

Warrnambool Echo
October 1899

The Ancient Wreck

(To the Editor of the Echo)

SIR,- I have been told that several persons expressed a wish to be informed of the site of the above for the purpose of prosecuting a search when the fine weather sets in.

Allow me to warn them against wasting their time by searching in the sea, where it will certainly not be found. A wreck found in the sea will not be the one wanted, whatever its value or interest may be in other respects.

Here is Captain Mills' sight-bearing as given by Mr. Lynar, late Postmaster of Port Fairy:- "Well to the Eastward of Gorman's lane: proceed eastward along the beach till you bring the point of land on which the old iron church stood in line with the highest point of Tower Hill. The wreck would be almost in straight line with those objects, well in the hummocks."

The phrase, "well in the hummocks", means, according to Mr. Alexander Rollo, of Panmure, who knew the wreck well for years, about four chains from the water's edge. It lay behind a low hummock, and had a higher hummock behind it. It was, therefore, in a valley, and not at all visible from the beach or from the sea.

The late Mr. F. Saul told me about six months before his death that when he was putting up a fence about 80 years since the wreck was at that time "about fifty yards or two or three chains" from the fence. The site of "Saul's fence" is known to persons in the neighborhood of Gorman's lane, and some portions of it were in existence a few months ago. It is to be specially noted that to this exact spot Mr. Rollo conducted a small party of visitors a few months since. This also corresponds with Captain Mills' sight bearing.

The only point upon which there is room for expression of "opinion" appears to be as to the depth at which the wreck lies in the sand. I should think from a portion of Saul's fence being so lately extant, that it would not be very deep, and that perhaps a ten-foot sharp iron rod may strike it. As the bow heads towards Port Fairy, the boring should be from west to east. It would be necessary to secure a small piece of the timber for expert examination. The site lies probably within an area of a quarter of an acre, which can be fixed from the above particulars. Sketch plans and particulars are posted at the "Illowa" and "Killarney" hotels, and any further information will be given by the writer at the Museum.

I may state that every pains has been taken to verify the information given above. If persons will cut this out for reference, it may assist them.

I am, etc.,
J. ARCHIBALD

October 4th., 1899