

WRECK INSPECTION REPORT

(Leschenault Inlet Unidentified)

Dept. of Maritime Archaeology
W.A. Maritime Museum
Cliff St. Fremantle
6160
March 1996

Mike McCarthy
Department of Maritime Archaeology: Report No. 107

Technical Data

Site Name: Leschenault Inlet Unidentified

Date lost: Post 1900

Date of Inspection: 21/12/1995

Personnel: M. McCarthy

Approximate Location

North Shore-Leschenault Inlet, Bunbury

Chart No: AUS 115

Lat: 33° 19'47" S

Long: 115° 38'30" E

File No: 405/71

File Name: Bunbury Area

Sailing Directions:

Take the North Shore road towards the Koombana Channel, turning towards the boat ramp east of the channel entrance in Leschenault Inlet. Two prominent palms mark the location of the now demolished home of Mrs Lois Wallace, one of the last permanent residents of the North Shore and first reporter of the Leschenault Inlet unidentified. The wreck lies in the intertidal zone in front of and east of the front garden of the old house and circa 5 metres from the base of the old jetty.

Compass Bearing: N/A

Visual Transits: N/A:

Site Photographs:

Black & White: N/A

Colour: Leschenault Inlet unidentified

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Site Photographs:

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Colour: Leschenault Inlet unidentified

Site Conditions on inspection

Sea and Swell: Nil
Surge: Nil
Visibility: 6m
Current: Nil
Sea-bed coverage: sand

Chemical Measurements : N/A

Temperature
Salinity
Ph
Dissolved O₂
Corrosion Potentials

Biological Data :

Colonising fauna: Nil. The site is normally buried, precluding the long-term colonisation of marine biofauna.

Site Condition and Integrity :

The site lies buried, sometimes totally. Occasionally the ends of its frames and a number of timbers are visible above the sand. The exposed timbers are strong and show little evidence of extensive internal decay. This observation could be the subject of a detailed analysis at a later date.

Management considerations :

(i) Natural Forces

The Site is exposed to few natural threats. The inlet is very narrow and is not open to the swells. Wash from passing power boats is expected to be a force, but again this will be minimal.

