



FOPIA Newsletter

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Accessing Peel Island - Part 2

The stone jetty on Peel's South-Eastern corner had served Peel well - firstly as access for the island's quarantine station and then, from 1907, as access for the lazaret at the opposite corner of the island. Vessels, however, could not berth there at low tide and the distance from the lazaret was also a disadvantage. It was decided to build a jetty less remote from the lazaret and one that could be used in all weathers and tides.

In 1948, the short version (causeway only) of the proposed western jetty was completed. This enabled a much quicker access to the lazaret but was still not accessible at low tide. The longer (wooden) section, which straddled the sandbanks, was not completed until August 1956. From then on, this became the main access for the island.

Although the lazaret was to close in 1959, the jetty was again useful when, in December, 1968, the then Church of England Grammar School ("Churchie") took out its first lease over part of the former lazaret buildings for the purpose of sending their students to the island for three-day camps.

It is doubtful whether the old stone jetty on the South-East of the island would have been used, or repaired, after the opening of the western jetty in 1956.



Peel Island's Western Jetty from the Air in 1978 (Photo courtesy of Marion Opala)



*Peel Island's Western Jetty 1956-7
(Photo courtesy of Barbara Walker)*

There were no rail tracks along the jetty but a vehicle could be reversed out to its end for loading stores.

There was also some protection for vessels from the proximity of a long sandbar that stretched out from the lazaret towards Cleveland.

When Ray Cowie was appointed the Redland Shire Council's Ranger in 1988, he encouraged tour boats to visit the island. Visiting groups came from many organisations such as the Coochiemudlo Island Residents, the Leprosy Mission, the Natural History Group and the Brisbane History Group.

All these groups accessed the island by way of the western jetty and then a 15 minute walk to the former lazaret.

These tours continued regularly until the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service took over control of the island in 1993.

The Stradbroke Flyer took larger groups to the island and also dropped off individuals requiring access to the island.

Sadly, the Western Jetty had become unsafe after 40 years of inattention to its maintenance.

It was demolished in the late 1990s.

This left Peel Island without a proper access; a situation that has persisted until this day.



*The Army at Peel's Western Jetty in 1990
(Photo courtesy of Ray Cowie)*