THE EARLY SHIPPING HISTORY OF THE SOUTH EAST COAST

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This booklet examines the early shipping history of Esperance and the South East coast (from Two People Bay to Eucla) of Western Australia to the 1920’s, and includes details of many of the ships wrecked in that area.

1. EARLY NAVIGATORS:

The discovery of the coast of the Great South Land is generally attributed to Dutchman Pieter Nuyts in the vessel "Guilde Zeepaard" ("Golden Sea Horse") in January 1627. Nutys almost certainly visited the islands off the coast of Esperance as many of these are shown in early Dutch charts. There is a legend of a Dutch or Portuguese vessel having been wrecked east of Esperance around 1600, but this legend has yet to be substantiated. No other navigators are known to have visited the south-east coast until 1791 when the British Sloop of War "Discovery" under Captain George Vancouver, accompanied by the armed tender "Chatham" under Lieutenant William Robert Broughton, on a voyage of discovery around the world, passed through the waters on their way to the west coast of North America. Vancouver discovered and named King George's Sound (28-9-1791) and surveyed about 300 miles of coastline eastward.

A little over a year later in 1792 the French vessels "La Recherche" under Rear-Admiral D'Entrecasteaux and "Esperance" (Hope) under Captain Huon de Kermadec discovered and named Esperance Bay (on 9th December 1792). The "La Recherche" and "Esperance" had been sent out by the French National Assembly to look for the missing vessels "La Brussole" and "L'Astrolabe" under La Perouse. The "La Recherche" and "Esperance" stayed two weeks at Esperance whilst repairs to the latter vessel were affected. In that time much of the coastline and many of the islands around Esperance were explored.

It was left to Captain Matthew Flinders in the vessel "Investigator" to complete the chart of the South East coast in his circumnavigation of Australia in 1801-1802.

On the 8th January 1802 Flinders in the "Investigator" sighted the western most island of the Recherche Archipelago on his voyage eastward. Flinders named Lucky Bay, Thistle Cove and Cape Pasley and visited a number of the islands before sailing eastward on 17th January 1802.

Lieutenant Philip King in the "Mermaid" sailed from Sydney to King George's Sound arriving on the 20th January 1818. He was the last British navigator to visit these waters until Commander J.W. Coome in the survey ship "Waterwitch" completed a survey of Esperance Bay in 1897.

In 1825 the French vessels "Thetis" under Captain du Camper and the
"Esperance" under de Bougainville visited the south coast. They were followed a year later in 1826 by the "L'Astrolabe" under Dumont D'Urville. The fear of French annexation of the western portion of Australia resulted in the establishment of the settlement at King George's Sound under Major Lockyer on Christmas Day 1826.

2. WHALERS AND SEALERS:

American and French whalers were known to be operating off the coast of Western Australia as early as 1803. The Americans were particularly active around Flinders Bay (Augusta) and Busselton and their visits were welcomed by the early settlers of those areas. The whalers purchased large quantities of farm produce and traded in many essential items.

By 1835 William Lovett and Thomas Sherratt had begun whaling and sealing in King George's Sound and eastward. In that year the Lovett-Sherratt operations captured fifteen whales.

Whaling became an important source of revenue to the infant colony and by the 1840s bay whaling stations had been established at Cheynes Beach, Cape Riche, Doubtful Bay Island, Two People Bay and Middle Bay. Many other stations were in operation along the west coast.

Sealing was often carried out in conjunction with whaling and sealers had been collecting skins from the islands of the Recherche Archipelago, as early as the 1820s.

A number of vessels were wrecked along the south-east coast while engaged in whaling and sealing, the first recorded being the brig "Belinda" wrecked at Middle Island in 1824. Other vessels lost were the "Mountaineer" in 1835, the Avis in 1842 and the "Arpenteur" in 1849. Another vessel, the brigantine "Wave", although not engaged in whaling or sealing at the time, was wrecked along this section of the coast in 1848 and has been included in this section.

"BELINDA" 1824:

The 160 ton British brig "Belinda" was built and registered at Yarmouth in 1810 and was owned by J. Lee. She arrived at Hobart on 12th November 1823 with a cargo of general merchandise and 28 passengers after an eventful voyage from England. In the South Indian Ocean off the St. Paul Island, the brig was battered by a heavy gale and she lost both masts, the caboose and all the boats on deck. Three sailors were lost overboard in the gale.

