

*Combining Indigenous and Maritime
Archaeological Approaches: Experiences
and Insights from the '(Re)locating
Narrunga Project', Yorke Peninsula, South
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Combining Indigenous and Maritime Archaeological Approaches: Experiences and Insights from the ‘(Re)locating *Narrunga* Project’, Yorke Peninsula, South Australia

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Abstract This paper details the unique pairing of Indigenous and maritime archaeological approaches in the ‘(Re)locating *Narrunga* Project’. *Narrunga* was a ketch built by the Narungga Aboriginal community at Point Pearce Mission (Yorke Peninsula, South Australia) at the turn of the twentieth century and later sunk in the 1940s. It is argued that convergences between the scholarly interests of Indigenous and maritime archaeological approaches have been slow to develop and that maritime archaeology as a sub-discipline has not capitalized on the insights that can be gained from collaborative approaches between communities and practitioners. Similarly, Indigenous communities in Australia have had few opportunities to work with researchers to record their maritime heritage. As is evident in the *Narrunga* story told in this research, non-Indigenous records have been complicit in underplaying the maritime achievements and skills of Narungga people and collaborative research can work towards decolonizing this past.

Keywords Indigenous · Australia · *Narrunga* · Narungga

Introduction

Archaeology in Australia, as in many parts of the world, is traditionally separated into three primary and discrete fields: Indigenous, historical and maritime. Prior to the mid-1990s research into the ‘contact’ and/or ‘post-contact’ period of the Indigenous Australian past received little attention and was largely viewed as a ‘curiosity amongst the ‘real business’ of writing Aboriginal ‘prehistory’ and settler-colonial history’ (Williamson and Harrison

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2004:2). Since this time ‘contact’ and/or ‘post-contact’ archaeology¹ has seen merges between the fields of Indigenous and historical archaeology ‘producing a new synergy’ (Smith et al. 2004:xiii). However, convergences between the scholarly interests of Indigenous and maritime archaeological approaches are slower to develop. Whilst this paper does not examine why this has occurred we do note that further research into this issue is worthy of investigation.

To date research has taken place in Australia in relation to the significance of ships, shipbuilding and shipwrecks of non-Indigenous Australian-built heritage (Jeffery 1989, 1992; Coroneos 1991; Bullers 2005; O’Reilly 2007). However, less is written about Indigenous watercraft construction, shipbuilding and use (either of a traditional nature or as a result of European influence) and the past and contemporary significance of such vessels to Indigenous peoples.² Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there exists little research in Australia where Indigenous perspectives are carefully and appropriately incorporated in the process of investigating European or colonial maritime heritage.

Thus, maritime archaeology as a sub-discipline has lagged far behind its Indigenous archaeology counterparts in terms of engaging a broader community in cultural heritage management. Power relationships, class and social inequities have gone unaddressed in discussions concerning the management of heritage and who owns the past: nowhere more so than in Aboriginal people’s control of ‘heritage’ (Flatman 2007:86). We would argue that maritime archaeologists should, therefore, be engaging in debates on topics such as: (1) The sea rights and Indigenous tenure of intertidal and submerged cultural landscapes and seascapes; (2) The significance of the natural environment (i.e., waters, marine life and tides) and its relationship with the cultural environment in Indigenous communities; (3) The Western prescription of a boundary between land and water when defining and managing heritage; (4) Legislation that protects submerged Indigenous heritage equally, rather than privileging the heritage of European shipwrecks; (5) Maritime heritage management that incorporates the needs of Indigenous communities; and (6) The meaningful interpretation of these sites such that multiple perspectives are incorporated.

Given the above issues and general prior lack of engagement between maritime archaeology as a sub-discipline and Indigenous peoples we have chosen to employ the term ‘Indigenous archaeology’ in this paper in the manner as first outlined by Nicholas and Andrews (1997:3), i.e., as ‘archaeology with, for, and by Indigenous peoples’. The collaboration envisioned for the project discussed in this paper has been to achieve the ‘genuine synergy’ as described by Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008:1)—i.e., ‘where the contributions of community members and scholars create a positive result that could not be achieved without joining efforts.’ We also draw upon the principles of an ‘Indigenist Research Epistemology’ as defined by Rigney (2006) and articulated by Arbon (2008), Martin (2008) and Mihesuah and Wilson (2004). As Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008:1–2) argue, all projects along the ‘collaborative continuum’ are necessarily unique and few works have provided the theoretical perspectives required to understand

¹ Also referred to as ‘the archaeology of cross-cultural engagements’ and ‘the historical archaeology of Indigenous peoples’ (for general usage of all of these terms see Torrence and Clarke 2000; Clarke and Paterson 2003; Murray 1996; Rubertone 2000; Smith and Beck 2003).

² Although some researchers are beginning to make some headway in this area (see the Western Australian Museum’s (2013a) research into Indigenous oral histories regarding shipbuilding in the Broome region). The Western Australian Museum’s (2013b) ‘Strangers on the Shore’ database also deserves mention here for its efforts in relation to the acknowledgment of the social contact that Indigenous peoples had with survivors of Western Australian shipwrecks.



Fig. 1 Elder Clem O'Loughlin conducting research at the South Australian Museum Archives. Photograph by Amy Roberts

'collaboration's multiplex applications.' In this regard, we briefly outline below the impetus for the project and its collaborative development.

