

Israelite Bay Jetty

Maritime Heritage Site Inspection Report

Compiler: Dena Garratt
Consulting Maritime Archaeologist
June 1994

Report - Dept. of Maritime Archaeology
WA Maritime Museum, No 85.

This project was partially funded under the National Estate Grants Program,
administered by the Australian Heritage Commission and the Heritage Council
of Western Australia.

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Technical data.....	4
Management considerations.....	5
Description of site	6
Site identification comments	8
Associated shipwrecks and land sites.....	8
Assessment of site significance.....	10
Recommendations.....	10
Further comments.....	10
References.....	11

Figures

Figure 1. Chart Excerpt: BA 1059.	1
Figure 2. Map Excerpt: <i>Malcolm</i> SI 51-7. 1: 250 000, 1968.....	2
Figure 3. Israelite Bay Jetty, aerial view, 1978.....	3
Figure 4. Israelite Bay Jetty, facing north, 1994.	3
Figure 5. Israelite Bay Jetty looking out to sea, April 1994.....	5
Figure 6. Head of the Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers.....	6
Figure 7. Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers.	7
Figure 8. Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers.	7
Figure 9. <i>Mary Ann</i> , from a crayon drawing, Muresk College Magazine.	8
Figure 10. Remains of Israelite Bay Telegraph Station, aerial view, 1978.	9

Acknowledgments

This project was partially funded under the National Estate Program, a Commonwealth-financed grants scheme administered by the Australian Heritage Commission (Federal Government) and the Heritage Council of Western Australia, (State Government).

Introduction

The purpose of this site inspection was to make a preliminary assessment of the extent of the remains of the Israelite Bay Jetty and to produce a photographic record of the site and associated material on land.

Background

Compiled from the files of the Department of Maritime Archaeology, (MA).