After a three month stay at Hobart in which time the necessary repairs to the ship were made, the "Belinda" sailed for Sydney where the balance of her cargo was sold and the ship was advertised for freight or charter. On the 17th May 1824, the "Belinda" under Captain Thomas Cloverdale sailed from Sydney for the sealing grounds off the Archipelago of the Recherche. The "Belinda" was wrecked at Middle Island in the Archipelago on the 19th July 1824.

All twenty-six crew of the "Belinda" survived the wreck. The crew salvaged two of the ship's boats and a small supply of provisions. They set sail in the boats for Sydney, but after having proceeded about 200 miles, one of the boats swamped and was lost. It was decided that the crew should return to Middle Island to await rescue and one party walked along the shore whilst the other party kept abreast in the remaining boat.

The survivors lived on Middle Island for five months until rescued on 8th December 1824 by the sailing brigantine "Nereus" under Captain Thomas Swindles. The "Nereus" continued sealing and in March 1825 returned to
Sydney with the survivors from the "Belinda" and 3,500 sealskins collected from the Archipelago of the Recherche and from around Kangaroo Island.

In 1826 the schooner "Liberty" salvaged some copper and iron and two anchors from the wreckage of the "Belinda". The "Liberty" returned to Sydney in March 1826 with these goods and a cargo of 1,500 fur seal skins and two tons of salt.

"MOUNTAINEER" 1835:

The 23 ton clinker built cutter "Mountaineer" arrived at Albany on 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 1835 from Launceston after having been engaged in sealing and trading among the islands off the south coast of Australia.

The vessel left Albany on 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1835 and sailed eastward under the command of Evanson Jansen. Besides Jansen, the vessel carried two crewmen and six passengers including two women. The "Mountaineer" anchored in Thistle Cove on 22\textsuperscript{nd} March 1835 and two days later was driven ashore and wrecked. There were no casualties and the survivors remained at Thistle Cove for ten days before setting out for Middle Island in the whale boat.

At this time a number of sealers, including the notorious negro John Anderson, were operating from Middle Island, and had established a house, a well and a garden there.

After about three weeks at Middle Island, several of the survivors from the "Mountaineer" and some of the Middle Island sealers set out in the whale boat for Albany. Apparently the vessel was wrecked as there is no record of it having reached Albany.

In June 1835, James Newell, a passenger from the "Mountaineer" and sealer James Manning were involved in a disagreement with Anderson. Anderson had Newell and Manning taken to the mainland where they were put ashore without provisions. They arrived in Albany exhausted on 9\textsuperscript{th} August 1835 after walking about 400 miles in six weeks and subsisting mainly on limpets and grass roots.

Anderson, a thief and murderer, was later shot and killed by a fellow sealer.

The "Mountaineer" was built at Launceston in 1832. She measured 35ft 2in in length and 12ft 10in in beam. Her draught was 5ft 8in.

"AVIS" 1842:

The American whaler "Avis" of New London was wrecked at Two People Bay about 20 miles east of Albany on 28\textsuperscript{th} August 1842.

The vessel was anchored off Two People Bay loading whale oil from the Bay whaling operations there. Both her cables broke during a south east gale and the ship was driven ashore and wrecked.

There was no loss of life and the cargo of 800 barrels of whale oil, some tobacco, timber and iron were salvaged. The hull of the "Avis" was sold at auction.

"WAVE" 1848:

The 103 ton brigantine "Wave" was built in Bermuda in 1838. She was registered for a time in Hong Kong before being purchased by W. Younghusband and C. Hackett of Port Adelaide.

The "Wave" was sailing from Adelaide to Singapore via Albany when she was driven ashore in a storm and totally wrecked at Cheynes Beach on 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1848. There were no casualties and the survivors and part of the damaged
cargo were rescued by the colonial schooner "Champion". The brigantine "Arpenteur" of Port Adelaide was employed for a time in salvaging cargo from the "Wave". Ironically the "Arpenteur" was also wrecked at Cheynes Beach a little over a year after the "Wave" whilst loading whale oil. The "Wave" measured 72.2ft x 20.4ft with a draught of 10.8ft.

