

# 'Butterfly Bay' Site Inspection Report South of Yardie Creek, North West Cape



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Department of **Culture and the Arts**

Cover image: View to the south-west of 'Butterfly Bay' (N. Bigourdan)

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## 1. Technical data

**Site Name:** Butterfly Bay Unidentified

**Date Inspected:** 17 June 2012

### **Personnel:**

Maddy McAllister (Department of Maritime Archaeology, WAM)

Nicolas Bigourdan (Department of Maritime Archaeology, WAM)

Jennifer Rodrigues (Department of Maritime Archaeology, WAM)

Jon Carpenter (Department of Materials Conservation, WAM)

Kalle Kasi (Department of Materials Conservation, WAM)

**Approximate Location:** Approximately 10 km south of Yardie Creek, located in Defence Force Land, North West Cape, Western Australia.

### **GPS Location:**

Datum: WGS 1984

Decimal degrees: 113.765010

- 22.687650

**Chart Number:** Aus 329 North West Cape to Point Cloates

### **Map of Area:**

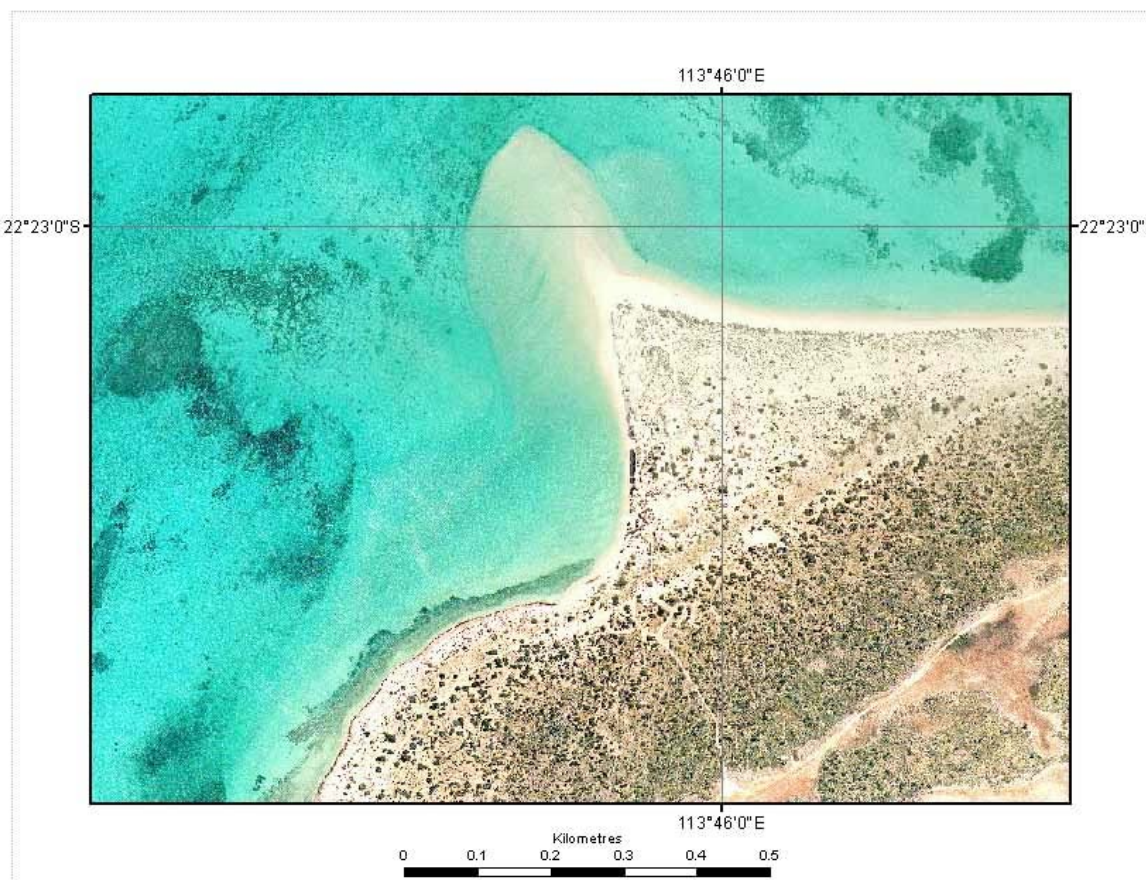


Figure 1. Map of Area (Landgate).