Site Name: Israelite Bay Jetty

File Name: Jetties and Port Related Structures

File Name: Eyre Area

File Name: Heritage Council of WA

File No: MA 2.93

File No: MA 102.91

File No: MA 13.93

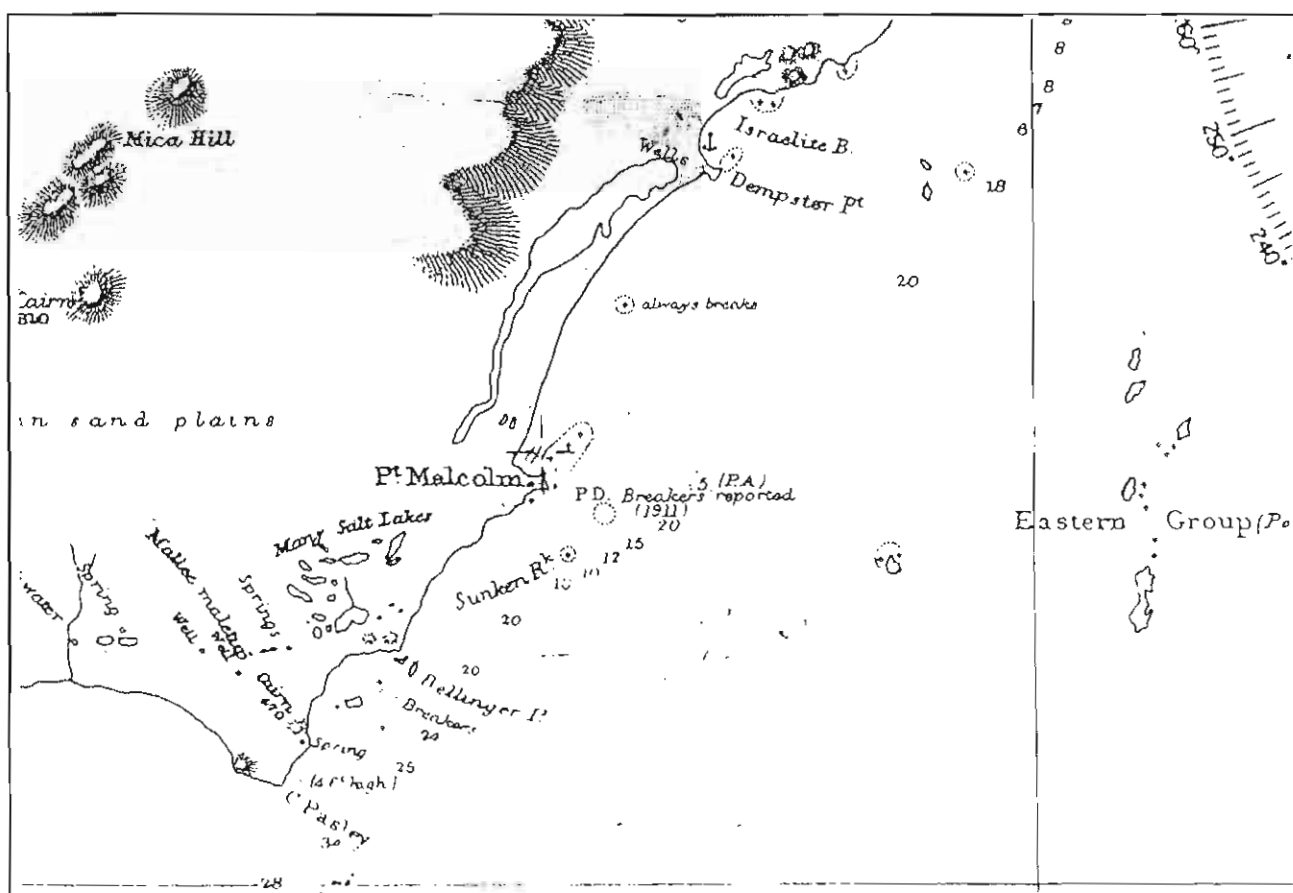


Figure 1. Chart Excerpt: BA 1059, Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight, 1881; 1897; 1901. 1: 610 000 (enlarged to 1: 305 000)

