

WRECK INSPECTION REPORT

(*Solveig*) (1877-1903)

Dept. of Maritime Archaeology
W.A. Maritime Museum
Cliff St. Fremantle
6160

LLOYD'S REGISTER.

SAILING VESSELS.

SOL-SOR

Ship's Name.		Material, Rig, &c.	Registered Tonnage.	Particulars of Classification.			Built.			Owners.	Registered Dimensions, Deck Erection, &c.			Port of Registry.	Moulded depth.	Freeboard and depth of hold.
Master.	Lat. Name, if any.		Gross	Character.	For Special Survey.	When.	By Whom.	Where.	Length.		Breadth.	Depth.	Flag.	ft. in.		
Special Surveys.	No. of Decks, &c.		Under 25-Ton.	For Special Survey.	Under 25-Ton.											
Solveig		Woodhull	619			1877	Perrigand		Geeseed Aenes Solveig (H.J. Larsen)	158-2	33-0	17-4	Tromsøen Norwegian			

Dr M McCarthy.
With assistance from Dena Garratt and Ray Shaw.
1998

Report, Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime Museum
Number 137.

Cover illustration: Details of the *Solveig*. From Lloyd's Register, 1903-4

Technical Data

Site Name: Solveig

Date lost 19/2/1903

Date of Inspection: 12/9/1995

Personnel:

M McCarthy : OIC

D. Garratt

R.Shaw

Approximate Location: Point Samson at Port Walcott

GPS.

20° 37.531

117° 11.698

Chart No: AUS 740

Map : Roebourne 1:100,000. Sheet 2356. The wreck lies at 204194

File No:

File Name: Dampier Area

Sailing Directions:

Drive along the road to Point Samson from Roebourne around the town to the coast keeping the sea on the right hand side and coming to a bay at the northern end of which can be seen the Cape Lambert Jetty. Houses line the road to the left, the sea to the right. At the end of the road a track leads to the beach. At the head of the track there is a Bicentennial of Western Australia plaque commemorating the *Solveig* site. The wreck lies on the reef below and to the south east of the plaque.

Site Photographs:

Solveig: Colour slide and video

Site Conditions on inspection

Sea and Swell: Calm seas no swell, ebb tide

Sea-bed coverage: Sand flat rock and little weed.

Biological Data :

