The Maritime Archaeology of Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens: Area Conservation Plan

Heritage Office
June, 1999
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 General</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Specific</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Shipwreck Survival - some factors</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Myall Lakes - general history</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Boat building at the Myall Lakes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 WRECK SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens wreck sites</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Brighton</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Paterson</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Breeza</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Iluka</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Myall River</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Terara</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Salamander</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9 &quot;Drogher&quot; on Tramline Beach (Smith’s Lake)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10 Unidentified drogher at Neranie Bay</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 TERRESTRIAL SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Neranie Mill</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Neranie Bay</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Corrigans Bay</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Mayers Point</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Clarks Bay, Boolambayte Lake, site of Duncan McRae’s mill</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Boolambayte Creek</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 SITE POSITIONS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 BRIGHTON</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 PATERSON</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 BEEZEA</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 ILUKA</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 MYALL RIVER</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 TERARA</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 SALAMANDER</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 THE BROTHERS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9 UNIDENTIFIED DROGER, Neranie Bay</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10 BOILER - SMITHS LAKE</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 SITE MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Background</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Development of a site management strategy</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 Results</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4 Legislative Protection</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

Figure 1: Location map - Tea Gardens wreck sites under investigation. ...........................................7
Figure 2: Location map - Sites in the upper Myall Lake under investigation. ...................................8
Figure 3: View of typical scenery at Neranie Bay in Myall Lake......................................................11
Figure 4: The drogher *The Brothers* loading timber at Thomas Brothers’ Bungwahl Mill..............14
Figure 5: The Manly ferry *Brighton*. ..........................................................................................16
Figure 6: The wreck of the ex-Manly ferry *Brighton*, Pindimar Bay. ...........................................17
Figure 7: A boiler located south of the bridge at Tea Gardens.........................................................18
Figure 8: Wreckage immediately opposite Tea Gardens attributed to the *Iluka*. ............................19
Figure 9: Remains of a burnt wreck on Witts Island.......................................................................20
Figure 10: View of remains of a paddle steamer believed to be *Terara*, Witts Island.....................21
Figure 11: Iron framework lying near the *Terara* remains .............................................................21
Figure 12: Remains attributed to wooden drogher *Salamander*.......................................................22
Figure 13: Remains of submerged timber drogher attributed to *The Brothers*. ..........................23
Figure 14: Several photographs of completion ceremony for *The Brothers* pontoon.........................24
Figure 15: Sketch of the “bow” of the timber drogher identified as *The Brothers*. ..........................24
Figure 16: Detail of a mast or stanchion within the hull, plus chain.................................................25
Figure 17: Unidentified timber drogher near Neranie Mill site.......................................................25
Figure 18: Remains of the sunken breakwater at Neranie Point, Myall Lake.................................28
Figure 19: Measured sketch of the jetty remains at Neranie Sawmill site........................................29
Figure 20: Colin Browne obtaining GPS position for Neranie wharf site......................................30
Figure 21: Jetty structure at Corrigans Bay, Bungwahl.................................................................31
Figure 22: Jetty remains at Mill Bay at Mayers Point, Myall Lake..................................................32
Figure 23: Stone jetty remains at Clarks Bay, Boolambayte Lake....................................................33
Figure 24: Timber jetty remains at Clarks Bay, Boolambayte Lake..............................................34
Figure 25: Landward side of the Clarks Bay site, Boolambayte Lake.............................................34
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Heritage Office wishes to thank the following individuals and organisations for their help with the Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens wreck inspections.

Mr Colin Browne  Manly Hydraulics Laboratory, Department of Public Works & Services
Mr Cosmos Coroneos  Consultant Maritime Archaeologist
Mr Norman Cruickshank  Marine Drive, Tea Gardens
Mr Peter Dawson  Dawsons Scenic Tours, Nelson Bay
Mr Dennis Gojak  National Parks & Wildlife Service, Hurstville
Mr Bill & Ms Leanne Legge  Local researchers
Mr David Ratcliffe  Raymond Terrace
Mr Stephen Smith  Regional Manager, Booti Booti National Park
Mr Dave Turner  Sub District Manager, Booti Booti National Park
Staff  Australian National Maritime Museum Library
Staff  Bulahdelah Historical Society
Staff  National Parks & Wildlife Service, Hurstville
Staff  Myall Lakes National Park
Staff  Mitchell / State Library of NSW
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report details a regional Maritime Archaeological Survey of the Myall Lakes system and the Tea Gardens area by the Heritage Office’s Maritime Archaeology Program staff.

The aim of the survey was to document the known abandoned wreck sites in the vicinity of Tea Gardens, and to document and search for wreck sites and submerged jetty/slipway sites in the upper Myall Lakes.

The field inspection proved successful with the following results:
- the inspection of the Neranie Timber Mill site, Neranie Bay
- the inspection of the ps Brothers wreck site, Neranie Bay
- the inspection of an unidentified drogher wreck near the Neranie Mill site
- the inspection of wharves associated with Crolle’s Shipyard, Bungwahl
- the inspection of the Beresford Mill site, Mayers Point
- the inspection of McCrae’s Sawmill site at Clark’s Bay, Boolambayte Lake
- the inspection of the Iluka abandoned hulk
- the inspection of the Myall River abandoned hulk
- the inspection of the Salamander abandoned hulk
- the inspection of the Paterson boiler wreck site
- the inspection of the Brighton and associated abandoned hulks, Pindimar Bay

The field project was organised by the Heritage Office as part of its role in administering the State’s Maritime Archaeology Program. Heritage Office Maritime Archaeologists’ David Nutley (Project Leader) and Tim Smith coordinated the field work which involved five separate visits during fieldwork in the region, the first to Tea Gardens on the 10 November, 1997, the extended survey between 11 - 15 May, 1998, the third on 16 February, 1999, the fourth on 24 February, 1999, and the fifth between 13-14 May, 1999.

Fieldwork support was obtained from Mr Colin Browne, Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (DPWS). Primary research material and information on potential sites was collated by Consultant Maritime Archaeologist, Mr Cosmos Coroneos. Mr Coroneos compiled a report commissioned by the Heritage Office, Myall Lakes Shipwreck Study, 1998, drawing upon primary historical records, records maintained by the National Parks & Wildlife Service, and local identities. Leanne and Bill Legge provided valuable information on sites in Neranie Bay.

Figure 1: Location map - Tea Gardens wreck sites under investigation. Courtesy: Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (DPW&S).
Figure 2: Location map - Sites in the upper Myall Lake under investigation. Courtesy: Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (DPW&S). Note that McCrae’s Mill at Clarke Bay and the Beresford Mill at Mayers Point are not shown.
2.0 OBJECTIVES

2.1 General

To locate and visually inspect known wreck sites in the study region and to inspect known submerged remains of slipways, jetty sites and shipbuilding yards. To observe their environmental and archaeological characteristics and to develop an assessment of their archaeological potential.

2.2 Specific

1. to locate known wreck sites and land based maritime sites in the Tea Gardens - Myall Lakes area
2. To record accurate GPS positions for each site;
3. to carrying out a general orientation inspection of each as an aid to understanding the nature, complexity and spread of each site;
4. to photographically record each site and its setting;
5. to liaise with local contacts to obtain information on each site. To liaise with organisations and a State and regional level who are involved in the interpretation and management of the sites (eg NPWS).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Background histories of the targeted shipwreck and land based sites were prepared by Heritage Office staff prior to the site inspections. This was based on earlier research conducted by Consultant Maritime Archaeologist, Mr Cosmos Coroneos. Mr Coroneos was commissioned by the Heritage Office to compile the Myall Lakes Shipwreck Study which aimed to identify key sites. The report relied heavily on previous site inspection work conducted in the area by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It identified locatable sites and provided information on the general history of each.

The Heritage Office was aware of the abandoned hulks in the Tea Gardens area, but had not previously inspected them. Evidence to assist with their location was obtained from local residents in the first stage of the Myall Lakes field inspections. Research into each site, particularly the shipwreck sites is at an early stage. Information has been obtained in part from the National Historic Shipwrecks Database (maintained in NSW by the Office), although additional research is required. Similarly, minimal research has been undertaken to source surviving archival images for each site.

Most sites were inspected by boat and documentation restricted to visual survey. Site sketches and land based photography was undertaken where suitable. An accurate position for each site was obtained using a GPS on static averaging mode. Some positions were obtained by map spotting from appropriate topographic charts.
3.1 Shipwreck Survival - some factors

The majority of shipwreck losses in New South Wales derived from the peculiar difficulties in navigating the coast. These included, apart from the normal storms and violent weather, natural hazards such as reefs, protruding headlands, entrapping bays, uncharted rocks, offshore islands and dangerous river bar entrances. A number of losses can however, be attributed to human error, including drunkenness, poor navigation, overloading and vessel disrepair.

These events are symptomatic of the range of disasters which could befall shipping, including at times, vessels operating on inland waterways.

However, even after a vessel survived the course of its natural working life, it could still end up in the archaeological record. The wrecks documented in this report were all purposely scuttled/abandoned after their useful working life was over. Driven ashore on small islands or bays, most can be found today partially exposed above water, overgrown by mangroves, or submerged.

Each site differs in construction techniques and age. The majority were iron steamers (either paddle or screw), while some were of timber construction. Some operated in the area, others were towed there to be abandoned (eg the ex-Sydney ferry, Brighton).

The Myall Lakes was renowned for its working fleet of paddle steamers. Generally punt shape in form, they were commonly referred to as “droghers” and locally as “punts”. Typical examples in the archaeological record include the Salamander and The Brothers. These were work-a-day steamers which were used to transport raw materials - particularly timber, produce and stores, amongst the townships and firms of the region. Much of the timber was transported for carriage by ocean going vessels.

