

# THE WRECK OF THE *ADOLPHE*

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When Dennis Ruddell bought a farm at Parua Bay, Whangarei, New Zealand, in 1976, one of the items he came across on the property was a large bell. Painted a garish orange and decorated with a roughly daubed swastika, it had clearly once been a ship's bell, and Ruddell enquired of the farm's vendors whether they knew anything of its history. All that they could tell him was that it had been discovered under the floorboards of a picture theatre in Auckland, at a period when the growing popularity of television was bringing about the demolition of many cinemas in that city and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Ruddell decided to strip away the orange paint, and in so doing discovered engraved on the bell's surface the inscription "ADOLPHE 1902". No doubt the daubed swastika had been added during or after World War Two by someone who assumed the bell had had a connection with the Germany of Adolf Hitler.

Moving in 1979 to a property in nearby Otaika Valley, Ruddell took the bell with him, and for some years it occupied a spot on his veranda where it captured the attention of his next-door neighbour. Years later, the neighbour was visiting the city of Newcastle, Australia, and decided to take a stroll along the northern (or Stockton) breakwater at the entrance to Newcastle harbour. In this area lie the submerged remains of scores of vessels from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that had come to grief on what was then known as the Oyster Bank, a treacherous series of shoals and sand spits. The subsequent construction of the northern breakwater was aimed at enabling ships to avoid the Oyster Bank and enter the harbour in safety.

Reading the names of the ships which had sunk or disappeared on the Oyster Bank, the visitor noticed one in particular, its steel bow emerging from the water and its rusting hull seeming almost to be part of the breakwater itself. To his astonishment, the nearby plaque indicated that this was none other than the *Adolphe*, a French ship which had been stranded on the Oyster Bank in 1904. On checking with the Newcastle Maritime Museum, he ascertained that the ship's bell had indeed disappeared from Newcastle, and on his return to New Zealand was able to inform Dennis Ruddell that he believed he had discovered the bell's provenance.

The *Adolphe* was a sailing ship, one of four four-masted steel barques built in 1902 for the firm of A.-D. Bordes et Fils of Bordeaux. It was also what was known as a "bounty ship".

Antoine-Dominique Bordes, together with his business partner Captain Le Querhic, had founded a shipping company in 1847 in Valparaíso, Chile. Their ships would move coal outbound from England or Wales, transporting nitrate (for the manufacture of fertilizer) and copper back to Europe from Chilean ports such as Valparaíso and Iquique. By 1870 the company had amassed an extensive fleet of sailing vessels.<sup>2</sup>

On the retirement of Antoine-Dominique Bordes in 1883, the company was taken over by his three sons, Adolphe, Alexandre and Antonin, all resident in Bordeaux where the firm had its headquarters. Though Antoine-Dominique died in May the same year, the company retained the name of A.-D. Bordes et Fils. There appears to have been a rumour that the Jesuits owned the line—a rumour possibly sparked by the fact that Bordes bought and recommissioned a number of ships bearing the names of saints—and this would explain the company's later adoption of the practice of changing a ship's name immediately upon purchase.<sup>3</sup> It was certainly very common for the company to use the names of family members for its vessels—beginning with the *A.-D. Bordes* in 1884. Whenever one of its ships was decommissioned, wrecked or lost, the family member's name was simply transferred to a newly built ship.

During the late 1890s, the firm commissioned vessels from various shipbuilding yards at Nantes-Saint-Nazaire, Le Grand-Quevilly and La Seyne. Like most of the French shipbuilding companies at that time, it concentrated on sailing ships rather than steamships; unlike England, where in 1897 only 2 per cent of ship construction was devoted to sailing ships, or Germany where the percentage was even less, in France sailing vessels comprised 80 per cent of naval construction. In 1900 the Bordes company invested 2 million francs in the construction of two sailing ships (the *Marthe* and the *Valentine*) at Le Grand-Quevilly, and in 1902 another 4 million in the construction of four more ships by Ateliers et Chantiers de France (ACF) at Dunkirk. The first of the Dunkirk craft was the *Adolphe* (construction beginning on 1 April 1901); its launching in March 1902 was followed by those of the *Alexandre* in June, the *Antonin* in August and the *Valparaíso* in October of that year. The *Adolphe* was the third Bordes company ship to bear that name.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1895 and 1902 a total of 19 ships joined the Bordes "fleet", 16 of them remaining in service till after the end of the First World

War. They were known as "bounty ships" because of the bounty system that came into operation in France after the Franco-Prussian War and remained in operation until 1920. This system provided the ship's owner with a "bounty" or government subsidy (*une prime à la construction et à la navigation*) of 1 franc 70 centimes per gross ton for every 1,000 nautical miles sailed, regardless of the ship's load.<sup>5</sup> It was an excellent arrangement, one result of which was to encourage the building of larger ships with heavier superstructures to increase their gross tonnage. The chief motivation of the French government, however, was to provide comfortable and well-equipped craft for the Merchant Marine—a potential source of naval personnel in the event of a future military conflict (the prospect of which was never far from French minds at the time). As Alain Villiers and Henri Picard point out,

All French merchant seamen were naval reservists at 21 and qualified for a pension at 50. The law said that French ships must be manned by French nationals and, to keep them so, regulation and economic assistance were necessary. The French seamen's desertion rate was the lowest in the world, the British the highest. French seamen were well fed; their building bounties allowed owners to build in ample room for crews, and often a shelter-deck besides. Here the men could work the gear without being swept overboard and drowned, and the ships could fight to windward through vicious seas without being overwhelmed. The sailing bounties allowed ships to be sailed by kindlier routes which avoided the killing slog against the endless murderous westerlies of the wintry Horn.<sup>6</sup>

Like its sister-ships the *Alexandre*, the *Antonin* and the *Valparaiso*, the *Adolphe* was a four-master barque of steel construction, some 313 feet long with a breadth of 45 feet, weighing 3245 gross tons and 2400 net tons; it had two decks and five lifeboats.<sup>7</sup> The construction of four great vessels of this kind was a massive challenge, both technically and in terms of manpower. Some 800 to 900 men were needed in order to build the steel barques within the allotted timeframe, and many workers were injured or even killed. The final cost of building the four barques was to exceed ACF's original contract price by 200,000 francs.<sup>8</sup>

The launching of the *Adolphe* took place at the ACF shipyards in Dunkirk, and is vividly described by Brigitte and Yvonnick Le Coat:

The Bordes company kept the same names (in fact, the first names of its founder's sons) when christening the new ships that replaced older ones. And so it was that the first vessel launched, in bright sunlight, on Sunday 22 March 1902, was the third to bear the name *Adolphe*. Its "godmother", Mme Adolphe Bordes, watched as the magnificent red hull, embellished in pearl grey with black and white handrails, moved quickly down the slipway before she [Mme Bordes] could smash the champagne bottle; the heavy sailing ship, already equipped with its four lower masts, was probably too much for a rather weak link in the restraining cable, and suddenly took off. The twenty or so workmen who were putting the finishing touches to the ship managed to flee or protect themselves in time. And so, amid the din of bits of scaffolding flying everywhere, the first-born of the new Dunkirk lineage made the somewhat violent acquaintance of its element after managing (God knows how) to slow its headlong rush. And all ended well.<sup>9</sup>

Two months of fitting-out ensued, and on 16 May the *Adolphe*'s first captain, Louis Goslin (a *Gravelinois*, or native of the Dunkirk area of Gravelines), took possession of his new vessel.<sup>10</sup> Her first port of call was Port Talbot in Wales, from which she picked up a cargo of coal; 105 days later, in September of the same year, she unloaded the cargo at Iquique in Chile. Her second voyage, of 97 days, took her again to Iquique, this time from Dunkirk, the return journey taking 89 days.

