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Appendix F: Selected Shipping Mishap Landscape Data

Appendix F-1: Sample of Wrecks/ Strandings in Southern Port Phillip and Victoria Identified From Documentary Records

- ***Ranger* – Customs Dept Revenue Cutter – West Channel and Bird Rock, Geelong**

The *Ranger* went ashore near Shortland's Bluff on Saturday during the late tempestuous weather, and was speculated that she could get off without any injury (GA 14/8/1841). The vessel had been sent to the area to install buoys for the West Channel (GA 21/7/1841).

Buoying of the channel entrance into Corio bay had commenced by 1842, when the revenue cutter *Ranger* laid the first large buoy, and returned to Williamstown for the remaining six buoys. Each buoy was made of large tin butts, securely looped and fastened. The moorings are of such weight as required, and the buoys float high out of the water. The vessel *Ranger* had arrived with earlier with emigrants, and had grounded on the sand spit of Bird Rock, the first known occurrence of its kind at that location (GA 28/2/1842). The master was later criticized as incompetent (GA 4/4/1842).

- ***Dusty, Miller and Truganini***

The above ships were damaged and wrecked in bad weather (GA 5/12/1842).

- ***Rebecca* – King Island**

The *Bandicoot* was proceeding to the Straits to visit the wreck of *Rebecca*. The Bench at Melbourne determined that the former crew must render as much assistance as possible before they can recover wages (GA 2/11/1843:2). The wreck lies at King Island (GA 20/11/1843:3).

- ***Thalia* – Indented Head**

Ashore at Indented Head, but was gone when the Customs boat went to render assistance, probably blown off on Tuesday evening, in which case her hull may be found on the eastern shore. It is supposed that she must have originally drifted from her anchors, while the crew were on shore (GA 1/5/1846, 2/5/1846:2).

- ***Domain* – Wilson's Promontory**

Wrecked off Wilson's Promontory (Gippsland), only one person makes it ashore. Vessel capsized and buried in surf. The wreck lies about 4 miles south of Shoal Lagoon. Sole survivor picked up by 14 year old boy, Daniel Anthony, who lived on shellfish and now suspected of being mad from it (GA 6/5/1846:2). Rescued by cutter *Vanguard*, after her crew saw boy on beach waving a flag midway between the Prom and Cape Liptrap. Boy washed ashore on hatch (GA 9/5/1846).

- ***Sophia* – Pt Nepean**

Sank in deep water alongside the reefs off Pt Nepean, and thought it would break up without any hope of recovery. Wreck sold for £5, but was discovered to have drifted inside heads and forced by tide well up on Pt Nepean Beach. Two lighters now alongside trying to raise her. Mr Raleigh, who had purchased the *Thetis*, will make nothing to compared to the salvage of this wreck (GA 7/6/1848:2).

- ***Albeona* – Tasmania**

(GA 11/7/1848:2).

- ***Princess Royal* – Pt Lonsdale?**

Total wreck on reef off the outer Head. The cause blamed by the Captain on the lighthouse being on the inner instead of outer head (GA 1/3/1849:2).

- ***The William Hyde – West Channel***

Grounded in the West Channel at high tide in a gale, whilst under command of the pilot. The vessel would need to be lightened to get her off. It was later got off (GA 24/7/1849:2).

- ***The Lady Mary Pelham – Port Fairy***

Brig wrecked at Port Fairy (GA 8/9/1849:1).

- ***Tasman – Corio Bay***

There was no pilot station at Geelong in 1849, which caused much concern for vessels departing there, as Pilots had to be notified in advance to come from Williamstown. This was compounded by a direct communications route to Melbourne, resulting in long delays before the message was even delivered. Several vessels had been kept waiting up to 10 days, and one vessel, the *Tasman*, left in Pt Henry in frustration and was subsequently grounded (GA 14/4/1849:2).

- ***Victory – Lonsdale Bight***

The wreck lies on a bank of rocky ground half way between Shortland's Bluff and Pt Lonsdale. The passengers were got off by the Government Schooner *Apollo*, and the vessel eventually was refloated 3 days later. The incident occurred mainly because pilots did not service vessels until after they were inside the Rip, and almost on top of the reef described (Intelligencer 31/8/1850:902, Ballieu Collection #51, QHM). The steamers *Vesta* and *Aphrasia* aided in towing the vessel off the reef, and two of Captain Coles lighters aided in transferring goods that would otherwise have been thrown overboard. Even then 50 tons of bale goods had to be discarded over the side to lighten her enough to get off the reef (MMH 19/8/1850:2). The assisting parties filed salvage claims for assistance rendered, and it was indicated that iron pots were thrown out of the way (probably overboard) to get to the more valuable cargo (MMH 28-29/8/1850:2, 12/9/1850:2). The barque was from Glasgow. The salvors making a case were Capt Bunbury (R.N. Harbour Master, and master of the government schooner *Apollo*) and the *Apollo* crew, E. Toby (master of *Aphrasia*, and also on behalf of his crew), J. Raleigh (on behalf of the owners of the *Aphrasia*), L. Moodie (Sub-collector of Customs at Geelong), C. Friend (Landing Waiter of Customs at Geelong), G. Cole had withdrawn his salvage claim after

- ***James T Foord – Symonds Channel***

This London immigrant vessel (300 emigrants) was aground in the Symond's Channel on a sand bank after having entered the heads without a pilot the previous night. The Harbour Masters vessel, The *Apollo*, was headed to the scene to render assistance Attempts were being made to charter the steamer *Diamond* to free her (GA 1/5/1851). The vessel still remained stuck 2 days later, and her cargo would need to be removed before she could be got off, and the authorities appeared to be in no hurry to remove the passengers (GA 2/5/1851). Eventually, the *Maitland* was sent to evacuate the passengers and cargo, but returned only with the single women and married couples, as the lighter could not get close enough to the vessel due to spring tides (GA 3/5/1851:2).

- ***Lancastrian – South Channel***

This vessel from London was aground near the buoy in the eastern channel. Attempts were being made to charter the steamer *Diamond* to free her (GA 1/5/1851).

- ***Triad – Hobson's Bay or Shortland's Bluff***

This schooner grounded on weighing anchor after she drifted ashore on the rocks near the lighthouse. It was implied that Capt Bunbury of the Government Schooner was a wrecker, when he and Mr Lovell of the Water Police (in a whaleboat), went to render assistance. It was expected that she would be off again at high water (GA 23/5/1851:2). Note this could be at Hobsons Bay.

- **Wreck near Cape Otway – *The Marie* – Cape Otway**

The lighthouse keeper at Cape Otway informed that a schooner had gone ashore near Cape Otway, one half of the vessel is Apollo Bay and the other about 8 miles from the lighthouse. She is copper fastened, and from her timber English built. Whaleboat found but no name seen or cargo found (GA 8/10/1851:2). The wreck was later identified as the *Marie*, based on the Hamburg flag and other articles found in the area. Six bodies were washed ashore (GA 11/10/1851:2).

- ***Maitland* - unspecified**

Captain Cole has raised the vessel to water level, but is having problems in further salvaging her as there is no diving bell in the port (MMH 28/2/1852:2). The vessel was eventually completely raised after a diver went down and plugged all the stopcocks, which had mysteriously been left open. 12 pumps worked to keep her dry and she was to be taken to the slips where her engines and boilers were to be replaced (MMH 9/3/1852:2).

