

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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SOCRATES

Location

Port Fairy

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S623

Date lost

28/08/1843

Construction material

Wood

Hull

1822 listed in Lloyds as a schooner. Described as snow brig 152 tons (OM) in 1832 (SA Shipping Arrivals and Departures) later converted to barque rig. Listed as 3 masted ship in Parsons.

 Single deck supported by beams, 12 pairs iron knee, low

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

79.00 Feet / 20.00 Feet / 13.00 Feet

Builder

William, James and Robert Tindall

Year of construction

1821

Built port

Scarborough

Built country

England

Registration Port

Launceston

Date lost

28/08/1843

Departure

Launceston

Destination

Port Fairy

Cargo

Timber, hay, flour, sewing machine, bran, potatoes

Owner

1832: John Griffiths of Launceston, Launceston Fishing Company

Master

1832: William Gibbons1835: William Dutton1843: Capt. Lewis Grant

Weather conditions

Easterly gale

Cause of loss

Cable parted and blown ashore during a gale

Statement of significance

<p>The Socrates is archaeologically significant as part of the Port Fairy wreck resource. It is historically significant for its association with the early Tasmanian and Victorian whaling industry, and for its role in the development of the Victorian settlements of Port Fairy and Portland.</p>

VHR history

The Socrates was owned by Michael Connolly and John Griffiths, two Launceston whaling identities, and early settlers of Port Fairy . Connolly was also a member of the Port Phillip Association who sent Batman to find land across Bass Strait.

 The Socrates had been used for whaling and trading between 1821 and 1843 and at the time it was wrecked was being used to transport produce from Port Fairy, which at the time was

undergoing a transition from a whaling station to an agricultural and rural settlement of commercial importance.

 After the boom in bay whaling in Tasmanian and Victorian waters the depression of the 1840s had set in and the Socrates was involved in carrying anything from timber, hay, general goods and livestock in the Bass Strait trade between Tasmania and Victoria. Connolly had attempted to sell the Socrates a month before it was wrecked.

 Artefacts including intact bottles, copper alloy fastenings and hull structure were removed from a wreck with three masts in 1971, said to be the Socrates (Age 19/1/1971).

 MHU fieldwork at Port Fairy in 1984 found the site believed to be the Socrates covered in sand, but the site has been identified from archival plans - it is in the same location as a site historically identified as being the Socrates.

 Local press reports suggest a lot of material was removed in 1971 prior to the amnesty. The timbers may be the upper hull of the Socrates.