The ship's third voyage, in early 1904, was again Port Talbot-Iquique and return (102 days out, 88 days return). By this time she was under the command of a new captain, Joseph Layec.<sup>11</sup> All that is known of him is that he was born on 7 December 1871 at l'Ile-aux-Moines in Brittany,<sup>12</sup> so that at the time of taking command of the *Adolphe* he would have been 32 years old. After sailing the ship to Chile, he returned to Europe and then left Antwerp under ballast on 7 July 1904, having been chartered by J. and A. Brown (Bordes's local agents) to load coal in Newcastle, New South Wales, and transport it to Chile.

The passage to Australia was a fair one, taking 85 days, or almost three months. The barque was off Jervis Bay on 27 September, passed Sydney Heads on 28 September and Norah Head lighthouse (south of Newcastle) the same night, when rough weather made Captain Layec decide to stand off the land. An overcast day followed, with springtime storms threatening and fresh south-south-westerly winds on the coast. A moderate sea was running on the bar. As the early morning passed, the winds became increasingly strong.<sup>13</sup>

With first light on 29 September, the four-master sailed towards Newcastle and could be seen about ten kilometres off the port. In those days when rival tug companies vied with one another for the lucrative trade of bringing vessels into the harbour, it was no surprise that the tug *Hero*, belonging to J. Fenwick & Co., came out with a view to negotiating a tow. Layec declined the offer, on the grounds that the barque was under charter to J. and A. Brown, whose company ran its own tugs. The weather remained heavy all day. Later in the day, *Hero* again offered to bring the *Adolphe* in, but Layec preferred to put out to sea for the night.

On the morning of 30 September, with still no sign of Brown's tugs, *Hero* again offered its services. This time, having enquired of the tug-master whether it was safe to enter Newcastle and being told that it was, Layec agreed, and accordingly a line was placed aboard *Adolphe* at about 7.00 a.m. A second Fenwick tug, *Victoria*, steamed out to the French ship and put a line aboard; this was made fast on the starboard bow. Both tugs proceeded with the towage. Meanwhile, the pilot steamer *Ajax* left its moorings at 8.45 a.m. and proceeded towards the barque, which was by now about nine kilometres off the land. At about 9.50 a.m., the pilot Captain Stevenson went on board the *Adolphe*, and Layec handed over command to him while the pilot boat *Ajax* followed astern. The procession now moved towards the harbour entrance, first the two tugs (*Hero* on the headline and *Victoria* with her line fastened on the poop deck), then the *Adolphe*, and in their wake the *Ajax*.<sup>14</sup>

By what was to prove a sad irony, just as the *Adolphe* was approaching Nobbys Head (the giant rock at the entrance to Newcastle harbour), a message for the ship arrived and was displayed at the Nobbys signal station. At that distance, however, it was unreadable. It was only on the final approach towards the mouth of the harbour that the signal's message became apparent: it bore instructions from the agents J. and A. Brown for the barque not to call at Newcastle but to proceed to Sydney to load wheat. The explanation of the failure of Brown's tugs to meet the *Adolphe* was now clear. It appears that the charter had been changed a few days after the ship left Antwerp, but the message seems not to have reached Layec in time for him to act on it. By the time it did finally reach him, it was too late for the *Adolphe* to change course, and the pilot had no option but to continue the ship's passage into Newcastle harbour.<sup>15</sup>

What happened next was reported in graphic detail in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* the following day:

With two good tugs the pilot apparently had every confidence in being able to bring the ship in, especially as she was well found in every respect, there being a full and well-disciplined crew, while the vessel had unusual stability for one in ballast trim. She was drawing 16ft, and carried 1600 tons of ballast. There seems to be a consensus of opinion that from the time the vessel was sighted the sea continued to rise, but everything went on all right with the tow, until she was being rounded up for the entrance of the southern breakwater. Just at that moment three big bounding seas struck the barque in succession, and the extra strain snapped the *Victoria's* hawser. The *Victoria* was towing on the starboard side, and had 90 fathoms of line out, the break occurring 30 fathoms from the tug, and of course, caused the *Hero*, which was towing on the port side, to get slightly out of position. The barque was now in a most critical situation, being broadside on to the southerly gale, with the Oyster Bank immediately on her lee. The climax came a minute or two later. The *Hero* with the length of line cut could do nothing to prevent the barque sagging, without running ashore on a stony point herself, and the trailing, broken hawser sagging also to leeward, tended to bring the barque's head further round, until all at once three big rollers lifted her further over, the third depositing her right on top of the wreck of the *Colonist*. It was then all over. The barque remained hard and fast, the seas sweeping her from stern to bow.<sup>16</sup>

In summary, the three rogue waves had had three effects: the first broke the hawser (or tow rope) of the tug *Victoria*, whose towline was dragged under the *Adolphe* by the outgoing current, thus drawing the ship closer to the Oyster Bank; the second wave pushed the *Adolphe* uncontrollably leeward towards the sunken wrecks along the Oyster Bank; and shortly thereafter the third wave lifted the barque and dropped her on top of the submerged wrecks of the *Lindus* and the *Wendouree*. It was later reported that, as if in a death pang, the *Adolphe* heaved from bow to stern several times, then gave a loud groan and fell silent.<sup>17</sup>

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A ship's bell had three main functions: to warn other vessels of the ship's presence; to announce the time of day in nautical terms; and to warn the crew of danger. The *Adolphe's* bell would have rung the distress call to warn all aboard of the imminent danger and to bring everyone on deck. Well

might it have done so: there are more than 550 officially listed wrecks lying along the coast from the south of Newcastle at Broken Bay to the north at Seal Rocks, and over 480 people recorded as having been drowned or killed in the vessels listed. If one adds ships which disappeared or were found derelict off the coast, it has been estimated that another 150 names could be added to the list.<sup>18</sup> At least 30 of the shipwrecks lie at the mouth of Newcastle harbour, either on or close to the Oyster Bank.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, in the treacherous weather conditions the crew of the *Adolphe* were at serious risk of being added to the ranks of the victims.

