

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 14/10/24

BITTER BEER

Location

Between Port Fairy and Warrnambool, off Cape Otway

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S62

Date lost

1866

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 / 0.00 / 0.00

Builder

J. Griffiths

Built port

Tamar River

Built country

Tasmania

Date lost

1866

Departure

Melbourne

Destination

Belfast

Weather conditions

Heavy gale

Statement of significance

<p>The vessel is significant historically due to it being one of the Australian built coastal traders employed around Australia. It is impossible to assess whether it has any archaeological significance as it has not been located nor inspected, but it has the potential to yield information about the construction of Australian built ships built during the 19th century.</p>

VHR history

The schooner Bitter Beer disappeared off Cape Otway in March 1866 during a heavy gale while sailing from Melbourne to Belfast. A few weeks later the Warrnambool Examiner reported "The Bitter Beer has never been seen or heard of since she left Melbourne for Port Fairy on March last. On Monday last week a bottle was picked up on the beach at Portland within which was a paper with the following words written thereon, "Schooner BITTER BEER, black lookout." Loney also writes that on 7 March 1866, one of the fiercest gales ever experienced on the Victorian coast destroyed the barque Mandarin, the ketch Surprise and the schooners Pomona, Victory and Bitter Beer. (Lonely, 1994, Wrecks along the Gippsland Coast p 32). (Lonely. 1975. Wrecks along the Great Ocean Road, p111).
 Examiner March 1866 reports: Wreck near Moonlight Head - Capt. Helpman, the Harbour Master, in accordance with instructions received from head quarters, proceeded yesterday to the vicinity of Moonlight Head, it having been reported that the Bitter Bay was supposed to be on shore about there.