The integrity of each wreck was found to vary significantly. This relates to a range of environmental and human factors which have impacted on each site.

The majority have retained a significant level of intactness. This has resulted from their placement in stable shallow water environments, where the soft sand bottom and limited tidal action has acted to keep the hulls together (eg The Brothers, plus the unidentified drogher at Neranie Bay). The less saline water of the lake system has probably also acted to reduce iron corrosion levels. However, some are noticeably deteriorated, for example the hulks in Pindimar Bay. Here, human forces have largely acted to reduce the structure of the wrecks.

Many wrecks were purposely salvaged in recent times, either for financial returns, or in an attempt to remove the wrecks from high traffic areas. Sites such as the Paterson have thereby been reduced to a single boiler, while the Brighton and Iluka have been reduced to the lower hull.

Many of the land based installations examined during the present study have also been retained in situ. These include stone jetties and breakwaters, timber wharves and slips. While some were partially removed above water after the end of their service life (sometimes pulled down by the droghers), remains below water have generally been left largely intact.
4.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As previously mentioned, detailed historical research into these sites has not been undertaken by the Heritage Office to-date. The current inspections aimed purely to locate and identify key remains. Additional research will be ongoing as part of the Office’s role in identifying and managing the underwater cultural resource of New South Wales. The Office is assisted in this role by local researchers and other Government agencies, such as the National Parks & Wildlife Service which documents many of these sites as they occur within existing Park boundaries.

![Figure 3: View of typical scenery at Neranie Bay in Myall Lake. Archaeologist Tim Smith pictured. Photo: David Nutley.](image)

4.1 Myall Lakes - general history

Some general comments on the Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens area can be made. Myall Lakes\(^1\) was an important area in the collection and transshipment of raw material, particularly timber, from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. The lakes cover an area of 10,125 hectares and are the largest natural fresh - brackish water systems on the New South Wales coast.


The first Europeans in the area were escaped convicts who wrecked their stolen sailing vessel on the north shore of Port Stephens on the 29th September 1790 (Kent, 1988 - reference not confirmed). Exploitation of the cedar stands (*Cedrela Australis*) began soon after in 1795. The cutting of timber was carried out by convicts who manhandled the logs to the lakes. They were then lashed together as rafts and poled out to waiting ships.

The first permit to cut cedar in the area was issued by Governor Macquarie on the 9th November 1816. James Smith obtained permission to cut cedar at Port Stephens and Solomon Wiseman shipped it to Sydney at this time. In 1821, Solomon Wiseman was given

---

\(^1\) This information is extracted from the NPWS brochure, “Myall Lakes National Park”.  

11
the authority to cut 10,000 feet of pine and a Mr Underwood, to ship 24,000 feet. From 1823
the cedar trade was well established (Port Sydney Journal, 1950: 268).

It is clear from the amount of timber shipped back to Sydney in the months after the permits
were issued, that a sizable stockpile of timber had previously been accumulated ready for
shipment. The trade was expanded in 1822 to include bluegum, rosewood, grasstree gum
and firewood (Kent, 1988).

The Australian Agricultural Company was formed in 1825 and parts of its lease of 405,000 ha
bordered on the Myall Lakes. Some European settlement had probably taken root in the
area before 1825 with timber getting being the primary, if not the only, industry at that time.
With the coastal section of the A. A. Co. grant reverting to the Crown in 1837, the area began
to develop further.

At the height of the timber trade, ‘droghers’, or barges predominated on the waterway. They
were at first poled craft until the introduction of marine steam engines in the area. Small
vessels from Sydney “come a considerable way up the Myall river for cedar and hard timber,
the latter being for the knees of vessels in process of building” (The Australian Home
Companion, 1859: 116).

Boat building was known in the area from 1840, though timber getting remained the major
industry. From the 1840’s, settlements were begun at Bungwahl, Neranie, Mayers Point,
Nerong and Bulahdelah. By 1860 there were a “great number of small farms in different
parts of the Lakes” (The Australian Home Companion, 1859: 116). In 1839, land in the
vicinity of Bulahdelah became available for purchase. By 1846, leases were offered at Boolambayte, Violet Hill, Bombah Point and on the northern shore of Myall Lake. In 1851
further lots near Long Point, on the eastern side of Myall Lake and also west of Bulahdelah,
were offered very cheaply. Again in 1853, land was sold between Wallingat River and the
western shore of Wallis Lake.

1857 saw 7660 acres offered for lease on the ocean side of the lakes and by 1860, 53 acres
had been taken up on Myall Lake becoming the nucleus of the ‘Burraduc’ property.
Settlement of the area was retarded by difficulty of access as well as the discouragement of
those already settled (Kent, 1988).

The timber industry had been in decline from the mid-1830’s as the best cedar stands were
removed. The 1860’s however, saw a relative period of growth with the resurgence of the
timber cutting in adjacent areas, assisted by the growth of the railway and the introduction of
steam sawmills (Kent, 1988).

Some enterprising individuals sought to secure their future by combining two industries.
Duncan McRae’s timber mill for example, was combined with shipyards for the construction
of vessels to operate on the lakes, including hardwood punts (droghers) to transported the
timber to Port Stephens. These sawmills attracted small settlements of workers and their
families which in turn saw schools and stores spring up.

As Comyns indicates, “Tea Gardens being the principal center, the launches and droghers of
the port are concentrated here; the larger vessels lie in the Duck Hole, adjacent thereto, and
the smaller steamers and launches meet them there and transship or embark passengers
and cargo to and from Bulahdelah and the Lakes”. There were six mills working in the
district with an aggregate output per week being 120,000 super ft (Comyns, 1909: 29).

The fishing industry began in earnest in the Seal Rocks/Myall Lakes area around the mid
1870’s with ice being shipped in boxes. Flathead, mullet, bream, blackfish and prawns were
the most common species caught. Prawning became popular with the increased population from the 1920’s onwards.

With the decline of timber milling resulting from the 1890’s depression, efforts were made to start a tourism industry. An inland passenger service offered direct service to the inland towns of Taree and Wingham, as well offering leisurely cruises and ‘packaged holidays’ (Kent, 1988).

Once the timber stands completely ran out, the demand for water transport declined. The increase in vehicular access finished off the Lakes’ trade and by World War Two, water transport had almost ceased. The last major industry in the region was sandmining, which occurred in the late 1960’s.

A lasting tradition was the Mungo Brush Regatta which was held every year since 1909, and originally began as a fisherman’s sailing meet.

The following 1866 account gives an impression of travel on the Lakes in the early period. Here, flat-bottomed unpowered timber punts were used to transport materials and passengers.

‘Quite a party went down by the punt last time besides the three men who work the punt, the wife of one of them insisted on going and I should think she must have found it pleasant and convenient as there is no place to live except on deck or in wet weather in a little hole of a forecastle where everybody sleeps. Mr. Somerville and Mr. Gilliat also went with the punt this time instead of riding to Raymond Terrace but they did not leave here till two days after her when they pulled down the river in one of the boats to overtake her. It must be rather slow work traveling by the punt. She is propelled by great sweeps and progresses at the rate of about one mile an hour”.

The punts were slow and an essential part of the timber industry. Their cargoes consisted of shingles of forest-oak; girders, piles and railway sleepers of ironbark and turpentine; boat stems and knees of paperbark; and house building timbers of blackbutt, brushbox, tallowood, bluegum and flooded-gum. Farm produce frequently topped the load (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:92).

4.2 Boat building at the Myall Lakes

The following breakdown of ship construction at Myall Lakes and Port Stephens provides an interesting picture of frequency of construction (from Jeans, 1974: 163). The total numbers of craft constructed has not been identified although the following examples, give some indication as to the type and size of vessels completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1845/9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.5% of vessels built in NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855/9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865/9</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875/9</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885/9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895/9</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*C figures are given as tonnage

**Caldeonia**

The fore-and-aft schooner, *Caledonia*, was built at Myall Lakes in 1867 by Duncan McRae. Of 45 tons and with a length of sixty-eight feet, the vessel had a single deck and two masts. It was finally sunk near Seal Rocks in 1894 (*British Register of Ships*, Port of Sydney, 31 of 1878; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April, 1894). The vessel has been stated to have been the largest vessel ever built at Myall lakes (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:95).

**Huntley Castle**
The timber schooner, *Huntley Castle*, was built by Alexander Croll at his mill in 1879. The vessel was of 70 tons gross and 77 feet long and was wrecked at Port Stephens in 1883, while on a voyage to Sydney (*British Register of Ships*, Port of Sydney, 30/1879).

*Janet*

The timber ketch, *Janet*, was built by James Blair at Duncan McCrae’s Myall Lakes yard in 1877. The vessel was of 30 tons gross and fifty-eight feet in length (*British Register of Ships*, Port of Sydney, 71 of 1877).

*ps The Brothers*

*The Brothers* was a paddle steamer “drogher” built in the mid-1930’s by Tom Palmer for the Thomas Brothers mill at Bungwahl. It was poled to Tea Gardens with its first load while waiting the completion of its steam engine and single rear paddle wheel. The vessel was used to take mill workers and their families to the Mungo Regatta. When motor vehicles came into use it was moored near the mill and its winch and derrick were used to load the trucks (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:95).

![The Brothers](image)

**Figure 4:** The drogher *The Brothers* loading timber at Thomas Brothers’ Bungwahl Mill. From: Garland, H.K. & Wheeler, J., 1982, Myall Lakes: From Creation to Controversy. Newcastle. p.100.

