ADMELLA
Discovery Trail

Commemorating a Tragedy
Celebrating Volunteerism

A self drive touring route integrating cultural, heritage and nature based experiences within a 130 km radius of Mount Gambier, South Australia.

21 maritime themed interpretive trail markers emotively recount the tale of the wreck of the Admella *and take you on a journey that you will never forget.*

ADMELLA 150th ANNIVERSARY August 2009

The Wreck of the SS Admella

The wreck of the SS Admella in the early hours of 6 August 1859 was only the beginning of a horrific week for survivors who remained on board, in sight of land, while volunteers struggled to rescue them from the stricken steamer.

The loss of 89 lives makes the wreck one of the worst maritime disasters in Australia's history.

The *Admella* was sailing from Adelaide to Melbourne when it struck Carpenters Reef. Within 15 minutes the ship broke up leaving passengers and crew clinging to the wreckage a mile from shore.

Several early attempts to reach land were fruitless. Eventually 2 sailors struggled to shore and made a 20 mile trek to MacDonnell Lighthouse to raise the alarm. It was not until the third day after the wreck that people heard of the disaster.

Over the next few days, rescue attempts were made, but mountainous seas and severe storms continually drove the rescuers back.

Survivors lashed themselves to rigging, their strength sapped by lack of water, food and shelter; some were driven mad by drinking sea water, others slipped quietly into the boiling surf to their watery graves.

James Shaw (1815-1881), The Admella 1858, oil on canvas, from the collection at Art Gallery SA. Purchased via SA Govt Grant 1977

On day eight a lifeboat managed to crash through the surf and reach the wreck; three people were taken ashore safely. Shortly after, the lifeboat *'Portland'* rescued the remaining nineteen survivors.

Further Information

"The Lady Nelson" Visitor & Discovery Centre, Mount Gambier
Phone 1800 087 187

Portland Visitor Information Centre
Phone 1800 035 567

www.admella.org.au
www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

Acknowledgements

Information compiled by Linda Hay, Veronica Jenkin, Susanne Somerville and Brendon Jarrett on behalf of the Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee in association with the Port MacDonnell and District Maritime Museum Association.

Wreck of the Admella, 1966, Ian Mudie, The family of the late Ian Mudie.

Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Admella, Intercolonial steamer on the Southern Coast of Australia, 1859, Samuel Mossman.

Report of Commission appointed by the Governor-In-Chief to inquire into the Loss of the 'Admella', 1859

Information and photos provided to the Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee from descendants of those involved in the wreck of the Admella.

Cover artwork 'Admella Wreck', Julian Bruere

Admella Discovery Trail information to be used as a guide only; the suppliers assume no responsibility and disclaim all liability for any inaccuracies, error or omission.

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Mount Gambier West

District Council of Grant
PO Box 724, Mount Gambier, SA, 5290

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www.admella.org.au www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

Interpretive Marker Locations

Sites are numbered in chronological order

Sailors' Trek
A Fateful Voyage

***THE NAVIGATOR* ADMELLA MEMORIAL**, *Timpson Street / Queens Wharf, Port Adelaide SA and* **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM**, *126 Lipson Street, Port Adelaide, SA*

Phone 08 8207 6255 www.history.sa.gov.au

The *Admella* left Port Adelaide on 5 August 1859 on its regular voyage to Melbourne, reportedly laden with 113 people, 6 horses, general merchandise and 93 tons of copper.

View The Navigator Sculpture which depicts the SS Admella embedded in the seabed after hitting Carpenters Reef. Acclaimed as one of the finest in the world, the maritime museum features a number of Admella artefacts.

1 Sailors' Trek
From Glory to Tragedy

CAPE BANKS LIGHTHOUSE

Canunda National Park, Lighthouse Road, near Carpenter Rocks, SA

(GPS 0445184 N5805299 - unsealed road from Carpenter Rocks)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8735 1177
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Read a brief account of the Admella disaster and view the memorial cairn. Walk along the beach where survivors landed, and rescuers gathered. View the treacherous reef, now known as Admella Reef, from the observation deck near the Lighthouse and on rough days try to picture the drama that unfolded.

2 Sailors' Trek
A Good Ship that met a Terrible End

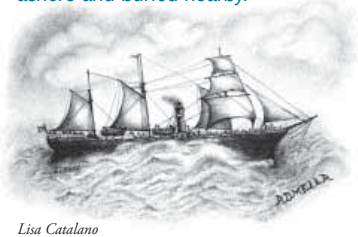
ENTRANCE TO CANUNDA NATIONAL PARK

Corner of Lighthouse Road and No. 2 Rocks Road, near Carpenter Rocks, SA

(GPS 0445345 N5805921 – unsealed road from Carpenter Rocks)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8735 1177
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Access Canunda National Park via the marked 4 wheel drive soft sand track. Travel along the edge of the sand dunes where Admella wreck victim's bodies were found washed ashore and buried nearby.



