

Castletown Jetty Esperance

Maritime Heritage Site Inspection Report

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

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

Background

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

Site Name(s): Castletown Jetty

Also known as Newtown Jetty

File Name: Jetties and Port Related Structures

File No: MA 2.93

File Name: Heritage Council of WA

File No: MA 13.93

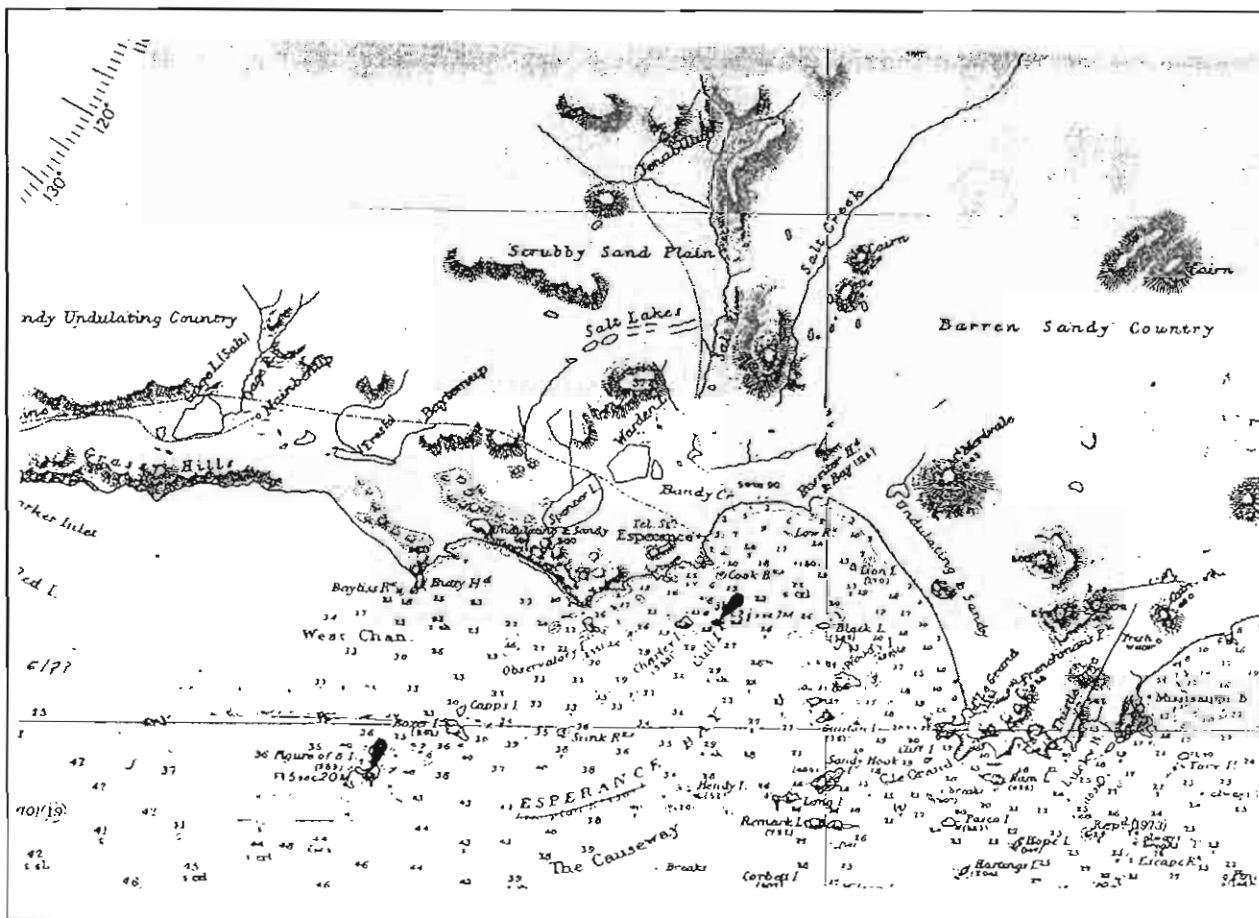


Figure 1. Chart Excerpt: BA 1059, Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight. 1881; 1897; 1901, 1: 610 000.

Technical Data

Date of Inspection: 1 April 1994

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

Approximate Location: The jetty is situated in Esperance Bay, at the junction of Chaplin Street and Castletown Quays in Castletown.

Charts: BA 1059, *Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight*. 1881; 1897; 1901. 1: 610 000
BA 2973, *Esperance Bay Anchorage*, 1: 24,240. 1897.
AUS 119, *Approaches to Esperance*, 1: 75 000, 1974.