The distress call was also a cry for help, and the ringing of the bell on the *Adolphe* marked the beginning of the rescue operation that was to follow. What happened next is recorded by the *Newcastle Morning Herald*:

The signal guns were fired, and the lifeboat crew immediately launched their boat. They had a perilous task before them to rescue the crew. The barque presented a magnificent though terrible spectacle. The splendid but utterly helpless vessel stood perfectly upright, with her bows heading to the harbour, resolutely resisting the thunderous shocks of the sea. She was in a spot where the long rollers of the Pacific finally spend themselves in terrific rhythmical bursts. The seas struck her near the quarter, and, sweeping along the length of her side, were cast in huge clouds of white foam, the tops of which sometimes covered the lower topsail yards. Tons of water poured on to the lower decks, the scuppers presenting the appearance of cascades, and the crew had to take refuge on the poop where they clung as best they could.<sup>20</sup>

The rescue itself has gone down in local maritime history as one of the most remarkable ever carried out in these waters.<sup>21</sup> It began when the *Ajax* managed to close in and, by means of a rocket, fired a line aboard the stranded barque. By this time the lifeboat *Victoria* (not to be confused with the tug *Victoria* mentioned above) was in sight, with its crew of 14 men under the command of Coxswain Allen McKinnon.<sup>22</sup> McKinnon's first plan was to go outside and around the *Adolphe*, but the crew were beaten back by the seas and a number of oars were broken. At this point McKinnon was able to manoeuvre the lifeboat between the *Wendouree* and *Lindus* wrecks<sup>23</sup>—a space less than 300 feet wide. He dropped anchor and edged the boat close in to the *Adolphe*'s side. Bow lines were passed to the barque to steady the lifeboat, while a third line was used by the French crew to slide down into the boat.

Less than an hour after the lifeboat had been ordered to sea, the 32 crew members of the *Adolphe* and Pilot Stevenson were taken off safely. The lifeboat was now seriously overloaded. Sitting low in the water and with 47 people on board, it was at serious risk of sharing the fate of the *Adolphe* by colliding with submerged wreckage. Had a large wave hit it broadside, all those aboard would certainly have been thrown into the sea and probably have been lost. Fortunately the sea abated sufficiently for the boat to back clear of all the wrecks and to make for the harbour, where all were landed by noon. Both the pilot and the lifeboat crew were later to be highly complimentary of the crew of the *Adolphe*, stating that they had remained calmly at their posts and not left until ordered to do so by their officers: "greater discipline [it was reported] could not have been expected on a warship".<sup>24</sup>

Layec himself was the last to disembark, and did so with enormous reluctance. It was only when the lifeboat was about to leave and Coxswain McKinnon begged him to join the others, pointing out that the lifeboat would have to make a doubly dangerous journey again on an ebb tide to take him off, that he at last consented to do so, falling into the water and having to be dragged into the lifeboat by the crew.<sup>25</sup>

Once again the *Newcastle Morning Herald's* account gives us a vivid picture of the events that followed:

The landing [of the lifeboat] took place amid great enthusiasm at the King's Wharf. Each man as he passed across the launch was formally examined by Dr. Russell, the port health officer, as the barque had been flying the quarantine flag. Dr. Eames was also present to render assistance in case of accident, but happily his services were not needed. Most of the survivors were hatless and bootless, not as much as even a scrap of paper having been saved from the ship. Cabs had been procured and Mr. Frank Gardiner, the local secretary of the National Shipwreck Relief Society, and Mr. J. C. Reid, the French Consular agent, and the crew were driven to the Sailors' Home. All were perished to the bone, and a stiff peg of brandy was served out to each man. Mr. Gardiner furnished new clothing, and the shipwrecked sailors were made as comfortable as possible.<sup>26</sup>

According to another account, the accommodation of the Frenchmen was not quite as democratic as would appear from the above. While it confirms that the French Consular Agent (Reid) had arranged for an ambulance and the two doctors to be in attendance, along with an interpreter, it adds that it was

only the *Adolphe*'s crew who were taken to the Sailors' Home, her officers being put up in greater comfort at city hotels.<sup>27</sup>

Thousands of curious spectators had gathered on the harbour front and surrounding hills to observe the rescue operation, attracted by the ringing of bells and distress signals as well as by the guns sounded from the shore. A large number of these onlookers then proceeded to King's Wharf to watch the French sailors and their rescuers come ashore. Once the crowd had dispersed and the men of the *Adolphe* were safely accommodated, the next phase of the adventure could begin.

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Captain Joseph Layec must have been totally despondent. As well as seeing such a superbly beautiful vessel come to grief, there would have been the additional burden of that special bond which binds a ship's captain to his charge. As he awoke on the morning after the disaster and visited the site of the *Adolphe*'s stranding, Layec realized that the ship could never be salvaged. Her hull had been ripped open below waters, and it was obvious from the fact that her main mast had shrunk several feet that it had crashed through the hull.

Some years later, a journalist by the name of Raymond Meredith wrote an imaginative, but perhaps not totally inaccurate, account of the scene:

It is not often that a man cries openly, especially one of the tough, iron men who go down to the sea in ships.

But there was one, at least, who did—and he was a handsome Frenchman, and a skipper as well.

He stood on the beach at Stockton, on the northern side of Newcastle (NSW) Harbor, and wept openly and bitterly one afternoon early in October, 1904.

Tears streamed down his face as he gazed seaward at a graceful ship that seemed to be anchored peacefully in the calm sea about half a mile away, her bows pointing toward the harbor.

The handsome Frenchman was Captain Layec, who, until the morning of September 30, 1904, was the proud captain of the *Adolphe*, one of the most beautifully proportioned, full-rigged, four-master barques that had ever sailed the Seven Seas. She was stuck fast on the reef and could never be salvaged.

With this sad fact in mind, Captain Layec had gone across the

Newcastle Harbor to Stockton to take a last look at what had been his pride.<sup>28</sup>

But he soon had other things on his mind, as a number of formalities needed to be attended to. The *Adolphe* being a French ship, a Consul's Inquiry was conducted from 5 to 8 October by the French Consular Agent in Newcastle, J. C. Reid, who "took evidence from all who were able to give any information in regard to the disaster".<sup>29</sup> The evidence obtained was to be forwarded to the French Consul General in Sydney (Georges Biard d'Aunet),<sup>30</sup> and by the latter to the French Government.

It must be assumed that the greater part of the evidence taken by Reid was elicited from members of the lifeboat crew, tugs and pilot ship, since it is clear that Reid himself, despite his consular position, had only the most rudimentary knowledge of French. It is inconceivable that he would have been able to question the predominantly monolingual<sup>31</sup> members of the *Adolphe*'s crew directly, though no doubt Layec would have had some knowledge of English and it is likely that a translator was at hand. As to Reid himself, some comments may perhaps provide an insight into a situation which was probably typical of many consular agents at the time.

John Christian Reid (1873–1932)<sup>32</sup> was born at Newcastle, the eldest son of John Reid and a nephew of Sir George H. Reid, a former Premier of New South Wales (popularly known as "Yes-No" Reid on account of his policy on Federation) who at the time of the *Adolphe* rescue was Prime Minister of Australia. John C. Reid entered the shipping and insurance business on leaving school, and from 1895 to 1909 managed the business of J. Fenwick and Co., proprietors of the tugboat firm whose boats were later to tow the *Adolphe* into harbour. He then became Managing Director of his own firm, John Reid Ltd, a position he retained until his death. He was well known in the public life of the City of Newcastle, being Mayor for three terms and President of the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce from 1916 to 1919. In July 1904 he was appointed Consular Agent for France, and was subsequently honoured by the French Government with the award of the titles *Officier d'Académie* and *Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur*. He held his consular position for some 28 years.