- ***Thames* - unspecified**

The steamer was a total wreck (MMH 9/3/1852:2).

- ***Isabella Watson* – Pt Nepean**

Went ashore on Pt Nepean after her rudder became unshipped after striking a submerged rock. (Full account of wreck). Capt Addis and Mr Moody immediately chartered the steamer *Aphrasia* to proceed to the wreck (possible salvage attempt??) . After some of the passengers drowned, the others were taken off, along with some of their luggage, and landed at Pt Nepean and Shortland's Bluff. The captain and crew, and customs and boat crews remained at the wreck to save as much as possible (GA 24/3/1852).

- ***Union* – Swan Island NE Tasmania**

The schooner *Union* bound from Geelong to Hobart was wrecked on a reef about a mile and a half north west of Swan Island on 3/4/1852. She became a total wreck in ten minutes, although all her crew were safely ferried ashore by Mr Johnson and his two assistants (from the lightship?) and others from the *Victoria Packet* who carried a boat 1.5 miles overland to launch at the end of Swan Island. (MMH 6/4/1852: 2).

- ***Lady Peel* – Shortland's Bluff**

Barque with coal from Newcastle was grounded ashore between Shortland's Bluff and Swan Pt (GA 7/6/1852:2), but had been got off (MMH 8/6/1852:2) and docked at Melbourne by 10 June (GA 10/6/1852).

- ***Xylon* – Mud Islands**

The *Xylon* from Newcastle was at the heads and reported to have been ashore at the Mud Islands (MMH 8/6/1852: 2).

- ***Abberton* – West Channel**

Barque bound from London from Melbourne was ashore on the east coast of the West Channel, between the Red Beacon and Prince Georges Bank, she has since got off (GA 4/8/1852:2). However, she was reported still aground on 11/8/1852 (MMH). Pilot Toby was dismissed from the service for neglect of duty while in charge of her (MMH 13/8/1852:2).

- ***Faug a Ballah* – West Channel**

The vessel went ashore on the 7th, near the wreck of the *Clarence* in the Western Channel, with the ensign flying upside down, and apparently making a great deal of water. No less than 5 vessels are ashore inside the heads (includes *Duke of Cornwall*, *Abberton*, *John Souchay*, and *Gazelle*) and that is was some time since so many vessels had been ashore at one time (MMH

9/8/1852:2). The vessel parted her anchors on 6/8, and is now full of water and a total wreck (MMH 11/8/1852: 2).

- ***Duke of Cornwall, Abberton, John Souchay, and Gazelle – Inside The Heads***

These vessels were reported ashore inside the Heads, and that is was some time since so many vessels had been ashore at one time (MMH 9/8/1852:2).

- ***Henry and Edward – Gellibrand Pt***

When coming in on the 12th, the vessel went on shore inside of the black buoy off Gellibrand Pt on the rocks. The captain was drunk, and the mate flew the ensign upside down as a signal of distress (MMH 13/8/1852:2).

- ***Australasian Packet – Port Albert – not sure if sunk***

The passenger of this vessel (which was bound to Adelaide) returned to Melbourne, and informed that there was no doubt she will be condemned at Port Albert as she is completely water logged (MMH 13/8/1852:2).

- ***Considine (misspelt - actually the Conside) and Portland – Lonsdale Reef***

Iron Steamer ashore at Pt Lonsdale Reef on Tues night and was total wreck. 180 passengers. Guns repeatedly fired during the night. Boat lowered but upset and drowned 14 people. Schooner also observed on reef as a total wreck. Geelong Harbour Master, Capt Friend proceeded to wreck (GA 16/9/1852:2). The schooner was later identified as the *Portland*, from (reg. Hobart, sail from Sydney). The *Considine* was wrecked after she followed the lights of the wrecked schooner ashore, and was travelling full steam ahead and her bow was hanging over deep water on the lee of the reef (GA 17/9/1852:2).

- ***Cossipore – Prince George Shoal***

Vessel went ashore on the 8th, on Prince George Shoal. About 100 tons of water had been started, but without lightening the vessel, to try to refloat her. She was at the time under the charge of Pilot Steele (MMH 9/12/1852:4). The vessel was still aground, but in a safe position, with the Shamrock schooner engaged in lightening her so she might be floated off. The mishap was caused by the pilot mistaking a small boat for the buoy, who perceived his mistake before she touched, and put about, but too late to avoid the shoal. The vessel had left Geelong on the 3rd in ballast for Calcutta. It was hoped that she could be floated off and re-ballasted that night (MMH 10/12/1852:4).

- ***St George – Swan Island***

The ship from Plymouth with 240 immigrants struck rocks on Pt Nepean, but was carried clear by currents. When the pilot was taken on board inside Pt Lonsdale, she was leaking so badly that he decided to beach her in Swan Bay. The captain proceeded overland to Geelong and via steamer *Victoria* to Melbourne to procure the assistance of the river steamers to disembark the passengers. The ship is in a perfectly safe position, beached in Swan Bay, and the Captain is confident that he can refloat her after part of her cargo is discharged. The whole of the cargo will be damaged as far as the water has penetrated (Argus 31/12/1852:4). The vessel had grounded on the 28th, but the captain deemed it advisable to run ashore in Swan Bay. The government schooner *Boomerang* was despatched to lend assistance. The ship was from Plymouth with 240 immigrants and an assorted cargo. The ship was holed after she ran onto rocks and was swept off by the current (MMH 31/12/1852:6). The wreck was purchased by Capt Cole for £500, who raised it and towed it to Hobsons Bay, where she was expected to yield a considerable profit as she was built of a large quantity of iron, and her cargo was still included in the hull (MMH 14/2/1853:4)

- **Disasters at Sea**

Six wrecks in six weeks. Short editorial on circumstances of : Undecipherable name (outward bound vessel – no name - captain asleep & species lost) ; *Frisk* (suspicions of crew killing Captain outside heads); *Sea* (drunk captain); *Rebecca*; *Monumental City* (hugging coast too closely in good weather) (Argus 1/7/1853).

- **Lillias- Warrnambool**

Schooner wrecked off the Hopkins at Warrnambool (Belfast Gazette 8/1/1853, In MMH 12/1/1853:4). The wreck was being broken up as she was too damaged to refloat (Belfast Gazette 22/1/1853, cited in MMH 26/1/1853:4).

- **Mary and Ellen – Port Albert**

Schooner was reported ashore at Port Albert and likely to become a total wreck (MMH 20/6/1853:4). The vessel (from Sydney) struck the bar on the 9th, and after throwing most of her cargo overboard, she floated off on the 11th, but was found to be leaking. The pilot boat rendered assistance, and on returning the Captain to the vessel capsized killing all on board (MMH 29/6/1853:6).

- **Julia – near Heads**

The Julia was involved in a collision at the Heads, doing considerable damage, and was burnt (Argus 12/9/1853:4)

- **Anthracite – Lighthouse Pt Williamstown**

The vessel ran aground, even though the pilot was on lookout in the forecandle. All efforts to refloat her with an aft hauser were futile. She is likely to have to be lightened before she can float, but is currently lacking the tidal depth (Argus 15/9/1853:4). Efforts to slue her around using canvas had still failed to get her off (Argus 17/9/1853:4).

