

Historic areas of the Houtman Abrolhos

Code of Conduct recommendations for visitors to the Islands.

Prepared for the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council

by

Myra Stanbury

Curator

*Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
FREMANTLE WA 6160*

**Report - Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian
Maritime Museum, No. 44
April 1991**

| | |
|--|----|
| CONTENTS..... | i |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Areas of historic significance..... | 1 |
| Restrictions applying to areas of historic significance in the Houtman Abrolhos..... | 1 |
| HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS..... | 1 |
| HISTORIC LAND SITES..... | 2 |
| Maritime archaeological sites..... | 2 |
| Code of conduct recommendations..... | 3 |
| Heritage trails..... | 5 |
| SHIPWRECK SITES..... | 6 |
| Dutch shipwrecks..... | 6 |
| BATAVIA 1629 | 5 |
| WRECK SITE..... | 5 |
| LAND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE <i>BATAVIA</i> SURVIVORS..... | 7 |
| SITE 1. Beacon Island: <i>Batavia</i> 's Graveyard..... | 7 |
| SITE 2. Long Island: Seals Island..... | 8 |
| SITE 3. Traitors Island..... | 9 |
| SITE 4. West Wallabi Island: Slaughter Point..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.1. Weibbe Hayes' encampment..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.1.1 Limestone structure 1..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.1.2 Fireplaces..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.1.3 Middens..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.1.4 Wells..... | 10 |
| SITE 4.2 Limestone structure 2..... | 11 |
| SITE 5. East Wallabi: High Island..... | 12 |
| ZEEWIJK 1727 | 13 |
| WRECK SITE..... | 13 |
| LAND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE <i>ZEEWIK</i> SURVIVORS..... | 15 |
| SITE 6. Gun Island..... | 15 |
| SITE 6.1 Mutton Bird Hill to Lunch Point..... | 15 |
| SITE 6.2 Lunch Point to Point Happy..... | 15 |
| SITE 6.3 Mutton Bird Hill to Lunch Point..... | 15 |
| SITE 6.4 Central area of island..... | 15 |
| SITE 6.5 Remainder of island..... | 15 |
| SITE 7. Middle Island: Wells used by <i>Zeewijk</i> survivors and sailmaker's scissors reported to be found by <i>Zeewijk</i> survivors..... | 17 |
| SITE 8. Pelsaert Island..... | 18 |
| SITE 8.1 Sawn-off mangrove tree stumps..... | 18 |
| SITE 8.2 Artefact deposit..... | 18 |
| SITE 8.3 Wreckage deposit..... | 18 |
| SITE 9. Murray Island: Well used by <i>Zeewijk</i> survivors..... | 20 |
| Post-European settlement shipwrecks | 21 |
| LAND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH POST-EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT | |
| SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS..... | 23 |
| SITE 10. Pelsaert Island Shipwreck survivors' encampment <i>Marten</i> (1878) and <i>Ben Ledi</i> (1879)..... | 23 |
| SITE 11. Pelsaert Island Temporary encampment site of survivors from the <i>Ocean Queen</i> | 24 |
| SITE 12. Middle Island..... | 25 |
| SITE 12.1. Shipwreck survivors' refuge and burial site - <i>Venus</i> 1851..... | 25 |
| SITE 12.2 Non-European burial..... | 26 |
| SITE 12.3 Stone structures..... | 26 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 28 |
| Do's and don'ts for Code of Conduct for visitors to the Houtman Abrolhos in respect to Historic Areas: the 'look but don't touch' approach..... | 28 |
| References | 30 |
| APPENDIX 1 | 31 |
| Historic areas not currently protected by legislation | 31 |
| LAND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH MARITIME INDUSTRY | 31 |
| Guano and phosphate mining..... | 31 |
| SITE 14. Pelsaert Island | |
| 19th and 20th century guano mining settlement and activity sites..... | 31 |
| SITE 14.1 Occupation or settlement site..... | 31 |
| SITE 14.2 Northern guano field..... | 31 |
| SITE 14.3 Southern guano field..... | 31 |
| SITE 14.4 Guano loading bay and chute..... | 31 |
| SITE 14.5 Phosphate loading wharf and causeway - 20th century..... | 32 |
| SITE 14.6 North jetty (settlement area) - 19th century..... | 32 |
| SITE 14.7 Centre jetty (settlement area) - 20th century..... | 32 |
| SITE 14.8 Limestone causeway (rock groyne)..... | 32 |
| SITE 14.9 Quarry (south of settlement area) - 20th century..... | 32 |
| SITE 14.10 Wooden punt or lighter (settlement area beach) - 20th century..... | 32 |
| SITE 15. Sweet Island | 33 |
| SITE 15.1 Encampment site..... | 33 |
| SITE 15.2 Transportation facilities..... | 33 |
| SITE 15.3 Causeway and jetty..... | 33 |
| SITE 15.4 Manmade rock walls..... | 33 |
| SITE 16. Number One Island | 34 |
| SITE 17. Number Three Island | 34 |
| SITE 18. Number Eight Island | 34 |
| SITE 19. Davis Island | 34 |
| SITE 20. Gun Island | 35 |
| SITE 20.1 Occupation site..... | 35 |
| SITE 20.2 Quarry..... | 35 |
| SITE 20.3 Tramline foundations..... | 35 |
| SITE 20.4 Rock piles..... | 35 |
| SITE 20.5 Causeway and jetty..... | 35 |
| SITE 21. West Wallabi Island | 36 |
| SITES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORIC EVENTS | 36 |
| SITE 22. East Wallabi Island | 36 |

Introduction

In 1988, the Abrolhos Islands Task Force, (hereafter referred to as AITF), produced a planning strategy for a future Government Policy on the Abrolhos Islands (AITF, 1988). A number of proposals were included in the 'key strategy', among them 'Protection of areas of historic significance, including those sites associated with the *Batavia* and *Zeewijk* wrecks'. Section 3.2.3. of the document (AITF, 1988:22) identifies the general localities of areas of historic significance, outlining some general issues and strategies.

The Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council has agreed to issue a Code of Conduct for visitors to the Islands which will include a list of 'Do's and Don'ts' and also show the 'no go' areas. This report has been prepared in compliance with their request

- for advice on any restrictions that apply to the historic areas of the Houtman Abrolhos;
- for identification of historic areas; and
- for any restrictions applying within those areas to be clearly spelt out.

Areas of historic significance

Areas of historic significance in the Houtman Abrolhos fall into the following categories:

- shipwreck sites - which may be totally and/or partially submerged;
- land sites; and
- jetties and/or causeways - which may be totally and/or partially submerged.

Visitors to the Houtman Abrolhos need to be informed of the location of historic sites/areas and, most importantly, of their status in respect to existing legislation. Many will already be familiar with the legislative protection afforded to historic shipwrecks but may not know that this legislation also includes sites on land which are associated with historic shipwrecks.

The public, therefore, need to be clearly informed of the distinction between

- areas which are gazetted as '**maritime archaeological sites**' under the State *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973*; and
- areas which are considered to be historically significant but are not yet specifically protected under any existing legislation.

A report prepared by Green and Stanbury (1988) entitled *Report and recommendations on archaeological land sites in the Houtman Abrolhos*, sought to identify the historic land sites in these two categories and outline their significance as individual and/or group entities.