Despite the impressive titles bestowed on him, Reid's extremely limited knowledge of French can be observed in a quite extraordinary document which he caused to be drawn up to record his formal interview with Layec on 8 October 1904, at which the latter handed over to him, for for-

warding to the French Consulate General in Sydney, whatever documentation he had managed to salvage from the *Adolphe*. The document must have been printed in some haste (it is printed, not typed), as it is specific to the *Adolphe* rather than a generic document. It is reproduced verbatim below, Reid's handwritten additions being shown in italics and between square brackets:

**Consulat Général de France en Australie.**

**ACTE DE CONSIGNATION DE VALEURS PROVENANT DE NAUFRAGES**

Par devant nous Agent Consulaire de France a Newcastle (Nouvelle Galles du Sud).

J'est presenté le Capitaine [*Layce Joseph*]

Commandant le navire "Adolphe" naufragé à [*Newcastle NSW*]

Leguel a consigné entre nos mains le titres, pieces et valuers suivantes à savoir:

1° [*Journal de Mer*]

2° [*Acte de Francisation*]

3° [*Declaration D'Armement et Registre des Traversees*]

4° [*Livre de punition*]

[5. *Inventaire*]

[6. *Conge*]

[7. *Depeches Postale*]

[8. *Prefecture - autorisation de mise en service*]

[9. *Certificat de visite*]

[10. *Extrait des Minutes*]

[11. *Role d' l'equipage*]

Lesquels titres, traites, documents, valuers et especes serout transmis immédiatement par nous a M. le Consul Général de France à Sydney, dont relève l'Agence Consulaire de France à Newcastle.

Apris quoi nous avons dressé le present acte dont il a été domie lecture au sieur

Qui a signé avec nous

Fait en double - Newcastle le [8 octobre 1904]

L'Agent Consulaire de France

[*John Reid*]<sup>33</sup>

The above document is included among Reid's papers and is presumably the duplicate, the original having been sent off to Biard d'Aunet in Sydney. It is notable that, despite the indication that Layec had read it and countersigned it, Layec's signature does not appear on this copy along with Reid's. One wonders whether Layec, on reading the original, made the necessary corrections. It is of course possible that the curiously deformed French is the result of the printer's misreading of a handwritten document, but even so one would have expected Reid to make the required corrections on the document he signed.

In fact, Reid's unfamiliarity with the French language was to lead to an interesting correspondence with the Consul General, Biard d'Aunet, in Sydney. Reid was quite new to the position, having been appointed on a provisional basis in May 1904 and confirmed as Consular Agent in September of that year. Consular Agents had a considerable number of functions, including filling out Bills of Health (*Patentes de Santé*) for the Ministry of Hygiene in France, ensuring that boats setting out for French possessions such as Tahiti and Papeete were fumigated after loading (to kill any rats that had climbed aboard), dealing with French sailors who had deserted their ships or had fallen ill and been hospitalized in Australia, and a number of similar duties.<sup>34</sup> Though Reid must have felt up to the task, Biard d'Aunet had to make it clear to him that some knowledge of French was necessary in order to carry it out. In appointing Reid on a temporary basis, he wrote to him on 25 May 1904:

I gather from the content of your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month that it is probable that you would prefer to correspond with this General Consulate in English, and I have no objection to your doing so. However, I should wish to write to your Consular Agency in French. Kindly let me know if you have any objection to this course of action.

In your relations with French commercial vessels, it is necessary that our language should be used, it being the only one that most of our sailors, and even of our captains, understand. Consequently, the services of an interpreter will be indispensable.

Without imposing on you the obligation to accept either of them, might I mention two persons who would appear to be in a position to be useful to you as interpreters, Mr M. Molinas, who served Mr MacDermott [Reid's predecessor as Consular Agent] well in this capacity, and Mr F. B. Fulton, who has been very highly recommended to me, and is the agent for the "Year Book of Australia".<sup>35</sup>

It is no doubt revealing that, in Reid's copy of the above letter, someone (presumably Reid himself) has added in pencil between the lines a literal, word-for-word translation (even of the simplest words), probably requiring the assiduous use of a dictionary. As to conversation with the French seamen, it seems likely that Reid took Biard d'Aunet's advice and used the services of an interpreter.

It is clear from the list of documents provided by Reid in the *Acte de consignment de valeurs* that the news report stating that none of the ship's papers had survived was inaccurate. All other items that could be salvaged were put up for auction, and were sold by local auctioneers Creer and Berkeley in their rooms in Wolfe Street, Newcastle, at 12 noon on 6 October.<sup>36</sup> The ship's gear was sold in one lot, her stores in a second lot. All sails and gear were near-new, the ship being only two years old, and the items auctioned included five anchors, five boats with gear, two steam boilers and accessories, two steam and four hand pumps, three steam and four hand winches, one windlass and six hawsers. These were sold to the highest bidder, Mr A. Wilson of Balmain, for £740. The stores were knocked down to J. and A. Brown, the ship's agents, on behalf of her owners, for £160. These included twenty-two 50-gallon casks of wine, nine demijohns, 160 bottles of liqueur brandy, and 150 gallons of brandy in bulk. The stores were described as "sufficient for nine months", and one assumes that, in the event of a long period in becalmed waters, the officers and crew would at least have been well lubricated.<sup>37</sup>

A number of formalities still remained. It was announced that the crew of the lifeboat would each be paid the sum of £2/10/0 for their heroic labours in such extraordinary conditions (the usual wage for going out in calm weather being £1/5/0).<sup>38</sup> On Friday 7 October, Georges Biard d'Aunet came to Newcastle to recognize on behalf of the French Government the services rendered by the lifeboat crew. In addition to his speech of thanks, he presented Coxswain Allen McKinnon with a purse of five gold sovereigns and a pair of binoculars, and the rest of the crew with a purse of thirty gold sovereigns. The next day, McKinnon and his crew visited the Sailors' Home and presented to each of the crew of the *Adolphe* a photograph of the *Victoria* lifeboat and both crews. The photograph bore the title "Savers and Saved".<sup>39</sup> Allen McKinnon made a heartfelt address to the French crew on behalf of his fellow-rescuers. It concluded:

When your families look at this picture and the likeness of the rescued and the rescuers they will thank God that He has so moulded the hearts

of men that they are ever ready to risk all, to save the lives of their "fellowmen", irrespective of creed, colour or nationality.

We feel pleased that you have all spoken words of praise and admiration for coming to your assistance, and your great nation, France, has also sent word of kindness and congratulation to us, through your Consul General, for services we rendered.

The kindly settlement [*sic*] expressed by your Consul General more than repays us for anything we have done.

We again join in wishing you all a pleasant and safe passage home.<sup>40</sup>

In return, the crew of the *Adolphe* called upon John C. Reid and presented him with a written expression of their thanks for all that he had done for them. The newspaper reported that "they expressed themselves very pleased and grateful for the interest he had taken in them and the arrangements made for their comfort at Newcastle".

It was gratifying to see such expressions of goodwill between the two groups—the French and the Australians, the savers and the saved—though one cannot help wondering how much genuine communication took place between them in view of the language barrier. Some idea of how little one group understood of the other can be gleaned from the lists of names of the French crew which were recorded by their Australian hosts. Set out below are the two lists which remain, the first taken from the caption on the photograph "Savers and Saved" and the second from the *Town and Country Journal* of 5 October 1904:

(1)

Name of the Crews from the barque *Adolphe*:

*Captain*: Joseph Layec;

*Officers*: Beanjeen, Roland, Leguen, Gehors;

*Donkeyman*: Glaneux;

*Carpenter*: Jacquet

*Cook*: Cavare

*Boatswain*: Le Grand, Crecker.

