

Forgotten Wrecks
of the
First World War



LED BY IWM

May
2018

Ferry
Sandringham,
River Hamble

Site Report





FORGOTTEN WRECKS
OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Ferry Sandringham,
River Hamble, Hampshire
Report



1 Table of Contents

1	Project Background.....	2
2	Background and Context.....	3
2.1	Site History.....	4
2.2	Wider Geographical Context.....	5
2.3	Research Questions.....	5
3	Fieldwork Methodology.....	5
4	Site Results.....	6
5	Discussion & Conclusions.....	11
6	Bibliography.....	11

i Acknowledgments

The Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War project was generously funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Heritage Grants Programme.

The Maritime Archaeology Trust would like to thank Nick Mason, who volunteered to help with the work relating to the Ferry *Sandringham*.

ii Copyright Statement

This report has been produced by the MAT with the assistance of funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Heritage Grants Programme. Unless otherwise stated all images are copyright of the MAT. If copyright is unknown, this is indicated in the caption.

iii List of Figures

FIGURE 1 – LOCATION OF SANDRINGHAM.....	3
FIGURE 2 - 1900'S IMAGE OF THE SANDRINGHAM (COPYRIGHT ERIC PAYNE - SIMPLON POSTCARDS, 1999).....	4
FIGURE 3- SANDRINGHAM 1959- (COPYRIGHT ERIC PAYNE - SIMPLON POSTCARDS, 1999).....	4
FIGURE 4 - FWFWW 2017 - PERSPECTIVE SHOT OF SANDRINGHAM FERRY REMAINS.....	6
FIGURE 5 –FWFWW- SITE PLAN 2017.....	7
FIGURE 6- FWFWW – PERSPECTIVE CLOSE UP SHOT OF SANDRINGHAM.....	8
FIGURE 7 - HAMBLE RIVER SURVEY- HAM008-1 - THE REMAINS OF THE FORMER FERRY 'SANDRINGHAM' LIES IN THE TIDAL MUD OF BADNAM CREEK (HAMPSHIRE AND WIGHT TRUST FOR MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY, 2008).....	9
FIGURE 8 - DIRECT WEST SHOT LOOKING TOWARDS BOW - NOTE THE CLEAN-UP OF THE FOLIAGE.....	9
FIGURE 9 – FWFWW - CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE SANDRINGHAM'S WORKING LIFE.....	10

1 Project Background

Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War is a Heritage Lottery Funded project dedicated to raising the profile of a currently under-represented aspect of the First World War. While attention is often focused on the Western Front and major naval battles like Jutland, historic remains from the war lie, largely forgotten, in and around our seas, rivers and estuaries.

With over 1,000 wartime wrecks and dozens of coastal sites along England's south coast alone, the conflict has left a rich heritage legacy and many associated stories of bravery and sacrifice. The underwater memorials represent the vestiges of a vital, yet little known, struggle that took place on a daily basis, just off our shores. The study and promotion of these archaeological sites presents a unique opportunity to better interpret them and improve physical and virtual access.

The project focuses on underwater and coastal sites from the Isle of Thanet in Kent, to beyond the Isles of Scilly, and over half way into the English Channel. The sites include merchant and naval ships, passenger, troop and hospital ships, U-boats, ports, wharfs, buildings and foreshore hulks. These sites, under water and on the foreshore, have been degrading and deteriorating due to natural and human processes for approximately 100 years and, as a result, are extremely fragile. In many cases, this project represents a final opportunity to record what remains on the seabed and foreshore before it is lost forever.

The project aims to characterise the nature and extent of the maritime First World War archaeological resource surviving on the south coast's seabed and around the coast. This will enable an understanding of the record of maritime activity created during the conflict and provide a window onto some of the surviving sites. While it will not be possible to visit and record every site dating to the First World War along the south coast of England, a representative sample of sites have been selected for more detailed study, analysis and interpretation.

With particular regard to coastal, rather than fully submerged archaeological remains, it has been noted in wider commentaries on England's coastal heritage (Murphy, 2014: 94) that there are relatively few surviving sites because of subsequent reuse and/or destruction during or following the Second World War. As a result, from the perspective of identifying coastal research priorities an emphasis has been placed (Murphy, 2014: 119) on the need to differentiate First World War sites from those of the Second World War. With all of this in mind, the following report addresses one of the coastal sites dating to the First World War.

