

SHIPWRECKS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SARNIA - Garden Island

The steam dredge *Sarnia* (also known as No. 4 Dredger) was built at the South Australian Government Shipyard, Port Adelaide in 1878. The composite vessel measured 118.0 feet (36.0 m) in length, 21.0 feet (6.4 m) breadth, 10.0 feet (3.1 m) depth and was 180 gross tons.

Although relatively small by today's standards, the *Sarnia* was the largest vessel built in South Australia at that time. It was also a valuable addition to the South Australian dredging fleet, operating at both Port Adelaide and Port Pirie. The dredging mechanism consisted of a 58 foot (17.7 m) ladder, holding 30 buckets. It was estimated that the *Sarnia* could dredge to 22 feet (6.7 m) with material delivered by two chutes to waiting pontoons.

In the 1920s the *Sarnia* was converted to a hulk. Its condition deteriorated rapidly to a point where, on 26 November 1926, it sank in the Port River while under tow with a load of coal. The Harbors Board initially salvaged as much material as possible, before depositing the vessel at the Garden Island Ships' Graveyard on 7 April 1927.

Today the remains lie covered by silt and hidden amongst the mangroves, with the bottom section and the internal machinery beds indicating its previous service as a bucket dredge.



Sarnia, c1900
Photo: SA Maritime Museum



Sarnia today

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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