*AB's*: Rouitle, Chapelain, Lounequir, Haebon, Defeyer, Dupont, Le Bresteur, Le Bacquir, Le Bibour, Brondic, Benoit, Rohette, Marot, De Wert, Daterbre, Croljich, Renault, Vaillant, Cooset

*Cabin boys*: Jaffachoa, Birchet and Corlourer.

(2)

[the first names listed are illegible]

*Lieutenant*: Gepois

*Engineer*: Glarveux

*Carpenter*: Jacquet

*Petty Officer*: Cavarò

*Second Cooks*: Legrand and Creker

*Seamen*: Bointle, Chapelain, Lonnegrue, Huchon, Depeyer, Dupont, Leforestier, Le Burgieur, Le Bibou, Broudic, Benoix, Rohellic, Marot, De Wost, Durterbre, Croizier, Revult, Vaillant, Vassel

*Boys*: Gagaciot, Buhotlarnay and Coibouer.<sup>41</sup>

It must be assumed that the French sailors had been asked to write their names on a sheet of paper. Given that some of them were probably close to illiterate, and that French writing style is (and certainly was at the time) very different from English copperplate, it is perhaps understandable that to Australian eyes the names in some cases must have appeared all but unintelligible.

The following day, Sunday 9 October, Captain Layec and his crew left Newcastle for Sydney on the steamer *Namoi*,<sup>42</sup> and on the Monday following set off for France on a New Caledonian ship, *Le Calédonien*, which one of the crew members, Louis Huchon, was later to describe as "an ancient New Caledonian steamer which took three months to complete the voyage".<sup>43</sup> It must have been an enormous let-down after the trip out on the magnificent *Adolphe*.

\* \* \*

The French inquiry into Layec's seamanship led to his being exonerated of any responsibility for the stranding. This was clearly a reasonable finding, for two reasons. Firstly, the disaster was not the result of bad navigation on his part, but was caused by the snapping of a hawser on the tug *Victoria*; indeed, Huchon's later account refers to the *Adolphe* as being "mal remorqué" (incompetently towed by the tug)—an implied criticism somewhat at odds with the polite expressions of mutual esteem that were exchanged immediately following the rescue. Secondly, at the time of the stranding the barque was not under the command of her captain but of the Newcastle pilot. Layec, his name cleared, was given command of another barque.<sup>44</sup>

As to the *Adolphe*, though salvage work began almost immediately after the rescue, the hull proved immovable. Many expected that the ship would break up and join the other wrecks on the bank, leaving perhaps a mast to mark its grave. However, it confounded expectations and stayed above water, disintegrating slowly. In 1905, the mizzen and jigger masts (numbers 3 and 4) fell during a gale. The following year, construction of the northern breakwater advanced as far as the wreck, enabling small boys to climb aboard the hulk and shin up the masts like true sailors. Realizing the danger, the Port authorities blew up the sagging after-end of the *Adolphe*'s hull and cut down its two remaining masts.<sup>45</sup>

The ship being apparently indestructible (at least in the immediate term), it was decided to incorporate the hulk into the breakwater as the latter's construction moved further and further out to and over the Oyster Bank. By 1912, the breakwater had reached its present length, the *Adolphe*'s bows remaining highly visible as they pointed towards the safe harbour that the barque never reached. Over the ensuing years the condition of the wreck gradually deteriorated, and the safety of the public became a cause for concern, as the wreck was still a popular fishing platform for adults and children alike. In response to a letter from a concerned citizen to the Port Manager in 1983, the Newcastle Wharf Inspector recommended its demolition, proposing that "explosive charges be placed in certain locations with time delay switches, detonated, which should allow the remains of the 'Adolphe' to move into deep water and out of public access".<sup>46</sup> Fortunately, the Port's engineer was of a different mind, annotating the Inspector's report as follows:

In view of the historical nature of the wreck and its location, removal could cause bad publicity.

The solicitor might be advised to comment with the possibility of erecting an appropriately worded sign.<sup>47</sup>

In due course, and after seeking its solicitor's advice, the Port authority erected a sign reading: "This wreck is dangerous. Do not board under any circumstances."

The same issue arose again in the 1990s when a member of the public wrote to the Newcastle Port Corporation demanding the demolition of this "rusting health hazard". By now, however, the historical interest of the wrecks along the Stockton breakwater was so great that a "Shipwreck Walk"<sup>48</sup> was created, including a plaque with the name of the *Adolphe* and

the date of its stranding, while a specially constructed viewing platform not only discouraged people from clambering over the wreck but also enabled visitors to gain a forceful impression of how the magnificent craft must once have looked.

\* \* \*

As the centenary of the *Adolphe's* stranding (30 September 2004) drew closer, Newcastle's maritime historians and the Stockton Historical Society felt that it should be commemorated in some appropriate way. Just as important as the fate of the barque itself was the duty to commemorate the bravery of the rescue crew, some of whose descendants were still resident in Newcastle.

The Newcastle Maritime Museum was naturally involved in planning a centenary event, and one of its staff recalled that a gentleman from New Zealand had called at the Museum some years before, mentioning that he believed the ship's bell was still in existence, located on a farm in New Zealand. This being but one of a number of theories and rumours as to the bell's whereabouts, enquiries were made and were eventually narrowed down to the New Zealand hypothesis. Exhaustive investigation at last identified the bell's probable current owner as Dennis Ruddell, a New Zealand farmer. One of the foremost enthusiasts for research into the history of the *Adolphe* and its bell, Mr Bill Hillier, asked a colleague who was travelling in New Zealand to visit the Ruddell property and check the story. As it happened, everything fell into place.<sup>49</sup> Dennis Ruddell was delighted to have the opportunity to bring the bell to Newcastle and place it on loan to the city for six months so that it could be symbolically reunited with the vessel of which it had once been a part.

After an unveiling ceremony attended by various local dignitaries,<sup>50</sup> the bell of the *Adolphe* was taken to a spot on the Stockton breakwater adjacent to the remains of the barque itself, and at 10.20 a.m. on the morning of 30 September 2004 (one hundred years to the minute since it had rung out the distress signal on the Oyster Bank) it was rung again, this time by two descendants of the original crew of the lifeboat *Victoria*, Mary Loscocco and Alex Costa.<sup>51</sup> The ceremony was attended by many of those involved in the amazing history of the *Adolphe* and of the discovery of its bell, including Dennis Ruddell and his wife Margaret. With the permission of the French Embassy in Canberra, the French flag was flown for the occasion.<sup>52</sup>

