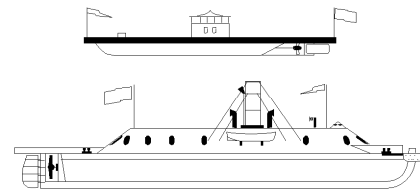


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook



No. 211

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

JANUARY, 2004

## FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



D'YOU HEAR THERE FORE AND AFT!

Happy New year to all, and best wishes for a prosperous 2004.

Many thanks to Jeanne and Jack Bobbitt for hosting the December meeting and auction in their home. We were all received with the typically warm Bobbitt hospitality, which causes so many of our members to look forward to the December meeting with such anticipation. As evidence, I counted 22 members and one guest present, which may not be a record attendance, but it must pretty close to it. Well done to First Mate Dave Baker for organizing the annual HRSMS auction, which he then presided over as auctioneer in great style. Dave's silver tongue teased so much money out of the usually tight membership that we raised over \$500.00 for the support of the Society. Thanks are also due to Eric Harfst, our in-house CPA, for keeping track of all the successful bids and for collecting the resulting funds. It should be noted that one winning bid came (by remote control) all the way from Baghdad, Iraq and was submitted by Pat McCarthy, who is serving in the Air Force over there. It was appropriate that Pt's successful remote control bid was on a remote control boat model. I'm sure we all wish Pat the best of luck as he serves his country in this dangerous region.

**BANQUET.** I want to remind all our members to mark their 2004 calendars for March 20th, which is the date of our annual banquet at the Radisson Inn in Hampton. We will be sending out a flyer shortly with the menu and prices so members and their guests can sign up.

**FOUNDER'S AWARD.** One of the high lights of the annual banquet is the presentation of the Founder' Award to the member who has, over time, done the most to support the best interests of our society. I have asked Bob Comet, as a former award winner and as a recent Skipper, to head up the nominating committee, which includes John Cheevers and Bill Clarke as members. Please send your nominations for the Founder's Award to Bob by telephone, snail mail or (preferably) by e-mail (RComet316@msn.com), with courtesy copies to John (jfcheevers@juno.com) and Bill (theclarkee@juno.com). Since the next meeting is at Bob's house, you can write your nomination on a piece of paper and hand it to him that night. Since we are working on a pretty tight schedule, I ask that all nominations be submitted to Bob

(Continued on page 2)

## Mystery Photo



Answer to Mystery Photo No. 210: I suppose we could call this month's submission a "Mystery within the Mystery Photo"; follow along and you will see. If you identify this ship and remember your history, perhaps you will reveal details of the legend that haunts this vessel. This double Mystery is an "at-large" submission that Bill was quick to distance himself from – very curious, indeed! Nevertheless, it is a good image to review – quite possibly the first in this column not associated with any Navy or Government. I would expect to see a flurry of responses for this enigma.

In actuality, and most likely because of the Holidays, I received only three responses. Veteran players Dave Baker, Bob Comet, and new player Gene Andes all sent very informative bits about this impressive ship. If you study the photograph you quickly realize two things: 1) the photograph is very old – the vessel was constructed some time ago, and 2) the vessel is very large. In fact, this simple vessel is enormous when compared with contemporary ships from her time. To prove the point, just count the masts and smoke stacks and look how the lifeboats seem to disappear at the rail.

So, what kind of vessel has a plumb stem with round forefoot, dead-flat sheer, huge side paddlewheels, and 5-funnels and six masts? Dave Baker, Bob Comet, and Gene Andes think they have the answer. Dave writes: "I believe this month's photo shows Isambard Kingdom Brunel's outsized masterpiece, the *Great Eastern*." Bob, on the other hand expresses a more kindred relationship to the vessel when he writes this: "Our ship was launched in 1858 as a huge passenger ship, capable of carrying 4,000 passengers or 10,000 troops." Bob's response confused me until I read further; then I understood he was using the possessive pronoun "our" to mean the object of the Societies monthly Mystery Photo when he added: "The name of the mystery ship is *The Great Eastern*, originally to be named *Leviathan*." Finally, Gene Andes had this to say: "Looks like the *Great Eastern* during her 1860 visit to NYC on her maiden voyage, except that it is out of the water."

