

CLARENCE (1841-1850)

An early Australian built schooner used to transport livestock and cargo.

Diving on the Wreck of the *Clarence*

During the early 1980s, the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria (MAAV) began searching for a number of shipwrecks in Port Phillip Bay. This involved research into historical records, old newspapers and charts and many hours of underwater searching. In 1982 they discovered the well preserved wreck of the *Clarence*.

The *Clarence* lies on a sandy seabed in 4-5 metres of water. On a good day, the wreck is clearly visible from the surface.

The outline of the vessel is clear apart from the starboard side of the stern which is buried. The port side of the old ship from bow to stern, and from keel to deck level is almost complete. The paired frames used as the framework for the hull can be seen poking out of the sand and outline the shape of the ship. At the time of its wrecking, the *Clarence* was used to transport sheep. Part of the Baltic pine decking used to accommodate the animals can be seen at the stern and the hull.

Some very fragile pieces of leather and rope have been found at the wreck site. Other artefacts which have been discovered include a small glass deck light, ceramics and the ship's compass.

Dive Standard: Basic

Dive Conditions

The *Clarence* is currently undergoing further study. A Protected Zone has been declared around the wreck site as any boats anchoring directly over the vessel, could cause damage to the fragile hull. Although the site is currently closed to divers, it may be open to permit divers in the future.

Locating the Wreck of the *Clarence*

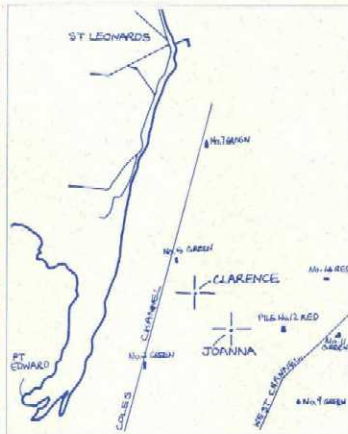
Launch Site: St Leonards or Queenscliff boat ramp
Chart No.: AUS 158
Latitude: 38° 12' 14" S
Longitude: 144° 43' 16" E

Compass Bearings:

1. West Channel Pile Light - 069° (T)
2. Coles Channel Light - 202° (T)
3. Swamp Beacon - 287° (T)

This is a 100 metre radius Protected Zone, access is by permit only. Anchoring is prohibited.

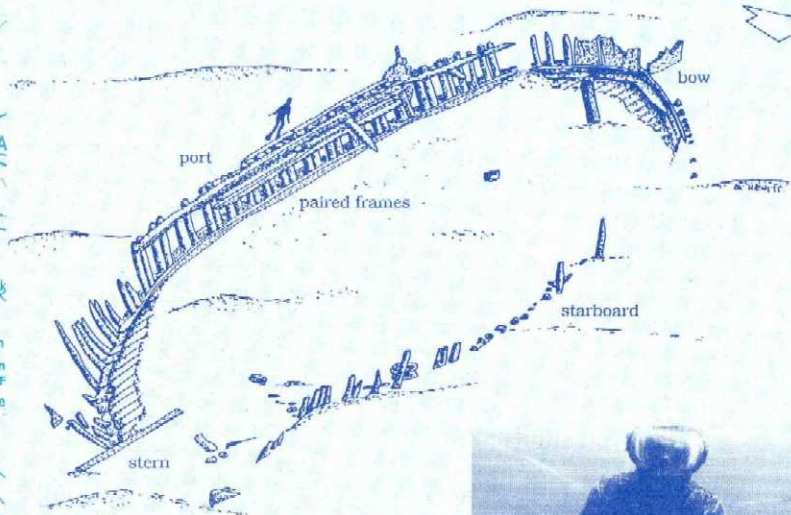
Position of the *Clarence* in relation to the Joanna and West Channel



Similar Wrecks in Victoria

There are few well preserved wrecks of early Australian built sailing ships in Victoria. The only similar wreck included in the Underwater Shipwreck Discovery Trail is the *Joanna* which lies nearby.

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Help Protect Our Maritime Heritage

The *Clarence* was declared an Historic Shipwreck and Protected Zone on 11th September 1965 under the State's Historic Shipwreck's Act (1981). Any damage or interference to the *Clarence* or any other Historic Shipwreck is an offence under the Act and penalties are severe.

Many wrecks are fragile and require constant monitoring. Divers visiting wreck sites can help the Maritime Archaeology Unit protect and manage Victoria's historic shipwrecks by:

- Reporting any damage to wreck sites caused by natural erosion or the activities of divers.
- Reporting artefacts which have become exposed through erosion and are at risk from being washed away or looting.
- Reporting any diver seen actively looting a wreck.
- Informing the Unit of a new wreck site. Divers who find and report a new wreck may be entitled to a reward.

Please contact the Maritime Archaeology Unit at:

Victoria Archaeological Survey
29-31 Victoria Avenue
Albert Park VIC 3206
Telephone: (03) 690 5322



Diver with ship fastening spike and hull sample