The idea for this project first arose during discussions between Narungga Aboriginal Elder, Clem O'Loughlin, and archaeologist/anthropologist, Amy Roberts, during a separate project. During these discussions, the significance of the vessel known as *Narungga* became apparent (further outlined below). It was also clear that the detailed oral histories and knowledge about the vessel, which primarily rested with the older generation, was in need of recording. In this context O'Loughlin expressed his desire to (re)locate the sunken vessel and to record other aspects of the boat's history (including inter-tidal and land-based sites relating to the story of the vessel) and its importance to the Narungga Aboriginal community.³ Subsequently, when Roberts joined the Archaeology Department at Flinders University, the opportunity for collaboration with her maritime archaeological colleague, Jennifer McKinnon, arose and more serious discussions began with Elder Clem O'Loughlin and other relevant Narungga organizations (Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation and Adjahdura Narungga Heritage Group). It was decided early on that attempts would be made to be as inclusive as possible of all community members and organizations with an interest in the vessel. In preliminary meetings about the project it was also noted by Narungga community members and the Narungga academic, Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney, that given that the project would be detailing community knowledge, Narungga members should also be involved as researchers and authors. Thus, throughout all stages of the project community members have participated in: (1) Project design; (2) Archival research; (3) Collection of oral histories; (4) Archaeological field work; and (5) Analysis and writing (Fig. 1).

³ In this regard we also note here the important inroads made by those archaeologists who have been considering concepts such as 'maritime cultural landscapes' — the works of Christer Westerdahl are particularly instructive in this regard (e.g., see Westerdahl 1992, 2003, 2006, 2011). As Ford (2011:5) articulates: 'Within the maritime cultural landscape approach, maritime history and ethnography are integrated with the physical residue of past maritime systems...'. However, the approach taken here whilst incorporating such approaches is more focused on the collaborative endeavor.



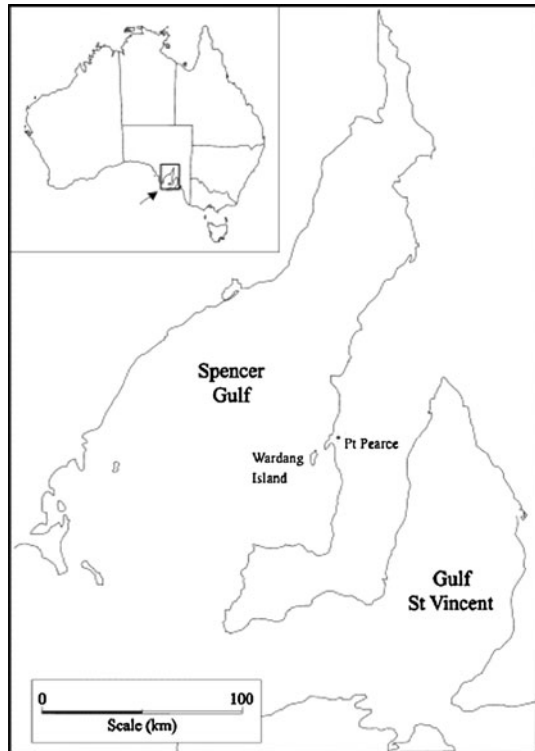
Fig. 2 One of the collaborative field work crews: L-R: Narungga community members (Doug Milera and Edward Newchurch), archaeologist/anthropologist (Amy Roberts), volunteers (John Naumann and Kurt Bennett) and maritime archaeologists (Madeline Fowler and Jennifer McKinnon). Photograph by Jason Raupp

Other benefits were built into the project or have significant outcomes including: (1) Economic payments/benefit for Narungga participants (particularly as field work monitors); (2) The provision of opportunities for the transmission of knowledge between generations about Narungga's maritime history; (3) The preservation of community knowledge; and (4) The recording of archaeological remains that are rapidly deteriorating. The beneficial outcomes from an archaeological/historical perspective are further detailed in later sections of this paper.

As a result, the process embarked upon in the design, implementation and concluding phases is akin to the approach of 'collaborative inquiry' as defined by Bray et al. (2000:6) and subsequently advocated by Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008:9), a process which consists of 'repeated episodes of reflection and action through which a group of peers strives to answer a question of importance to them' (Bray et al. 2000:6). Further, the research conforms to the 'Indigenist' research principles as outlined by Rigney (2006:42) including: (1) The goal to seek liberation from the colonial domination of research and society; (2) The imperative to maintain the integrity of Aboriginal knowledge; and (3) By privileging Indigenous voices in research. These important principles informed our collaboration as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal authors and researchers and make clear the spirit and intent of this paper (Fig. 2).

Background

Narrunga (also spelt *Narrungga*, *Narungga* and *Narunga*) was built by Narungga people to carry stock from the Aboriginal mission on Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, known as

Fig. 3 Map showing locations

Point Pearce (traditional name—Burgiyana), to Wardang Island (traditional name—Waraldi, Waradharldi) (Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association 2006; Wanganeen 1987:55 and 66) (see Fig. 3).⁴

Prior to the use of European style vessels Narungga people crossed the channel to Wardang Island by other means and there are various accounts of such events. For example, *The South Australian Register* (20 November 1886) reported the following story regarding the Narungga man referred to by Europeans as ‘King Tommy’:

His stories of travel were quite interesting. Before the whites settled on the Peninsula he has gone up the Murray [River] for grasstree to light fires, and was never molested by the other natives. He has frequently swam to Wauraltee Island with a firestick in his hair. The distance is between 2 and 3 miles, but he would choose low tide for it, when he could occasionally rest on sandbars.