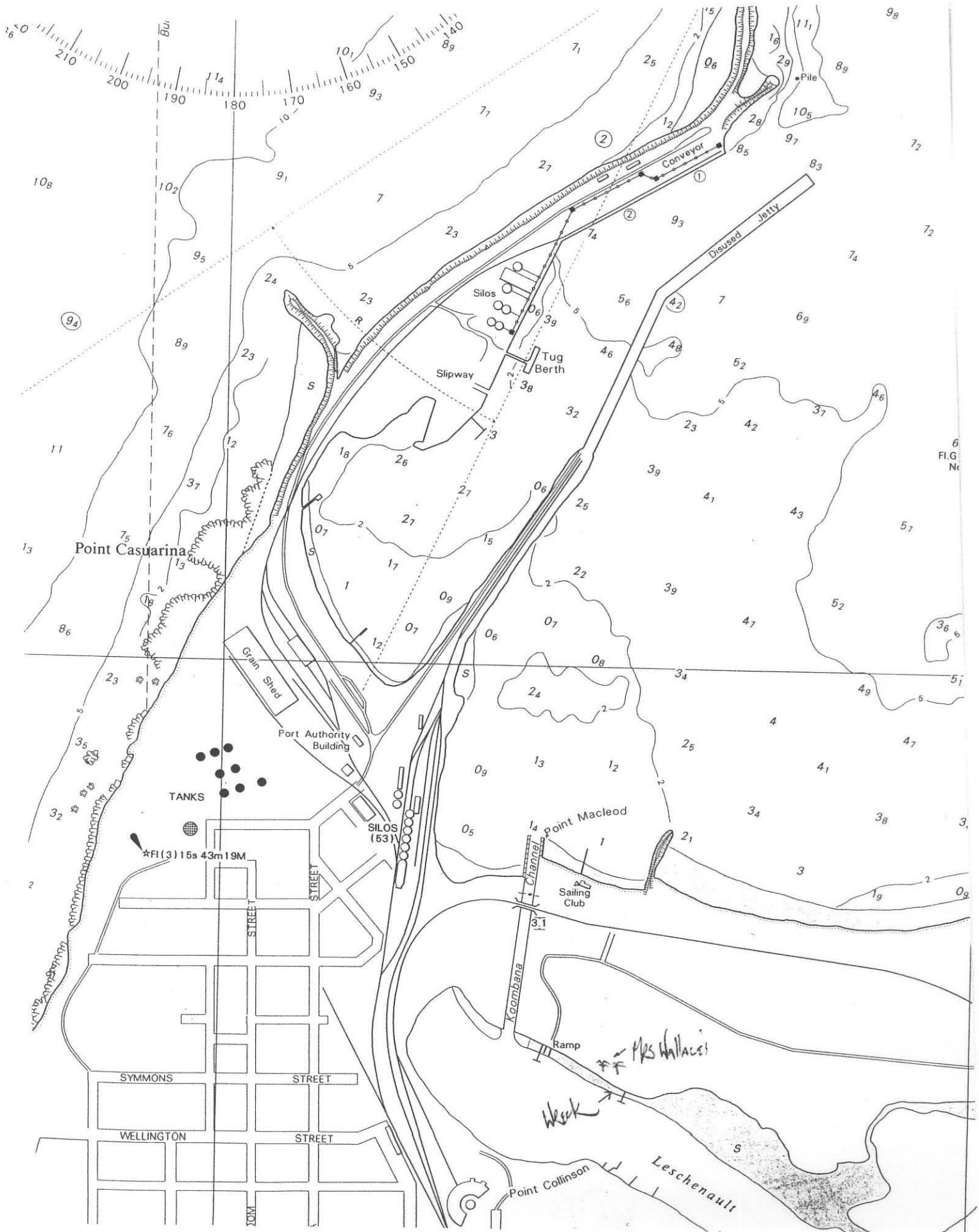
(ii) Present and future Human forces

The site is very accessible, but it is unlikely to attract wanton damage or speculative excavation. There is some concern that people may trip over the exposed timbers and thereby injure themselves, however. This has led to suggestions that the site be modified to reduce these risks.

(iii) Projected General site Stability in view of the above

The remains are likely to remain much as they appear today if left undisturbed. The buried sections are expected to remain intact indefinitely.

Chart showing Site (AUS 115)



Description of Site

The wreck lies bows on to shore on a gently shelving estuarine beach at an angle of around 45° to the shore. Its stern comes within 3 metres of the jetty at the foot of Mrs L.E. Wallace's former home on the North Shore (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Mrs Wallace showing Museum staff Mike McCarthy and Ian Field the wreck in August 1981. The jetty is in the background. (McCarthy, 1983: Appendix II).



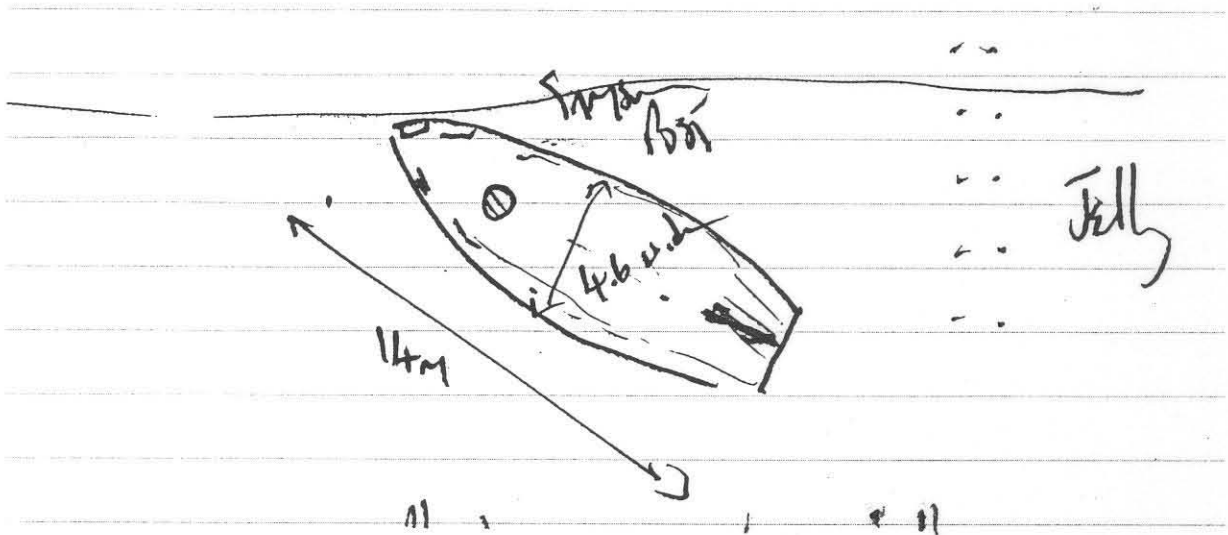
As indicated, the site lies in the intertidal zone and is normally totally covered in sand all bar the mast or samson post shown protruding in the illustration above. At high tide, the remains are also inundated, being covered by approximately 20 centimetres of water at the shallow end.