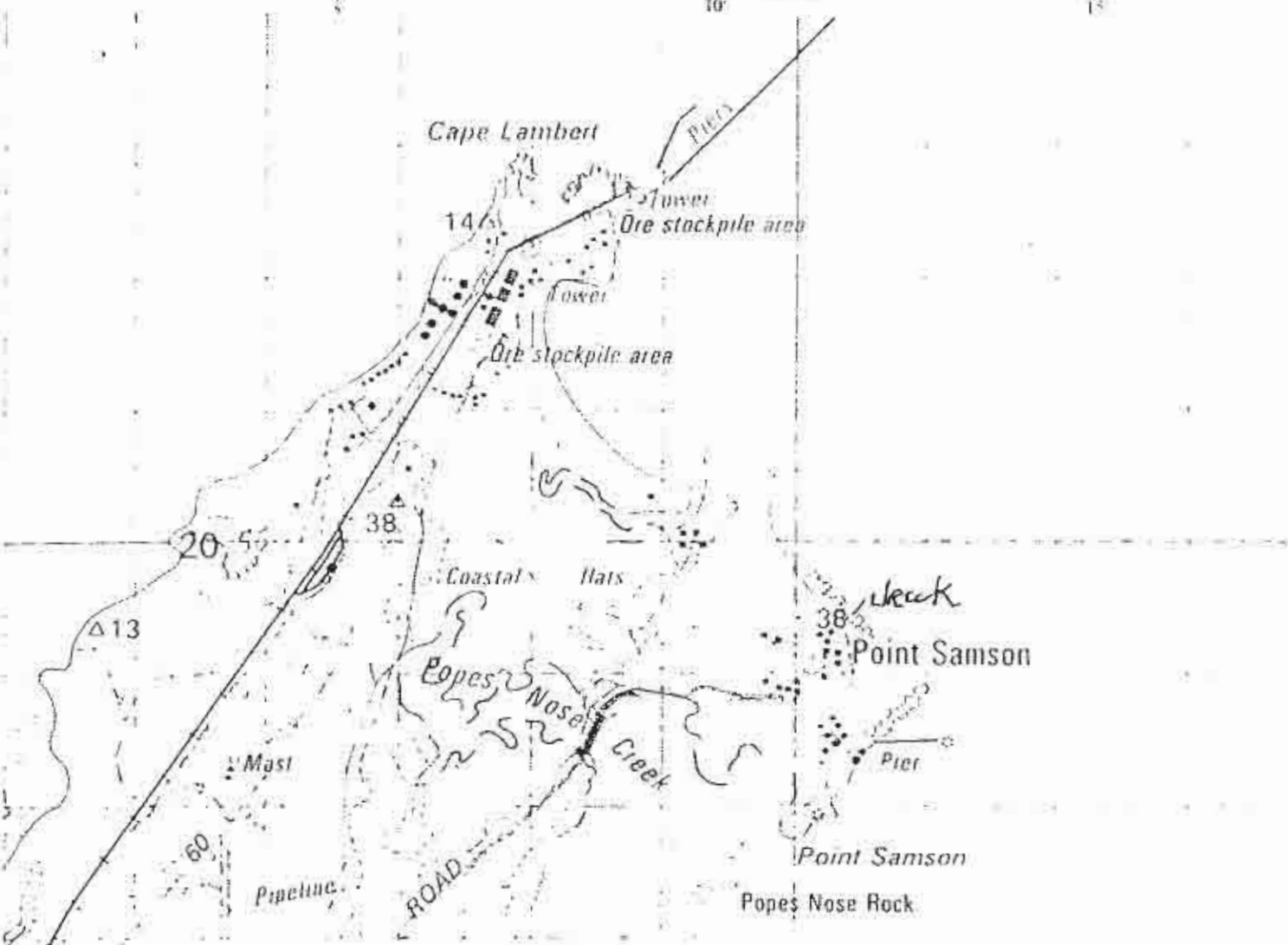
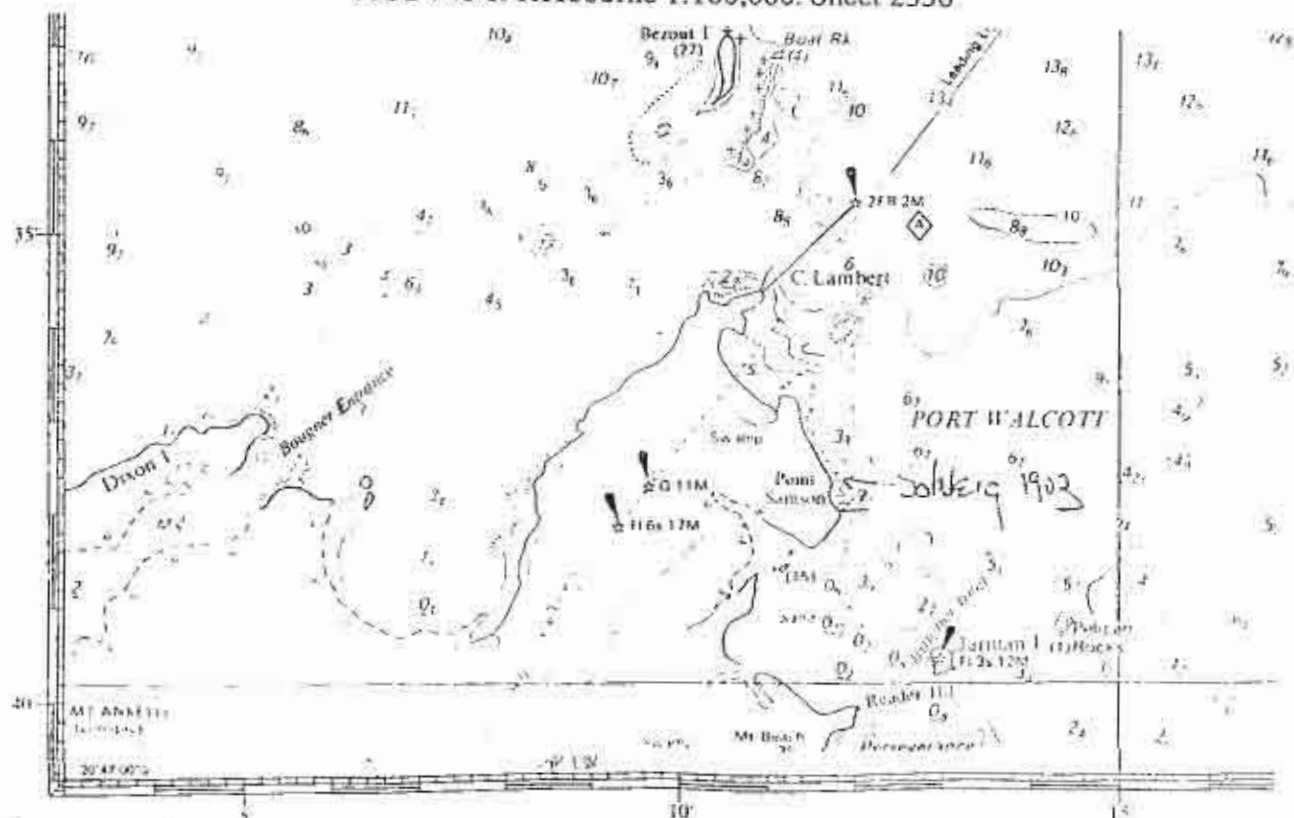
Colonising fauna: Barnacles and sponges appear on the ironwork

