

FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



The June issue of *Nautical Research Journal* will include an article developed from my talk on the plating of iron and steel ships, presented at the 1995 NRG conference here in Hampton Roads. As a bit of a preview, here is a marvelous quotation from an old English shipbuilding text:

... It is most important that the process of "screwing up" should be carefully and thoroughly done, so that the strakes may be set closely against the frames, and the butt straps against the plates.

—Samuel J.P. Thearle, *The Modern Practice of Shipbuilding*, London, 1886

If your reaction was like mine, you are smiling now, so contradictory is the relationship between today's slightly raunchy and usually derogatory connotation of "screwing up" and any notion of care and thoroughness. But the author was literally describing the process by which the formed and punched plates were initially secured to a ship's frames prior to riveting, using screw bolts with nuts as temporary fasteners. The quotation marks are his, presumably marking the quoted term as a bit of shipbuilders' jargon.

Use of care and thoroughness in all things is certainly good advice in our shipmodeling efforts; by such "screwing up" the British pioneered and led the world in iron and steel shipbuilding for a century.

As a case in point, a recent hobby magazine quoted a passage, apparently from competition rules of the Scale Ship Modelers' Association:

Commercially purchased plans do not necessarily count as documentation at regattas. You will need other items from your research to back them up for judges.

—Model Ship Club News, *Model Ship Builder* #104, November/December 1996

See Pilothouse pg. 2

To Build A Ship Model



Our speaker was once again Bob Comet and he continued with his presentation from last month, the planking of a wooden hull.

In addition to details that were most thoroughly covered and in the notes provided for our newsletter other relevant points were raised and discussed.

Answering a question regarding plank thickness, we were advised that planking of insufficient thickness may warp or buckle and of course planking too thick would be difficult to bend. A good rule of thumb would be to opt for a thickness of between one thirty second and one sixteenth of an inch depending upon the scale of ones model.

A note was also made relating to butted planking, to the effect that butted planks would not occur between gun ports. Reference was also made to planking at the turn of bilge. This can be a difficult area to cover, however it can be made easier with a bevel along the edges of adjoining planks. During this talk it was also noted that depending upon the complexity in the shape of particular hulls as many as four belts may be necessary in order to maintain a fair run of planking.

The use of stealer planks was also discussed as well as the reasoning for choosing certain styles.

Nibbing was covered as well and as this technique is also used on certain decks we were advised to begin with a well thought out deck plan.

In addition to reference sources listed in Bobs notes an additional title was introduced. *Historic Ship Models* by Wolfram Zu Manfeld can be obtained from Model Expo.

Our speaker gave us two nights of solid information and for those of us who have yet to embark upon more ambitious model building, he has given us insight, cleared away the mysteries and set us firmly on the right path.

See To Build pg. 2

MINUTES



The mate rung the bell at 2015 hours. The skipper asked for guests to be recognized but none were present. The treasurer gave his report and reminded the club that 1997 dues are due.

Old Business:

Jack Bobbitt contacted the Watermen's Museum about the use of their meeting room and he is waiting for them to get back to him. The Norfolk Naval Shipyard tour was rescheduled for May 17th.

New Business:

Jack Bobbitt had an invitation to the National Museum of American Art exhibition, *The Bard Brothers: Painting America Under Steam and Sail*. He would not be able to attend the exhibition and offered the invitation to the club membership.

Joe McCleary said he taking a model to Boston for the competition during the 1st week of June and would be willing to transport models for club members.

It was suggested that those wanting to attend the NRG convention in Boston make early reservations due to a limited number of rooms set aside for the attendees. The dates of the convention are October 30th - November 1st. The event will be held at the Summerville Holiday Inn. To make reservations call the inn at 1-617-628-1000.

There was a discussion pertaining to the banner for the Festival in the Park. It was noted that the festival is sponsored by the Newport News — and not associated with the museum.

Bob Comet gave the presentation, *Planking Part II*.

Show and Tell:

Jack Bobbitt

ARMING THE FLEET: U.S. Navy Ordnance in the Muzzle-Loading Era

By Spencer Tucker

This thorough examination of the development of naval guns through the Civil War clarifies the history of naval weaponry and rescues many important details from the oblivion of early naval manuals. 1989. 336 pages. 13 photos. 122 line drawings. Apps. Notes. Bibliog. Index. 7"x10". ISBN: 0-87021-007-6. List price: \$49.95

Bill Abbott had a propeller for his Arley Burke model. This fine piece of work was done by Kieth Bender.

Harvey Williams said that Rick Wellons has a good supply of Primavera wood.

The meeting was adjourned at 2130 hours.