This report focuses on fieldwork undertaken on the Ferry *Sandringham*. This hulked vessel hulk has a unique history of particular relevance to Portsmouth, Southampton and the wider Solent area, including being used as a fleet tender/ troop carrier during the First World War. The site was first identified by the Trust during work on the Hamble River in 2001, and further photographed between 2005 & 2008 as part of the '*Recording Archaeological Remains on the River Hamble*' Project (Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology, 2008), although its position in deep tidal sediments made physical access impossible. The site was revisited and surveyed in 2017 using a drone. The collected footage has enabled greater understanding and interpretation of the extant remains through the creation of a 3D model and site plan.

This report outlines the geographical context of the site, the methods used to record it, and the results, it also offers proposals for useful future work and research that could be undertaken. The report constitutes one of the project outputs and will be lodged with the Archaeological Data Service.

2 Background and Context

The site of the Ferry *Sandringham* was chosen for inclusion in the Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War project due to its unique significance in local history and its use during the War when it was likely to have been used as a Fleet tender and troop transport.

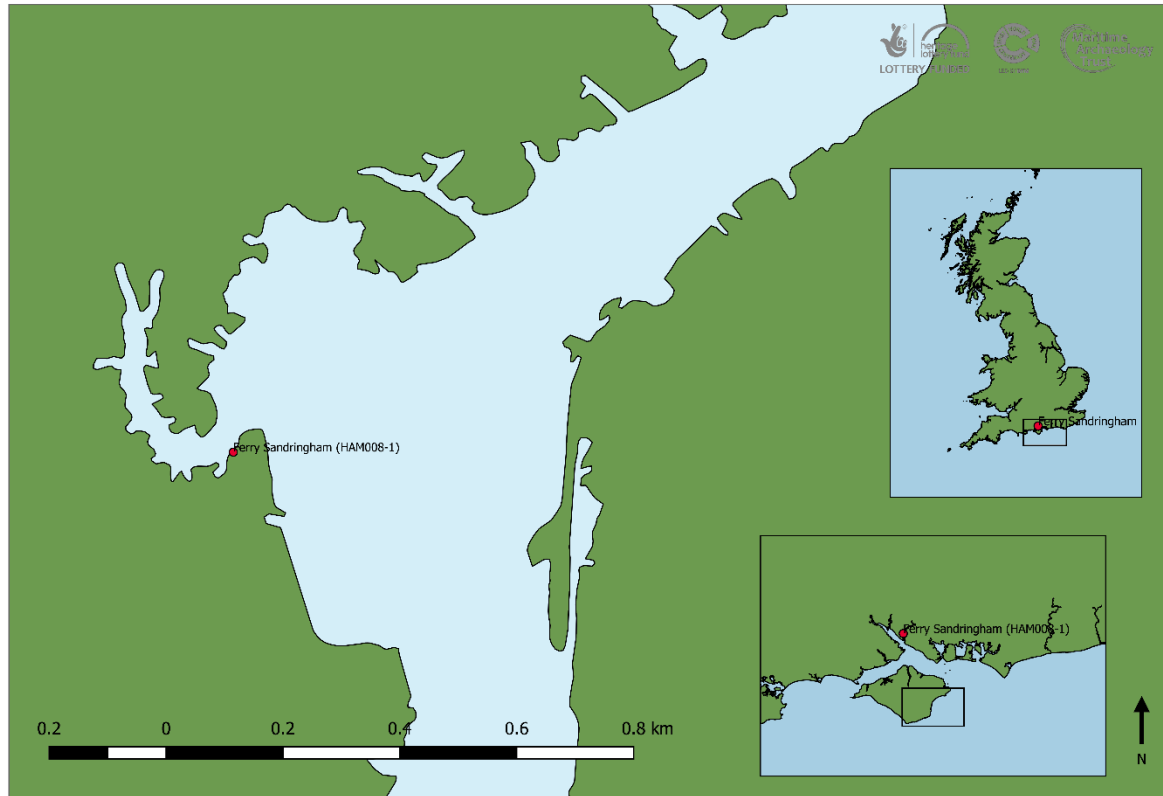


FIGURE 1 – LOCATION OF SANDRINGHAM

An initial photographic survey of the site conducted as part of the Hamble River Project (2005-08) by the Maritime Archaeology Trust (then the Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology), was undertaken from a distance due to access issues. The capability of MAT to undertake drone surveys meant it was possible to include the site within the Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War project.