Cockburn (1984:235) also records that Narungga people swam from the Point (Pearce) to Wardang Island in order to capture bandicoots. Black (1920:88), however, states that the purpose of visits to Wardang Island was to get fish and penguins, he wrote:

⁴ The spellings for the vessel and the language group have been kept distinct in this article to both maintain difference between the two and because they are the generally preferred orthography in both instances.

When crossing to Wardang Island the blacks would wade out to [mungari] and swam the rest of the distance. Mrs. Newchurch's grandfather and grandmother told her that while the swimmers were in the water the old men sat along the shore and sang an incantation to keep the sharks away. No one was allowed to move until the party landed on the island. When ready to return they made a signal across the water and the singing began again.

Hill and Hill (1975:38) also record that the 'Aborigines' told an old local resident [Mr A. Menz of Port Victoria] 'that at low tide they could almost walk from the tip of Point Pearce to Wardang Island, only having to swim a short distance across one deep channel.' The Narungga Elder, Cecil Graham (now deceased), also recalled the following:

My grandfather told the story about when in the old days some people camped on a little island, Greeny [Green] Island. The old men would go over to Wardang Island, butterfishing. They'd swim across through the shallow water, and be back before the tide came in. One old lady this time was scared. She said, 'Don't go today, the shark might get you.' The man swam. He had a sore on his leg. He never came back. (Graham and Graham 1987:53)

Whilst Wood and Westell (1999:18) more recently recorded the following Narungga account from Elder Irene Agius (now deceased):

Now, with our ancestors, they used to make parts of the branches off the tree, walk out to Greenie [Green Island], if they needed to cross the island, drag the branches with them, go from one island and keep walking while the tide was out. Then they had a channel to cross off from, part way off from Greenie to Wardang Island. You had strong men each side of the channel and strong men to help cart the old ladies and old men over to Wardang Island. And by having the strong men up each end of it, two or three strong men up each end of the channel, they were facing opposite end to each other and they would wave their branches so to distract the sharks from coming to take the, take them. And that's how they crossed to Wardang Island. (Irene Agius in Wood and Westell 1999:18)

Such ethno-historical accounts are vital in providing context and continuity to the *Narrunga* story. These narratives reveal that although Narungga people adapted to and adopted aspects of European material culture that such adaptations and adoptions did not necessarily result in the cessation of traditional activities. This is, for example, evidenced by the contemporary practice of fishing for traditional species in the Wardang Island area and detailed knowledge of fishing places.

Narrunga was described as both a two-masted ketch (Wanganee 1987:55) and a schooner (Gillen in Mulvaney et al. 1997:436). Historic photographs of the vessel indicate it was ketch-rigged (and it is described as such at the time of its launching—although it is possible that the vessel was both over the course of its life).⁵ Built in 1903 the following dimensions and details about the boat were reported in a newspaper article at the time of its launching:

⁵ In relation to historic photographs of the vessel it should be noted here that at least one published image has been mis-identified as the *Narrunga* vessel. The vessel in the photograph in Heinrich (1976:90) labeled as '*Narunga*', although similar in appearance to *Narrunga*, is elsewhere identified as *Adonis* (see Moody 2012:51).

A vessel has just been completed to the order of the Yorke Peninsula Aboriginal Mission committee for the station at Point Pierce. The measurements are:—Length over all, 45 ft. 5 in.; beam extreme, 12 ft. 5 in.; and depth amidships, 4 ft. She has accommodation for over 160 sheep, and draws only 20 inches of water when loaded. Light draught is necessary for working over the shallows that are found between Wardang Island and Point Pierce...She is ketch rigged, with centerboard of jarrah, and sails well. The sheep are loaded by being driven on stages through a gap hatchway in the stern.

(*The Advertiser*, 30 September 1903)

The vessel has numerous levels of significance to the Narungga community. Undoubtedly, however, the naming of the vessel features high on the list of the importance it is accorded by Narungga people—being named after their language group (Clayton Smith pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 6 August 2012). Significantly, and unusually, the moment of its naming was recorded by the early ethnographer, Francis James Gillen (Fig. 4).

Gillen, in a letter (1 February 1903) to another early ethnographer, Walter Spencer, wrote:

We are having a new boat built at the Station a small Schooner, and I have named it the Narungga Much [sic] to the delight of the old men. It was like old times squatting in their Camp [sic] in the scrub and I am seriously thinking of putting in a week with them some day...

(Gillen in Mulvaney et al. 1997:436)

The fact that the boat was built by members of the Narungga community is also significant. Whilst many boats of European construction were used by Indigenous communities around Australia (including others in the Narungga community such as *Moorara* [see State Heritage Branch 1991])—few are recorded to have had community involvement in their construction. This fact was recorded in oral histories preserved in the production of the publication *Point Pearce: Past and Present* compiled by the Narungga researcher Eileen Wanganeen (1987). In interviews conducted with two senior women from the community,

Fig. 4 Francis James Gillen. Image courtesy of the South Australian Museum, AA676-5-10-6 (original from Archibald 1915)





Fig. 5 Image courtesy of the South Australian Museum, AA676-5-10-32 (original from Archibald 1915). *Note:* The caption in Wanganeen (1987:66) states that the vessel is moored at ‘Dolly’s Jetty’ on the mainland, however, field research and archival resources (e.g., Archibald 1915) indicate that the image is of the ‘Wardang Island Jetty’

Olga Fudge and Eileen Newchurch (now deceased), the following was recorded about their discussion of Fig. 5 (Klynton and Eileen Wanganeen pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 9 February 2012):

