Alex T. Brown – Shipwreck

Blown ashore on 29 May 1917, the *Alex T. Brown* was a 788-ton, 65 meter wooden 4-masted Schooner, one of only two 4-masted schooners to become shipwrecks in Australia.

USA owned and bound for Manila, the *Alex. T Brown* was caught in a gale around midnight. The tug *Wyola*, sent to unbeach her, was unable to get close enough to assist. Timbers from the wreck were salvaged by local Yanchep residents, and can still be found in structures such as the Yanchep Inn.

2018. Image courtesy of Wanneroo Museum

1920. Image courtesy of Wanneroo Museum.

The wreck is located on the beach, just 350m to the South of this local surfing point known as "The Spot". Since it wrecked in 1917, the remains constantly change in appearance. Winter storms and swell can see up to 12m of the wreck exposed, but even in the height of summer, timbers can still be seen above the water mark.

In 2018, following exposure by winter storms and subsequent vandalism, the City of Wanneroo, in conjunction with the WA Museum, successfully obtained a Permanent Conservation Order (Protection Order) to protect the wreck from further interference and damage.

The Order is made under Western Australia's heritage legislation and severe penalties apply for interference, removal, or damaging any part of the wreck. Damaging the wreck carries a maximum fine of $1M and possible imprisonment.

Please respect the natural environment - unique plants and animals live here.
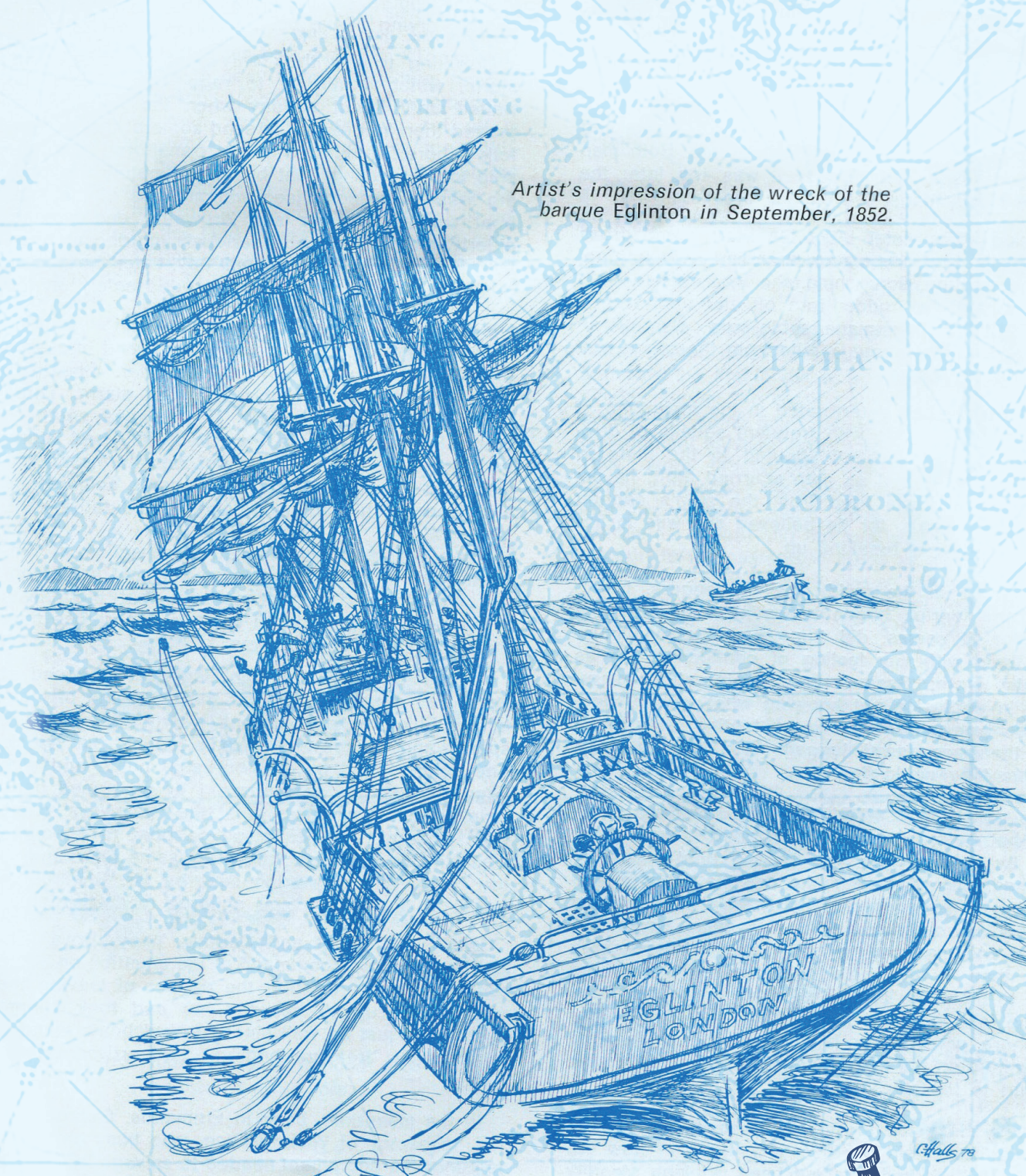
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Eglinton – Shipwreck