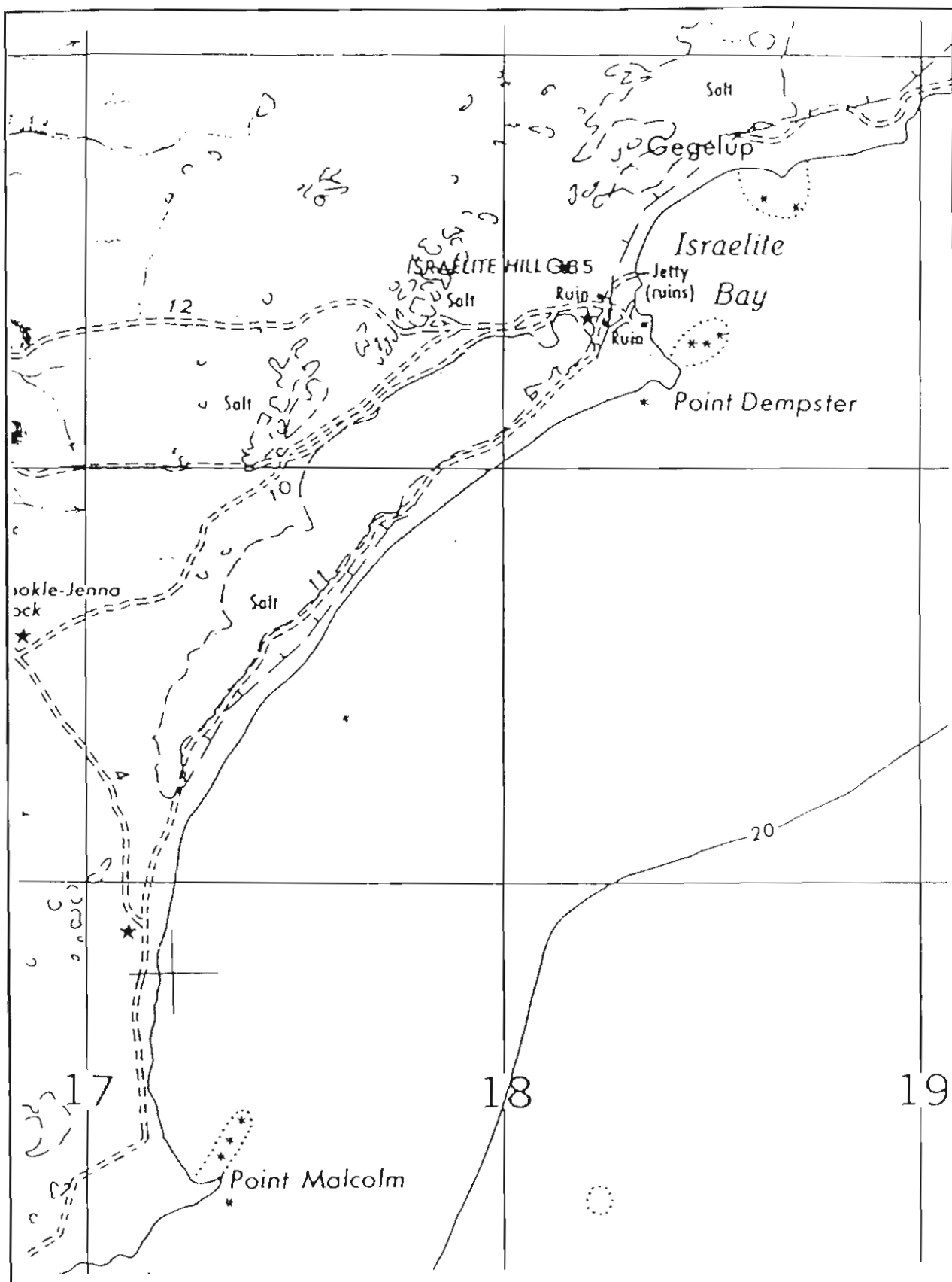


Figure 2. Map Excerpt: SI 51-7 Malcolm, 1968. 1: 250 000, (enlarged to 1: 12 500)

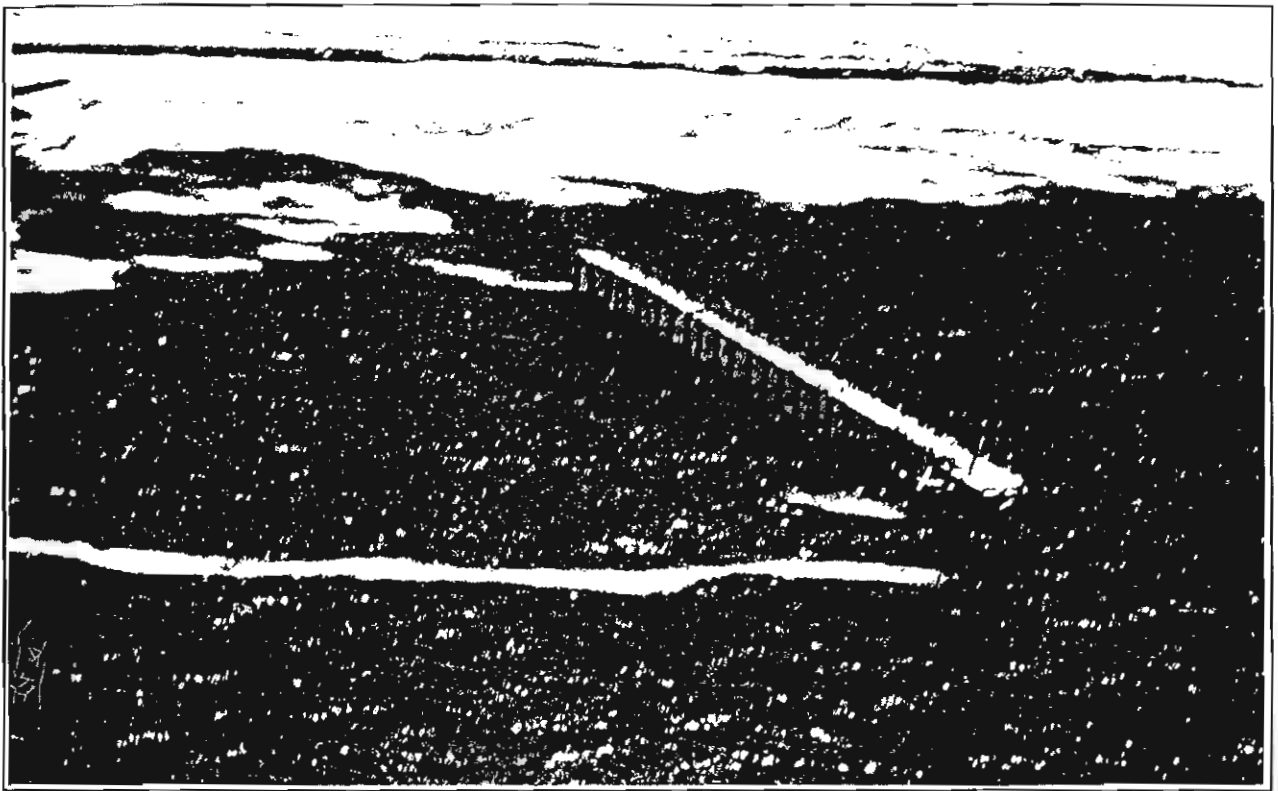


Figure 3. Israelite Bay Jetty, aerial view, 1978. (WA Maritime Museum)

