

SHIPWRECKS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981



Fact Sheet No. 24

Alert

Jervois Basin Ships' Graveyard

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 ketch *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.

On 10 February 1960 *Alert* was moved to the log pool 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



Image: DEW Files

The remains of Alert at Jervois Basin in the 1990s

breaking-up contract led to the involvement of the Crown Solicitor and eventually a three month jail sentence.

Today substantial remains of *Alert* are evident on the mudbank in Jervois Basin, although much of the vessel now lies beneath sections of reclaimed shore and the remainder obscured by mangroves. Of particular interest is a substantial section of the keel and centreboard casing.

More information

Heritage South Australia

Department for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001
Ph. (08) 8124 4960
Email: DEWheritage@sa.gov.au

www.environment.sa.gov.au



Image courtesy: Ron Blum

The ketch Alert under reduced sail in the Port River, c.1930s