The Ferry *Sandringham* was built in 1900 for the Port of Portsmouth Floating Bridge Co. The vessel was active during the First World War having been requisitioned for war service at the start of the war and returned in 1919. Figure 2 shows the vessel in the 1900's presumably whilst performing its duties During the First World War.

Further information on the *Sandringham* can also be found in Davies, K., 1982. *Solent Passages and their Steamers*. Isle of Wight County Press, Newport, Isle of Wight. (Davies, 1982)

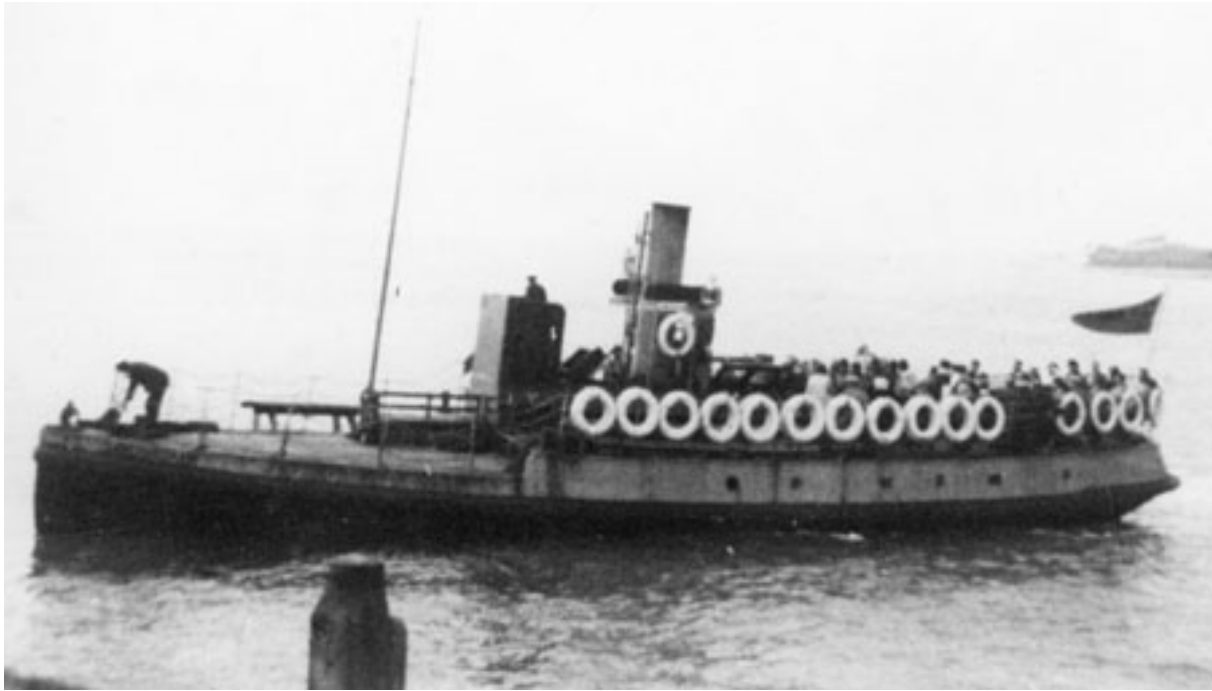


FIGURE 2 - 1900'S IMAGE OF THE SANDRINGHAM (COPYRIGHT ERIC PAYNE - SIMPLON POSTCARDS, 1999)

2.1 SITE HISTORY

Sandringham was built for the Port of Portsmouth Floating Bridge Company. The construction took place in Gosport. The vessel was built to replace *Eva Mary* for employment in excursion work around Portsmouth.

The vessel was a single hulled ship with a steam compound engine that was later replaced in the 1950's by a classic Gardner diesel engine (Davies 1982: 122). As built *Sandringham's* displacement was recorded as 46 tons. *Sandringham* was requisitioned for war service in both World Wars.