- **Winchester – Popes Eye Bank**

Barque from Newcastle anchored inside heads, as she was prevented from proceeding to sea by a strong SW wind. The tide was ebbing rapidly, so that she lay with her head to NE, and a fire broke out in the lazarette. The crew were rescued by the pilot. The wind fanned the flames from stem to stern. After burning for 2 hours the powder magazine exploded, and half an hour afterwards was burnt to within a few feet of the waterline. She was lying between the two Popes Eye buoys, the lighthouse bearing N by W. She was 393 tons (GA 18/4/1853:2).

- **Sacramento – Heads**

By 1853, the Melbourne Harbour Master, Capt Ferguson, had arrived at Pt Henry to begin surveying the bar, but was diverted to the *Sacramento* shipwreck (GA 29/4/1853:2). The vessel was totally broken up by the beginning of May, and her deck timbers lie about a hundred yards from the skeleton of the hull, which is broken in two, and not two bullock loads of timber remain. She carried only 30 tons of cargo, mainly spirits and ale. The beach between Pt Lonsdale and the Bluff is strewn with fragments of the wreck. The conduct of the Mr and Mrs Potter at the Flagstaff, and Mr Foy (Superintendent of the Lighthouse) displayed great promptitude in sending a dray to convey the emigrants from the wreck to the heads, where Mrs Dod (at Government house) hospitably cared for them on this and on other occasions (GA 2/5/1853:2)

Although no lives were lost at the wreck, the loss of the cargo and luggage must be felt by those to who it belonged. When the immigration agents arrived from Geelong, the scene was heart rendering, as many people as possible had been fed and sheltered by the pilots, but but there was neither food nor accommodation for 300 people. Many sufferers were scattered along the beach, wringing their hands in despair... and relatives had lost each other in the confusion. The

arrival of the Government agents with provisions and other comforts was a most acceptable relief, and steps were taken to find out the scattered and lost...On arrival of the *Aphrasia* from Melbourne, they safely embarked and were conveyed to Melbourne (GA 3/5/1853:2). The mate was later accused of negligence after twice leaving his post, and was later convicted of this charge (GA 5/5/1853, 21/5/1853).

- ***Marmion* – The Heads**

The brig from Liverpool while entering the Heads kept too far to the east, and was seen to let go of her anchor when nearing Pt Nepean to prevent drifting ashore, but did not hold. The vessel swing broadside on to the reef, with the waves breaking over her. The wreck as reported to the pilot and government vessels, via the flagstaff. Only seven of the crew were saved, as the brig went to pieces soon after striking. Cargo of the wreck is floating about the entrance to the harbour (GA 30/5/1853:2).

- ***New Zealander* - Portland**

Portland burnt at mooring on 16/12, - no passengers on board (GA 23/12/1853:4).

- ***Lady Bird***

The vessel is ashore opposite the Port Masters residence, about a mile from the beach, near the spot where the *Lady Bird* got ashore last year, but the weather being so fine it is hoped she will escape damage (GA 27/1/1854:2).

- ***Marco Polo* – Queenscliff Anchorage/ Swan Bay?**

The vessel is ashore opposite the Port Masters residence, about a mile from the beach, near the spot where the *Lady Bird* got ashore last year, but the weather being so fine it is hoped she will escape damage (GA 27/1/1854:2).

- ***Nestor* - Portland**

The vessel had slipped her chains and went ashore in an effort to save her after the hull was discovered to be leaking (GA 3/11/1854:4).

- ***Sylvia* – Drapers Reef**

The schooner from Sydney bound for Geelong with a cargo of sugar, treacle, tobacco and flour, went aground on the reef under the Lower Lighthouse (Drapers Reef). The master attributed the grounding to the tide, but it was advocated that this was another example (amongst many) of vessels trying to evade pilotage fees from the vessel outside the Heads. It was suggested that the master was “penny wise, pound foolish”. At daylight, every assistance was rendered by the pilots and crew, and had been towed off by 5pm by the steam tug *Lioness* (GA 8/9/1855:2).

- ***Flying Arrow* – found abandoned off King Island**

Ship found abandoned off King’s Island with decks completely swept and no crew aboard. Towed back to Hobsons Bay by *Marion*, while the *Fantome* searched the area for the crew (GA 18/11/1859:2).

- ***Gil Blas* - Heads**

This vessel from Auckland shipped a sea whilst entering the heads, resulting in the loss of life of 4 people (GA 7/5/1859: 2).

- ***Gem* – West Channel**

The schooner from Newcastle bound for Melbourne with coal was ashore on the east bank in the West Channel. The tug *Sophia* was rendering assistance (GA 2/5/1855:2).

- ***Notion* – West Channel**

The schooner *Notion* was bound to Newcastle from Hobson Bay in the winter of 1859 via the West Channel when she got ashore in the vicinity of No. 6 buoy. When the crew went out in the only boat with an anchor to haul her off, the boat capsized drowning most of the boat's crew (QS 26/11/1892).

- ***Simoda* – West Channel**

The outward bound ship grounded in the north east bank of the West Channel on 25th May, where she remained hard and fast in a most dangerous position. While the wind blew from the north, the whole pitch of Hobsons Bay set on the sands. Two kedge anchors (as the ships boat was not robust enough to carry the bower) were set to try to haul her off, but proved too light and were hauled back. The customs officer returned from the stranded vessel to telegraph the Chief Harbour Master in getting the ship off as she was in great danger. The vessel bumped hard all through the night (GA 26/5/1862:2). The vessel was eventually refloated on 27 May (GA 28/5/1862:2).

- ***Success* – Shortland Bluff**

During the late SE gale the brig from Newcastle with coal ran ashore between the customs quarters and the bathing houses. The customs boat went to the ship at daylight, but could not render assistance, so returned to take her provisions and telegraph Melbourne for steamer. The captain was allowed by port regulation to throw the coals overboard, and has offered them to anyone who will take them away, though few takers offered due the seas state, though the ship is close to the beach (GA 20/4/1862:2). It was refloated on 20th April (GA 21/4/1863:2)

- ***Tybee* – Swan Spit**

The barque arrived from Newcastle on the 17th April, but weighed anchor on 18th and went aground on the Swan Spit (GA 20/4/1863:2), where she remained until being floated off on the 19th.

- ***Colchester* – 14ft Sand**

Brig aground on the 14 ft Sand, but was got off (GA 20/4/1863:2).

- ***Apollo* – Gippsland Lakes Entrance**

(GA 14/6/1864).

- ***Vesta, Express and Victoria* – Hobsons Bay**

Collision between vessels in Hobsons Bay (GA 22/6/1864:2)

- ***Ant* – Breamlea**

(GA 14/6/1866:2). The discharge of the cargo from the wreck was intermittent, according to the state of the weather. If the weather intervenes, the hull, machinery and some portion of the cargo will be saved. "The wreckers have made sad havoc with all available materials. It is known, and those who have done the despoiling will be called upon to render an account of their ill doing" (GA 28/6/1866:2).

- ***Barwon* – Lonsdale Bight**

Steamer from Newcastle ran ashore in Lonsdale Bay at 4am on 24th June. She was high up on the beach, and swinging with her port bilge amidships on a ledge of rocks or bank of sand. It was low water when she struck. Her position, 100 yards westwards of the lower lighthouse. She can not be got off unless lighted, and extraordinary means are resorted to immediately. The tugs *Resolute* and *Sophia* are down trying to tug her off (GA 26/6/1866:2). The water tanks from the vessel had been salvaged by 27th June, and a quantity of coal was sold from the vessel to a Mr Pagan in Queenscliff. The steamer was still embedded in the sand (GA 28/6/1866:2). An enquiry was held into the grounding of the Barwon in July (GA 6/7/1866:2).

