

DIVE INFORMATION SHEET

LA BELLA (1883-1905)

A four masted barquentine sailing ship constructed from iron and steel. It was used as a trading vessel in the Pacific.

Diving on the Wreck of *La Bella*

The *La Bella* now lies on its port side, with its bow facing south-west, in 13 metres of water, 300 metres south-east of the end of the Warrnambool breakwater.

Although heavily covered in thick kelp and weed growth, the *La Bella* is a spectacular dive.

The five metre high ship's bow lies on its port side. Divers swimming around the bow will be able to see the bowsprit, several anchors, an anchor chain, catheads, winches and hawsepipes.

In the midships region divers should see a donkey engine, parts of the rigging, decking frames, a deck winch, bilge pumps and bollards.

Overtime the stern has broken up and has now disappeared. An information plinth lies in the midships region off the port side of the ship. It was placed there by staff of the National Safety Council and the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum, sponsored by Warrnambool Textiles.

Dive standard: Basic - Intermediate

Diving Conditions

The current is usually minimal although in south - westerly winds the swell can make boating dangerous, particularly near the reef.

If you wish to dive on the *La Bella*, please register at the Flagstaff Maritime Village.

Locating the Wreck of the *La Bella*

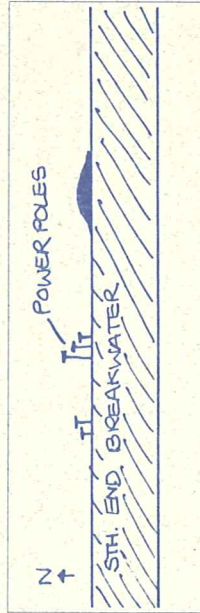
Launch Site: Lady Bay boat ramp
Chart No: AUS 140 (see also AUS 786)
Latitude: 38 24'22" S
Longitude: 142 29'14" E

Compass Bearings:

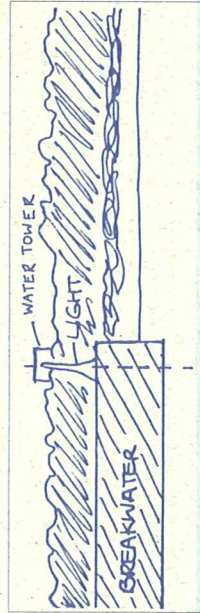
1. Thunder Point Trig Point - 304° (T)
2. Upper Lighthouse - 030° (T)
3. Flagstaff at Flagstaff Hill - 014° (T)
4. Hopkin's River Mouth Trig Point - 079° (T)

Visual Transits

1. Two southernmost power poles line up exactly.



2. White water tower on hospital with breakwater light in foreground.



Similar Wrecks in Victoria

Other wrecks of iron sailing ships included in the Underwater Shipwreck Discovery Trail are the *Eliza Ramsden* (Port Phillip Bay), the *Fiji* (Moonlight Head), *Falls of Halladale* (Curdies Point), *George Roper* (Point Lonsdale), *Holyhead* (Point Lonsdale), *Hurricane* (Port Phillip Bay), *Loch Ard* (Port Campbell) and *Sierra Nevada* (Portsea ocean beach).

Help Protect Our Maritime Heritage

The *La Bella* was protected as a Historic Shipwreck on 23rd April 1982 under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act (1976). Any damage or interference to the *La Bella* is an offence under the Act and penalties are severe.

Many wrecks are fragile and require constant monitoring. Divers visiting wreck sites can help the Maritime Archaeology Unit protect and manage Victoria's Historic Shipwrecks by:

- Reporting any damage to wreck sites caused by natural erosion or the activities of divers.
- Reporting artefacts which have become exposed through erosion and are at risk from being washed away or looting.
- Reporting any diver seen actively looting a wreck.
- Informing the Unit of a new wreck site. Divers who find and report a new wreck may be entitled to a reward.

Please contact the Maritime Archaeology Unit at:

Victoria Archaeological Survey
29-31 Victoria Avenue
Albert Park VIC 3206
Telephone: (03) 690 5322

stern hatch

deck beams

bilge pumps

donkey engine

mast

bent mast

tank

rigging

windlass

deadeyes

bollard

anchor

broken anchor

anchor

bollard

trail plinth marker

pin rail

bow

bowsprit

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