71.<sup>53</sup> Dennis Ruddell died of cancer on 1 December 2004, at the age of

*University of Newcastle*

### Notes

1. I am deeply indebted to Newcastle maritime historian Mr Bill Hillier for his generosity in making available to me a great deal of material concerning the *Adolphe* and its rescue by the lifeboat *Victoria*, as well as personal information concerning Mr Dennis Ruddell and his acquisition of the ship's bell. At the Auchmuty Library Archives, University of Newcastle, Mr Gionni DiGravio and Mr Gregg Heathcote provided invaluable assistance, for which I am extremely grateful. Thanks are also due to Mr Keith Powell of the Hunter Port Corporation for facilitating access to the Corporation's archives.
2. Information concerning the firm of A.-D. Bordes et Fils and the construction of the *Adolphe* is taken from Marthe Barrance, *La Vie commerciale de la route du Cap Horn au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: l'armement A.-D. Bordes et fils* (<http://historique-marine-france.com/cap-horniers.bibliographie.htm>); Brigitte and Yvonnick Le Coat, *Cap-Horniers français*, vol. 1: *Mémoire de marins des voiliers de l'armement Bordes*, Douarnenez, le Chasse-marée; Rennes, Editions Ouest-France, 2002; and J. Randier, *Grands voiliers français, 1880-1930*, Paris, Editions MDV, 2000.
3. Anecdotal information from Mr Bill Hillier.
4. Figures relating to sailing ship construction are from Barrance, p. 256 and Le Coat, p. 14. The *Alexandre* made only three voyages, reported missing in 1903 while being towed across the North Sea from Dunkirk towards the Tyne. The full crew of 33 went with her. The *Antonin* was more fortunate, making 20 voyages in all, while the *Valparaiso* continued in service until 1925, being towed to Dunkirk in 1927 to be scrapped. (Information from Mr Bill Hillier.)
5. Barrance, p. 256.
6. Alain Villiers and Henri Picard, *The Bounty Ships of France: The Story of the French Cape Horn Sailing Ships*, London, Patrick Stephens Limited, 1972 (jacket blurb).
7. *Lloyd's Register—Sailing Vessels, 1903-1904*.
8. Information from Mr Bill Hillier.
9. "La maison Bordes est fidèle aux mêmes noms de baptême — en fait les prénoms des fils de son fondateur — lorsqu'elle remplace ses vieux navires. C'est ainsi que le premier bâtiment lancé, par un beau soleil, le dimanche 22 mars 1902, est le troisième *Adolphe*. La marraine, madame Adolphe Bordes, voit la superbe coque rouge agrémentée de gris perle avec sa lisse blanche et noire descendre rapidement le ber de lancement avant de pouvoir y briser la bouteille de champagne : le lourd voilier déjà équipé de ses quatre bas-mâts a

vraisemblablement eu raison d'un maillon de retenue plus faible et a soudain pris son élan. Les quelque vingt ouvriers occupés aux ultimes préparatifs ont le temps de fuir ou de se protéger. Dans un fracas d'échafaudages volant en éclats, le premier-né de la nouvelle lignée dunkerquoise fait ainsi brutalement connaissance avec son élément après avoir, Dieu sait comment, ralenti sa course folle. Tout se termine bien." (Le Coat, p. 14)

10. Various spellings of the first captain's name are found in the documentation (e.g. Gosselin, Gosslin), but Goslin is the form found in *Lloyd's Register* and Le Coat, which are the most authoritative sources.
11. There is no definite evidence that Layec took over from Goslin after the second voyage, but the accounts of the *Adolphe's* earliest voyages suggest that this was the case. A written account by maritime historian Mr Percy Hunt of Stockton gives details of the ship's first four voyages, as reproduced here. Brigitte and Yvonnick Le Coat talk of Layec setting out for Australia "après avoir transporté une cargaison de charbon anglais au Chili" (p. 220), which appears to be a reference to the *Adolphe's* third voyage.
12. Information from City of Dunkirk Archives, provided by M. Pierre Seillan, Chargé d'Affaires at the French Embassy in Canberra (letter of 30 August 2004 to Mr Bill Hillier).
13. The account of the *Adolphe's* stranding and the rescue of the crew is based chiefly on the report printed in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* of 1 October 1904, headed: "THE FRENCH BARQUE ADOLPHE / STRANDED ON THE OYSTER BANK / CREW SAVED BY THE LIFEBOAT / A GALLANT RESCUE / THE WRECK IN A TREMENDOUS SEA". There are also written accounts by Mr Bill Hillier and others.
14. The tug *Hero* was built in South Shields, England, and launched in 1892. It sank in Sydney harbour in 1940 whilst in tow of the *Northumberland*, but in 1944 was raised by the US navy and refitted for service. It was lost while trying to help the freighter *Bulwarra* in Port Kembla harbour on 13 July 1960. (See Mike Scanlon, "Wreck of the Adolphe", *Newcastle Herald*, 24 June 2004.) The lifeboat *Victoria*, named in honour of Queen Victoria, was built by Forrest & Sons of London at a cost of £800 and launched in Newcastle on 27 May 1897. At the end of its service, it was preserved, handed over to the Newcastle Maritime Museum in 1977, and completely restored to mark its centenary in 1997. The *Ajax*, built in 1873, was towing punts when, in 1896, it was announced that she would become the new pilot steamer. After an eighteen-month conversion and refitting in Sydney, the *Ajax* returned to Newcastle and served the port for 30 years as the pilot steamer (information from Mr Percy Hunt).
15. Information from Mr Bill Hillier and from Newcastle Maritime Museum.
16. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 October 1904. The report is inaccurate in stating that the *Adolphe* had been deposited on top of the wreck of the *Colonist*, though perhaps a completely accurate report was not possible until a subsequent inspection had taken place. The *Colonist*, a 2286-ton steamship, had been

wrecked on the Oyster Bank on 9 September 1894, close to the wrecks of the *Lindus* and the *Wendouree* (see note 18 below).

17. Information from Mr Bill Hillier.
18. The known wrecks were listed by Norm Barney in the *Newcastle Herald*, 26 May 1994.
19. Information from marine archaeologist Tim Smith of the NSW Heritage Office, quoted in the *Newcastle Herald*, 1 October 2004. The Oyster Bank had been recognized by Henri Rochefort as a particularly dangerous stretch of water—though he thought this was because of an underlying belt of coral—when he and his companions were approaching Newcastle harbour in 1874. See Kenneth R. Dutton, “Henri Rochefort and his Companions in Australia”, *Explorations*, n° 32, June 2002, p. 12.
20. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 October 1904.
21. See, for example, Mike Scanlon, “Our Own Shipwreck Coast”, *Newcastle Herald*, 29 July 2004; “Bell Tolls for Unsung Heroes”, *Newcastle Herald*, 25 September 2004.
22. Allen McKinnon was to die suddenly on 17 January 1906 at the age of 58. Assistant coxswain Antonio Costa, who took part in the rescue of the *Adolphe*, then took McKinnon’s place as chief coxswain. He died on 17 January 1917 at the age of 61.
23. The *Wendouree* was a 1640-ton steamship which was wrecked on 20 July 1898 on the Oyster Bank. The *Lindus* was a 1679-ton steamship, wrecked near the *Wendouree* on 4 June 1899. (Both listed by Norm Barney in the *Newcastle Herald*, 26 May 1994.)
24. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 October 1904.
25. Information from Mr Bill Hillier and *Newcastle Morning Herald* report, 1 October 1904.
26. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 October 1904.
27. Information from a pamphlet in the Newcastle Maritime Museum.
28. Raymond Meredith, “The Tough Captain Cried on the Beach”, *The World’s News* (Sydney), 12 June 1954.
29. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 10 October 1904.
30. On Georges Biard d’Aunet, see Ivan Barko, “Georges Biard d’Aunet: the Life and Career of a Consul General”, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, XXXIX, 2002, pp. 271–291.
31. See note 35 below.
32. Material taken from obituary of John C. Reid, *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 21 March 1932. Reid put out an annual brochure, proclaiming himself as “John Reid, Shipping, Colliery and Insurance Agent, General Merchant, Exporter of Coal, Coke, Wheat, Wool and Australian Hardwoods. Importer of Lumber, Colliery Requisites and General Merchandise. Agence Consulaire de France.” He had premises at 11 Watt Street, Newcastle, and was the agent for, amongst other firms, Messageries Maritimes and the Union Commerciale et de Navigation Calédonienne, Noumea. (John Reid Limited Brochure, Auchmuty

