



# Admella Newsletter

## Commemoration Event Date:

Thursday 6th August to  
Sunday 16th August 2009

## Visitor Information:

**Limestone Coast Tourism**  
ph toll free 1800 087 087  
www.thelimestonecoast.com

### Mount Gambier

'Lady Nelson' Visitor &  
Discovery Centre  
ph toll free 1800 087 187

**Portland** Maritime Discovery  
& Visitor Information Centre  
ph toll free 1800 035 567

**Port MacDonnell** Tourism  
ph 08 8738 2576

**Beachport** Visitor Information  
ph 08 87358029

**Millicent** Visitor Information  
ph 08 87330904

**Penola** Visitor Information  
ph 08 87372855

**Nelson** Visitor Information  
ph 08 8738 4051

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## I 50th Anniversary of the wreck of the Admella: Commemoration Event Date

### "Commemorating a Tragedy; Celebrating Volunteerism"

**Thursday 6th August - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>  
August 2009 has been chosen as the  
date of the Commemoration Event.**

These dates help "mirror" events as they happened in 1859: the Admella was wrecked on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1859; the survivors rescued on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1859 after which they were taken by ship to Portland to recover.

In an endeavour to allow visitors to view other areas of the region during the Commemoration Event, townships have been allocated certain days for major events:

**Mount Gambier & District**  
Thu 6/8/09 – Sat 8/8/09  
**Carpenter Rocks** Sun 9/8/09  
**Port MacDonnell** Mon 10/8/09  
**Beachport, Millicent & Penola area**  
Tues 11/8/09  
**Robe** Wed 12/8/09 (to be confirmed)  
**Mount Gambier & District** Thu 13/8/09  
**Nelson & Portland**  
Fri 14/8/09– Sun 16/8/09

Events are being planned in consultation

with the District Council of Grant, Glenelg Shire, Wattle Range Council and City of Mount Gambier to ensure major events do not clash and to provide a variety of events suitable for people of different ages & interests.

A number of events are in the planning stage, including many community organised events. It is envisaged the event program will be launched before the end of 2008; a sneak preview of what to expect is printed overleaf.



James Shaw (1815 – 1881), The Admella 1858, oil on canvas. From the collection of Art Gallery of SA. Purchased via SA Govt Grant 1977 . This painting will be included in the Admella Exhibition at the Riddoch Art Gallery, Mount Gambier in 2009.

## Registered Descendants

Over 100 people representing 38 different survivors, victims and rescuers have registered their families' interest in the Commemoration of the Admella at this time. Most are from outside the Limestone Coast and Western Victoria area; the majority are from interstate and overseas. Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee members have been busy following up information and answering enquiries from descendants.

**If you are considering visiting the region during the commemoration** and require information about accommodation, travel and sightseeing please contact one of the visitor information centres listed in the column to the left. They can also provide information about venues for any **family reunions** being planned — please let them know you are visiting the region for the Admella Commemoration— they'll be happy to help you!

## Descendants

Descendants & interested persons of the following have registered to date:

Beith, Catherine and 4 children	Foster, Emma	
Booth, William	French, Alfred	
Bowie, Madlene	Germein, Benjamin	Miller, James
Brown, Walter	Harris, Charles Wright Capt.	Penny, John
Chambers, Edwin Cheshire	Hills, George	Patterson, Charles
Davey, Thomas	Isbister, William	Smith, Henry
Dimond	Kean, James	Thomas, Lewis
Duckering, Robinson	Ledwith Bridget	Underwood, Edward
Dusting, John	Livingston ("Curratum" owner)	Ward, George
Fawthrop, James	McEwan, Hugh Cpt	Williamson, Mr
Fisher, Hurtle	Magarey, James	Wells, Capt.
Foster, George	McDonell, William	Whittaker, James

*"Do you know anyone who  
hasn't registered their interest  
in the Admella  
Commemoration yet - please  
ask them to contact us"*

## Admella Trail

The Admella Committee is planning the *Admella Trail*, which aims to Commemorate the Wreck of the Admella and promote public awareness of the significance of the event.

The Admella Trail will be a tourist self drive trail with the majority of markers accessible by front wheel drive vehicles. It will also encompass 4 wheel drive tracks and walking trails.

Portland, Cape Bridgewater, Mount Gambier, Cape Banks, Carpenter Rocks, Port MacDonnell, Robe, Beachport, Millicent and Canunda National Park will be included in the trail.

The drive between Cape Banks and Cape Northumber-

land will represent the Sailors Trek, Cape Northumberland and Mount Gambier - the Spread the News trail, Mt Gambier and Cape Banks the Rescuers path.

Markers will resemble mooring posts representing the Maritime theme of the trail, and signage at each site will each tell a different component of the Admella tale. Brochures will be available from local tourism centres, and on-line as a downloadable PDF file.

