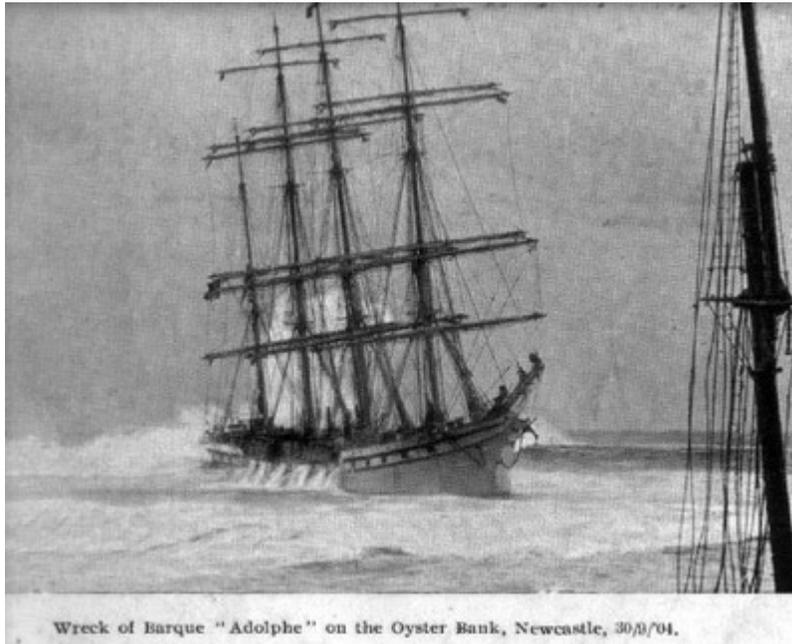


# Wreck of the Adolphe



The wreck of the French four-masted barque Adolphe lies off the Stockton break wall. The account of the wreck is a story of the courageous and skilful work of the lifeboat crew who saved every life on board.

The Adolphe sailed in from Antwerp on September 30th 1904. It was picked up by the tugs Hero and Victoria about 9 a.m. and made an attempt to enter port.

When it came round the southern breakwater, the barque was struck by huge seas which caused the Victoria's hawser to snap. The Hero could not hold the barque up and another succession of big waves lifted the Adolphe on to the remains of the wreck Colonist where she remained.

The seas swept her from stern to bow, tons of water poured into the lower decks and the crew had to take refuge on the poop.

The doomed vessel presented a splendid though terrible spectacle standing perfectly upright with her bow heading to the harbour.

When the signal guns were fired, the lifeboat commanded by Coxswain A. McKinnon was quickly launched and made her way to the wreck with thousands of spectators watching.

Several attempts were made to take the boat around the stern of the Adolphe, which was abandoned after four oars were broken. McKinnon then skilfully manoeuvred the boat round the wreck of the Regent Murray and was able to get a line onto the Adolphe. The lifeboat was anchored and the seamen slipped down the line one by one. It took half-an-hour for the thirty-two men to be placed in the lifeboat.

The Adolphe struck at 10:25 a.m. By 12 o'clock the last of the ship's company (including Captain Layec) slid down the line to safety. The lifeboat made the return trip with forty-seven men on board and was taken in tow by the Customs tug.

The Australian Consul-General for France M. Biard d'Aunet and French Consul for New South Wales Nettement made a special visit to Newcastle to officially recognising the gallant work of the lifeboat crew. The Mayor, Consular representatives, prominent citizens, and Captain Layec, officers and crew of the Adolphe gathered at the lifeboat harbour to witness M. Biard d'Aunet make a presentation to A. McKinnon, coxswain of the lifeboat crew.





*The Adolphe as seen today*

*Information was sourced from the internet and the Newcastle Maritime Museum*

**Return to *The List* -**  
**<http://lakescan.customer.net.au/list.html>**

If you have additions or alterations please email me at [lakescanslist@netspace.net.au](mailto:lakescanslist@netspace.net.au)