

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

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## OTWAY

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### Location

Lorne, Louttit Bay

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S510

### Date lost

1862

### Official number

40927

### Construction material

Wood

### Hull

One deck, square stern, clinker built with carvel sheathing, scroll head.<br /> Length from forepart of stem under the bowsprit to aft side of head of the sternpost 49 2/10 feet.<br /> Main breadth to outside of plank 14 8/10 feet.<br /> Depth in hold (fr

### Propulsion

Sail

### Number of masts

2

### Length/Breadth/Depth

49.20 Feet / 14.80 Feet / 5.70 Feet

### Year of construction

1850

**Built port**

Hobart

**Built country**

Australia

**Registration Number**

5 of 1857

**Registration Port**

Geelong

**Date lost**

1862

**Departure**

Geelong?

**Destination**

Lorne, Louttit Bay

**Owner**

1/1853: Hy Shade & Hy Gibbins/ Melbourne.<br /> 5/1853: J. Peters, J. Johnson, D. Wilson, A. Prate.<br /> 5/1855: Robert Rae/ Melbourne.<br /> 1857-1862: Horatio Spencer Wills/ Geelong

**Weather conditions**

Gale force wind

**Cause of loss**

Weather: Blown ashore in a gale

**Statement of significance**

<p>The Otway is historically and archaeologically significant as evidence of the early development of the Otway timber trade and development of Lorne. It is also archaeologically significant for its potential to answer research questions relating to Australian-built vessels.</p>

**VHR history**

The Hobart built schooner Otway served its various Melbourne based owners between 1852 and 1857, when it was bought by a Geelong gentleman, shopowner and businessman Mr Horatio Spencer Wills. Mr Wills built shops in Market Square, Geelong in 1851, had a house 'Willsfort' at Point Henry in 1857 (also 'Belle Vue' at Point Henry in 1861), and had at least two daughters (Geelong Historical Records) and one son . Mr Wills owned the Otway for five years until its loss (exact date unknown) in 1862 (A.S.R.O. Geelong Register). It was an eventful and tragic year for the Wills family, who lost their trading vessel Otway, had the birth of their second daughter (16/8/1861), and soon after the family (except for Mr Wills) are recorded to have been murdered in Queensland

on 20 October 1861 (Geelong Historical Records).  
There is record of only one vessel of the Otway's tonnage built in Hobart in 1850, which was the William (O'May: 72), so it is possible it may have had its name changed after being sold to Victorian owners. The Otway appears in Melbourne, Geelong and Portland ports between 1850 and 1853 (Syme), indicating it was involved in the local coastal trades. The same Otway is also recorded with a slightly different tonnage and dimensions in both the Hobart and Geelong Customs Register of Ships for the year 1850 (Parsons, 1969).  
Little is known about the circumstances or salvage of the wreck other than:  
"The 33 ton Geelong registered schooner was lost at Lorne during a south-westerly gale which had battered her, finally forcing her ashore where she became a total wreck" (Loney, 1979: 85; Cecil & Carr, 1988).  
Horatio Wills died in 1918, and the Certificate of Registry for the Otway was cancelled on 2 April 1919 when advice was received from his son that the vessel had been lost at Lorne in 1861 or 1862. (A.S.R.O. No. 5 of 1857)  
No details relating to contemporary or present day salvage of the Otway have been located, and the site has not been positively located nor reported.