5.0 WRECK SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS

5.1 Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens wreck sites

The existence of several abandoned hulks in the Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens area is well known. A visit to Tea Gardens in 1996 by the Heritage Office’s historian, Mr Anthony Prescott, resulted in the photographic documentation of the *Brighton* site and the noting of several others. During the current survey, discussions were held with local charter
Mr Norman Cruickshank of Marine Drive, Tea Gardens\(^2\) provided a wealth of information. His wife's father had been the last owner of the *Salamander*, one of the visible wrecks at Tea Gardens. He had earlier worked for Allen Taylor, whose shipping company owned many local traders, including the *Allenwood* which Mr Cruickshank used to load and which was subsequently wrecked at Birdie Beach near Norah Head. Allen Taylor owned the Birdwood timber mill at Winda Woppa which was built in 1917 and closed in the 1950’s. He also owned the large Beresford Mill at Mayers Point near Bungwahl.

Mr Cruickshank had information on a number of other sites, including photographs, and provided information to establish the identification of several of the abandoned vessels. These included: *Iluka*, *Myall River*, *Terara*, *Salamander* and a boiler attributed to the *Paterson*. He also noted that the iron drogher *Iluka* had once sunk in the Bulahdelah River, was purchased by a Henry Eagle, replated and refloated. The timber built *Salamander* was a typical flat bowed drogher (the locally used term was “punt”), owned by Allen Taylor and had been abandoned behind Witt Island. The drogher *Myall River* was last intact at the slipway on the Witt Island slip but burnt by kids in recent times. The wreck of the ferry *Brighton* was apparently reduced by scrap iron salvors in 1974 as were many of the iron wrecks in the area at this time.

In several cases however, archival records could not be found to validate some sites identified. This is particularly so for the boiler inspected at Tea Gardens said to have originated from the abandoned steamer, *Paterson*. No vessel of that name is recorded as having been wrecked or abandoned there. The same situation is met with many of the timber drogher wrecks located in the region. In many cases, these vessels appear to have been locally built and never formally registered (eg in The Register of British Ships). An example is the *Salamander* which was inspected during the current survey, and the drogher wreck attributed to *The Brothers* in Myall Lakes. The local attribution of names is thus accepted until contrary evidence is located.

The identified sites were inspected by small boat and photographed. No other recording was attempted at this stage. It is anticipated that principle measurements of all sites will be obtained and research into the histories and abandonment of all vessels achieved at a later time. They will then be added to the *National Historic Shipwreck Database* (NSW) and to the *Shipwreck Atlas of NSW* (NSW Heritage Office).

### 5.2 Brighton

The area known as Pindimar Bay (opposite the old township of Pindimar) was more commonly referred to as “The Duckhole”. It was here in the shallows, that a number of steamers ended their lives in a vessel graveyard. Originally floating at their moorings, the abandoned vessels were later beached as they became a hazard. Today, at least three hulks can be identified standing partially out of the shallows. Only one of these, the double ended steamer *Brighton*, can be positively identified. A total of five hulks are known to have been located in the bay, they were: *Brighton*, *East Star*, *Deroby*, *Sydney* and *Bingara*\(^3\). Most of the hulks were severely reduced by scrap metal salvors during the 1970’s.

---

\(^2\) Mr Norman Cruickshank, Pers. Com. 11 November, 1997.
\(^3\) Mr Norman Cruickshank, Pers. Com. 28.8.98. See also: photo of three of the abandoned hulks held by the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. MSBL2314, taken in October, 1938.
The iron steamer *Brighton* (ON83792) was built in Great Britain in 1883 by T.B.S. Seath & Company at Rutherglen. It served its life as a ferry in Sydney Harbour and had a length of sixty-seven meters (220 feet) and a tonnage of 417 tons gross. Originally fitted with two masts and schooner rigged, the *Brighton* was powered by two direct acting diagonal oscillating engines generating 160 horse power. The engines were built by A. Campbell & Sons at Glasgow (Parsons, 1961: 74). In 1916, the vessel was abandoned at the Pindimar Bay scuttling area (*British Register of Ships*, Port of Sydney, 100/1883). The steamer was later stripped of much of its original iron by salvors in about 1974.\(^4\)


The *Brighton* is perhaps one of the best known hulks in the Tea Gardens area and its double ended construction is clearly visible. The new ferry *Brighton* was ordered by the Port Jackson Steamship Company after its name change in 1871.

In November, 1907, the vessel was being run by the then, Port Jackson & Manly Steamship Company Ltd (Parsons, 1961: 75).

In its heyday, the *Brighton* was renowned for the plush style of its internal decor, which included velvet seats, cages of singing canaries and plush woodwork. The vessel was the pride of the Manly ferries, initially running with the ferry *Narrabeen* during a working life which lasted from 1883 - 1916. It was the largest and finest on the run (Andrews, 1982: 22-3). Today, one end of the vessel retains significant structural form and the shape of the vessel can be readily interpreted. The site was photographed and an accurate position obtained.

---

\(^4\) Mr Norman Cruickshank, Pers. Com. 11 November, 1997.
5.3 Paterson

The existence of a wreck site attributed to the steamer Paterson, was noted by Mr Norman Cruickshank. All that remains of the site is an iron Scotch Boiler half exposed in the flats near Tea Gardens. The site was photographed and an accurate position obtained. According to Mr Cruickshank, the vessel was abandoned at the spot and left fully intact with wheel house and decks complete. Apparently originally owned by Henry Wattingham, after seventy years the vessel has broken down completely leaving only the boiler.

There were a number of vessels registered as Paterson in the British Register of Ships. One was found to be positively wrecked at Norah Head in 1951 (British Register of Ships, Port of Sydney, 75/1855; 16/1873; 25/1948).

A likely contender was the timber paddle steamer Patterson (ON94101), built in 1887 by W. Henderson at Newcastle. This vessel had a length of 80 feet and tonnage of 58 tons gross. It was rigged with a single mast and powered by a steam engine built by Morrison & Bearby of Newcastle, generating 20 horse power. Running with the Newcastle and Hunter River Steamship Company Ltd. in 1891, the vessel was sold in January, 1901 and was out of commission on a beach at Windy Woppa before 1916. The vessel’s register was officially closed in 1953 (Parsons, 1961: 111). The day to day history of the vessel remains a mystery.
5.4  Breeza

Mr Cruickshank recalled another vessel abandoned close to the “Paterson” site. This he recalled was the paddle wheel drogher Breeza owned by Allen Taylor and was used for timber haulage. According to Mr Cruickshank, all that remains of the wreck is some bottom planking, portions of the rudders and some corroded fastenings.

A search of known vessel’s in the British Register of Ships and the National Historic Shipwrecks Database failed to find any reference to a vessel of that name wrecked/abandoned in New South Wales. However, the Breeza may not have been a registered vessel and therefore its loss not officially recorded. In detailing the history of the Legge family, author Shirley Drake states that the Breeza was the first drogher to work on the Myall for Allen Taylor. It was said to have had a sharp bow and to have been a slow old punt (Drake & Fleming, 1988: 20).

A visual inspection of the area failed to find any trace of a wreck site.

5.5  Iluka

The iron drogher, Iluka, lies abandoned against a mangrove bank directly opposite the township of Tea Gardens. A vessel named Iluka was built at Blues Point in Sydney in 1879 (British Register of Ships, Port of Sydney, 54/1879), of iron construction and fitted out as a paddle steamer. The Iluka (ON75036) had a length of 110 feet (36 meters) and a tonnage of 128 tons. Built by W.M. Ford, the vessel had a single deck, one mast and was cutter rigged. Propelled by two vertical surface condensing engines generating 50 horse power, the Iluka was originally owned by Joseph Grafton Ross of Sydney. It was later sold to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in 1880 with the register being closed in 1911 after the vessel was dismantled and converted into a lighter (Parsons, 1961: 59).

According to Mr Norman Cruickshank, the vessel had once sunk in the Bulahdelah River and was then purchased by a Henry Eagle who refloated and replated it. Mr David Ratcliffe

---

5 Mr Norman Cruickshank, pers.com. 28.8.98.
suggested that the *Iluka* was used to haul logs out of Boolambayte Creek and that the bulkheads were removed to allow their stowage inside the hull. The vessel was also used to tow hulks loaded with timber to ocean-going steamers in Port Stephens (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:150). The *Iluka* was apparently appropriated by American forces during the war but was returned as unsuitable. It was moved to Tea Gardens and accidentally beached one night in 1945 when someone slipped the moorings and a westerly wind blew up (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:150). In the 1970’s when the price of steel rose, the wreck was partially scrapped for its iron plating 6.

Figure 8: Wreckage immediately opposite Tea Gardens attributed to the *Iluka*. Photo: David Nutley.

The wreck site was visited during the current survey, photographed and an accurate position obtained for the remains. The stern section which is directed towards Tea Gardens is awash at high tide.

5.6 Myall River

An inspection was made of “Witts Island” adjacent to Tea Gardens to inspect several visible wrecks. Mr Norman Cruickshank indicated that an abandoned vessel, the timber screw steamer *Myall River* lay abandoned on the bank here. Historic research suggests that the vessel might correspond to the *Myall River* recorded in the *British Register of Ships* - ON 131543 (*Register of British Ships*, Port of Sydney, 3 of 1910). This vessel was registered as a 119 tons steamer built at Stockton in 1912 by Mr M.A.K. Callen. It measured 87 feet in length (26.5 meters), had a single deck, three bulkheads and a single mast, ketch rigged. The steamer had a round stern and was propelled by a compound surface condensing steam engine generating 5 knots. Its boiler was of the Motor Tubular Marine Type rated at 120 pounds per square inch and built by Morrison and Beaty of Newcastle.