"ARPENTEUR" 1849:

The 95 ton square rigged brigantine "Arpenteur" was totally wrecked at Cheyne's Beach on 7th November 1849. The vessel was engaged in trade between Adelaide, Singapore and Java. She was taking on a cargo of whale oil at Cheynes Beach when driven ashore by a terrific north east gale. The ten crew were lucky to escape the disaster with their lives.

The vessel "Emma Sherratt" was sent from Fremantle to attempt to salvage some of the 6 tons of oil, 8 tons of flour and quantities of tea, sugar and sundries on board the "Arpenteur" at the time of the wreck. Neither the vessel nor the cargo was insured. The wreckage of the "Arpenteur" later sold at auction for £11.

The "Arpenteur" was built at Mahe in the Seychelles in 1839 and was originally registered at Port Louis, Mauritius. At the time of the wreck the vessel was registered at Port Adelaide and was owned by J. Ridley and W. Owens. She measured 72.7ft x 18ft with a draught of 10.6ft.

The remains of the "Arpenteur" were re-located in 1965 by some fishermen when their nets snagged in some wreckage.

After 1860, whaling began to decline in Western Australia, partly due to a Legislative Council Ordinance prohibiting whaling by aliens off the west coast and partly to discoveries of petroleum oil in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Pearling became more lucrative and many whalers turned their attentions to that industry. The last recorded return of the effort of whale oil from Western Australia in 1879.

3. EARLY SETTLEMENT AND THE TELEGRAPH LINE:

Following the establishment of colonial settlement at King George's Sound in 1826, settlers gradually took up grazing land eastward. George Cheyne occupied land at Cape Riche and he was followed by the Wellstead family who settled at Bremer Bay in the mid 1850s.

The Dempster Brothers selected land around Esperance in 1863 and they were followed in the 1870s by the Moirs at Fanny Cove, Brooks at Nanambinia, Ponton Brothers at Point Malcolm, Campbell Taylor at Thomas River, Kennedy Brothers and McGill at Mundrabilla and John Muir at Moopina.

On 1st January 1875, work in Albany was begun on the East-West Telegraph Line connecting WA with the rest of Australia and the world. Seven thousand squared jarrah poles each fitted with a small lightening arrester and each weighing about 2 cwt. had to be shipped to points between Albany and Eucla.

Many small sailing vessels were employed in the carriage of the telegraph poles and other materials. Some of these were the "Mary Ann", "Agnes", "Walter and Mary", "Scorpion", "Tribune", "Planet", "Twilight", "Beatrice Wheaton", "Eclipse" and "Bunyip".

The East-West Telegraph Line was completed in December 1877 and many of the smaller coastal schooners secured government contracts for the carriage of freight and telegraph personnel and supplying pastoralists and conveying their goods. Wool, skins (sheep and kangaroo), hides, sandalwood, salted pork, butter and vegetables were carried to Fremantle, Albany and Adelaide.
The ports visited by the coastal schooners were Cape Riche, Bremer Bay, Doubtful Island Bay, MaryAnn Harbour (Hopetoun), Fanny Cove, Esperance Bay, Thomas River, Point Malcolm, Israelite Bay, Eyre's Sand Patch and Eucla.

The landing of telegraph poles or supplies particularly east of Cape Arid was dangerous work as there were few anchorages that offered safety from strong south-east winds. Many vessels were wrecked during the construction of the east-west telegraph line and later in coastal service.

"MARY ANN" and "SCORPION" 1876:

In 1876 two vessels, the cutter "Scorpion" and schooner "Mary Ann" were wrecked. Little is known of the "Scorpion" but the wreck of the "Mary Ann" is well documented. The 104 ton "Mary Ann" was built in Tasmania in 1842. She measured 84ft x 21ft and drew 9ft of water. She was the first vessel to land telegraph poles at Esperance.

On 13 July 1876 on a voyage from Eucla to Esperance, under Captain Miles the "Mary Ann" anchored for the night in the lee of Belhinger Island alongside the schooner "Tribune", The wind veered during the night into a stiff breeze, The "Mary Ann" parted her cables and piled up on the rocks a complete wreck. All hands were saved and some sails, spars and rigging were salvaged and transferred to the "Tribune".

