

Australasian
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That Ancient Wreck

To the Editor of the Australasian

Sir, - Mr. John Mason, writing of the "ancient wreck" once on the hammocks between Port Fairy and Warrnambool, says, in last Saturday's issue: -

" As regards its nationality, I do not profess to be a judge, but if the ships depicted in this well-known picture of "A Long-forgotten Expedition," published some years back by the London Art Union, are accurately represented as being either of Spanish or Portuguese build, then I think there is little doubt that the wreck in question is of neither, as the high ornamental prow and deep sheer, or longitudinal curve of the deck line of the ship of those nations were here entirely absent, the general appearance and build resembling more the outlines of our own *[word unreadable in original article]* lighters, only of greater dimensions, and *[word unreadable in original article]* a very slight acquaintance of the builder with marine architecture."

It may assist Mr. Mason to know that the picture "A Long-forgotten Australian Expedition" was painted, not for the "London Art Union" but for the "Art Union of Victoria", in whose affairs I took an active part. In some early Portuguese charts is a fragmentary indication of a portion of the Australian coast line. This naturally suggested to the council of the art union that there had once been a Portuguese exploring expedition, and we entrusted a clever young artist, Mr. J.C. Curtis, with the work of producing an ideal picture of the starting from Lisbon of that expedition. In this case I think he succeeded admirably. The Art Union of Victoria reproduced this picture in shrouded lithography, and made the original one of its prizes. The argument of Mr. Mason, then to some extent, rests upon the imagination of Mr. Curtis, which may (or may not have been influenced by historical accuracy) as to marine construction. Mr. Curtis is still amongst us, and some good work of his I have seen lately.

- Yours, &c.,

ROBERT WALLEN,

Hawthorn, Nov.3. 1890