The *Myall River* was first owned by the Newcastle & Hunter River Steamship Company. Although its working life has not been documented in detail yet, it was known as a regular on the river and a favourite at the Mungo Brush Regatta days. The vessel’s final years are uncertain, although Mr Norman Cruickshank indicated that it had been abandoned on the slips at Witts Island (see also: Garland & Wheeler, 1982:150). Here, 6

---

6 David Ratcliffe, pers.com to Mr Cosmos Coroneos, 1998.
sometime recently, it was set on fire and destroyed by youths. Somewhat inconsistently, records for the above mentioned Myall River indicate that the vessel’s registry had been closed in 1949 and “the vessel [was] dismantled and the hull broken up” (Register of British Ships. Myall River, 3/1910 Port of Sydney).

Figure 9: Remains of a burnt wreck on Witts Island attributed by Mr Norman Cruickshank to the Myall River. Photo: David Nutley.

The meagre remains of a destroyed vessel were detected on the site of the former slip and in adjacent shallow water. They consist of badly burnt timber planks with iron fastenings, although at times, it is difficult to differentiate some fittings from the vessel and slipway.

5.7 Terara

A significant shipwreck is visible just to the east of the Myall River remains. The iron hull is largely intact, including remnant timber planking. Paddle wheel sponsons can also be identified with the rudder denoting the stern. The bow lies submerged at all times, while the stern has been driven up the beach of the island. Several large mangroves have grown through the hulk.

Mr Norman Cruickshank has identified the wreck as the paddle steamer, Terara. An iron paddle steamer of that name was built in 1885 and registered in Sydney that year (British Register of Ships, Port of Sydney, 16/1885).
This vessel had a length of 125 feet with a tonnage of 152 tons and was built at Sydney’s Atlas Engineering Works. It had a compound direct acting engine capable of generating 30 horse power. Originally owned by the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, the vessel was sold to the North Coast Steam Navigation Company in 1896, then to the NSW Government in 1916. At this time the register was closed, suggesting that the vessel was abandoned or broken up (Parsons, 1961:88). The wreck site was not measured and therefore cannot be compared to the archival accounts. Its construction details and time of abandonment seems to match the observed wreck remains, but additional field recording is required to confirm the attribution.

Some fifty meters away lie some unusual remains which could not be immediately identified as constituting a shipwreck site. They consisted of a metal framework bedded into the shallow water at the edge of the island. The remains however have been identified by Mr Peter Dawson as the temporary framework for an awning cover, placed on the Terara during regattas and other events.
5.8 Salamander

Information on the distinctive shipwreck partially exposed on the northern side of Witts Island is hard to find. The vessel has been attributed to the timber drogher *Salamander*, allegedly owned and operated by Allan Taylor and abandoned there (Drake & Fleming, 1988: 20). Mr Norman Cruickshank’s father-in-law was stated to have been the last owner of the vessel. The hull is substantially intact to the level of the deck.

![Figure 12: Remains attributed to wooden drogher Salamander. Photo: David Nutley.](image)

One incident is recalled when the vessel sank near Mungo Brush in the 1920’s. After a large hole was patched in the floor, the vessel was salvaged (Drake & Fleming, 1988: 20). The most characteristic feature is the collapsed deck structure which has fallen across the site and partly onto the adjacent mangrove bank. The timber appears quite sound and sufficient remains are visible by which to record the hull lines and details of the collapsed upperworks. The vessel’s overall design appears typical of the flat bow droghers which operated on the river system.

Information on the vessel’s working life has not been collated at the present time, but the site survives as the best preserved timber drogher wreck in the Myall Lakes system. It has scope for quite detailed interpretation and recording.

5.9 ps The Brothers

A vessel called *Brothers* operated at the Neranie Mill, Myall Lake, from 1875 and took timber to Sydney. A former North Sydney ferry built by Thomas Chowne of Pyrmont in 1847, it’s Official Number was ON59513. The wooden steamer measured sixty-seven feet or 22 meters in length, had one deck and was powered by an 18 horsepower engine. It appears to have been converted to a paddle steamer soon after completion (Parsons, 1983: 28; Leplastrier, 1915). Taken over by the local Hudson Brothers in 1875, it was broken up in 1891 at Port Stephens (Garland & Wheeler, 1982: 97; Parsons, 1961: 4).

Local residents reported a wreck site in Neranie Bay also known as *Brothers* (or *The Brothers*). This wreck site was located and found to be an entirely different type of vessel.

---

Located in shallow (1 meter) water at the top of Neranie Bay, all that is left is the wooden hull of a pontoon type hull. It appears to have been a stern (or perhaps) side paddle wheel drogher of the type commonly used on the lakes system last century.

The only published information comes from Garland and Wheeler who described the vessel as a single stern paddle wheel punt built at Thomas Brothers Mill at Bungwahl in the mid 1930's and used to transport timber (Garland & Wheeler, 1982: 100). At an earlier time, it allegedly sank at its moorings near the Beresford Mill at Mayers Point.

Figure 13: Remains of submerged timber drogher attributed to The Brothers. The main components of the hull can be easily seen in the shallow (0.5 - 1 meter) water. Photo: Tim Smith.

Recently, a set of original photographs documenting the vessel's construction have been obtained including local identities such as the builder John Palmer.

No register details have been located for the vessel, but it was not uncommon for locally constructed craft not to be officially registered. Garland and Wheeler record that the vessel's engine was removed and taken to a museum in Taree, while between 1979-1980 the vessel was set alight and burnt to the waterline.

The hull was measured and found to have a total length of 23.70 meters and a maximum beam of 6.9 meters. Both ends were clearly truncated in the manner of a flat ended, shallow draft punt. The internal timber framed were spaced approximately sixty centimetres apart at their centres and a total of thirty-six frames were observed within the surviving length of the hull. A very heavy beam (keelson) ran down the centre of the vessel and held mortise joints presumably to fit a mast or other vertical supports. Two other timber “stringers” ran parallel to this on either side for the full length of the vessel.

While lying submerged at all times, the surviving structure appears sound and retains significant potential for detailed recording. The timber species used in its construction have not been identified, although could be determined through timber identification analysis.

---

8 Norman Cruickshank, pers.com. 28.9.98.
9 Obtained from Bill and Leanne Legge. April, 1999.
**Figure 14:** Several photographs of completion ceremony for *The Brothers* pontoon. Photo’s courtesy of Bill and Leanne Legge. Man in bottom left is the vessel’s builder, Tom Palmer. The photo at top left shows Mrs Bramble breaking a bottle over the bow.

**Figure 15:** Sketch of the “bow” of the timber drogher identified as *The Brothers*. Drawing by Tim Smith.
5.10 Unidentified drogher at Neranie Bay

Another timber drogher wreck was shown to the Heritage Office on 16 February, 1999. Also located in Neranie Bay, the submerged site is located close to the bank at the north-eastern corner of the bay, close to the moored house boats. It is within easy view of the Neranie Mill site.

The most obvious feature is the raised vertical timber “stern?” post which extends out of the water for a height of 80 centimetres. Forward of this, the lower hull can be readily discerned and comprises a central beam 20 centimetres in diameter and two parallel beams spaced 1.30 meters either side. Between these three framing timbers, transverse “ribs” are evident spaced uniformly 50-55 centimetres apart.
The structure is visible for a distance of 12.50 meters before it is buried by vegetation which forms a small island over the “forward?” end of the wreck. The island is a further 9.0 meters in diameter. The total length of the wreck cannot be made out, but does not appear to extend beyond the island. Its maximum length therefore is 21.50 meters which compares favourably to The Brothers drogher, with a length of 23.70 meters. The maximum beam of the vessel cannot be readily determined. On the whole, the surviving hull does not appear as extensive or complete as the former site.

Scattered timbers lie all around the site for a considerable distance but they appear randomly placed and are probably associated with the mill or the breakwater.

5.11 “Drogher” on Tramline Beach (Smith’s Lake)

The presence of another site attributed locally to a timber wreck was noted by National Parks & Wildlife officers. The identity of the vessel was not known although it was stated to have been abandoned off Tramline Beach in the adjacent Smiths Lakes. This was near to the original tramline servicing the timber mill at Neranie Point. A boiler allegedly associated with the wreck was reported to be visible at least until 1992 (see: Garland & Wheeler, 1982:96).

An inspection of the site was conducted on 16 February, 1999 and no trace of a drogher wreck site could be identified. The limited boiler remains were observed in the shallows in association with residual timber remains, presumably associated with the railway’s entry into the lake front. Of small diameter, the boiler is insufficient to power a steam vessel and was probably associated with a winch or derrick used to load timber onto the railway. A photograph of the boiler taken by Ms Leanne Legge in the 1980’s, showed the boiler in a more complete form.

6.0 TERRESTRIAL SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS

The following terrestrial sites were identified in the study, Coroneos, C., 1988, *Myall Lakes Shipwrecks Study*. In most cases, information on the history, location and present condition of the sites has been obtained from individual files maintained by the National Parks & Wildlife Service (Hurstville Office).

The range and spread of sites is extremely large making it impossible for all but a few of the more significant to be inspected during the current survey. Some were reached from the shore, others by boat.

A major survey objective was the tentative examination of submerged structures associated with each place. This generally involved a brief inspection of each site, usually limited to photographing key features. Any further recording was outside the scope of this initial survey which aimed to familiarise Heritage Office staff with the general appearance, layout and potential of each site for future documentation.

