

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 15/10/24

LOCH ARD



417 LochArd HistoricView



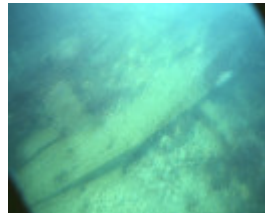
417 LochArd
HistoricPrintOfWreck



417 LochArd BrokenCrockery



417 LochArd Debris



417 LochArd WoodRemains



417 LochArd MetalArtefact



417 LochArd Spoons



417 LochArd
LochArdPeacock



417 LochArd SitePlan
diveinfosheet 1992

Location

Mutton Bird Island, Loch Ard Gorge, east of Port Campbell

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S417

Date lost

01 Jun 1878

Official number

68061

Construction material

Iron

Hull

One bulkhead, cemented 1873, two decks

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

263.70 Feet / 38.30 Feet / 23.00 Feet

Builder

Charles Connell and Co./ Barclay, Curdle & Co.

Year of construction

1873

Built port

Scotstoun, Glasgow

Built country

Scotland

Registration Number

101 of 1873

Registration Port

Glasgow

Date lost

01 Jun 1878

Departure

Gravesend

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

2375 tons general cargo, miscellaneous items including straw hats, umbrellas, perfumery, clay pipes, pianos, clocks confectionary, linen, candles; also industrial cargo including railway iron, cement, iron, lead and copper. Special cargo items: Minton porcelain peacock, Cremona violin in a brass case.

Owner

General Shipping Co, managed by Aitkin, Lilburn and Co.

Master

Capt. George Gibb

Weather conditions

night, calm, mist

Cause of loss

Ran into coastal cliffs after fog prevented navigational fixes being made

Passenger comments

conflicting data in newspaper sources, one source says 15 passengers

Number of crew

37

Crew comments

conflicting data in newspaper sources, one source has 40 crew

Statement of significance

<p>The Loch Ard is historically significant as one of Victoria and Australia's worst shipwreck tragedies. It is archaeologically significant for its remains of a large international passenger and cargo ship. It is highly educationally and recreationally significant as one of Victoria's most spectacular diving sites, and popular tourist sites in Port Campbell National Park.</p>

VHR history

The wreck of the 1693 ton iron clipper Loch Ard is one of Victoria's best known and tragic shipwrecks. Nearing the end of a voyage from Gravesend to Melbourne, the Loch Ard sank after striking Mutton Bird Island near Port Campbell in calm foggy weather and 52 of the 54 crew and passengers were lost. A nearby gorge into which the only two survivors, 18 year olds Tom Pearce and Eva Carmichael were able to get ashore is named Loch Ard Gorge.

 The Loch Ard's cargo included 2375 tons general cargo including copper and lead, building materials, bottled goods, marble fireplaces, gaslight fittings, railway iron, and exhibits destined for the 1880 International Exhibition, to mark the official opening of the Melbourne Exhibition Buildings in 1880. The famous majolica ware Minton Peacock which was to be the main exhibit was found floating in its packing case at the time of the wreck, and is currently on display in Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum.

 Contemporary salvage

and pilfering of washed up cargo on beaches occurred, and one major salvage effort ended when the 90 ton PS Napier sank after striking rocks inside Port Campbell Bay.

 At the time of the Loch Ard's rediscovery in 1967 there was neither a maritime heritage agency nor historic shipwreck legislation in Victoria, and it fell to the Receiver of Wreck to manage the site under the provisions of the Commonwealth Navigation Act 1912. Legal issues were raised over ownership of the site as the great-great-granddaughter of Miller who bought the rights to the wreck in 1878, its finder, and salvaging divers competed for ownership rights and the saleable metal cargo. It was finally decided that all material recovered from the wreck should be lodged with the Receiver of Wreck until the legal owner(s) could be found.

 In 1969 the wreck was illegally blasted and a large quantity of material recovered. The Commonwealth Police became involved following friction between divers and reports of illegally salvaged goods being sold, and carried out raids resulting in fines. However over the next twenty years recreational divers continued to raise large quantities of cargo and ship's fittings. One of two located anchors was raised for the Loch Ard centenary year in 1978 by a consortium of dive groups. Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum divers recovered artefacts from the wreck to safeguard them from looters in 1980, with a permit from the Receiver of Wreck.

 In 1982 the site was gazetted as an historic shipwreck under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976, and the newly formed Maritime Archaeology Unit conducted rescue archaeology to recover loose artefact material. Between December 1985 and May 1988 fieldwork and a detailed site survey took place. Management issues included the dynamic and unstable nature of the large site, looting by divers and ongoing monitoring and enforcement of the site.

 In 1990 the site was again gazetted as an historic shipwreck as the 1982 gazettal was found to be invalid, the site declaration having preceded the actual declaration of Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976 in Victoria by four days. The result was that cases being prosecuted against looters were forced to be dropped.

 The Loch Ard site lies in 18-24 metres depth on the south-east tip of Mutton Bird Island, and is part of Victoria's Underwater Shipwreck Discovery Trail.