

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 27/09/24

MIRANDA

Location

Point Bunbury, Apollo Bay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S471

Date lost

16/08/1881

Official number

61672

Construction material

Wood

Hull

One deck, elliptical stern, carvel built, no galleries, no head, substantially built, "had been intended to be a steamer but that idea not carried out" (Argus 18/8/1881)

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

66.50 Feet / 14.50 Feet / 7.20 Feet

Builder

James Sinclair and William Curnow

Year of construction

1877

Built port

Geelong

Built country

Australia

Registration Number

No. 2 of 1878

Registration Port

Geelong

Date lost

16/08/1881

Departure

Apollo Bay

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

600 bags of potatoes

Owner

1877: T.J. Parker 32/64 shares
 James Huddart 16/64 shares
 Jno. Traill 16/64 shares
 4/7/1879: Lewis Tindal, master mariner, of Melbourne
 29/12/1879: Benjamin Cooke Jnr.

Master

Capt. Lewis Tindal/ Tindall

Weather conditions

no wind, heavy swell which came in suddenly

Cause of loss

dragged anchors in heavy swell

Number of crew

3

Crew comments

William Cousins, Mate; Maurice Jones, seaman; C. O Brien, seaman

Statement of significance

The Miranda has historical significance for its early association with shipowners Huddart & Parker, who went on to become one of Australia's major shipping company lines. It has technical significance as an Australian-built wooden vessel designed as a steamer although its intended machinery was never installed.

VHR history

The same conditions which today see surfers scrambling for their surfboards were to result in the destruction of the Miranda, when a heavy Southern Ocean swell suddenly picked up within the space of an hour while the wind remained breathless. Her hapless crew could do nothing other than cling to the rigging for their lives as seas broke over the deck. The Miranda was described as a substantially built wooden schooner originally intended to be a steamer for its original owners, Huddart, Parker & Traill of Geelong (Argus 18/8/1881). It never became a steamer though, instead operating as a sail trader, and was subsequently sold to its next owner and master Capt. Lewis Tindal of Melbourne (possibly the same (unfortunate) Capt. L. Tindal who was in command of the Henry when it was lost at Lorne in 1877). Tindal in turn sold the vessel to Benjamin Cooke the younger, timber merchant of Melbourne, while remaining its master (Parsons, 1969: 21). Under Cooke's ownership it is assumed the Miranda operated in the local coastal and Otway timber trade for the next two years. It is recorded to have traded between Lorne and Apollo Bay, and was also involved in salvaging floating wreckage from the Eric the Red (Argus 18/8/1881; Loney, 1979: 87). On this occasion the Miranda arrived from Melbourne and had begun loading potatoes at Apollo Bay. The Mate William Cousins stated at the Steam Navigation Board Inquiry that: "On 16th busy loading, no appearance of bad weather. Loading from boats until about a quarter to 4pm, when a sea came rolling in from south-west, which compelled us to desist loading. The sea became worse until about 5 o'clock, a little time after which we let go the second anchor, with about 20 fathom chain. She commenced to drag between half past 5 and 6. There was no wind. She got broadside on to the sea. The hatches were battened down. The sea was washing over. To prevent our being washed overboard we held on to the spars. About half-past 5 a sea smashed a boat which was being towed aft. We had to let her go adrift. There was only one more boat which was ashore. We continued dragging, sometimes broadside on. The captain asked my advice. I told him there was nothing to be done. She then dragged right on to the rocks, to the northward of the jetty about 150 yards. The people ashore had been looking at us. The captain got on to the jibboom, and cast a line ashore, which the people caught, and we got ashore by climbing along the line... I never saw a similar sea in this place. The current was setting to westward. I don't think more chain would have saved us, as if the anchor had held the chain would have parted. The sea came in very suddenly. We couldn't have escaped, as there was no wind to take us out. The heaviest anchor weighed from 4cwt to 5cwt. The chain was not much worn. Have been nine months in the Miranda. I always considered Apollo Bay good holding ground till now. The lifting of the vessel caused the anchor to drag" (Argus 27/8/1881). The Board found that a heavy sea and insufficient wind to get the vessel under weigh were to blame for the wreck, and exonerated the master Lewis Tindal from any blame. No remains of the wreck of the Miranda have been located nor reported.