



District Council of Grant  
Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee

# Admella Newsletter

Newsletter (3): July 2008

[www.admella.org.au](http://www.admella.org.au)

## Admella 150 Festival:

6th -16th August 2009

Thursday 6th - Monday 10th  
Mount Gambier & District

Tuesday 11th  
Millicent/Beachport/Penola

Wednesday 12th  
Robe

Thursday 13th  
Mount Gambier & District

Friday 14th - Sunday 16th  
Portland District



### Did you know?

The Admella's name represents major trading ports of the time: AD Adelaide, MEL Melbourne, LA Launceston



### Visitor Information:

**Limestone Coast Tourism**  
phone toll free 1800 087 087  
[www.thelimestonecoast.com](http://www.thelimestonecoast.com)

**Mount Gambier** Lady Nelson  
Visitor & Discovery Centre  
phone toll free 1800 087 187

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

**Port MacDonnell** Tourism  
phone 08 8738 2576

**Beachport** Visitor Information  
phone 08 87358029

**Millicent** Visitor Information  
phone 08 87330904

**Penola** Visitor Information  
phone 08 87372855

**Nelson** Visitor Information  
phone 08 8738 4051

## Admella 150 Festival

*Commemorating a Tragedy; Celebrating Volunteerism*

**The wreck of the SS Admella in the early hours of August 6th 1859 was only the beginning of a horrific week for survivors who remained on board, in sight of land, while authorities & volunteers struggled to rescue them from the stricken steamer. The loss of 89 lives, mostly due to dehydration, cold and exposure, makes the wreck one of the worst maritime disasters in Australian history.**

The dates and venues for the *Admella 150 Festival* have been set and most official events are currently being planned however if you have a request or suggestion regarding the *Festival*, please don't hesitate to contact the Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee; contact details are on the back of this newsletter.

**Are you considering attending any of the events during the Admella 150 Festival in August 2009?**

A short questionnaire (if not enclosed) is available online at [www.admella.org.au](http://www.admella.org.au) and it's completion will help with planning events that may suit you!

We understand your circumstances may change between now & August 2009, however an indication of the number of people expected, health concerns and age groups to cater for, will help make the *Admella 150 Festival* a successful commemoration event.

If you require information about travel,

accommodation, & sight seeing, a Visitor Information pack can be ordered on the questionnaire, or for personal service please contact one of the visitor information centres listed in the column to the left.

The Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee would like to thank the City of Mount Gambier, District Council of Grant, Limestone Coast Tourism and Events SA for their financial support, which enables us to organise commemorative projects and to promote the *Admella 150 Festival*.



Photo supplied by Samuel Germein (descendant)

Photo: Cape Northumberland Light Keeper, Capt Benjamin Germein's sextant. Capt Germein was responsible for spreading the news of the wreck & for patching the Admella's damaged lifeboat with canvas & soap, he was also the captain of the heroic crew who rescued the first 3 survivors from the ship. The sextant will be displayed at the Admella Exhibition in August 2009

## Tax Deductible Donations

Local Government Associations have supported the establishment of the Admella Committee, but it is expected the majority of funding for commemorative projects and events will come from grants, sponsorship and donations. The Port MacDonnell & District Maritime Museum Assoc Inc has established the **Admella 150th Anniversary Fund** to support commemoration projects; the fund has Deductible Gift Recipient status & **any donation of \$2 or more is tax deductible.**

Commemorative projects will ensure the story of the Admella, and those involved, is commemorated and celebrated well into the future. Projects include the Admella School's Resource Kit, Admella (short story) Vignettes, Admella Model, Admella Discovery Trail and possibly a commemorative book. Any contribution, however small or large, will be gratefully accepted.

Those donating \$500 or more, can also provide the wording for a bronze memorial plaque which will form part of the Admella Discovery Trail to be unveiled at the *Admella 150 Festival* in August 2009; you may consider having other members of your family contribute towards this. A donation form, if not enclosed, can be found at [www.admella.org.au](http://www.admella.org.au) or contact the Admella Project Officer.