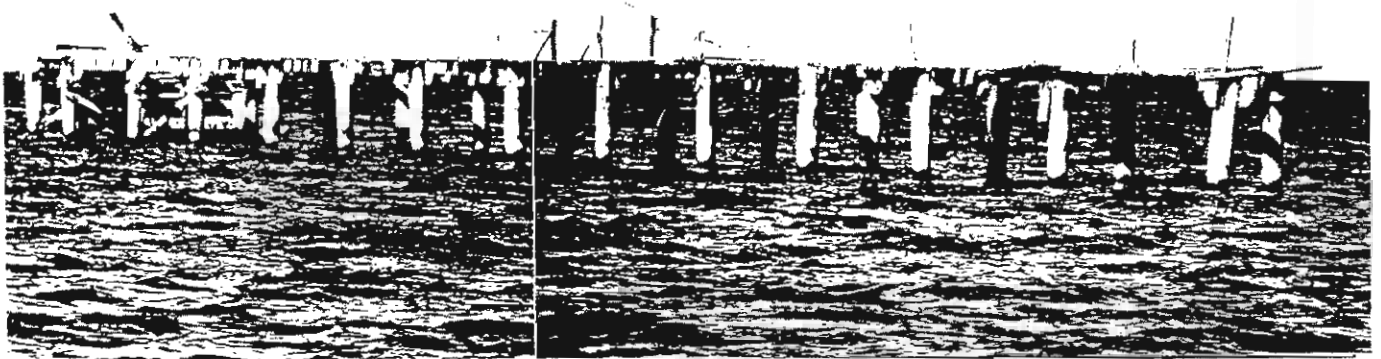


Figure 4. Israelite Bay Jetty, facing north, 1994. (D. Cumming)

Technical Data

Date of Inspection: 2 April 1994

Personnel: Denis Cumming, Dena Garratt, Bob Richards, Ray Shaw.

Approximate Location: The jetty is situated in Israelite Bay.

Charts: BA 1059, *Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight*. 1881, 1: 610 000.

Maps: *Balladonia & Eyre*, 1: 500 000, 1970
Malcolm SI 51-7, 1: 250 000, 1968

Historic Plans:

Latitude: 33° 36.90' S **Longitude:** 123° 51.98' E (GPS Average of 50)

Directions: The site is accessible from the Israelite Bay camping area. Proceed along the track in a northerly direction for 1 km. This track leads directly to the jetty. The boat ramp is 1.5 km south of the jetty.

Site Photographs:

B/W: (Neg Nos. 0-19) U/W (Neg Nos. 1-36) MA 2.93

Colour: (Neg Nos. 1-25) MA 2.93

Slides: Draw #D4 File Name; SCW, (Aerial view)

Video: 10 mins. (R. Richards) "Jetties and Port-related Structures Project" - 1:15:18

Historic:

Site Conditions on inspection:

Swell: Nil

Visibility: 3 m

Current: Nil

Sea-bed coverage: *Posidonia* seagrass meadows with sand patches.

Chemical Measurements:

Temperature:

Salinity:

pH:

Dissolved O₂:

Corrosion Potential:

No measurements were deemed necessary in this instance, however all chemical measurements should be recorded if a full archaeological investigation of the site is undertaken.

Biological Data:

Colonising fauna and flora: The piles are host to several species of weed and sponges that will need to be identified if a full investigation of the site is initiated.

Site Condition and Integrity: Substantial remains of the seaward end of the jetty structure are in place. The general shape and dimensions of the structure is clearly evident from the shore. The head of the jetty is intact, as are the piles, crossheads and stringers. Several of the timbers forming the diagonal and longitudinal bracing are severely eroded, however the pile timbers appears sound. Large sections of decking are still in place, however the davit at the head of the jetty and much of the hand railing has collapsed during the 16 years since the site was photographed, (see Figure 3). The remains of the earthworks for the jetty abutment is now obliterated.

Management Considerations

(i) Natural Forces: The jetty piles are not subjected to the damaging forces of ocean swells as the site is sheltered behind Dempster Head, resulting in a dampening effect on the swells rolling in from the Southern Ocean.

(ii) Present and future Human forces: Apart from the ever-present threat of vandalism, there is no current threat from human forces. The visitation rate to the site is low, as the area is remote and access is limited to 4WD vehicles only. The jetty structure can only be reached by swimming from shore or by boat.

(iii) Projected general site stability: The structural integrity of the jetty does not appear to be in any immediate danger from either environmental or human forces. Due to the remoteness of the site, there is little likelihood that these remains will become a navigational hazard to small craft. . However, in the long term, the timbers will continue to be degraded by biological and environmental agents.