With the vessel identified as *Great Eastern*, these three offer these statistics that help to define the ship. Dave and Bob agree that the vessel was 692-ft long and 82-ft wide, although Dave specifies an extreme beam that includes the paddle boxes of 118-ft. Gene states an overall length of 693-ft and a width of 120-ft. Bob alone gives the draft as 29.3-ft. While Dave indicates a full load displacement of 27,000-tons,

(Continued on page 2)

(Pilothouse—Continued from page 1)

Comet and the other committee members not later than January 23. I would like to remind all members that the Founder's Award can only be presented once, so the following members, who have received the award at some time in the past are not eligible: Jack Bobbitt, Alan Frazer, Bill Clarke, John Cheevers, Joe McCleary, Graham Horne and Tom Saunders. All current members of the HRSMS may submit nominations. A ballot will then be included in the February Logbook, so that members can vote for the nominees.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS.** In accordance with the HRSMS Constitution and Bylaws, January is the month in which we nominate officers to be elected at the February meeting. The Skipper and First Mate may serve no more than three consecutive one-year terms. The Skipper (myself) and First Mate (Dave Baker) have just completed one year of service. The Clerk (Tom Saunders) and Purser (John Cheevers) may serve as long as the membership pleases. So, if anyone would like to submit nominations for any of these offices, be prepared to do so at the January meeting. If there are no nominations, I will direct the Clerk at the February meeting (in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws) to cast a single ballot to reelect each one of the named incumbents to another one year term.

**RICHMOND ANTIQUE TOOL SHOW.** Several of our members attended the Richmond Antique Tool Show on January 3rd, and a number of purchases were made. I encourage those who made purchases to bring them to the February meeting as part of "Show and Tell" to let the other members see what can be obtained as such shows for very reasonable prices. Bill Clarke was seen to obtain some marbles to make up for those that he is known to be missing. Also, don't forget Cabin Fever Model Engineering Exhibition will be held in York, PA on January 17th and 18th. For further info, see [www.cabinfeverexpo.com](http://www.cabinfeverexpo.com). Maybe Bill can find some more marbles.

THAT IS ALL

Joe McCleary

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## MINUTES

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HRSMS Monthly Meeting  
December 2003  
Host, Jack Bobbitt  
Guest: Mark Foster

The meeting was called to order by the skipper at 2000 hours.

Old Business: A discussion of the 2005 NRG Conference was

(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 1)

Bob gives the light-ship displacement at 18,914-tons. While they agree on the total paying passenger capacity, Dave breaks the number down into the following categories: 800 1st-class passengers, 2,000 2nd-class, and 1,200 3rd-class, plus an additional 400 crewmen. And while Bob mentions a 10,000-troop transport capacity, Dave mentions a cargo capacity of 6000-tons.

Bob and Gene state that the hull was made from iron, but only Dave and Bob state that the hull was double. Dave states the double hull extended to the main deck and that the deck was doubled, too, while Bob says the double hull ended at the waterline and the hull was divided into 10-water tight compartments. Dave provides an excellent visual reference with this statement: "She had a double hull, with the inner and outer hulls separated by 2 ft. 4 in., and the main deck was also doubled, probably to strengthen that long flush-decked hull."

While all three mention the combined sail, screw, paddle wheel propulsion system, only Dave and Bob indicate a designed top speed of 15-knots, which Dave claims the vessel never attained. Also, Dave and Bob agree on the diameter of the prop at 24-ft, but Dave indicates a paddle wheel diameter of 56-ft while Bob gives the dimension at 58-ft. Dave also states that the six masts could support 58,000-ft of sail.