It was proposed in the recommendations

- that areas not afforded protection under the *Maritime Archaeology Act* may be suitably protected under the *Heritage Act 1991*, which was then pending in State Parliament.

While the Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime Museum, has undertaken the archaeological survey and historical investigation of various historic land and jetty sites in the Wallabi Group and the Pelsaert Group, (primarily those associated with the *Batavia* and *Zeewijk* survivors and 19th and 20th century guano mining operations), definitive recommendations concerning the code of conduct of visitors to historic areas on land are necessarily confined in this report to those areas which fall within the legal framework of the *Maritime Archaeology Act* and the delegated responsibility of the Director, Western Australian Museum.

Restrictions applying to areas of historic significance in the Houtman Abrolhos

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS

The islands of the Houtman Abrolhos are situated in State waters as defined by the baselines in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. S 29, 9 February 1983*. They therefore fall within the jurisdiction of Western Australian legislation.

With respect to the protection of historic shipwrecks in the Houtman Abrolhos this presents a discrepancy which needs to be clarified on advice from the Crown Law department and the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories (DASETT).

Several shipwrecks in the Houtman Abrolhos are gazetted Historic Shipwrecks under the **Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976**.

These are:

- *Batavia* (1629)
- *Zeewijk* (1727)
[See also Schedule 1 'Agreement between the Netherlands and Australia concerning old Dutch shipwrecks' and Schedule 2 'Dutch shipwrecks off the coast of Western Australia'.]
- *Ocean Queen* (1842)
- *Hadda* (1877)
- *Ben Ledi* (1879)
- *Marten* (1879)
- *Windsor* (1908)

Under the terms of the **State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973**, an 'historic ship' is deemed to be 'any ship that before the year 1900 was lost, wrecked or abandoned, or was stranded, on or off the coast of Western Australia'. Hence, of the above, all except the Windsor, are also assured protection under the State Act. Other vessels protected under the State Act are listed in Table 1 in the section on post-European settlement shipwrecks.

The aims of the Acts are complementary and primarily designed to prevent alteration, destruction, damage, looting and theft. They do not aim to prevent divers from using wreck sites for recreation. Rather, divers are encouraged to visit and enjoy and learn from wreck sites. The sites are an important element of our maritime heritage, and the laws are there so that everyone may share this heritage with equal opportunity.

The main requirements placed on divers are that they should:

- provide information on any new find and help the delegated authority (Director, Western Australian Museum) in following up the matter;
- provide information on the whereabouts of relics or articles from a declared shipwreck if they or their present whereabouts have not been notified previously;
- keep any relics legally held (that is, with the written permission of the relevant delegated authority) in a manner consistent with the conditions of the permit; and
- co-operate with an inspector authorised to carry out enquiries and site supervision under the Acts.

Divers must **not**:

- remove relics or articles, interfere with or damage declared historic wreck sites or sites not yet assessed; or
- enter without a permit a declared prohibited zone round a wreck site.

Currently, no historic shipwrecks in the Abrolhos region have been gazetted with a declared prohibited zone round the wreck site (requiring a permit to enter the zone). Divers may therefore visit the wreck sites for recreational purposes but must abide by the laws embodied in the Acts. Declared wrecks and relics are there to be used and enjoyed by as many people as possible, provided they do not interfere with them unless they have been authorised to do so. It is essentially a '**look but do not touch**' approach.

HISTORIC LAND SITES

Maritime archaeological sites

Under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973*, Section 4, a **maritime archaeological site** - other than the remains of a historic ship (Section 4. 1. a.) - is defined as follows:

- 4. (1) (b) any area in which any relic is known to be located, or where in the opinion of the Director unrecovered relics associated with a ship which may have been a historic ship are likely to be located; and
- 4. (1) (c) any structure, camp-site, fortification or other location of historic interest that, in the opinion of the Director, is associated with, and was occupied or used by, persons presumed to have been in a historic ship.

The Act further states that:

- 4. (2) A maritime archaeological site may be situated below low water mark, on or between the tide marks, or on land, or partly on one place and partly in another.

Provisions under the Act allow for a **'protected zone'** to be established round a maritime archaeological site:

- 9. (1) For the purpose of preventing the plunder, damage or disturbance of maritime archaeological sites, and of the ships, relics, or things vested in the Museum on behalf of the Crown, the Governor may, by an instrument published in the *Gazette*, declare that an area is a maritime archaeological site and that a specified area surrounding that site is a protected zone, and that zone may be declared to include the waters lying above and the land or bed of the sea below it.
- 9. (4) The declaration of a protected zone shall specify the boundaries of that zone in sufficient detail to enable them to be established but it shall not be necessary that the boundaries are surveyed or demarcated, and notwithstanding that the boundaries are not demarcated a person may be convicted of an offence against this Act in relation to a protected zone where the court is satisfied that the location of that zone could have been established by reference to land marks, leading marks, a buoy or other position marker specified in the declaration, but it shall be a defence to show that the location could not have been so established.

Sites currently designated as **maritime archaeological sites** in the Houtman Abrolhos include:

- sites associated with the survivors of the Dutch shipwrecks *Batavia* and *Zeewijk*; and
- sites associated with the survivors of post-European settlement shipwrecks.

Again, the aim of the Act is to prevent unlawful alteration, destruction, damage, looting and theft; and to promote cooperation with any person authorised to inspect or deal with the site. [See Appendix 1 for areas of historic significance not covered by the *Maritime Archaeology Act*.]

Code of conduct recommendations

The development of a code of conduct for historic areas in the Houtman Abrolhos needs to take into account

- the significance of individual or groups of associated historic sites;
- recommendations relating to permitted access to wreck sites and land sites;
- recommendations pertaining to specific restrictions related to wreck sites and land sites;
- the penalties associated with sites protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* and the *Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*;
- recommendations concerning public notification of site locations, prohibitions, availability of information etc.;
- recommendations concerning safety of access to sites;
- general behaviour - e.g. littering sites etc.

Recommendations submitted in this report are presented in the context of each individual site or complex of sites as a basis for the formulation of a code of conduct. They are intended to take into account the various individuals and/or groups who may visit the islands for purposes of the fishing industry, conservation of fauna and flora, tourism and recreation, scientific and /or other research purposes. A summary of recommended 'Do's and Don'ts' concludes the report.

Heritage trails

The development of underwater 'Wreck Trails' and 'Heritage Trails' on land (e.g. the Rottneest Wreck Trail, Fremantle Convict and Old Foreshore Trails) has provided an excellent means of presenting historical information to the public. Similar heritage trails are in the process of being developed for several places in the south-west of Western Australia e.g. Mandurah, Hamelin Bay and Bunbury, and in the eastern States. In many instances, the initiative for the trails has come from the local community who, with professional support, have then assisted in their establishment and maintenance, acting as volunteer guides and so on.

This type of development is regarded as an appropriate way of both engendering public awareness and appreciation of heritage sites, and enlisting community help in the long-term management and protection of the sites. [In response to public interest, formal proposals for a wreck trail in the Houtman Abrolhos were made by the Department of Maritime Archaeology in 1986 but the results of deliberations by the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Committee are still awaited.]