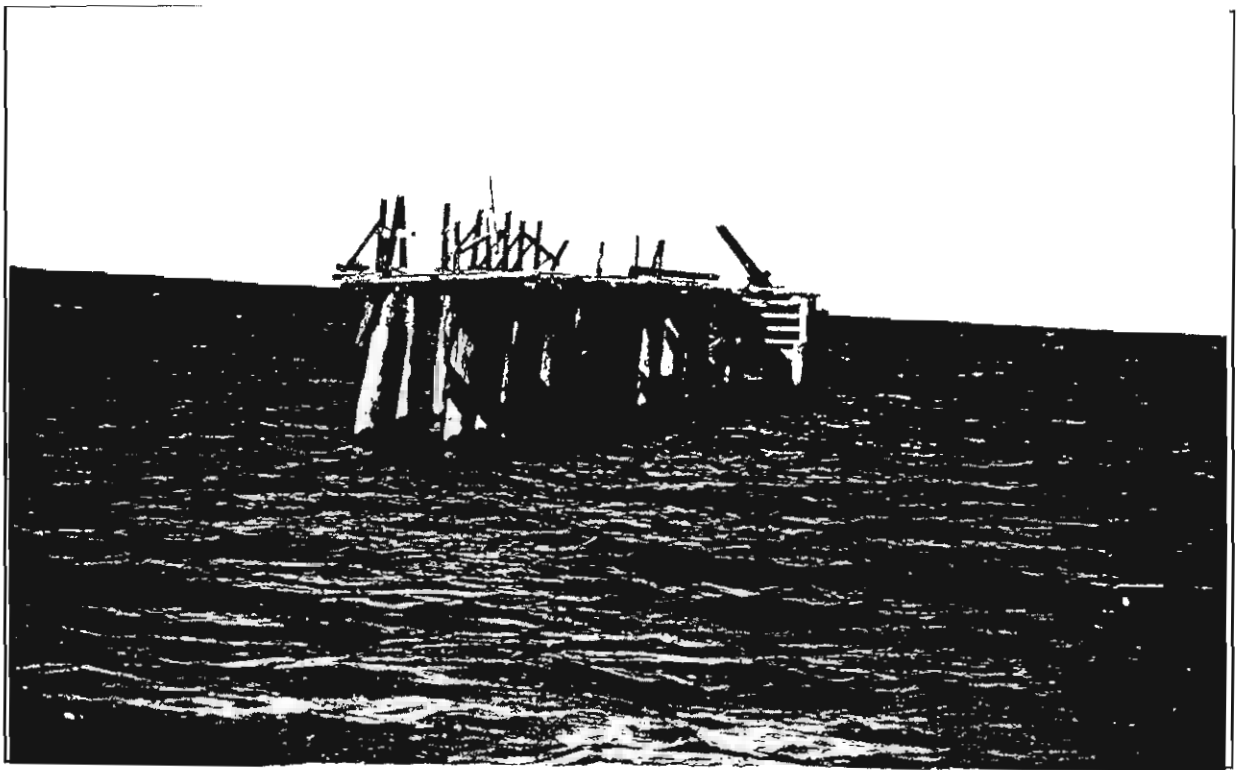


Figure 5. Israelite Bay Jetty looking out to sea, April 1994. (D. Cumming)

Description of Site

The jetty extended into Israelite Bay in a easterly direction for a distance of 89 metres (292 ft) to a water depth of 3 metres at low tide. All trace of the land-based section of the jetty has disappeared, apart from one pile laying in the shallows about 10m offshore. A swim of 30 metres out to sea is required to reach the existing structure, which constitutes the seaward half of the jetty. The overall length of the remaining structure is 59.4 metres, with the longitudinal distance between each set of piles being 4.6 metres. The lateral distance between each pair of piles is 1.3 metres. There are 24 piles to the head of the jetty (12 sets of pairs) and a further 6 piles (2 sets of 3 piles) forming the head. The head of the jetty is 2.6 metres wide and 4.6 metres long. Sections of the longitudinal bracing for the head of the jetty are severely eroded. This is possibly due to the fact that these timbers are positioned just below water level and are therefore subject to the damaging effects of constant wave action, (see Figures 7 and 8). On the right hand side of the head (looking out to sea) is a flight of steps leading down to the water line.

Apart from jetty timbers, few artefacts were seen on the seabed in the vicinity of the head. It is likely that many more artefacts will be buried beneath the sand.