Grant funding and corporate sponsorship for this project is currently being sought. Markers may also be donated by descendants in memory of their Admella ancestor. The Admella Committee has applied to the Australian Tax Office for Deductible Gift Recipient Status and will create sponsorship packages when this comes through.

## Other Commemoration Projects

**Model Ship:** A project brief was distributed, and a submission by Adrian Brewer of Float a Boat (Melbourne) was chosen as the preferred tender. The model will be about 1metre in length, in a timber framed display case and will cost approx \$6,000. The model would be housed at the Port MacDonnell & District Maritime Museum, but will be compact enough to tour schools and community events to promote the Admella Commemorations.

We currently have grant applications pending with the Department of the Environment and Water Resources - Commemoration of Historic Events and Famous Persons Program and the History Trust of SA – SA History Fund.

**School's Resource Kit:** To ensure the next generation of Australians remember the Admella, a Schools' Resource Kit is being created. The kit should include multi-media vignettes, interactive game and teacher resources.

A number of regional & retired school teachers are producing a body of work about the Admella, with some of the work trialled at Allendale Area School already. We also hope to work with the National Museum of Australia to produce a body of work for school children Australia wide.

To complete the Admella experience, local camp grounds and hostels will be promoted to schools to encourage school camps and visits to the region.

## Historic links

Capt Emmanuel Underwood was commissioned by Governor Grey in 1845 to survey the South Coast for a port. Capt Underwood was master of the Admella on at least one trip from Melbourne to Adelaide prior to the wreck. His son **Edward Underwood** perished on board the ill fated Admella. Correspondence about the wreck between Edward's family have been donated to the SA State Archives by descendants of Captain Underwood, who have registered with the Committee.

The first navigational aid on the **South East Coast** was the obelisk at Cape Dombey, Robe in 1855. The **McDonnell Light at Cape Northumberland** was opened on 1 January 1859. This was the first light on the Australian coastline to be seen by vessels completing their Great Circle Route from England. A total of 30 vessels were wrecked between 1835 and 1865 on the South East Coast.



Admella Dunes parallel to Carpenter's Reef (running vertical in photo)

The **Dunbar**, which featured with the Admella in this year's Historic Shipwrecks series of Australia Post Stamps, was wrecked in Aug 1857 at South Head as she come into Port Jackson (Sydney Harbor). Of the 121 people on board only crewman James Johnson was rescued after he clung to a cliff face for 36 hours. Interestingly enough the 2nd mate on board the Admella when it was wrecked two years to the month later was **J. Johnson**. Could it possibly be the same seaman?

The Southern Coast was not a good one for **Captain Hugh McEwan**, master of the Admella, he also owned the iron barque Glenrosa which was wrecked in 1890 not far from where the Admella met her end.

The **Carpenters Reef** which runs along the coastline near Cape Banks, and is the reef the Admella was wrecked on, was originally named "les Charpentiers" by the French explorer Nicholas Baudin who mapped the area in 1802.

The Colony of SA had established five south east ports by 1878; Greytown (Southend) 1845, Robe 1847, Kingston 1848, Port McDonnell 1860, and Beachport 1878.

## www.facebook.com

A new facebook group called Admella has been created on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). This site has been set up by a descendant, and is open to anyone who is interested in sharing information, stories and photos with other descendants or interested persons. The Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee will monitor the site regularly for new information, but does not take any responsibility for the site or stories placed on the site.

Wayne Harris, a descendant of Admella passenger **Captain Charles Harris**, has contacted the Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee to advise he is writing a short

story from the point of view of Captain Harris. In order to make the story as realistic as possible he is very interested in any technical details, such as the layout of the ship, engines and the usual relationship between a high profile passenger and the Captain of the Admella.

*"Do you or someone you know, have any photos, artifacts, medals, or other interesting articles that we can display at the Riddoch Art Gallery during the Commemoration or publish in upcoming newsletters?"*

If anyone has any information that may help Wayne, please contact him via email: [WayneHarris@talktalk.net](mailto:WayneHarris@talktalk.net) or by post: Wayne Harris, 54 Chapel Lane, Old Sodbury, Bristol, BS37 6NG, UK.



George Ward: Admella Cabin boy

## George Ward

George Ernest Ward (b1840 d1919) arrived in South Australia in 1856 and was 19 when he worked on board the Admella as a cabin boy. He survived the wreck and shortly after moved to Kameruka, near Bega NSW, where he worked as a stockman, dairyman and then became one of the managers of the Estate, where he lived and worked for 50 years.

From his humble beginnings as a carpet weaver's assistant at age 11, he become president of the Jockey Club, Guardian of Minors, Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Affidavits, and Chairman of the Recruiting Committee and the Voluntary Aid League. He married Mary Ann Selina Butler in 1863 and they had 12 children; one was named Admella.