- ***Netherby – King Island***

Wreck of the *Netherby* at King Island (GA 23/7/1866:3).

- ***Jessie Black – Mud Island***

The barque was ashore at Mud Island. The lifeboat was launched and manned by the health officer and custom crew and the tide surveyor (14 crew in all). The vessel got off on her own by the time the lifeboat reached her, and it took the lifeboat crew about 6 hours to get back again as a gale was blowing (GA 18/4/1867:3).

- ***Seabird – West Channel***

The large 3 masted schooner carrying coal from Newcastle went aground near the upper lightship on 19th June. A steam tug from Melbourne and the lifeboat crew attended, but were unable to assist, after the vessel parted her anchor and went bumped very heavily on the bank with 4ft water in the hold. The vessel was considerably damaged in the heavy seas and remained aground on the 20th June (GA 24/6/1867).

- ***Sophia – ships boat – Dromana***

The ships boat from the steamer *Sophia* was scheduled to take people to the Mud islands for a boxing bout on 9th July 1867, but could not land the spectators due to a slight swell. They then proceeded to Dromana, where a skiff was launched, but overturned in the surf, drowning a number of people (GA 26/7/1867:3).

- ***Light of the Age – Pt Lonsdale***

Account of wreck (GA 17/1/1868). The vessel remained in the same position, and the steamers returned to Melbourne as they could do no good without lighters. Seven hands remain on board, along with two of the customs crew. A number of men of men to assist in the discharging of the cargo arrived from Melbourne last night, along with some police from Geelong. The latter are quartered in a house close to the beach (GA 18/1/1868:3). Wreckage from the *Light of the Age* was strewn for miles along the beach when she broke up this morning. The goods might have been salvaged by lighters, but the steamers themselves were useless (GA 20/1/1868:3).

- ***Yarrow –Pt Lonsdale***

The coal brig from Newcastle wrecked on 23rd August with 7 crew at 4am. The Queenscliff lifeboat attended, as did the steamer *Mystery*. The crew and passengers were taken off on board the lifeboat, and were towed by the *Mystery* to Queenscliff. The brig is a total wreck, but no lives were lost. The vessel was beginning to break up by 3pm, and by 5pm the vessel had fallen over and the masts were gone (GA 24/8/1870:2).

- ***Hector - Swan Spit***

The wreck has been abandoned by the insurance agents, which was stranded on Swan Spit. The pump engines and part of her gear have been removed and will go up for auction. Yesterdays surf increased the damage originally done to the vessel (GA 5/7/1871:3).

- ***Queen of The Thames – Unknown***

Account of the wreck (GA 8/7/1871:3).

- ***Sussex – Barwon Heads***

When the *Sussex* wrecked near Barwon Heads, police and Customs forces from both Geelong and Queenscliff were stationed near the wreck to prevent theft from it. “*In all directions 0-under bushes and beneath some canvas tents that had been erected, suspicious looking prowlers may be seen evidently anxiously awaiting a squall. To give them the opportunity of wrecking. Picnic Parties mixed with those who were bent on more earnest work*” Many men from Queenscliff had come to look for salvage, and were being ferried across the Barwon river by a

crayfisher who was kept very busy by visitors going to and fro to the wreck. Many speculators from the Melbourne Iron trade also visited the wreck with valuers prior to its sale. The vessel was speculated to have confused the lights at Pt Lonsdale, or that the Cape Schank light was not lit at the time. A survivor from the boat wreck was given clothing and food at a farm nearby (GA 4/1/1872). The day after the wreck there were 1500 people encamped on the shore nearby. At an investigation into the circumstances of the wreck, it was alleged that the remains of 3-4 fires on the shore may have been confused for the light at Queenscliff, and that the pilots blue flash lights may have been thought to be those of Cape Schank (GA 6/1/1872).

- Many reports appeared of items not only being looted from the shoreline, but visitors property also being stolen (GA 17/1/1872).
- A Mr Miller (the famous salvor) was hurt when salving the wreck of the *Sussex*. Two lighters and a steamer were involved in landing the cargo, which included iron tanks, brooms and casks of rum (GA 20/1/1872). At the enquiry, the Captain was charged with neglect (GA 23/1/1872).
- Cargo from the *Sussex* at Barwon Heads was washed up on the beach at Pt Lonsdale. The road to Heads was besieged with vehicles of every description, including many dignitaries including Geelong councillors and politicians. The cliff at the Barwon Heads were covered with the tents of customs and police officers, along with former crew from the wreck, who had been sent down to watch over the wreck. "There were a large number of carts in close proximity to the shore, and scores of land sharks waiting for something to turn up" (BS 5/1/1872).
- Account of capsized boat crew member (GA 11/1/1872).
- The Captain of the vessel saw two lights one above another suddenly appear on his port side and immediately steered towards them (GA 10/1/1872).
- Indeed, a case of boots was found at Portarlington about a fortnight after the *Sussex* wreck, but it was insinuated that they may have arrived here by other means. Scores of people made use of the half holiday and went out to see how the wreck of the *Sussex* was getting on. Divers were in the hold sending up goods as fast as possible, and these were transferred to a lighter alongside to be transported ashore to an iron tramway that had been set up over the dunes to the tents above. Tents were also established for the accommodation and refreshment of visitors. Cries of "to the wreck, Now for the wreck" were heard throughout Geelong, as the touts secured passengers for their vehicles. "Visitors (men women and children) were scattered in every direction looking for mementoes of the wreck, but finding few" The salvors of the wreck threw floatable items overboard (such as masts, yards etc) and these ended up to half a mile to the westwards of the wreck (GA 15/1/1872).
- Had the ship gone ashore another 100 yards to the west she would have struck the boiler of the *Ant*. "It was about Midday that numerous visitors commenced to arrive, and at two o'clock picnic parties could be seen scattered over sand hummocks in every direction, every sheltered spot within a radius of half a mile seemed to have occupants, and great hilarity prevailed. People had gone there for a days pleasure, and wreck or no wreck, pleasure they would have". Visitors had come from as far away as Geelong, Melbourne and the surrounding districts In at least one case, the *Sussex*, shares were offered to salvage the wreck, and this particular wreck proved very profitable as it was salvaged before it was destroyed (GA 1/2/1872:2).

- ***RMS Ceylon* – South Channel**

The Royal Mail Ship grounded in the South Channel on the 14th July whilst going out with the mails. Though two tugs and another mail ship (the *Ellora*) tried to tow her free, she was still aground (GA 15/7/1875:2). She was eventually refloated on the 15th July, with no damage sustained (GA 16/7/1875:2).

