

The Zanoni

1865 - 1867

The 338 ton composite barque *Zanoni* was built in Liverpool in 1865 and was 139 feet (44 metres) in length. It was built by W. H. Potter & Co and owned by Thomas Royden & Son and intended for the East India trade.

The *Zanoni* left Liverpool on 14 February 1866 on its maiden voyage to Lima, Peru, probably with a cargo of British manufactured goods and produce. From here she sailed to Port Louis, Mauritius, with 400 tons of guano where after its discharge, 4551 bags of sugar were taken on board bound for Port Adelaide. The *Zanoni* arrived at Port Adelaide on 13 January 1867.

After receiving 15 tons of bark and some wheat at Port Adelaide, the ship proceeded to Port Wakefield on 2 February to complete loading wheat.

The final voyage

On 11 February 1867 under the command of Captain Summers and with crew of 13, and two stevedores, the *Zanoni* set off on a return trip to Port Adelaide to obtain her clearance to London. She was now laden with the bark and 4025 bags of wheat.

The weather was fine but a 1.30pm threatening squall was observed to be approaching from the westward. Captain Summers immediately took the precaution of reducing sail. The sea was lashed to a fury and was 'whirled into the air by the peculiar nature of the cyclone'. The ship was thrown on her beam ends and the crew made for the weather side, but as they did so the ship rolled over keel upwards.

Some managed to scramble onto the keel and were able to assist others, including the captain, who had been clinging to the ship's side. Realising that the ship would soon founder, the best swimmers began to make for one of the ship's boats. Five or ten minutes after the squall struck, the ship had disappeared.

The storm passed away almost as quickly as it had come, and at about 11.00pm all sixteen men were rescued by the sailing ketch *Powles* and taken back to Adelaide.

Thomas Lancaster, 2nd mate of the *Zanoni* said the ship was correctly stowed, although stevedore Henry Daulby said four or five bags of wheat on either side in the lower hold would give her a list while loading.

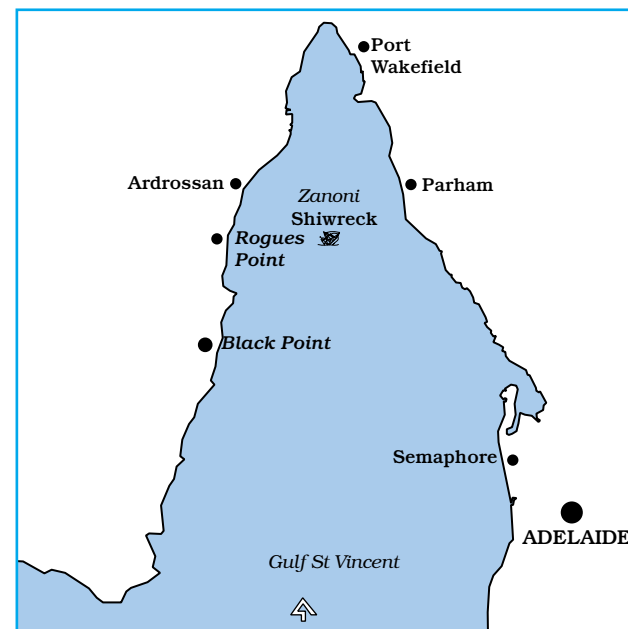
Unsuccessful searches

Captain Douglas, Marine Board President, searched unsuccessfully for the *Zanoni* on 2 February 1867. Captain Wells, of the tug *Young Australian*, failed to find the vessel during a week of searching. A £100 reward was offered to anyone who could pinpoint the wreck in March 1867. Despite a rumour that the reward had been claimed, the wreck remained undiscovered.

Discovery

In the 1980s abalone diver John McGovern offered a reward for any information on the location of the *Zanoni*. This brought a response from retired fisherman Rex Tyrrell of Port Vincent. He took John and Ian O'Donnell out to a site 15km south east of Ardrossan on 17 April 1983, and after a quick dive they found the remains of a vessel.

The location of the shipwreck has now been fixed and buoyed, and is just over two miles north east from the position in which the survivors first reported the *Zanoni* to have sunk.





J. McGovern, R. Tyrrell and I. O'Donnell with the bell recovered in 1988. Photo courtesy Narelle Autio, The Advertiser

Description of the wrecksite

The wrecksite of the *Zanoni* comprises one of the most complete remains of a vessel of its type and age to be located in South Australia and possibly Australia.

The wrecksite is in 18 metres of water lying on a barren sea bed. Numerous types of fish inhabit the wrecksite which is covered by sponges. It consists of the entire length of the vessel, lying over on its port hull. The middle part of the vessel has collapsed, with most of the starboard hull lying on top of the flattened port hull. The fore and mainmast have broken and lie on the sea bed adjacent to their respective stumps.

A most spectacular view is obtained of the bow of the vessel which is intact over its full depth and for a length of nearly ten metres. The best bower anchor is lying below the starboard bow. The sternpost and rudder stands nearly six metres off the sea bed.

Protection and Management

The *Zanoni* has been declared a Historic Shipwreck under the *Historic Shipwreck Act 1981*. Messes Tyrrell, McGovern and O'Donnell have been rewarded for discovering and reporting the wrecksite. For additional protection a 550 metre Protected Zone has been declared round the *Zanoni*. This means all activities - even taking a boat into the zone - are prohibited unless a permit is obtained.

In 1983 there was considerable lobbying from fishermen with regard to the issue of permits to allow them to fish within the Protected Zone. Representatives of the Department of Fisheries, the Fishing Industry Council, local fishermen and the Department of Environment and Planning met and resolved that permits would be issued to fishermen who could demonstrate an interest in the wrecksite before it became widely known. The Department of Fisheries Catch Returns were used as the basis to show which fishermen had been fishing in this locality. None had reported any catches here, and no fishing permits have therefore been issued. Permits are issued to divers to view the wrecksite provided they abide by certain conditions.

A barge was sunk 1 nautical mile south of the *Zanoni* in 1984 to act as an alternative place for fishing, and has been buoyed. The coordinates of the barge are 34°31'50.5" S; 138°03'41.0" E.

The significance of the *Zanoni*

The *Zanoni* is the most intact 19th century merchant sailing vessel located in South Australia.

The *Zanoni* suffered no contemporary salvage and the ship's hull, the equipment used aboard, and the possessions of the master and crew are available for study making this site a rare and valuable archeological resource.



*The barge sunk 1nm of the *Zanoni* . Photo: B. Jeffery 1984*



*The stove of the *Zanoni* during conservation.*

Photo: B. Jeffery 1984

The Future

The wrecksite has a valuable educative role for divers that can view it. Archaeological work carried out on the site can also be interpreted for the benefit of the general community. Some interpretation has already been carried out and is located with some artefacts at the Ardrossan National Trust Museum

One of the greatest causes of concern is the continued damage done to the wrecksite by small boat anchors. Large planks from the bow are being broken off and this could lead eventually to this most intact section totally collapsing. For this reason, a mooring buoy has been placed near the wrecksite for tying off boats that have been authorised to be in the Protected Zone.

Shipwrecks are protected under Historic Shipwrecks legislation.
For further information or to report a wreck or shipwreck relics contact:
Heritage South Australia
Department for Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 1047 ADELAIDE SA 5001

*Front cover: The sternpost and rudder of the *Zanoni**

Photo: B. Jeffery 1985

Text: B. Jeffery