

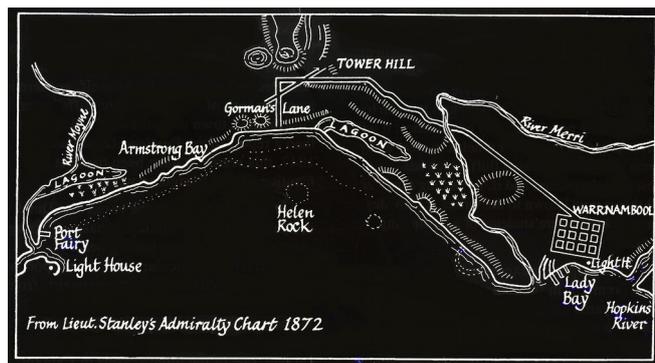
## Armstrong Bay Maritime Archaeology Project. Finding the Mahogany Ship.

Armstrong Bay is a part of the Australian Coastline known as The Shipwreck Coast. In the area, historical, oral traditions and archaeology all give testament to many voyages ending before reaching destination. Such endings are caused commonly by an unexpected encounter between a vessel and the seabed.



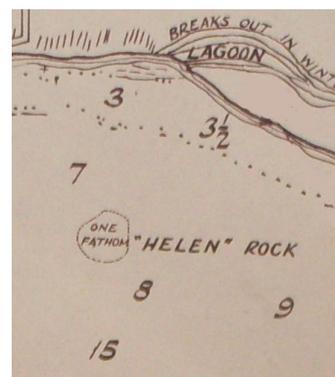
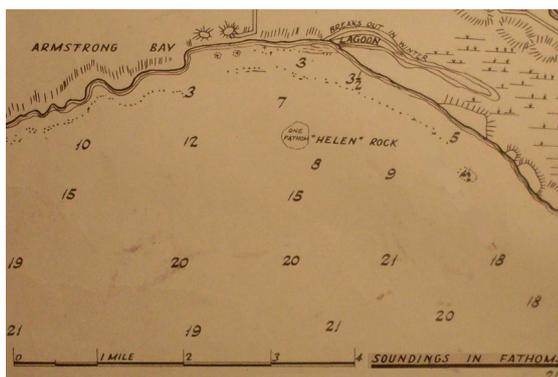
Armstrong Bay has numerous accounts of sightings of wrecks, some records going back over a hundred years. Many believe vessel remains to have been swallowed up by the encroaching sands, either in the dunes or just offshore.

Within Armstrong Bay, about one and a half kilometres offshore may be the culprit for one or more such wrecking events. Appearing on old maps, as well as new charts is Helen Rock.



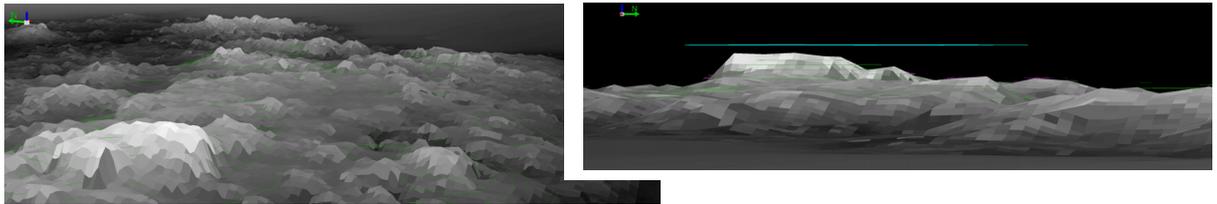
This submerged outcropping rears up from twenty to thirty metres off the seabed, to lie in wait just below the surface of the sea.

One old map from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century shows Helen Rock to be just one fathom below the waterline. Another witness describes the rock as sometimes breaking the surface.

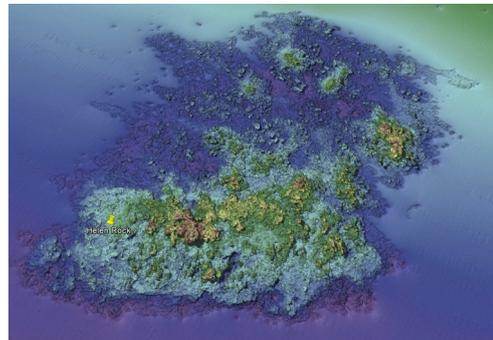
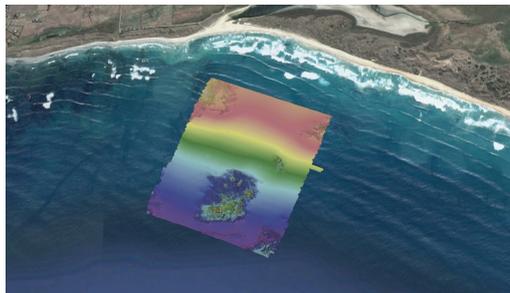


Helen Rock is a hazard to sea traffic, or 'ship trap'. It is marked as being so now, and has in the past. In the event of a large vessel colliding with the Rock, a distressed vessel may very well have had to jettison fittings and equipment to lighten its way and help its chances of gaining the shore. Such heavy material would have sunk straight to the seabed and if of sturdy enough material, such as iron, would still be lying in the same place today. If this is the case, this jettisoned material may be found, and so give information about what still lies elsewhere in Armstrong Bay.

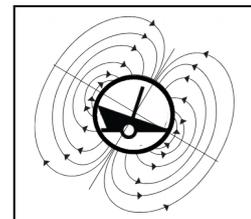
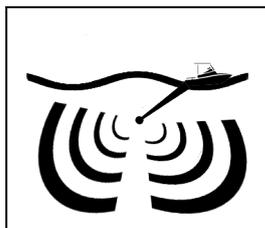
To this end, Armstrong Bay **M.A.P. (Armstrong Bay Maritime Archaeology Project)** has been developed. Bathymetric Lidar data from Victorian Government has provided high-resolution contour mapping of the Armstrong Bay seabed.



Deakin University has conducted a multibeam sonar scan of Helen Rock and its surroundings, especially towards the beach. This has shown the nature of the seabed. The results are promising, showing open sandy areas, and rugged, rocky patches.



The next phase of Armstrong Bay M.A.P. is about to occur. The heavy, ferrous (iron) material lying on the seabed may be detected using a seaborne magnetometer. By detecting changes caused in the Earth's magnetic field due to the presence of iron objects, it is possible to pick these up, even if buried under sand or covered by sea grasses. Thereby we can prove the ship trap theory by the presence of historically relevant artefacts.



We, ShipShapeSearchers, have a contractor able to carry out the seaborne survey. Other groups, organisations and individuals on voluntary or in-kind bases will assist

other logistics. The cost will be for the magnetometer and operator, and this is where the project needs your help in donations.

The results of this phase will determine the next phase; our expectation is to produce an interactive map of Armstrong Bay from the remote sensing data, which researchers can use in their search for shipwrecks in the area, including perhaps even the Mahogany Ship!

Our supporters include the Mahogany Ship Committee, Deakin University, as well as you!