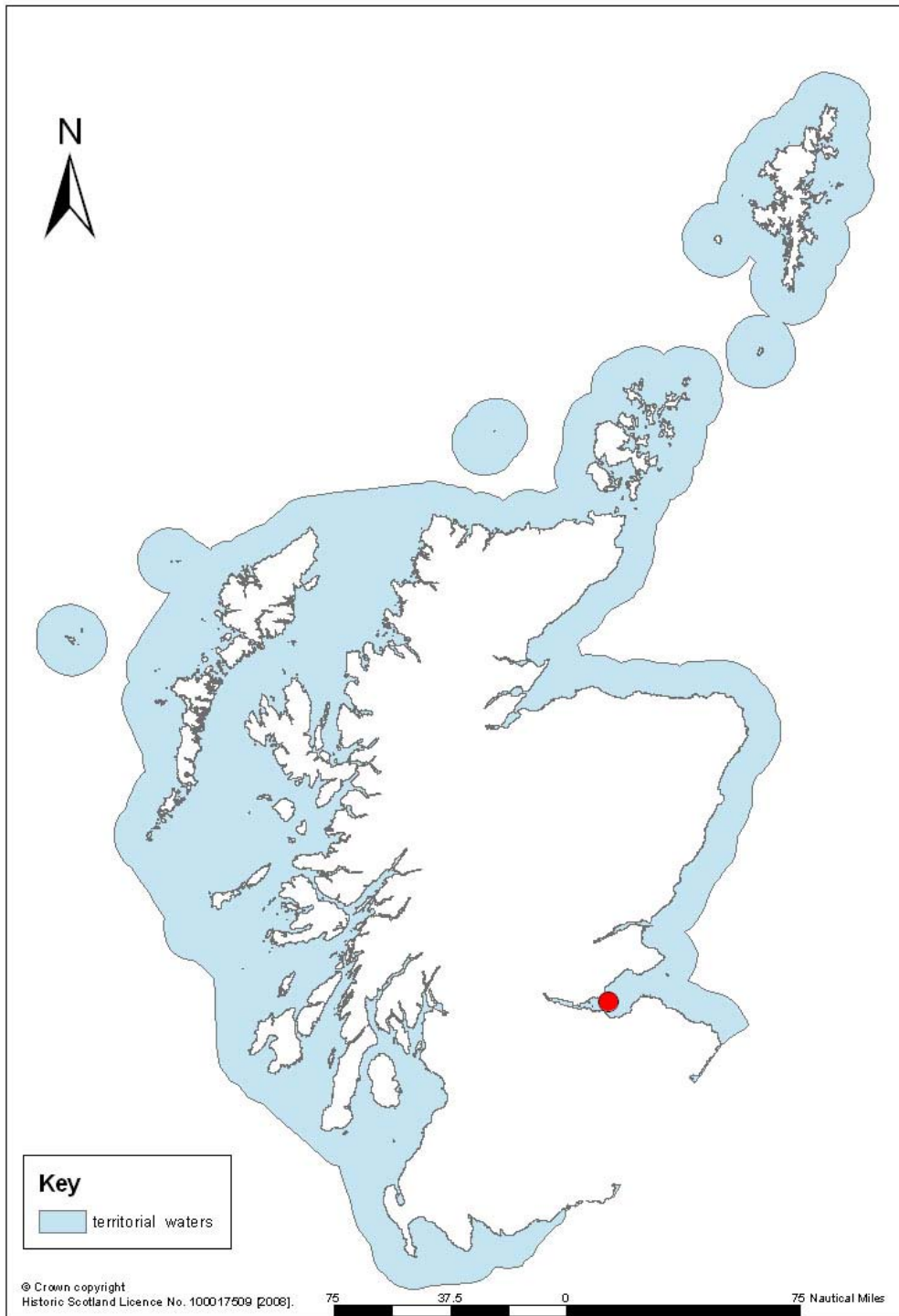


Scotland's designated wreck sites (Protection of Wrecks Act 1973)

Blessing of Burntisland, off Burntisland harbour, Firth of Forth, Fife



8 May 2008

**Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh
EH9 1SH. Telephone 0131 668 8766**

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1. Introduction

1.1. This document provides information relating to an historic wreck that has been afforded statutory protection under Section 1 of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

1.2. This wreck has been designated under the 1973 Act on the basis that it is or may prove to be the site of a vessel lying wrecked on or in the sea bed; and (b) on account of the historical, archaeological or artistic importance of the vessel, or of any objects contained or formerly contained in it which may be lying on the sea bed in or near the wreck, the site ought to be protected from unauthorised interference.

1.3. The 'Statutory Instrument' in Annex A identifies the location of this designated wreck site and the extent of the restricted area used to protect the site (see also section 4).

