

## Macquarie and Heard Islands – shipwrecks on or around and sites associated with the sealing industry

Description and condition	Reference
<p><i>Heard Island – sealing sites</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of sealing activities on Heard Island still present at several coastal sites: Long Beach, Spit Bay North, Try Pot Beach and Lavett Bluff</li> <li>• Comprise stone platforms, hut footings or ruins, occupied caves, barrels and graves.</li> <li>• Stone platforms comprised of large beach cobbles formed into sub-circular mounds raised above the general level of surrounding seal wallows, and used as platforms for working activities.</li> <li>• Ruins of a variety of huts used for domestic and/or industrial purposes, and built from a range of materials, are found on virtually all the sealing beaches.</li> <li>• Barrels and barrel pieces are widespread across the beaches, and two barrel caches are known from Oil Barrel Point and Red Island.</li> </ul>	<p>Australian Antarctic Division and Director of Parks, 2005, <i>Draft Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve Management Plan</i>, Department of Environment and Heritage, p.93.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified four different types of sealing sites: stone platforms, hut footings or ruins, occupied caves and barrels. Also many isolated sealers artefacts scattered across the beaches, including pieces of trypots (large metal cauldrons).</li> <li>• The platforms were constructed from large beach cobbles built into sub circular mounds, ranging in size between 4 metres and 17 metres across.</li> <li>• The function of the platforms was apparently as working platforms and the more intact ones supported remains of tryworks including trypots, flensing floors and other equipment.</li> <li>• The largest mounds, at Spit Bay North, had substantial remains of a tryworks including four surviving trypots and pieces of a fifth, a fire-box made of bricks and iron beams a scrap blubber press and the remains of a large flensing floor.</li> <li>• Two other mounds in the Spit End region had trypots and/or other tryworks equipment on or immediately adjacent to them. These were at Sealers Beach, where the mound also incorporated bricks and had trypots and a copper oil tank, and at Trypot Beach, which had a trypot.</li> <li>• One other mound at Spit Bay North had associated with it a wooden flensing floor and a blubber skimmer.</li> </ul>	<p>McGowan A, 2000, On their own: an analysis of sealer's sites on Heard Island, Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania, Volume 133 (2), p.61-70 based on assessment visit by Angela McGowan and Estelle Lazer in 1986-87.</p>

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<p>Another has several sealing tools. Two mounds had no diagnostic artefacts found with them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platforms at Spit End were most probably made of wood. Two platforms supported wooden floors, built from an apparently random selection of beams, planks and unworked timber. Another platform had what may be either the remains of a floor or part of a collapsed wall. Timber pieces of various shapes and sizes found lying alongside each other have been interpreted as floors. Groups of similar planks or boards found lying in disarray have been interpreted as collapsed walls.</li> <li>• The large tryworks at Spit Bay North had two wooden uprights between the fire-box and the wooden floor, and these may have contributed to the support of a roof of some kind.</li> <li>• Barrels and barrel pieces are widespread across the beaches of Heard Island. The distribution of isolated barrel pieces is probably the result of dispersal by the wind rather than representative of the original location of barrels. Where barrels are found eroding out of the ground or where there is a group of iron components, the site is probably at its original location. Barrels were used to contain food and other goods such as coal, as well as to store and transport blubber and oil.</li> <li>• Two sites may be cooperage sites, where barrels were put together, although in both cases the evidence is inconclusive. One of these, at Spit Bay North, contained a large collection of coopering iron, sealing tools and ships dunnage, which suggests that a cooperage and tryworks had been in this area.</li> <li>• At Sealers Beach, a small brick and stone structure with associated barrel component may have been the cooperage for this settlement. The largest barrel cache, at Oil Barrel Point, comprised 35 barrels (in 1986) lying on their sides in two rows supported by lines of rocks. A small excavation of five barrels showed that they contained variously: congealed blubbery oil, dismembered penguin pieces in solidified oil and whole giant petrels (which may have fallen in while trying to eat the oil). The casks appeared to be stacked ready for taking off.</li> <li>• Red Island had a small cache of six barrels sitting end up. The date of this site is unclear. A number of barrels and barrel pieces have been found at Atlas Cove.</li> <li>• Stone hut ruins have been found on virtually all the sealing beaches. Stone footings survived to a height of 0.75 metres, together with four upright wooden posts and the remains of six others. The hut was probably roofed with a sail or with seal skins as the two largest upright posts were peppered with a variety of copper and iron nails which may have held the roofing material in place.</li> <li>• All of the huts recorded at Spit End in 1986-87 by McGowan and Lazer have a rectangular floor plan, with the exception of one of the Sealers Beach huts which have been L-shaped. Burton &amp; Williams (1985) reported one</li> </ul>	