**File Number:** 209/80/2

**TRIM Number:** 2010/0046/SG

**File Name:** Point Cloates Area

**Sailing Directions:** N/A

**Visual Transits:** N/A

**Site Photographs:**

Nicolas Bigourdan and Jon Carpenter

**Site Conditions on Inspection:**

Weather Conditions: sunny with very little wind; approximate temperature was 27°C.

Wind: ENE 6 kn

Water temperature: N/A

Water visibility: 10 m

Seabed coverage: the area that was inspected was formed of a rocky reef ledge consisting of sand and sea-grass patches. The water depth averaged 1 m but, also extended right up to the shore line. The reef is approximately 200 m in length (along the coast) and varies from 5 to 20 m in width.

**Chemical Measurements:** NA

**Biological data:**

Numerous small fish and crustaceans inhabit the reef and sponges have colonised the outer edge. Sea-grass beds cover a large area of the reef; however, they are sparse.

## 2. Background on notification of wreck site

The location of an unidentified wreck site was reported by the Callen Family (Geoff, June and Garrick) in 1994. They supplied a mud-map of the area and location of the wreck site, along with directions to the site via 4WD tracks through the National Park and the Defence Land.

Callens' Directions: (Combination of mud-maps and directions) (See WAM File 209/80/2)

1. Follow the 4WD track 10 km south of Yardie Creek, passing through the National Park boundary 5 km south of Yardie Creek.
2. Just after the national park boundary, there is a right hand turn, heading west. Take this turn and follow it past two diverting tracks, where it turns to the south and continue along for 5 km.
3. Take another right hand track for 200 m. Butterfly Bay is directly at the end of this track, where an old fisherman's camp was.