The following preliminary format for the development of on-site informative plaques for historical sites in the Houtman Abrolhos is presented with the site data as an example of the type of information which the public may need to know [at this stage the text is in draft form only]. A series of pamphlets or booklets describing the sites in greater depth would serve as a valuable accompaniment to the on-site plaques.

| Historic Site [Name of site] | |
|--|-----------|
| SIGNIFICANCE | |
| HISTORY | |
| DISCOVERY | |
| THE LAW This site is protected under the as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities. | |
| INFORMATION For further information contact: Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160 Ph: 09 335 8211 | SITE PLAN |

SHIPWRECK SITES

Dutch shipwrecks

BATAVIA 1629

WRECK SITE

The *Batavia* is a gazetted historic shipwreck protected under the **Commonwealth *Historic Shipwreck Act 1976***.

Historic Site

Batavia 1629

Dutch East Indiaman. Wrecked 1629. Declared historic 15.12.76. 28°29' S 113° 49' E, Aus 332. Morning Reef, Wallabi Group, Houtman Abrolhos. Built 1628 at Amsterdam, this Retourschip of about 600 tons was one of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) fleet which linked Texel in Holland via the Cape of Good Hope with Batavia in the Dutch East Indies; with 316 passengers, crew and soldiers on board she ran aground on Morning Reef on 4 June 1629, an event which led to a mutiny, massacre and retribution which cost a total of 125 lives.

This site is protected under the **Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*** as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group, Morning Reef.

MAP: Aus 332, 28°29' S 113° 49' E.

The main *Batavia* wreck deposit lies on the seaward side of Morning Reef in a heavy swell zone but scatters of material extend across tracts of the inside reef area. The extent of the underwater 'site' is defined as the main wreck site and the inside reef lagoon area (see Abrolhos Islands Task Force, 1988: Fig. 4 (b)).

Recommendations

- that access is permitted to this site, although it is an offence for anyone to 'damage, disturb or interfere with the wreck, relics or remains' of this historic shipwreck; [The penalties may include fines up to \$5000, jail up to 5 years and confiscation of equipment. The penalties are severe to try to help preserve Historic Shipwrecks.]
- that individual groups and/or leaders of organised dive charters intending to dive on the site should notify either:
 - Head Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime Museum, Cliff St, Fremantle, WA 6160. Ph: 09 335 8211;
 - or
 - Branch Curator, Geraldton Maritime Museum, Marine Terrace, Geraldton. Ph: 099 215 158
- that persons intending to dive on the site should familiarise themselves with the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* [pamphlets available from Historic Shipwrecks Officer, Heritage Branch, Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, GPO Box 1252 Canberra ACT 2601];

[Note: Under the wreck trail proposals submitted by the Department of Maritime Archaeology in 1986, an information pamphlet was to have been produced which would be available at dive shops and in Government and tourist offices.]

- that boat operators be given advice on appropriate mooring sites in the vicinity of the inshore and main wreck sites such that no damage to the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are disturbed or damaged;
- divers and boat operators should **not** attempt to visit the main wreck site unless they are experienced and fully acquainted with the adverse conditions that frequently present at this site. [This was discussed in the proposed wreck trail submission.]

SITE 1. Beacon Island: 'Batavia's Graveyard'

Historic Site

Batavia 1629

About 316 men, women and children were aboard the *Batavia* when the ship was wrecked on Morning Reef. Of these, 180 managed to reach the safety of the island now known as Beacon Island. Here, many of the survivors were brutally murdered by Jeronimus Cornelisz and his mutinous supporters, either being buried at sea or in shallow graves. Hence the island became known as 'Batavia's Graveyard'.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. GJ 725468

(ii) 1: 5000 MORNING REEF, WALLABI GROUP, HOUTMAN ABROLHOS, W. F. JEFFERY, Surveyor, 1980.

Recommendations

- that the whole of Beacon Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under sections 4.(1) (b) and 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that the island be declared a protected zone under section 9. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that no digging and/or any major earthworks be undertaken on the island without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no further occupation or dwellings be permitted on the island;
- that in the long-term (10-20 years) the existing camp-sites be removed; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 2. Long Island: 'Seals Island'

Historic Site

Batavia 1629

A party of about 45 cabin boys, men and women were sent to 'Seals Island' (now Long Island) to search for water. Seventeen days later, on 15 July 1629, all except 7 boys and some women were murdered. Four people escaped, the others suffering the same fate.

On 18 September 1629 Pelsaert ordered the principal mutineers and other accomplices to be taken to Seals Island for security pending interrogation. After confessing to their crimes, the condemned mutineers were sentenced to have either both hands or their right hand cut off prior to execution on the gallows. The punishments were carried out on Seals Island.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. 1:100 000 GJ 715475

(ii) 1: 5000 MORNING REEF, WALLABI GROUP, HOUTMAN ABROLHOS, W. F. JEFFERY, Surveyor, 1980.

Recommendations

- that Long Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under section 4. (1) (b) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 3. Traitors Island

Historic Site *Batavia 1629*

Fifteen of the *Batavia* survivors were marooned on Traitors Island by Jeronimus Cornelisz. While attempting to escape to the Wallabi Islands on rafts they were intercepted by mutineers. Those unable to escape by swimming were either drowned or killed.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. GJ 725459

(ii) 1: 5000 MORNING REEF, WALLABI GROUP, HOUTMAN ABROLHOS, W. F. JEFFERY, Surveyor, 1980.

Recommendations

- that Traitors Island and all the small islands of the Morning Reef complex be protected as maritime archaeological sites under section 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 4. West Wallabi Island: Slaughter Point

SITE 4.1. Weibbe Hayes' encampment

Historic Site

Batavia 1629

Weibbe Hayes, a soldier on the *Batavia*, was ordered by Jeronimus Cornelisz to leave *Batavia's* Graveyard (Beacon Island) and lead a party to a 'long island' in search of fresh water. After 20 days, two pits of water were found on the island (West Wallabi) and food in the form of birds, fish, eggs and 'Cats' (Tamar wallabies). As pre-arranged, three fires were lit as a signal to Cornelisz of success. Escapees from the mutineers sailed on rafts to join Weibbe Hayes making a total of 45-47 people on the island. Fearing attack, they made preparations for defence. This limestone structure is archaeologically associated with the Dutch survivors, probably built as a shelter or look-out for approaching mutineers. After three attacks, Cornelisz was captured while attempting to make a peace offering. When Pelsaert returned from Batavia on the vessel *Sardam*, the prisoner was handed into his custody for trial.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. GJ 651481

Includes:

4.1.1 Limestone Structure 1

Rectangular structure approximately 7.9 m x 3 m x 0.55 m, originally divided into two 'rooms'. Walls show marked reconstruction since 1974.

4.1.2 Fireplaces

Three structures on east coast of Slaughter Point (to the NE and ENE of Structure 1) consisting of limestone slabs that have been stood upright to form a three-sided protection from the wind.

4.1.3 Middens

Possible midden site (marked 'site' on compass traverse by Orme and Randall, 1987).

4.1.4 Wells

- a deep brackish well to the north-east of Limestone structure 1, recently marked by the placement of a wooden fence post;
- a well to the east of Limestone structure 1;
- several small wells in the vicinity of Limestone structure 2; and
- a deep well situated to the WSW of Limestone structure 2, near survey cairn.

