

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 13/10/24

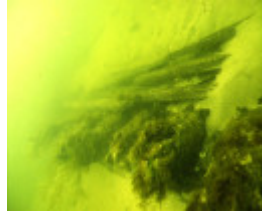
WILL O THE WISP



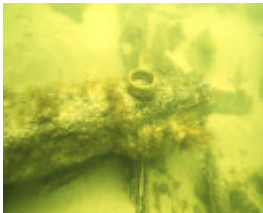
S727 WillOTheWisp
PortphillipBaySwanPoint
DeckWinch



S727 WillOTheWisp
PortphillipBaySwanPoint
Winch



S727 WillOTheWisp
PortphillipBaySwanPoint
WoodDebris



S727 WillOTheWisp
PortphillipBaySwanPoint Post

Location

William Sand, West Channel, Port Phillip

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S727

Date lost

08/10/1853

Construction material

Wood

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

76.00 Feet / 18.00 Feet / 10.50 Feet

Year of construction

1840

Built port

Liverpool

Built country

England

Date lost

08/10/1853

Departure

Auckland

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

Timber, bricks, potatoes

Master

R. Highat

Weather conditions

Weather NW force 2 clear.

Cause of loss

Struck sand bank

Statement of significance

<p>The Will O' The Wisp is archaeologically and technically significant as the wreck of an opium clipper schooner, i.e. representative of a particular type or design. As the wreck lies in only two to three metres depth, there is good potential for access to the snorkelling and diving public to interpret the site. The wreck is substantially intact, and stands above the seabed, with many artefacts still visible in situ.</p>
 <p>*There is a 100m diameter Protected Zone around Will O' The Wisp centred on position -38.241498 , 144.701159 WGS84.

No entry is permitted unless a Permit has been authorised by Heritage Victoria. Will O' The Wisp is within the Swan Island Department of Defence prohibited area. Additional authorisation from the Department of Defence is needed.*</p>

VHR history

The Will O' the Wisp was an armed clipper schooner built especially for the opium trade, which it entered in 1842. As steamers displaced fast sailing vessels it went into the Pacific-Honolulu trade. In 1852-53 it engaged in intercolonial trading between New Zealand, Launceston and Melbourne during the Gold Rush. It was totally wrecked on 8 October 1853 with a cargo of timber, bricks and potatoes from Auckland to Melbourne after running onto the eastern side of the West Channel in Port Phillip Bay. The captain and the crew were rescued and taken to Melbourne aboard the SS Hellasport (or the Wanderer?). The master was also the owner of the ship and its cargo.