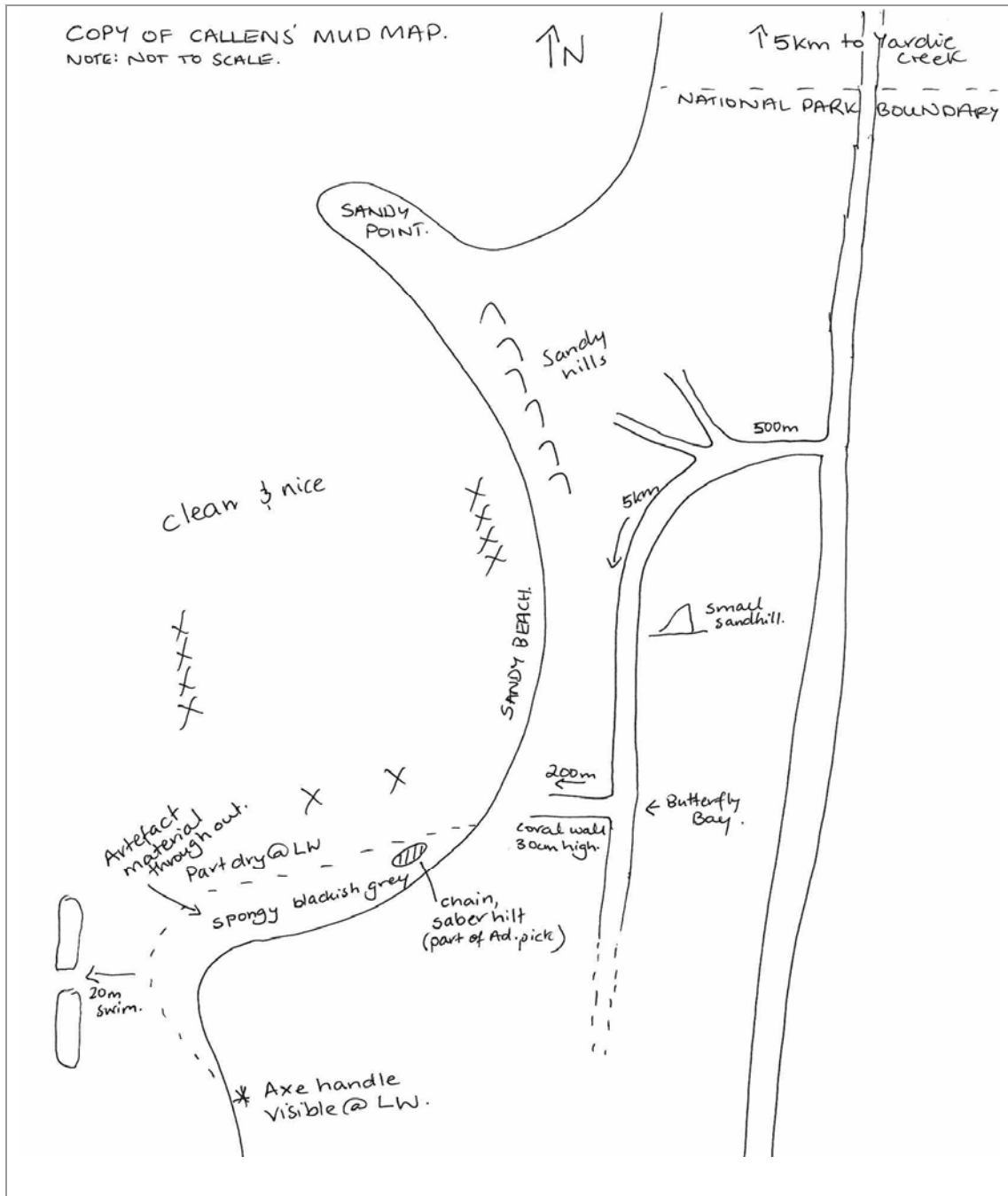


Figure 2. Copy of Callen Family's mud map of 'Butterfly Bay'.

The mud-map and directions were accurate enough to allow the site to be located with ease. Furthermore, the mud-map locating the wreckage was clear and allowed for a thorough and methodical search of the area.

On 1 November 1994, the Callen family also brought in artefact material collected from the site.

Dr Michael McCarthy, inspected the artefact material and concluded that it was from a small 5 to 10-ton coaster of the pre WWII period, earliest dating to the late

nineteenth century. This conclusion was made after inspection of the fastening, rigging and anchor sizes from the range of artefact material (see Appendix 1.).

### 3. The Site Inspection

Due to staffing changes in the position Inspector of Wrecks, the department was not able to visit the site until 2012. On 17 June 2012, a team of both archaeologists and conservators journeyed to the site during a fieldwork trip to the Point Cloates area. On reaching the site, two elements were noticeable. One, there was a square structure along the northern side of the bay in the intertidal zone; and, two, there was a dark structure in the middle of the bay, 40 m away from the shore in an otherwise sand covered bay.



Figure 2. View north, showing unidentified structure and snorkeller returning from inspecting dark structure (J. Carpenter).

The square structure was inspected and recorded. It was buried quite deeply into the sand and was composed of timber posts (protruding above the ground to a maximum of 0.5 m) linked by corrugated iron fastened to the outside (see Appendix 2). Additionally, two longitudinal pieces of timber were visible 33.2 m south of the square structure in the intertidal zone. Large cattle bones were also observed along the shore line both underwater and within the intertidal zone