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<p>round and two elliptical structures at South West Bay Beach. This type of hut has not been found elsewhere at Heard Island and the date of this site is uncertain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At Sealers Beach there were remains of three large huts. They consisted of stone footings with wooden upright posts. The large quantity of fallen wooden boards inside these huts indicated that the walls were made of boards fixed to the wooden uprights.</li> <li>• The huts on the north-western beaches of Heard Island were generally smaller and were typically stone-wall huts lined with wooden boards or planks.</li> <li>• Other domestic sites, at Try Pot Beach and Spit Bay North, were indicated by scatters of domestic artefacts.</li> <li>• Many lava caves occur around Heard Island. One at Red Island and a cave in a moraine at Long Beach had evidence of occupation. Another hut site at Red Island was located in the shelter of a lava overhang. Both the occupied caves are small, 4 metres deep at the most, and both contained items of structural timber, showing that their sheltering properties had been improved upon.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Heard Island shipwrecks</i></b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 100 visits to Heard Island by over 40 whaling ships and other vessels are known to have occurred in the sealing period. Of those ships at least 14 are recorded as having been lost and some of these were wrecked or lost at the island during the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the <i>Mary Powell</i>, thought to have been driven into ice cliffs at Brown Glacier in 1858/59, and the <i>Trinity</i>, which was wrecked at Spit Bay in October 1880 leaving its crew stranded on the island until January 1882.</li> <li>• No specific locations of wrecked ships are known but shipwreck material has been recorded at Walrus Beach, Skua Beach and along the northern beach at Spit Bay.</li> <li>• These remains and any others from shipwrecks over 75 years old are automatically classified as historic shipwrecks under the <i>Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>Australian Antarctic Division and Director of Parks, 2005, <i>Draft Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve Management Plan</i>, Department of Environment and Heritage, p.93.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three sites with shipwreck material were recorded: (two sites) on Walrus Beach and (one site) at Skua Beach. In addition, isolated items of ship wreckage were found along the northern beach at Spit Bay.</li> <li>• The Walrus Beach sites both consisted of very fixed assemblages of ship timber and other fittings, mixed with other debris which appears to have blown into Atlas Cove from the ANARE camp and then washed up on the shore.</li> <li>• The Skua Beach material is a ship's wheel which was buried at the edge of the old beach terrace above the</li> </ul>	<p>Lazer E, McGowan A, 1990, Heard Island Archaeological Survey 1986-87, Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Department of Architectural and Design Science, University of Sydney, p.37.</p>

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shingle beach. The heel was found to be marked 'Robinson Massachusetts' (pers. comm. Linda Clark). Made of iron, copper and wood, the ship from which it came has not yet been positively identified.	
<i>Macquarie Island sealing sites</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the exact locations of early 19<sup>th</sup> century seal colonies could not be determined from the archaeological evidence, the location of bases of operations can be implied from the written evidence. These centres were the Isthmus, Sandy Bay and possibly the Nuggets. Oiling sites (from elephant seals) are located in seven specific areas around Macquarie Island with the majority being on the leeward or eastern side.</li> </ul>	Townrow K, 1989, Survey and Excavation of Historic Sites on Macquarie Island, Occasional Paper No. 20, Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife, Tasmania.

## Macquarie Island – sealing sites.

Sources:

Carmichael N, 2004, Macquarie Island Historic Heritage Sites Audit, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart.

Nash M, 2000 (draft), Conserving Macquarie Island’s public historic heritage: conservation planning guidance, Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.