Figure 6. Head of the Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers. (D. Garratt)



Figure 7. Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers. (D. Garratt)

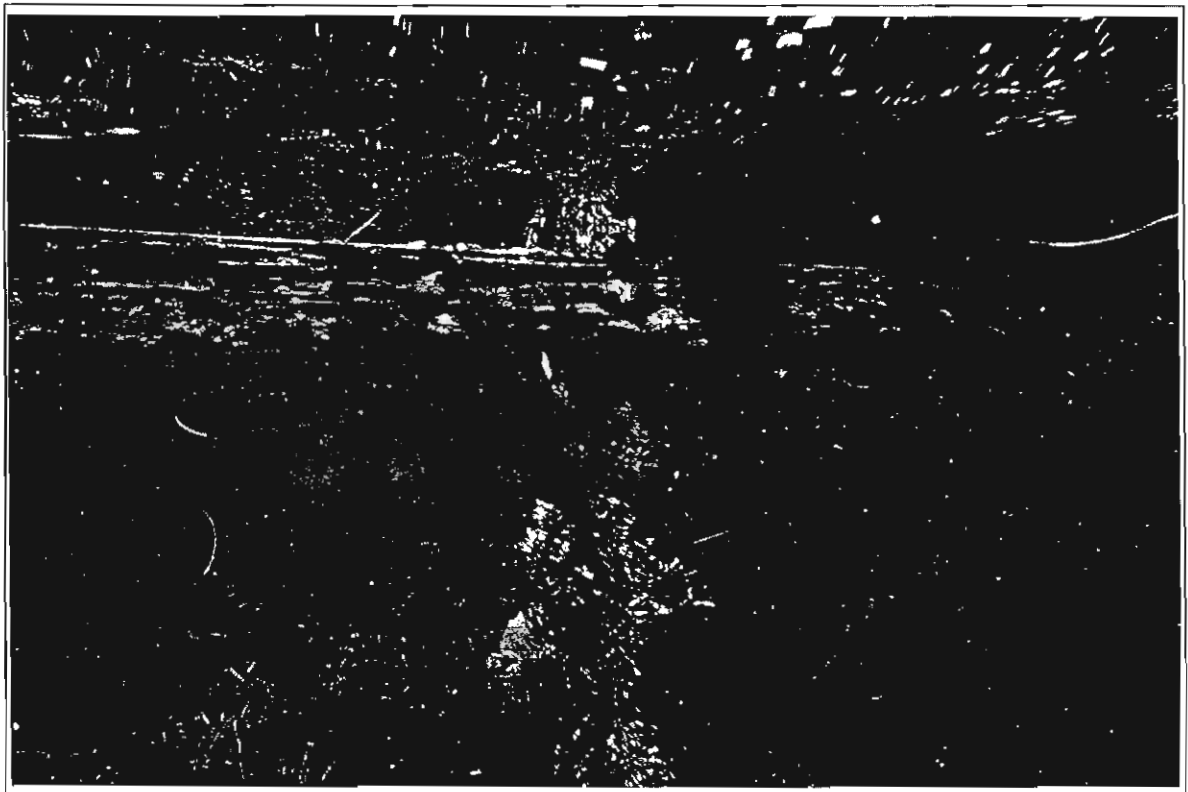


Figure 8. Jetty, showing deterioration of timbers. (D. Garratt)

Site Identification Comments: (From research notes compiled by D. Cumming).

A landing place was chosen in Israelite Bay for unloading poles for the overland telegraph line. The Israelite Bay telegraph station was established in 1876 and began operations in 1877. During the 1890's, the SS *Ferret* and the schooner *Grace Darling* called regularly. A jetty 75.3 metres (247 ft) long and 1.7 metres (5 ft 6 ins) wide was completed in 1898 at a cost of £364. This was extended landwards by 13.7 (45 ft), repaired and supplied with a 1-tonne crane and a tramway in 1902.

References

Australian Pilot, Vol. 1, p. 98.

Eucla Recorder 10.12.1898; 7.1.1899.

Le Page, John, *Building a State*. Water Authority of Western Australia, Leederville, 1986.

Moullin. *Note Book*. Department of Marine & Harbours, Fremantle, p.9.

Report, Public Works Department, 1902., 1904

Associated Shipwrecks and Land Sites

Twilight and Bunyip

On the night of 24 May 1877, the cutters *Twilight* and *Bunyip* were discharging stores from Albany intended for the parties engaged in the construction of the Eucla telegraph line, when they were driven on shore in a gale. No lives were lost. Both vessels were abandoned as wrecks at the eastern end of Culver Cliffs, at a place subsequently called Twilight Cove. (Extract from: *Unfinished Voyages*, Vol. 2, p. 226.)

