

ALERT – Jervois Basin

The wooden ketch *Alert* was built by J & D McKay in Hobart in 1872, with original measurements of 65.6 feet in length (20 m), 17.9 feet (5.46 m) breadth, 6.6 feet (2 m) depth and 44.89 gross tons. In 1898 the vessel was lengthened to 70 feet, with 18 feet breadth, 6.2 feet depth and 58 gross tons.

The *Alert* was first registered in Port Adelaide in 1873 by partners J Evans and J McLeod. A succession of owners followed, until the vessel finally became the property of the Wright family in the 1930s. The *Alert* was a regular trader to ports in St Vincent and Spencer Gulfs, as well as between Port Adelaide and Victor Harbor. At the end of its working life, the ketch lay derelict near the Jervois Bridge.



Alert, c1930s
Photo: Ron Blum



Alert today

On 10 February 1960 the *Alert* was moved to the logpool at Ethelton, near the Railway Bridge and, until 1961, gradually broken up by Robert Gregory. However demolition was not carried out to the satisfaction of the Harbors Board and in 1962 the vessel was subsequently burnt to the waterline in lieu of further salvage. Mr Gregory's inability to meet with the conditions of the breaking-up contract led to the involvement of the Crown Solicitor and eventually a three month jail sentence. Today substantial remains of the *Alert* are evident on the mudbank in Jervois Basin, although much of the vessel now lies beneath sections of reclaimed shore. Of particular interest is a substantial section of the keel and centreboard casing.