Site Condition and Integrity : The wreck is totally broken up. No timber remains. The ironwork is scattered along the reef top and above highwater mark in the rocks on the shore.

Sketch Map showing access to Site & Chart

Excerpts:

AUS 740 & Roebourne 1:100,000. Sheet 2356



Description of Site

The remains consist of a large proportion of the ironwork (frames, windlass, winch, wire rigging, rudder gear, chain, iron fastenings, fittings and fixtures) of a part iron framed wooden hulled sailing vessel which had been fitted with a donkey boiler.

A trail of debris consisting of this material covers an area of drying reeftop 120m by 60m, with an iron crutch, the rudder-head and worm gear, to the seaward or eastern end of the site. This appears to mark the position in which the stern of the wreck disintegrated. A capstan lies to the west of this area, followed by a broken line of chain cable, and other ironwork, including a deck knee. The eastern extremity of the cable finishes at the shoreline and it appears to mark the position of the bow of the wreck. Wreckage also lies in a shallow depression which runs from the bow area parallel to the beach. It also lies up against a low jagged rock platform just above high water mark on the beach parallel to the modern shore line. Some materials have been forced over this barrier in very heavy seas, to lie above it and to remain totally dry under all but times of high tides and very strong seas and swell.

It appears from this evidence that the wreck once lay bows to shore on a NW/SE axis with the stern on the outer edge of the drying reef platform. As it began to break up the vessel was forced beam on to the sea to finish parallel to shore in a shallow depression and against the low jagged rock platform just above high water mark on the beach. In this position the wreck totally broke up depositing the donkey boiler, a capstan, fastenings, fittings and most of the iron knees. Heavy seas eventually deposited sections of the vessel onto the rock platform adjacent the wreck itself.

Management considerations :

(i) Natural Forces : That section of the site on the reef is totally exposed at low water spring tides. The parts further inshore are inundated only at very high tide and those amongst the rock platform inshore are affected only by very high seas.

(ii) Present and future Human forces: The wreck is easily accessible to reefwalkers and beachcombers

(iii) Projected General site Stability

Given the accessibility of the site and the fact that almost all of the loose attractive material has been long-since removed, it is expected that little change will be effected by human visitation in the future. The concreted nature of the materials remaining and their being fixed by corrosion products to the reef and rocks will also ensure that there will be little change in these even with the advent of heavy seas in the near future.

Material Raised:

Nil. The material remaining is concreted to the reef.