Title	Description	Condition	Key threatening processes	Cultural significance
Buckles Bay landing beach digester site		<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u></p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The site is largely protected from wildlife disturbance by a wooden wildlife exclusion fence constructed in 1991. The site is also far enough from either coastline so as to be safe from even major storm events. Tussock grass is growing all around the base of the three digesters and one boiler and is contributing to the degradation of the wooden support bearers. There has been little apparent degradation at the site since the assessment by Nash in 1997 (2000:15).</p>	Corrosion, wood deterioration and vegetation encroachment	National: some State (Tas): considerable
Hasselborough Bay digester site/processing works	Sealing/oil processing works. The site dates back from the later period of oiling (1917-1919) and was used seasonally in conjunction with the nearby Razorback Hill works. The site has limited physical evidence and consists of elements of a single digester plant.	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> The plant consists of a heavily corroded boiler and digester. In 1996 the boiler came loose from its timber bearings and is presently lying on its side. The original timber bearings for the plant equipment are still in place. There is also a scatter of timberwork from the original plant shed and a number of loose barrel staves.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The boiler was toppled and relocated during the May 2003 storm event (Parks &amp;</p>	Wildlife disturbance, corrosion, wood deterioration, and wave action.	National: some State (Tas): considerable

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		Wildlife Service 2003: 76), while the digester which toppled in 1996 was also relocated in the same storm (Nash 2000:18 and Schulz & Lynn 2003). The storm also removed tussock vegetation from the site causing floorboards and foundations to be exposed.		
Unity Bay tryworks site		<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u></p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The site was previously buried and was only discovered after the May 2003 storm event removed tussocks and soil from around a trypot. The site consists of a half exposed trypot and the extent of the site is unknown.</p>	Corrosion and wave action	National: unknown State (Tas): unknown
The Nuggets digester site	<p>Processing works for Royal penguins established in 1891. Comprised two boilers, three digesters and three cooling tanks. A second hand boiler was brought in (in 1908) to replace one of the originals and a small digester was added.</p> <p>The Nuggets site dates (1891 to 1919) from the later period of oiling. The site is the most intact and representative from this period of occupation and contains graves, sub surface hut remains, a large digester plant and extensive artefact scatters.</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u></p> <p>Accommodation area – stone footings, foundation posts and scattered floor timbers mark the site.</p> <p>Steam digester site – remains consist of the foundation of a shed enclosing four digesters and three boilers that sit on substantial timber bearers. Nearby there are also partially buried barrels that still contain coal. There are also remains of a barrel ramp leading down to the beach and a concrete foundation for a winch. Three settling tanks are now buried under a landslip. There is a scatter of artefacts.</p> <p>Boiling down works – has been affected by wave action. The large south-east digester has been pushed two metres away from its original timber bearings and the south-west digester has fallen over towards the south. Landslip and tussock growth has also buried three settling tanks and partially buried the northern most boiler.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The Nuggets site has</p>	<p>Wildlife disturbance, corrosion, wood deterioration, wave action and landslips.</p> <p>Long-term conservation of the entire site will be very difficult given its susceptibility to wave action, wildlife disturbance and landslips.</p> <p>The site is impacted by penguins and used by elephant seals during their moulting periods. To protect the boiling down works 68 metres of protective fencing was put up in 1991. High seasons destroyed a large</p>	International: exceptional National: exceptional State (Tas): exceptional

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		<p>deteriorated very rapidly in the last 12 years due to landslips and wave damage. One digester has been toppled, other digesters and boilers have been shifted off their bearers, and the collection of coal filled barrels has become more exposed. In addition, the partially buried engine located on the southern side of the complex, and the barrel ramp, reported by Nash (2000: 20) in 1997 can no longer be seen.</p>	<p>proportion of the fencing and the remnants have been removed. The material at the living quarters and the barrel concentrations appear to be periodically uncovered by either occasional high seas or the impacts of penguins and seals.</p> <p>Penguin activity has removed all tussock growth lying in front of the site, decreasing its protection from occasional high seas.</p>	
Boiler Rocks boiler	<p>The object appears to be an old boiler that has been converted into a ship's mooring buoy and was either used locally or has been washed up onto Macquarie from elsewhere (Townrow 1989:50).</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u></p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> This object may have been moved further inland by the May 2003 storm (Schulz &amp; Lynn 2003).</p>	Corrosion and wave action	<p>National: unknown</p> <p>State (Tas): unknown</p>
Bauer Bay sealers hut site/processing works	<p>The site was used seasonally (1878-1879) during the revival of oiling operations. The site has limited surviving sub surface evidence.</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> the site is comprised largely of sub-surface deposits. There is a light scatter of surface material that appears to be subject to considerable sand movement. Excavations revealed a fire hearth and artefact material believed to be associated with a cooper's workshop.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The site consists of some buried timbers and a hearth. There are no visible artefacts at the site and only the remaining historic site boundary markers provide any indication as to its location. The site does not appear to have changed since its assessment by</p>	<p>Wood deterioration and wildlife disturbance.</p> <p>Elephant seals wallow over the area and it is subject to wind erosion.</p>	<p>National: some</p> <p>State (Tas): some</p>

