

# **HAMELIN BAY JETTY**

## **Maritime Heritage Inspection Report**

Compiler: Dena Garratt  
Consulting Maritime Archaeologist  
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**Report - Dept. of Maritime Archaeology  
WA Maritime Museum, No. 75.**

# Introduction

The primary purpose of this site inspection was to make a preliminary assessment of the extent of the submerged remains of the Hamelin Bay Jetty. Secondly, to produce an underwater video recording of the site and any associated material on land.

# Background

Site Name: Hamelin Bay Jetty

File No: MA 196.75

File No: MA 2.93

File No: MA 13.93

File Name: Hamelin Bay Area

File Name: Jetties & Port Related Structures

File Name: Heritage Council of WA

Figure 1.

## Chart Excerpt: AUS 116-1981 Hamelin Bay 1: 25 00

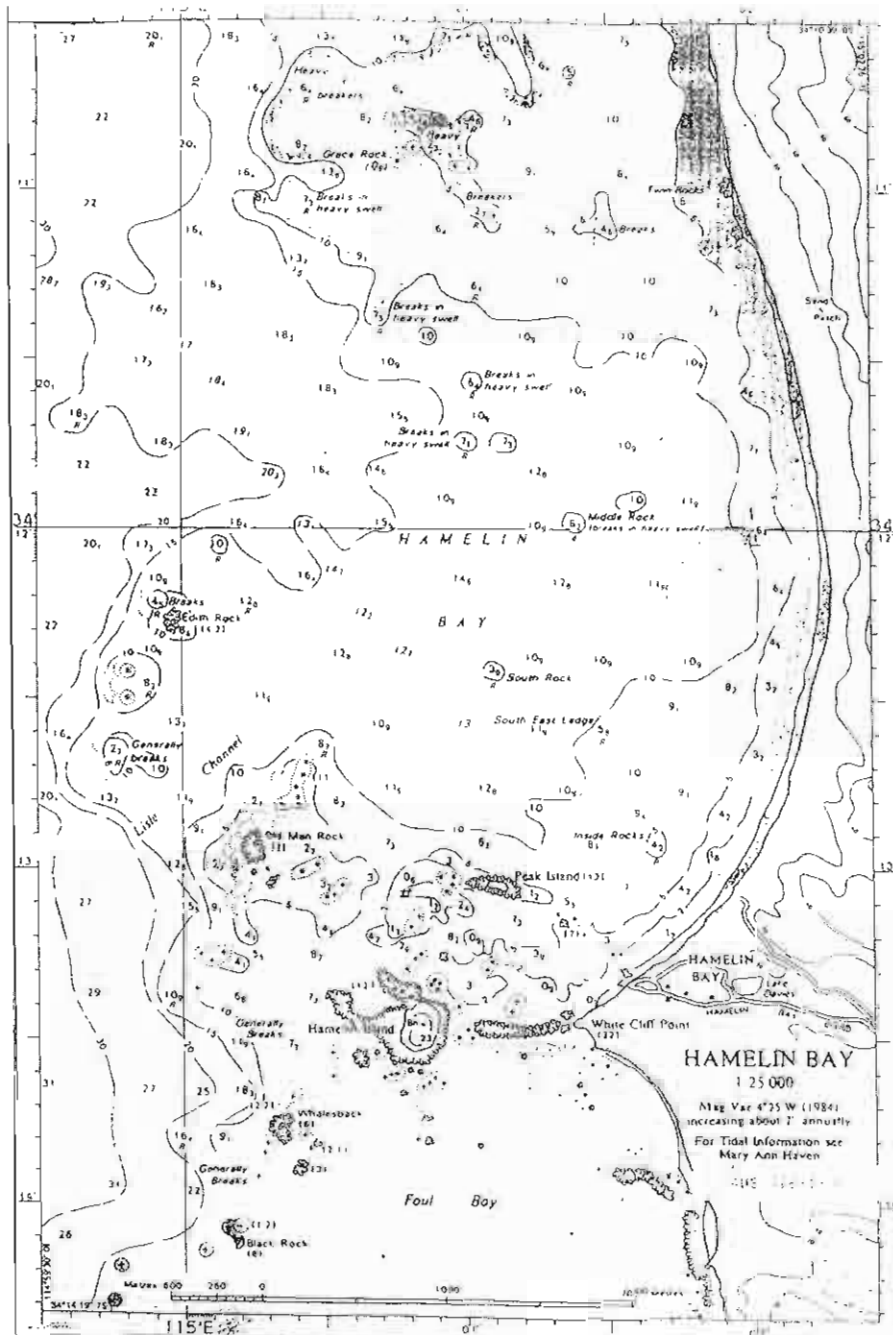
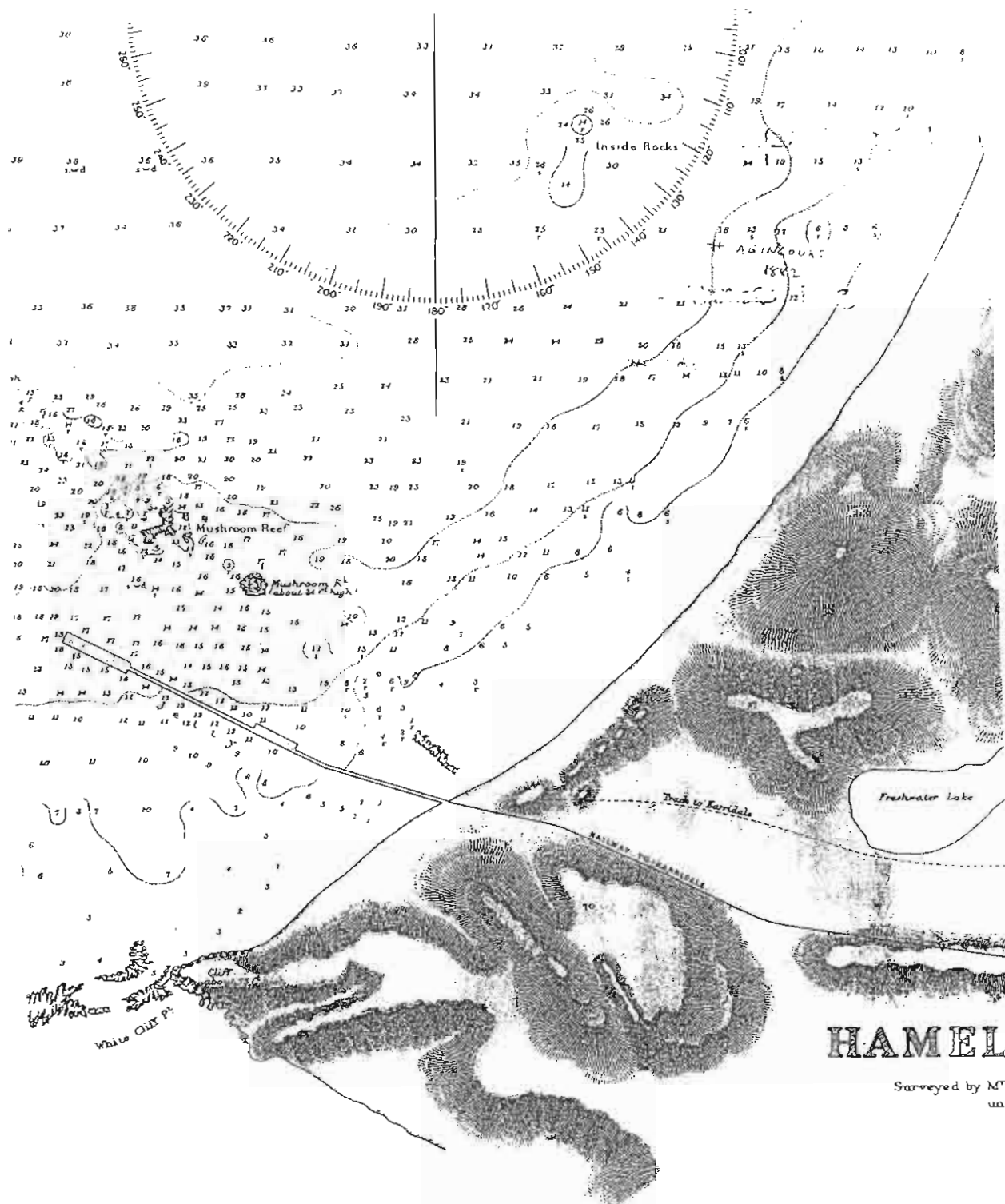


Figure 2.