"TWILIGHT" and "BUNYIP" 1877:

The cutters "Twilight" and "Bunyip" were wrecked together at Twilight Cove on the night of 24th May 1877. The vessels were working a section of the East-West telegraph line and had safely discharged a portion of their cargoes. They anchored for the night in a little nook protected from the south-west winds at the eastern end of the cliffs when a strong wind sprang up from the south-east. Both vessels dragged their anchors and were driven ashore and totally wrecked. Some of the survivors walked 170 miles to the settlement at Israelite Bay for assistance. The "Twilight" of 24 tons measured 43ft x 14ft x 6.5ft. She was built at Fremantle in 1869. The "Bunyip" has been referred to in some accounts as the "Bunup" or "Catabunup" but "Bunyip" seems to be correct.

"BROTHERS" 1878:

In 1878, Andrew Dempster won the contract to build the Esperance Police Station. He chartered the topsail schooner "Brothers" to convey building materials to Esperance. On the voyage to Esperance the vessel also carried Dempster's wife and children.

"Brothers" left Esperance bound for Fremantle on 12 July 1878 and was never again heard of. The vessel of 48 tons was built in Fremantle in 1876. She measured 64.67ft x 17.17ft x 7.08ft.

"BATOE BASSI" 1880:

The 325 ton Dutch barque "Batoe Bassi" on a voyage from Tjilatjap (Java) to Melbourne carrying a cargo of 300 tons of sugar, 3,000 coconuts, rice and spirits, was purposefully ran ashore on Inshore Island about 60 miles east of Esperance. It seems that the vessel developed a serious leak and the Captain ran her ashore to save those on
board. The schooner "Agnes" was chartered to salvage the cargo but by the time she arrived the "Batoe Bassi" had sunk in about 13 feet of water. All 24 crew including 3 Malay females were saved but two later died ashore.

Thomas Sherratt of Albany purchased the salvage rights to the "Batoe Bassi" for £8 and he dispatched his schooner "Walter and Mary" of 31 tons to recover what remained of the wreck.

Early settlers in the vicinity of the shipwreck salvaged some of the ship's timbers and these were used for building purposes.

"AGNES" 1892:

The "Agnes" purchased in 1879 by Captain Frederick Douglas of Albany and Esperance served the south-east coast for many years. On Good Friday 1892 she left Albany for the East Coast. She called at Bremer Bay and loaded 40 tons of sandalwood. Whilst at anchor in Bremer Bay, on 24 April 1892, huge seas arose and the "Agnes" broke her three anchor cables and ran ashore.

The two crew members on board managed to get ashore and the following day Captain Douglas and his crew salvaged the cargo, masts, sails, and other valuables. The vessel was not insured. The "Agnes" of 44 tons was built in New South Wales in 1874. She measured 62ft x 18ft x 5.4ft.

Following the loss of the "Agnes" Captain Douglas travelled to Adelaide where he purchased the schooner "Grace Darling" of 82 ton. The "Grace Darling" was to serve the South-east coast of WA until sold to R.J. Lynn Ltd. in 1910.

"RODONDO" 1894:

The 1119 ton steamship "Rodondo" under Captain Hill and carrying cargo and passengers from Adelaide to Melbourne, struck Pollock Reef at 2am on 7th October 1894. She sank stern first 12 hours later.

There were about 200 passengers on board and four lost their lives when the davits holding the lifeboats broke, spilling passengers into the sea. In a curious incident one passenger is reported to have shot himself whilst struggling in the water.

The survivors were landed on South East Island and a party of twelve set out in one of the boats for help. The party had the good fortune to run into Captain Douglas in the schooner "Grace Darling" voyaging from Albany to Eucla. The survivors from the "Rodondo" were all taken to Point Malcolm in the "Grace Darling".

Nothing was saved from the "Rodondo" and one passenger, Mr. Fitzgerald, is reported to have lost 300 sovereigns.

The "Rodondo" should have past 70 miles south of where she struck, but a 7 ton boiler carried as deck cargo is thought to have affected the compass.

4. GOLD RUSH DAYS:

Following gold discoveries at Dundas and Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893 men poured into Esperance and Fanny Cove on their way to the Goldfields. Esperance grew so rapidly that it was gazetted a townsite in December 1893. Gold was discovered at Norseman in 1894 and this added to the momentum. Small sailing vessels and steamers brought men and equipment for the Goldfields and the town mushroomed overnight. Jetties had been built at Esperance in the 1880 and the early 1890s by Dempster Brothers and the Hampton
An advertisement for the Adelaide Steamship Company 1882

Plains Company but to cater for the increased trade the Government built the town jetty in 1895. To meet the increased trade, the jetty was extended in 1896-97.