George's granddaughter, great grandson & great grandchildren, and descendants of George's brother John & sister Anne have registered with the Committee.

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*Commemorating a Tragedy;  
Celebrating Volunteerism.*

## Relief & Reward Fund

The Admella Relief and Reward Fund "at the desire of the Inhabitants of Victoria" used funds raised by public subscription as an aftermath to the Admella wreck to build the Melbourne Sailor's Home. The Sailor's Home was demolished to replan the area near the Spencer Street Bridge in the 1960's and a marble tablet which commemorates the rescue efforts of volunteers was salvaged and will be restored by the Glenelg Shire.

The Admella Relief & Reward Fund awarded Certificates, money & medals to rescuers. They also distributed compensation to families of the deceased and for lost items.

*right: Medal awarded to Henry Smith*



## Bridget Ledwith

About 16 of *Bridget Ledwith's* descendants have registered with the Committee:

- Ann *Bridget* Ledwith's eldest son James Gottlieb Avage's (b1869-d1956) grandchildren residing in NSW, NT and Victoria
- Ann *Bridget* Ledwith's daughter Alice Maude Dower's (nee Avage, b1877) grandchildren residing in Victoria
- Bridget Ledwith's brother Maurice Ledwith's, (b1842 d1905) great grandson residing in NSW
- Bridget Ledwith's great niece's grandchildren, residing in SA.



Ann Bridget Avage (nee Ledwith) b1838 d 1917

James and Ann Ledwith were married in 1830 in Ireland and immigrated to SA on 1/10/1840. They had 10 children:

- Catherine Laura (b1830 d1919) m Daniel Mathew Kenny 1846
- Mary (b1832 d1910) m J. Michael 1849 m W. Chettleborough 1879
- Biddy (b1835 d1838),
- Elizabeth (Bessy b1837 d1899) m John Dowd 1854
- Ann Bridget (Bridget b1838 d1917) m James Gottlieb Avage 1868
- Bridget (b1839 d1840)
- Maurice (b1842 d1905) m Hannah Head 1862
- Bridget (b1844 d1864)
- Margaret (Sister Bernadine of Mary McKillop's order b1846 d1919)
- James (b1848 d1907)

There is some confusion amongst family members over which *Bridget* survived the wreck.

## Commemoration Events

The Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee has started organising some of the official events and is liaising with many local business, schools, councils and community groups about other public functions to be held in the region.

It is envisaged that an event program will be finalised before the end of 2008; the following events have been included in a draft program:

**Official Launch of Commemoration Events** Thur 6/8/09, am, Cape Banks Lighthouse (SA Governor invited, 89 school children to represent lives lost)

**Opening of Admella Exhibit & Community Art Exhibit** Thur 6/8/09, pm, Riddoch Art Gallery (Featuring paintings from Art Gallery of SA and Victoria State Library & artefacts from SA Maritime Museum and private collections. Open for public viewing for approx. 6 weeks)

**City of Mount Gambier Mayoral Reception** Thur 6/8/09, pm at Mt Gambier City Hall

**Maritime Theme Bush Dance & Supper** Fri 7/8/09, pm, Carpenter Rocks Marquee in Village Green

**Descendant & Interested Persons Registrations** Fri 7/8/09 afternoon and Sat 8/8/09, am—afternoon, Mt Gambier City Hall (Displays by Admella Committee, descendants, local businesses & tourism operators.)

**"Spread the news! Celebrating Rescuers & Volunteers"** Static Display/Street Parade Sat 8/8/09, 11.30am at Cave Gardens, Mt Gambier

**Official Commemoration Dinner** Sat 8/8/09, 5pm at the Barn Palais, Mt Gambier (Guest Speakers – i.e. Admella Historian, Maritime Historian during meal, Stage show with historical themed music. Time for discussions with other descendants—venue seats up to 700 people)

**"Breakfast on the Beach"** Sun 9/8/09, at Carpenter Rocks Marquee in Village Green. (Family fun day, market stalls, competitions)

**Launch Admella Trail** Sun 9/8/09 Carpenter Rocks

**Admella Trail Guided Bus Tour** Thur 13/8/09, am & afternoon 1/2 day tour leaving from Mount Gambier

**Admella Theatre Production** Thur 13/8/09, pm, Sir Robert Helpman Theatre, Mt Gambier

**The Old Mount Gambier Courthouse/ National Trust** - interactive re-enactments of the Inquiry into the wreck of the Admella. 6/8—13/8/09

**Portland ideas include:** Replica whale boat or yacht race, memorial gathering, Cemetery tours, Tall Ship or naval ship visit, maritime exhibits, history talks, Band Competition.

(Admella Commemoration Draft Program may be subject to change)