## Registered Descendants

Over 150 people have registered their families connection to the Admella with the Admella Commemoration Advisory Committee. Included are descendants of the following passengers, crew & owners of the Admella, as well as those who helped with the rescue and had salvage rights to the wreck:

Anderson, Robert  
Beith, Catherine and 4 children  
Booth, William  
Bowie, Madlene  
Brown, Walter  
Chambers, Edwin Cheshire  
Davey, Thomas  
Dimond, James  
Duckering, Robinson  
Dusting, John

Fawthrop, James Capt.  
Fisher, Hurtle  
Foster, George  
Foster, Emma  
French, Alfred  
Germein, Benjamin Capt.  
Guy, William  
Harris, Charles Wright Capt.  
Hills, George  
Isbister, William  
Kean, James

Ledwith, Bridget  
Livingston, Peter (Curratum)  
McDonell, William  
McEwan, Hugh Capt.  
McInnes, Hugh  
Magarey, James  
Miller, James  
Patterson, Charles  
Rosevear, William

Wells, Capt.  
Whittaker, James  
Williamson, Mr  
Wylie, Henry

Australia Post Admella Card & 50cent stamp - released 1/5/07



## Admella Trail Survey

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey regarding the intended Admella Discovery Trail. Congratulations to the winner of the Limestone Coast products - Trevor Sneath, Mullaloo, WA.

We have collated the information received from descendants & visitors to the region, and will use it as support documentation when applying for funding. The survey, completed by 156 people, revealed 97% of visitors from outside the Limestone Coast region of South Australia would consider staying in the region longer if they were able to use the Admella Discovery Trail, & 96% would encourage others to visit & use the Admella Discovery Trail as a regional guide.

## 'One and All' historic sailing opportunity

Smith, Henry (Harry)      Thomas, Lewis  
Underwood, Edward Ward, George      Webb, Allan

### Would you like to sail the Admella's trading route?

An opportunity exists to be involved in an historic re-enactment of part of the Admella's regular sailing route. South Australia's tall ship, the 'One and All' will be sailing from Cape Jaffa Marina, near Kingston SE to Portland during the *Admella 150 Festival*.

She will pass as close as possible to Cape Banks Lighthouse and the wreck of the Admella site on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009, for the launch of the *Admella 150 Festival*, and also on the return voyage.

The voyages are open to any person over 15 years of age who is physically able. As part of the crew, a one way journey will take about 7 days, and will include all food and accommodation. The cost will be about \$1500 per person and up to 24 people can be accommodated each way.

The 'One and All' will also offer 1/2 day trips from Portland harbour during the last weekend of the *Admella 150 Festival*.

If you are interested in these voyages please contact Linda Hay, Admella Project Officer, phone: (08) 87210444 or email: linda.hay@dcgrant.sa.gov.au



## Facelift for marble Admella Plaque

The marble Admella Plaque that once stood near the Portland lifeboat in the Portland Botanic Gardens has undergone conservation treatment and removal of a concrete surround. The conservation work was carried out at a Ballarat stonemasonry and Maldon-based object conservator Jude Schahinger supervised the removal of the concrete which has surrounded the plaque since the 1970s.

Described as Grecian in design, the original Admella plaque comprised three sections of marble; a wreath in the upper section; a written tribute to the heroic actions of those involved in the rescue in the central section; and a relief image of the rescue in the lower section. This was surrounded by a decorative marble inner border of

shamrock rose and thistle, and an outer border of laurel leaves and berries.

The plaque was originally commissioned by the Admella Relief and Reward Fund and once hung in the "long room" of the Customs House in Melbourne. It was later displayed in the Sailor's Home on the corner of Little Collins and Spencer Streets. The plaque was rescued when the sailor's home was demolished, kept in storage and finally sent to Portland around 1971.

It will be mounted on a purpose built support and unveiled this August for permanent display at the Portland Maritime Discovery Centre, reunited with the Portland Lifeboat.

## William Isbister: part owner

**William Isbister**, shipping agent and part owner of the Admella was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1829. Between 1849-1851 he travelled to Canada and USA and visited Australia in 1855.