Plan of Site

(From a sketch by R. Shaw)

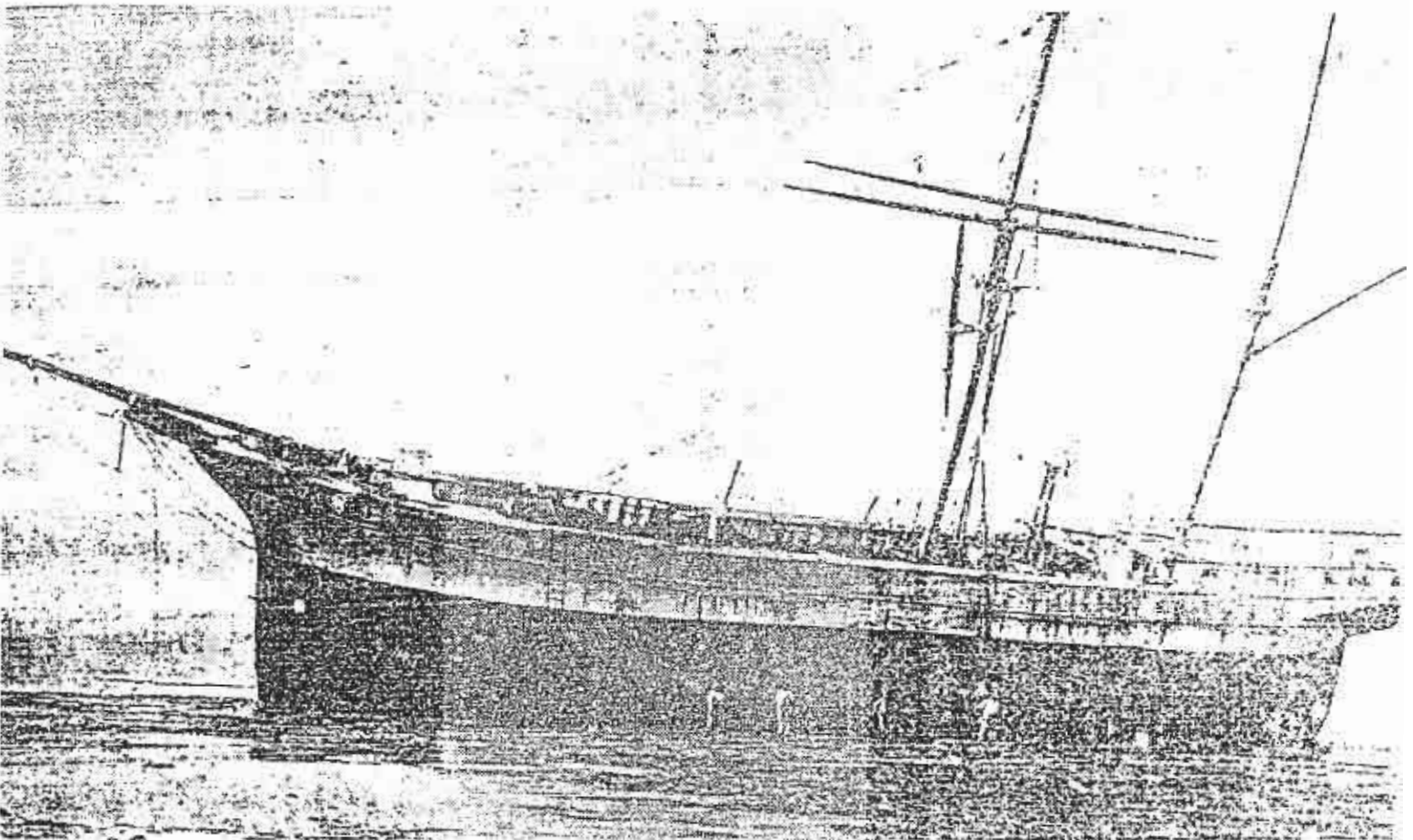


Site Identification Comments

The wreck is beyond doubt that of the Norwegian Barque *Solveig*, shown in the illustration below. A donkey boiler and stack is visible just forward of amidships. Lloyd's Register for 1903-4 shows that the *Solveig* was a 574 tons (net) wooden barque built in Porsgrund Norway in 1877. The vessel measured 158.2 X 33 X 17.7 feet (48.8 X 10 X 5.4m) and it had one deck with two tiers of deck beams. It had been re-sheathed in March 1897, six years before its loss.

The wreck of the *Solveig*. From the Weekend News, October 9 1971.

• TOP: Seen high and dry at low tide—possibly near Port Hedland about 1900—is the barque *Solveig*. It had just unloaded a consignment of timber and horses, and the state of the masts suggests the vessel may have had an encounter with one of the North-West's famous "blows" . . . Sent in by R. Cracknell, WA Trustee Co, Perth.