That old boat, that was built in the wool shed in Point Pearce, in that old wool shed. That’s our people, the Narrunga people. That’s the boat just come out, on her first trip I think to Wardang Island. It was to cart all the sheep, cattle and all in that boat. It was built by a fella by the name of Burgoyne. He had all the Nungas working with him, helping him, like Old Joey my grandfather. Billy Williams, all them fellas, helped to build that boat. Burgine [sic] was only just telling them what to do, supervisor...They used to put them on deck, the sheep, and all. All the station was down there watching the boat come out of the shed and they took it down to the sheoaks (the tide was out). Old Yates, Jerry Yates his name was, took it down there with a big locomotive from Maitland, engine pulling it. They put her on with the wheels and this engine took it down there, left her there on the sand. When the tide come in...away she went. She floated. They took her over to the island. The old fella, old Ben Sims, he was the captain of her for a good while...*Narrunga* was also used to ferry us all over to Wardang Island for the day, for a big picnic. She was towed by the motor launch, *Annie Roslyn*, later sold to someone in Port Pirie...⁶ (Wanganeen 1987:66)

⁶ The precise identification of both Jerry Yates and Ben Sims is at present uncertain. The surname ‘Yates’ is common in the Point Pearce community—however, the name ‘Jerry Yates’ was not known by the Elders interviewed for this research. As such, it cannot be stated with certainty that this individual is Aboriginal. Similarly, the definite identification of the ‘Ben Sims’ in the quote is difficult due to the fact that it is known that there was an ‘Aboriginal’ Ben Sims and a ‘white’ Ben Sims (also spelt Simms) (see Moody [2012:81] for information on the ‘white’ Simms family—of note in this regard he writes that a different member of the family [Hector Simms] ‘skipped the Point Pearce work boat’). According to a descendant of the ‘white’ Ben Sims the ‘Aboriginal’ Ben Sims took his name from the ‘white’ man of the same name. This same descendant also stated that the ‘Aboriginal’ Ben Sims shared much information with the ‘white’ Simm’s family about traditional Narungga fishing (Ben Simms pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 11 October 2012).

Doris and Cecil Graham, two Narungga Elders (now deceased), also record in their book that the boat was built by Point Pearce people (Graham and Graham 1987:58). In relation to a discussion about Fig. 6 they write:

From 1877 Wardang Island was used by the Point Pearce Community for grazing livestock, because feed ran short on the mainland. Tanks were constructed on the Island. To overcome transportation problems, this two-masted boat, the *Narrunga*, was built. It is pictured here, en route to Wardang Island. Substantial jetties were also constructed at both sides of the channel. The *Narrunga* was built by the people on Point Pearce. Pictured on the bow of the ship is Cecil's Grandfather, Alfred Hughes. (Graham and Graham 1987:58)

Archibald (1915:22), writing about the history of the mission, further notes that the 'substantial jetties' were constructed in 1910. An important part of the maritime tenure and transportation, jetties serviced local vessels like *Narrunga*. These sites provide a crucial, yet often overlooked, aspect of maritime activities at Indigenous missions linking the land to the sea.

Non-Indigenous records about the vessel's construction, however, make no mention of the Narungga community's pivotal role in its construction. An article in *The Advertiser* (30 September 1903) simply states: 'The vessel was built at the station by Mr. W. Burgoyne, of the "Pioneer slip." Port Pirie...'. We should not be surprised that this is the case, for as Reynolds' (2000:9) has argued, if Aboriginal people were 'shown to have displayed the same skills and attributes as white frontier settlers' then they would 'complicate the story, undermine white heroism' and diminish the accomplishments of colonialism. Similarly, the same newspaper article highlights the 'white' accomplishments in the story of the vessel's launching by referring to the machinery used to launch the boat:



Fig. 6 *Narrunga*—Alfred Hughes is standing on the bow of the vessel (Graham and Graham 1987:58). Image courtesy of the South Australian Museum, AA676-5-10-43 (original from Archibald 1915)

A traction engine, owned by Jarret Bros., of Maitland, provided the motive power necessary to effect the launch. Owing to the soft condition of the road after heavy rains, laying steel plates under the trolley wheels was resorted to, thus ensuring firmness. Over one and a half miles was plated in this way...

(*The Advertiser*, 30 September 1903)

This history of the event is in stark contrast to the community atmosphere recorded in the oral histories in Wanganeen (1987:66), quoted above, which refer to the fact that the entire Point Pearce community turned out to watch the event.

Materials and Methods

Oral Histories and Lived Experiences

In keeping with the goals of the study to incorporate Indigenous and maritime archaeological approaches and to conform to ‘Indigenist’ research principles, the starting point for this project began with an oral history focus combined with initial site visits with Narungga community members to record additional ‘lived experiences’ of relevant places. In accordance with the idea that an Indigenous archaeological methodology should be ‘with, for, and by Indigenous peoples’ (Nicholas and Andrews 1997:3) we began by concentrating our gaze on the knowledge of the Narungga community so as not to start the program by privileging the documentary and archaeological data or the non-Indigenous history.

Interview methods were based on qualitative approaches because qualitative data involves documenting real events, recording what people say, studying written documents and examining visual images (Neuman 1997:238). All of the aforementioned points are of course important in a study that aims to investigate the contemporary socio-cultural importance of *Narrunga* to the community.