SITE 4.2 Limestone structure 2

Historic Site

In 1879 Surveyor John Forrest visited West Wallabi and reported seeing two stone huts. While this structure could have been built by Weibbe Hayes and the *Batavia* survivors, this is not archaeologically or historically proven; the structure could have been built at a later date by guano miners.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Director
Western Australian Museum
Francis Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 328 4411

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. GJ 651481

Limestone Structure 2

Inland site. Four walls broken by an entrance in north facing wall, approximately 6.5 m x 5 m x 0.75 m.

Recommendations (Sites 4.1 and 4.2)

- that the two limestone structures be protected as maritime archaeological sites under section 4 (1) (b) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*, each site within a protected zone of 100 metres radius;
- that any interference with the structures and/or removal of material from within the protected zones be prohibited;
- that any digging within these zones be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 5. East Wallabi: 'High Island'

Historic Site *Batavia 1629*

Survivors from the *Batavia* visited the 'High Island' (East Wallabi) to obtain fresh water. At least one person, the Upper Barber, Mr Frans Jansz, was killed here by the mutineers.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the State's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Wallabi Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. GJ 670510

5.1 **Resource site (water) - wells.**

5.2 **Slaughter site** - killing of Mr. Frans Jansz, Upper barber - location unidentified.

Recommendations

- that the wells on East Wallabi be protected as maritime archaeological sites under section 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act* within a protected zone of 100 metres radius of each well;
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

ZEEWIJK 1727

WRECK SITE

The *Zeewijk* is a gazetted historic shipwreck protected under the **Commonwealth *Historic Shipwreck Act 1976***.

Historic Site

Zeewijk 1727

Dutch East India Company (VOC) vessel. Wrecked 1727. Declared historic 15.12.76. 28°54' S 113°52'E, Aus 332-333. Pelsaert Group, Houtman Abrolhos.

Built 1725 at Zeeland, this 400 ton Retourschip left that port late in 1726 with 208 aboard and armament including 36 cannon. After the ship struck Half Moon Reef on 9 June 1727, 96 of the survivors managed to reach Gun Island where they stayed for some months. After building a boat, the *Sloepie*, from salvaged timber and fittings, 82 survived the journey to Batavia, arriving on 30 April 1728.

This site is protected under the **Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*** as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:

Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) Aus 332-333, 28°54' S 113°52'E.

(ii) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. GJ756008

The main wreck site is situated on the seaward side of Half Moon Reef in a zone of heavy breaking surf. Wreckage is scattered over a wide area in the shallow waters of the Pelsaert Lagoon (see AITF, 1988: Fig. 4(d)).

Recommendations

- that access is permitted to this site, although it is an offence for anyone to 'damage, disturb or interfere with the wreck, relics or remains' of this historic shipwreck; [The penalties may include fines up to \$5000, jail up to 5 years and confiscation of equipment. The penalties are severe to try to help preserve Historic Shipwrecks.]
- that individual groups and/or leaders of organised dive charters intending to dive on the site should notify either:
Jeremy Green, Head Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime Museum, Cliff St, Fremantle, WA 6160. Ph: 09 335 8211;
or
Greg Wallace, Branch Curator, Geraldton Maritime Museum, Marine Terrace, Geraldton. Ph: 099 215 158
- that persons intending to dive on the site should familiarise themselves with the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* [pamphlets available from Historic Shipwrecks Officer, Heritage Branch, Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, GPO Box 1252 Canberra ACT 2601];
- that boat operators be given advice on appropriate mooring sites in the vicinity of the inshore and main wreck sites such that no damage to the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are disturbed or damaged;

- divers and boat operators should not attempt to visit the main wreck site unless they are experienced and fully acquainted with the adverse conditions that frequently present at this site. [Note: This site is **not** considered suitable for the wreck trail due to adverse conditions.]

SITE 6. Gun Island

Historic Site
Zeewijk 1727

A bronze swivel gun and other Dutch artefacts recovered by John Lort Stokes in 1840 during a survey of the Houtman Abrolhos in HMS *Beagle* resulted in the name Gun Island. Later discoveries by Surveyor John Forrest and the guano firm of Broadhurst and MacNeil confirmed this to be the island where 96 survivors from the *Zeewijk* came ashore. During nine months on the island, they built a small vessel named *Sloepie*, in which 82 people managed to survive the journey to Batavia, arriving on 30 April 1728.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 WALLABI, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. GH 789010 NM/F/635

(ii) 1: 1000 GUN ISLAND 1976, Surveyed and drawn by J.W. Willis.

(iii) 1: 1000 GUN ISLAND 1976, 1978 version showing areas of archaeological significance.

Includes:

Southern coast of Gun Island

6.1 Mutton Bird Hill to Lunch Point.

Area 1 **Ordinary mess:** bottle fragments, drinking glasses, barrel hoops, clay pipes, charcoal, bones and some personal belongings.

Area 2 **Large encampment** - possibly the Officer's mess, or remains of two major camp-sites observed by surveyor John Forrest in 1879 and Florance Broadhurst in the 1890s. Heavy concentration of artefacts, more than in any other location on the island. Area known to local people as the '*Zeewijk* camp-site'. Very fragile area situated in sand dunes with artefacts having been found on or near the surface.

Areas 3 to 6 **Ordinary mess sites:** artefact assemblages as for Area 1

Area 7 **Storage area** - possibly for provisions to be taken aboard the *Sloepie*. Artefacts include barrel hoops; bones - beef, pork and seal; bottle fragments, clay pipes, musket balls and parts of a pistol.

West coast of Gun Island

6.2 Lunch Point to Point Happy.

Area 8 **Ordinary mess:** artefact assemblage similar to Areas 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Area 9 **Major encampment site** - possibly survivors involved in the construction of the *Sloepie*. Bottles, clay pipes, drinking glasses, ceramics, bones, barrel hoops, iron, charcoal, buttons, tools, coins, dice, pulley sheaves and nails were among the artefacts found in this area.

Area 10 **Non-specific site:** fragments of nails, iron and glass found in test holes in a depression on the beach but assemblage did not suggest a specific activity site.

Area 11 **Probable construction site of the *Sloepie*.** Test trenches revealed few artefacts associated with camp-sites. Pulley sheaves, pitch, whole and fragmented iron bolts and nails were more likely to be associated with boat-building.

6.3 Mutton Bird Hill to Ross Point.

Burial site or graveyard.

Test holes in this area were sterile except for a few seal bones. In 1965-8 however, British Petroleum unearthed several Dutch graves in this area while removing sand to build a platform for an oil drilling rig [possibly ZW.A15831 and ZW.A16361]. It is possible that the area could contain more buried human remains. Skeletal material was also recovered by the guano miners in 1893 but whether it was from this location is uncertain. The material is held in the Department of Anthropology collection, W.A. Museum (ZW.M3789 and ZW.M3790).

6.4 **Central area of island.**

Resource sites (water) - rock holes or 'wells'.

Water was collected regularly from rock-holes or 'wells' on Gun Island. The 'main well'; RH 20, at the northern end of the island, was drained and the mud at the bottom geologically probed. A fragment of 'onion' bottle glass was the only cultural material found, at a depth of 1 metre under the mud.