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		Nash in 1997 (2000: 23).		
Sandy Bay sealers worksite/processing works	The site was one of the first locations on Macquarie Island where tryworks and accommodation areas were established. The site was in operation from 1812 to 1820 and was subsequently re-used by various sealing parties in 1851, 1877-78 and during the Hatch period (1899 onwards). Members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition during the 1911-1913 expedition re-used the hut on the site.	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> test excavations in 1988 revealed a processing area from the earliest sealing period. This consisted of a stone hearth and a clay floor, as well as a scatter of timber barrel parts. This area is now protected by timber fencing that was installed in 1991. The remains of the sealing hut that was burnt down in 1913 have also been located. Subsequent landslips have largely covered the hut but the burnt remains of floor planking and timber foundation bearers were located during the excavation. Artefact material recovered from the site dated from a number of different occupation periods from the building of the hut in the 1870s to discarded refuse from the nearby ANARE hut.</p> <p>Surface scatters of timbers and some iron artefacts were reported in 1989 to lie 80 metres north of the ANARE hut. Much of this material has disappeared with the expansion of the resident king penguin colony and the subsequent erosion of the area.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> This site formerly had a wildlife exclusion fence around it which was removed in 2000. The site has deteriorated noticeably since the author's last visit in 1978 with considerable tussock loss having taken place. The stone hearth is now completely exposed and is vulnerable to wildlife disturbance and wind erosion. The condition of the clay floor reported by Townrow (1989:65) is unknown.</p>	Wildlife disturbance and weather	National: some State (Tas): considerable
Lusitania Bay digester and tryworks site/processing	The site comprises three main areas: a try works, a boiling down complex of one boiler and two	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u></p> <p>The try works – consists of a single trypot set in remnant dry stone walking and a scatter of timberwork. Some</p>	Corrosion, wood deterioration and wildlife disturbance.	National: some State (Tas): considerable

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works	<p>digesters and living quarters.</p> <p>The site was used sporadically for oiling operations between the 1820s and 1899, and was the first location where digester technology was introduced to the island. Members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition during the 1911-1913 expedition also re-used this site. As at 1997, the site had considerable physical evidence from all periods of occupation including the remains of an early try works, elements of the later digester plant and the sub surface remains of associated accommodation huts.</p>	<p>artefact material, including the remains of an engine driven winch.</p> <p>The digester site – originally enclosed in a shed, the remains of the shed consist of some posts and a bearer on the west side of the building and a section of planking and the wall plate on the south side. The plant equipment consists of one boiler and two digesters.</p> <p>Living quarters – the site has been extensively eroded and consists of a scatter of building timbers over approximately 30 m square. The hut location is marked by a number of remnant posts.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The site does not appear to have changed much since the assessment by Nash in 1997 (2000:31) and the author’s last visit in 1998. Although entirely surrounded by breeding King penguins there is still a surprising number of timber and metal artefacts scattered around the main digested locality. The penguin colony prevents most seals from accessing the site and it does not appear to have been affected by wave action in recent times. The surrounding penguin colony also seems to have prevented many ‘collectible items’ such as brass valves, from being souvenired by expeditioners.</p>		
Caroline Cove tryworks site	<p>The site was the most intensively used location on the island’s west coast and dates to a single occupancy from 1823 to 1827. As at 1997, the site had physical evidence in the form of a try works and associated artefact scatters.</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> consists of two trypots. One trypot stands clear on the surface while the other, has been largely buried. These excavations in 1988 revealed material from the sites short occupation period, consisting of parts of the two original trypot fireplaces and a section of a timber walkway. A scatter of barrel staves and ship wreckage extends along the beach and in the tussocks. What may be part of a stone wall reinforced with iron spikes has been located 20 metres west of the trypots. The cave reported to</p>	<p>Wave action, landslips, corrosion, wood deterioration, and wildlife disturbance.</p> <p>Recent heavy rabbit grazing of the vegetation may be contributing to the landslip problem.</p>	<p>National: some State (Tas): considerable</p>