In keeping with a qualitative approach, methods that reflected this intent were favored. As such, methods such as in-depth interviewing—e.g., semi-structured and unstructured—were employed (see for example Cannole et al. 1993; Jones 1985; Neuman 1997; Mini-chiello et al. 1997). Interview themes focused on collecting information about known locations for the vessel—including remembered transits or marks and proposed GPS coordinates—together with known stories, ‘lived experiences’ and contemporary thoughts on significance. In addition, as noted previously, Narungga community members (Klynton Wanganeen and Clem O’Loughlin) were involved in the collection of oral histories. Their active participation as researchers was pivotal to the contextualization of information gathered (Fig. 7).

Inter-Tidal Zone and Terrestrial Survey and Recording

The importance of inter-tidal and terrestrial sites associated with the vessel *Narrunga* were identified early in discussions with the community. Questions about where *Narrunga* was constructed and which jetties were used during its tenure in the area prompted field-work focusing on more terrestrial-based sites. Several sites were visited and photographed during this survey, including the wool shed location at Point Pearce Mission where *Narrunga* was built, the area thought to be its launching point, jetties on Point Pearce and Wardang Island as well as other infrastructure on Wardang Island. Investigations at each



Fig. 7 L-R: Klynton Wanganeen, Lance Newchurch and Clem O'Loughlin during an oral history interview at Point Pearce, 16 February 2012. Photograph by Amy Roberts

site involved photographic recording as well as the taking of records relating to location, condition and construction. One jetty located on Point Pearce (known as 'Dolly's Jetty') was recorded in detail using baseline offset measuring methods, photography, and fastener and construction material surveys. A plan view of this jetty was drawn as a result of the survey.

Geophysical Surveys

Geophysical surveys were conducted in efforts to (re)locate the *Narrunga* vessel. Both side scan sonar and a magnetometer were employed—although they were not used together at the same time.

This project used an Imagenex SportScan side scan sonar for imaging and identifying anomalies. The SportScan was integrated with a Garmin 76C × GPS system and was operated on a dedicated laptop utilizing Imagenex data collection and analysis software.

The magnetometer utilized was a Marine Magnetics Explorer using overhauser technology which provides a resolution of around 0.1 nT. The position fixing was with a Garmin Omnistar 8400 giving sub-metre precision. Data was logged on Chesapeake SonarWiz which stored position, layback and magnetometer readings. Data was processed using Surfer and MagPick.

The geophysical surveys were conducted on 10 and 11 April 2012, 30 and 31 May 2012 and 16 and 17 October 2012, and were designed to cover the areas where members of the *Narungga* community indicated the sunken vessel might be located.

Results and Discussion

Oral Histories and Lived Experiences

Oral histories and 'lived experiences' were central to this project. They provided the initial location for survey areas in the search for *Narrunga*, context and texture to the *Narrunga* story and served to preserve knowledge (and facilitate its transmission to younger generations) about the maritime history of *Narungga* people.

The recorded locations for the vessel (via oral histories) are not reported here, except in general terms, at the request of the community. In general terms the oral histories reveal

that the boat is thought to be located in an area a number of kilometers north-west of Wardang Island. The information shared by community members involved both remembered transits/marks and some GPS coordinates. The location of the boat is also known as an important 'fishing drop' (i.e., a favourite Narungga fishing place)—this latter fact has been important in the preservation of knowledge about the sinking of the vessel.

The oral histories of Narungga people revealed that at least one member of the community, Clem O'Loughlin, recalled sailing on the vessel. He also discusses its sinking below:

Clem O'Loughlin [CO]: I remember it [*Narrunga*] was backed into Dolly's Jetty. Loading it up from the back...

Amy Roberts [AR]: And who were you with when you first remember the boat and went on the boat?

CO: Family...Dad [Alf O'Loughlin], mum [Gladys Stuart] was already on the boat see, most of the furniture...[and my] brother Danny.

AR: And what do you remember about how the boat looked then? Did it have sails?

CO: Not sure now. But I think they used to tow it around with the island launch...

AR: And so when you first remember *Narrunga*, you were getting on it and you were taking your furniture to Wardang Island [to live there with your family]?

CO: And the horse and the cow too. Dad had to have a horse there cause he was supervising the bottom half of Wardang.

AR: And you said a cow?

CO: Cow for milk, yeah.

AR: So how did you load all these things onto the boat? Just over a little ramp or?

CO: Something like a ramp, yeah...

AR: And so when you went across that time, how old were you then?

CO: Well, I was born in 1934, and I went to school over there. That's 1939, must have been five or six when I went over...

AR: And that was the first time you had been on that boat? And do you remember if it had a wooden deck or anything like that? Do you remember any other particulars about the boat?

CO: I thought it looked more like a open boat, you know...Because it had to be open to get the horse and the cow on, didn't it...I think it might have had a quarterdeck around, you know.

AR: But then you know that the boat was sunk?

CO: It was taken out to the island [Wardang] and sank [c. 1940s].

AR: So tell me about how you know about that.

CO: Well in the history, people talking, it was too old and they had to take it out and get rid of it. They took it out there and...in deep water...

AR: And what did you hear about that process?

CO: I just heard the bloke who took it out there were Jimmy Messenger, the bloke who worked the BHP [Broken Hill Proprietary]⁷ on Wardang.

AR: So he worked for BHP on the sand mines?

CO: On the sand dunes, yeah, collecting sand for the Pirie smelters. Well they all worked for BHP, all the white fellas...

(Interview conducted on 5 December 2011)

⁷ Broken Hill Associated Smelters (or BHAS) held the mining leases on the island—however because BHP is a more commonly known company and also due to the fact that it had interests in BHAS many people simply use the term BHP.