FIGURE 3- SANDRINGHAM 1959- (COPYRIGHT ERIC PAYNE - SIMPLON POSTCARDS, 1999)

In 1939 the *Sandringham* was employed as an examination vessel. From 1941 the War Department took control, and the vessel was used as a tender for warships in Portsmouth Harbour. *Sandringham* continued in this role after the war until 1956, when it was sold to the Solent Boating Company (later Blue Funnel Cruises). The vessel would have been a well-known sight photographed in 1959 (Figure 3) carrying passengers on one of these tours.

During the 1950's cruises around the docks at Southampton were becoming increasingly popular, and from 1956 *Sandringham* was employed in this fashion, becoming one of the first vessels used by Blue Funnel Cruises. This remained the case until 1969, when the vessel was laid up to act as a floating pontoon and workshop at Blue Funnel's Cobden Bridge Yard on the Itchen River.

How the vessel came to lie in Badnam creek is unknown. It is likely to have been brought to the inlet to be salvaged or converted into a houseboat, but then fell into disrepair due to being too expensive to restore and allowed to slowly degrade. The vessels remains are extensive and well preserved likely due to its isolation within the inlet (Figure 4).

2.2 WIDER GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The River Hamble is a diverse archaeological landscape that has been the focus of multiple studies by the MAT. The site of the *Sandringham* is located in a small inlet in the western arm of Badnam Creek, a tidal inlet on the western bank of the Hamble. The site can be seen from the public footpath lying directly opposite it across deep tidal sediment, and can only be directly accessed from the bank which is under private ownership. The vessel hull is fully buried up to the level of the top rail, meaning the lower hull is likely to be complete down to the keel.

The series of inlets one of which contains the *Sandringham* were used regularly as houseboat moorings and for refits and repairs. In an inlet to the south are the remains of the *Five Sisters* known to have come there for repairs before becoming to economically unviable to restore. In close proximity are the remains of the Sultan mast which is related to the boom defence vessels stationed on the river in the First World War.

2.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions posed for the *Sandringham*, as a hulk which has not be previously subject to detailed survey, were:

- What are the extents of the archaeological material left on the site?
- What can we tell about the history of the vessel from the remains (can we directly confirm the identity)?
- What remains of the early 1900's construction prior to refit in the 1960's?

3 Fieldwork Methodology

Forgotten Wrecks Project site visits and fieldwork aim to:

- Provide opportunities for volunteers to access and take an active role in the recording and research of a range of different types of maritime First World War sites;
- Record extant remains for heritage records; and
- Record extant remains for public dissemination, enabling 'virtual' access for those not able to achieve physical access.

Intertidal/coastal fieldwork comprised a combination of the following (depending on the nature and extent of the site); initial site visit, characterisation of remains through detailed inspection, full site survey, and/ or creation of a 3D model.

Methods used on the *Sandringham* included site sketch and measured survey and photographic/video survey, employing a drone where appropriate.

For further information about methodology, please refer to the MAT's *Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War: Project Methodology Report*.

4 Site Results

The site was surveyed in March 2017 using a drone and taking advantage of low water to ensure as much of the site was exposed as possible. The drone was flown transversely over the remains taking an image every 0.5 seconds, the drone was flown in a rough dome around the site. For initial data capture two mapped courses were used using the Litchi app. Foliage in the area made collecting close up images more difficult and manual control was used to ensure a greater depth of control.

The series of images taken allowed the extent of the remains to be established and the creation of an accurate orthomosaic and 3D model of the site. The model was scaled using aerial images as no direct physical measurements of the structure are available.



FIGURE 4 - FWFWW 2017 - PERSPECTIVE SHOT OF SANDRINGHAM FERRY REMAINS

The vessel is orientated east - west with the bow directly on the bank of the river. The forward sections inclusive of the bow have become buried into the bank. The majority of the hull outline and significant amounts of the remains lie visible above the thick tidal sediment. The remains of the vessel are approximately 13m in length by 5m wide. The possible associated debris extends for another metre around the main body of the vessel.

From the series of images collected an ortho rectified image of the site was created. This allowed a site plan to be generated that outlines the physical extents of the remains (Figure 5).