- Library Archives, University of Newcastle.) His uncle, Sir George Reid, was Prime Minister of Australia from August 1904 to July 1905.
33. The document records the handing-over to Reid by Layec of a number of papers, including the ship's articles and log, registration papers, punishment book, inventory, leave register, list of postal despatches, ship's crew, etc. Reid undertakes to forward these papers to the French Consul General in Sydney (University of Newcastle, Auchmuty Library Archives A6462). The spelling "Layce" (in Reid's handwriting) could conceivably be read as "Layec", but in view of the fact that the spelling "Layce" is also used in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* report of 1 October 1904, it seems that both Reid and the reporter had made the same error. Perhaps it was Reid who gave the reporter the wrong name; or perhaps Reid had read the incorrect report in the newspaper.
34. Some of the duties of the Consular Agent are particularly worthy of note. Reid's papers contain a pro forma to be completed in the case of a soldier who had gone Absent Without Leave (*un insoumis*) but who had decided to hand himself in: in this case, the Agent Consulaire had to fill in a form stating that,
- touché de repentir pour le délit qu'il a commis et désireux de bénéficier de l'amnistie accordée à l'occasion de la mobilisation générale, il vient volontairement et spontanément se présenter devant Nous, Nous requérant de lui donner acte de sa soumission et d'assurer son renvoi en France, où il s'oblige à se mettre à la disposition de l'autorité militaire pour être par elle statué ce que de droit.

Other orders to the Consular Agent show almost a sense of humanity: a letter to Reid from the Consul General dated 13 November 1920 reads:

On the occasion of the discharge of sailors from their ships, to be sent to France, I beg to remind you that whatever the cause of discharge may be, the Captain must give them a little pocket money—the amount varies according to the conduct of the man—as they cannot remain several weeks without a penny.

(Reid papers, Auchmuty Archives A6462, University of Newcastle.)

35. "D'après le contenu de votre lettre du 7 de ce mois, il est probable que vous préférerez correspondre avec ce Consulat Général en langue anglaise, et je n'y ai pas d'objection. Toutefois, je désirerais pouvoir écrire en langue française à votre Agence Consulaire. Vous m'obligerez de me faire savoir si vous n'y voyez pas d'inconvénient.

Dans vos rapports avec les navires de commerce français, il est nécessaire qu'il soit fait usage de notre langue, la seule que la plupart de nos marins et même de nos capitaines, connaissent. Par conséquent, les services d'un interprète [*sic*] seront indispensables.

Sans vous faire une obligation d'accepter l'un d'eux, je vous signale comme paraissant en état de vous être utiles comme interprètes, M. M. Molinas, qui a rendu de bons services à M. Mac Dermott, en cette qualité, et M. F. B. Fulton, qui m'a été tout particulièrement recommandé, et est agent du 'Year Book of Australia'."

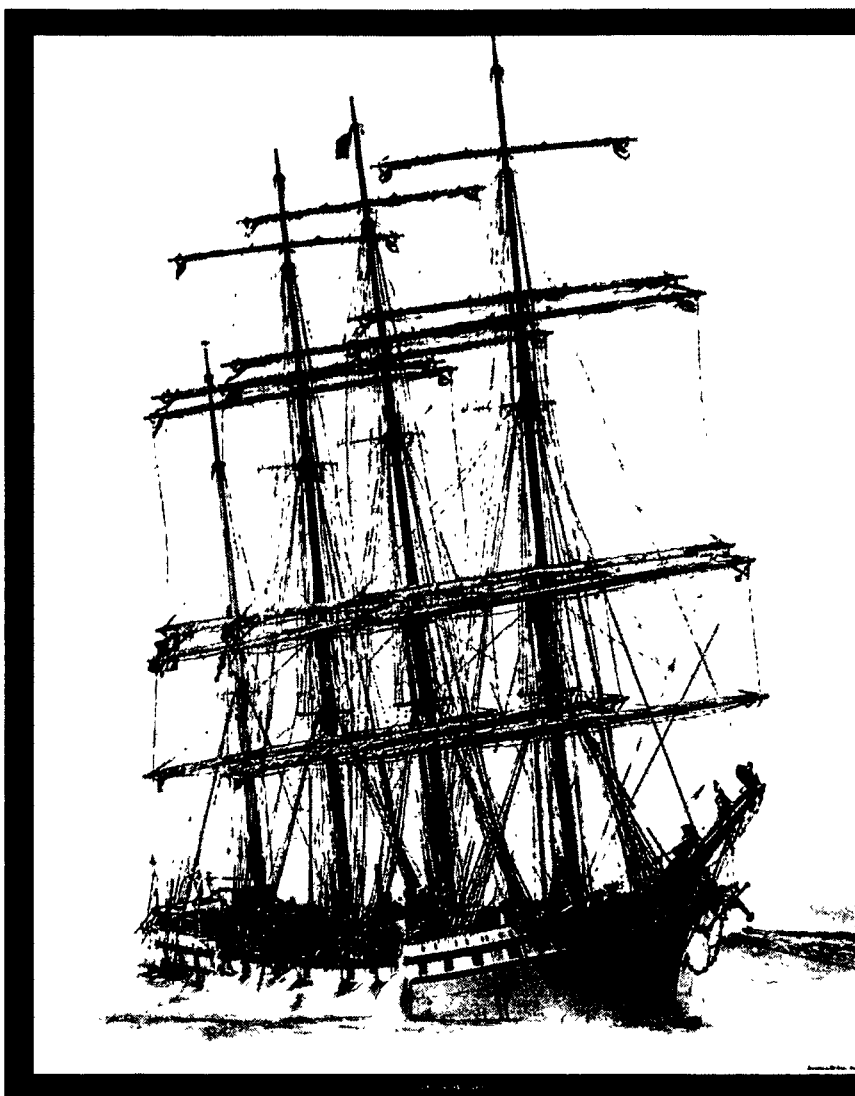
- (Reid papers, Auchmuty Library Archives A6462, University of Newcastle.)
36. Notice of the auction is given in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* of 6 October 1904.
  37. Information from *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 7 October 1904; also from the Newcastle Maritime Museum and Mr Bill Hillier. It is believed that the *Adolphe's* steel spars ended up at J. and A. Brown's Hexham workshop and were used as spear legs in portable, makeshift tripods to carry chain blocks for lifting heavy items. (Mike Scanlon, "Wreck of the *Adolphe*", *Newcastle Herald*, 24 June 2004)
  38. Crew members were paid £12 per annum, the Coxswain (McKinnon) £50, and the Second Coxswain (Costa) £25. In addition, there was a special payment each time the boat was called out, of £1/5/- for each member of the crew, £2 for the Second Coxswain and £3 for the Coxswain. The payments were doubled in difficult conditions. These wages were high by the standards of the time, but the highly dangerous nature of the work needs to be kept in mind.
  39. On Biard d'Aunet's presentation, see *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 6 October 1904 and the handwritten report in the Newcastle Pilot Station log book for 7 October 1904; information also from Mr Bill Hillier. The photograph "Savers and Saved" is preserved in the Auchmuty Library Archives, University of Newcastle.
  40. Reported in *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 10 October 1904.
  41. Of the names listed, the only two of which we can be sure are Layec and Huchon (see note 43 below). Others which are likely to be correct are Jacquet, Legrand (or Le Grand), Chapelain, Dupont, Marot and Vaillant. Those referred to as "boys" or "cabin boys" are the French *mousses*. (Crew—*marins*—were divided into three groups: *matelots* (of different grades), *novices* and *mousses*). (Reid papers, Auchmuty Library Archives A6462, University of Newcastle)
  42. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 10 October 1904.
  43. Huchon is quoted by Brigitte and Yvonnick Le Coat as follows: "L'*Adolphe*, mal remorqué et gêné par une barre, partit à la dérive et alla s'écraser sur les carcasses de vieux bateaux qui jalonnaient éloquemment les contours de cette baie inhospitalière. L'équipage fut sauvé par le canot de sauvetage de Newcastle. Le bateau était perdu. Tout le monde, soit 28 hommes fut rapatrié à Marseille par un vieux paquebot calédonien, qui mit trois mois à faire le voyage." (Op. cit., p. 220)
  44. Information from Mr Bill Hillier.
  45. Information from Mr Bill Hillier.
  46. Letter from Wharf Inspector, Newcastle, dated 3 August 1983, in response to a letter dated 15 July 1983 addressed to the Port Manager, Maritime Services Board, Newcastle. (Newcastle Port Corporation Archives)
  47. Annotation by Port Engineer, dated 4 October 1983 (loc. cit.).
  48. The "Shipwreck Walk" was created by the Newcastle Port Corporation (formerly the Maritime Services Board, Newcastle) on the initiative of the New-