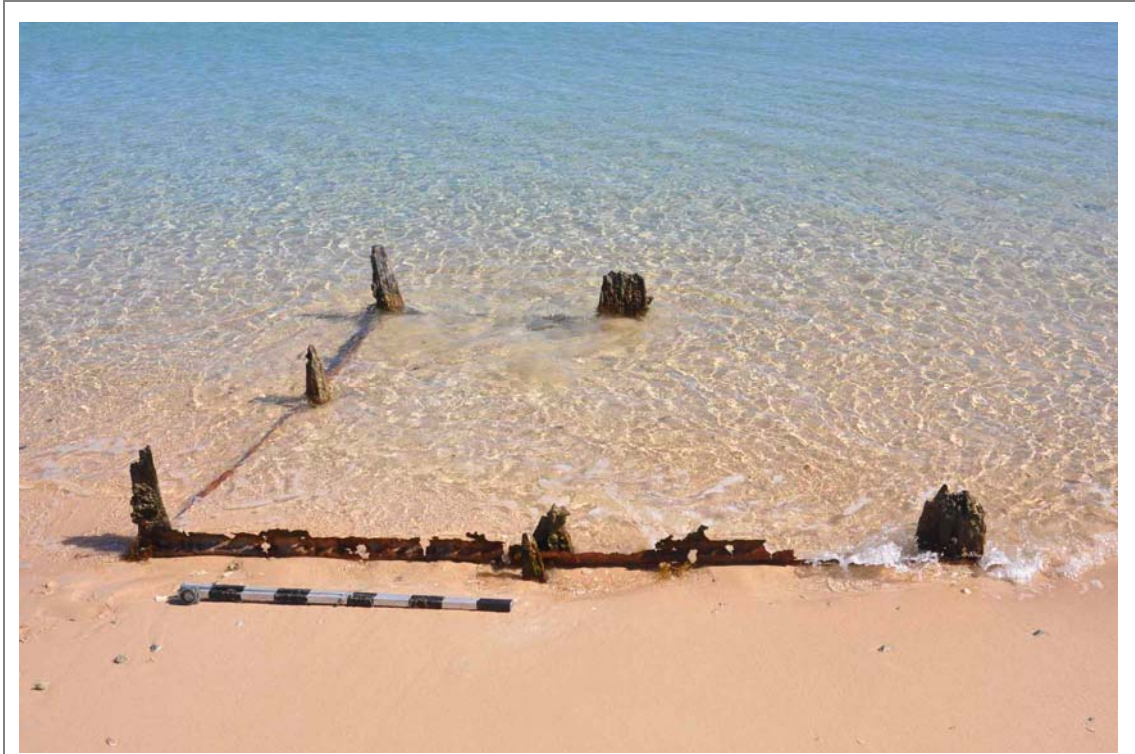


Figure 3. Unidentified timber and corrugated iron structure (N. Bigourdan).

The dark structure off the shore was also inspected and recorded. It appeared to be a concrete boat mooring.

The reef area was indicated to have material spread throughout, including part of an admiralty pick anchor and chain. The search was conducted by three staff members, in a snorkel line survey (see Appendix 3). Only one large bolt was located at the north-east end of the reef (see Figure 5).



Figure 4. View south-west, showing reef area. (J. Carpenter).



