

Melbourne Age
March 18 1911

The Port Fairy Wreck

To The Editor Of The Age

Sir, - The statement, if correct, that the Dutch galleot, or other ship, wrecked off Port Fairy is coppered would be conclusive argument against her great age. A few war ships began to be coppered in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, but this coppering was expensive, a great deal too expensive for a small craft like that of Port Fairy, reported to be of not more than 50 tons.

Copper sheathing was not the first method of protecting the bottom of ships, for by the middle of the seventeenth century lead sheathing was being tried, and in Charles II.'s reign we find favorable reports on the results of the lead sheathing of several battleships. But this method of preserving the hull and adding to the ships sailing abilities was not persevered in. If the Port Fairy wreck had been lead sheathed, then it might be considered ancient. As for any Spanish ship of the sixteenth century being coppered, the idea is absurd. If the material of the hull is of Spanish walnut the fact is certainly curious.

-Yours, &c.,

X.

16th March.