

YOUR VIRTUAL DISCOVERY VISIT – 77 TO THE HERITAGE STORIES OF ROTTNEST ISLAND



The Virtual Visit series was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rottnest Island was closed to the public due to social distancing restrictions and periods of use for quarantine from March to June 2020.

Now that the Island is again open to visitors, these Virtual Visits are continuing in 2021 to enable a further enjoyment of stories introduced at the Wadjemup Museum, the Chapman Archives or sites around the Island.

Enjoy, reflect and share.

Jetties in Transition

In the pre-Covid 19 days before March 2020, about 185,000 of the 500,000 annual visits to the island were made by private or charter boats. Additionally the recent trend towards increased boat ownership and larger vessels has had an impact on the island's marine reserves. Like camping, the boating experience is a treasured component of Rottnest Island heritage. Infrastructure to support this aspect of our enjoyment of Rottnest necessitates continuing investment to ensure ongoing structural integrity, compliance with evolving regulation and timely anticipation of visitor expectations and numbers. This is an ongoing process but by its gradual nature may pass unnoticed. This Virtual Visit focuses on some examples where heritage structures and places on Rottnest have continued to evolve.



Army Jetty

The Army Jetty has featured directly and indirectly in a number of Virtual Visits over the past years including: 19 – Ma Keogh; 27 – Crab, Crayfish and Dolphin; 29 – Hussey Remembers; 30 Barge Duchess; 32 Ferry Zephyr; 41 – Highlanders on Rottnest; and 51 – Army Jetty. The Army Groyne is now the third structure on the site with each iteration retaining elements from the previous.

In October 2018, a portion of the decking at the Army Jetty collapsed. Subsequently the Rottneest Island Authority contacted McMahon Services to demolish and remediate the concrete deck of the jetty's structure. Works include the complete demolition of the jetty including the removal of existing steel superstructure, timber fender system and steel piles. The scope of work created several challenges. These included transporting plant, equipment and materials to the island by barge and ensuring public access to the site was restricted using clear and security fencing and hoarding. A 50 metre no-go zone was established around the site.



As Rottneest Island is an A Class reserve, the natural environment requires stringent levels of protection during works on site. McMahon Services achieved compliance with biosecurity requirements by ensuring all vehicles, plant, equipment and all tools were free from soil, dirt and any plant or animal matter, prior to transportation to the island. All demolition waste generated was removed from the Island including timber and steel piles from the boat ramp to make it safe. Over 100 tons of armour stone was imported and placed on site to rebuild the groyne on completion of demolition. Approximately 60 cubic metres of limestone road base was also placed and compacted to form a pedestrian track.



Fuel Jetty



Rottneest Island's new Fuel Jetty, built by Fremantle company Total AMB, opened on 5 December 2021. The new jetty provides improved facilities and accessibility to the Island including additional power and water outlets, new finger jetties at lower level between pens and enhanced refuelling for smaller vessels. The facility also includes a new multi-level landing platform with disability access and improved berthing for smaller vessels.



Stark Jetty / Pilot Boathouse Jetty





A favourite haunt of Pirate Pete and his treasure, during school holidays, the Pilot Boathouse looks out directly on the Stark jetty which is currently undergoing renovation.



The evolution of the North Thomson foreshore both above and below the waterline since the America's Cup defence is illustrative. It demonstrates the dynamic nature of the sea front with sand accumulation changing over time. The seasons can also be tracked by the amount of sea grass accumulated. Changing attitudes of inclusion have seen the installation of a ramp leading into the sea for wheelchairs and the introduction of balloon tires further extending universal access.

The success of conservation and rehabilitation initiatives is also evident through extension of spinifex dunes to stabilise beach sand and the healthy seagrass meadows visible from the shore. The beach anchoring points installed four years ago in Thomson Bay by the Rottne Island Authority have proven popular among visitors and are considered a safe and sociable way to secure a vessel, while the bay's seagrass, vegetation and shoreline benefit from the use of these well-managed moorings.



Green Island Jetty, Nancy Cove



Green island jetty in 2007. Remember those simpler bicycle times with no gears and a canvas carry satchel. (Yeah E-Bikes)

Sometimes, we just don't know and the former jetty in Nancy Cove by Green Island is a case in point. It is well documented that the building stone for both lighthouses on Wadjemup Hill was quarried at Nancy Cove. The jetty that was there facing Green Island was damaged during a storm and was eventually removed. Extensive digital searches have to date been unable to discover any sources relating why or when it was built. Was the original jetty associated with the quarry? Pass any leads to RVGA Heritage, Archives or Statistics.

Nancy Cove is just a little over a kilometre away from Mary Cove where the Anitra II was wrecked. Green Island is also one of five marine sanctuary zones surrounding the island, the others being located at Parker Point, Kingston Reef, Armstrong Bay and West End. The West End is a designated demersal sanctuary zone to protect bottom-dwelling or 'demersal' fish species.

<https://ria.wa.gov.au/Articles/latest-news/New-Rottnest-Island-Management-Plan-approved>

<https://www.mcmservices.com.au/projects/rotnnest-island-former-army-jetty-demolition/>

<https://ria.wa.gov.au/Articles/latest-news/island-new-fuel-jetty-to-open>

<https://lighthouses.org.au/wa/rotnnest-island-lighthouse/>

<https://archives.rvga.asn.au/1991/07/01/rotnnest-islander-story-of-camping-at-munt-camp-near-nancy-cove-in-1910/>

<https://fremantlebiz.livejournal.com/864576.html>

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