Individual site histories are only summarily covered in this report and are derived from published research. At the present time, comprehensive historic photographs of the sites have not been sourced for inclusion.
Sites inspected during the current survey included:

- Neranie Sawmill site and breakwater, Neranie Bay
- Neranie Bay, isolated scattered submerged timbers
- Corrigans Bay, wharf structure and isolated scattered timbers
- Mayers Point and associated wharf structures, Beresford Mill
- Isolated timber scattered around shore of Mayers Bay
- Boolambayte Creek
- Clarks Bay, jetties, slip and associated shore structures, McCrae's Mill
- Visual traverse around Boolambayte Lake to Bombah Point.
6.1 Neranie Mill

One of the most significant structures surviving in Myall Lake is the breakwater built at Neranie Head. It is associated with the timber mill built there by the Hudson Brothers in 1873 and served to offer vessels some protection when loading and unloading in bad weather (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:97). The lease covered 120 acres and ran in competition to Crolle’s Mill established nearby at Mayers Point. Located not far from Bungwahl, the Neranie Mill was closed in 1894. It was re-opened by the Mitchell Brothers in 1895 until its closure in 1907 (Garland & Wheeler, 1982: 97).

One of the most significant aspects of the site was the former train line which linked it to Smiths Lake in the north. This track was initially built by Hudson’s in 1884 and ran for a distance of 1.6 kilometres. The rails were originally of timber and the wagons hauled along it by horses. Later this section was replaced with iron tracks and had a steam engine to haul the timber. Unfortunately the railway sleepers have been removed from the area, although a cutting through rising ground is apparently visible on private property.

![Figure 18: Remains of the sunken breakwater at Neranie Point, Myall Lake - formed by placing timber scrap (“hearts”) from the mill as an artificial barrier. Photo: David Nutley.](image)

It is at the Smiths Lake end of this rail that the remains of another timber paddle steamer (drogher) had been (incorrectly) identified. Associated with it are the remains of rails leading into the lake. It is possible that the boiler may have once operated a small crane or derrick at the site, which has now disappeared. Local researchers have indicated that the boiler has collapsed significantly in recent years 10.

---

Droghers were used to bring timber across from the other side of Smiths Lake to the railway and thence to the Neranie Mill (Garland & Wheeler, 1982: 96-7). Much of the timber processed at the mill was transferred to Hudson’s wharf at Pyrmont in Sydney for use in his carriage and housing business. With the decline in both industries during the 1880’s, the mill went bad. During that period, the complex included the mill, a school, workers cottages and a cemetery. The remains of these structures were not located.

The most distinctive feature of the former mill site is the extensive breakwater formed from timber off-cuts. The hearts and other wasters from the mill was purposely laid off Neranie Head in order to form an artificial breakwater to provide protection for vessel’s visiting the mill. Today the site is referred to as “Hearts Point” and is an impressive reminder of the ingenuity of the mill operators to improve their local operations. Siltation of the originally solid timber wall has led to the formation of a wooded spit which covers the bulk of the submerged timbers. These were initially laid at an angle against each other far out into the bay (approximately 150 meters).

An inspection of the shallow heartwood breakwall was undertaken using snorkel equipment. The water depth (1-3 meters) made the inspection a simple matter. An additional survey of the breakwater will be conducted at a later date.

While no clear evidence of the buildings which once dominated the headland could be readily identified, a study of the site and associated cemetery is being conducted independently by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The remains of a small timber wharf/jetty were located nearby against the bank associated with the main site. Although severely denuded, they comprised the stumps of the original vertical piles of the structure.

![Figure 19: Measured sketch of the jetty remains at Neranie Sawmill site. Tim Smith.](image)

None of the bearers, supports or decking materials could be identified for certain, although a quantity of loose timber in the area might have originated from the structure. This jetty presumably formed one of the major loading platforms at the mill and is located inside of the sanctuary provided by the artificial breakwater.

---

The structure was formed with two rows of five piles, spaced roughly three meters apart (although there were variations of between 2.09 and 3.62 meters). The original jetty would probably have covered an area of approximately 150 square meters, and carried approximately seven meters from the shore into the water. The depth at the waters edge amounted to approximately 1 - 1.5 meters, sufficient for the local droghers to maneuver in. The timber piles appear to be local Australian timbers and survive to a maximum height of only about one meter.

6.2 Neranie Bay

Moving from the Neranie mill site, an inspection of the entire shore of Neranie Bay was completed by boat. Little could be identified in the shallows or along the bank, except for isolated timber lengths which appeared to have been “sawn” and washed up randomly. It was felt that these possibly originated from the mill operations and are testimony to the tranquil underwater conditions which allows their retention in situ. The isolated timbers were too few in number to warrant recording, although a significant area of scattered timber was observed close to the mill where the houseboats are currently moored.

It was also in this area that the remains of an unidentified timber drogher wreck was recorded with the assistance of local researcher, Ms Leanne Legge (described previously). The Brothers wreck site was also identified at the northern (or top) end of the bay, and located in the shallows. Remains of what appear to be a small jetty, were found east of The Brothers. A GPS position was obtained for the structure. The remains of another vessel, referred to as “the cattle barge”, were supposedly located at the western opening to the bay, known as Lamins Point. No trace of this wreck could be located although it is commonly known and believed to have belonged to a Mr Rippy12.

6.3 Corrigans Bay

The visual inspection of the shore continued into the adjacent Corrigans Bay, from Lamins Head to Corrigans Head. Remains of the timber jetty at the Bungwahl township formed the most significant structure. Located within the reeds, today the wharf consists of a number of upright posts, with some cross beams and decking sections in place. It was initially operated from about 1872 by Alexander Crolle, John Wright and John Rodger, who had all been employed by McCrae. It was later known as the Thomas Brothers Mill until sold to Tom Palmer. The site was burnt down on a number of occasions.

![Figure 21: Jetty structure at Corrigans Bay, Bungwahl](image)

Once the site of long standing timber milling operation and local shipbuilding center. Photo: David Nutley.

It was also the building site of The Brothers drogher by Palmer. The site was finally sold to Paul Herbert Pty Ltd (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:100).

Apart from the surviving shed and structures in the now unoccupied yard, the remains of a substantial timber jetty lie in the thick reeds against the bank. Due to difficulties in reaching the structure, it was not recorded in detail, but survives as one of the larger, more intact wharf examples in Myall Lake. The yard would be expected to retain important archaeological remains associated with the earlier mill and ship building phases.

6.4 Mayers Point

The Mayers Point precinct is well known as an important timber milling and transportation site. It was connected at various times by two main railways extending north, the largest through Wooton into the timber getting areas. A small line built earlier by Alexander Crolle in 1892 (Garland & Wheeler 1982: 102), was eclipsed by the Allen Taylor line which fed directly onto a large timber jetty for loading onto his drogher fleet. These consisted of the Avalon, Salamander, Breeza and Ability (Garland & Wheeler 1982: 104). Crole transported timber from his line to his mill then established at Bungwahl.

Taylor’s line, first begun in about 1906 by the Australian Export Timber Company, was acquired in 1909 and used to transport timber to his Beresford Mill built at Mayers Point in 1915, and to his other mill, Birdwood, constructed at Hawkes Nest in 1917. The rail line was originally of timber and horse driven. By about 1913 he had it converted to rail with several steam locomotives working the line until it was closed in 1944 (Burke, 1980:15ff; McCarthy, 1981:21 (Garland & Wheeler 1982: 98).
The survey of the Beresford Mill jetties was undertaken by boat from the launching ramp at the tip of Mayers Point. The area is accessed by road from The Lakes Way, via Mayers Point Road. Today, there are few visual reminders of the large mill, wharves and railways which predominated the site last century and into the early twentieth.

Of immediate interest were the two large jetty pile remains on the eastern side of the point, which extend into Mill Bay. Several historic photos show the yard in the 1920’s with droghers loading. The site was photographed and an accurate position obtained from topographic maps of the area. The remains consist of two distinct groups of vertical timber piles, which extend well into the bay. Although not surveyed during the current inspection because of the time required, it is important that the remains are well documented as an important visual reminder of the once extensive land and water operations conducted at the spot.

The boat survey was continued around the tip of Mayers Point and along the shores of Mayers Bay. Isolated groupings of timber offcuts were observed in the shallows although they were not deemed worthy of recording.

6.5 Clarks Bay, Boolambayte Lake, site of Duncan McRae’s mill

The investigation of the Clarks Mill and shipbuilding site was deemed of special importance during the current survey. This was because of its age as the earliest steam mill operating in the Myall Lakes area, because of its visible structures and likelihood of in situ archaeological remains, and because it had been surveyed in some detail by the National Parks & Wildlife Service in 1991.

The mill was built by Duncan McCrae in 1863 (Kent, 1988 notes), also serving as a shipyard. By 1866 the site had developed into a small township with over 100 people (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:95). Kent notes that it was an important early shipbuilding centre where vessels used predominantly for lake transport were built, as well as the cumbersome hardwood punts (droghers) used to transport the timber from the lakes to Port Stephens (Kent, 1988: notes). Vessels constructed included the ketch, Caledonia (1867) and Star of
Peace (1873) (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:95. Note however that official records suggest the latter vessel was built at Terrigal: British Register of Ships, Port of Sydney, 21 of 1873).

McRae’s first operated as a pit-saw mill until converted to the first steam mill in 1865-6. The town once boasted several buildings including a butchers shop. In 1872, Alexander Crole, John Wright and John Roger left McCrae’s operation to found their own mill sites (see above). With the transfer of the mill to Boolambayte Creek, the area was purchased and eventually housed the Sunnyside Guest House, the footings of which can be readily seen.

