

INCHKEITH ISLAND - EAST SIDE LANDINGS

Landing from the East anchorage below the lighthouse can be awkward as the bay is open and the beach one of large stones. A cable to the NNW is an improved landing opening to the NE and substantially hidden from seaward by an outcrop which provides some shelter.

This landing is on two levels, separated by a saw back ridge of strata. The southernmost upper level is a very lumpy natural rock slipway. In much earlier times a patch at the top was paved by inseting rough cut stone blocks. The lower level to the north is a shingle beach strewn with large dressed masonry blocks which cover, remnants of a former jetty.

A 1941 map in the Public Records Office, Kew bears the legend "old jetty" and names the place Kirkcaldy Harbour. The same source has a 1909-1915 period map marked "jetty", the presumption being that in those days the jetty was serviceable.

Numerous iron ring bolts in the rock bear testimony to heavy usage of this landing. Above it is blockhouse of WWII vintage and before this it was defended by a fire trench and wire entanglement. A rising line of steel posts in the slope behind indicate the former landward access. A barrack block solid fuel water heater lying on the shore suggests that, like the harbour on the West side (Leith Harbour), in post-war years this landing was also used for removal of scrap metal. The paving at the top is probably indicative of use in the early years of lighthouse building when this landing, being sheltered from the prevailing wind and close to the light, had advantages.

On the South East side there are other beach landings, one conveniently tucked behind a pillar shaped rock, the last in a lower foreshore row. To the south of this is a shingle beach overlooked by the bow front of a concrete WWII search light emplacement. Half buried in this beach are the empty rusty casings of two large moored contact mines, further reminders that the principal industry on this island was concerned with dealing death to enemies of the Crown and it still hoatches with traps for the unwary.

If tempted to exercise your legal right to roam be aware of the dangers, in particular those posed by old defence installations and water collection systems for island water supply. Please have respect for this private property and the wildlife. Even as late as August flightless chicks are still abundant and are easily displaced.

Paul Shave
yacht Blue Spindrift
20 August 2006