Chart Excerpt: BA 1472, Plans on South-West Coast of Australia, 1898.



Information and Chart Datum

datum of soundings				Datum to which soundings are reduced and Remarks
Is	Heights at Springs near the Solstices		Mean L <sup>t</sup>	
	E. W.	L. W.		
W Water				
L <sup>t</sup>	Mean H <sup>t</sup>	Mean H <sup>t</sup>	Mean L <sup>t</sup>	
4	3-7 feet	1-1 feet		Tide usually diurnal.
	3-8	0-9		

BA 1472, Plans on South-West Coast of Australia, 1898



# Technical Data

**Date of Inspection:** 28 November 1993.

**Personnel:** Dena Garratt, Volunteers - David Ceilak, Tracie Ceilak, Ray Shaw.

**Approximate Location:** Approx. 10m to the left (south) of the Hamelin Bay launching ramp.

**Charts:** BA 61 South West Coast, Hamelin Inner Harbour 1896  
BA 62 Hamelin Bay, Inner Harbour 1897, 1 : 1 200  
BA 413 Cape Mentelle to White Point 1896, 1911, 1 : 99 200  
BA 1037 Flinders Bay, 1897, 1899, 1911, (Detail 1 : 12 130)  
BA 1472 Plans on the South-West Coast 1898, 1961  
AUS 116 Hamelin Bay 1981, 1 : 12 500

**Latitude:** C.34 °13' S

**Longitude:** C.115 °01' E

**Sailing Directions:** It is possible to wade or swim out to the jetty straight off the beach. The site is accessible by boat from the launching ramp but care must be taken due to the possibility of snagging on piles submerged just below the surface.

## Site Photographs:

B/W: U/W (Dena Garratt); aerial photos MA 3340 No. 23.

Colour: Prints and slides (Dena Garratt)

Video: 30 mins (Jon Carpenter)

Historic: PLA Hamelin Bay (old view) 2555 No. 8,10 & 2556 No. 35,36  
(Light house) 2555 No. 12.

(Battye Library) Hamelin Harbour (no date) Reg. No. 7265B/66.

M.C. Davies Jetty 1889 Reg. No. 4979B/21.

M.C. Davies Store 1889 Reg. No. 4979B/22.

Hamelin Jetty c1900 Reg. No. 1326P.

## Site Conditions on inspection:

Swell: Nil

Visibility: Underwater, 3m

Current: Nil

Sea-bed coverage : Sand and weed clumps.

## Chemical Measurements:

Temperature: No measurements were deemed necessary in this instance.

Salinity: Ditto

pH: Ditto

Dissolved O<sub>2</sub>: Ditto

Corrosion Potentials: NA

**Biological Data:**

Colonising flora & fauna: The piles are covered with a thick matting of several species of seaweed.

**Site Condition and Integrity:** There is substantial remains of the jetty structure on the beach and the general shape and dimensions of the structure is clearly evident from the shore. Approximately 95% of the piles are still in position on the sea bed and appear to be reasonably sound.

## **Management considerations**

(i) Natural Forces: The site is prone to violent storms but because of the protected waters in the Bay, the piles are not subjected to the forces of damaging swells.

(ii) Present and future Human forces: There is no apparent threat from human forces. The site is suitable only for passive recreation such as snorkelling. The visitation rate may increase after the new edition of the *Hamelin Bay Wreck Trail* brochure becomes available to the public.