6.5 **Remainder of the island.**

Surface artefacts - including loose sherds of metal and 18th century glass - were found in various places around the island, in particular near rock-hole number 15, the area of the guano miners' camp on the east side of the island, and at the north end of the island where broken Dutch bottles appeared to have been discarded from guano screens.

Recommendations

- that the whole of Gun Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under sections 4. (1) (b) and 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act* and as a protected zone under section 9. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 7. Middle Island: Wells used by *Zeewijk* survivors and sailmaker's scissors reported to be found by *Zeewijk* survivors

Historic Site
Zeewijk 1727

During his survey of the Pelsaert Group in 1840 in HMS *Beagle*, Stokes failed to visit Middle Island and missed finding a valuable source of water. For the *Zeewijk* survivors camped on Gun Island it was a life-saving resource. They made frequent excursions to collect water from the deep limestone wells on Middle Island, leaving evidence of their visits in the form of broken jars and bottles.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. GH 838985.

28° 55' S 113° 56' E.

(ii) Sketch-Map of Middle Island by R.W. Fairbridge, 1945.

Recommendation

- that the whole of Middle Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under sections 4. (1) (b) and 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that the well be specifically protected within a protected zone of 100 metres radius under section 9. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 8. Pelsaert Island

SITE 8.1 Sawn-off mangrove tree stumps

SITE 8.2 Artefact deposit

SITE 8.3 Wreckage deposit

Historic Site

Zeewijk 1727

From Gun Island, it appeared to the *Zeewijk* survivors that the 'long island' (Pelsaert Island) in the distance was the mainland. Several visits were made during which time they found parts of the wreck washed ashore, including the ship's gig. Driftwood was collected for use in the construction of the *Sloepie* and mangrove trees were cut for firewood and dunnage. An abundance of seals, birds and fish provided a valuable source of food.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:

Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

(ii) Geological Map of PELSART ISLAND by Teichert, 1946.

(iii) HOUTMAN'S ABROLHOS near the W COAST of NEW HOLLAND From Van Keulan: Dalrymple 1782.

(iv) Jan Steyn's map, 1727 [of the Pelsaert Group].

(v) Adriaan (van) de Graaff's map, 1727 [of the Pelsaert Group].

Site 8.1 Resource site (timber) - sawn off mangrove tree stumps

Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 895955

Site 8.2 Artefact deposit site - material that has drifted across the lagoon

Approx. Grid ref.1: 100 000 GH 880920

Site 8.3 Wreckage sites

(a) Zeewijk gig. Approx. Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 878906 - (possibly beach used by 19th century guano miners);

(b) Figurehead. Approx. Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 898962

Recommendation

- that the southern end of Pelsaert Island, the mangrove area on the west side of Pelsaert Island and an area of shoreline on the west side of the island, 10 metres wide and extending for 100 metres to the north of the HMAS *Moresby* Bench Mark be protected as maritime archaeological sites under section 4. (1) (b) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that anydigging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and

- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 9. Murray Island: Well used by Zeewijk survivors

Historic Site
Zeewijk 1727

Throughout the Houtman Abrolhos, fresh water is a scarce commodity. Survivors from the *Zeewijk* found the well on Murray Island provided them with a limited supply of reasonable water.

This site is recognised as a place of historic significance. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION) SERIES R 611
Grid ref. GH 825998

Recommendations

- that the well on Murray Island be recognised as an area of historic interest;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

Post-European settlement shipwrecks

The following ships are known to have foundered in the Houtman Abrolhos:

| Name | Date | Size | Type | Area |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|---------------------|--|
| <i>Ada</i> | 1921 | | Wooden fishing boat | North Island |
| <i>Hadda</i> ** | 1877 | 334t | Barque | Wallabi Group 28°28'24"S 113°47'30"E Aus 332 |
| Guano Barge | 1890s | 35 t | Barge | Wallabi Group |
| <i>Ivy</i> | 1914 | | Wooden lugger | Easter Group |
| <i>Ocean Queen</i> ** | 1842 | 268 t | Wooden barque | Pelsaert Group 28°56.5'S 113°51.7'E Aus 332-333 |
| <i>Preston</i> * | 1855 | 20 t | Wooden schooner | Pelsaert Group |
| <i>Marten</i> ** | 1878 | 28 t | Wooden schooner | Pelsaert Group 28°55.5'S 113°59.6'E Aus 332-333 |
| <i>Ben Ledi</i> ** | 1879 | 1107 t | Iron sailing ship | Pelsaert Group 28°55.5'S 113°59.6'E Aus 332-333 |
| <i>Nautilus</i> * | 1897 | | Private yacht | Pelsaert Group |
| <i>Windsor</i> ** | 1908 | 1853 t | Iron steamer | Pelsaert Group 29°0.0'S 113°56.3'E Aus 332-333 |
| <i>Jon Jim</i> | 1961 | 37 t | Wooden freezer boat | Pelsaert Group |
| <i>Neptune</i> | 1901 | 22 t | Wooden cutter | Geelvinck Channel |
| <i>Venus</i> * | 1851 | 28 t | Wooden schooner | Unknown |
| <i>Evelyn Marie</i> * | 1891 | 18 t | Wooden cutter | Unknown |

Table 1. Shipwrecks at the Houtman Abrolhos since European settlement.

Under the definition of the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973*

...any ship that **before the year 1900** was lost, wrecked or abandoned, or was stranded, on or off the coast of Western Australia' is deemed to be an 'historic ship'.

Vessels marked (*) above are therefore protected under the provisions of this Act. Similarly, a 'relic' means

...any thing of historic interest that appears to have formed part of, or to have been carried by or derived from or associated with any historic ship, or to have been constructed or used by any person associated with such a ship...

Vessels marked (**) are gazetted as historic shipwrecks under the Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*. All except the SS *Windsor* are also protected under the *Maritime Archaeology Act*.

Recommendations

- that access is permitted to all the above sites, subject to the conditions and prohibitions of the Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* and the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* where these are applicable;

- that persons intending to dive and/or snorkel on the *Ocean Queen*, *Windsor* and *Ben Ledi* wreck sites be made aware of the dangers associated with these exposed reef sites;
- that boat operators be given advice on appropriate mooring sites in the vicinity of the wreck sites such that no damage to the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are disturbed or damaged;
- that consideration be given to the feasibility of establishing an Historic Wreck Trail subject to issues of safety and future management of the Houtman Abrolhos being addressed [as suggested by this department in collaboration with Geraldton diving interests].

SITE 10. Pelsaert Island. Shipwreck survivors' encampment: *Marten* (1878) and *Ben Ledi* (1879)

| Historic Site <i>Marten 1878 and Ben Ledi 1879</i> |
|---|
| <p><i>Marten</i>, a two-masted wooden schooner, 28 tons. Wrecked 1878. Gazetted 8.9.77. 28°55.5'S 113°59.6'E, Aus 332-333. Pelsaert Group, Houtman Abrolhos. Owned by the Browse Island Guano Company at the time of her loss; wrecked on a voyage in ballast from Adelaide to Browse Island on the site subsequently also to claim the <i>Ben Ledi</i>.</p> <p><i>Ben Ledi</i>, a three-masted iron-hulled sailing ship, 1107 tons. Wrecked 1879. Gazetted 8.9.77. 28°55.5'S 113°59.6'E, Aus 332-333. Built 1868 at Glasgow; wrecked without loss of life on voyage from Sydney to Calcutta in ballast.</p> <p>Survivors from both shipwrecks are known to have come ashore. Three of the <i>Marten's</i> crew stayed behind on the island while the master and two men rowed to Geraldton. Those from the <i>Ben Ledi</i> used sails to rig up tents. Evidence of encampment on shore is thought to be associated with the survivors of this wreck.</p> <p>This site is protected under the <i>State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973</i> as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.</p> <p>For further information contact: Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000 Ph: 09 335 8211</p> |

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. GH893952

(ii) Aus 332-333, 28°55.5'S 113°59.6'E (Wreck sites)

Beach and inshore area adjacent to site of remains of *Ben Ledi*.