The Adelaide Steamship Company opened an office in Esperance in 1896 and that company began a twice weekly service between Esperance and Port Adelaide with such vessels as the "Flinders" 521 tons, "Lubra" 321 tons and "Rob Ray" 393 tons, and later other Adelaide Steamship Company vessels to call at Esperance were the "Helen Nicoll", "Herbert" and "Franklin".

In 1896 the rail link between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie was completed and Esperance lost a lot of its Goldfields' trade. Shipping began to decline and the Adelaide Steamship Company closed in 1907. When the railway was extended from Kalgoorlie to Norseman in 1909, Esperance slipped further behind and it was not until 1925 when the railway link from Esperance to Salmon Gums was finished that port trade began to move again.

The year 1896 was notable for its severe storms and in that year three vessels all owned or chartered by J.R.A. Conolly of Esperance were lost. In 1894 Conolly established farms on some of the islands off Esperance and grew potatoes, onions and other vegetables for the settlements between Eucla and Albany.

"SWIFT", "ETTIE" and "FLEETWING" 1896:

The 73 ton ketch "Swift" owned by Conolly struck a reef near Twilight Cove and was lost on 31 August 1896, She was built in Tasmania in 1883 and measured 84.8' x 20.5' x 7.3'. The other vessels lost by Conolly were the schooner "Ettie" in September 1896 and his yacht "Fleetwing" in the same month.

5. SHIPPING MISHAPS 1900-1920:

"HERBERT":

The Adelaide Steamship Company's steamer "Herbert", 302 tons, was used in the South East mail run from 1898 to 1904, Built in 1884 at Hebburn on Tyne, the "Herbert" measured 110.5' x 25' x 7.25'. 302 tons gross and 152 tons nett and was fitted with a 60 HP compound steam engine. She was lengthened to 140.1' in 1899.

The "Herbert" was originally acquired in 1896 by the Adelaide Steamship Company for the use in the shallow rivers and bays of North Queensland. In 1898 she was transferred to the South East mail run and whilst in that service, suffered a number of mishaps:

18 May 1898 struck the bottom at Esperance Bay
30 January 1901, with a crew of 18 and 10 passengers, damaged her cargo in Mary Ann Harbour (Hopetoun)
21 June 1902, with a crew of 15 and 2 passengers, touched the sandy bottom at the Israelite Bay Jetty. Some coal was jettisoned and she was refloated.
Esperance residents complained that the "Herbert" was too slow and she was replaced on the mail run by the bigger vessel "Franklin". However the "Franklin" was wrecked at Point Malcolm on 4 April 1902 and the "Herbert" was replaced on the run. Eventually as the South East trade declined, the "Herbert" was replaced in 1904 by the smaller steamer "Croydon".

"ECLIPSE":
The 78 ton schooner "Eclipse" under Captain R. Wheaton and a crew of five was stranded at Goose Bay, Middle Island, on the 10 December 1900. The vessel was owned by R. & I.W. Arnold, was valued at £600 and carried cargo valued at £1200. The vessel was apparently refloated.

"YARAKA":
The 303 ton steamer "Yarak" under Captain W. Anderson with a crew of 23 and 1 passenger was stranded on a reef in Mary Ann Harbour (Hopetoun) on 23 July 1900. The vessel's propellers and hull were severely damaged.

"FRANKLIN" 1902:
The steamship "Franklin" was built in Glasgow in 1880. She measured 200' x 26'3" x 11' 7"; 730 gross tons and 395 net tons. She was fitted with a 280 HP compound steam engine and could carry up to 60 passengers.

Before being wrecked at Point Malcolm in 1902, the "Franklin" had been involved in two other mishaps. She struck an unbouyed anchor in Townsville Harbour in July 1893 and sank. She was successfully raised and repaired. In January 1896 she suffered cyclone damage, again whilst in Townsville Harbour.

