

## SHIPWRECKS OF SYP

The Yorke Peninsula has a beautiful coastline, but for ships it has often proved less than idyllic. To the south is Investigator Strait, which runs between Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. At least 26 vessels were wrecked in this stretch of water between 1849 and 1982, and they make up what is now known as the 'Investigator Strait Shipwreck Trail'.

To the west is the Spencer Gulf, where over 40 vessels were wrecked on or just off the Yorke Peninsula Coast. Wardang Island is located just west of Port Victoria and is home to the 'Wardang Island Maritime Heritage Trail' which features eight shipwrecks. To the east is Gulf St Vincent, where there have been over 20 wrecks on or near the Yorke Peninsula coastline.

This brochure provides information on 5 of the more well-known Yorke Peninsula shipwrecks. For more information, please visit the local museums or the websites listed below:

- Investigator Strait Shipwreck and Wardang Island Maritime Heritage Trail: [environment.sa.gov.au/topics/heritage/maritime-heritage](http://environment.sa.gov.au/topics/heritage/maritime-heritage)
- Australian shipwrecks, maps and locations: [environment.gov.au/heritage](http://environment.gov.au/heritage)

## THE FERRET

The Ferret was an iron screw steamship, 170ft long and was built in Scotland in 1871. In 1880, a conspiracy between 3 men saw it first stolen, then renamed twice (Bentan and then SS India), and then finally turn up in Australia. A UK insurance company put out a description of the Ferret, asking authorities to watch for similar ships. An Australian police officer spotted the SS India, noticed the resemblance and the ship was seized by custom officials.

In 1920, 25 years later, The Ferret struck the Yorke Peninsula coast during thick fog, and found itself beached alongside the Ethel wreck. All crew survived, but the wreck remained, discharging it's cargo of wines and spirits for the locals to gather from the shore.

Ethel Beach | Innes National Park | Jonathan van der Knaap



# SHIPWRECKS

## SOUTHERN YORKE PENINSULA

### Yorke Peninsula Visitor Information

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IS270 - Shipwrecks

*Walk between shipwrecks  
on sandy shores,  
Dive beneath the surface  
and explore the ocean floor*

## THE ETHEL

The Ethel was a three-masted barque sailing ship, 177ft long, weighing 711 tons. Built in 1876 and originally named Camelo, it was renamed Ethel in 1892. Travelling from South Africa to the port of Semaphore, the Ethel was caught at night in the gale force southwesterly winds of a summer storm. First the ship lost her sails and then damaged her rudder on a reef—leaving the ship vulnerable in strong surf. A nearby ship, the SS Ferret, saw the drama unfolding but was also struggling in the rough seas and could not assist directly—instead sending an urgent radio message to Adelaide. The waves turned the Ethel broadside and kept pushing her hull against the shore, causing the captain and crew to fear she would begin to break up. A nineteen year old sailor, Leonard Stenerson, volunteered to swim ashore and raise the alarm. A rope was tied to his waist, but he was lost and his body was never found.

The next morning, in calmer conditions, the crew walked ashore. An unsuccessful salvage attempt was made in 1904 with a tugboat and lines. When the wind blew up and lines broke, the Ethel was blown back onto the beach, where its remains still lay today.



Ethel Beach | SATC

## THE ZANONI

The Zanoni was a 140ft long, three-masted composite barque sailing ship built in England in 1865. In February 1866 the Zanoni sailed from Liverpool (UK) to Peru, then to Mauritius and then to Port Adelaide. On 11th Feb 1867, on its way from Port Adelaide to Port Wakefield to load wheat, the ship was struck by a violent squall. Despite reducing the sail in preparation, the ship rolled over and quickly sank. All 16 crew were rescued and taken to Adelaide.

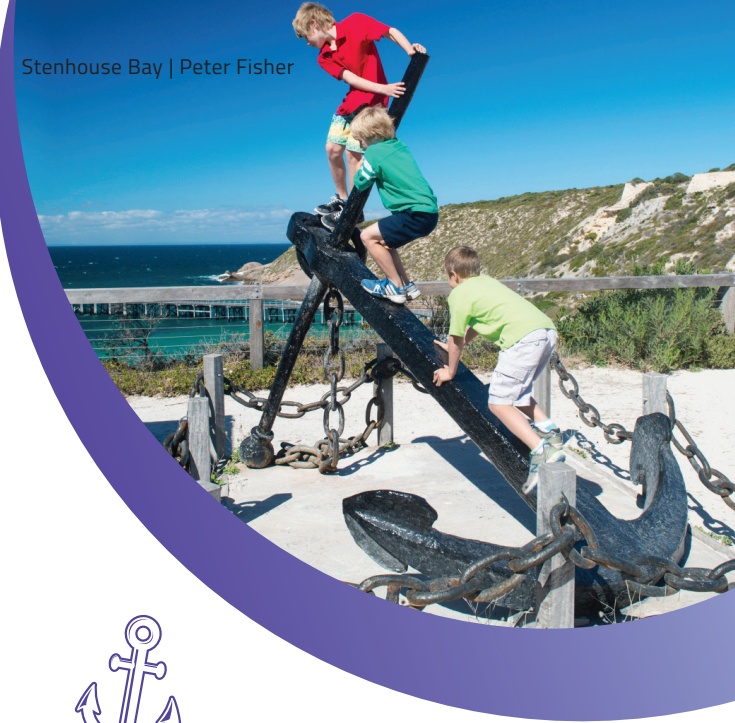
The location of the wreck was unknown until 1983, when a reward was offered and a local fisherman came forward and led divers to the site. The position has now been fixed. For more information and to see artifacts from the wreck, visit the Ardrossan Museum.

## SS CLAN RANALD

The Clan Ranald was a two-decked turret ship, 355 foot long, weighing 2,285t (net). Built in 1900 in the UK, it sank in 1909 off Edithburgh, just south of Troubridge Island. The ship left Semaphore, on it's way to South Africa, with a list to starboard. The list increased, until starboard deck was suddenly under water. Rough weather then smashed the ship against the nearby cliffs. The lifeboats had been destroyed on the cliffs, so the survivors had to swim through cold, dark and stormy conditions to reach the shore, where the locals had rushed to give assistance where they could.

Of the 64 crew on board, 40 souls perished. Only 36 of the 40 missing bodies were recovered, these were buried in the Edithburgh Cemetery. The tragic tale can be read in more detail at the Edithburgh Museum. While the anchor is located outside Edithburgh Museum, the shipwreck itself is an accessible dive site.

Stenhouse Bay | Peter Fisher



## THE HOUGOMONT

Built in 1897 in Scotland, the Hougomont was a four-masted, 292ft long, steel hulled, barque sailing ship. In 1932, on its way from London to Port Lincoln, the Hougomont was caught in a storm and suffered serious damage. 18 slow days later, after refusing aid from other ships, the Hougomont finally arrived at the port of Semaphore.

Repairs were deemed too expensive, and so the Hougomont was sold to the Waratah Gypsum Company, who then paid for a tug boat to tow it back to Stenhouse Bay Jetty. There explosives were used to sink the ship, to create a breakwater to protect ships laden with gypsum. The ship is now located in 9 metres of water, making the remaining pieces easily accessible to divers.