GLANEUSE

Location

west of Point Lonsdale, Port Phillip Heads

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S290

Date lost

02/10/1886

Construction material

Iron

Hull

Iron; 1 deck, 2 tiers beams; Lloyd's classification:A1, iron ship built according to the Rules of the Society in force between 1864-1871

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

143.70 Feet / 27.30 Feet / 16.40 Feet

Builder

Frgs & Chautiers de la Medit

Year of construction

1870

Built port

La Seyne

Built country

France

Registration Port

Bordeaux

Date lost

02/10/1886

Departure

Charente, France

Destination

Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart, Sydney

Cargo

2940 cases, 588 qtr casks, 6 hds, 10 cases (flasks) and 5 cases (half flasks) of brandy, 137 cases of wine and 300 cases or sardines for Melbourne, with similar cargo for Launceston, Hobart, Sydney and Dunedin (UID 72). Pigs (who drank the claret) (UID 72)

Owner

Anton Dominique Bourdes et Fils of Bordeaux

Master

Captain Gorce

Weather conditions

Night; fine; clear

Cause of loss

Drifted ashore while waiting for pilot, struck reef

Number of crew

14

Crew comments

Ships cat, Marche

Statement of significance

The Glaneuse is significant historically as the wreck of a large European built iron hulled sailing barque. The wreck resulted in intense scrutiny on the pilot service and a Public Enquiry resulting in changes to pilotage operations. As the site is subject to sanding and is usually buried an assessment of its archaeological significance has not been made.

VHR history

A 482-ton net (502-ton gross), iron, three-masted clipper barque, the Glaneuse was built in La Seyne, France by Farges & Chautiers de la Meditin in 1870, and was owned by Anton Dom Bourdes et Fils of Bordeaux. It had one deck and two tiers of beams in accordance with Lloyds classification rules and had dimensions of 143.7 x 27.3 x 16.4 feet (43.7 x 8.3 x 5.0 metres). Under the command of Captain Gorce and with 14 crew, the Glaneuse sailed from Charente, France on 28 May 1886 for Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart, Sydney and Dunedin, New Zealand, with a cargo of brandy, wine, sardines and general goods.

In the company of four other vessels the Glaneuse arrived off the Heads on Friday evening in calm conditions and, at 1 a.m. on Saturday, 2 October, signalled for a pilot but failed to obtain one. The pilots aboard the schooner Rip saw the Glaneuse and signalled with their flashlight but, as they did not see any return signal, assumed the Glaneuse was commanded by an exempt master (who are not compelled to use pilots to enter the Heads.

It was a dark night, but instead of standing out to sea until daylight, the French captain was apparently sailing just offshore between Point Lonsdale and Barwon Heads. On an approach to Point Lonsdale and too close inshore in a channel, the ship was seen to be heading for the breaking reef an attempt was made to wear the ship around, but it was too late. Because the Lonsdale light was shut off from observation from the western direction, it would have been impossible to see. Captain Gorce ordered the starboard anchor dropped, however the Glaneuse drifted stern first on to the reef in the light south-westerly wind. Being in no immediate danger, the crew were not in a hurry to get off, and the lifeboat sent from Queenscliff at daybreak at the urging of the lighthouse keeper returned empty handed. Later in the day, a rocket line was fired to the ship and the crew and ship's cat (Marche, who had a penchant for wine) were safely brought ashore along with the ship's instruments, papers and personal possessions. On Saturday night the wind changed to a south-easterly and strengthened and the Glaneuse was driven further westwards and closer inshore, and became embedded in sand about 100 metres from the lighthouse.

By this time, a large crowd of spectators had gathered, along with a strong body of mounted and foot policemen and customs officers who were camped nearby to ensure that the salvage being recovered by a gang of workers and stacked on shore was not interfered with. The police did not intervene in disturbances among the foreigners who were drunk on the wine and spirits, as knives were not involved. Due to fresh water shortage, pigs on board were given claret. The ship's cat, when rescued, showed a penchant for wine. Most of the cargo was salvaged and because of the police presence there was not the amount of thieving and drunkenness usually associated with wrecks containing large amounts of liquor, although the deployment of police from surrounding areas led to lawlessness in Portarlington.

An Inquiry by Pilot Board found pilots not blameworthy, but a later Public Board of Inquiry made a number of recommendations for tightening up the operations of the service, including the purchase of a third pilot vessel. The Glaneuse was sold at auction to J. Henty & Co. for 305 pounds. The reef on which vessel struck was later named Glaneuse Reef. Up to two and a half years later attempts were still being made to float the largely intact wreck off the reef, but finally it broke up and disappeared beneath the shallow water.

The wreck of the SS Cheviot (1887) on Point Nepean was attributed by some to its having lost its propellor blades to floating wreckage from either the Glaneuse or the Gange, as it passed through the Heads on its way to Sydney.

Some secondary sources give different measurements from Lloyds Register.

The site of the Glaneuse lies about 100 metres west from the lighthouse on Glaneuse Reef about 50 metres off Point Lonsdale beach. The remains are prone to sanding over and consist mainly of twisted iron frames, protruding ribs and a few wooden beams, along with some associated wreckage to be found in adjacent reefs and gutters. Caution should be exercised, as a nearby rip known as The Escalator has claimed lives and the site is best dived at times of slack water.