

Eglinton – Shipwreck

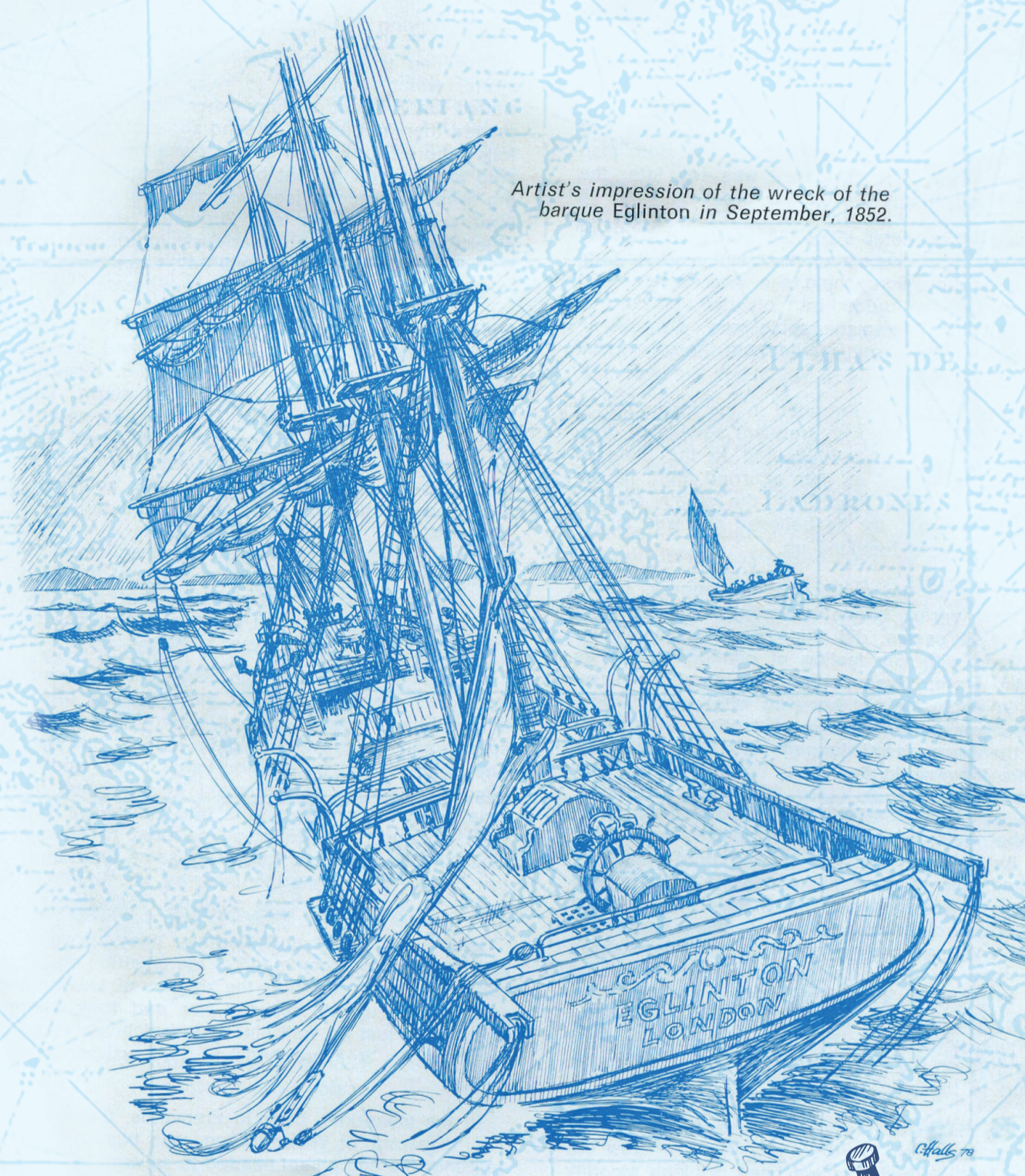
The *Eglinton*, a 464-ton Quebec-built barque, left London carrying 21 crew and 30 settlers. The vessel hit an outer reef off the coast of Wanneroo on 3 September 1852, and was the sensation of the year.

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.

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.



