

# MOUNTAIN MAID (1841-1856)

A small two masted wooden snowbrig used for transporting cargo between the Orient, Europe and Australia.

## Diving on the Wreck of the *Mountain Maid*

The *Mountain Maid* was severely damaged and sank following a collision with the *SS Queen*. Maritime archaeologists believe that after sinking, the ship came to rest upright on the sea floor and then collapsed outwards. The port side of the hull lies flat in five metres of water on a limestone rock platform. It is covered by sand and shell debris. The starboard side of the hull is completely absent.

There is an enormous amount of wreckage to see at the site although it is spread over a huge area of approximately 600 square metres. Divers can see intact areas of flooring, ceiling, garboard strakes (the lowest timber planking on the hull near the keel) and the keel and keelson (an internal beam providing structural support). Iron knees, which support the decking, are also clearly visible around the wreck site.

When the *Mountain Maid* was rediscovered in 1981 by the Maritime Archaeological Association of Victoria (MAAV), divers found the original bamboo dunnage lying between the ribs of the ship. The bamboo would have been used to

secure and waterproof dry cargo and protect the hull from damage. The presence of the bamboo dunnage helped to identify the wreck as the *Mountain Maid*, as bamboo was only used to pack cargo in Asian ports.

Other discoveries at the wreck site include pieces of patterned ceramic, metal artefacts, a ship's barometer scale, glass bottles and scrimshaw on a piece of pearly nautilus shell.

An information plinth has been placed at the wreck site by the Maritime Archaeology Unit. It lies about 20 metres from the wreck.

**Dive Standard:** Basic

**Dive Conditions**

The *Mountain Maid* is best dived at flood slack. It should be avoided in northerly winds when the waves can become large and a hazard to divers and boating.

## Locating the Wreck of the *Mountain Maid*

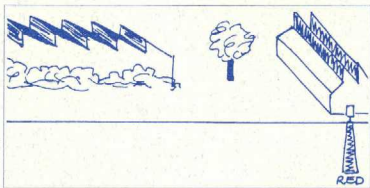
Launch Site: Queenscliff  
Chart No: AUS 158  
Area: Port Phillip Bay

## Visual Transits:

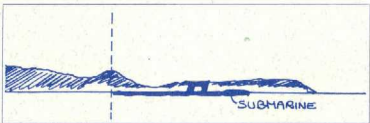
1. Looking south-southwest, 3 channel markers line up between transit lines.



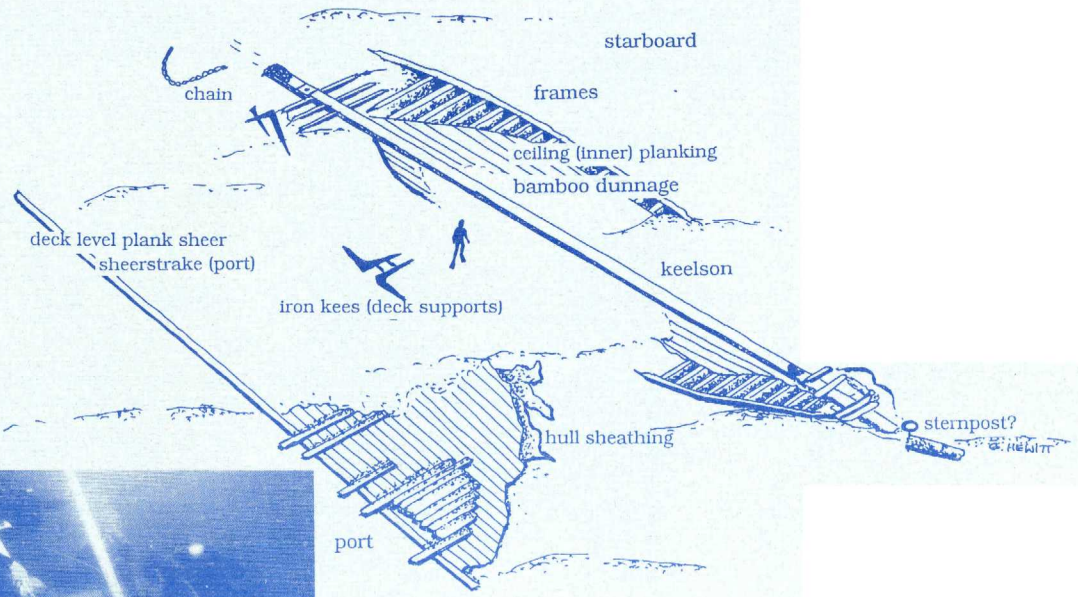
2. Looking south, the green marker lines up with the third building



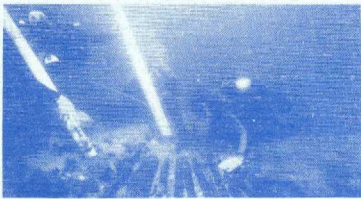
3. Looking south-southwest - The end of the Swan Island submarine lines up with the top of Cheviot Hill.



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22 metres distance (approx)



Bamboo wood dunnage was used to raise the cargo above the bilge.