The *Eglinton*, a 464-ton Quebec-built barque, left London carrying 21 crew and 30 settlers. The vessel hit an outer reef off the coast of Wanneroo on 3 September 1852, and was the sensation of the year.

Deprived settlers had been desperately awaiting the *Eglinton's* cargo, so the wreck was a local disaster. The scene on the shore was "almost melancholy, the unfortunate passengers lying there without shelter, and short of water and provisions, a severe initiation into colonial life". However, their ordeal was still not over, as accounts of the day suggest they then walked all the way to Perth.

£15,000 in coins, mail and cases of gunpowder were eventually recovered by a ticket-of-leave man, Rodriguez, earning him a recommendation for £200 in reward for his trouble.

Although the mail had been under about 10ft of water it still proved salvageable and was sent to Fremantle under escort of the 99th Regiment, along with the coins and gunpowder.

Image courtesy of the Western Australian Museum

Artist's impression of the wreck of the barque Eglinton in September, 1852.

PORT OF FREMANTLE MAGAZINE - SPRING. 1978
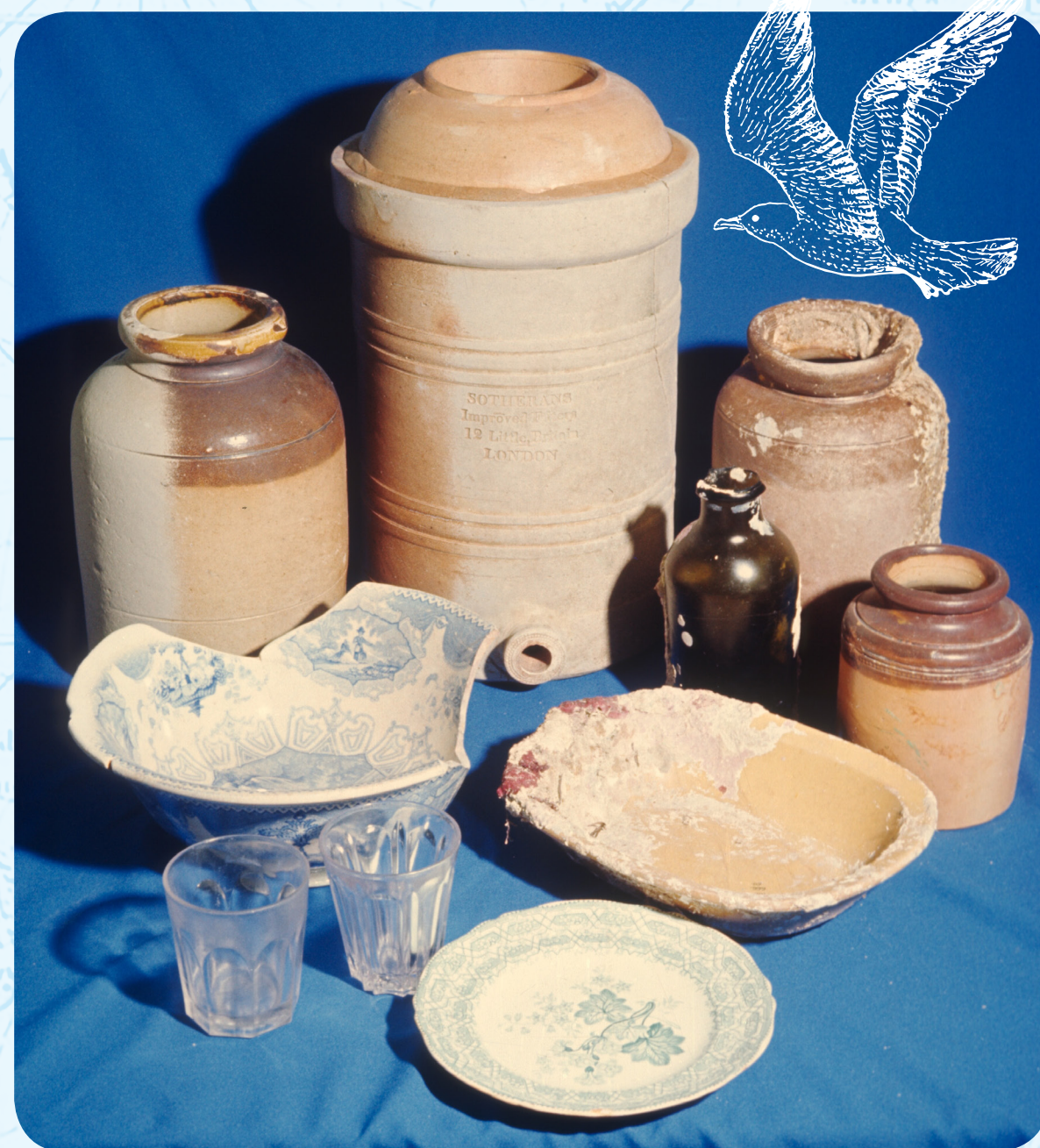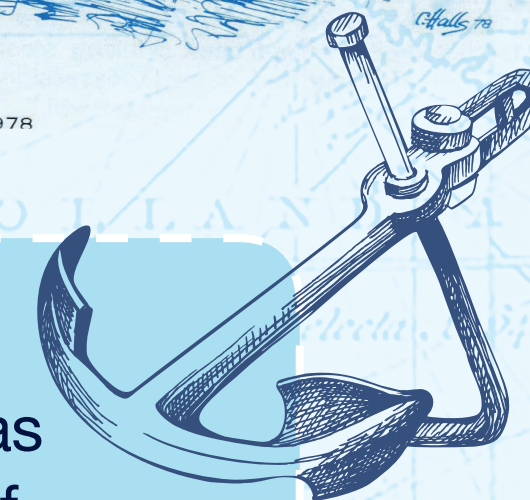
Image courtesy of Wanneroo Museum

