

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 03/10/24

LUCY LEE

Location

Thompsons Creek, Breamlea

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S419

Date lost

11/10/1868

Official number

53983

Construction material

Wood

Hull

carvel built, square stern, no gallery, no head, single deck

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

1

Length/Breadth/Depth

37.30 Feet / 12.50 Feet / 5.60 Feet

Year of construction

1868

Built port

Westernport, Victoria

Built country

Australia

Registration Number

17 of 1868

Registration Port

Melbourne

Date lost

11/10/1868

Departure

Melbourne

Destination

Apollo Bay

Cargo

Stores and splitters

Owner

Henry Adolphus Moon Goble, storekeeper of Melbourne, 64/64 shares @ 14 May 1868. Mortgaged to Andrew Gibson, gentleman of Brighton for 25 pounds on 16 June 1868.

Master

Capt James Webb

Weather conditions

Westerly gales

Cause of loss

Heavy weather, defective anchors, sails and cables

Passenger comments

One passenger Robert Lacey drowned. Number of passengers unknown though Lacey was described as "one of the splitters" so at least two.

Statement of significance

<p>The Lucy Lee has local historical significance for its involvement with the Apollo Bay timber trade, as part of the resource of wrecks associated with this early trade. As the site has not yet been located it is impossible to assess its archaeological significance, however it would be of interest as an Australian/ Victorian built vessel in addressing questions relating to Australian shipbuilding.</p>

VHR history

The unfortunate cutter Lucy Lee was destined for a short trading career of just less than six months. According to Captain James Webb the cutter Lucy Lee, bound from Melbourne to Apollo Bay, experienced westerly gales and heavy seas outside the Heads resulting in the loss of all head sails. The vessel hove to and drifted 25 miles to the south east of Cape Otway overnight. The vessel set off on the 10th after the sails had been repaired as best they could be in the circumstances. When the vessel was about 4 miles off Cape Patten, Robert Lacey, one of the splitters, was knocked westward by the main sail while assisting in reefing the sail. No assistance could be given to him on account of the "high confused sea". A south-westerly gale came on and Captain Webb decided to turn and run for Melbourne to get refitted with sails. That night they made the Point Lonsdale light when the weather got "thick, dark and dirty"; the vessel drifted by the head tide on to the westerly coast, until the captain found himself in three fathoms water, not seeing the land but hearing the breakers, he decided to let go his anchor. At daylight he found himself off the White Hummocks, 4 miles below the Barwon Heads. In the afternoon the wind freshened and being close to the surf, the cable parted. Having no canvas to work the ship off shore, the captain had to beach the vessel. (GA, 13 October 1868)
 Loney describes the vessel as lost at Bream Creek (Loney, 1980: 207)
 An inquiry was held before the Steam Navigation Board of Victoria on 26 October 1868 to investigate the cause of death by drowning of Robert Lacey, passenger on board the Lucy Lee. The Board found that Lacey was lost overboard during the reefing of the mainsail, and that the state of the weather at that time, in the opinion of those on board, rendered it impracticable to save his life. The Board was further of opinion that the vessel was lost due to deficient equipment; and that the master, James Webb, was highly culpable for proceeding to sea knowing the vessel to be undermanned, and badly found with sails, anchors, and chains. The Board suspended the master's certificate of competency issued by the Board of Trade, London for 12 months. (Argus, 27 October 1968 p.5 (b))

 The site of the Lucy Lee has not yet been reported nor located. From contemporary reports it would appear that the Lucy Lee went ashore somewhere between the western end of Thirteenth Beach and Torquay.