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 truck by a gale which shattered the mainmast & left it driftingt 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.