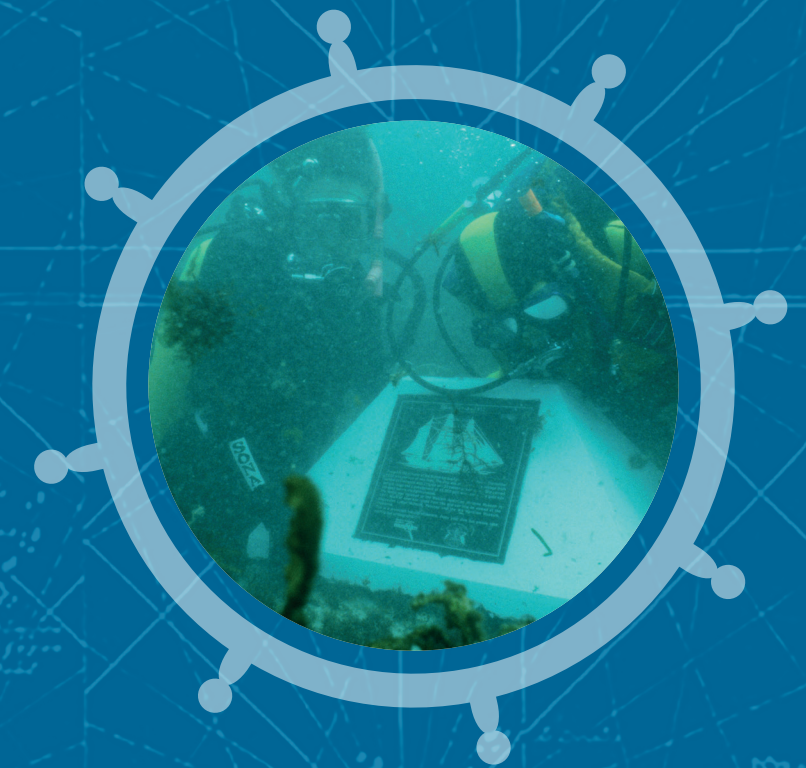Image courtesy of the Western Australian Museum

The *Eglinton's* chronometer (marine navigation tool) had been found to be faulty earlier on the journey and was blamed for the shipwreck. Not only did it add to the list of unfortunate maritime incidents for which the Western Australian coast had become well known, but also deprived a bare colonial market of a large portion of valuable cargo.

The ship's dog, having already survived the previous wreck of the *Birkenhead*, was washed off the *Eglinton* by mountainous seas. It managed to make its own way to shore and, subsequently adopted by a Fremantle family, became "the most famous canine in the colony."

Alkimos – Shipwreck

A former WWII Liberty Ship, the 7,291-ton *Alkimos* was first launched on 15 October 1943, to supply war cargo from USA to Britain. For the next 22 years she carried cargo all around the world. In her final years the *Alkimos* was a Greek Freighter.

On a voyage from Indonesia to Bunbury in 1963, the *Alkimos* struck a reef near Beagle Island; damaging her propeller… the vessel was stuck! This mishap was the start of a tragic chain of events. Sadly, all attempts to refloat her failed and in 1965 she was declared a wreck and sold for scrap. Today the wreck is a recreational and educational diving location, and the inspiration behind the naming of nearby suburb: Alkimos.

