

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 27/04/24

ARTISAN



S45 Artisan CapePatterson
BeachView unknown



S45 Artisan CapePatterson
HistoricView unknown



S45 Artisan CapePatterson
HullRemains unknown



S45 Artisan CapePatterson
Remains unknown



S45 Artisan CapePatterson
HullWreckage unknown

Location

Harmers Haven, Cape Paterson

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S45

Date lost

23/04/1901

Official number

80086

Construction material

Wood

Hull

The Artisan was a 1155 ton single decked, three masted barque. The hull was of softwood (pitchpine and spruce) construction and sheathed in felt and yellow metal . In 1897 structural modifications were made to the vessel with two tiers of iron beams being

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

189.60 Feet / 37.70 Feet / 22.40 Feet

Builder

Stewart & Richie

Year of construction

1881

Built port

St John, New Brunswick

Built country

Canada

Registration Port

St John, New Brunswick

Date lost

23/04/1901

Departure

Manila

Destination

Newcastle

Cargo

500 tons of ballast

Owner

W. Thompson & Co.

Master

Capt. Purdy

Weather conditions

Incessant gales - Gale force westerly winds and heavy seas (20/4/1901), change to gale force easterlies on 21/4, with sudden gale force change to the south then south west on evening of 22/4.

Cause of loss

Blown ashore by gale. Total wreck.

Passenger comments

Mrs Purdy, wife of Capt. Purdy and her dog and parrot. Anglo crew "speak in the highest terms of the quiet, calm courage of the captain's wife, who passed among the men cheering them in their hour of greatest anxiety" (Argus 23/4/1901).

Number of crew

17

Crew comments

"Several of the crew were Filipinos who could not understand a word of English, some of whom, however, understood the points of the compass, and, understanding the orders given to them, were considered good seamen" (Marine board Inquiry). One account sa

Statement of significance

<p>The vessel is historically significant to the community of Wonthaggi, however archaeologically the vessel has limited significance due to it being totally wrecked, however some information might be obtained from the small sections of the wreck washed up into the creek bed.</p>

VHR history

The large wooden barque Artisan left Manila in the Phillipines in February 1901 bound for Newcastle in N.S.W. to pick up a cargo of coal. On April 21 just off the coast of Victoria the ship was struck by a severe storm and thick weather which lasted for two days and made position fixing impossible. The gale continued and one by one, although close-reefed the gale carried the sails away and the buoyant, lightly ballasted vessel with bare poles was at the mercy of the driving wind and waves. The drama was compounded by an oil lamp igniting and setting fire to the deck of the vessel, which was brought under control by the crew. Seven hours later at about 3am on the 23rd of April the vessel was driven ashore onto a low rock platform near the present day hamlet of Harmers Haven. Blue distress rockets had failed to draw attention to their plight, but miraculously at daylight the captain's wife and crew found they could safely step ashore. Caretakers of the Cape Paterson Coal Mine Richard Jennings and his wife lived a short distance away and looked after the crew, the Captain and his wife. The captain was critical of the delay in arranging transport for himself and the crew to Melbourne. The Newhaven-San Remo Rocket Corps made a hazardous overland voyage with lifesaving gear after spotting the wreck and later assisted the passage of the mariners to Melbourne. With its back broken and impossible to refloat the vessel was a total loss. The mate stayed behind to deter looters during the salvage operations. Extensive salvage took place. Built at an estimated cost of 4000 pounds the Artisan was owned by 23 part owners all from St Johns, New Brunswick, major shareholders being John Stewart and William Ritchie. Lesser shareholders included William Thompson & Co. who were large shipowners with a fleet of 14 ships and barques, three steel ships and nine steel ocean steamers. A Marine Court of Inquiry found no one was to blame for the wrecking, and the ship was well

found with gear and safety equipment, but considered that it would have been prudent for the master to have kept his vessel on a port tack, when the wind was from the eastward. A number of vessels including the Canadian ship George T. Hay which was sheltering behind Cape Woolamai and burning blue distress flares, and the Tasmanian schooner Marie Laurie which sheltered in Western Port after having its port bulwarks stove in, were in distress during the period of the gales.