

SOUTH HOOK SLIPWAY PEMBROKESHIRE

SITE VISIT



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
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Park Authority



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Gan / By

Pete Crane BA Hons

Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys

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SUMMARY

Following concerns over the condition of the Old Slipway at South Hook a visit was made in January 2011 to look at the implications of repairs to this structure. It is certain that this slipway is associated and contemporary with the Victorian fort at South Hook. The recommendation is that no action is taken to repair the slipway at the moment, but it should be rapidly recorded and its condition monitored on a yearly basis. Furthermore, the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of South Hook Fort (PE 337) should be amended to include this slipway, thereby securing both legal protection and regular monitoring through Cadw's SAM monitoring programme.

INTRODUCTION

As field archaeologist for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Pete Crane was invited by Phil Lees, PCNPA Senior Ranger to look at the old South Hook Fort slipway or jetty, as it had been considered that repairs might be undertaken on this structure.

Due to the limited scope of this report and the complex nature of the Victorian defences of the Haven, it is not intended here to go into any detailed history or description.

The first defences of the Haven were in c. 1546 by Henry VIII, in response to a combined threat from France and Spain, which never materialised. They consisted of two blockhouses on either side of the Havens entrance at West Blockhouse Dale and East Blockhouse Angle, neither of which appeared to have been finished.

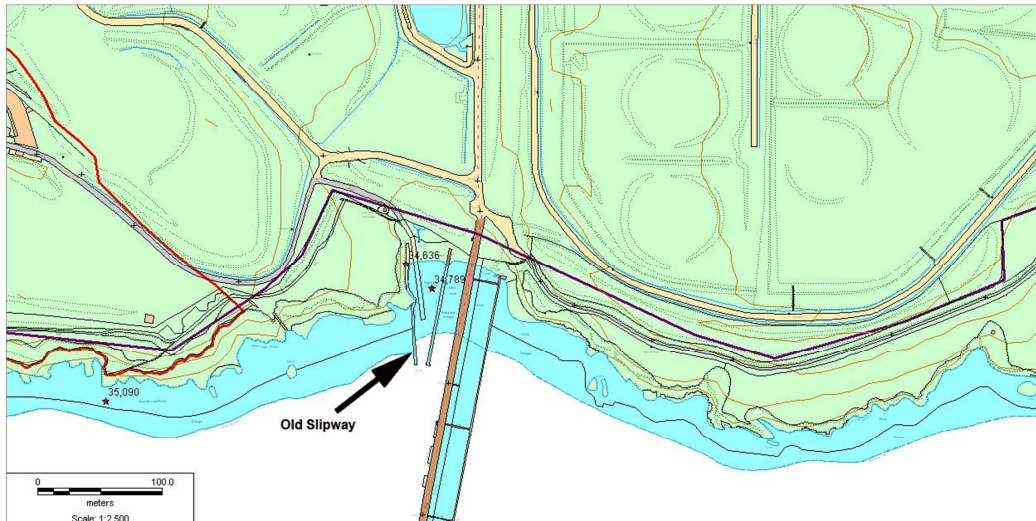
An encampment and gun emplacement was constructed in 1643 at the entrance to the Pill inlet, just to the east of Milford. Further defences were discussed in the later 1600's but little if anything appears to have been built.

It was not until 1759 that a fort was started at Paterchurch (Pembroke Dock) but it was never finished. This was dismantled and replaced in 1840-42 to defend the new dockyard at Pembroke Dock. The Defensible Barracks were also built there in 1842-5. Two "Martello Towers" were built in 1848-51 to further protect the dockyard (Lloyd, Orbach and Scourfield 2004, p349). Another tower was constructed during 1850-52 on the Stack Rock, adjacent to South Hook. This fort was later enlarged by enclosing the original tower with a casement in 1859-67, raising the number of guns from three to twenty three (Wheeler *undated*). Dale Point Battery and West Blockhouse Dale were built between 1852-57, the latter works removing any trace of the Henry VIII defence. 1852-56. Both the West Blockhouse and Dale Point forts were remodelled in 1900. Thorn Island Battery was also begun at the same time, 1852-1859. South Hook Fort, just to the west of the quay, was constructed between 1859-65, but again re-modelled in 1900. Further forts were added at Popton Point 1859-64, Huberston Point 1860-65, and Chapel Bay c. 1868: again all of these forts were remodelled in 1900. Fort Scoveston, 1861-65 was the only fort built to defend the Haven from attack overland, although others were planned. St Catherine's Fort 1868-1875 was built on the island adjacent to Tenby harbour.

South Hook Fort is located between the Liquid Natural Gas facility of South Hook and the Haven, overlooking the earlier fort built on the Stack Rocks in the waterway. It is a two story horseshoe shaped structure, which was disarmed in 1935.

The slipway (NGR SM 87390 05390) is located on the eastern edge of the point on which South Hook Fort stands, There is a modern concrete slipway adjacent to

the east, now disused. Further to the east there is a modern outfall and, just beyond, the massive jetty for the LNG facility. Both of these slipways may have been recorded together by Dyfed Archaeological Trust (Primary Record Number 34789) and described as modern. Also recorded in the area is a cottage, The Week, PRN 34636, of post medieval date. The lime kiln (NGR 87362 05492) just to the north has not been recorded by DAT.



Location of slipway

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This slipway was associated with the fort and was probably where the guns were embarked in the 1850's for transport to Shell Island Fort 1km to the WSW. Copies of the plans of the slipway and further information are likely to be with George Gear at Chapel Bay Fort (pers comm. Roger Thomas, English Heritage). Further historical background has not been sought due to the limited scope of this report.