Another senior Narungga man, Lance Newchurch, added further detail to the sinking of the vessel:

LN [Lance Newchurch]: ...I mean I would listen to the story when I was a kid. We were told they had taken a boat out there and loaded big trucks on it and sinking it.

AR: And what kind of trucks did he put on there?

LN: Yeah, dump trucks.

CO: Used over on Wardang on the mine, to go pick the sand up and taken them down to the jetty...

LN: You can push them along yourself, you know. Tip them over...

AR: And who did you go fishing there with?

LN: With Wellesley [Sansbury].⁸

(Interview conducted on 16 February 2012)

Specific Narungga individuals, such as Wellesley Sansbury (now deceased) mentioned above, were pivotal in passing on information about *Narrunga* and are remembered as expert fishermen. Another significant Narungga fisherman in this regard was Clem Graham Snr (now deceased) (Ron Newchurch pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 11 April 2012)—there were also others. Klynton Wanganeen (pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 23 August 2012), for example, noted the community's pride at Clem Graham's achievements in gaining his coxswain certificate—but he also in turn reflected on the impact various licensing regimes have had on Narungga people. These and other issues relating to fishing permits and their impact on the social and cultural fishing activities of the community are currently the subject of additional research by Roberts, Rigney and Wanganeen.

During the site visits with Narungga people to locations relating to the vessel 'lived experiences' and any surviving archaeological remains were recorded. For example, during a visit to the location of the old wool shed at Point Pearce (where *Narrunga* was built) it was discovered that not only were there limited remains of this building (demolished c. 1960s), but that it had been the site of later significant events for Clem O'Loughlin. In particular, he recalled the difficult time of his exemption.

'Exemption' was a legislative provision under the *Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1939*. This provision was an 'invidious form of discrimination' which ultimately had the effect of declaring certain Aboriginal individuals and families as 'honorary whites' (Mattingley and Hampton 1988:49). Such a declaration could be made by the Aborigines Protection Board even if the person concerned had not applied—and was sometimes employed as a punitive measure (Mattingley and Hampton 1988:48). Exempted people were not permitted to live on Aboriginal missions and reserves—a circumstance that deeply affected Clem O'Loughlin. The site visit to the old wool shed brought back these memories as he recalled the time when he hid in the grass outside of the building after attempting to visit his wife (whom he was prohibited from visiting as she was not exempted and still lived on the mission). Only to be discovered by the mission's superintendent and told to 'move on' (Fig. 8).

Site visits also clarified some of the oral histories from the community. For example, whilst earlier oral histories in Wanganeen (1987:66) refer to the fact that *Narrunga* was launched at an area known by the Narungga community as 'The Sheoaks'—field work at this location revealed that the launching probably took place at an area to the north of The

⁸ Metal trolleys used to load sand onto the waiting barges at Wardang Island are pictured in Heinrich (1976:88) and appear to be approximately 1.5 m × 1.5 m × 1 m in size.



Fig. 8 Loading wool to cart to market in front of the old wool shed at Point Pearce, c. 1912. Image courtesy of the South Australian Museum, AA723-5 (original from Archibald, 1915)

Sheoaks' current location on the tidal flats which was more easily accessed and which provided an easier location from which to launch the vessel.

Similarly, oral histories and community observations combined with comparisons of archival photographs and archaeological remains (e.g., probable stump posts and *in situ* rough rock wall remains) has led to the identification of the probable location of 'Old Dolly's Jetty' which was the sheep run on Point Pearce (Lyle Sansbury and Lance Newchurch pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 13 April 2012) (Fig. 9).

Site visits also added significant detail to more well-known Narungga maritime infrastructure such as the existing jetty known as 'Dolly's Jetty' that is located further south of the probable location of 'Old Dolly's Jetty'. Whilst at 'Dolly's Jetty' Clem O'Loughlin talked about how his father was involved in the building of the stone wall used to funnel sheep onto *Narrunga*.

Field-work on Wardang Island, together with oral histories, also revealed the extensive archaeological remains present on Wardang Island in the area of the 'Old Village'—the area where the 'old *nungas* [Aboriginal people]' lived and worked (Clem O'Loughlin pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 12 April 2012).

Elder Fred Graham also added his 'lived experiences' to this place by telling stories about his experiences of the *gubba* [spirit being or devil] when he camped in this location with Elder John Stuart (now deceased) as a younger man (Fred Graham pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 6 August 2012) (see Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association 2006:44 for *gubba* definition).



Fig. 9 *Narrunga*. Image reproduced from Kartinyeri (2003:69). Note: The caption in Kartinyeri (2003:69) states: ‘delivering sheep to Wardang Island’—however, field research indicates that this jetty is what is referred to by contemporary senior Narungga people as ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’

Inter-tidal Zone and Terrestrial Survey and Recording

A site visit and pedestrian survey of the potential area where the initial launching of *Narrunga* took place provided further evidence of ‘lived experiences’ and maritime activities. For example, community members recalled that a barge was cleaned and refitted on the tidal flats in the 1970s (Cyril Kartinyeri, Doug Milera and Klynton Wanganeen pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 23 March 2012). Physical evidence of ship timbers and fasteners further substantiated the site as a maritime activity area and suggested that it is likely the area where *Narrunga* was launched. Typically the natural features of an area (i.e., expansive, hard tidal flats free from rocks or obstructions) and their proximity to communities and to deep water led to their selection as launching or vessel refitting areas. This area fulfills these characteristics and further survey and historical research could provide more evidence for its positive identification.