Maps: *Esperance*, SI 51-6, 1: 250 00
Esperance, 3230, 1: 1000 000

Historic Plans: *Plan of Esperance Town-site*, public plan, 1: 1584 (1" to 2 ch), 1893.
c No. 504 226.
Plan of Esperance Town-site, public plan, 1: 1584 (1" to 2 ch), 1896. c No. 504 227.
Plan of Esperance Locality, public plan, 1: 15840 (1" to 20 ch), canc. 1912.
c No. 002 960.
Plan of Esperance Locality, public plan, 1: 31680 (1" to 40 ch), 1912.
c No. 504 228.

Latitude: 33°52' S **Longitude:** 121° 53' E

Sailing Directions: Sail west, parallel to the coast for approx. 1 km from the Bandy Creek Harbour boat ramp.

Site Photographs: (Held in File No. MA 2.93 awaiting accessioning)

B/W: U/W Neg. No. 12-36 (D. Garratt), 5 photos, no negs. (D. Cumming)

Colour:

Slides:

Video:

Historic: Castletown Jetty ruins c1930s. (Esperance Municipal Museum).

Site Conditions on Inspection:

Swell: Nil

Visibility: 8 m

Current: Nil

Sea-bed coverage: Sandy seabed with patches of *Posidonia* seagrass.

Chemical Measurements:

Temperature:

Salinity: Ditto

pH: Ditto

Dissolved O₂: Ditto

Corrosion Potentials: NA

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

Biological Data:

Colonising fauna and flora: The piles have been colonised with several species of seaweed and sponges that will be identified if further research is undertaken.

Site Condition and Integrity: There is substantial remains of the jetty structure still in place. The general shape and dimensions of the structure is clearly evident from the shore. The remains of the approach embankment for the jetty abutment has been obliterated by the road verge and parking bays.

Management Considerations

- (i) Natural forces: The jetty piles and associated artefacts are not in any immediate danger from natural forces as the jetty is situated within the protected waters of Esperance Bay.
- (ii) Present and future human forces: Apart from the ever-present risk of vandalism, there is currently no apparent threat from human forces. The area is designated for passive recreational activities only.
- (iii) Projected general site stability: The jetty remains do not appear to be in any immediate danger from either environmental or human forces.