1.4. The 1973 Act controls activities by a licensing regime, so that these important historic wrecks are not put at risk from undisciplined activities or investigation. It is a criminal offence to do any of the following in a designated area without a licence issued by Scottish Ministers:

- tamper with, damage or remove any part of a vessel lying wrecked on or in the seabed or any object formerly contained in such a vessel;
- carry out diving or salvage operations directed to the exploration of any wreck or to removing objects from it or from the seabed, or use of equipment constructed or adapted for any purpose of diving or salvage operations. This includes deployment of remotely operated vehicles;
- deposit anything including anchors and fishing gear which, if it were to fall on the site, would obliterate, obstruct access to, or damage any part of the site; and
- to cause or permit any of the above activities to be carried out by others, without a licence, in a restricted area.

1.5. Where a person is authorised by a licence, it is an offence for any other person to obstruct them, or cause or permit them to be obstructed, in doing anything which is authorised by the licence.

1.6. Bathing, angling and navigation are permitted within a restricted area provided there is no likelihood of, or intention to, damage the wreck or obstruct work on it. Anchoring on the site is only permitted for licensed activities or in cases of maritime distress.

2. Further guidance

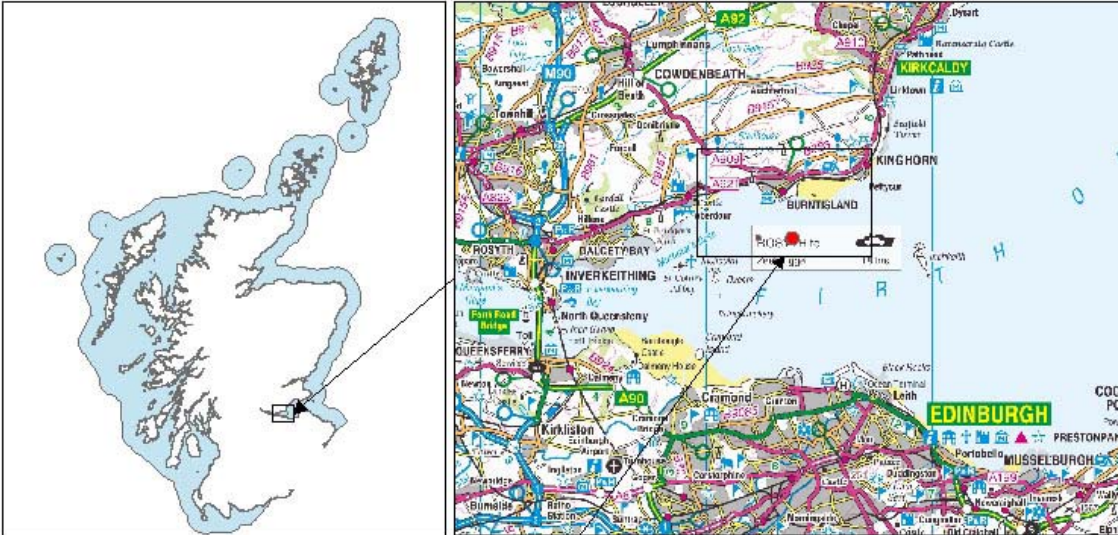
2.1. Licence application forms and guidance for divers and archaeologists in relation to the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 are available online at <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/wrecksites.htm>



3. Summary

Site name		<i>Blessing of Burntisland</i>	
RCAHMS reference number		NT28SW 8008	
General information			
<i>Location</i> Off Burntisland harbour, Firth of Forth, Fife		<i>Year of discovery</i>	<i>Date of sinking</i> 1633
Description of wreck site It is believed that this site contains or may prove to contain remains of the wreck of the <i>Blessing of Burntisland</i> , a ferry that operated between Burntisland and Leith. In July 1633, during Charles I's coronation tour of Scotland, she sank in a storm while carrying the king's baggage train. This designated wreck site is located close to the designated wreck site of <i>HMS Campania</i> .			
Description of site environment The site is located one nautical mile south west of Burntisland harbour entrance, at a depth of 17-23m on a flat muddy bottom with areas of gravelly sand. 1-2m of sediment overlie a bedrock layer.			
Designation summary (see annex for Statutory Instrument)			
<i>Designation order</i>		<i>Latitude (OSGB 36 datum)</i>	<i>Longitude (OSGB 36 datum)</i>
Protection of Wrecks (Designation No.2) Order 1992		56 02.407N	03 14.856 W
<i>Site marker(s)</i>		<i>Date designated</i>	<i>Exclusion zone radius (m)</i>
None		22 February 1999	100
Further information <i>Published references</i> Larn, R and Larn, B 1998, Shipwreck Index of the British Isles: <i>volume 4</i> , Scotland, London, DA (R) 10/07/1633			