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

PORT OF FREMANTLE MAGAZINE - SPRING, 1978

Image courtesy of Wanneroo Museum

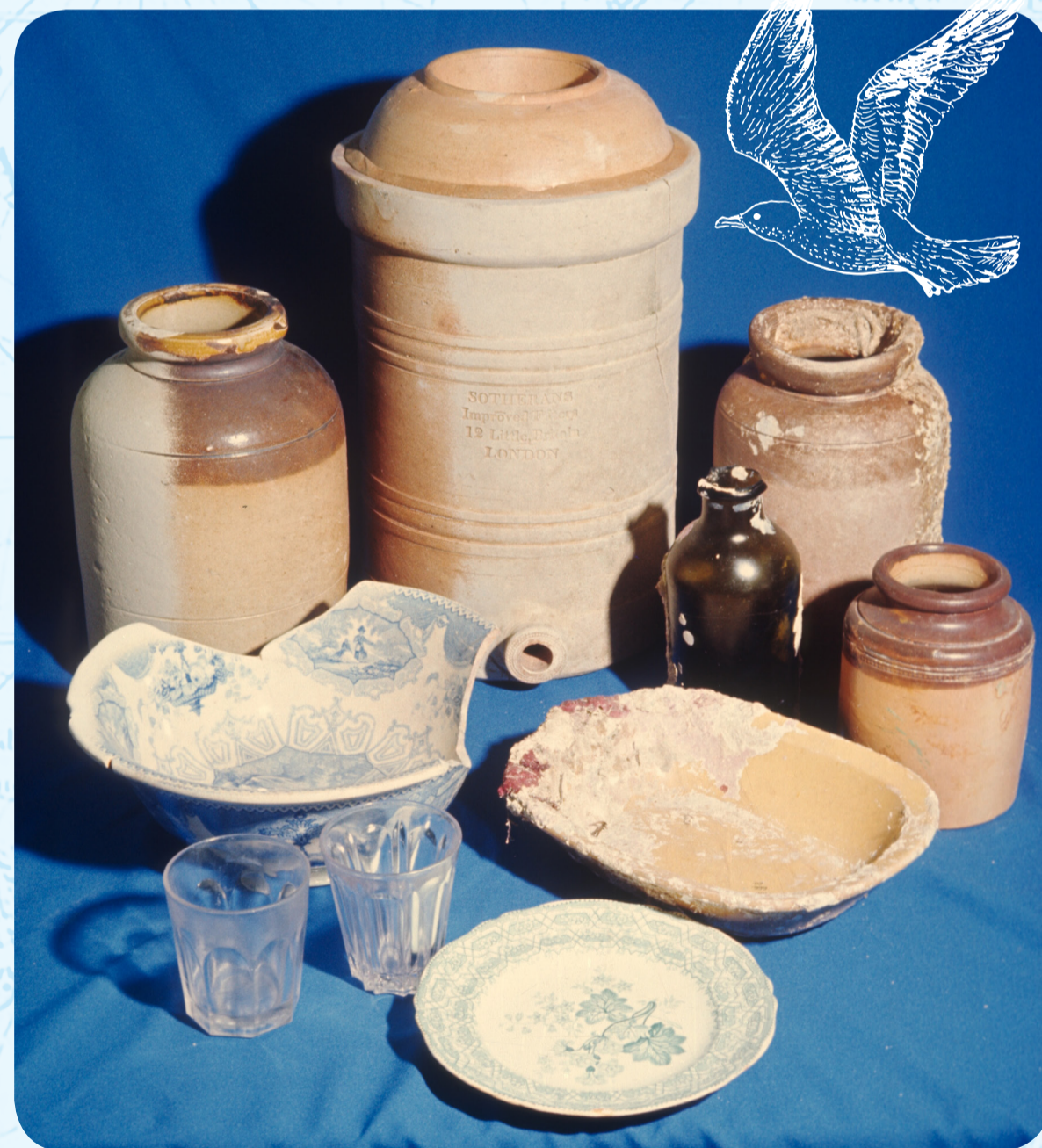
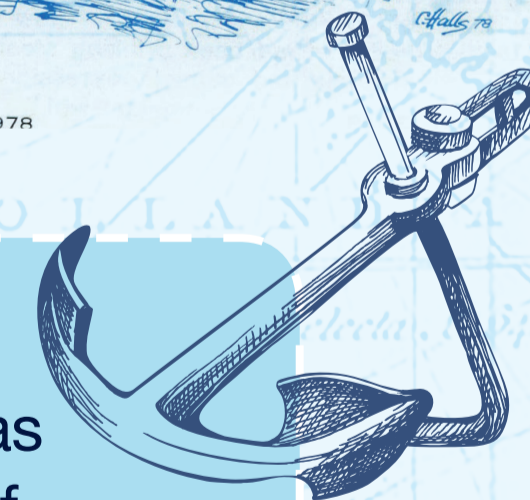


Image courtesy of the Western Australian Museum

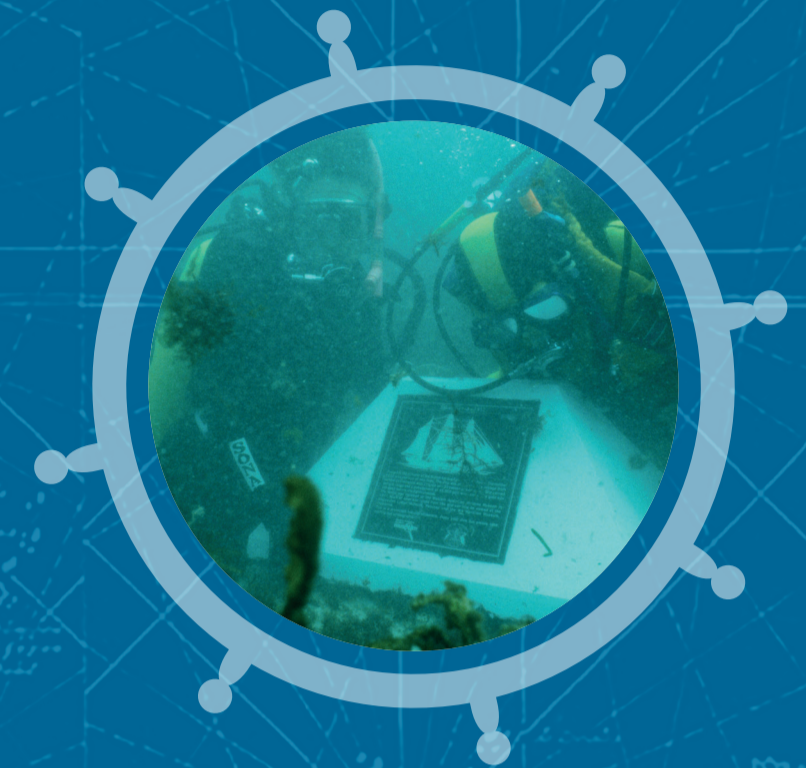


Image courtesy of the Western Australian Museum

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.”