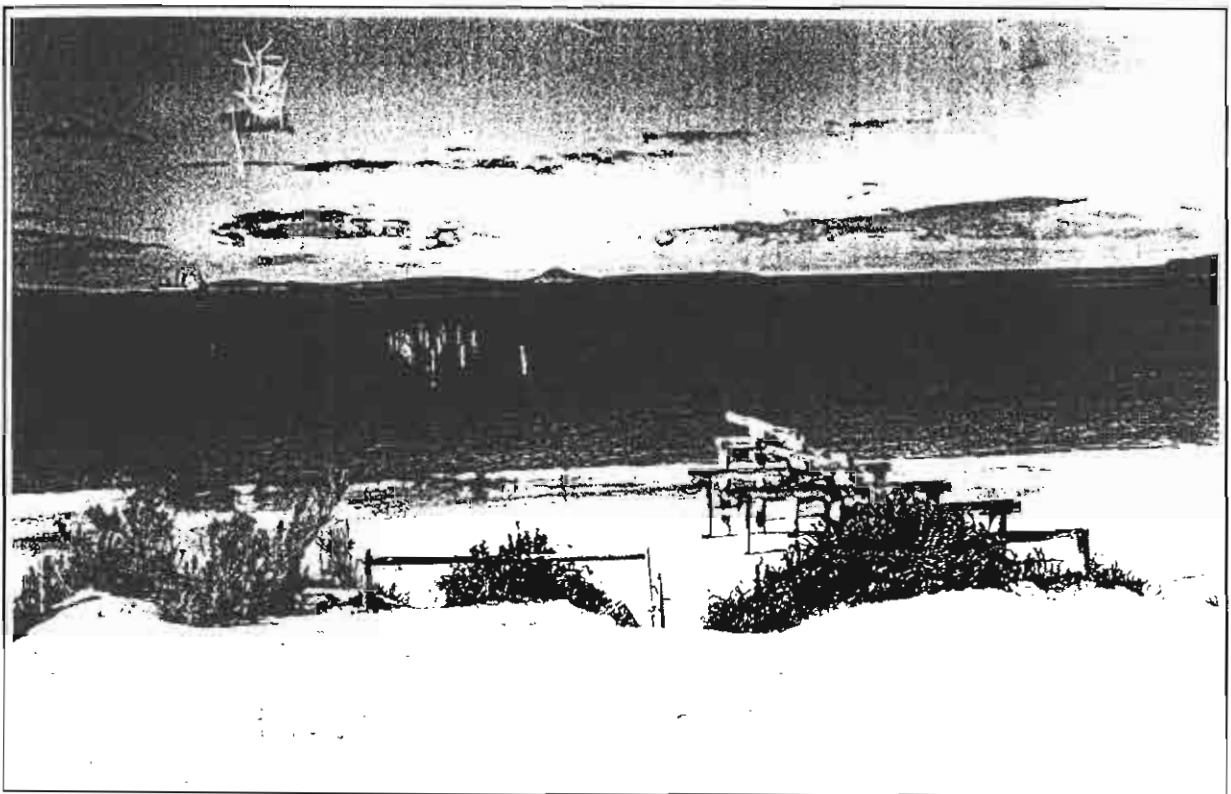


Figure 4. Castletown Jetty. (D. Cumming, 1994)

Description of Site

Castletown Jetty extends into Esperance Bay in a southerly direction to a depth of 7 metres (23 feet) at low tide. Originally the jetty was an extension of Chaplin Street. The first section of the jetty from the road to about midway down the beach has gone, including the timbers from the abutment, which were removed in 1948. However, with approximately two thirds of the jetty piles still in place, the overall dimensions of the structure can still be determined from shore. Sections of cross-members are still in place on six spans of piling. Apart from collapsed jetty timbers, there is no evidence of archaeological material on the seabed. It is possible that due to the mobility of the sand on the site, artefacts may be buried.

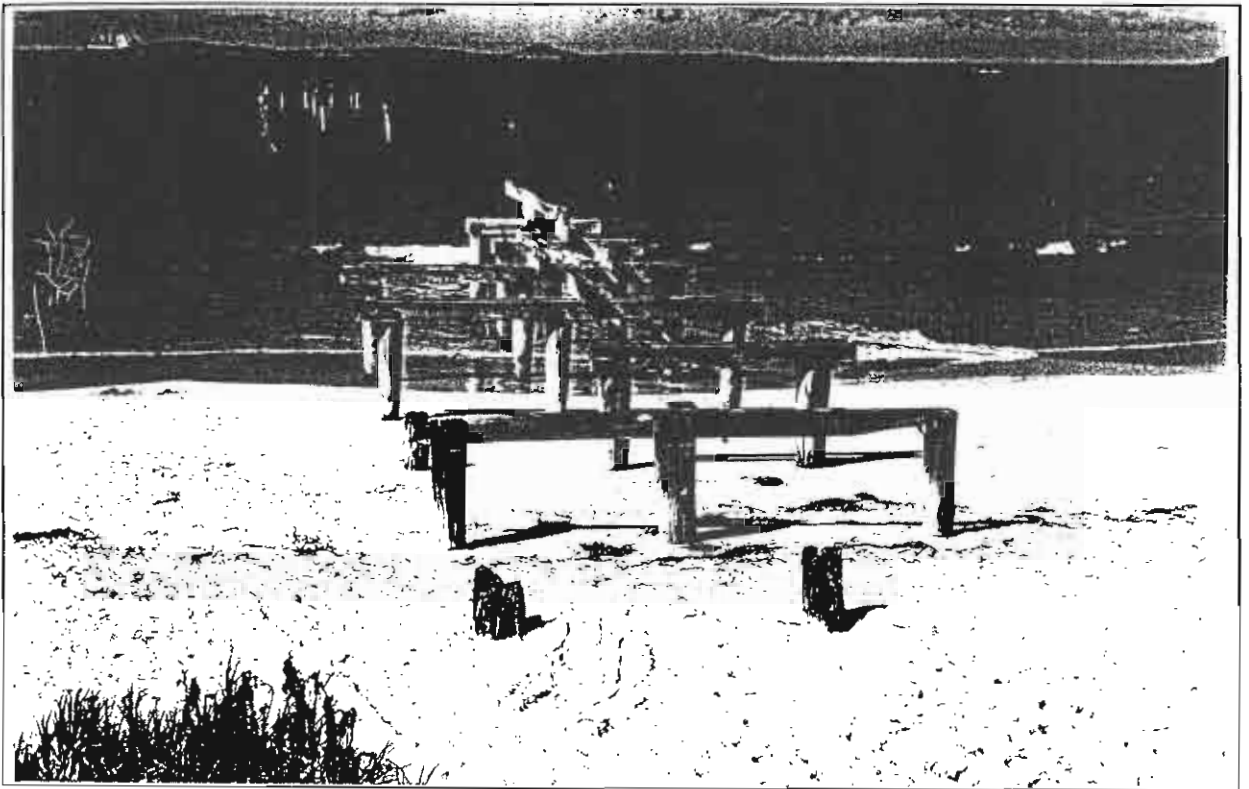


Figure 5. Castletown Jetty. (D. Cumming, 1994)



