

**Melbourne Argus**  
**April 1 1876**

## **Mason Letter**

A local curiosity is referred to by Mr John Mason, of Belfast, in the following letter to the *Argus*:-

"Sir,-Riding along the beach from Port Fairy to Warrnambool in the summer of 1846, my attention was attracted to the hull of a vessel embedded high and dry in the Hummocks, far above the reach of any tide. It appeared to have been that of a vessel about 100 tons burden, and from its bleached and weather-beaten appearance, must have remained there many years. The spars and deck were gone, and the hull was full of drift sand. The timber of which she was built had the appearance of cedar or mahogany. The fact of the vessel being in that position was well known to the whalers in 1846, when the first whaling station was formed in that neighbourhood, and the oldest natives, when questioned, stated their knowledge of it extended from their earliest recollection. My attention was again directed to this wreck during a conversation with Mr M'Gowan, the superintendent of the Post-office, in 1869, who, on making inquiries as to the exact locality, informed me that it was supposed to be one of a fleet of Portuguese or Spanish discovery ships, one of them having parted from the others during a storm, and was never again heard of. He referred me to a notice of a wreck having appeared in the novel *Geoffrey Hamlyn*, written by Henry Kingsley, in which it is set down as a Dutch or Spanish vessel, and forms the subject of a remark from one of the characters, a doctor, who said that the English should never sneer at those two nations - they were before you everywhere. The wreck lies about midway between Belfast and Warrnambool, and is probably by this time entirely covered with drift sand, as during a search made for it within the last few months it was not to be seen.

---Yours, &c.,  
JOHN MASON