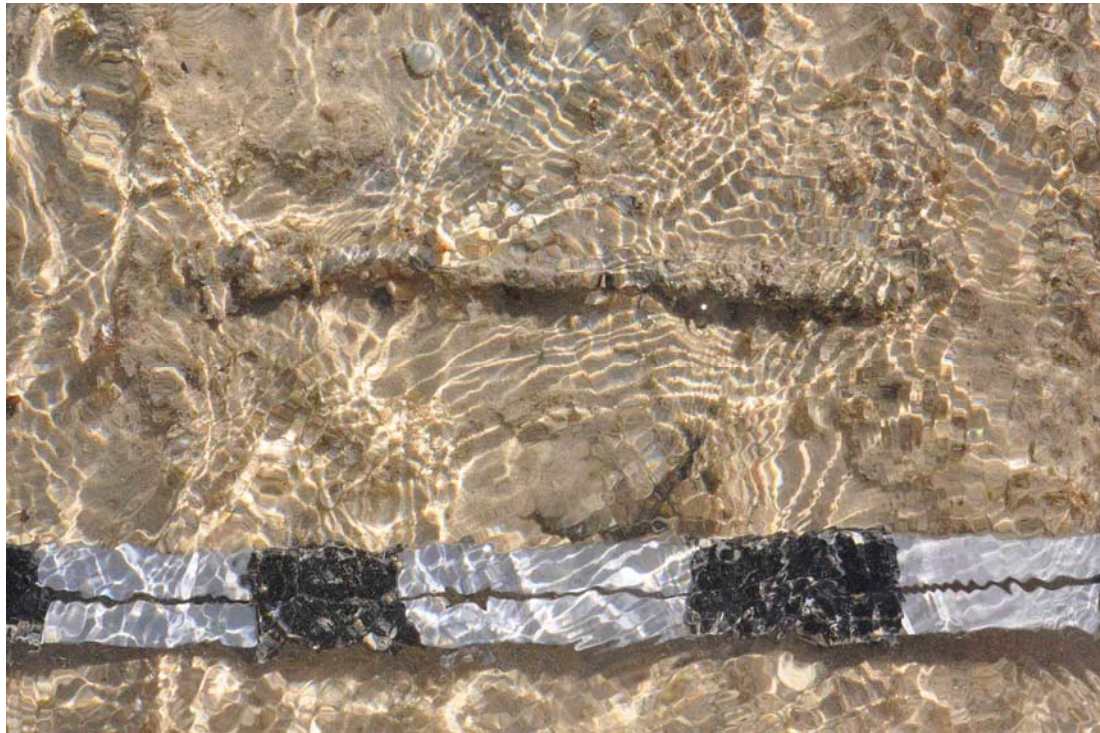


Figure 5. Concreted bolt, *in situ* at north-east end of reef (N. Bigourdan).

A small amount of fastenings were found together in a small depression by a rocky outcrop 5 m away from the shore line. These fastenings were photographed (see Figure 6), and appeared to have been collected and placed there. Additionally, thin metal pegs were scattered along this rocky outcrop, although they appear to be related to modern camping material.



Figure 6. Collection of fastenings on rocky outcrop (J. Carpenter).



A survey of the area around the south-west point, in the next bay, was also conducted in order to locate additional artefact material, possibly an axe handle, also reported by the Callen family. Two pieces of timber were located and could be related to a wreck site (see Figures 7 and 8), one may be the axe handle timber.



Figure 7. Timber located in the next bay (J. Carpenter).



Figure 8. Larger timber located in next bay (J. Carpenter).

A GPS position of the location of the unidentified timber structure in 'Butterfly Bay' was reported to Phil Kendrick of Ningaloo Station, being knowledgeable about this area, and whom has been a valuable source of information in the past. Phil did not know about or recognise the structure, but suggested that these elements may have washed in from Norwegian Bay Whaling Station.

#### 4. Conclusion

The inspection concluded that there is no, or very little, artefact material remaining from any wreck that may have been in Butterfly Bay in the past. It was noted that the Callens' mud-map of the reef area, where the material was located indicated that the sea floor was 'spongy-grey'. It is possible the reef was once covered in sea-grass and sand that had built up. This indicates that this area of the bay has undergone significant changes in the composition of the sea floor, some time between 1994 and 2012.

The close proximity of the fisherman's camp and car parking, combined with the presence of a mooring structure indicate that the area is visited by the public. It may be possible that artefact materials have therefore been removed.