Figure 6. Castletown Jetty, showing the distance between the piles. (WA Maritime Museum)



Figure 7. Castletown Jetty. (WA Maritime Museum)

Site Identification Comments (From archival notes compiled by the Esperance Museum)

The Esperance Bay Company, in association with the Hampton Plains Company, had been granted a concession of land by the Government to establish a railway between Esperance and Coolgardie.

The Castletown Jetty was built in the 1890s by the Esperance Bay Company for the purpose of landing materials for the construction of a Town Hall and houses in the new community of Castletown and was connected to Esperance by a railway. The jetty was sold to Mr Brian Fullerton c1948. He dismantled the jetty and the timbers were milled and sold. The land was eventually disposed of in a series of sales in the 1950s.

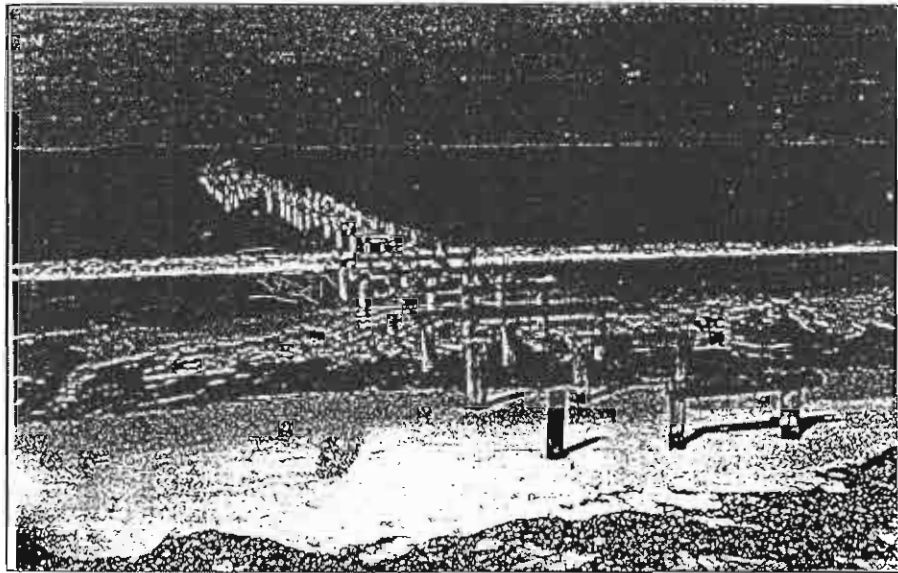


Figure 8. Castletown Jetty c 1960. (Esperance Municipal Museum)

Assessment of Site Significance

- (i) Historical: The Castletown Jetty is one of the few remaining privately-owned jetties on the Western Australian coast. It is representative of the entrepreneurial spirit that flourished during the heyday of the Kalgoorlie/Coolgardie gold rush. The jetty played a significant role in the building of the township and the development of the community and served as 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 in the 1890s. (See also Hamelin Bay Jetty).
- (iii) Scientific: Information on corrosion rates can be gained from the iron artefacts on the site.
- (iv) Educational: The heritage remains have the potential of being a focus for educational activity if properly marked and documented.
- (v) Recreational: The jetty site has exceptional recreational potential. It is a readily accessible and safe environment and the clarity and depth of the water on the site is ideal for snorkelling. There is abundant marine life in and around the jetty piles to make the site interesting for divers.
- (vi) Cultural: There is undoubted cultural significance in the remains of the jetty. It represented a focal point for commerce for the early residents of Castletown and was the entrepot for the goldfields of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. The site is now an area for recreational activities.
- (vii) Archaeological: The site has the potential to be included in a comparative study of jetty sites, particularly with regard to deposition and distribution patterns along jetties.
- (viii) Rarity: One of only four jetties of this type in Western Australia that has retained substantial structural integrity.
- (ix) Representativeness: The structure is representative of the style of jetty construction in the 1890s. (See also Hamelin Bay Jetty).

Recommendations

The options are:

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

Further Comments

Regardless of the outcome of the above, it is recommended that the Castletown Jetty 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 Esperance should be highlighted in the displays at the Esperance Municipal Museum.

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