On 7th November 1857 he set sail on the **maiden voyage of the Admella** from Rothsay, Scotland arriving in Adelaide on 17th March 1858. The ship came out under sail with the screw being fitted after arrival.

William kept a written account of the maiden voyage, relating various adventures and experiences, and was accompanied by several of the ship's part owners; **Mr McNair** (purser), **Mr Brown** (engineer) and **Capt. Hugh MacEwan**. MacEwan was married to William's elder sister, Margaret & was Captain of the Admella when the shipwreck occurred; he survived the wreck & was praised for his



William Isbister



Information and photo provided by descendant Peter Isbister

leadership and bravery during the event.

William became Adelaide agent for Captain Cadell's Murray River steamers and manager for Derwent and Tamar Assurance Co. He was also on the Adelaide Children's Hospital Board.

He married Jane Linklater in 1864, & had two sons; William James Isbister, 1866-1950, who became a solicitor & barrister, & James Linklater Thomson Isbister, 1869-1936, a GP & Gynecologist in Sydney.

A letter from shipping agents, "Brown & Isbister" advising the loss of the Admella is on display at the Port Adelaide Maritime Museum, and William's account of the Admella's maiden voyage has been handed down through his family.

*Photo left:* William's great grandson and his wife visited Mount Gambier recently and met with Admella committee members and Director of the Riddoch Art Gallery, where

*"Do you have any photos, artifacts, medals, stories or interesting articles that we may be able to display at the Riddoch Art Gallery during the Admella 150 Festival, include in upcoming newsletters or in commemorative articles?"*

## Fawthrop: a family affair

From information received from descendants Roberta Wagner & Alison Yorkston

**Captain James Fawthrop** was Portland's harbour master and was 55 years of age when he captained the lifeboat "Portland" rescuing 19 of the Admella survivors. His brother in law, **William Henry Rosevear**, and stepson, **Thomas Ward**, were also part of the brave crew.

He was a 35 year old bachelor when he married Jane Ward (nee Rosevear), who was a widow with 2 small children. Their daughter, Mary Jane Fawthrop, was born in 1841.

**James Miller** (1829—1877) and 18 other survivors rescued by the crew of the "Portland" were taken directly from the wreck, by sea, to Portland Victoria.

Miller was taken to the home of Captain Fawthrop to recuperate. James Miller fell in love with Mary Jane Fawthrop,

and they married in 1862.

A number of Fawthrop, Miller, Ward & Rosevear's descendants have registered with the Admella Committee.



*Photo:* Admella Committee members in front of the "Portland". The lifeboat is on permanent display at the Portland Maritime & Visitor Information Centre and is currently being professionally cleaned & restored.



George Hills  
Admella Forward Cabin Steward

## George Hills:

Story & photo provided by descendant, Andrew Hirst

**George Hills** was born in 1833 and was 26 years of age when, as forward cabin steward, he survived the wreck of the Admella in August 1859. He was rescued by the Portland life boat. His only injury was to his thumb which was subsequently amputated.

He married Eliza Ridge and had eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. He ran various small businesses, the most notable being the sailors home in Port Adelaide. This was where sailors stayed while their ships were being fumigated before returning to England.

He died in 1916 at the age of 83. His sixth child, Sarah, married Captain Arthur Bradley and that union has produced 22 descendants of George Hills, many of whom are planning to attend the *Admella 150 Festival* in August 2009.

**CONTACT US:****DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT  
ADMELLA COMMEMORATION ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

Linda Hay, Admella Project Officer  
P O Box 724  
Mount Gambier SA 5290  
Phone: 08 8721 0444  
Fax: 08 8721 0410  
Email: linda.hay@dcgrant.sa.gov.au

**GLENELG SHIRE ADMELLA  
COMMEMORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Elizabeth Foreman, Tourism Officer  
Phone: 03 5522-2206

## Regional Co-operation

More information about the 'One and All' tall ship is available online at [www.satallships.org.au](http://www.satallships.org.au)

Two joint meetings have been held recently between members of the South Australian and Victorian Admella Commemoration Advisory Committees. Discussed were the program of events, a joint marketing plan, and co-operative projects commemorating the 150th anniversary of the wreck of the Admella. The S.A. Committee is made up of representatives from all local government areas involved, including representatives of the new Victorian Committee.