Pilothouse From pg. 1

The intent of this is not clear to me, as any judged event seems rather late to require further research from a model-maker who has built from unacceptable drawings, and more research cannot correct the resultant problem. A major purpose of a club should be to help beginners (kindly and constructively, of course) early in the game when we sense that they may, for example, be using lousy plans. Like most of us, beginners don't know what they don't know; more experienced members may be very helpful, especially if asked. The beginner will "screw up" less if he or she proceeds with care and thoroughness, and develops a sense of when (and who) to ask.

—Alan Frazer

From the Past Skipper

My thanks to the club for the stationary and to John Cheevers for his design efforts. It was my pleasure to serve as your skipper. Friend ships with you members have been and will continue to be particularly rewarding.

Jack Bobbitt

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To Build from pg. 1

While it is certainly true that books are essential to our endeavors, the focus and interplay of human thought expressed within a group, is without doubt the icing on the cake.

Thank you Bob! We are certainly the beneficiaries of the efforts that you have made on our behalf.

Our speaker for the June meeting will be Joe McLeary. His subject will be fiberglass hull construction.

Graham Horne

Hull Planking Part II

Pre-bend plank to lie along frames smoothly. If required use ammonia water, hot water, steam, or heating iron. If wet, clamp in place and dry with hair dryer or heat lamp to speed up process. If using heating iron be careful that wood isn't burned, particularly if back of plank will show.

Fasten plank in place with glue on frames and adjacent plank. Wipe off excessive glue on back if they will show. It is good practice to also pin the planks in place using brass nails or trenails. Can be done while gluing or after gluing depending on what works best for you. If CYA glue is used pinning is highly recommended.

Alternate planking strakes from side to side. That is, after planking one strake on a hull side, plank the same corresponding strake on the other side. You may also use a plank fitted on one side as the pattern for the corresponding plank on the opposite side. If all the strake were attached to one side of the hull, forces may be set up that would result in an asymmetric or "banana" shaped hull.

Special Planks.

Stealers - Used to fill space in a planking belt, at stern normally, where median plank width won't over. Wedge shaped piece let into one or both adjacent planks (half checked or quarter checked).

Half Checked. Before fastening last normal plank, cut notch starting where normal plank would diverge from next plank, tapering back to edge. Cut notch half the plank width deep. Fasten the notched plank. Cut the plank to be used for a stealer to fit into the notch and into the stern rabbet. Lay, but don't fasten, the next normal plank lapping over the partially made stealer. Scribe along the bottom of the plank on to the stealer, and cut the top of the stealer to this line. Fasten stealer in place. Next plank should fit along top of stealer, and may be fastened if the fit is good.

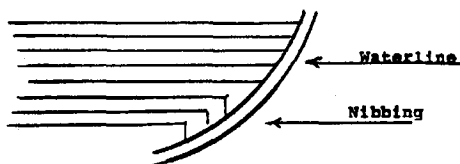
Quarter Checked. Cut notch only one quarter width into last normal plank. Cut stealer to fit into notch and cut forward edge of stealer projecting up one quarter plank width, tapering upward to full width. Don't fasten stealer. Lay next plank in place, place stealer over it, and trace the top of stealer onto plank. Fasten stealer into place and after cutting traced line to fit stealer top, fasten, into place



Drop Plank. Used where plank will be reduced to less than half I plank width at rabbet. Two types as illustrated below.



Nibbing. Used where rabbet angle at bow is so acute that fastener can't be inserted without unduly weakening the plank. Often used on fishing schooner bows, but not used above the water line.



Closing Strake or Shutter Plank. Used to complete the planking of the hull. This is the last plank fitted. It should be located between the turn of the bilge and the garboard in order to make it less noticeable. Top edge normally spiled. Width to bottom determined by measuring across gap. To get a good fit, cut a little over size and taper the edge so that it can be gradually fitted tightly into the opening.

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Smoothing. Use scrapers to good effect unless metal fasteners have been used. File and sand. If clear finish is to be used on plank on bulkhead model and treenails are used. dummy treenails should be inserted to represent all frames.

Finishing. Your option.

Deck Planking

Before planking the deck, put in beams, waterways, carlings, ledgers, and margin planks. It is better practice to attach hatch cabin trunks, and companionways and plank around them as would be done in full size construction. Simpler models overlook this and simply attach these structures on top of the deck.

Some ships have heavier planking, usually located along the length of the centerline, around masts, or under windlasses. If you put these in, rather than using a veneer overlay, do it before starting the regular deck planking. Use planking width according to plan. If this isn't given, the following generally applies: 16th century and before - 12 to 18 in.; 17th century - 10 to 16 in.; 18th century - 8 to 14 in.; 19th century, first half - 6 to 8 in.; 19th century and later 6 in. or less.