Lisa Catalano

3 Sailors' Trek
Survivors 'like Seals on a Half-Tide Rock'

NENE VALLEY CONSERVATION PARK and MEMORIAL WALL

Nene Valley, SA

(GPS0457863 N5795336 - unsealed road)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8735 1177
www.environment.sa.gov.au

The Nene Valley Conservation Park walking trail is an easy walk of approximately 1.5km.

Walk along the trail and imagine how the sailors may have tackled this bush during their 20 mile trek for help. Learn of the survivors' existence on the shipwreck.

4 Sailors' Trek
Exhausted they push on

DOUGLAS POINT CONSERVATION PARK

Cape Douglas, SA

(GPS 0463494 N5791163 – unsealed road)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8735 1177
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Read the story of the 2 sailors' struggle to convey the news of the shipwreck. Walk to the top of the Cape to view the rugged landscape which confronted Knapman and Leach on their quest for help.

5 Spread the News Track
A Tough Salt!

MACDONNELL LIGHTHOUSE SITE

Cape Northumberland Heritage and Nature Park, near Port MacDonnell, SA

(GPS 0470353 N5787565)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8738 2576
www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

The original Lighthouse, built 1859, played a prominent part in the *Admella* rescue. It was at this site that news of the *Admella* disaster was first heard. Today it is home to Little Penguins who return each evening around dusk.

Walk up the path to the lighthouse remains and take in the panoramic view.

6 Spread the News Track
More Terrible Luck

BLACK'S STATION SITE

Winterfield's Creek, Duckshooters Road, between Port MacDonnell and Nene Valley, SA

(GPS 0464893 N5795901 - road partly unsealed)

In 1859 this part of South Australia was remote and difficult to traverse, Robe the nearest port, Mount Gambier founded 6 years earlier, and MacDonnell Lighthouse opened only months before the wreck.

Learn of events that delayed news of the wreck reaching Mount Gambier. Looking towards the windmill near this site try to spot the current lighthouse, situated quite near the original lighthouse site.

7 Spread the News Track
News paralyses the State

MOUNT GAMBIER TELEGRAPH STATION SITE

Cave Garden, Watson Terrace, Mount Gambier, SA

Free Entry. Phone 08 8724 9750
www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au

Situated in the centre of the city this sinkhole was the original source of water supply for the early settlers. The Mount Gambier Telegraph Station was located on the main corner in 1859.

Venture out onto the suspended viewing platforms for a spectacular view into the sinkhole. Picnic in the Cave Garden and learn about the early history of this area and how important it was as the distribution point of news of the wreck.

8 Rescuers' Path
Local Knowledge Helps

CURRATUM STATION HOMESTEAD SITE

Corner Aslins Road and Old Rocks Road, near Kongorong, SA

Supplies, guides and men were sent from Curratum Station to help with the rescue, and the *Admella's* master, Captain Hugh McEwan, recuperated at the homestead after his rescue.

Learn more about the fourth day of the tragedy and imagine the rough tracks and distance that rescuers had to travel from here, the closest homestead to the wreck.

9 Rescuers' Path
Port Robe joins the Throng of Volunteers!

ROBE CUSTOMS HOUSE

Royal Circus, Robe, SA

For opening times Phone 08 8768 2465
www.robe.com.au

This National Trust museum displays nautical items and local memorabilia

Read about Robe's involvement in the Admella tragedy and visit the Customs House Admella display.

Did you know...
Admella was built in Port Glasgow in 1857.

10 Rescuers' Path
Lifeboat Journey

PORTLAND FORESHORE

Lee Breakwater Road, Portland, Vic

Learn of the lifeboat Portland's journey from this site to assist with the rescue, and visualise the site as it would have been then.

Did you know...
Admella was named after trading ports:
AD Adelaide,
MEL Melbourne,
LA Launceston.

11 Rescuers' Path
"We may never become aware of the Names of all the lost"

Adelaide Observer 20/8/1859

MOUNT GAMBIER STATION SITE

Tenison Woods College, White Avenue, Mount Gambier, SA

View the Admella memorial sculpture created by renowned artist Greg Johns. Learn about the fate of some of those who did not survive their journey on the Admella's final voyage.

Did you know...
Admella was claimed to be one of the safest ships ever built.

12 Rescuers' Path
Commemorating a Tragedy

CARPENTER ROCKS HALL

Carpenter Rocks Road, Carpenter Rocks, SA

Visit the Sheoak Memorial for the 89 souls lost on the wreck of the Admella; planted in 2009 for the Admella 150 Festival. Read about the heroic rescue of those who survived.