According to Dave the ship was ordered in 1854, was completed in 1858, and sold for scrap in 1888. As Bob indicates, Great Eastern was the largest vessel in the world for over 20-years (or during her lifetime.) All agree she was a general failure as a passenger vessel. Dave indicates that the hull rolled badly while the ship was on her maiden voyage carrying all of 30 (Bob claims 36) paid passengers. They also agree that the vessel found a totally unexpected, and ultimately most useful, role as an underwater telegraph cable layer. Bob says it best: "Although she was a failure as a passenger ship, she developed her fame as a cable layer, laying the first trans Atlantic telegraph cable. During 1865 to 1873 she operated in this role, laying a total of 4 trans Atlantic cables plus one from England to the Orient." I might add that due to cable breakage and lost (dropped) ends it took more than one try to lay some of these cables.

Only Gene attempted to place the image in the photograph. "Looks like the Great Eastern during her 1860 visit to NYC on her maiden voyage, except that it is out of the water. The ship left Southampton on June 17 for her trip to New York." Later in his response he added this: "... the ship's propeller shaft had worn badly during the voyage to NY, and upon her return to Milford Haven in the Fall, she was placed on the grid at Milford to be 'fitted with an new stern tube of tough South American lignum vitae wood in a brass jacket'. Perhaps the mystery photo is from that refitting. The mystery photo is very much like the one in "The Great Iron Ship" by James Dugan, Harper and Brothers, NY, 1953, showing the *Great Eastern* moored portside against the dock and the caption states it is moored in the North River, at the lumber wharf, at the foot of Bank Street. (That picture is credited to the Mariner's Museum.)"

Bob offers this bit about the vessel's design: "The

(Continued on page 3)

(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 2)

ship was so large that the original plans were to incorporate two 100' tug boats carried on platforms aft of the paddle wheels, as it was feared that the harbors in which it would sail would not have tug boats sufficiently powerful to handle her. This was not carried out, although a painting of the ship in Alan Villiers' *Men, Ships, and the Sea* show the tug boats in place." He also offered this item, which deals with the second mystery I mentioned in the opening paragraph: "It was believed by many that a riveter had been enclosed alive in the double bottom, and the ghost of this riveter supposedly accounted for the ship's bad financial luck. It was rumored that when the ship was ultimately scrapped that a skeleton was found in her double bottom."

In addition to Gene's aforementioned photograph, Bob and Dave list their reference material: Bjorn Landstrom's *The Ship*; Allan Villiers' *Men, Ships, and the Sea*; and Peter Kemp's *The History of Ships*. Also, one of the best, short versions of *Great Eastern's* story is found in an obscure reference book written by William Avery Baker and Tre Tryckare. Titled *The Engine Powered Vessel*, the book traces the development of mechanical, motive power in ships from the earliest references to what was then state of the art in 1964. In this book, I find that two men, not Brunel alone, should share the glory and infamy of *Great Eastern's* design and building. That other fellow was shipbuilder John Scott Russell.

From 1854 to 1858, *Great Eastern* was under construction in Scott Russells' shipyard located on the Isle of Dogs, in London's East end. A product of Brunel's mind and Russells brawn, this ship outclassed anything building or built for over 20-years. Her intended purpose was to carry passengers from London to India and Australia without having to stop for fuel. Considered an oddity because of her huge size, a skeptical public refused to place its trust in her. One of the more interesting things about her building was the intended sideways launch that went awry and took over two months of very hard labor to correct. The cost associated with completing her launch exceeded the remaining budget and severely delayed completion. Ultimately, the ship was a failure at its intended role.

*Great Eastern* cost Brunel his health and Russell his shipyard. At the end of its days, in August 1888, having been used as a fairground and advertising hoarding, the fate of the ship was sealed when it was sold for scrap. Deconstruction work on the ship started on January 1, 1889, on the banks of the Mersey. Taking the iron hull apart was a matter of brute force, and over the next two years men chiseled, levered, and hammered its plates apart until there was nothing left.