Photographs were a useful media in helping to identify the probable location of ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’, ‘Dolly’s Jetty’ and the Wardang Island Jetty. As mentioned above, questions remained about whether the jetties identified in historical photographs were correctly labeled and where they were located. By piecing together data gleaned from oral history, historical photographs and archaeological survey, this project was able to clarify this information based on natural and cultural features. A short pedestrian survey and the removal of seaweed from the inter-tidal zone revealed an upright, wooden pile located just off the end of what appeared to be a jetty constructed of piled rocks in the area said to be the location of ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’ (see Fig. 10). Further probing of the area will likely determine if other piles exist.

An intensive archaeological survey conducted at ‘Dolly’s Jetty’ revealed a long history of use and repair by the local community. A combination of rock, mortar and wood were used in its construction, with rock comprising the first 14.5 m of the shoreward deck



Fig. 10 Probable location of ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’, 13 April 2012 (facing west). Photograph by Amy Roberts

(Fig. 11). The seaward portion is comprised of wood piles, bracing and girders (Figs. 12, 13, 14). The overall length of the jetty is 30.7 m and it is suspected that this is the original length due to its probable function (Fig. 15).

It appears as if the jetty was primarily used by the community for loading livestock and it likely superseded ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’. Indications that it was used for the transfer of livestock include the iron railing (some still present) which ran on either side of the jetty.

Iron rails from rail tracks (potentially from the Wardang Island sand mining operations) were utilized to enclose the livestock on the jetty—from the top to the bottom of piles above the original deck as evidenced by notches in the piles (Fig. 16). Multiple gauges of rails were utilized in this way and it is possible they were replaced or repaired over time as they rusted in place.

Another indication that the jetty was used for the transfer of livestock is its overall length. A jetty of this length would not have supported a cutter, ketch or schooner berthing along its side due to the depth of the water. Instead a vessel would berth with its stern moored to the head of the jetty, which would allow sheep or cattle to run down the jetty and load directly into the hull of the vessel through a specially designed gate on the transom. Photographic evidence and oral history interviews indicate that this was the method by which *Narrunga* was loaded. Further research into the types of materials and style of jetty construction will reveal more in terms of the community’s use of this jetty.

Only a brief site visit was made to the Wardang Island Jetty. Photographs and general notes were taken and initial impressions are that this jetty was also built to transfer livestock. Similar in design to ‘Dolly’s Jetty’, the Wardang Island Jetty incorporates iron rails along the sides of the deck and further on shore there is more evidence of activities relating to livestock. Additionally, it is a relatively short jetty, although not as short as ‘Dolly’s Jetty’; in fact the greater water depth likely allowed larger vessels to berth laterally in addition to berthing at the head.



Fig. 11 Clem O'Loughlin sitting on top of the stone wall built by his father at 'Dolly's Jetty', 13 April 2012. Photograph by Jennifer McKinnon



Fig. 12 Narungga community members, Cyril Kartinyeri and David Wilson, with field work volunteer Kurt Bennett behind a rock wall feature in the 'Old Village' area on Wardang Island, 9 April 2012. Photograph by Amy Roberts



Fig. 13 L-R: Elders Lance Newchurch, Clem O’Loughlin and Fred Graham during the magnetometer survey, 16 October 2012. Photograph by Amy Roberts



Fig. 14 Ship timbers with copper alloy fasteners near the tidal flats, 23 March 2012. Photograph by Amy Roberts

Geophysical Surveys

A total of 4,177 km² was surveyed using the side scan sonar and magnetometer. Unfortunately no significant anomalies were identified within the survey area.

There are a few explanations that may express the results collected during the geophysical surveys. One explanation is that the vessel is completely buried by sand resulting from weather and water conditions. If this is the case, the remains of the vessel would not be visible via a side scan sonar survey but should be detected through magnetometry. Another explanation is that the site has deteriorated to the point where it no longer maintains an easily discernable shape that would be visible in side scan sonar imagery or is scattered widely on the seabed and no longer has a detectable magnetic signature.

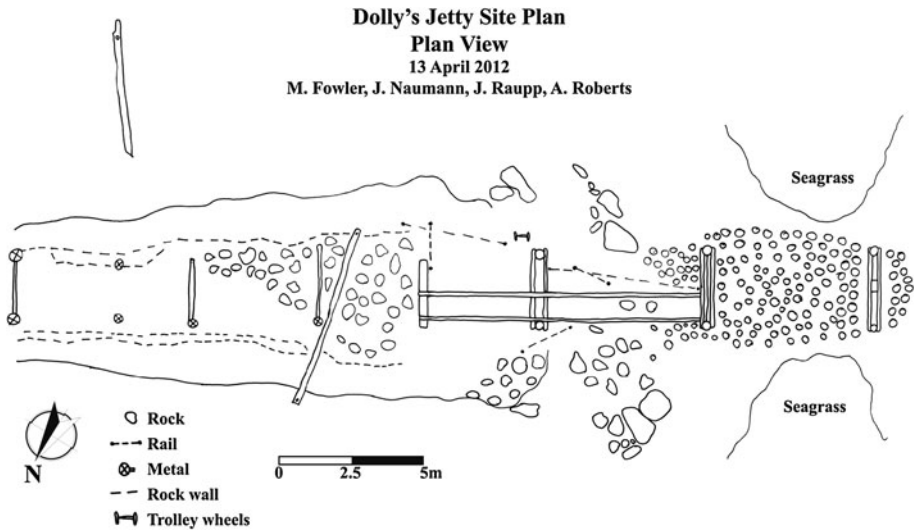


Fig. 15 Plan view of Dolly's Jetty

Fig. 16 An example of multiple notches in a pile at Dolly's Jetty, 12 April 2012. Photograph by Jennifer McKinnon



Constructed of wood and being relatively small, the boat was likely susceptible to marine organisms such as *Teredo navalis* and/or weather and water conditions. Based on other historic wooden wrecks in the area (i.e., *Monarch*), a great deal of deterioration is caused by marine organisms particularly in those parts exposed on the seabed. If the wood

is eaten away the only remains left are metal fasteners and fittings and perhaps the trolleys which oral histories indicate were loaded onto it prior to its sinking.