The Committees have visited the Portland lifeboat, old Portland Cemetery and other sights in Portland where activities will take place, as well as strategic sites at and near Cape Banks, Carpenter Rocks and Port MacDonnell.

An eleven day program for the Festival in August 2009, is being prepared with events being hosted in the District Council of Grant, City of Mount Gambier, Wattle Range Council and Robe District

*Photo:* Some members of the SA & Victorian Admella Commemoration Advisory Committees:

*Standing:* Brian Brooksby, Anne Grant, Brendan Jarrett, Linda Hay (Admella Project Officer), Ted Jordan, Bob Stone.

*Sitting:* Keith Wilson (Victorian Committee Chair) & Leonie O'Meara



Descendants & people interested in the wreck of the Admella have been invited to take part in a special Community March to celebrate Australia's first Merchant Navy Day in Port Adelaide on Wednesday 3 September 2008. For more information please contact Linda Hay or visit online: [vindicatrixboy.com](http://vindicatrixboy.com)



## Descendant Involvement

We are currently organising official events and liaising with many local business, schools, councils and community groups about functions to be held in the region during the **Admella 150 Festival in August 2009.**

The following are some of the ways that you may consider being more closely involved:

**Contact your local paper or radio station** with the story of the Admella & your family connection. This will help us reach as many interested people as possible **prior to the Admella 150 Festival.** You may also consider contacting *Ian McNamara (Macca) of ABC Radio's "Australia Allover" program:* GPO Box 9994 Adelaide 5001, ph (02) 83331020, [mcnamara.ian@abc.net.au](mailto:mcnamara.ian@abc.net.au) OR *ABC TV's "Can We Help?" program:* GPO Box 9994 Perth 6848, ph (08) 9220 2700. Individuals personally connected to the story are much more interesting to the presenters and producers than a committee! Feel free to pass on our newsletters and contact details.

**Exhibit an Admella artifact,** medal, painting or photo of your Admella ancestor at the Riddoch Art Gallery, Mount Gambier. The Art Gallery are currently seeking items to be displayed in an exhibition titled "**Catastrophe, Courage and Commitment: The story of the Wreck of the Admella 6 August 1859**". All security, transport, loan agreement and insurance is being professionally organised by the Riddoch Art Gallery; the exhibit will run for 6 weeks opening on **Thursday 6th** and will also include paintings on loan from the State Library of Victoria and the Art Gallery of South Australia.

**Contribute stories and photographs** for the Admella Newsletter, promotional articles or commemorative projects.

**Take part in the Admella Street Parade on Saturday 8th** at 11.30am in Mount Gambier. We are investigating options for transporting descendants along the route so that they don't have to battle with health or weather conditions!

**Speak at the Commemorative Dinner** at Mount Gambier on **Saturday 8th, 5pm.** A number of different 'Admella personalities' and stories will be featured during the evening. We are interested in hearing from any person who may be interested in presenting a short, entertaining and informative presentation about their Admella Ancestor at this function.

**Host a family information/display site** at the *Admella 150 Festival* registration days **Friday 7th & Saturday 8th** at the Mount Gambier Old Town Hall from 9am to 1pm. Admella information, registration packs & souvenirs along with displays by local tourism, food and wine groups will feature; this offer may be of particular interest to those organising family reunions during the *Admella 150 Festival.* (site bookings required)

**Make a tax deductible donation** in memory of your ancestor. This will help achieve the completion of commemorative projects including the **Admella Discovery Trail**; a self drive touring route integrating cultural, heritage & nature based experiences within a 150 km radius of Mount Gambier. A series of maritime themed interpretive markers emotively recounting the tale of the Admella and listing the names of those associated with the 1859 wreck, as well as the placement of memorial plaques, will enhance the visitors' experience and help commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the wreck of the Admella. Itineraries & maps will be available online & in print.

*For more information regarding any of these items, please contact Linda Hay. (contact details top of this page)*