Wreck- site History

Contemporary Salvage: The photograph of the *Solveig* indicates that its back is broken and from its position it is evident that all useful materials could have been relatively-easily salvaged. The anchors for example are no longer on the site. The fact that ironwork, fastenings, the donkey-boiler and the capstan remains on the site indicates that they were considered of value at the time either due to damage sustained during or after the wrecking and/or to the vessel's age.

Assessment of Site Significance

The site has provided a useful and easily-accessible recreational opportunity for the general public. It also represents an opportunity to study the fastenings and ironwork of a later nineteenth century part-iron framed sailing vessel. Culturally it provides a useful reminder to visitors of the difficulties of trade and navigation on this stretch of coast. It could be used by regional schools as a focus for a variety of historical and social studies.

Management Proposals

The wreck of the *Solveig* cannot be protected under either the 1973 Maritime Archaeology Act (being post 1900) or the 1976 Commonwealth Historic Shipwreck Act (lying above low water). The site is marked with an interpretive plaque and being stable and with little to attract interference, the wreck requires little protective action. If the Western Australian Maritime Archaeology Act is modified to be able to cater for post-1900 sites then the wreck should be protected under the terms of that act as the remains of a vessel engaged in trade on the north west coast and as an educational and recreational site of some significance.

References

Lloyd's Register of British and foreign shipping, 1898, Lloyd's Register of British and foreign shipping, London.

Dampier Area Wrecks file, 4/79, Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime Museum.

Dickson, R., nd., *Marine Accidents and incidents in Western Australian Waters*: compiled from the Register of wrecks and casualties in Western Australia 1897-1942, HMC and the Register of accidents and incidents from 1916-1972, Department of Marine and Harbours. Report: Department of Maritime archaeology, WA Maritime Museum No. 56.

The West Australian . March 1903.
Weekend News, 9/10/1971

Appendices

Notes on the wreck of the *Solveig*:
From the McKenna collection

(Notes as printed in the Press, from the scrapbook of Captain.E.J.Barron., 75 View St, East Fremantle.)

The following is a newspaper article from a news clip undated. from "The West Australian" (although the wreck of a S/v. is described, it is recorded here as a story of interest in that the "Sultan" was the closing chapter of the crews' return to civilisation.)

THE WRECK OF THE "SOLVEIG".

Arrival of the crew at Fremantle.

The story of the wreck.

The Captain and crew of the Barque Solveig, which was wrecked at Cossack last month, arrived at Fremantle by the steamer "Sultan" on Sunday. The crew were accommodated at the Sailors Rest.

Capt.Ostreddt states that the vessel is a total wreck, and that there is no possibility of her being refloated.

The story of the disaster, as detailed to a reporter of "The West Australian" yesterday, may be briefly told. The cargo, which consists of long piles for the jetty at Port Sampson, was about half unloaded. At about 11 o'clock on the Morning of the 17th ult. a fresh breeze was blowing from the North-East. The wind then dropped, and the sea became as smooth as glass, with the rays of the sun striking down with a fierce heat, and reflected with a blistering ~~heat~~ glare from the surface of the water. This lasted till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when without any warning the Hurricane came down on the Barque from the south-east. As darkness came on the heavens seemed to open, and, with thunder and lightning the rain poured down in torrents. It was an anxious night for those on board. Sleep was impossible, and all remained on deck waiting for daylight. The cables stood, however, and daylight broke with no diminution of the fury of the tempest. All that day the storm continued, and in the middle of the night the starboard cable parted. The spare anchor was got out, but shortly afterwards the Barque broke adrift, and was heading straight for shore. As the timber had been discharged from the bow parts, the Solveig, was deep aft, and swung round bow onto the shore. She had been anchored about a mile off, but had dragged in considerably, so that it was not long before she struck the ground heavily, huge seas breaking over her. In the morning it was seen that she was high up on the shore, and with a swiftly receding tide the men were able to dry ground.

The Wrecks Register at Customs House, Perth, as kept in those times shows the following:-

19/2/1903. Capt. R.Ostreddt., Master.

H.Gundersen., Owner.

547 tons ; Crew: 13 ; Cargo; Timber :

Mishap: Parting of cables at Port Sampson. Total Loss.

Value of Cargo: £2,000.