SANDRINGHAM

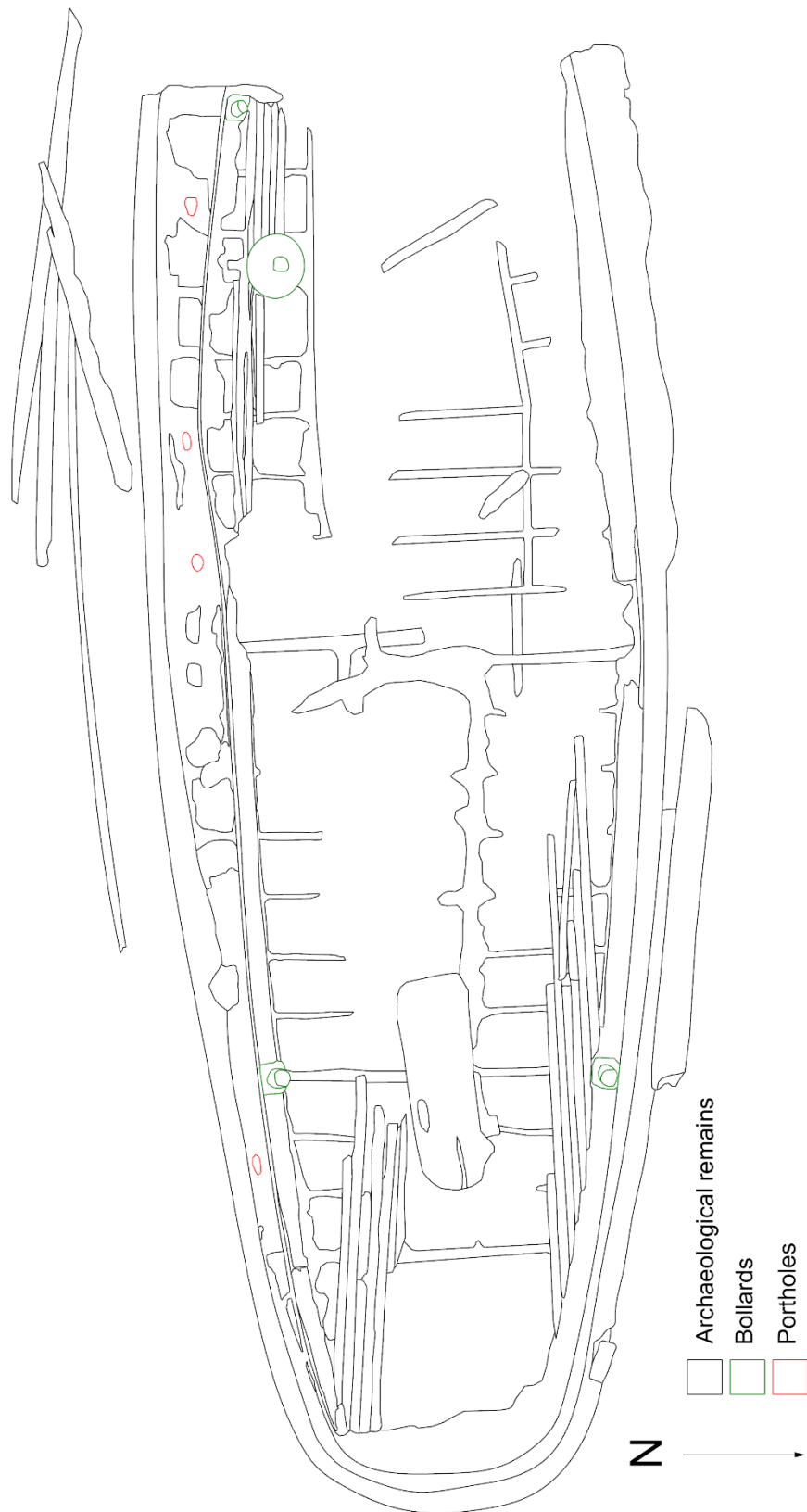


FIGURE 5 –FWFWW- SITE PLAN 2017

An estimated 40-50 cms of the siding lies above the sediment with the rest presumed buried. These are the remains of the bulwark, an extension to the main hull. The bulwark is the main element lying above the intertidal mud consisting of steel plating with a series of port holes and hatches cut and set into it. Below this is the remains of a protruding gunwale acting with dual purpose as a rubbing strake. The vessels siding is slowly collapsing in on itself.