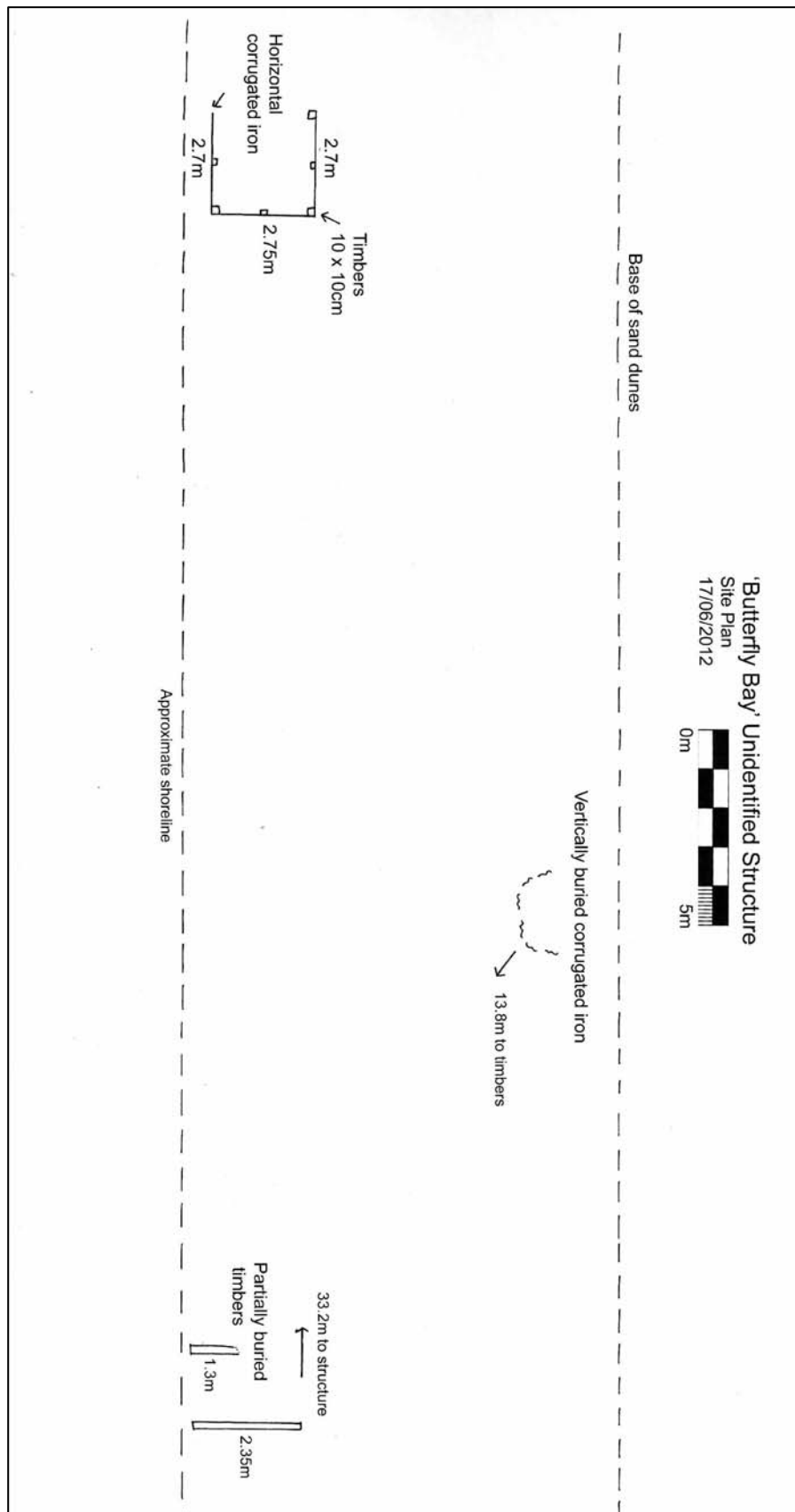
In conclusion, there were only minimal indications of a wreck site in the area, and hence no management is required for this site, nor any assessment of significance at this stage, although the identification of the material of the large bolt could yield some additional information.

5. Appendix 1.

Letter from Dr Michael McCarthy to the Callen Family regarding the artefacts they submitted to the Museum.



6. Appendix 2. Site plan of the unidentified structure at 'Butterfly Bay'.





7. Appendix 3. Location of structures and survey area