![Figure 23: Stone jetty remains at Clarks Bay, Boolambayte Lake. Photo: David Nutley.](image)

The National Parks & Wildlife Service’s survey noted the showed remains of a timber log cradle, stone causeway and stone foundations possibly associated with a kiln/oven/forge, as well as the remains of a timber jetty (Clarks Bay timber mill site no. 026-15-1 on the NWPS site form). An inspection of the site was conducted during the present survey and the submerged stone causeway and timber jetty remains photographed. The causeway appears to represent the base (packing) of a timber jetty now removed.

The visible timber jetty comprises a few dilapidated vertical posts near-shore, which appear connected to some very large sectioned tree trunks placed on the landward side of the structure. These are laid horizontally in the marshy area against the shore and might represent the “cradle” observed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It appears that they form the foundation of a log slipway or ramp which extended out into the water. Others have suggested that they formed the footings for laying vessel’s keels during the shipbuilding operations. It is still unclear although they tend to lie at an inclined angle.
The “ramps” purpose also remains unclear but is presumably associated with the loading of logs onto waiting droghers.

A brief inspection was made of the land area associated with the underwater remains. Several depressions were noted and the established brick footings for some kind of raised structure. An intensive archaeological assessment of the site might establish the correct attribution of the various elements and identify the likelihood of significant archaeological remains being present on the site. The absence of any site interpretation constrains the appreciation of the importance of the place in the history of the entire lakes system.

6.6 Boolambayte Creek

McRae later moved his mill across to the nearby Boolambayte Creek, settling on a site four miles up stream on the west bank. This site was finally closed in 1902 (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:95). In 1883, Charles Dee III built a sawmill on the opposite side of the creek where McRae’s mill was placed (Kent, 1988 notes; Garland & Wheeler, 1982:100). He later moved operations to Bulahdelah in 1944 when the mill was purchased by Northern Timbers (Garland & Wheeler, 1982:101).
An inspection was made up the Boolambayte Creek but had to be terminated before the sawmill sites were reached.

A visual inspection was made of the shores of Violet Hill, Lemon Tree Point, Violet Hill Passage and Long Point (where a drogher was allegedly sunk - pers. Com: David Ratcliffe). Few identifiable structures could be observed and the presence or otherwise of the Long Point drogher ascertained only by future underwater diving or remote surveys.

The inspection was continued from Clarks Bay down Boolambayte Creek, passing the historic Koroseman’s site and limited jetty remains, to Bombah Point. The remains of a timber jetty were observed built within the present Bombah Point ferry terminus, but were not recorded.

7.0 SITE POSITIONS

Accurate positions were obtained for the following wrecks within the study region by hand held GPS:

**Neranie Wharf Site:**
32° 24 23.34 Lat
152° 26 54.42 Long

**ps The Brothers Wreck**
32° 23 49.99 Lat
152° 27 10.55 Long

**Neranie Bay - Wharf site ?**
32° 23 54.86 Lat
152° 27 18.67 Long

**ps Paterson Boiler**
32° 40 43.16 Lat
152° 09 50.39 Long

**ss Brighton**
32° 40 11.96 Lat
152° 07 28.94 Long

**ps Iluka**
32° 40 05.52 Lat
152° 09 49.86 Long

**ss Myall River**
32° 39 52.14 Lat
152° 09 35.21 Long

**ps Salamander**
32° 39 44.61 Lat
152° 09 31.36 Long
8.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance has been assessed in accordance with a sites attributes related to historical, social, archaeological, scientific and interpretative significance. In all cases, the determination of significance is tentative only. A detailed statement of significance must await the further documentation of the surviving structures and the compilation of individual site histories.

A complete significance assessment of the known Pindimar Bay/Tea Gardens wreck sites must await the compilation of detailed individual site histories. These have not been undertaken at this time as the individual identity of the hulks (apart from the Brighton) was not ascertained prior to the site inspection work. Their relative significance remains suggestive only.

8.1 BRIGHTON

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The Brighton is significant as a rare example of a sophisticated turn-of-the-century iron steamer used on the famous 7 mile Sydney-Manly ferry run.

A site which retains strong ties to the Sydney community and the popular interest in the Sydney ferry fleet.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)

The limited hull remains retain some potential to document iron hull construction techniques current in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The site’s archaeological potential has been significantly reduced by the reduction of the site by scrap iron workers this century.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A vessel important for its links with the Sydney community which respected it as the once pride of the Sydney Manly ferry fleet. A vessel noted for the plushness of its decor.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

A site significant in its potential for interpretation through interpretative plaques (potentially mounted on poles adjacent to the site)/ and supportive brochures, etc. Potential to exist as a focal point of a Pindimar Bay hulk interpretation program, documenting the varied maritime history of the lake system.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE
Rare (concerned with the uncommon or exceptional)
The *Brighton* site is a rare example in NSW of the large iron paddle steamer ferry type which once dominated the Sydney waterways.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The *Brighton* wreck site has the potential to be a significant component of a Tea Gardens/Myall Lakes, Riverine Heritage Wreck Trail. The site retains high social significance due to the important role it played in the Sydney operation of the vessel and retains archaeological potential for documentation and research. The site retains high recreational importance as an accessible shipwreck site suitable for boat visitors in the Lakes system.

8.2 **PATERSON**

**NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The *Paterson* retains local significance as one of the familiar vessels abandoned in the lower Tea Gardens area early this century.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)

There is no presumption of technical significance.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The site retains no archaeological significance due to extensive salvage of the site and natural deterioration of the structure.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

The social significance, if any, of the site has not been ascertained.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

The site retains limited potential for public interpretation. This potential is limited by the amount of surviving structure, and by access restricted to shallow water craft.

**DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)

The boiler is representative of the Scotch type fitted to steamers from the latter nineteenth century.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**
The Paterson’s boiler remains a tangible reminder of the fate of purposely abandoned vessel’s which once operated in the area from the nineteenth century. It retains moderate potential to be a component of a wider Riverine Heritage Trail of the region.

8.3 BREEZA

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The Breeza is associated with the initial establishment of Allen Taylor respected timber milling firm, being the first vessel allegedly operated by him on the Lakes.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The site’s archaeological potential is presently unknown as it has not been located.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

The site’s interpretative significance is unknown until the wreck site can be identified.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Breeza’s relative significance cannot be ascertained until the wreck site is located and positively identified.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Breeza has an important tale to tell, being the first vessel allegedly operated by Allen Taylor with the establishment of his timber company in Upper Myall Lakes. The sites potential for documenting early timber drogher design and use must await the identification of the wreck site, or otherwise.

8.4 ILUKA

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The assessment of historical significance must await further detailed research.

A vessel which appears to have played a colourful role in the transportation of timber for the local milling industry well into this century. The story of its association with American forces during World War Two is waiting to be told.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)
The site retains moderate technological significance in documenting Australian iron shipbuilding practices in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The remains of the *Iluka* have moderate archaeological potential for documenting large paddle steamer construction during the latter nineteenth century.

The site’s archaeological potential has been reduced by the action of salvors during the 1970’s.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A site important for its links with the adjacent Tea Gardens community.

A wreck which is well known to local residents who have limited knowledge of its history or connection with the area.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

The site is significant in its potential for interpretation through shore based interpretative plaques/brochures as a focal point of a potential Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens Riverine Heritage Trail.

**DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)

The *Myall River* site is representative of the fate of vessels purposely abandoned in NSW at the end of their service life.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The *Iluka* site has the potential to be a significant component of a Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens recreational Riverine Maritime Heritage Trail. The ease of access by boat or shore based visitor establishes it as a pre-eminent site for interpretation. The *Iluka* retains moderate social significance as one of the most visible of the abandoned historic wrecks in the small Tea Gardens community.

**8.5 MYALL RIVER**

**NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The *Myall River*, had it not been destroyed by fire, would have retained a high level of historic significance as a vessel well remembered by the local community during the popular Mungo Brush Regattas.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)
The site retains no technological significance.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The site retains no archaeological potential due to its near total destruction by fire.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A site once important for its connection to life on the Lakes system, particularly its involvement as a transport in the famous Mungo Brush Regattas.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

A site which retains moderate - low potential for interpretation. A site which retains potential however to document the devastating results of indiscriminate vandalism to sites of heritage importance in a local community.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)

The destruction of the Myall River steamer demonstrates the effect of senseless vandalism towards local heritage items, which were retained within the community.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The destruction of the Myall River steamer was a loss to the local community. A vessel with an important connection to Tea Gardens and the Myall Lakes, unfortunately not regarded sufficiently to save it from senseless vandalism. The pitiful remains of the vessel have a role to play in educating the community for the need to preserve and interpret our historical and archaeological heritage.

8.6 TERARA

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The Terara is significant as one of the most intact and visible abandoned wreck sites in the Tea Gardens area.

A vessel associated with the popular Mungo Brush regatta events, following its relocation to the Myall lakes.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)
The site retains moderate technological significance in its ability to document iron paddle steamer construction at the famous Atlas Engineering Works in Sydney.

Other extant vessels built by this firm, eg the paddle steamer Manning located at Taree, retain potential for a comparative assessment of construction method and materials.

**Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)**

The remains of the Terara have moderate archaeological potential for documenting large paddle steamer construction during the latter nineteenth century.

**Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)**

A site important as one of the more intact and visible of the abandoned vessels in the Tea Gardens area.

**Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)**

The site is significant in its potential for interpretation through shore based interpretative plaques/brochures as part of general interpretation of the riverine heritage of the Myall lakes/Tea Gardens area.

**DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)**

The Iluka site is representative of a large iron paddle steamer built at Sydney in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Iluka wreck site has the potential to be a significant component of a Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens Riverine Heritage Trail. The significant structural remains, including remnant paddle sponsons and rudder, are readily identifiable. A site retaining high recreational significance as an easily visited component of the maritime history of the area.

**8.7 SALAMANDER**

**NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Historical (Concerned with range of context)**

The Salamander is significant as the best preserved of the locally built and operated timber droghers in the Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens area.

A vessel which retains strong links to local residents who were associated with its later operational phases at the Lakes system.
Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)

The site retains high technological significance.

A substantially intact wreck site with potential to document NSW’s timber drogher shipbuilding practices, including fit-out of superstructure areas.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The remains of the Salamander retain high archaeological potential for documenting large timber paddle steamer construction.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A site important for its links with local shipping identities who have the ability to furnish oral and photographic records of the vessel.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

The site is significant in its potential for interpretation as a focal point of a shore or river based interpretative Riverine Maritime Heritage Trail.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)

The Salamander is representative of the timber droghers which once dominated the inland waterways of the Myall Lakes/Tea Gardens area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Salamander wreck site could form a significant component of a local Riverine Heritage Trail. The site retains high archaeological potential to document NSW’s drogher construction. A site which retains high recreational importance as one of the most intact shipwrecks for public visitation in the region.

8.8 THE BROTHERS

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The Brothers is significant as a rare surviving example of the locally built drogher type, unique to NSW’s inland waters shipbuilding industry.

A site which retains strong ties to the local area in which it was constructed and operated.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)
A site which retains significant structure to enable detailed documentation of a specific and unrecorded form of hull construction.

Hull components have the potential to document timber preferences, fastening types and joinery practices.

**Archaeological** (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The remains of *The Brothers* have moderate archaeological potential for documenting the construction and fitting out of a timber drogher constructed at a regional shipbuilding center.

The site’s archaeological potential has been reduced by the destruction of a large portion of the wreck site by deliberate fire in the 1970’s.

**Social** (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A site important for its links with the original Bungwahl and Myall Lakes communities who recall strong ties to the original owner and builders of the vessel.

**Interpretative** (Concerned with public education values)

A site significant in its potential for interpretation through shore based interpretative plaques/brochures as part of general interpretation of the rich maritime history of the Lakes system.

**DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Rare** (concerned with the uncommon or exceptional)

*The Brothers* site is a rare example in NSW of the traditional locally constructed drogher type developed from the nineteenth century.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

*The Brothers* wreck site has the potential to be a significant component of a Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens Riverine Heritage Trail. The site retains high social significance due to the local origin and operation of the vessel and retains archaeological potential for documentation and research. The site retains high recreational importance as an accessible shipwreck site suitable for boat visitors in the Lakes system.

8.9 **UNIDENTIFIED DROGHER, Neranie Bay**

**NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Historical (Concerned with range of context)
The Unidentified Drogher is significant as a rare surviving example of a locally built vessel type, unique to NSW’s inland waters shipbuilding industry.

A site which retains strong ties to the local area in which it operated.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)

A site which retains significant structure to enable detailed documentation of a specific and unrecorded form of hull construction.

Hull components have the potential to document timber preferences, fastening types and joinery practices.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The remains of the Unidentified Drogher have moderate archaeological potential for documenting the construction and fitting out of a timber drogher probably constructed at a local shipbuilding center.

The site’s archaeological potential has been reduced by the reduction, through scrapping or natural deterioration, of the vessel to the level of its lower hull.

Social (Concerned with community regard or esteem)

A site important for its links with the mills and townships of the Myall Lakes system.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

A site significant in its potential for interpretation through shore based interpretative plaques/brochures as part of general interpretation of the rich riverine history of the Lakes system.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rare (concerned with the uncommon or exceptional)

The Unidentified Drogher site is a rare example of the traditional drogher type developed from the nineteenth century in NSW.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Unidentified Drogher wreck site has the potential to be a significant component of a Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens Riverine Heritage Trail. The site retains high social significance due to the local operation of the vessel and retains archaeological potential for ongoing documentation and research. The site retains high recreational importance as an accessible shipwreck site suitable for boat visitors in the Lakes system.
8.10  BOILER - SMITHS LAKE

NATURE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical (Concerned with range of context)

The boiler located at Tramline Beach, Smiths Lake, retains moderate-low significance as a record of the once active drogher/railway interchange feeding the Neranie Mill.

Technical (Concerned with technical or creative achievement)

The fragmentary remains of the associated railway retain moderate-low potential to document early steam railway design features. The boiler retains no significance for study.

Archaeological (Concerned with research potential through investigation of material remains)

The boiler retains no apparent archaeological potential for research, although a careful area survey might reveal details of the associated railway construction, routing and construction of passes.

Interpretative (Concerned with public education values)

The site retains moderate potential for the interpretation of the once significant railway/drogher bridgehead which supplied much of the Neranie Mill’s timber stocks.

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Representative (concerned with the typical or characteristic)

The site is representative of those associated with early milling operations but which has been almost totally denuded of its archaeological potential, through indiscriminate salvage, clearance and souveniring.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tramline Beach site has the potential to be an important component of a Riverine Heritage Trail, focusing on the transport by drogher, of timber to the Myall Lakes mills. The site’s archaeological potential however, has been steadily reduced by uncontrolled interference.

Significance assessments have not been undertaken for the terrestrial sites inspected as part of this study. This is due to the lack of supporting reference material obtained to-date. Once individual site histories have been determined, key historic, social and other themes and relative significance statements can be isolated. These assessments will therefore require additional research and formulation at a later date.
9.0 SITE MANAGEMENT

9.1 Background

NSW Heritage Office investigation of the Myall Lakes - Tea Gardens historic shipwrecks and terrestrial sites has established the need for additional site survey and documentation. The range and variety of sites has been found to be especially significant, providing scope for ongoing thematic research projects and the potential for a holistic approach to site interpretation. The area has been identified as an important region for the study of a localized trading system, in its unique setting. Patterns of development, trade, export and production mirror similar settlements established on other river/lake systems in New South Wales, and are closely linked to the development of coastal trading patterns from the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

The significance of each item identified in this study has been evident on a number of levels, notably for the variety of site types, the range of activities associated with each, the integrity of the visible structures, the likelihood of significant in situ archaeological remains, and the uniqueness of the sites for study in terms of their proximity to the shore, ease of visitation and interpretation. The tourism potential of the sites is also likely to be high.

The work has established the lack of detailed histories for most places and the need for additional site survey work and analysis. A number of general (often unreferenced) histories of the area have been prepared but the only site specific documentation has been conducted in preliminary form by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This is the case for each of the sites identified in this study. At present, it is therefore only possible to provide a tentative assessment of significance, based on the limited resources available.

Comparative low visitor numbers in the northern lake system has generally acted to prolong the integrity of most sites. Threats need to be urgently addressed however as several instances of vandalism, particularly in terms of deliberate fires, has seen the destruction of a number of important items since the 1970’s. These include The Brothers and Myall River wrecks to name a few. These are extremely unfortunate incidents which occurred in quite recent times. The Brothers particularly is a rare site type in the region and was principally intact to that time. Today, only the submerged lower section of the timber pontoon survives for analysis and documentation, a shame as the vessel was an important example of the Myall Lakes timber drogher type.

The wholesale reduction of several of the iron vessels for scarp iron salvage has certainly constrained their interpretation (eg Brighton and Paterson). These activities appear to have occurred prior to the establishment in New South Wales of the Heritage Act, 1977. This legislation would have afforded a level of protection to those sites over fifty years of age at that time. All sites have also been affected by the natural deterioration of their structures over time. Some however, like the Paterson, have witnessed accelerated disintegration due to salvage activity.

The provisions of the NSW Heritage Act, 1977 and the National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974, as they relate to the protection and long term management of these sites, need to be promoted and enforced at a local level.

Insufficient historic research is a constraint particularly noted with the shipwreck remains. As many of the vessels were abandoned, the final laying up of the vessels was often poorly recorded in official records. It is often very difficult then to determine the correct attribution of a certain wreck without a detailed knowledge of their construction and service histories. Many of the droghers particularly, were locally constructed and not officially registered. In
some cases, the only knowledge of the relative vessels and associated wreck sites, is retained only by local residents (eg *The Brothers*). It is extremely important therefore, that these oral recollections are obtained in association with detailed archival research, before the correlations are lost forever.

The wreck sites form an intriguing group and differ from shipwrecks located in coastal areas, in that they were all abandoned. As such, they were principally intact when their service life was completed, although fittings and machinery were often removed. Their placement in shallow water environments often against mangrove/tea tree sand banks, has meant that each site had the potential to deteriorate in a stable environment where factors acted to keep the whole together.

Their placement in a variety of saline - brackish water environments has meant localised corrosion regimes acting on individual sites however. Some have been abandoned partially exposed which has led to exaggerated corrosion at the tidal area of the hulls causing structural weakness at these areas, while others have been completely submerged.

The timber wrecks appear to have fared better on the whole, the fine silty bottom deposits of the lakes system being a good inhibitor of timber degradation due to its anaerobic nature. The lakes are also devoid of marine boring organisms such as *Toredo Worm* which can voraciously attack exposed timber. The abundant mussel/oyster species in the lower regions however have colonised many of these sites (both iron/steel and timber) although the effect on the historic structures has not been assessed.

The land sites by comparison have remained largely unchanged since their abandonment. Few if any have been affected by modern development or re-use, apart from visitation by day trippers and holiday makers as recreational destinations. As such, they do not appear to have been damaged by human activities to the same extent as the historic wreck sites.