- ***Loch Levan – King Island***

The Elizabeth had just returned from the camp at the site of the wreck and had recovered 200 bales of wool before abandoning the camp (GA 15/1/1872)

- ***Holyhead – Pt Lonsdale***

- “old Salt” States that: The artist who drew the picture of the Holyhead on the Rocks at Pt Lonsdale, and which appeared in Thursday Nights Herald, must have drawn the object through a thick heavy fog (QS 15/2/1890).
- There was a large quantity of slate on both the George Roper and Holyhead, which prevented recovery of the cargo of railway iron below it (QS 15/2/1890).
- the Holyhead purchased by Captain Currie for £1700 (QS 29/3/1890)

- ***Joseph H. Scammell***

In 1891, Lloyd Hooper, Grocers of Geelong, advertised kerosene, cases of seafood and axe handles for sale from the *Joseph H. Scammell* shipwreck (QS 4/7/1891).

- ***RMS Australia – Pt Nepean***

Notice was given that the *RMS Australia* was to be removed as it presented a danger, especially to small fishing craft (QS 11/2/1911).

- ***Campbell – Corsair Rock***

The wreck Bell was rung when the Whaling Steamer Campbell was wrecked on Corsair Reef (QS 20/6/1914).

- ***Hovding - Heads***

The Norwegian vessel *Hovding* broke her mast and was dragging her anchors towards shore outside the heads when the lifeboat crew was summoned by the wreck bell. The tug *Nyora* eventually rescued the vessels when she was towed to Melbourne (QS 18/7/1914).

- ***Blue Anchor liner***

The night the *Blue Anchor* liner was wrecked on the coast it was the dirtiest night out. There was 4 hours of waiting for the pilot and the terrible time they had (the lifeboat men) will never be forgotten (QS 26/4/1919).

- ***Cufic - Rip***

The work of channel deepening in the Rip had to date taken ten years and lowered the entrance by only 7ft. After the vessel *Cufic* struck the bottom in a large swell, it was recommended that the work proceed with great haste (QS 29/7/1911). Work proceeded slowly over the next few years, and by 1914 it was anticipated that a uniform depth of 40ft would be provided in the Heads Channel within three years (QS 28/2/1914).

Appendix F-2: Lifeboats and Lifesaving Equipment

1) Lifeboats and Lifesaving: Rescuers and Wreck Management

Landscapes

Wherever ships wrecked, lifesaving crews were sure to operate close by, and Queenscliffe was no exception. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, almost a third of British seamen would die either from accidents on board or in shipwrecks (Bathurst 2000:2). The massive loss of life associated with early UK shipwrecks led to the design of many innovative life saving devices from around 1808 onwards, including Manby's lifesaving mortar (that fired a shot weighted rope to wrecked vessels) and a lifesaving vessels with watertight compartments which were the forerunners of modern lifeboats. By 1824, the Royal Society for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck was established to facilitate organised rescue of shipwreck survivors (Bathurst 2000:2, 3).



Figure F-2.1: Health Officer's Yawl c1864 (Photo: PH42, QHM Collection).

The agglomeration of shipwrecks around Port Phillip Heads fell within the time period of the development of lifesaving services in the UK eventually led to the establishment of a lifeboat service at Queenscliff. From the 1840s onwards pilots were expected to assist all distressed vessels, which became a formal requirement from 1852 -1856, and when the *Sacramento* wrecked at Point Lonsdale in 1853, both pilot boats were used to assist, and the pilot later proceeded to an incoming vessel immediately from the wreck (Draper 1900:10).

An ordinary ship's lifeboat within floatation tanks and emptying capacity was put into service at Shortlands Bluff in 1856 as the first dedicated lifeboat, and as there was no shed or jetty, it was moored off the Customs Quarters (near the current Pilots Jetty). It was crewed by members of the Customs, Health and Pilots Boats (Fanning 1892b; McGrath nd:1; Noble, 1979:48; Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3).

Another more suitably designed lifeboat was built in 1858 at Williamstown, and was housed in a purpose built shed (constructed 1860) on the northern arm of the Queenscliff Pier, from which she was manned for 30 years (Raison 2002:26). As she was lowered from falls on the pier a buoy was supplied offshore from which to haul her off in bad weather (Loney 1989a: 4) The oared vessel was

rowed by 10 men, and had a Coxswain, Bowman and Superintendent (who was the Head Lightkeeper), and was first used to attempt (an unsuccessful rescue) of the barque *Asa Packer* in 1861. The crew of the lifeboat were mostly fishermen, but were supplemented with crews from the Health, Customs and Pilots service, were awarded £5 each in recognition of their bravery (Fanning 1892b; McGrath n.d.:1; Allom Lovell 1985:161). The boat was commissioned as the “Official Queenscliff Lifeboat” in 1865 (Noble 1979:48). After the Customs and Health Boats crews were withdrawn from Queenscliff around 1867, the fishermen formed the entire crew, with the superintendent of the Lighthouse Service in charge (GA 18/4/1867; Raison 2002:26).

The wreck of the *Gange* in 1887 again brought the need for the lifeboat into the public arena, and the necessity for a boat to be stationed at Point Lonsdale after time was lost rowing from Queenscliff to Pt Lonsdale. A new larger self-righting lifeboat was purpose built by the Customs Department the government at Williamstown (Noble, 1979: 48; Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3). The former Fisherman’s Pier Lifeboat #1 was moved to the Pt Lonsdale lifeboat shed by 1893, where it replaced a smaller vessel that had been used in that area from 1859-1890 (Noble 1979:48). However, the former Fisherman’s Pier Lifeboat #1 proved to be unsuitable as it was too heavy to remove from the water on to the pier (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3).

The new lifeboat arrived in Queenscliff in November 1890, and briefly replaced the *Queenscliff* lifeboat there (whilst it was repaired) before taking up her position at the new pier and boatshed provided for her at Point Lonsdale in 1891 to reduce travelling time to wrecks at the Point (QS 22/11/1890; Syme 2001:37). However, problems were experienced in extracting the vessel from the water, along with a lack of protection from environmental conditions when launching, and the 14 metre vessel was exchanged with the old Fisherman’s Pier boat by 1893, where it remained until it was sold in 1926 (Syme 2001:37). A new shed had been built (to hold its increased weight) on the New Pier in 1888, with alterations in 1894 (VPRS 2143: 88- 9-133, 94-5-196; Syme 2001:37).

Until 1896, the crews of the lifeboats were not provided with waterproof clothing unless they used their own, and the fishermen often left these on their moored boats. The Customs Department resisted a proposal to supply waterproofs, which were the norm in lifeboats in England, due to a policy of retrenchment (QS 6/1/1894).

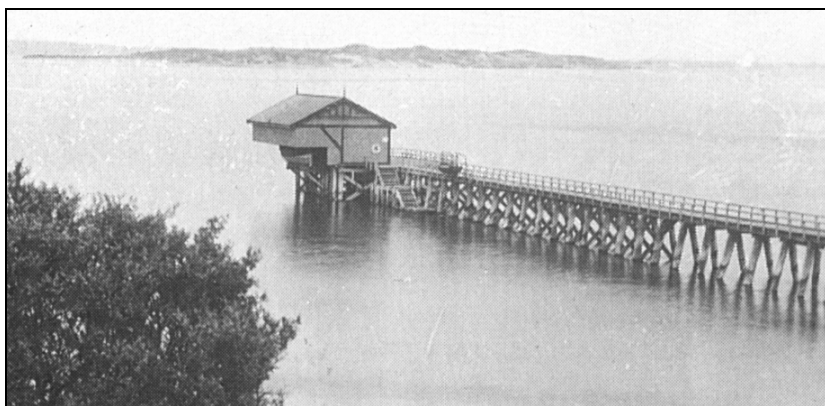


Figure F-2.2: Pt Lonsdale lifeboat shed and pier, c. 1890 (Photo: QHM Collection).

