

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

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## OSPREY

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### Location

Lorne, Loutit Bay

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S508

### Date lost

18/06/1854

### Construction material

Wood

### Hull

One deck, standing bowsprit, square stern, no galleries, carvel built, bird figurehead.

### Propulsion

Sail

### Number of masts

3

### Length/Breadth/Depth

78.80 Feet / 20.70 Feet / 13.70 Feet

### Year of construction

1834

### Built port

Pill

### Built country

England

## Registration Number

19 of 1853

## Registration Port

Geelong

## Date lost

18/06/1854

## Departure

Geelong

## Destination

Lorne

## Owner

1835: Fisher & Co/ Bristol UK.<br /> 1843-1852: Richard Burns and Henry White/ Hobart.<br /> Oct.1852-May 1853: Reuben Barnett/ Melbourne.<br /> May 1853-Aug-1853:Henry Alfred Coffey, Alexander Williamson Hill, John MacFarlane/ Melbourne.<br /> Aug 18

## Master

1835: W. Fisher<br /> Jan. 1849: A. Griggs<br /> 1840: J. Quinton<br /> Oct 1852: A.Gray, W. Hansen<br /> Feb 1853: John Lyons Jacob<br /> June 1853: James Donald<br /> Aug 1853: Donald, Hodge<br /> Nov 1853: L. Hodge<br /> April, June 1854: J. Hawkins

## Weather conditions

Easterly gale

## Cause of loss

Weather: Driven ashore during an easterly gale, dragged two anchors before cables parted.

## Crew comments

All saved

## Statement of significance

<p>The remains of the Osprey are archaeologically and historically significant as evidence of the timber trade and early development of Lorne. It is the only positively located wreck site in Louttit Bay. It is historically significant as the earliest known site of any kind associated with Lorne's settlement, and for its role in the early development of the Lorne and the Otway region generally.</p>

## VHR history

In its earlier life under British owners, the Bristol-built three masted wooden schooner Osprey is known to have traded between the British Isles and Indian, Asian and Australian ports such as Batavia, Ceylon, Surabaya, and Sydney (Lloyds 1835, 1840, 1845). It was sold to Hobart merchants Richard Burns and Henry White in 1843 who operated the Osprey between Hobart, Batavia, Surabaya, Melbourne and Sydney. Between January 1849 and June 30 1850 the Osprey left Hobart Town for San Francisco, for the gold rush, arriving back in Hobart Town on 28 January 1851 (O'May). It was then sold to Melbourne merchant Rueben Burnett in October 1852, who after seven months sold it to Henry Alfred Coffey, Alexander Hill and John McFarlane all merchants of Melbourne. After a period of four months in August 1853 this Melbourne syndicate sold their shares to Geelong merchants Sydney and Richard Morrison. During this period the Osprey traded to Hobart, Adelaide, Geelong, Lorne and Portland (Syme). The Osprey was said to have been involved in the timber trade between Melbourne, Geelong and Lorne (Cecil & Carr, 1988).  
After completing a voyage from Adelaide to Geelong with six passengers and a cargo of hay, bran and flour on 10 May 1854, the next and last recorded voyage of the Osprey was from Geelong for Louttit Bay. Early on the morning of 18 June 1854 while anchored with two anchors out under the command of Captain Hawkins, an easterly gale caused the vessel to drag and be blown ashore near the mouth of the Erskine River in shallow water. Although pounding seas were breaking over the vessel there was no loss of life and most of the gear was saved (Argus 28/6/1854).  
After the storm the vessel was lying on its side and was heavily sanded up, and despite the hopes of the owners it could be refloated became a total wreck.  
The Osprey was believed to be insured (GA 27/6/1854). Captain Hawkins had previously been fined for not putting down a second anchor during a gale on 29 March 1854 which forced him to leave Geelong under duress of weather (Syme).  
Local folklore as early as 1875 identified a site to the south of the Erskine River as being that of the Osprey (Cecil & Carr, 1988). However a survey in December 1933, when Erskine River floods washed out the river exposing wreckage, described the Osprey identification as "unlikely" being consistent with a wreck of "more than double 66 tons". However the author believed the Osprey to be 66 ton vessel, and not a 149 ton vessel (Stribling, 1934), and in fact in all respects this wreckage matches exactly the recorded dimensions of the Osprey. This is significant as this wreckage was identified as belonging to the Rebel, even though it does not match the Rebel's dimensions. Both historically and archaeologically there is no evidence to suggest the Rebel was totally wrecked at Lorne, rather that it was in fact refloated (see database entry for Rebel).  
Timber taken from a site near the rivermouth has been confirmed as being Quercus sp.(white oak) indicating it was a vessel built in the northern hemisphere. Wreckage and artefactual remains include the keelson, frames, outer planking, copper bolts, trenails, iron fastenings, copper sheathing (with marking 'P GRENFE (LL?) 20', brass tacks and horsehair. The area of site is 10m long and between 4.5 and 5.5m wide (MHU Wreck Inspection Report, 1995).  
Some planking and frames were removed from the site in 1973, while sometime prior to 1984 most of the remains of wreckage along the front beach at Lorne were removed by the Shire of Winchelsea in order to clean up the beach.(Cecil & Carr, 1988).  
Depending on beach formation and sand levels, occasionally two or three of the lower frames can be seen protruding from a gutter north of, and level with the tip of the rock groyne, submerged but visible at low tide.