

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 12/10/24

IQUIQUE



S350 Iquique PointNepean
SiteView

Location

Port Phillip Heads, Point Nepean back beach

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S350

Date lost

14/12/1863

Propulsion

Sail

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 / 0.00 / 0.00

Built country

France

Date lost

14/12/1863

Departure

Bordeaux or Charente

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

307 hhds, 1,100 quarter-casks, and 5000 cases of brandy, besides several hundred other packages consigned to Blight and Harbottle

Weather conditions

Appalling conditions at Heads and in Bay. At 9 am on 14 Dec. at Cape Schanck: wind SE; very strong; cloudy; with heavy showers

Cause of loss

Approaching the Heads, the ship was struck by a gale which shattered the mainmast & left it drifting helplessly. The Master ran the ship ashore (UID 9, 23, 53)

VHR history

Iquique was a French-built and owned barque of 500 tons travelling from Bordeaux to Melbourne with a cargo of 307 hogsheads, 1100 quarter casks and 5000 cases of brandy consigned to Melbourne merchants Messrs. Bligh & Harbottle. Some sources have named the vessel Ijauqui. A week of appalling conditions in December 1863 caused havoc around Port Phillip Heads and south-west Victoria, and resulted in the disruption of telegraphic facilities between Cape Otway and Geelong. The pilots were unable to get outside the Heads; at Queenscliff 13 small boats were swamped and the barque Northern light was beached (later refloated); the ship Brandon put back to Melbourne after losing both topsails and five men overboard near Cape Otway; Margaret Chessel also had to return to port after losing its topmasts; and another barge, Congo, near Iquique at the time on 14 December was 'severely damaged' by the gale (Argus, 18 December 1863, p.5). Iquique was off the heads when the gale took away its mainmast and, unable to stand off the land, the master decided to run the barque ashore. Fortunately, he chose a good spot where a channel allowed passage through the outside reef, and between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. landed safely on the sandy beach just east of Point Nepean. One crew member died, reportedly from the mainmast shattering, but his death was later said to be from natural causes unrelated to the wrecking event, while Iquique was in the breakers. At low water the vessel was high and dry, which allowed the crew to get off safely, but as it rolled at high water the foremast was cut away to ease it during the salvage operation. Most of its cargo of brandy was salvaged by bullock drays and Customs officers were on shore to take charge of the goods as they were landed. There is an obvious channel in the reef's shore platform on the seaward side just east of Point Nepean where wreckage consisting of 'an old iron wheel, much broken glass and other remnants which could be the remains of the Iquique' has been reported (D. Love, pers. comm.). The wreck site has not otherwise been positively identified.