4. Location and extent of protected area

Site believed to be the Blessing of Burntisland, off Burntisland, Firth of Forth



<p>Key</p> 	<p>Extent of protected area as defined in the Statutory Instrument</p>		<p>This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Historic Scotland Licence No. 100017509 [2008].</p>
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5. Statement of significance

Period

It is believed that this site may prove to contain remains of the wreck of a 17th-century ferry carrying some of the belongings of Charles I during his coronation tour of Scotland in 1633. In 1629, Charles I dismissed the English Parliament and ruled as an absolute monarch, taking all decisions on internal government and foreign policy. He had instigated some action for poor relief and other social measures but forced loans, poundage, tonnage, ship money and other extraordinary financial burdens were sanctioned to meet governmental expenses. At a time of hardship for his people, Charles I's coronation tour was an attempt to cement the monarch's relationship with the country of his birth (Charles was born in Dunfermline in 1600). The Scots had waited eight years for Charles' visit and were determined to put on a spectacular show. The king was equally determined to make his mark on Scotland and travelled with a huge entourage of 250 lords and courtiers, nearly 1,000 servants and all their baggage including a silver gilt banqueting service for over 200 people.

Rarity

If subsequent investigations confirm that the wreck of the *Blessing of Burntisland* is located within the protected area, this site would likely represent a highly significant example of a 17th-century sea-going ferry, a vernacular craft of type and period that has not survived in the archaeological record. The contents of its cargo too would be of very high importance.

Documentation

Historical research has uncovered several contemporary accounts relating to the loss of the vessel and the circumstances leading up to its sinking. Well documented too are the maritime histories of Burntisland and Leith, respectively the ship's ports of departure and destination.

Group Value

If subsequent investigations confirm that the wreck of the *Blessing of Burntisland* is located within the protected area, the importance of the site would be enhanced by its association with its nearby home port of Burntisland and other contemporary ports around the Firth of Forth.

Survival/condition

Extensive areas of the seabed of the Forth are covered in soft silt that has accumulated mostly since the intensification of agriculture during the post-medieval period. If the remains of the *Blessing of Burntisland* became deeply buried in sediment, then a good state of preservation may be expected.

Fragility/vulnerability

Without statutory protection, this wreck (if located) would be vulnerable to looting.

Diversity

If subsequent investigations confirm that the wreck of the *Blessing of Burntisland* is located within the protected area, the discovery would be significant. Scientific

analysis of the *Blessing of Burntisland* would afford insight into the diversity of form in shipbuilding at both national and regional levels. It would also provide opportunities to study a rich assemblage of accurately datable material that would otherwise only have survived in a relatively incomplete state, perhaps for example as individual pieces in a royal collection.

Potential

If subsequent investigations confirm that the wreck of the *Blessing of Burntisland* is located within undisturbed sediments in the Firth of Forth, the discovery would provide an excellent opportunity to study both vernacular shipbuilding traditions and the contents of a royal baggage train.

Summary and conclusions

This site is considered worthy of designation under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 on the grounds that it may prove to be the site of the wreck of a vessel of historical and archaeological significance.

Annex – Statutory instrument

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1999 No. (S.)

PROTECTION OF WRECKS

The Protection of Wrecks (Designation) Order 1999

<i>Made</i>	<u>29th January 1999</u>
<i>Laid before Parliament</i>	<u>1st February 1999</u>
<i>Coming into force</i>	<u>22nd February 1999</u>

The Secretary of State, being satisfied that the site identified in Article 2 of this Order is, or may prove to be, the site of a vessel lying wrecked on or in the sea bed and that on account of the historical and archaeological importance of the vessel and objects contained or formerly contained within the vessel which may be lying on the sea bed in or near the wreck, the site ought to be protected from unauthorised interference and having consulted such persons as he considers appropriate in accordance with section 1(4) of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973(a), in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 1(1) and (2) of that Act and all other powers enabling him in that behalf, hereby makes the following Order:

(a) 1973 c.33.

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Protection of Wrecks (Designation) Order 1999 and shall come into force on 22nd February 1999.

Identification of Site and Designation of Restricted Area

2.— (1) The site where a vessel lies, or is supposed to lie, wrecked on or in the sea bed is in position Latitude 56° 02.407' North, Longitude 03° 14.856' West.

(2) The area within a distance of 100 metres of the site identified in paragraph (1) above (but excluding any area above high water mark of ordinary spring tides) is designated as a restricted area.



Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Scottish Office

St Andrew's House,
Edinburgh

29th January 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order identifies the site in the Firth of Forth of what is thought to be a wreck of a vessel and on account of the historical and archaeological importance of the vessel and its cargo the Order designates an area 100 metres around the site as a restricted area so as to protect the site from unauthorised interference.

The restricted area does not include any part of the designated area which is above the high water mark of ordinary spring tides.