

News release



NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

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Maritime archaeologists survey convict shipwreck “Hive” in Wreck Bay area

Maritime archaeologists from the Heritage Branch, NSW Department of Planning, are in the Jervis Bay region this week to conduct an underwater survey of the wreck of the convict transport ship *Hive*.

The maritime archaeologists are expected to remain in the Jervis Bay region from 17-19 February 2009.

The *Hive* is buried under sand in the southern waters of the appropriately named Wreck Bay. Maritime archaeologists from the Heritage Branch first located the wreck in 1994.

Deputy Director of the Department’s Heritage Branch, Tim Smith, who is also co-ordinating the dive itself, said the survey work being conducted was an important contribution to understanding the role of convict transportation to NSW.

“The *Hive* was on its second voyage to Australia in 1835 when it ran aground with 250 Irish male prisoners, military guards, ship’s crew including women and children and a cargo of coinage worth £10,000,” Mr Smith said.

“The archaeological work being conducted will involve a detailed survey of the land-based survivor’s camp and the re-evaluation of damage to the buried shipwreck hull.

“The information gained from this survey will provide us with a wonderful insight into convict travel and will help with the future management of other Maritime Heritage sites.”

When she went aground in bad weather on 10 December the gold was recovered first, then the convicts.

A crewmember, the Boatswain, tragically drowned during the transit of passengers from the foundering ship to shore however the rest of the crew and passengers all survived. A messenger was dispatched to Port Jackson, while the rest of the passengers, with the help of local Aboriginal people, established a bush camp in the adjacent sand hills of Bherwerre Beach to await rescue.

The *Hive* site is unique in NSW as the only convict ship wrecked whilst transporting convicts to Sydney.

The only two other convict transport shipwrecks in Australia are located in Tasmanian waters.

Survey work conducted this week will support a nomination of the *Hive* wreck for listing on the State Heritage Register.

The divers will also survey the wreck of a Royal Australian Navy Fairey Firefly aircraft VX 381 which was lost in Jervis Bay on 27 November 1956. One of four aircraft from 851 Squadron based at HMAS Albatross at Nowra, VX 381 collided mid-air with Firefly WD 887 during a training mission. The wreck of WD 887 has never been located.

The wreck survey will be conducted as part of the State Maritime Archaeology Program and the NSW component of the National Historic Shipwreck Program.

Media contact: Tim Smith, Deputy Director Heritage Branch and dive co-ordinator on 0411 405 092.

For more information on the Hive shipwreck event go to the NSW Maritime Heritage Online web site www.maritime.heritage.nsw.gov.au