When viewed in December 1994, the entire length of the hull was visible as a row of exposed frames on both the port and starboard sides of the wreck. The remains measured 14 metres long by 4.6 metres wide amidships. Planking visible at the jetty end of the site was consistent with the underside of a counter stern, though too little of it was visible to provide a definitive indication.

The wreck lies on an angle of approximately 30° to port with outer planking and ceiling (inner planking) clearly visible and in apparently good condition. Stringers and a section of the keel were also visible in the stern section, with planking underneath.

Four metres aft of the bow was a mast stump or samson post which was c. 8 inches in diameter (200 mm). The frames measurable were approximately 5-6 inches (125-150mm) wide by three inches (75mm) thick and the hull amidships was 9 inches (225mm) wide from the inside of the ceiling to the outside of the outer planking, though the timbers had sprung giving a false indication of width. The planking astern was circa one inch (25mm) thick.

Sketch of Site



Site Identification Comments

Historical Precis

Mrs L.E. Wallace, former resident of the North Shore was aware of the site for many years and when interviewed in August 1981 she made comment on nine wrecks in her area. With respect to the remains considered here (her wrecks #3 and #6) she made the following points.

- 3) Site below my residence Koombana Park, North Shore, I believe to be Ecclestone's "Fanny" (Ruby?). (Small schooner). Butt of main mast visible today.
- 6) Passenger launch *Nautilus* (Prior name "Yorke"- Springman, J.) used at Turkey Point and Bunbury Boat Shed. Vessel beached below my residence and remained there some years (McCarthy, 1983: Appendix II).

A close assessment of this information and the use of the term 'remained there for some years' leads to the conclusion that the launch *Nautilus* was removed. This is in contrast to Mrs Wallace's statement that a part of Ecclestone's schooner *Fanny* (or *Ruby*) was still visible below her residence and that she was able to take the Museum team directly to it in August 1981.

An examination of the records shows that the name *Nautilus* was common, but that there are no motor launches of that name in the sources consulted. The name *Yorke* was not common and nothing was found on that possibility. E Springman of Bunbury, on the other hand, had premises on Austral Parade in 1924 and he built small fishing craft and boats for the pleasure market (Dickson, 1994: 164). This corroboration of Mrs Wallace's account attests to the quality of her memory. The wreck examined then is most likely Ecclestone's *Ruby* or *Fanny*.

Timber analyses of planks, fame and stern sections show that the Leschenault Unidentified was built of eucalypt an was therefore built in Western Australia. A pearling boat *Fanny* was owned by the noted Broome pearler Ancell Gregory around 1908 and a C.W. Murphy of Broome owned a 38' X 11' X 3' (11.5m X 3.4m) lugger of that name, built in 1902-3 (Dickson, 1994: 74, 135). Boatbuilder Robert Howson of Fremantle built a cutter *Ruby* around the turn of the century.

As the Leschenault Unidentified is longer than Murphy's vessel, this can be discounted. Details of the remaining possibilities were not found and Ecclestone was not found in the literature and records consulted, all leading to the inability to identify the site with any degree of certainty beyond the evidence presented by Mrs Wallace.

Assessment of Site Significance

(i) Archaeological: The remains are a well preserved example of a small craft, most likely a Western Australian built sailing vessel from the 20th century. They have considerable strength under the sand and will remain intact unless disturbed.

(ii) Technological: The remains are of a type of vessel most likely to have been built in the region or at Fremantle. The vessel was apparently used in the region and was probably based there. The wreck has interest and importance for this reason. Appendix 2 gives some indication of the significance of the boatbuilding industry at Bunbury.

(iii) Educational: The remains could provide a focus for those interested in the history of the Bunbury North Shore and the operation of small craft from Bunbury in the pre WWII period.

(v) Recreational: The remains could be marked as part of a 'Heritage Walk' facility with a small unintrusive interpretive marker giving brief details of the site. It could read as follows:

The timbers visible in the intertidal zone beyond this marker are believed to be the remains of a small, Western Australian built coasting schooner, either the *Ruby* or *Fanny*. The vessel was owned by a Mr Ecclestone.