Elements of the deck remain in situ and are slowly collapsing. The deck is made of wood and is supported by a metal lattice of iron cross beams.

Three bollards/ cleats which were used to tie the vessel up are extant on the site. The bollards are circular sat on square metal plates and bolted through the deck. There are two sets respectively on the starboard and port sides at the aft of the vessel. A further bollard has been identified forward close to the bank (Figure 6- Close up shot of *Sandringham*).

A large wooden timber estimated to be around 1.5 – 2m in length with a possible diameter of 0.5m is located in the aft section on top of the deck. The timber would appear to have square rebates inferring it is a possible winch or capstan. Its relationship to the vessel cannot be confirmed as it may have been deposited on to the site after it was laid up in Badnam creek. A further circular metal feature is visible on the forward deck estimated to be 0.5m in diameter. These elements may hint at the vessels life as a floating pontoon. The cab, hand rails, funnel and filling strakes have all been removed at some point as there is no trace of them visible on the site. They may have been removed towards the end of the working life of the vessel when it was used as a pontoon.



FIGURE 6- FWFWW – PERSPECTIVE CLOSE UP SHOT OF SANDRINGHAM

The site is extremely stable with very little significant change between the images taken in the 2005-2008 survey (Figure 7) and the condition in 2017 (Figure 8). A path is established along the shore and there has been some removal and management of the trees adjacent to the site.



FIGURE 7 - HAMBLE RIVER SURVEY- HAM008-1 - THE REMAINS OF THE FORMER FERRY 'SANDRINGHAM' LIES IN THE TIDAL MUD OF BADNAM CREEK (HAMPSHIRE AND WIGHT TRUST FOR MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY, 2008)



FIGURE 8 - DIRECT WEST SHOT LOOKING TOWARDS BOW - NOTE THE CLEAN-UP OF THE FOLIAGE

An interesting note in the Maritime archaeology Trusts previous reporting on the site is that the Cruiser type stern has the name just visible (Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology, 2008). The stern of the vessel lying directly within the tide is completely grown over with vegetation preventing confirmation of whether the name is still present in 2017.