On 18 April 1902 the "Franklin" under Captain West was approaching Point Malcolm when she struck a submerged object and sank. (The submerged object may have been an anchor from the "Grace Darling"). All 20 crew and 2 passengers were saved but the ship valued at £10,000 and the cargo worth £500 were a total write off. The tug "Euro" was engaged in attempts to refloat the "Franklin" but these attempts failed. The side of the ship was opened and her boiler removed. Made water-tight the boiler was towed behind the vessel "Bullarra" to Adelaide where she was built into another vessel.

"CROYDON":
"Croydon" steamship O/N 101625, was built in 1896 by Riley Hargrave and Company, Singapore. She measured 76ft x 16ft x 6ft7in, 69 tons gross, 38 tons nett. She was fitted with a 25 HP compound surface condensing steam engine.

The Adelaide Steamship Company purchased the "Croydon" in 1899 for use in lightening at Cossack in the North West and later she replaced the mail steamer "Herbert" on the Esperance run. From early in 1904 the "Croydon" had been operating out of Albany but when the Adelaide Steamship Company lost the mail contract in 1905 it was decided to take her to Port Adelaide. The journey was full of incidents. The "Croydon" grounded at Hopetoun and then ran into severe weather off Point Malcolm. Sheltering for a time at Point Malcolm, the "Croydon" had to be towed to Port Adelaide by the "SS Tarcoola". The "Croydon" was slipped and examined at Port Adelaide but because of the damage to her, the vessel had to be abandoned to the underwriters on 10-5-1905.

The "Croydon" was sold in 1905 and repaired. She was sold again in 1918 to the Huon Shipping and Logging Company. On May 13, 1919 she sprung a leak and sank in the Savage River, Tasmania. No lives were lost.
"AGNES":
The steam lighter "Agnes" owned by the Adelaide Steamship Company dragged her anchor and went ashore at Hopetoun on 8 November 1907.
The "Agnes" mostly operated at Hopetoun but from time to time she was taken to Albany to assist at that port. The vessel was refloated and later sold by the Adelaide Steamship Company.

"SEA QUEEN":
The 60 foot ketch "Sea Queen" was chartered by the Western Australian Phosphate Company to survey the Recherche Archipelago for phosphate rock. Whilst the vessel was at anchor off Boxer Island with most of the survey party ashore, an easterly came up and the "Sea Queen" dragged her anchor and was driven onto the rocks and wrecked on 1-4-1907. The four men on board managed to get ashore in the dinghy; one suffered a badly broken arm. Some of the party rowed 15 miles to the mainland and walked to Esperance for assistance. The vessel was owned by W. Clements of Perth and was valued at £800. Her stores and equipment on board were valued at £500. It was uninsured. The wreck was sold to W. White.

"KEPLER":
The "Kepler" was a steam barge (O/N 88956), registered at Fremantle 4/1897. It was built at Footscray, Victoria and measured 91' x 18.3' x 5.8' 64.42 gross tons and 45.08 nett tons. It was fitted with a high pressure steam engine-25 HP. There were three masts and it was schooner rigged.
The "Kepler" was being used as a coal lighter when she sank at her moorings at Hopetoun in 1910. She was under the command of Captain A.B. Pascall with a crew of three when she sank on 8-8-1910. She was owned by the Adelaide Steamship Company and apparently attempts were made to raise the "Kepler" but these appear to have been unsuccessful. An anchor from the "Kepler" is on display in the Esperance Museum. For many years lumps of coal were washed up on the beaches at Hopetoun.

"DUNSTER CASTLE":
The "Dunster Castle" was a steamship of 62 tons. It was owned by R.G. Lynn Ltd., Fremantle.
In 1915 the Western Australian Government authorised a start on the Esperance-Salmon Gums Railway and on the 19 October 1915 the "Dunster Castle" brought the first railway material to Esperance from Bunbury. She made five voyages to Esperance with the railway material. On her last voyage under Captain Shroeder and with ten crew, she arrived on 1-7-1916 and departed for Albany on 4-7-1916 but immediately ran into heavy weather. Captain Shroeder decided to seek refuge in Fanny Cove but he missed the cave and found himself in severe difficulties. Both anchors were dropped but these were carried away immediately. The vessel was nearly out of coal and water so Captain Shroeder purposely beached her without injury to the vessel or crew. She was valued at £4000 and uninsured.
There were several attempts made to salvage the "Dunster Castle". The state owned vessel "Eucla" tried to tow the vessel off the beach but this failed. After several months of fruitless salvage attempts, the "Dunster Castle" was abandoned and sold to E.G. Everett and Albany storekeeper. Everett employed Captain William Douglas to do the salvage work. Captain Douglas succeeded in refloating the "Dunster Castle" but sand had entered the stern tube and seized the propellor shaft. Wind and sea rose and once again the "Dunster Castle" went aground.
Undaunted, the salvors continued their efforts. A load of salvage gear was loaded onto the 4 ton lugger "Alita". On her way to Albany the "Alita" was wrecked entering Hopetoun Harbour.