Plank from the centerline out, between the hatches first, gluing planks long enough to span the distance between them.

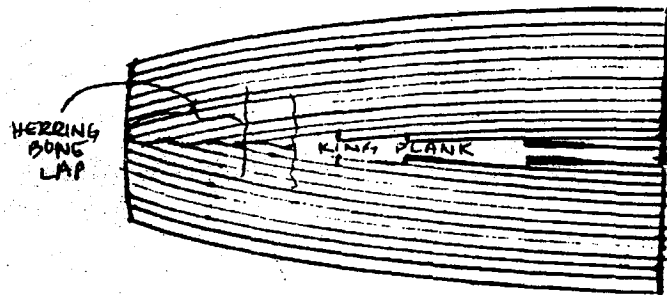
Once past this, scale length planking may be used showing butts, and using three plank or four plank butt shifts as for side planking. Butts should fall on deck beams.

Planking Patterns

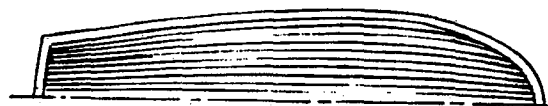
Parallel to centerline. Most commonly used pattern.



Parallel to deck edges. - Planks meet in a herring bone pattern along the centerline or are end nibbed into a king plank fitted along the centerline. Of ten used on the after ter half -decks of fishing schooners or poop decks of ships.



Parallel to Deck Edge and Centerline. Requires tapering of planks as in hull planking. Used mostly on large war ships. At bow, planks are chamfered off to fit against the margin plank.



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Nibbing or Jogging. Not used before about 1790.



After about 1850, treenails or nails should not be visible since fastenings would be covered by bung plugs with cross grain, matching the decking grain, and thus invisible at model scales normally used.

Bob Comet

1 to 1 SCALE

Foreign Warships scheduled to visit the Norfolk Naval Base during the summer of 1997.

June 3 -6 German Navy
Lutjens (D185), *Karlsruhe* (F212), *Friedberg* (A1413), *Spessart* (A1442), and *Oker* (A53)

June 16 -20 Japanese Navy (Training Ships)
Kashima (TV3508), and *Matsuyuki* (DD130)

August 7 - 18 NATO Standing Force
Witte de With (F813 - Netherlands), *Koln* (F211 - Germany),

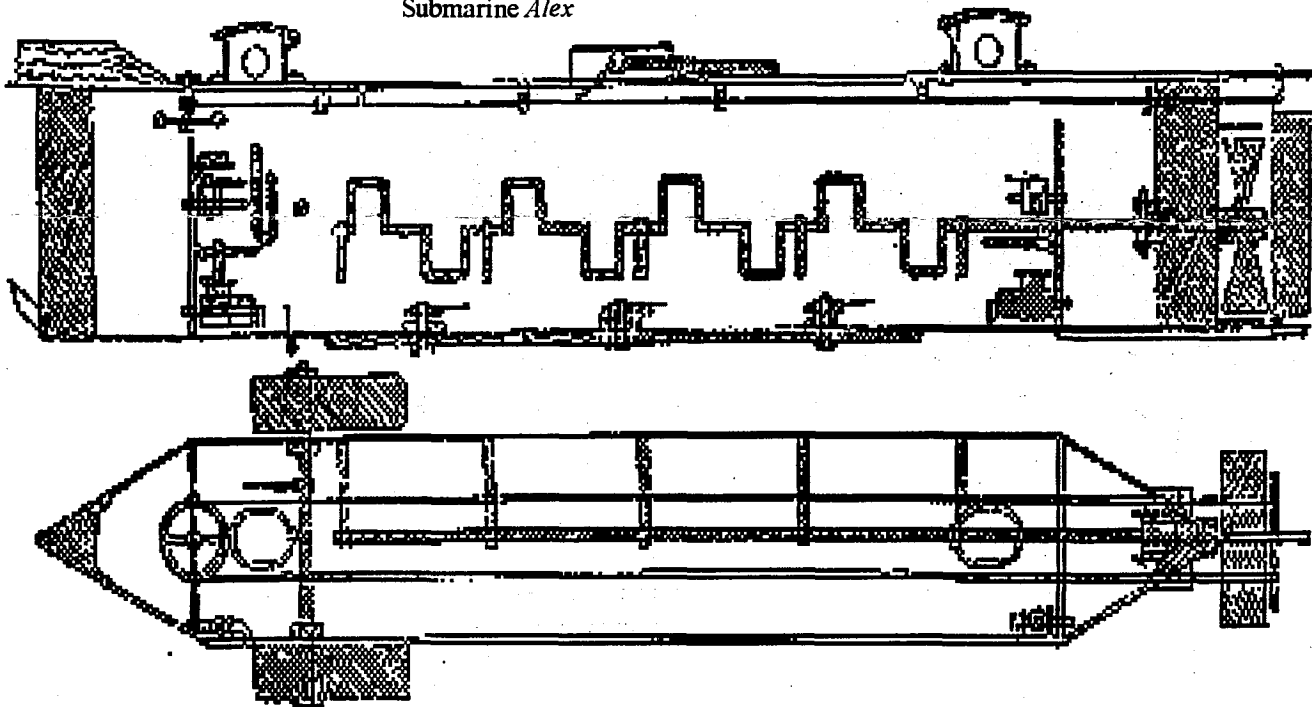
Vasco da Gama (F330 - Portugal), *London* (F95 - Britain), and *Peterson* (DD969 - U.S.). Arriving August 8, *St. Johns* (FF340 - Canada) and *Nils Joel* (F354 - Denmark).