Mary Ann

In June 1876, the 104-tonne schooner, *Mary Ann* was engaged as a survey and supply vessel for the construction of the telegraph line between Esperance and Eucla. It was on this occasion that Israelite Bay was chosen as the most suitable site for the third station. The vessel was wrecked on the return voyage near Bellinger Island, about 40 km (25 miles) south-west of Israelite Bay.

(*Unfinished Voyages*, Vol. 2, pp. 199–201. The east-west telegraph, 1875-7, *WA Historical Society*. 1978, p. 28.)

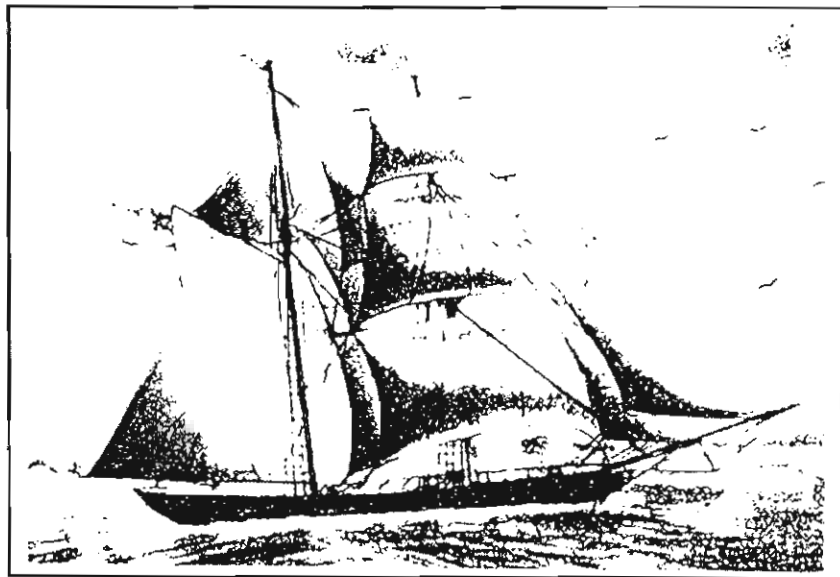


Figure 9. *Mary Ann*, from a crayon drawing, Muresk College Magazine.
(*Unfinished Voyages*, Vol. 2, p. 200)

Israelite Bay Telegraph Station

The Israelite Bay telegraph station was established in 1876 and operated from 1877 until the line was abandoned in 1896.