Recommendations

- that the *Ben Ledi* survivors' encampment be protected as a maritime archaeological site under section 4. (1) (b) and of the *Maritime Archaeology Act* within a protected zone of 100 metres radius under section 9. (1) of the Act with the restriction that no digging be undertaken without Museum approval;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 11. Pelsaert Island: temporary encampment site of survivors from the *Ocean Queen*

Historic Site

***Ocean Queen* 1842**

Three-masted wooden barque, 268 tons. Wrecked on the night of 13 September 1842. Gazetted as a historic shipwreck 8.9.77. 28°56.5'S 113°51.7'E, Aus 332-333. Half Moon Reef, Houtman Abrolhos. Built 1831 at Whitby, Yorkshire; wrecked on a voyage from Launceston to Bali in ballast.

Survivors from the wreck are known to have come ashore on one of the large islands in the Pelsaert Group and camped for several days. The exact location of their landing is not known but would likely have been somewhere at the southern end of Pelsaert Island, this being close to the wreck site.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. Not available

(ii) Aus 332-333

Wreck site location: 28°56.5'S 113°51.7'E, Aus 332-333.

Survivors' encampment: southern end of Pelsaert Island - NOT IDENTIFIED.

Recommendations

- that the southern end of Pelsaert Island be recognised as an area of historic interest;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 12. Middle Island.

SITE 12.1. Shipwreck survivors' refuge and burial site - *Venus* 1851

Historic Site

***Venus* 1851**

Wooden schooner, 28 tons. Wrecked 10 April 1851 on reef surrounding Pelsaert Group, Houtman Abrolhos. Location unknown. Built on the Swan River in 1839 by Captain John Thomas; wrecked on a voyage from Singapore to Fremantle with a cargo and the European overland mail. Crew had endured a passage of 10 weeks with insufficient water and were severely emaciated when the vessel struck. Except for John Williams, the cook, who was too sick to be moved, Captain Mason, one passenger and three crew rowed to Middle Island to obtain fresh water and take refuge. They survived on rations of seal meat and rice. The *Venus* had visited the Pelsaert Group on earlier occasions, the first visit being in 1842, carrying a salvage party from Fremantle to the wreck of the *Ocean Queen*.

Williams remained alive on the wreck for more than one week but then passed away in his berth. The crew buried him on Middle Island. In 1879, Surveyor John Forrest saw a grave with a headstone inscribed:

Here lieth the body of John Williams Seaman, died April 1851 in the wreck of the *Venus* aged 41 years.

Captain Mason rigged and decked the dinghy from the *Venus* and, together with the passenger and one sailor, set out for Champion Bay. They arrived safely. The two remaining crew were rescued by the schooner *Evergreen*.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Gid ref. (approx) 1: 100 000 GH 838985

(ii) Sketch-Map of Middle Island by R.W. Fairbridge, 1946.

Recommendations

- that the whole of Middle Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under sections 4. (1) (b) and 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act*;
- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

SITE 12.2 Non-European burial

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Gid ref. (approx) 1: 100 000 GH 838985

(ii) Sketch-Map of Middle Island by R.W. Fairbridge, 1946.

[Skeleton found to the north of the stone structures in 1978.]

SITE 12.3 Stone structures

Historic Site

Middle Island stone structures

The exact origin of the remains of a limestone structure resembling a rectangular building and a stone 'tower' on Middle Island is uncertain. Buildings appear to have been present on the island from at least 1867 when a visitor on the cutter *Victoria* saw the frame of a house. Surveyor John Forrest visited Middle Island in 1879 and also noted the remains of two old stone houses which he attributed to a fishing party from Fremantle - probably the Pelsart Fishing Company, formed in 1847. The company had permission to erect buildings in the Abrolhos and reported finding Dutch relics on islands where they based their operations. The existence of buildings on the island would have provided an excellent shelter for the exhausted survivors from the *Venus* wrecked on a nearby reef in 1851.

This site is protected under the *State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* as part of the nation's maritime heritage. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street PERTH WA 6000
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Gid ref. (approx) 1: 100 000 GH 838985

(ii) Sketch-Map of Middle Island by R.W. Fairbridge, 1946.

Stone structures

- (a) former 'house' or hut; and
- (b) stone tower.

[19th century glass and brown and white transfer ware earthenware fragments found in the vicinity of the structures in 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979 by W.A. Museum expeditions.]

Recommendations

- that the whole of Middle Island be protected as a maritime archaeological site under sections 4. (1) (b) and 4. (1) of the *Maritime Archaeology Act* and that the two stone structures be specifically protected within a protected zone of 100 metres radius under

section 9. (1) of the Maritime Archaeology Act, with particular reference to the restriction of digging and/or any major earthworks or building without Museum approval;

- that any digging be restricted to *bona fide* archaeological researchers with the permission of the Director, Western Australian Museum;
- that no metal-detecting devices be used for the purpose of locating archaeological material without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum; and
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations.

Summary

'Do's and don'ts for Code of Conduct for visitors to the Houtman Abrolhos in respect to Historic Areas: the 'look but don't touch' approach

Do

- visit the area
- enjoy the uniqueness of the site/area
- appreciate the historic significance of the site/area
- inform the appropriate authorities of new discoveries
- inform the appropriate authorities of any observed alteration or damage to historic sites/areas whether by natural and/or other interference
- provide information on any new find and help the delegated authority (Director, Western Australian Museum) in following up the matter;
- provide information on the whereabouts of relics or articles from a declared shipwreck if they or their present whereabouts have not been notified previously;
- co-operate with an inspector authorised to carry out enquiries and site supervision under the State *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* and Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*;
- notify appropriate authorities (i.e. Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum or Branch Curator, Geraldton Maritime Museum) of intention to visit the following sites:
 - Batavia* wreck site
 - Beacon Island
 - West Wallabi Island - Slaughter Point sites
 - Zeewijk* wreck site
 - Gun Island
- ensure that you seek advice regarding anchorages for large and small boats in the vicinity of wreck sites so that the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are not disturbed or damaged by boat anchors, mooring lines etc.

Note:

MOORINGS

Large boats: Pleasure and/or charter boat operators should be given advice on appropriate (or designated) mooring sites in the vicinity of wreck sites such that the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are not disturbed or damaged. [This also applies to submerged jetty sites, e.g. Pelsaert Island *et al.*, (see Appendix 1.)]

Small boats: Small boat operators should be given advice on appropriate (or designated) mooring sites in the vicinity of wreck sites in shallower, more sheltered waters, e.g. *Hadda*, such that the wreck site, associated relics, physical and environmental features (reefs etc.) are not disturbed or damaged.