John Cheevers

**Mystery Photo** Contact  
John Cheevers by mail, e-mail  
or telephone if you know what  
it is. [jfccheevers@juno.com](mailto:jfccheevers@juno.com)



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## NOTABLE EVENTS

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### JANUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Comet  
Tips on Rigging and Block Rounding machine, Jack Bobbitt

### FEBRUARY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Alan Frazer  
Election of Officers  
How to make art work and other tips on ordering brass etchings, John Cheevers

- 29 Cabin Boy's Birthday

### MARCH

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Krumpen

### APRIL

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Southside Bunch  
30-May 2 Western Ship Model Conference

### MAY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bill Clarke

### JUNE

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

### JULY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

### AUGUST

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

### SEPTEMBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

### OCTOBER

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

### NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller

### DECEMBER

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

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## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



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Skipper: Joe McCleary (757) 253-1802  
Mate: Dave Baker (757) 565-7991  
Purser: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955  
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580  
Historian: Len Wine (757) 566-8597  
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955  
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809  
Tom Saunders (757)-850-0580  
Webmaster: Greg Harrington

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## Next Meeting

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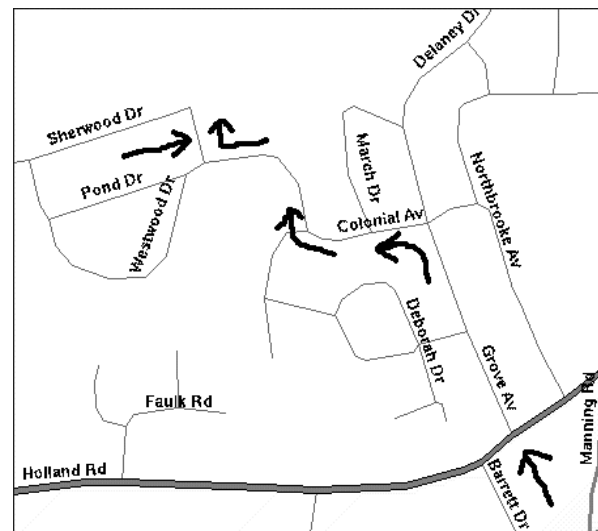
**Date:** January 9, 2004

**Time:** 2000 Hours

**Place:** 316 Sherwood Drive, Suffolk, Va.

**Host:** Bob Comet

For those coming from Richmond, take either 460 E or 64 E. From 460 E, proceed until it intersects 58 W. Proceed on 58 W, staying on 58 bypass. On the third stop light after 58 by pass joins 58 bus., turn right onto Grove Ave. Take second left onto Colonial. Take second right onto Pond. Take first right onto Sherwood. House is seventh house on right at 316 Sherwood Drive. phone 757 934 1279. For those coming via 64 E, take either James River Bridge (Mercury Blvd exit) or continue to 664 S and cross Monitor Merrimac bridge tunnel. Those taking James River Bridge, follow route 32 (state) south to 58 W then proceed as above. Those taking 664, proceed to 58 W (Suffolk exit 13) and further proceed as above. For those coming from Newport News or Hampton, take either the James River Bridge or 664 S and proceed as above. For those coming from Norfolk, Portsmouth, or Virginia Beach take 64 E to 58 W, or take 264 W to 58W and proceed as above.



*(Minutes—Continued from page 2)*

held. It was announced that the HRSMS Annual Banquet would be held on Saturday, March 20 at the Radisson Hotel in Hampton.

**New Business:** John Cheevers said that he received a letter from Gene Andes and there has been a change of address.

**Show & Tell:** Due to the auction, Show & Tell was not held.

The meeting was adjourned at 2012 hours to an auction conducted by Dave Baker, with Eric Harfst as cashier. Dave's wit added spice to the event. A full report will be given at the January meeting