While the absence of signage and interpretation has probably aided the limited human impact at these sites, the universal lack of historic interpretation has also constrained the appreciation and learning experiences to be gained from each setting. In most instances a visitor would not know of the historic significance of an individual place without prior knowledge. This is unfortunate as the sites lend themselves to interpretation and all formed a part of the fascinating history of the settlement and industry of the Myall Lakes region. Many are significant for a range of themes including timber-getting/sawmilling, shipbuilding, settlement, trade and early tourism. Most of the terrestrial sites are assessable by current roads or by boats, the latter regularly hired from main centers such as Tea Gardens.

### 9.2 Development of a site management strategy

All of the sites covered in this report are protected by the relics provisions of the *Heritage Act*, 1977. Any disturbance or interference to an individual site would require the prior approval of the Heritage Council of New South Wales. In most instances, an archaeological assessment would have to be undertaken prior to any proposed works in order to assess the integrity and archaeological significance of each site.

To support effective site monitoring, the Great Lakes Shire Council, the National Parks & Wildlife Service, local Police and Water Police should be appraised of the sites.

In terms of the shipwreck sites, each has been added to the Heritage Office’s *Historic Shipwrecks Database* and reference material filed as appropriate. A number of the known sites had previously been added to the Office’s *Shipwreck Atlas of NSW* Ed. 3 (eg *Brighton*), and the others will be added to future editions. As the sites largely comprise stripped down hulks, there is little possibility for illegal removal of artefacts from them. As such, public
visitation is not a matter for concern or strict regulation. The premise of the Historic Shipwrecks Program generally is the encouragement of human interaction to historic shipwreck sites. This helps foster a community regard for them and sound local management. It also helps to instil knowledge of their individual historic significance, their fragility and importance to the local and wider community.

It is not envisaged that these sites will be affected by local development, although, should dredging, clearance or other projects be proposed in an area near to historic shipwrecks, prior approval of the NSW Heritage Council would be required. None of the sites are in areas where they could cause a navigational hazard and therefore there is no immediate requirement for their lighting or other warning systems to boat traffic. There is a possibility for injury to visitors at these sites, particularly the iron shipwrecks which are in an advanced state of deterioration. Direct access to and on these sites is therefore not considered prudent, while access sufficient to view the sites from a reasonable distance is suggested. Normal care is suggested in all instances.

As with the terrestrial based sites, the wrecks have not been the focus of an interpretation strategy. Shipwrecks are always popular sites for investigation and learning and the Myall sites are ideally situated for site interpretation. Many are intriguing vessels with a rich and colourful history and could be conveniently incorporated into historic walking tour/trails in the region. Several excellent examples have been developed at coastal ports such as Newcastle and Port Macquarie, although inland waterways have not been addressed at this time. The Heritage Office is a convenient authority to provide information of potential interpretative projects in the study region, drawing on existing examples and site inspections conducted to date. These projects would require the organisational and funding support of local council, National Parks & Wildlife Service, historical societies, local business, researches and interested individuals. Potential historic trails should also incorporate the important terrestrial sites, some of which have been targeted in this study.

It is important that all field studies and research based projects be distributed widely to all interest groups. For example, the Heritage Office’s underwater survey work is of importance to proposed National Parks & Wildlife Service studies regarding management options for Neranie Head, and the Myall Lakes system in total. The results of both these independent studies could be successfully used for a regional or site specific interpretation strategy, and the assessment of individual sites and items incorporated into meaningful discussions about their use, re-use, access and long term management.

The sites are ideally situated, being close to regional centres such as Sydney, Newcastle and Foster, to be the focus of detailed non-disturbance archaeological survey and mapping. The wrecks of the two timber droghers in Neranie Bay are especially suited for analysis and provide excellent opportunities for training amateurs in site survey skills. Both sites could become the focus of maritime archaeological training programs being coordinated in NSW through the NSW Heritage Office.

One, the NAS or Nautical Archaeology Society Training Program (UK) is being administered in Australia under the auspices of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology Inc (AIMA). Another program on offer is the Office’s own Wrecks Alive community wreck survey project. Coordinated by the Heritage Office and open to all interested individuals through dissemination of a training kit, the program encourages people to survey and record historic shipwrecks in NSW. The results of these kinds of projects can then be fed back into the local communities and assist site interpretation and management activities.

9.3 Results
The success of the above mentioned management approach will be confirmed by members of the public willing to inspect the sites within the terms of area Plans of Management and existing legislation, such as the *Heritage Act*, 1977. The success of the community involvement with each site and their long term preservation will be proven by the retention of their integrity, the raised local awareness of the heritage resource of the Myall region, and both water and shore based visitation to the sites.

Taken as a whole, this management approach, in discussion with the local council, Government agencies, tourist industry, boat operators and key interest groups, will assist in the preservation of the sites. The system will not work effectively however without local interest in promoting and maintaining the historical and archaeological importance of the remains.

The current legislation system has proven to be a highly effective way to management shipwreck sites. However, the basis of the National Historic Shipwrecks Program is public education. This is seen as the most important way to foster an interest and understanding in the preservation and management of the national historic shipwrecks resource.

### 9.4 Legislative Protection

NSW’s shipwrecks, terrestrial and submerged archaeological cultural heritage sites are protected by legislation which aims to limit interference, damage or destruction, while encouraging responsible public access.

All sites located within this study are protected by the provisions of the NSW *Heritage Act*, 1977 (State). These are protected because they are more than 50 years of age from the date of build and are related to the colonisation of Australia. Wreck sites situated in open waters, below the low water mark, adjacent to the coast and lost 75 years ago or more, are protected by the *Historic Shipwrecks Act*, 1976 (Commonwealth).

### 10.0 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the historical research, wreck site inspections, community input and subsequent assessment of significance, it is recommended that:

1. The conditions of the *Heritage Act*, 1977 are sufficient to advance the long term survival and management of the wreck sites and terrestrial heritage sites covered in this report.

2. Relevant Government agencies and public interest groups be provided with a copy of this report. That these groups be made aware of the heritage protection applicable to each site.

3. The survey data obtained during the current survey be incorporated into management planning currently being undertaken for the historic Neranie Head precinct by the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

4. Management options for each site should be developed in partnership with the caretakers of those sites (eg National Parks & Wildlife Service), and regularly
reviewed based on input from site users, land owners, boat charter operators, and in consultation with appropriate Government agencies, the wider community, Historical Societies and relevant individuals.

5. The Heritage Office continue to monitor shipwreck site visitation and its effects on the integrity and long term survival of the sites and any associated relics.

6. The Heritage Office continue periodic non-disturbance archaeological recording of the sites, when appropriate, to enable a continued picture of the remains to emerge. All results should be distributed to current site users and to the wider community.

7. When practicable, the wreck sites be investigated by a marine materials conservator, to assess their structural condition and to identify any procedures which may prolong the retention of the structures.

8. Relevant authorities and interest groups be approached to discuss possible site interpretation programs.

9. Appropriate government agencies, local historical societies, organisations and individuals be encouraged, where possible, to further research the background of the sites included in this study, and others thought to exist in the general region.

10. Where applicable, the remains of wreck sites and terrestrial heritage sites and associated artefacts be retained in-situ to preserve their attraction as locally significant archaeological sites in NSW.

11. Archaeological excavation of any site only be approved where the Heritage Office/Heritage Council of NSW receives a proposal backed by an adequate research design and funding for recovery, conservation and display to standards that ensure the long term retention of the artefacts and archaeological documentation.
11.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY


Comyns, T. W., 1909 ‘All about the Lovely Lakes District (The Killarney of Australia) “a trip to the Kawal & Myall Rivers” - extracts and notes.

Debert, Marjory (ed), 19??, *Lakeland Adventure: A history of the early days of Foster-Tuncurry*. Forster-Tuncurry Centenary Celebrations Committee.


Parsons, Ronald., 1961, *Details of Steamships Registered at the Port of Sydney, NSW prior to 1900*. Adelaide.


unk Extracts from ‘The Australian Home Companion’ on the Myall Lakes 1858 and 1859
APPENDIX 1

List of vessels wrecked in the study area.
(Based on the *National Historic Shipwrecks Database*, 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Built</th>
<th>Lost</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breeze(r)?</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>A wreck of this name was reported to have been abandoned near the “Paterson” boiler at Tea Gardens (Norman Cruickshank, pers.com.). No information of such a vessel has been detected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drogher</td>
<td>Timber punt</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>Boiler of wreck visible in Smith’s Lake (Tramline Beach) opposite site of tramline in 1982 (NPWS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iluka</td>
<td>iron paddle stmr</td>
<td>36.3m</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Abandoned and sank at Tea Gardens in 1920’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myall River</td>
<td>Timber stmr screw</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1949 closed Said to have been abandoned at Slip Island, Tea Gardens, and burned by youths in recent times (Norman Cruickshank).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamander</td>
<td>Timber drogher</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>Abandoned behind Slip Island, Tea Gardens, said to have belonged to Allan Taylor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paterson</td>
<td>Steamer</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>No Register found to match this vessel. Stated by Norman Cruickshank to have been abandoned near Tea Gardens and represented by the visible boiler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliance</td>
<td>Timber stmr screw</td>
<td>18.1m</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Caught fire at Tea Gardens, 22.10.1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Timber stmr screw</td>
<td>20.4m</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Burrt at Tea Gardens 7.10.1916, but potentially lost in Port Stephens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brothers</td>
<td>Timber drogher</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>unk</td>
<td>Abandoned hulk in Neranie Bay attributed locally to the timber drogher, <em>The Brothers</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>