- ensure that persons diving on wreck sites are familiar with the protective legislation
- ensure that boat operators/divers are familiar with the dangers at particular wreck sites

Note: It should be stressed that all wreck sites in exposed reef locations i.e. *Batavia*, *Zeewijk*, *Ocean Queen*, *Windsor* and *Ben Ledi* are **dangerous** sites for divers and boat operators.

In parts of Europe, particularly where boating and/or diving may be hazardous; where accidents repeatedly occur; and where search and rescue is dependant on volunteer organisations, large public notices display local diving and boating restrictions. For example,

divers using SCUBA and/or surface air supply **must** be able to produce on demand from a delegated authority evidence of certification to dive; **must** wear regulatory diving and safety equipment (e.g. wet/dry-suits, buoyancy compensators etc.); **must not** dive alone; may only dive in certain locations during restricted daylight hours so that search and rescue organisations are not put at risk; and so on. In some places e.g. the Swiss lakes, there are also restrictions related to minimum air and water temperatures recommended for diving.

If the Abrolhos Islands are to be opened up for regular tourism it may be feasible to liaise with appropriate diving/boating authorities to devise a public notice relating to recommended diving standards and boating safety so that potential risks are minimised.

- ensure that divers are competent to dive on particular wreck sites
- ensure that adequate safety provisions have been made for diving/boating (e.g. dive flags, flares, first-aid/oxy-viva resuscitation equipment etc.)
- ensure that adequate supplies of fresh water are carried on board boats and/or taken ashore
- ensure that someone (e.g. OTC, volunteer rescue, etc.) is informed of your intended boating/diving movements
- ensure all personal litter is taken with you when you leave
- watch where you are walking on land so that relics (and natural fauna/flora) are not disturbed or damaged

Do not

- remove relics or articles, interfere with or damage declared historic wreck sites or sites not yet assessed; or
- enter without a permit a declared prohibited zone round a wreck site;
- take on to any wreck site spearfishing or salvage equipment unless permitted to do so;
- remove relics or articles, interfere with or damage declared maritime archaeological sites (on land) or sites not yet assessed;
- carry out any digging or major earthworks within protected zones round declared maritime archaeological sites unless permitted to do so. Sites in the following areas have 'protected zone' restrictions:

WALLABI GROUP

- Beacon Island
- Long Island
- Traitors Island and other small islands of Morning Reef
- West Wallabi

PELSAERT GROUP

- Gun Island
- Middle Island
- Pelsaert Island

- take metal-detecting devices into any of the designated historic areas without approval from the Director, Western Australian Museum.

PLEASE HELP TO PROTECT OUR MARITIME HERITAGE FOR ALL
TO ENJOY

References

- Abrolhos Islands Task Force, 1988, *Abrolhos Islands planning strategy*. A report prepared by the Abrolhos Islands Task Force for the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Committee.
- Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. S 29. 9 February 1983.
- Commonwealth of Australia, *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* No. 190 of 1976.
- Green, J. N. and Stanbury, M., 1988, *Report and recommendations on archaeological land sites in the Houtman Abrolhos*. Report - Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 29.
- Orme, Z. and Randall, N., 1987, A survey of the historical limestone structures on West Wallabi Island, Houtman Abrolhos. *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology*, **11.2**: 25-31.
- Western Australia, *Maritime Archaeology Act, 1973*. No. 66 of 1973.

APPENDIX 1

Historic areas not currently protected by legislation

Areas of historic significance not covered by the State *Maritime Archaeology Act* include:

- archaeological sites associated with maritime industry e.g. 19th and 20th century guano and phosphate mining;
- submerged and/or partially submerged jetties, wharfs, causeways; and
- sites associated with historic events e.g. visits by early hydrographers, colonial surveyors etc.

LAND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH MARITIME INDUSTRY

Guano and phosphate mining

SITE 14. Pelsaert Island. 19th and 20th century guano mining settlement and activity sites

| Historic Site |
|---|
| <p>Guano mining was established on Pelsaert Island in 1890 by the firm of Broadhurst, McNeil and Company, continued from 1904 to the 1920s by Davis and Fallowfield of Geraldton, and resumed during World War II by the British Phosphate Commissioners. The southern end of Pelsaert Island was heavily mined for live guano and rock phosphate which involved the removal of large tracts of topsoil and vegetation, often leaving only bare bedrock.</p> <p>The miners built accommodation and storage facilities; constructed jetties to facilitate the loading of guano onto transport vessels and for landing stores; and, laid down a system of rail tracks to enable the guano to be ferried from the guano fields to the jetties. Evidence of this activity may still be seen.</p> <p>For further information contact: Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160 Ph: 09 335 8211</p> |

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

- MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. GH878906
- (ii) 1: 2000 PELSART ISLAND, JOB 780265, 1979.
- (iii) 1979 Site plans.

14.1 Occupation or settlement site

19th and 20th century guano miners. Both groups established their living accommodation in the same general area on the west side of Pelsaert Island. Archaeological remains representing the various periods of occupation have been identified and remain *in situ* in this area - cement foundation slabs for dwellings and water storage tanks; an enclosure for animals; remnants of miscellaneous structures; glass, ceramic, iron and other artefacts associated with a settlement area.

14.2 Northern guano field

Environmental evidence of guano mining including pick-axe marks on limestone bed-rock; archaeological evidence of 19th century modes of guano transportation (i.e. rail tracks and trucks); and 20th century portable rock-screening plant with a rotating trommel screen and bucket elevator and hoppers for loading motorized tip-trucks; 20th century wheels and axle from tractor-drawn scoop for digging guano; man-made well and other remains.

14.3 Southern guano field

Environmental evidence of guano mining; few late 19th century beer and spirit bottles recovered.

14.4 Guano loading bay and chute

20th century (guano stockpile area near Moresby bench mark AG13).

14.5 Phosphate loading wharf and causeway - 20th century (leading from 14.4).

| |
|--|
| <p>Historic Site PHOSPHATE LOADING WHARF</p> |
| <p>This phosphate loading wharf was built by the British Phosphate Commissioners in 1943-44. The causeway was built with limestone quarried from the southern part of Pelsaert Island. Wooden piles, timber and chutes recovered from the concrete mixing plant used on the construction of the first Geraldton Harbour concrete wharf in the 1930s were utilised for the timber section. Guano was brought from the stockpile areas at the landward end of the jetty in tip trucks then loaded via the chutes into hoppers set in wooden punts. The punts were then towed out to carrier vessels anchored in deeper lagoon waters and the loose guano loaded into the holds of the ships. Rock phosphate was bagged and similarly transhipped on punts. On arrival at Geraldton the guano was unloaded into rail trucks on the wharf, most of the work being done manually. It was then processed at the Geraldton works of Cuming Smith and Mount Lyell (now CSPB)</p> |
| <p>This site is recognised as a site of historic interest. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.</p> |
| <p>For further information contact: Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160 Ph: 09 335 8211</p> |

- 14.6 **North jetty (settlement area)** - 19th century, for loading guano onto lighters for transhipment to larger carriers; the railway line from the guano fields would have extended the length of the jetty. Wooden pile stumps, fallen pylons, railway line and truck wheels are evident underwater.
- 14.7 **Centre jetty (settlement area)** - 20th century, for unloading supplies for the settlement.
- 14.8 **Limestone causeway (rock groyne)** - 20th century, for unloading heavy equipment such as trucks, tractors, and so on.
- 14.9 **Quarry (south of settlement area)** - 20th century; source of limestone from which causeways were constructed.
- 14.10 **Wooden punt or lighter (settlement area beach)** - 20th century; contained circular steel guano hoppers with bucket-type lifting frames so that they could be emptied directly into the hold of guano carriers.