Two years after the stranding, the Douglas's again refloated the "Dunster Castle". Again sand had jammed the propellor shaft. With the weather deteriorating they decided to open the seacocks and allow the vessel to settle on the bottom rather than beach her again. But she turned side on to the waves and quickly filled with sea and sand. The Douglas's had had enough and abandoned their attempts to salvage the ship.

An Esperance Syndicate with anchors, wires and heavy winches tried to straighten the vessel and drag her closer to shore where the sand and water could be removed. The attempt however also failed.

Next the Larsen Brothers from Albany built a four foot timber wall around the deck of the "Dunster Castle" to keep out the waves and proceeded to remove the sand and water by hand. They managed to remove a lot of the sand and water and to float the ship's stern but they could not get at the sand trapped forward. So the "Dunster Castle" remained where she was. What's left of the "Dunster Castle" can still be seen in the water several miles west of Shoal Cape.

"LAURA":

The "Laura was a cutter (O/N 61084) registered at Fremantle. It was carvel built and measured 44' x 13.1' x 6.9, 24.25 gross tons. It was built in 1874 for James Dyer of Perth and was sold in 1872 to Geo Simpson of Vasse, manager of the Western Australian Timber Company.

The register for this vessel records that no account of the "Laura" had been received since 1872, but it would appear that she was used by the timber industry at Vasse (Busselton) and Hamelin Bay until purchased by Captain Fred Douglas of Esperance.

Captain Douglas had the vessel refitted and whilst he was visiting Albany with the "Laura" in 1910, the steamer "Pericles" was wrecked off Cape Leeuwin (31-3-1910). Captain Douglas's son Carl sailed the "Laura" to Cape Leeuwin where he salvaged a large quantity of butter. The "Pericles" of 11,440 tons was steaming for England with passengers and a cargo of meat, wool, dairy produce, hides and lead when she struck an unchartered rock off Cape Leeuwin and sank some hours later. There were no casualties.

In 1916 the "Laura" was being used by Jim Douglas to take sheep to Figure of Eight Island off Esperance. A storm blew up and the "Laura" went ashore on the rocks and wrecked.

"PENGUIN":

The "Penguin" was a steam tug of 208.16 gross tons. She measured 120' ft x 24ftlin x 11ft4in. It was built in Newcastle in 1897. It was owned by the Western Australian Government and registered in Perth.

The "Penguin" was used at times for survey work, rescue and salvage operations and fisheries research. She was involved with rescue work with the "City of York" wrecked at Rottnest (12-7-1899) and "Carlisle Castle", iron sailing barque of 2,200 tons, wrecked with all hands lost at Rockingham (13-7-1899).

"Penguin" under Commander J.W. Coombe surveyed the waters from Cape Pasley to Cape Le Grande in 1901-2.

In 1920 she was fitted with refrigerators and under Captain T.S. Talbot and a crew of 17, was sent to survey the fishing potential of Esperance waters and the Bight. The "Penguin" took shelter from a gale in Goose Island Bay (Middle Island) on 27-6-1920 and dropped anchor. The gale strengthened and shifted and the "Penguin" was blown ashore and wrecked. There was no loss of life. The Marine Court of inquiry found that Captain Talbot had
committed an error of judgement anchoring too close to shore and not giving more consideration to the deteriorating weather and falling barometer. The court recommended however that no action be taken against Captain Talbot.

Salvage rights to the "Penguin" were acquired in 1921 by Englishmen S. Richards and J. McKenzie for £20. Richards and McKenzie were left on Middle Island in October 1921 with six weeks supplies whilst they carried out salvage work. However for various reasons they were not picked up until January 1922, 12 weeks later. In the meantime Richards and McKenzie survived on sea birds, wallabies and fish. The rusty remains of the "Penguin" can still be seen in Goose Island Bay.