The older smaller lifeboat (*Queenscliff*) was transferred back to Pt Lonsdale, where it remained until the 1930s, and it was withdrawn from service in the 1940s. Its crew were transported from Queenscliff and although it was used for practice, it was never used in any rescue (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3; Noble 1979:48; Rasion 2002:27).

The fourth lifeboat was a Watson class motor driven boat built in Adelaide in 1926 to specification of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute of England, which had been applied for in 1919, but could not be delivered due to the war (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3; QS 26/4/1919). This vessel, the *Queenscliffe*, was fitted with buoyancy tanks, two large fuel tanks, a centre plate and was diagonally planked for improved hull rigidity. It was shifted to the New Pier after the Cut caused sand accretion around the Fishermen's Pier, and was moved to deep water in 1949 ([JB]; Raison 2002:28). It was decommissioned in 1979, and is now housed in the Queenscliff Maritime Centre (Noble 1979:49; Boyd and Roddick 1996: 3).



Figure F-2.3: Pt Lonsdale Pier and lifeboat davit (on right), c. 1940-1950 (Photo: SLV Collection).



Figure F-2.4: Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat on Pier c. 1950s (Photo: SLV Collection).



Figure F-2.5: Queenscliff and Pt Lonsdale lifeboats c. 1920 (Photo PH 496, QHM Collection).



Figure F-2.6: Lifeboat Shed, New Pier c. 1910 (Photo: PH 276, QHM Collection).

From the mid 1900s onwards, a search and rescue service was established to coordinate searches for smaller vessels such as pleasure craft. Depending on the weather, range of the search, emergency response time and the size of the crew required, either the lifeboat or other smaller launches would be used to search for distressed vessels. The lifeboat was used for large offshore search areas, at night or in very bad weather, whereas the launches *Flinders*, *Corsair*, *Ranger*, *Hydra*, *Bass*, *Colins* or *Swan* were employed where speed was required and dependent on the search area range. All these vessels were moored in Queenscliff Creek. The pilot vessel *Hawk* was also used on occasions (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 4). The search and rescue service was disbanded in 1979. Launches were usually used for search and rescue, and other minor events such as towing, stranding on sandbars, small boats swept out to sea (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 12).

Lifeboat practice often was centred around the Heads at Queenscliff, Pt Lonsdale and Point Nepean, occasionally up to 3 miles out to sea, or as far as Barwon Heads or Cape Schank. However, in 1932, the lifeboat was called on to rescue crew from the *Casino*, which had gone ashore at Apollo Bay, but they were recalled before they had gotten past Barwon Heads as the journey would have taken 6 hours (Boyd and Roddick 1996:13, 14). The lifeboat also serviced inside the Bay, up the West and South Channels and around the Mud Islands (GA 18/4/1867:3).



Figure F-2.7: Lifeboat shed ramp Fishermen's Pier, c. 1930-40s (Photo: PH3188 QHM Collection).



Figure F-2.8: Lifeboat ramp, New Pier, c. 1950 (PH 4573, QHM Collection).

Location	Lifeboat and facilities	Date Start	Date Retired	Type	Comments
Queenscliff	Shortland's Bluff Lifeboat #1	1850's (early)		whaleboat /yawl	Based on land near Doctors Jetty (now Pilots Pier)
	Shortland's Bluff Ships Lifeboat #2	1856	1859?	ships lifeboat	Ordinary ships lifeboat with no flotation tanks
	Fishermen's Pier Lifeboat <i>Queenscliff</i> (moved to Pt Lonsdale 1893)	1859	1893	lifeboat	Relocated to Pt Lonsdale in 1890 to be closer to wrecks. Briefly relocated again to Queenscliff in 1891, then permanently replaced Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #3 in 1893
	Steamer Pier Lifeboat (ex Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat#3)	1890 1893	1891 1926	purpose built sail rigged lifeboat	Specifically constructed for use at purpose built Pt Lonsdale Pier. Briefly used at Queenscliff in 1890, before moved to Pt Lonsdale in 1891. Shifted to Queenscliff in 1893 after proved too heavy for purpose built Pt Lonsdale Pier. Sold as fishing boat in 1926.
	"Queenscliffe" Lifeboat	1926	1979	purpose built motorized lifeboat	Watson Class motor driven lifeboat designed in UK. Decommissioned 1979.
	High Speed Launches/ Helicopters	1979+		small motor launches	12-40ft motor launches. Moored Queenscliff Harbour. Operated by Ports and Harbours and Pilots
Pt Lonsdale	Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #1	1859	1890	lifeboat	Small vessel
	Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #2 (later Steamer Pier Lifeboat)	1891	1893	purpose built sail rigged lifeboat	Purpose built for specially constructed pier at Pt Lonsdale. Initially replaced <i>Queenscliff</i> at Queenscliff (during former's repairs), before moved to Pt Lonsdale. After proved too heavy for pier, was shifted to Steamer Pier 1893.
	Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #3 (ex Fishermen's Pier Lifeboat <i>Queenscliff</i>)	1893	1930s	lifeboat	Vessel moved here after Pt Lonsdale #2 Lifeboat proved too heavy for davits. Relocated to Queenscliff in the 1930s. Withdrawn from service mid 1940's
	Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #4	1940		davit mounted boat	Small boat mounted on pier/davits

Table F-2.1: Summary Chronology of Lifeboats Stationed at Port Phillip Heads.

2) Queenscliff Lifeboat Service: Chronological

A) Pilots Lifesaving

From the 1840s onwards pilots were expected to assist all distressed vessels, which became a formal requirement from 1852 -1856, until a ships lifeboat manned by the Health Officer's, Customs' or Pilots' Boat Crews was moored at the Customs Station was established near the current Pilots Jetty (McGrath n.d.:1; Raison 2002:26).

B) Shortlands Bluff Lifeboat #1

Lifeboats have been stationed at Shortlands Bluff since at least the early 1850s, when the Port Phillip Harbour Master instructed that the lifeboats be launched once a month and be kept ready at all times (Noble 1979: 48). Around this time the Pilots, Customs and Health boats were also used for lifesaving at times of shipwreck (McGrath n.d.:1). When the *Sacramento* wrecked at Point Lonsdale in 1853, both pilot boats were used to assist, and the pilot later proceeded to an incoming vessel immediately after the wreck (Draper 1900:10).

C) Shortlands Bluff Lifeboat #2 – Ships Lifeboat

An ordinary ship's lifeboat within floatation tanks and emptying capacity was put into service at Shortlands Bluff in 1856 as the first dedicated lifeboat, and as there was no shed or jetty, it was moored off the Customs Quarters. It was crewed by members of the Customs, Health and Pilots Boats, and the first superintendent was James Burgess (Fanning 1892b; McGrath n.d.:1; Noble 1979:48; Boyd 1996:3).