Given that it is likely that only metal remains of the vessel would still be in existence the same (and somewhat wider area) was surveyed using a magnetometer. The notable issue with the magnetometer survey was that there was significant geomagnetic background noise. This indicates that the Pleistocene coastal limestone is a relatively thin overlay to the underlying igneous or metamorphic rock that is producing the geomagnetism (Jeremy Green pers. comm. 8 November 2012). While the geomagnetic background was relatively slow moving over the area of the survey, it is likely that, given the probable presence of metal trolleys on the vessel, that the magnetometer should have a reasonable chance of locating the site, however, this is not absolutely certain. Further, it should be noted that we do not know what type of fasteners were used on the vessel (e.g., copper alloy [undetectable through magnetometry] or iron).

It is recommended that any future survey be conducted with a linked side scan sonar and magnetometer and the units deployed so that the magnetometer detector head is close to the seabed thus ensuring that any iron object on the seabed will have a relatively strong signal. The side scan sonar can be used to monitor this distance and can also be used to confirm the type of object detected by the magnetometer (Jeremy Green pers. comm. 8 November 2012).

Although the above issues may explain why the vessel has not yet been located it is also possible that oral histories about *Narrunga* are not detailing its precise location (e.g., because the 'fishing drop' location has changed over time).⁹ However, it should be noted that multiple community members indicated that the area surveyed was the 'fishing drop' where *Narrunga* is believed to have been sunk—and as shown in other aspects of this research program Narungga oral histories have proven to be a reliable means of locating sites—even in cases where there is no longer any visible evidence of past material remains. Future work may take place to search for the vessel should alternative locations be proposed by community members. Furthermore, research relating to the terrestrial sites relating to *Narrunga* continues (see below).

Conclusions

This research reveals that the pairing of Indigenous and maritime archaeological approaches has the potential to provide beneficial outcomes on numerous levels. This was further enhanced by conforming to 'Indigenist' research principles. First, as demonstrated in this research, collaborative inquiry has resulted in a research project that produced information with depth and meaning. Not only have community members participated as research collaborators in the project and therefore directly influenced its design and outcomes, but the participation of other Narungga people in the research through the provision of oral histories and 'lived experiences' adds layers of significance to the archaeological record that cannot be achieved by any other means.

⁹ It should also be noted here for the sake of clarity that a recent publication by Moody (2012) which marks a point on a map indicating *Narrunga*'s location is a 'rough guide only'. The Aboriginal 'informant' (Wellesley Sansbury) would not disclose the location to Moody at the time they were discussing the vessel as he did not want to reveal the location of one of his favourite 'fishing drops' (Stuart Moody pers. comm. with Amy Roberts 20 September 2012).

Second, research has revealed that non-Indigenous records have underplayed the maritime achievements and skills of Narungga people as a result of Eurocentric biases. This finding further demonstrates the need for greater convergence between Indigenous and maritime approaches and the necessity to decolonize this aspect of the past—i.e., to undertake that part of the decolonizing process which involves: ‘Taking apart the story, revealing underlying texts, and giving voice to things that are often known intuitively...’ (Smith 1999:3).¹⁰

In addition, it is argued that because these convergences have been slow to develop, the unique maritime heritage of coastal Indigenous communities has not been adequately recorded. This fact is all the more pressing given that much of the early maritime infrastructure built, adapted or used by Aboriginal communities is now in a state of deterioration. Furthermore, community members with direct knowledge of aspects of this early maritime history are now elderly and there is a need to preserve their oral histories. As such, an important outcome of this research was the (re)location and recording of numerous sites relevant to the *Narrunga* story. The probable launching area of the vessel was identified as were the location and remains of ‘Old Dolly’s Jetty’. ‘Dolly’s Jetty’, now rapidly deteriorating was recorded in more detail and oral history information about the manufacture of the stone wall on its shoreward deck was preserved. Surveying of both ‘Dolly’s Jetty’ and the ‘Wardang Island Jetty’ revealed that the primary use of the jetties was to transfer livestock. Archaeological investigation also indicates that multiple gauges of rails were utilized to facilitate these activities and that they were replaced and repaired over time. Additional research, via a PhD project (by Madeline Fowler), supported by Narungga organizations, is underway and will consolidate the recording of these remains and extend the survey areas.

Whilst the geophysical surveys of the seabed have not yet located the remains of *Narrunga*, oral histories relating to its location and the manner of its sinking have been preserved for future generations.

In keeping with the philosophy that Indigenous archaeology should be ‘with, for, and by Indigenous peoples’ (Nicholas and Andrews 1997:3) this research has provided other outcomes for the Narungga community in addition to those listed above including economic benefits for Narungga participants (particularly as field work monitors) and the provision of opportunities for the transmission of knowledge between generations about Narungga’s maritime history.

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¹⁰ Although it is acknowledged that such a process is only part of a ‘decolonizing framework’ (see Smith 1999:3).

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