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		<p>have been used as a dwelling place – landslides have covered the floor of this cave and there is no visible evidence of habitation.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> There have been many changes to this site since the assessment by Nash in 1997 (2000:34). Wave action has resulted in over 30 barrel staves, two half-buried barrels, a lump of crushed copper cladding, an iron ring and holding pin, what appears to be a stone hearth, and a section of timber walkway uncovered by Townrow (1989:119) during test excavations in 1988, all being exposed. The trypot previously located on the south-western side of the site has either been washed away or buried by a landslip.</p> <p>In addition, a new site has been exposed. Among the exposed objects at the new site are: stone foundation; a stone hearth; heavy timber beams; part of a machined brass hinge or instrument’ glass fragments; a rust circle possibly from an old trypot; coal fragments; timberwork with copper cladding still attached; and numerous metal fragments. The site appears to have changed markedly since its discovery (after the 2003 storm event) with some reported objects no longer apparent and new objects visible.</p>		
Hurd Point digester and tryworks site/processing works	<p>The site comprises three main areas: a steam digester plant, a tryworks and a living area.</p> <p>The site was used sporadically for oiling operations between the 1820s and 1899 and was continually occupied by members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition during the 1911-13 expedition. The</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> The erosion caused by the breeding penguins has caused an extensive scatter of artefacts down slope towards the beach consisting of building timbers, parts from the processing works, tools and barrel parts.</p> <p>Tryworks – a cluster of four trypots is situated in a line – only two of the trypots remain as whole pots – the location of the other pots being defined by depressions and trypot fragments. The ‘nest’ to hold the trypots above ground level</p>	<p>Wave action, corrosion, wood deterioration and wildlife disturbance.</p> <p>Virtually the entire site is used as a royal penguin breeding area and large numbers of elephant seals also visit the area. The erosion caused by the</p>	<p>National: exceptional</p> <p>State (Tas): exceptional</p>

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	<p>site has considerable physical evidence from all periods of occupation including the largest and best preserved try works on the island, elements of the later digester plant and the well preserved sub surface remains of at least one accommodation hut.</p>	<p>has been formed by stacking locally procured rocks. The presence of a timber and turf shed built to protect the works and possibly dating from the earliest occupation period, was confirmed by excavations carried in 1988. The adjacent steam digester plant and an associated artefact scatter of building timbers and metal fittings. There is one boiler and one digester, both of which have fallen down the hill. The remains of the shed used to house the digester plant lies slightly uphill of the fallen equipment. The shed is defined by weathered timber corner posts, remnant floor planking and bearers for at least one item of plant.</p> <p>Living quarters – the remains consist of a timber scatter with some wooden foundation posts and planking defining part of a single hut. A test excavation indicates that a minor landslip had occurred over this part of the site and helped to preserve remnant material from subsequent penguin erosion.</p> <p><u>From 2004 Carmichael survey:</u> The site is completely surrounded by breeding Royal penguins during the summer. The digester has moved approximately 30 m down-slope from its 1997 location as a result of the May 2003 storm event (Nash 2000:30 and Schulz &amp; Lynn 2003). The hut site partially excavated by Townrow in 1989 is now completely exposed, presumably due to waves or water runoff.</p>	<p>breeding penguins has caused an extensive scatter of artefacts down slope towards the beach.</p>	
Razorback Hill processing works	<p>The sealing/oiling works consisted of two sets of digesters and boilers housed in a timber and corrugated iron shed together with a cluster of at least three huts. The boiling plant is believed to have been in use up</p>	<p><u>From 1997 Nash survey:</u> There are some sub-surface remains of three timber huts. Test trenches dug at the site by Townrow in 1987 and 1988 revealed two of these huts. The surviving structural material consists of timber foundation posts and bearings, as well as some collapsed wall planking.</p>	<p>Corrosion, wood deterioration and wildlife disturbance.</p>	<p>National: considerable State (Tas): considerable</p>

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	<p>until 1919.</p> <p>The site dates from the later period of oiling and was used seasonally (1892-1919) in conjunction with the Nuggets works. The site has considerable physical evidence including elements of the digester plant and the subsurface remains of accommodation and storage huts.</p>	<p>The processing area consists of two digesters and one boiler with a scatter of remnant structural material from the original plant shed. Another boiler lies on its side. A timber and iron winch is also present, believed to have come from the Nuggets site. All of the above items of plant equipment are heavily corroded. Most of the visible artefact material reported in the 1982 and 1989 surveys is no longer locatable due to revegetation of the tussock grassland. Some material would also have been buried or dispersed by the actions of elephant seals across the site.</p>		