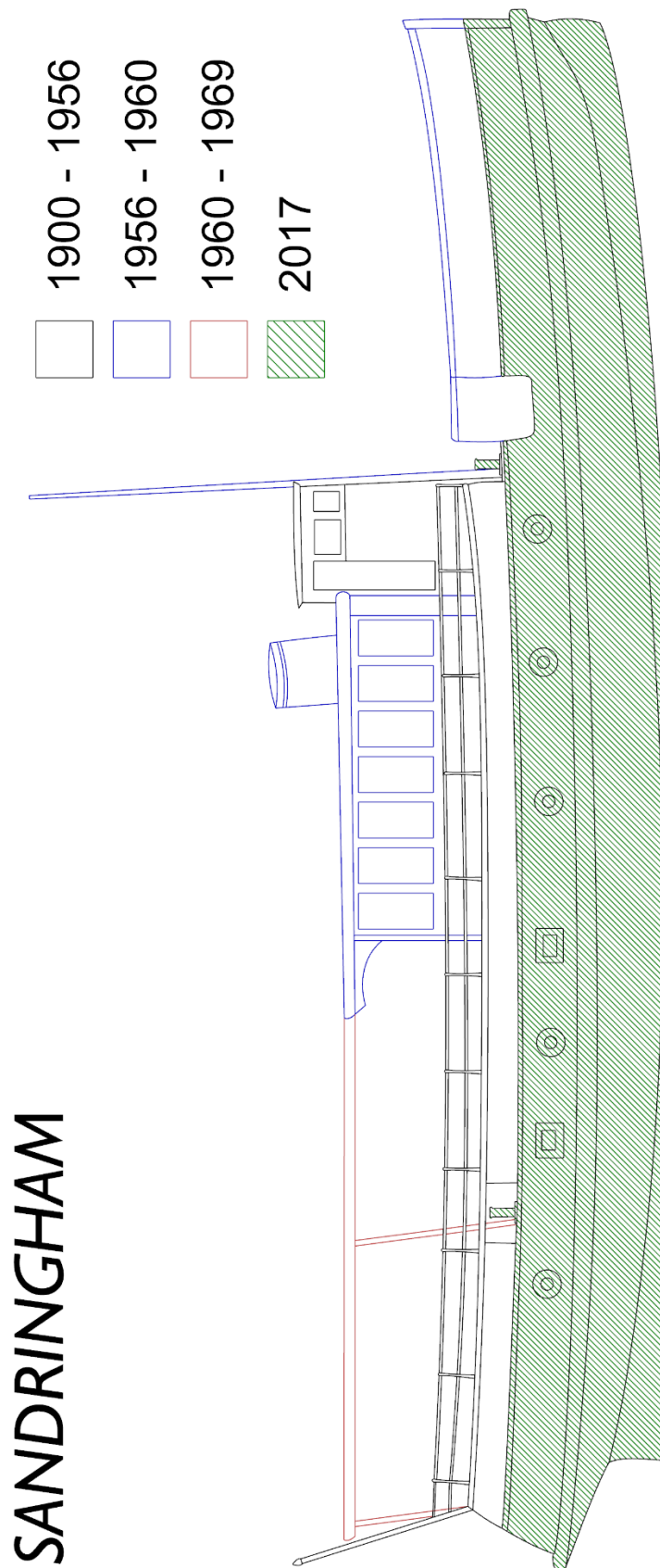


FIGURE 9 – FWFWW - CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE SANDRINGHAM'S WORKING LIFE

The remains still existing at the site are highlighted in green on Figure 9. The Figure has been created using historical photography as a basis and represents the changes to the vessel over its working life. From the images it was possible to map additional changes to the superstructure of the vessel demonstrating that following the First World War the vessel had a major refit which is likely to have taken place during its conversion to a public passenger vessel.

It is thought that the super structure had been removed, leaving the main deck and mooring bollards in place, prior to the vessel arriving in Badnam Creek. This may have been undertaken to enable the vessel to be used as a pontoon by the Blue Funnel Cruise Company. Interestingly this has had a beneficial effect in our research of the vessels 1900's origins. In stripping it down and removing all the superstructure it is possible to see more of the hull and 1900's structure.

The rails and additional bulwark in the bow heightening the freeboard were not present in the vessels original 1900's design and have been placed at some point between 1919 and 1950 . There is no trace of the remains of these elements on the site today.

5 Discussion & Conclusions

The vessel remains lying in Badnam creek are those of the passenger ferry '*Sandringham*' requisitioned for both World Wars and working into the 1960's, it has a rich history and long working life within Portsmouth, Southampton and the Solent. The vessel has a unique place in the history of the Solent and the early establishing of the Blue Funnel Cruise Company.

The survey of the *Sandringham* has been undertaken with a drone and the resulting photography was used to create a 3D model and interpretation. As there has been no physical measured survey of the site, there remains the potential for some slight inaccuracy within the model. If physical access could be achieved, then future measured survey of the remains could provide a base line set of measurements and seek to identify elements of the internal structure relating to refit and repair. Probing of the sediments is likely to confirm the extent and depth of the buried remains.

After the Second World War the vessel was well-known to local people, through its use as a cruise vessel. There is scope to add an oral history study to research of the vessel to collect the memories of those who may have travelled on the *Sandringham* or have historical photographs of the vessel.

Further research could be undertaken to determine when the vessel arrived in Badnam Creek and who it belonged to. Discussion with local residents is likely to provide further information to confirm this.

6 Bibliography

- Davies, K. (1982). Solent Passages and their Steamers. *Isle of Wight County Press*. Newport, Isle of Wight , United Kingdom: Isle of Wight County Press.
- Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology. (2008). *Recording Archaeological remains on the River Hamble* . Southampton : Heritage Lottery Fund .
- Murphy, P. (2014). *England's Coastal Heritage. A review of progress since 1997*. Swindon : English Heritage .
- Simplon Postcards. (1999, August 25). *Blue Funnel Cruises - Solent & Wight Line Cruises*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplonpc.co.uk>: <http://www.simplonpc.co.uk/BlueFunnelCruises.html>