(vi) Cultural: The remains are a reminder of past days at Bunbury, of early boatbuilding techniques and of the community that once occupied the North Shore. A marker at Mrs Wallace's former home would also be appropriate.

Management Proposals

The remains should be recognised as a part of the history of Bunbury and they should not be interfered with in any way. The site should be marked with an interpretive sign, suitably recognising the wreck, boatbuilding in Bunbury and the former status of the North Shore. The sign would also serve to diminish any risk that pedestrian traffic may encounter in walking along the beach. The placement of the sign should be such as to minimise any risk to passers by.

Recommendations

Because the wreck could not be dated accurately, the site cannot be declared historic under the terms of the State Maritime Archaeology Act due to its 1900 'cut-off' date. This should not preclude local interests, facilitated by the City of Bunbury combining to preserve the site and to mark it in the manner suggested above.

Acknowledgements

Mrs Lois E. Wallace
Mr Ian Field
Mr Grant Bilton (City of Bunbury)

References

- Dickson, R., 1994, *They kept this State afloat: Shipbuilders, boatbuilders and shipwrights of WA 1829-1929*. Report, Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Maritime museum, No. 89.
- McCarthy, M., 1983, *Koombanah Bay Wrecks*. Report, Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 19.

Appendices

Appendix I : Excerpts from McCarthy, (1983) noting sites known to Mrs L.E. Wallace: North Shore Resident

Appendix II Excerpts from Dickson (1994) indicating the extent of boatbuilding in Bunbury, 1929-1929.

Appendix I

2. Two sites uncovered during development of new Inner Harbour, believed to be "North America" and "Samuel Wright". This is near Sands and mineral silos.
3. Site below my residence Koombana Park, North Shore, I believe to be Ecclestone's "Fanny" (Ruby?). (Small schooner) Butt of main mast visible today.
4. Site at junction of road to Koombana Park and that to the Mineral Sands Silos (first one) outline of ribs were visible until cut off by machine.
5. Paddy's Blunder site old barge (in estuary).
6. Passenger launch "Nautilus" (prior name "Yorke" - Springman, J.) used at Turkey Point and Bunbury Boat Shed. Vessel beached below my residence and remained there some years.
7. Remains of vessel uncovered in dredging new Channel from Estuary to Koombana Bay in 1973.
8. "MV Valdemar" brought to Bunbury by my brother J. Pat Lyons one of the Swan "Vale" boats. Used as passenger and stores, berthing lines at Bunbury Harbour (old harbour). Buried at La Porte pipeline.
9. Wreck with iron ribs opposite the yacht club on the golf club side of railway. Disturbed and covered by railway development.

Lois E. Wallace
August, 1981.

Appendix II**The Boat and Ship builders of Western Australia.**

1829 - 1929.

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ADAMS, Henry Melville, of Bunbury.

He was born in 1823 in England and was a ship's carpenter who deserted from the American whaling barque "EAGLE" at Dunsborough some time during 1848. He married in 1860, Mary Anne Smith, (born at Augusta, 1835) and they were to have ten children.

He allegedly built a coastal schooner at Bunbury during 1849 and then in July 1850 was reported to be building a boat for Benjamin Jackson. From the contemporary newspaper we read, "on the 6th inst the vessel which has been in the course of

construction at Bunbury for some months past was launched in the presence of rather a limited number of spectators. She was christened the "UNKNOWN" by Miss Emma Adams, daughter of the owner, and in the opinion of our correspondent, without any exception, the finest model he has seen built in any of the Australian colonies.

The workmanship is quite equal to any exhibited from Port Arthur to Sydney. The vessel is about 54 tons burden.

In the following week's edition the story is that the launch was bungled, the vessel having stuck on the slips, and that it took another six days for the vessel to be securely anchored in deep water to be fitted out.

Later he worked at Yelverton's timber station at Quindalup and then became a farmer near Yallingup. In the mid 1860's he employed many ticket-of-leave men from the convict establishment. Henry Melville Adams died on the 18/5/1875.

References..Dictionary of West Australians, Erikson.
Perth Gazette, 16/8/1850, 23/8/1850.

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James was born at Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire, England, in 1822 and emigrated to the Swan River Colony on the ship "TRUSTY", arriving at Fremantle on the 23/5/1844. He married firstly, Charlotte Narroway and secondly, Alice Parkes and between them they had fourteen children, one of whom, Lillian was to marry another boat builder, A.E. Brown.