Recommendations

- that the area of Pelsaert Island including and southward of the 20th century phosphate loading jetty be considered for protection under the *Heritage Act 1991*;
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected to make known to the public the historic nature of the area;
- that no digging should be permitted except by *bona fide* researchers with permission from appropriate authorities.

SITE 15. Sweet Island

Historic Site SWEET ISLAND

The abundant bird life on the islands in the Abrolhos made them a valuable source of guano (fertiliser), much needed by colonial farmers. Guano was removed on a small scale from the 1840s after Stokes' discovered its presence during a survey in HMS *Beagle*. More intensive mining took place in the late 19th century resulting in alteration of the landscape and disruption of the natural breeding habitats of birds. Walls of discarded limestone rocks are a significant feature of the aftermath of mining activity. Railway tracks for haulage using horse-drawn sleds or tip-trucks, and limestone jetties for boat access are typical of the facilities constructed by the miners. Remains of both may be seen on many of the islands in the Pelsaert Group.

This site is recognised as a site of historic interest. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 800978

(ii) 1: 2 000 SWEET ISLAND, 1979. R. G. Brown & Myra Stanbury.

- 15.1 **Encampment site** - north-east promontory; limestone rocks delineate three sides of an 8 x 4 metre rectangle in the vicinity of which was scattered refuse consistent with a camp-site. This included 19th century glass bottles and sherds; iron nails and fragments of barrel hoops; mammal bones; rail iron; a large baler shell; a section of tree trunk; wood fragments and charcoal.
- 15.2 **Transportation facilities** - evidence of rail tracks extending from a jetty at the south-east promontory to a wooden stake on the northern part of the island together with two guano sleds.
- 15.3 **Causeway and jetty** - south-east promontory; 120 metre long limestone causeway at the end of which are submerged wooden jetty piles, lengths of tramline, firebricks and other miscellaneous debris.
- 15.4 **Manmade rock walls** - mainly on the western side of the island and alongside the rail tracks.

Recommendations

- that Sweet Island be recognized as a place of historic interest and considered for protection under the *Heritage Act 1991*;
- that access to the site should be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected to make known to the public the historic nature of the area;
- that no digging should be permitted except by *bona fide* researchers with permission from appropriate authorities.

SITE 16. Number One Island

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 812986

SITE 17. Number Three Island

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 799989

SITE 18. Number Eight Island

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 789998

SITE 19. Davis Island

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1640 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. 1: 100 000 GH 805980

Recommendations

- that the small islands in the Pelsaert Lagoon, in particular Sweet Island, Number One Island, Number Three Island, Number Eight Island and Davis Island be recognized as places of historic interest and considered for protection under the *Heritage Act 1991*;
- that access to the sites be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations;
- that no digging should be permitted except by *bona fide* researchers with permission from appropriate authorities.

SITE 20. Gun Island

Historic Site GUN ISLAND

Like other islands in the Pelsaert Group, Gun Island was rich in guano deposits. Until 1890, when Charles Broadhurst established a base on the island, mining had been a small scale affair. From an operational headquarters on the east side of Gun Island, the systematic mining carried out by the company, Broadhurst, McNeil & Co. stripped almost the entire island of guano. They were careful, however, to leave the site of the *Zeewijk* survivors' encampment intact and kept a catalogue of the many relics they frequently unearthed. Items from the Broadhurst collection may be seen at the Geraldton and Western Australian Maritime Museums.

This site is recognised as a site of historic interest. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group, Gun Island

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.
Grid ref. 1: 100 000 NM/F/635
(ii) 1: 1000 GUN ISLAND 1976, Surveyed and drawn by J.W. Willis

- 20.1 **Occupation site** - 19th century guano miners; area surrounding NM/F/635.
- 20.2 **Quarry** - inshore from causeway; probable source of limestone for construction of causeway south of occupation site.
- 20.3 **Tramline foundations** - the main tracks extend along the east and west coast and to the central and northern regions of the island. They would have originally converged close to the start of the causeway, the rail track continuing out to the loading jetty.
- 20.4 **Rock piles** - rocks discarded during the mining process.
- 20.5 **Causeway and jetty** - east coast, south of miners' occupation site; limestone causeway extends for 23 metres out to sea at the end of which would have been a wooden jetty.

Recommendations

- that the guano mining sites on Gun Island be included in the overall protection of the island as stated in the recommendation for Site 6.

SITE 21. West Wallabi

Historic Site

WEST WALLABI

West Wallabi was named after a visit by Stokes in HMS *Beagle* in 1840 on account of the numerous wallabies inhabiting the island. The name Slaughter Point was given to the eastern extreme of the island after Stokes and two crew shot 76 wallabies in one day. West of Slaughter Point they discovered two caverns with excellent water.

In 1876, L.A. Manning obtained a two-year lease to mine guano on the island but little is known of his operations. The guano deposits were assessed by Surveyor John Forrest in 1879 and again in 1897 by Surveyor A.J.Wells. The main deposits were situated in the south and south-west part of the island. A tramway, remains of which may still be seen, led northwards from Horseyard Bay to a jetty at Shag Bay, on the north-west coast. A house was situated close to the jetty. Introduced grasses and other plants in a small area east of the southern end of the tramway marks the former site of a yard for tethering the horses employed for guano haulage. Nearby is a deep well known as Horse Well. Several stone cairns in various parts of the island are linked with the early surveys, some indicating substantial sources of fresh water.

This site is recognised as a site of historic interest. Please help to maintain the site so that all can enjoy its unique qualities.

For further information contact:
Department of Maritime Archaeology
Western Australian Maritime Museum
Cliff Street FREMANTLE WA 6160
Ph: 09 335 8211

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

(ii) 1: 15840 ABROLHOS ISLANDS WALLABI GROUP VICTORIA, Houtman Rocks, B8051/2,
Press 17e 325, 22.4.1898

South and west side of the island.

Recommendations

- that the areas of the island formerly associated with the mining of guano be recognized as being historically significant;
- that access to the sites be permitted, but suitable markers and notices should be erected in order to make known to the public the above recommendations;
- access to areas where birds are nesting (e.g. mutton birds) should be restricted;
- no digging should be permitted other than by *bone fide* researchers with permission from appropriate authorities.

SITES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORIC EVENTS

SITE 22. East Wallabi: Visit of HMS *Beagle*

Area definition

AREA: Houtman Abrolhos

LOCATION: Pelsaert Group, East Wallabi

MAP: (i) 1: 100 000 ABROLHOS, SHEET 1641 (EDITION 1) SERIES R 611.

(ii) 1: 15840 ABROLHOS ISLANDS WALLABI GROUP VICTORIA, Houtman Rocks, B8051/2,
Press 17e 325, 22.4.1898

Wells - see Site 5.