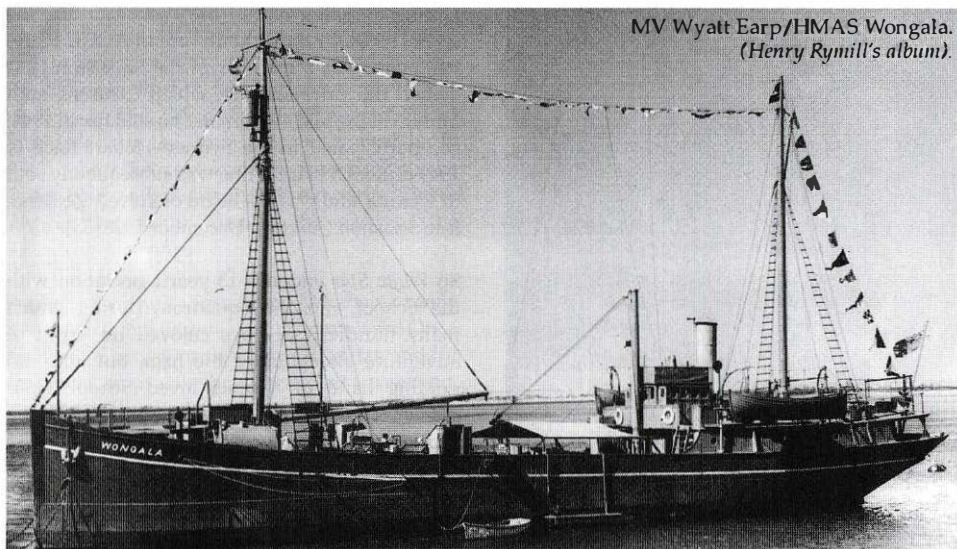




MV Wyatt Earp/HMAS Wongala.
(Henry Rymill's album).

Norm Howard, when on leave from the Navy, always secured a crew from the School Troop so he could go sailing in his beloved *Nereid*, which he launched in 1942.

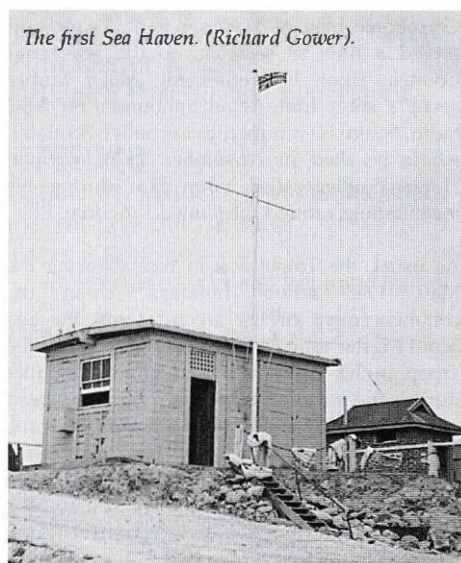
Other Sea Scout Troops in South Australia had the use of a small timber and fibro building, erected in the NE corner of the Mission to Seamen's grounds, situated west of the Outer Harbor railway station. The Mission building was later destroyed by fire and in 1998 only the ruins remain. This training centre was called Sea-Haven. During the Second World War, the structure suffered neglect, and together with the ravages of the weather over many years, it was necessary to demolish the building after the war.

MV *Wyatt Earp*/HMAS *Wongala* was a vessel used by the American explorer Lincoln Ellsworth for Antarctic exploration, during which she made several voyages south and travelled over 50,000 nautical miles. Upon completion of this work, Ellsworth presented the vessel to the Tasmanian State Government, who in turn handed her over to the Commonwealth Government.

During the Second World War, the Royal Australian Navy requisitioned the vessel and renamed her HMAS *Wongala*, this being an aboriginal word for boomerang. As such, she

served in a number of locations in Australian waters, finally as Examination Vessel outside Outer Harbor. As the threat of enemy action in the area in 1944 had diminished, the vessel was withdrawn and decommissioned, following which she lay idle at Port Adelaide.