2018. Image courtesy of Wanneroo Museum
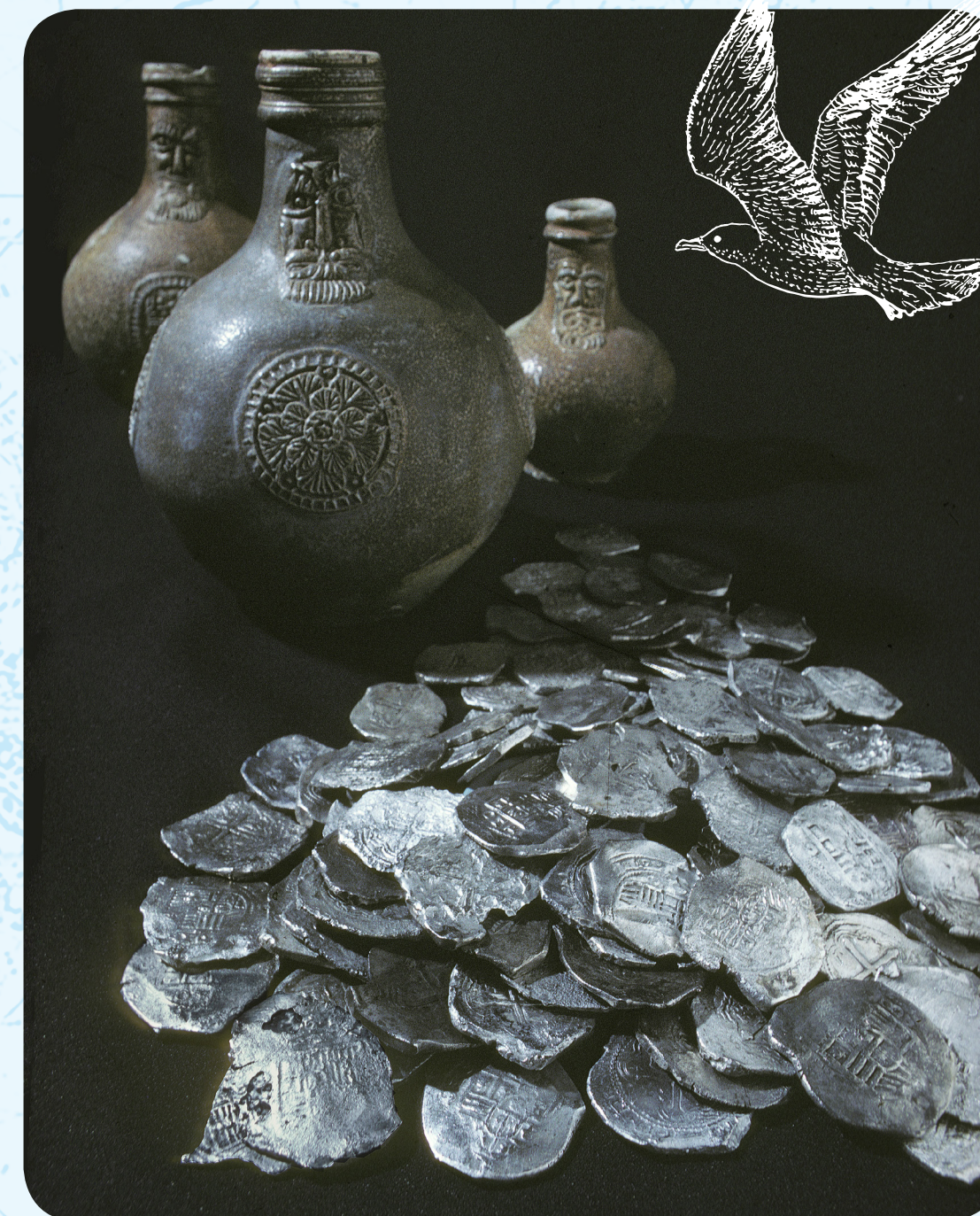
Image courtesy of Western Australian Museum

A forlorn, lonely and mysterious wreck, the *Alkimos* has become the focus of tales of misadventure and hauntings. Since foundering off the coast, she has gained a reputation for paranormal activity and ghostly sightings.

The remains of the *Alkimos* are located approximately 410m off shore. Pieces of the wreck have been uncovered as recently as 2018!

Alkimos January 1964. © Stan Perkins -Image courtesy of Western Australian Museum

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Vergulde Draeck – Shipwreck

The *Vergulde Draeck*, a 260-ton, 41.8 metre 'Jacht', was sailing to Batavia (Jakarta) carrying trade goods and eight chests of silver valued at 78,600 guilders. The wreck's name translates to the '*Gilt Dragon*'.

On 28 April 1656, the vessel struck a coral reef just south of Ledge Point. Sadly, only 68 of its 193 passengers survived. Between 1656 and 1658, five search vessels were sent south from Holland, to no avail. All efforts resulted in the loss of more men and boats, and failure to find any trace of the *Vergulde Draeck*.

On New Year's Day 1658, Abraham Leeman van Santwits, First Officer of the *Waeckende Boey*, led a crew of 13 sailors to search for the 68 survivors of the wreck of the *Vergulde Draeck*. The party landed at Two Rocks, finding wreckage but no survivors. The *Waeckende Boey* deserted them, leaving Leeman to lead his men back nearly 2000 miles.

All images courtesy of Western Australian Museum

In 1931, a young boy found 40 silver coins dated 1619 to 1655 - likely treasure from the wreck - near the Moore River mouth. The wreck was finally discovered in 1963 by 5 spear fishermen, 12km south of Ledge Point. They first noticed bricks, then elephant tusks!