6. STATE SHIPPING SERVICE:

In May 1912, the Government entered the shipping business. The policy of the Government at this time was directed toward the provision of State owned public utilities, and, in that year, the State Shipping Service, State Brickworks and State Ferries were all founded. The service was to provide a regular schedule of calls at the isolated out ports of the State, ranging from Fremantle north to Wyndham and south to Eucla.

The early State Ships played an important part in the development of the Esperance area carrying cargo, passengers and mail to and from Esperance, Eucla, Israelite Bay, Hopetoun, Bremer Bay and Albany. The three most important vessels associated with Esperance were the "Una", "Eucla" and "Kybra".

"UNA":

Built at Beverley Yorkshire, in 1890, as a North Sea trawler for Grimsby Union Steam Fishing Co. Ltd. Purchased in 1906 by John Bateman of Fremantle, the vessel changed hands several times before being bought by the State Government for £2,000 on the 1-5-1912, thereby becoming the first State owned vessel.

The "Una" made her first voyage to Esperance arriving 11-5-1912, with Captain A.E. Douglas and a crew of 15. She departed for Eucla the same day.

The "Una" was sold to Irvin and Johnson Ltd. of Cape Town on 11-7-1917 where she was again used as a fishing vessel. She was taken out of service in October 1925 and deliberately sunk in February 1926.

Dimensions: - Length 11ft, Beam 20'7", Draught 11ft. iron hull 177, 88 tons gross, 86.56 tons nett. Two masts ketch rigged. Triple expansion D/A vertical steam engine 3 cylinders 50 N.H.P Steel boiler 150lb.

"EUCLA":

Built in 1901 at Ayr U.K. for J. Bacon Ltd. of Liverpool by S. McKnight & Co. Named the "Wexford", she was used for some years in the "pig and whistle" trade between England and Ireland. She was purchased by the Western Australian Government on 16-5-1912 and arrived at Fremantle on 1-8-1912.

The "Wexford" sailed for Albany in August 1912 where she was officially renamed the "Eucla" by the Mayoress of Albany, Mrs. Sims and arrived at Esperance for the first time on 5-9-1912 under the command of Captain A.E. Douglas and a crew of 22.

The "Eucla" served this area of the coast for many years until being finally sold to Fremantle ship breakers early in 1932. After being stripped, the hull was towed to sea 25 miles west of Rottnest and sunk with explosives on 9-4-1932.

"KYBRA":

Built at Montrose Scotland by Coaster Construction Ltd., the "Kybra" was launched on 13-1-1926. She cost the State Government £60,000 to build and she arrived at Fremantle on 11-6-1926. Her first visit to Esperance was made on the 22nd June of that year.

The "Kybra" served this area for many years arriving in Esperance fortnightly with passengers, mail and stores. She was commandeered by the Navy in 1940 and was used in anti-submarine training on the east coast of Australia. On 8-8-1948, the "Kybra" arrived in Fremantle with the broken down 7,132 ton Greek steamer "Papachristidis Vassilios" in tow. The "Kybra" had rescued the distressed vessel some 400 miles off the North West coast of W.A.

The "Kybra" was sold in January 1958 by the State Government and was renamed the "Floreta" by her new owners. She was towed to Singapore and changed hands again in 1959. On the 2-9-1959 the "Floreta" was seized by the Indonesian Government after being caught involved in gun smuggling off the Mollucas.

Renamed the "Djajaputra 11" by the Indonesians, the old "Kybra" fell into poor repair and was broken up for scrap in 1968. Dimensions: - Length 204'2", Beam 31'5", Draught 15'11". Steel Hull 858.15 ton gross, 440.3 ton nett, 1300 tons dead weight. Two masts. Two stroke cycle single acting diesel engine 6 cylinders 235 N.H.P. Speed 11 knots. 32 passengers. "Kybra" means "Little Ship".

"CARL NIVVEN":

The "Carl Nivven" was a German auxiliary, steel hull, 5 masted schooner of 2,400, tons under Captain E. Weitendorf and a crew of 22. It arrived in Esperance on 3-3-1926 in ballast from Fremantle and sailed 11-3-1926 for Europe via Albany with 18,000 bags of wheat.