The then Chief Commissioner and Acting Headquarters Commissioner for Sea Scouts



The first Sea Haven. (Richard Gower).

was the late Henry Rymill, CBE, twice Commodore of the RSAYS. He approached the Federal Minister of the Navy, Mr NJO Makin MHR, a South Australian. After some delay, it was agreed that the vessel would be loaned to the South Australian Branch of the Scout Association, for use as a Sea Scout Training Ship.

During early March, 1945, a ceremony was held on board, with the vessel berthed alongside at the Outer Harbor, when Commander S.R. Symonds, RAN (Naval Officer-in-Charge, South Australia) formally handed her over to the Scout Association. Commander Symonds concluded his address with these words — 'Take this ship, train your boys, make them good men'.

Many dignitaries from public life and Scouting, including the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Mr R Walker and Mrs. Walker, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Port Adelaide, were present, plus many members of the Sea Scout Section and their leaders. The Chief Commissioner read a telegram from the Minister of the Navy, 'Extend my best wishes for a successful ceremony. Feel sure the loan of this vessel by the Commonwealth will be amply repaid by the future efforts and achievements of the boys of your Association'.

The *Wongala*, built in Sweden in 1919 as the *Fanefford*, was of wooden construction, 137 ft long and of 403 gross tons. When acquired by Lincoln Ellsworth she was sheathed and strengthened, thus enabling her to penetrate the southern pack ice. As handed over for Scouting, she was fully equipped, including two lifeboats. Lighting was supplied by a two-cylinder Southern Cross Diesel engine and associated equipment. Her main engine was a 'hot-bowl' six-cylinder diesel, and on the after end was a clutch, which enabled the engine to be run without turning the propeller. This machinery was not used during the loan period.

Prior to the ceremony, arrangements were made with the port authority, South Australian Harbors Board, for the vessel to be moored fore and aft to two large buoys north of No 4 Berth Outer Harbor, and also north of the channel into the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron.

A ship-keeper was employed and the Ex Naval Men's Association was instrumental in the Scouting Association employing Mr Harry Moles, a former RN & RAN Chief Petty Officer. Following his retirement from the RAN, and prior to the war, Harry had been the 'permanent hand' aboard Mr JT Mortlock's 66 ft yacht *Martindale*. [For *Martindale* see *Squadron Quarterly* September 1994: 24-29]. He was a man 'getting on' in years, but he was still active. His knowledge of the sea, shipboard routine, and in particular seamanship endeared him to all aboard *Wongala*. While not a man to talk of his experiences, he nonetheless had had a long and illustrious naval career; this being evident by his large and impressive row of campaign medals, which he wore on ceremonial occasions with pride and dignity. The first medal awarded was for service in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.

In addition to the Ship-Keeper, a Sea Scout Rover Crew was formed, which consisted of some twenty members, mainly Leaders, from various Sea Scout Groups. The Crew assisted with general maintenance and shipboard routine, and supported less experienced Leaders with all facets of ship routine, rope-work and seamanship. Upon Mr. Mole's retirement, and on the employment of an older person, one 'Salt' Kessell, the crew became responsible for all routine training and maintenance under the watchful eye of Henry Rymill and FF (Frank) Medcalf, who was appointed Assistant HQ Commissioner for Sea-Scouts and Officer-in-Charge SSTS *Wongala*.

Sea Scout Troops of up to 25 or 30 boys, together with their Leaders, were accommodated aboard in bunks. The Troops, including those from the country and occasionally from Victoria, used the vessel on a roster system, which continued throughout the loan period irrespective of the weather. Some Troops also took advantage of the longer periods, such as public holiday weekends, school holidays and Christmas and Easter, to come aboard on Friday evening instead of meeting in their Troop Room.

The ship was also used for Scout conferences, District Weekends, Charge Leader Certificate training, and the annual Sea Scout Regatta. The rowing course was in 'The Gut', with kind