'Admella Beach' Julian Bruere

13 Survivors Journey
To Kindness and Recovery

MACS HOTEL PORTLAND

Bentinck Street, Portland, Vic

Phone 03 5523 2671
www.glenelg.vic.gov.au

Walk Portland's Historic Walking Trail, view the Hotel where some survivors recuperated and find sites of other buildings involved in the rescue.

14 Artefacts Drive
Portland's Heroes

PORTLAND MARITIME DISCOVERY CENTRE and VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Lee Breakwater Road, Portland, Vic

Phone 03 5523 2671
www.glenelg.vic.gov.au

Discover mysteries of the sea, stories and legends of shipwrecks and rescues, and step inside a sperm whale skeleton.

View the lifeboat Portland used to rescue 19 of the 24 Admella survivors. Learn about Portland's heroes.

15 Artefacts Drive
Heroes Resting Place

PORTLAND NORTH CEMETERY

Henty Hwy, Portland, Vic

Free Entry. Phone 03 5523 2671
www.glenelg.vic.gov.au

Locate the graves of Captain James Fawthrop, master of the lifeboat Portland, William Rosevear, the lifeboat's coxswain and crewmen Israel Abbot Carey, Hugh McDonald and James Kean.

16 Artefacts Drive
Mischance, Delays, Blunders and Negligence

OLD GAOL RUINS

Obelisk Road, Robe, SA

Free Entry. Phone 08 8768 2465
www.robe.com.au

Walk through the remains of the Gaol and locate the Admella's boiler plates. Read about the chain of misfortune that affected the Admella rescue.

Did you know...

Reportedly 29 crew, 84 passengers including 19 women and 15 children were on board.

17 Artefacts Drive
Heroism not Overlooked

BEACHPORT VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Millicent Road, Beachport, SA

Open Daily. Phone 08 8735 8029
Email beachport@wattlerange.sa.gov.au

Displays at the Old Wool and Grain Store Museum in Railway Terrace include 1900's living quarters, 1920's school room, whaling and fishing, farm implements and a smithy shop.

View one of the Admella medals received by Henry Smith, of Germein's crew, and artefacts salvaged from the wreck. Read about the heroism of Admella rescuers.

18 Artefacts Drive
Relief and Reward Fund

MILLICENT LIVING HISTORY MUSUEM & VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

1 Mount Gambier Road, Millicent, SA

Open Daily. Phone 08 8733 0904
Email millicent@wattlerange.sa.gov.au
www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au

The Museum houses an outstanding collection of themed exhibits including Millicent, Victoriana, Aboriginal, Natural History and Shipwrecks, which features *Admella* artefacts.

Read about the Admella's Relief and Reward fund and view the largest collection of fully restored horse-drawn vehicles in South Australia.

19 Artefacts Drive
What a Ride it was!

DINGLEY DELL CONSERVATION PARK AND COTTAGE

Dingley Dell Road, Port MacDonnell, SA

Open Daily. Phone 08 8738 2221
www.dingleydell.net

Adam Lindsay Gordon's poem *'Ride from the Wreck'* was inspired by the *Admella* tragedy. Gordon's cottage has been restored to provide visitors with a glimpse of life in the 1860's and includes an *Admella* display.

Enjoy a picnic or pleasant stroll on walking trails meandering through the bushland. Learn about the Admella's horses.

20 Artefacts Drive
An Inquiry into the Wreck

PORT MACDONNELL & DISTRICT MARITIME MUSEUM

Near corner of Charles and Meylin Streets, Port MacDonnell, SA

For group bookings and opening times phone 08 8738 7259 or 8738 2576
www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

The museum houses a large *Admella* collection and tells the stories of thirty shipwrecks from this coastline. The early history of Port MacDonnell as a trading port and the 'Southern Rock Lobster Capital of Australia' are also explored.

View a superb model of the Admella and Admella' artefacts including her canon and bell at the Museum. Read about recommendations of the Inquiry into the wreck.

21 Artefacts Drive
Salvage from the Deep

VANSITTART PARK

172 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier, SA (next to the Mount Gambier Bowls Club)

Free Entry. Phone 08 8724 9750
www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au

Beautiful public gardens, bowling green and sports arena, large playground with picnic area and shelter. The site opposite was leased as a brewery by one of those who profited from the salvage rights of the wreck.

Wander through the 'Garden for the Blind'. Read about Admella's salvage and Whittaker's gold!

SS Admella Quick Facts...

SS Admella was a screw steamer fitted with 3 masts and sails.

Measuring 395 tons (gross) 209 tons (net) and 55.6m in length

SS Admella was the fastest and most luxurious ship to travel between Adelaide and Melbourne at the time.

The lifeboats on board were the latest design.

South Australian Parliament halted during the week of the rescue.

Inaction by the Victorian Government contributed to its downfall at the next election.

Rescue efforts staged from Adelaide, Melbourne, Robe and Portland

Victorian Colonists reward medals were the first struck in the new colony