## Description of Site

The jetty extends out into Hamelin Bay in a west-north-westerly direction. The earthworks for the Karridale railway runs parallel to the existing Hamelin Bay Road and terminates at the beach, at the point where it originally joined the jetty. With most of the timber piles still in place, the overall dimensions and shape of the jetty is clearly visible from the shore. (An even better view of the jetty remains can be had from the lighthouse on Hamelin Island). The onshore section of the jetty has some cross members and stringers still in place. Large areas of piles in the mid-section of the jetty have been burnt or broken to about half a metre above the low water mark, whereas the piles at the shore and seaward ends of the jetty appear to be intact. Apart from several displaced piles on the seabed, the main feature of the site is a large winch drum lying approximately where one of the steam cranes had been situated, on the jetty. Numerous ballast mounds of various materials, hull sheathing, bricks and ship's rigging are scattered throughout the site.

*Figure. 3*  
**Hamelin Bay Jetty, 1993.** (Dena Garratt)



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

The jetty was built by timber merchant M.C. Davies in 1881 as an alternative to Barrack Point in Flinders Bay for the export of timber from his saw mill at Coodarup and later Karridale. The original structure was 500 feet long with a wooden tramway, and could accommodate five or six ships at a time but was dangerous in north-west gales. In 1887, the jetty was extended to 1800 feet long and in 1898 mobile steam cranes were installed. Around ten vessels per year used the port in the period between 1882 and 1885, but efforts to improve safety proved useless. The jetty was finally abandoned soon after 1900 due to the loss of five ships and the grounding of two others in the harbour.

*Govt Gazette*, 1880 p283; 1883 pp 3, 416; 1887 p191.

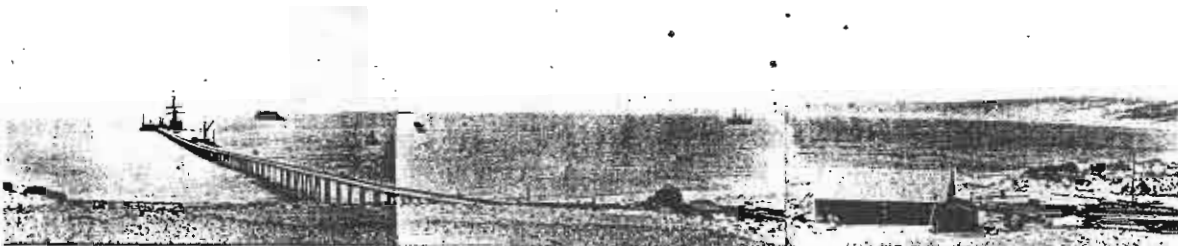
*Figure 4.*

**Hamelin Bay Jetty, 1889.** (Battye Library Ref. No. 4979B/22)



*Figure 5.*

**Hamelin Bay Jetty, c1900.** (Battye Library Ref. No. 1326P)



## Assessment of Site Significance

(i) Historical: With the remains of M.C. Davies' railway, the jetty played an important role in the development of the Western Australian export timber industry. The jetty is significant in the State's maritime history because of its association with numerous wrecks and with the Hamelin Bay Lighthouse.

(ii) Technological:

(iii) Scientific:

(iv) Educational: Any heritage remains have the potential of being a focus for educational activity if properly marked and documented. (As per Hamelin Bay Wreck Trail).

(v) Recreational: Suitable for passive recreation activities such as snorkelling and SCUBA diving.

(vi) Cultural: There is undoubted cultural significance in the remains of the jetty. It demonstrates a way of life that is no longer practiced and serves as a link with the commercial and social activities of the region.

(vii) Archaeological: The areas on both sides of the jetty have archaeological potential as a repository of materials dumped and lost overboard from ships. The site has the potential to be included in a comparative study of jetty deposition patterns.

## Discussion

Further efforts should be made to record the extent of surface material deposition along both sides of the jetty, preferably after winter storms when the likelihood of more material being exposed is greatest.

## Recommendations

### The options are:

(i) Initiate a full archaeological survey of the site

(ii) Leave as is

It is recommended that the Hamelin Bay Jetty be more widely publicised in conjunction with the *Wreck Trail* as a reminder of an important era in the development of WA's south west. Local residents should be encouraged to seek a grant to research, document and present the history of the jetty. In this regard, Phil and Karen Chamberlain, lease holders of the Hamelin Bay Caravan Park have expressed an interest in promoting the heritage significance of Hamelin Bay.