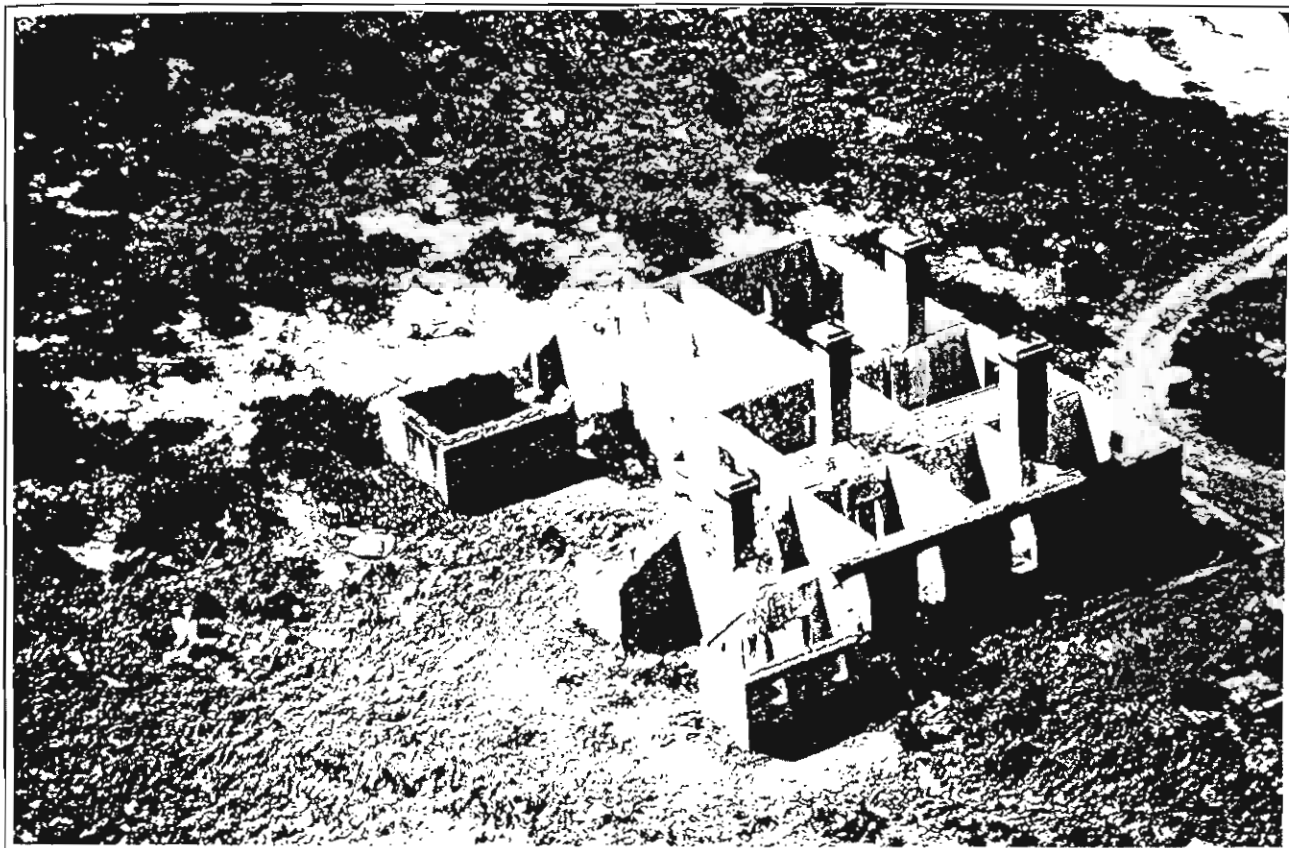


Figure 10. Remains of Israelite Bay Telegraph Station, aerial view, 1978.
(WA Maritime Museum)

Assessment of Site Significance

- (i) Historical: The Israelite Bay Jetty is associated with the Albany to Eucla telegraph line. It played a significant role in the construction of the Israelite Bay telegraph station and served as an outpost for the sandalwood and pastoral industry. It represented an important link with the rest of the world for the local population.
- (ii) Technological: The structure is representative of the style of jetty construction from the late 1800s. (See also Castletown Jetty in Esperance Bay, built 1895).
- (iii) Scientific: Information on corrosion rates can be gained from the iron artefacts on the site.
- (iv) Educational: All heritage remains have the potential of being a focus for educational activity if properly marked and documented.
- (v) Recreational: The clarity and depth of the water on the site is ideal for snorkelling. The jetty piles present an attractive dive site, with sufficient material visible on the seabed to make the site interesting for scuba divers.
- (vi) Cultural: There is undoubted cultural significance in the remains of the jetty. The jetty played a vital role in the establishment of the overland telegraph line and provided those that manned the station with their only regular means of personal contact with the rest of the world.
- (vii) Archaeological: The site has the potential to be included in a comparative study of jetty sites, particularly with regard to the patterns of deposition and distribution of artefacts along jetties.
- (viii) Rarity: The site is one of two jetties of its size, built in the late 1890s. The other is Castletown Jetty in Esperance Bay (built in 1896).
- (iv) Representativeness: The Israelite Bay Jetty is the oldest and most complete example of its kind.

Recommendations

The options are:

- (i) Recommend that the jetty be gazetted as an Historic Site in association with the telegraph station.
- (ii) Erect a marker at the site that will include interpretive material.
- (iii) Consider an archaeological survey of the jetty site, with the provision for the rehabilitation of the excavated areas and the appropriate treatment, conservation and display of any artefacts recovered from the site.

Further Comments

Regardless of the outcome of the above, it is recommended that the Israelite Bay Jetty site be more widely publicised as a reminder of an important era in the development of WA's regional centres. Further to this, the significance of the jetty in relation to the history of the pastoral industry and the overland telegraph should be highlighted in the displays at the Eucla and Esperance Museums.

Dena Garratt
Consulting Maritime Archaeologist

References

Australian Pilot, Vol. 1.

Eucla Recorder . 10.12.1898; 7.1.1899.

Henderson, G., 1988, *Unfinished voyages*, Vol. 2. University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, WA.

Le Page, J., 1986, *Building a state: The story of the Public Works Department*. Water Authority, Perth.

Moullin, *Note Book*. Department of Marine & Harbours, Fremantle.

Public Works Department Reports, 1902, 1904.

Western Australian Maritime Museum, File No. MA 102.91.