He went first to Picton and then Australind before finally settling at Bunbury. His trade was that of a carpenter, but he also made coffins, was a wheelwright and at one stage in his career took to boat building, constructing the "STAR OF THE SOUTH" at Bunbury in 1875.

She was cutter rigged, O/No.75297, and of 9.5 tons. Her length was 36ft, breadth 11ft and depth 4.5ft. She ran regularly from Fremantle to Bunbury and the Vasse and in 1884 was lengthened and reregistered. Her final owner was M.C. Davies, the timber merchants and mill owners of Hamelin Bay.

James other venture into ship building was the two masted schooner, "BELLE OF BUNBURY", O/No.75298, of 42 tons. Her dimensions were, 55 x 17 x 7 feet. She was built during 1876 and launched in January 1877. She was wrecked in a gale in Cockburn Sound on the 7th of April 1877.

J.D. Gibbs passed away at Bunbury in 1905.

References..Early Days Journal, Vol 3,Pt 1, R.W.A.H.S.
 Dictionary of West Australians, Erikson.
 Gibbs Genealogy.
 Bunbury Herald, 4/1/1905.
 Herald Almanac, 1866 to 1876.
 Brockman Family history, "He Rode Alone".
 W.A. Almanac, 1866 to 1871.

HOUGH, James,

of Bunbury.

James was born in 1824 and arrived at the Swan River Colony on the emigrant ship "PARKFIELD" on the 18/3/1841. He married Ann Hurst in December 1845 and they were to have thirteen children. He started his working life as a carter and sawyer in the Bunbury district.

In 1874 the pearling at Shark's Bay was at fever pitch similar to that of a gold rush and anyone with a boat was heading North to try their luck. Julius Brockman of Augusta was one such that was bitten by the thought of wealth lying around to be picked up. (see Brockman entry). On his way north he called in at Dongara to calk his vessel and fill his water casks. To quote from his diary :-

"29/1/1875, that evening I was surprised to see a boat coming in from the South. It turned out to be James Hough and his two sons from Bunbury in the "ADA", a small cutter they had built on the Collie River, and had carted her to Bunbury, in sections, and put her together there, like us they were on their way to the fisheries.

Next day, January 30th the two boats set sail, keeping pretty close together and reaching Port Gregory early in the afternoon. As we did not know of any anchorage ahead we stopped here about three miles offshore, and the following day we sailed in company with Hough, and at noon had a fair wind and hauled close and exchanged some meat, beef for pork, each throwing a piece on board. All that night we kept on and next morning sighted the false entrance to Shark's Bay. As we had no chart we were nearly going in, but then saw far ahead the right opening to Shark's Bay".

After battling winds and shoals the two boats arrived at Useless Inlet.

"then we saw a red painted whaleboat desperately struggling to get up the bay. Hough was far behind us. His boat could

McKERNON, C,

of Bunbury.

Mr McKernon, a shipwright, had his premises on Stirling Street, Bunbury in 1918 where it is assumed he built dinghies and fishing craft as there are no registered vessels to his credit.

Reference..Wise's Post Office Directory, 1918.
Yachting and Motor boat magazines, 1902 - 1913.
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PORT, James C,

of Bunbury.

This man came from Adelaide with his partner Richard Honey to set up a timber mill in Western Australia to supply their timber retail and construction businesses. They first set up in Bunbury calling themselves the Lion Jarrah Mills and as more contracts ensued they opened a branch in Perth. They also became large exporters of Jarrah, mainly to the Eastern States for construction projects. In 1904 the company built a two masted schooner named the "DELAWARE", O/No.120027, of 12.3 tons at Bunbury and the registered builder was James C Port. Eventually the vessel ended up in the Broome pearling fleet and was finally broken up during 1928.

References..Register of British Ships, Australian Archives.
Boat Builders certificate for "DELAWARE".
Interview with descendant.
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PRITCHARD, A.S.

of South Perth.

This man had his business at the Coode Street jetty in South Perth and although he is another of whom we know nothing, his advertisement states that prices are given for repairs, alterations and every description of boat building. This was in 1907. He also hired out sailing and rowing boats so presumably he built those for his business. The only boats I can find that he definitely built were two yachts one named "ELMA" which was used for racing on the river and the other was the "SEAGULL" built in 1906. No registered craft are attributed to him. Arthur's residence and boat building shed were situated on section 7 of lot 96 in Swan Terrace, South Perth.

References..Yachting and Motor Boat Annuals, 1902-1913.
City of South Perth, rate books.
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