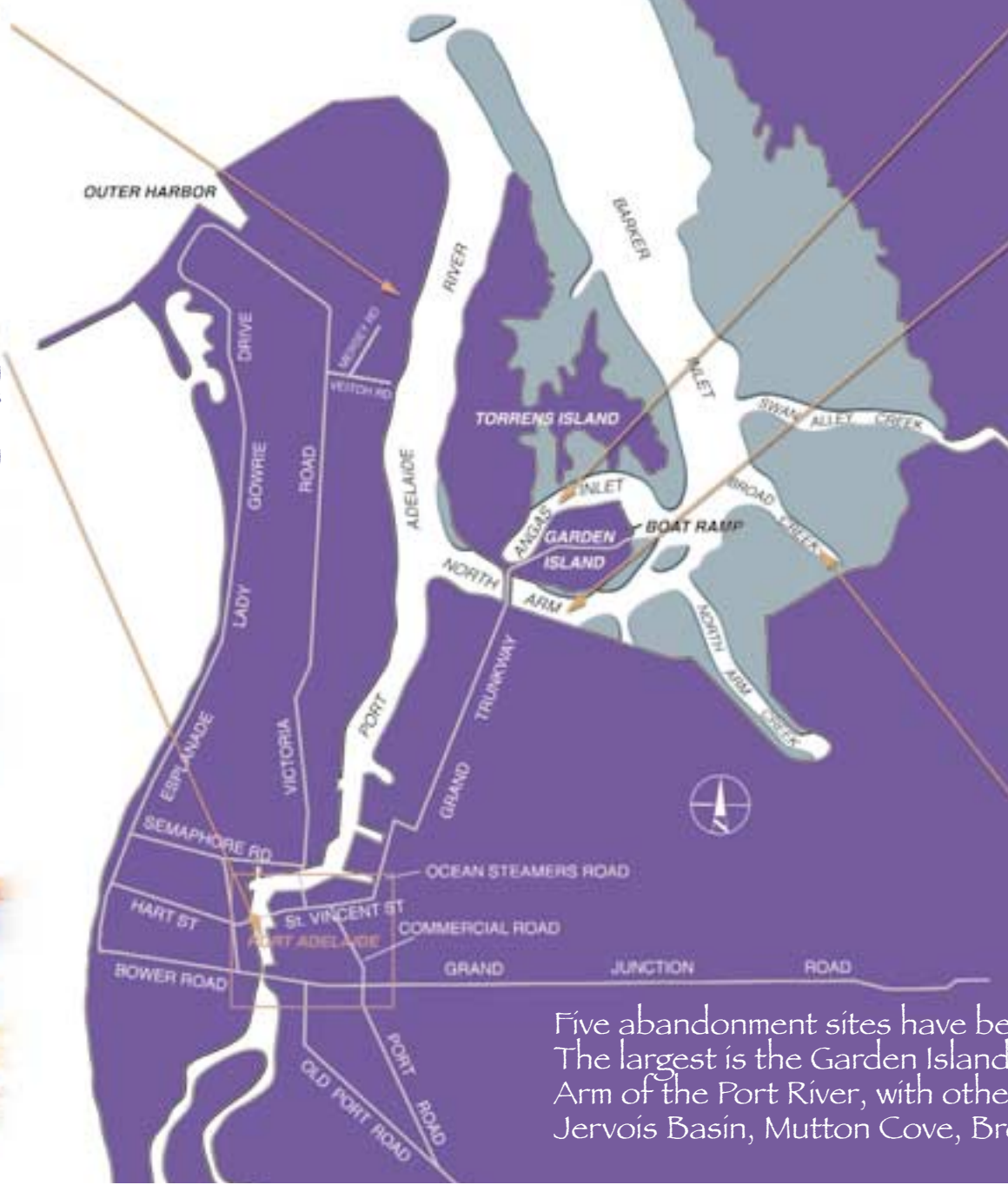
SHIPS' GRAVEYARD SITES

MUTTON COVE SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Mutton Cove is accessible by land via embankments and reclaimed areas north of the Submarine Corporation. The extensive remains of the *Excelsior* can be viewed at all times, but the *Jupiter's* timbers are approached through samphire and mud and are only exposed at low tide.

JERVOIS BASIN SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Vessel remains are readily accessible by land at low tide. The Graveyard is adjacent to a small park and viewing area, while a boardwalk through the nearby mangroves also overlooks the site.



ANGAS INLET SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Angas Inlet is most easily visited by boat or kayak, the latter also allowing access to the smaller sidestreams. Low tide is the best viewing time for the wrecks.

GARDEN ISLAND SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Vessel remains can be seen from the Garden Island Bridge, but are most easily viewed using a kayak or boat. Land access to some wrecks is possible via a pathway which is uncovered at low tide, but further access involves a trek through mud and mangroves. The SA Maritime Museum's vessel *Archie Badenoch* conducts regular cruises to the Graveyard.

The Garden Island Ships' Graveyard Maritime Heritage Trail, which includes six signs and a 50-page guide book, interprets this site. Three on-water signs have been installed in the North Arm, adjacent to the main group of wrecks. Two on-land signs are located at the Garden Island Boat Ramp with another at the nearby Adelaide Speedboat Club.

BROAD CREEK SHIPS' GRAVEYARD

Broad Creek is most easily visited by kayak or small boat. The entrance channel from Barker Inlet is narrow and best navigated at high tide.

Five abandonment sites have been identified within the Port. The largest is the Garden Island Ships' Graveyard, in the North Arm of the Port River, with other Graveyards located at Jervois Basin, Mutton Cove, Broad Creek and Angas Inlet.