These Naval vessels are normally open to visitors at scheduled times.

The naval base normally has two ships open for visitation on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1300 hours to 1630 hours. There is also one ship open at the Little Creek Amphibious Base.

Bill Clarke

Submarine Alex



NOTABLE EVENTS

JUNE

- 13 ☉ **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Ulrich Guenther

JULY

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Dean Sword
25-27 6th Sub Regatta; (Subcommitte) Groton, Cn.

AUGUST

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Southside Bunch
17 Task Force 50 Regatta; Lake Redman, York, Pa.

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 Warfare Exposition and Symposium: (USNI) Virginia Beach, Va.
12 **H.R.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Williamsburg Chapter AARP

OCTOBER

- 2-4 Naval History Symposium (USNA History Dept.), Annapolis Md.
10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Graham Horne
31-Nov 2 NRG Annual Conference; Boston, Mass.

NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Heinz Shiller

DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Jack Bobbitt

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Next meeting

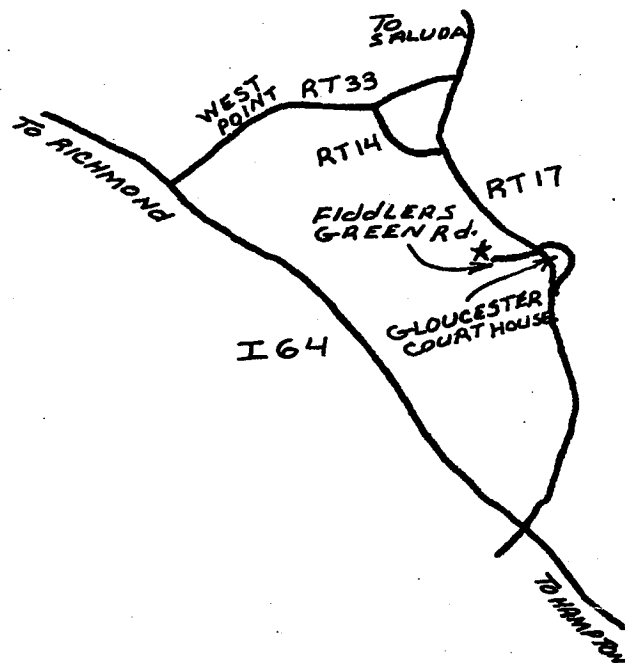
The next meeting will be hosted by Ulrich Guenther on June 13, 1997 at 2000 hours.
5637 Fiddlers Green Rd.
Gloucester, Va.
Telephone (757) 693-9732

From points south:

Stay on Rt. 17 north until the 3rd traffic light past Walmart. Turn left at Rt. 619 (Fiddlers Green Rd.) for ¼ mile. After crossing a small creek, it is the next driveway on the right, No. 5637. There is a red fence and a brown house up on a hill.

From points north:

Take I 64 south to exit 220. Go 5 miles past Westpoint and turn right on Rt. 14 to Rt. 17. Go 9 miles to the traffic light in Gloucester and turn right on Rt.619.



EDITORS NOTE

The editors encourage participation in the Logbook by the membership. Articles, tips, sources, plans, photos and news are welcome. Submissions should be received 15 days prior to the next meeting. Items may be submitted by mail to:
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11 Eldorado Ct.
Hampton, Va. 23669
E-mail: t.e.saunders@worldnet.att.net
FAX (prior arrangements required)