D) Fisherman's Pier Lifeboat #1 (Queenscliff)/ Point Lonsdale Lifeboat #3

Another more suitably designed lifeboat was built in 1858 at Williamstown, and was housed in a shed on the Queenscliff Pier (built 1860), from which she was manned for 30 years, and as she was lowered from falls on the pier a buoy was supplied offshore from which to haul her off in bad weather (Loney 1989a: 4). The oared vessel was rowed by 10 men, and had a Coxswain, Bowman and Superintendent (who was the Head Lightkeeper), and was first used to attempt (an unsuccessful rescue) of the barque *Asa Packer* in 1861. The crew of the Lifeboat, who were mostly fishermen, but were supplemented with crews from the Health, Customs and Pilots service were awarded £5 each in recognition of their bravery (Fanning 1892b; McGrath n.d.:1; Allom Lovell 1985:161). Fishermen formed most of the crew after the Customs and Health Boats crews were withdrawn from Queenscliff. A lifeboat shed was built on the northern arm of the jetty in 1860 (Raison 2002:26).

The lifeboat crew were next called in the 1863 gales that lasted 3 days, when the schooner *Northern Light*, Pilot cutter *Corsair* and Government Steamer *Victoria* were driven ashore after their anchors parted. The *Northern Light* was washed ashore at Swan Island, where the lifeboat rescued her crew. A Telegram was also received from Cape Schank detailing that the French ship *Iquique* was ashore there. The lifeboat was involved in 13 rescues from 1861 of the following vessels:

- *Light of the Age*
- *Conway Castle*
- *Seabird*
- *Essie Black Pride* (brig)
- *Suxxes* (barque at Point Nepean)
- *Yarrow* (brig)

- *Don* (Schooner)
- *George Thompson* and *Veritas* (ships)
- *George Roper*
- *Black Buoy*
- *Holyhead*
- The *Yarrow* crew were rescued from Point Lonsdale reef in the early 1870s, where the vessel had sprung a leak and almost immediately sank. The crew were rescued from the rigging of the foreyard minutes before the mast collapsed and the wreck pounded to pieces (Fanning 1892b).

The boat was commissioned as the “Official Queenscliff Lifeboat” in 1865. The boat was housed in a special shed built on the Queenscliff Steamer (New) Pier in 1888-89 (VPRS 2143: 89-0-133), but was moved to Pt Lonsdale lifeboat shed sometime before 1893 where a pier, life boat shed and rocket shed had been built in 1890-91 to reduce travelling time to wrecks at The Heads. However, it proved to be unsuitable as it was too heavy to remove from the water to the pier. The vessel remained at this location until the 1930s, until it was withdrawn from service in the 1940s. Its crew were transported from Queenscliff and although it was used for practice, it was never used in any rescue (Noble 1979:48; Boyd 1996:3; Rasion 2002:27).

E) Queenscliff Steamer Pier Lifeboat / Point Lonsdale Lifeboat #2

The wreck of the *Gange* in 1887 brought need for the lifeboat into the public arena, and the necessity of a boat stationed at Point Lonsdale became apparent. A self -righting lifeboat was purpose built by the government at Williamstown, along with a special pier and boathouse, but similar problems were experienced in extracting the vessel from the water. The 14 metre vessel was exchanged with the old *Queenscliff* boat sometime before 1893, where it remained on the Steamer Pier until it was sold in 1926. The boat had had two masts and three sails, a crew of nineteen and could carry two and a half tons of seawater ballast when required (Noble 1979: 48; Boyd 1996: 3). The boat was manned by: “a crew of hardy and experienced fishermen who know the eddies, currents and dangers of The Rip as well as they know Hesse St” (Fanning 1892b).

F) Queenscliffe Lifeboat (Fisherman’s Pier/ New Pier)

The fourth lifeboat was a Watson class motor driven boat built in Adelaide in 1926 to specification of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute of England, which had been applied for in 1919, but could not be delivered due to the war (Boyd and Roddick 1996:3; QS 26/4/1919). This vessel, the *Queenscliffe*, was fitted with buoyancy tanks, two large fuel tanks, a centre plate and was diagonally planked for improved hull rigidity. It was shifted to the New Pier after the Cut caused sand accretion around the Fishermans Pier, and was moved to deep water in 1949 ([JB]; Raison 2002:28). It was decommissioned in 1979, and is now housed in the Queenscliff Maritime Centre (Noble 1979:49; Boyd and Roddick 1996:3).

G) Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat #1

Noble (1979:48) reported that a smaller vessel was also used at Pt Lonsdale around 1859-1890, but this was probably a small ships boat or yawl, rather than a purpose built lifeboat. A Pier was built at Pt Lonsdale in 1890 (VPRS 2143).



Figure F-2.9: Pt Lonsdale Lifeboat Pier, 2003.

3) Hierarchy of the Service

The Lighthouse Keeper was officially appointed by the state government as the Superintendent of the Lifeboat, and was responsible for the all administration, reporting, and safety of the vessel and crew, with the Coxswain in charge when at sea. The lifeboat could not be launched without the Superintendent and Coxswain present, and the crew ranged in number from eight to eighteen, dependent on who was available at the time. Permission to launch the lifeboat was required from the harbour master, and this often delayed the launch, sometimes by hours, during which lives were periodically lost (Boyd and Roddick 1996:3, 6).

The Signal Station on Shortlands Bluff appears to have been the watchdog for the Rip area around the 1870s, as the Queenscliff postmaster (Boyd and Roddick, 1996: 12) or the signal station staff were often the first to report a wrecking incident via an alarm bell that had been installed in the signal station in 1877 (Dod 1931:13, 21, 39).

By 1893, there were two lifeboat crews for the one lifeboat. By 1895, a balloting system had been introduced to allocate the coxswains position, which was for a term of two years, and five coxswains had been elected (Boyd and Roddick 1996:11).

4) Lifeboat and Rocket Practice

Lifeboat practice was usually undertaken on the first day of the month, and consisted of either rocket or lifeboat drills that lasted half a day. In the early days lifeboat practice took place outside the heads, with later exercises held at St Leonards, Sorrento or outside the Rip, with rocket practice at Point Lonsdale or Queenscliff (Boyd and Roddick 1996:3-4; Kerr 1985:73). During this time, the crews would inspect and maintain the contents of the lifeboats, and the Rocket Sheds at Pt Nepean and Pt Lonsdale, and conduct rocket firing practice. The shed at Pt Nepean had been built by 1877 (VPRS 2143).

After the wreck of the *Craigburn*, the lifeboat crews (of which there were two – No.s 1 and 2), petitioned the government for an increase in their pay rate for lifeboat drills (six a year) from 12s to 20s for each drill, after the adequacy of remuneration was questioned during the wreck inquiry. The Secretary of the Customs Dept stated that the men were “liberally rewarded, not only by the government but also by the insurance companies and others concerned”. He further stated that increasing their pay would affect the service statewide, and that if they proceeded with their demands, then others would be employed in their place (QS 4/7/1891).

Lifesaving gear was stored in a shed at Point Lonsdale and at the boathouse and rocket shed at Queenscliff in 1893 (Boyd and Roddick 1996:11; Raison 2002:27).

5) Extent of Lifeboat Range

Lifeboat practice often was centred around the Heads at Queenscliff, Pt Lonsdale and Point Nepean, and sometimes up to 3 miles out to sea, or as far as Barwon Heads. However, in 1932, the lifeboat was called on to rescue crew from the *Casino*, which had gone ashore at Apollo Bay, but they were recalled before they had gotten past Barwon Heads – the journey would have taken 6 hours (Boyd and Roddick 1996: 13-4).