castle Marine Archaeological Society, the Shiplovers' Society of Newcastle and the Newcastle Region Maritime Museum.

49. How the bell found its way into an Auckland cinema has not been established. A number of theories have been advanced, one of them proposing that the bell was taken from the *Adolphe* by employees of J. and A. Brown, placed on board another ship as a trophy, and deposited in J. and A. Brown's Auckland office; during World War Two, when possession of a bell marked *Adolphe* might have exposed its owner to suspicion, the bell might well have been placed beneath the floorboards of the office and not removed when the office was subsequently converted into a cinema. Another story (equally unproven) involves a prank by drunken sailors.
50. The bell was unveiled at a ceremony held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Newcastle, and hosted by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cr John Tate, on 2 September 2004.
51. Antonio Costa was Second Coxswain, and later Coxswain, of the lifeboat *Victoria* (see note 22 above). Vito Loscocco was a member of the lifeboat's crew. Both men were Italian migrants who joined the Newcastle Lifeboat Service in 1883, having already (in 1882) been awarded the first gold medals for bravery in New South Wales with the rescue of the passenger steamship, the *New England*, at the entrance to the Clarence River. (Information from Mr Bill Hillier)
52. The bell was on public display at the Newcastle Regional Museum from 1 October 2004 to 31 January 2005. After Dennis Ruddell's death it was moved to Queensland by his family, in whose possession it currently remains.
53. Dennis Clive Ruddell was born in Whangarei, New Zealand, on 27 November 1933. (Information from his widow, Mrs Margaret Ruddell)

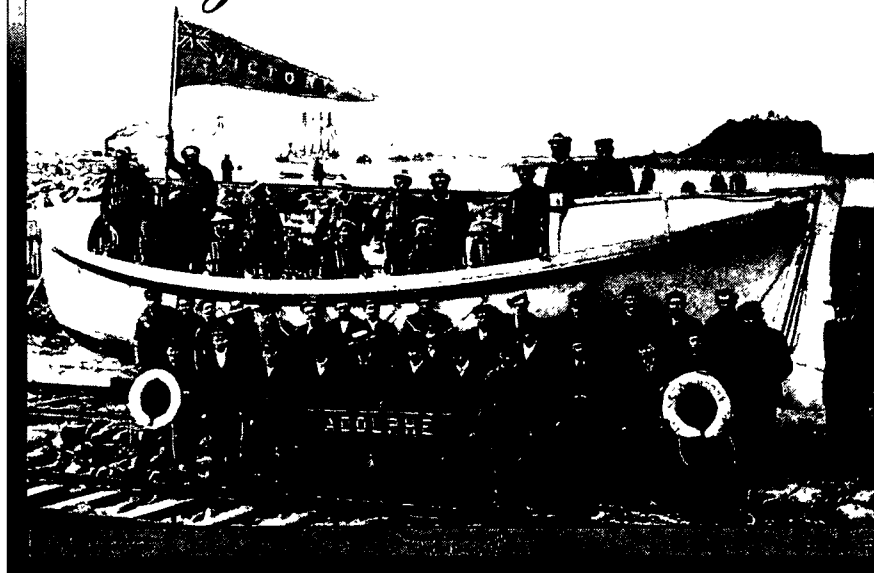


Photo courtesy Mr Bill Hillier

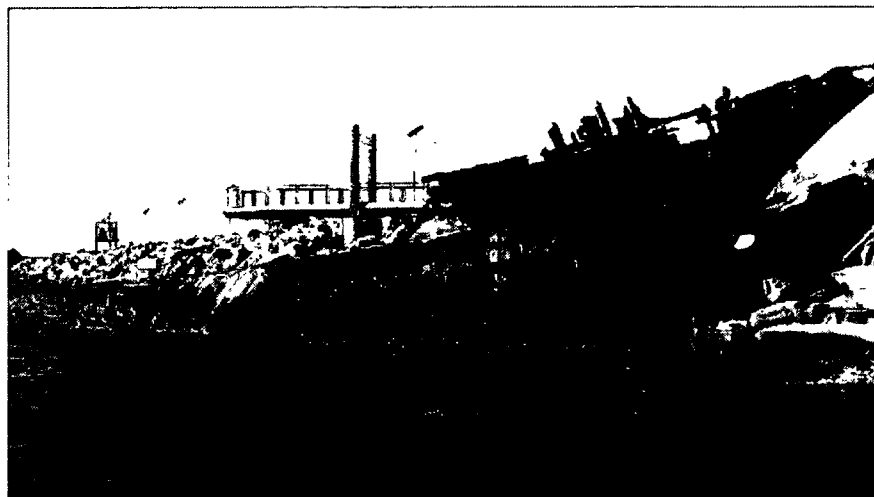


The *Adolphe*, courtesy Newcastle Maritime Museum

# *Legends in Their Time*



Crew of the lifeboat *Victoria*, with the French crew of the *Adolphe* below,  
courtesy *Newcastle Morning Herald*



The wreck of the *Adolphe*, courtesy Newcastle and Hunter District  
Historical Society