METHODS AND RESULTS

The site was visited on 20 January 2011 at low tide when the whole length of the slip was visible. Unfortunately the clear weather with strong sunlight hampered photography (see below). The slipway was constructed of ashlar facing with a thick flagstone capping, both probably of granite. The core was possibly of rubble and the whole structure appears to be mortar bonded, but its structure was not examined in detail. There are two straight lengths of slipway (Photos 1 and 4) between which there is a dogleg section running around the base of the cliff (Photo 5). In total it is about 100m long, just over 2m wide and between 0.5 to 1.5m high. The upper and middle part of the structure was constructed onto the levelled and cut back base of the cliff (Photos 1 and Photo 5)

The slipway would appear to be over 90% intact. The major damage apparently lay towards the upper, inland end, where a later concrete repair has suffered more from erosion than the paved surface of the slipway (Photo 1). The mid section surface is still in good repair (Photo 2) and the lower, southern end appears to be in fair condition but covered by a lot of seaweed (Photos 3 and 4). The general condition is fair to good with no evidence of any very recent damage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The group value of all the 19th century fortifications of the Haven are not just of local importance but are considered to be *"of an equal standard architecturally to any similar structures worldwide and are one of the most important groups of*

buildings in Wales" (Thomas 1994 p78). As this slipway appears to be directly associated with the Scheduled Ancient Monument of South Hook Fort (PE 337) it is recommended that the Scheduled Area is amended to include the slipway. This slipway would then continue to be monitored as part of Cadw's remit and also offer legal protection against demolition. Further documentary research is desirable to ascertain the slipway's association with that of South Hook Fort and also the relationship with regard to the building and supply of Stack Rock Fort.

The slipway does not appear to be deteriorating rapidly and therefore it is not considered that consolidation is necessary at this time. However, it is recommended that a full photographic survey is undertaken when light conditions are suitable (this will, by necessity, have to be done on a low spring tide). It should then be monitored at half yearly intervals for the next five years. If the monitoring notes further deterioration then consolidation may be necessary and costed proposals should be prepared for consolidation as part of a long term management plan for the site.

Sources

Edwards S 2009 *The Story of the Milford Haven Waterway*: Logaston Press, Little Logaston Wootton Almeley

Lloyd T, Orbach J and Scourfield R 2004 *The Building of Wales Pembrokeshire*: Yale University Press, New Haven and London

Thomas R 1994 *Survey of 19th and 20th Century Military Buildings of Pembrokeshire*. Unpublished report, copy held by DAT HER

Wheeler N J *undated* *The Fortifications of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock*. Leaflet produced by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park



Photo 1: Inland part of slipway with broken up concrete repairs. View N. Scale 1m
Modern slipway to right (East)

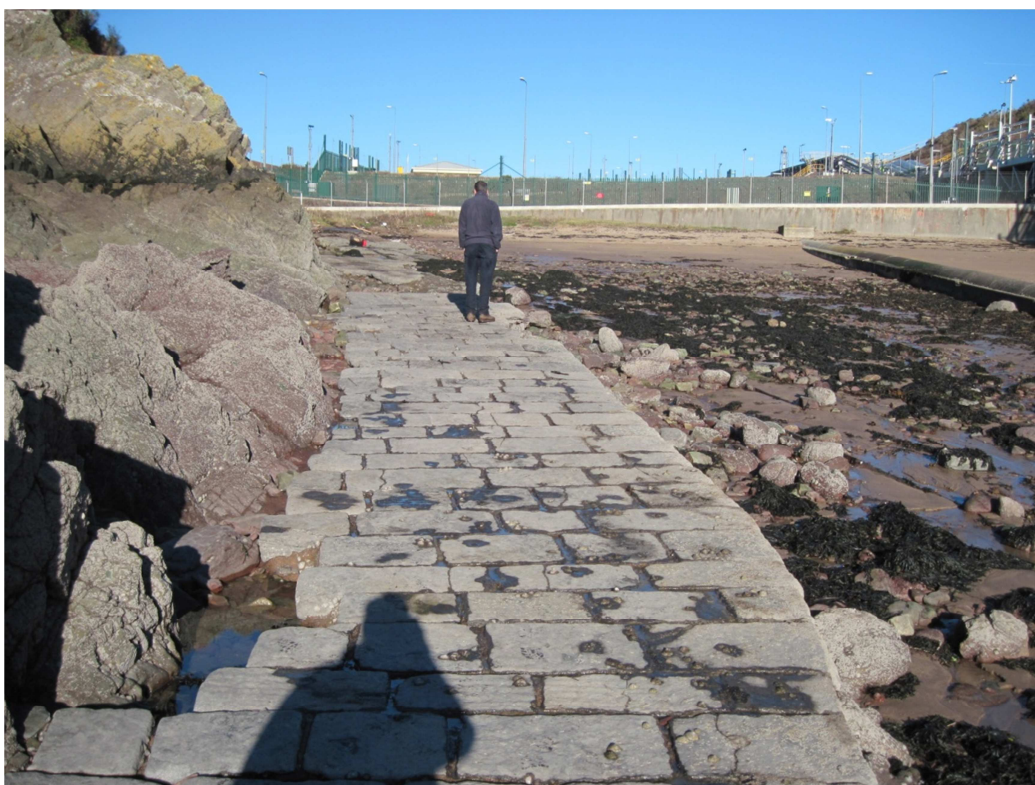


Photo 2: Mid section of slipway surface. View N



Photo 3: Lower part of slipway. View E. Scale 1m



Photo 4: Southern end of slipway surface. View S



Photo 5: Middle part of slipway around headland. View N. Scale 1m.

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by Pete Crane

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist PCNPA

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 1/2/2012

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Head of Heritage Management

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 1/2/2012

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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