The barque *Jessie Black* was ashore at Mud Island. The lifeboat was launched and manned by the health officer and custom crew and the tide surveyor (14 crew in all). The vessel got off on her own by the time the lifeboat reached her, and it took the lifeboat crew about 6 hours to get back again as a gale was blowing (GA 18/4/1867:3).

Appendix F-3: Smuggling, Looting, and the Establishment of Customs Services in Victoria

This appendix provides a brief overview of the Customs Service in Victoria, especially in regards to officers based at Queenscliff. This summary has been extracted predominantly from Day (1992), which provides a succinct outline of these services in Australia, and it is clear that further consideration of this service is warranted, but was not attempted during this study.

An examination of shipwreck looting would be inadequate without also examining smuggling, as these practices were often inextricably linked. In 1836, the NSW government was finally forced to recognise the settlement of Melbourne after private commercial concerns had established a colony there to graze cattle, and the Crown assumed all legal rights for land ownership. When the Colonial Government recognised that smuggling of stock, spirits and tobacco into the new colony was endemic from Van Diemen's Land, a contingent of troops, police and two customs officers were sent to establish order. The Colony's original customs facility was stationed at a tent at Sandridge in that year and later a permanent store was built there in preference to Geelong (Lewis 1983:16; Hoddle 1842 plan; Day 1992:260-4). After many delays, Geelong was made an open port, which meant that all incoming goods were no longer required to clear Customs in Melbourne, a consideration that may have previously led to high prices and smuggling practices (Day 1992:264-8).

Smuggling activities were reported early in Port Phillip Bay when the first offence was charged in relation to a barrel of whisky landed without customs clearance in 1836. When the men were gaoled for failure to pay the imposed fine, there was such a public outcry that the men were released after only two months. This reflected badly on the chief customs controller, who later tended to be more lenient in charging customs violators who were unlikely to be able to pay the fine, and he tended afterwards to confiscate the goods only (Day 1992:269). This could have had great implications in the Queenscliff study area, where many customs offences were perpetrated by fishermen whose financial circumstances meant they were incapable of paying any fines.

Corruption within the government services was also recognised at many levels, when a police constable was caught with illicit gin when coming ashore on a waterman's boat at Williamstown. Although the Landing Waiter proceeded with the prosecution, political pressure was brought to bear and the case was dropped. Smuggled goods provided large economic resources for the local economies, and extensive smuggling operations were active at unguarded smaller ports where customs facilities were not in place. One case was recorded in Port Fairy (a major fishing port) where a substantial quantity of spirits and tobacco bound for the grazing and whaling community were seized in 1841. In 1842 it was reported that spirits and tobacco exported from Melbourne and Hobart bond stores for foreign ports was being landed at Port Albert and redistributed via an extensive smuggling system. Although Customs officials were encouraged to perform their duties efficiently through the allocation of a percentage of the fines imposed or the value of the contraband when sold (Day 1992:269-70), this may have encouraged complacency especially where the perpetrators were too poor to pay the fine. When consideration is given to the fact that customs officials had to live within the community they policed, these officers may have been more lenient in their attitude towards more minor crimes.

The British Colonial Government's enforcement of the *Navigation Act* from 1815-1849, which effectively placed a trade embargo on foreign non-British shipping visiting Australia (Bach 1982:48, 55, 58) probably provided further impetus for the smuggling trade, as it limited the importation of goods into the colony, and hence led to exorbitant prices for luxury goods such as alcohol. Smuggling provided an alternative and/or supplementary income for many in the early days of the colony, and was a constant problem for authorities. The shores of Port Phillip Bay from Geelong to The Heads and along the eastern shores from Pt Nepean to Brighton were

notorious haunts of bushrangers and deserting seamen, who often preyed upon shipwrecked vessels, and were involved in smuggling and illicit sly grog distilling and distribution (Day 1992:292).

The new found wealth of the 1850s gold rush period attracted many smugglers to the area, and also led to changes in types of smuggled goods, which included more luxurious goods such as French champagne and obscene literature. Smugglers of illicitly imported goods were known to have buried 41 bottles of contraband whisky in the foothills near the quarantine station in November 1854. Burying booty also was reported to have occurred at St Kilda where four men were caught in 1852 interring barrels of brandy and gunpowder (Day 1992:284-5). The illicit alcohol trade was a huge business during the gold rush era, and special customs officers were assigned to police these offences. Fishermen were also known to enter the Quarantine Station grounds to supply illegal alcohol and other goods to internees (NHS 1966). During a special Customs enforcement voyage to the Mornington Peninsula, numerous grog tents, stills and drunken men were found, leading the officers to conclude that many people in the area were employed in the sly grog and smuggling trade, especially given the absence of an adequate police force in the area (Day 1992:293).

In 1852, all customs duties, taxes and charges were abolished except on spirits, wine, tobacco, tea and coffee, and wharfage and other fees (except for pilotage duties) were also abolished (Day, 1992:283). This encouraged many foreign (predominantly French) vessels to begin importation of luxury goods to meet the demand of the newly wealthy gold miners and pastoralists. Goods from wrecks of these vessels presented attractive targets for looting, particularly in frontier communities such as Queenscliff where even basic household goods were often scarce. As the cargo of these foreign shipwrecks had not cleared customs, many of those involved in opportunistic plundering from shipwrecks were regarded in the strictest terms of the law as smugglers.

The looting of vessels on the foreshore presented a twofold loss to the fledgling colony. Not only were owners deprived of their cargoes which were badly needed by the settlement, but the government was denied essential income generated through importation and customs duties on the international cargoes. The pillaging led to the establishment of a Customs Service to police not only looting, but also to try to control smuggling of illicit goods into the colony. A token customs force was stationed at Shortland's Bluff in 1853, but given the large expanse of coastline and hundreds of vessels entering The Heads each year, the complement of a junior Customs officer and boat crew proved ineffectual. A request was made in 1854 for an experienced customs officer and two policemen be stationed at Shortland's Bluff (Day 1992:292).

In 1852 the Customs Service began an active enforcement campaign of quarantine and passenger regulations to ensure that overcrowded passenger vessel conditions did not threaten onboard health, or eventually lead to the introduction of epidemics into the colony. Armed Officers also enforced the exclusion of ex-convicts from the Victorian colony in the 1850s (Day 1992:285-6, 292).

The Customs boat stationed at Queenscliff was making raids in search of smuggled spirits as far as Portarlington, but raised the ire of the local population in 1863 when the raid was carried out on the Sabbath (GA 8/1/1863:2, 9/3/1863:3). By 1867, the Queenscliff Customs Station was removed, despite the continued activity of sly grog merchants (GA 24/6/1867), prompting concern that the former smuggling trade that existed there would be renewed. In past time "uncustomed brandy and Geneva were regularly planted (buried) on the beach...and now that there is a fleet of fishing boats in this sub-port, the prevention of smuggling will be almost...an impossibility" (GA 18/4/1867:3).

In later periods drug smuggling became popular, and in the 1920s local fisherman discovered a potato sack full of tins of opium (Ferrier 1989:20). Upon arrival at the pier, one of the tins was opened to reveal the contents, and many were souvenired by locals until police were contacted and called for their recall. This trade has continued until comparatively recently when one former resident reported that he had been approached to smuggle ashore goods dumped outside The Heads [name withheld] and as late as 2004, drugs were dumped offshore for collection by smugglers. The lawlessness described in this section sets the scene for subsequent shipwreck looting which was widespread in the study area.