

FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



NOW DO YOU HEAR THERE FORE AND AFT –

Many thanks to Bill Clarke for hosting the May meeting of the HRSMS at his home. We had a very long business meeting and discussed many issues. We must all be getting older, or we are all watching our waist lines, because there seemed to be more strawberries and ice cream left over than usual in spite of the good attendance.

The NRG Conference Planning Committee held a meeting this past month in reaction to a number of developments and has made significant further progress in planning for 2005. Bill Clarke will give a report on these developments at the meeting in June.

Many thanks also to Bob Comet who continues to run our lecture series on the many aspects of ship model building in an outstanding manner. Bob handed out questionnaires to all attendees at the May meeting to get a better idea of what subjects members continue to be interested in, especially since we now have a number of new members. If you have not returned your questionnaire to Bob, please do so as soon as possible. If you did not attend last month's meeting and you would like to fill out a questionnaire, contact Bob by phone or e-mail and he will arrange to get one to you.

Congratulations to our Web Master, Greg Harrington, who continues to improve our web site in many ways. He now has established a "members only" section, protected by a password that includes such helpful information as an up-to-date roster with addresses (snail mail and e-mail) and phone numbers.

As part of Show and Tell, John Cheevers gave us an update on his project to build three identical models of a local tugboat. John's work is outstanding. John also gave us a few words on progress that is being made by The Mariners' Museum to bring the Monitor Center into existence. As part of this effort, Northrup Grumman Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. will build a full size "evocative" model of USS Monitor that will be included in the Monitor Center. John is one of the leaders of this project at Newport News. The word for the last meeting was E-V-O-C-A-T- I-V-E! Can you say "evocative"? Model builders have spent years and reams of paper arguing about the definition of a "museum quality model". Now we can argue about evocative models.

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Mystery Photo



The May mystery ship brought out a good response from folks interested in the steel navy era. John Cheevers got both the ship's identification and the year of the photo spot on, perhaps because of his expertise on the subject of aircraft carriers.

The ship certainly looks like an aircraft carrier, but the "duck" test (if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and squawks like a duck, it IS a duck") doesn't quite apply in this case. All the entrants got the class of the ship correct, for she started life under the British 1942 construction plan intended to be a unit of the large COLOSSUS class of light fleet carriers. But with the war in Europe winding down, and a perceived need for a greatly enlarged participation by the Royal Navy in the Pacific War, the Admiralty decided on 1 February 1944 that two of the class then building by Vickers Armstrong would be completed as aircraft maintenance ships to repair and overhaul carrier aircraft.

The Royal Navy already had one large repair carrier in service, the one-of-a-kind UNICORN, but that ship had been employed primarily as a full-fledged fleet carrier, due to the shortage of such ships in the RN. It was reckoned that two COLOSSUS-class carriers would about equal the maintenance capabilities of the UNICORN, but it was impossible to provide enough ships to meet the fleet's request for five (ten COLOSSUS) maintenance ships.

Our mystery ship was initially to have been named the EDGAR and was laid down on 1 June 1942 at Armstrong's Newcastle-on-Tyne yard. Launched on 26 March 1944, she was commissioned on 14 October 1944 but, after running trials and workup, was placed in Category B reserve, where she remained until 1950 when brought out and modified to test the new MacTaggart, Scott & Co. BXS-1 steam catapult. The deckhouse that had been installed to port of the island on the flight deck (most of the deckhouse was equipped as a lounge for the enlisted crew) and a large crane mounted near the bow were removed, and a structure about five feet high running all the way from the bow to a point just abeam the aft end of the island was installed down the center of the flight deck to accommodate the new catapult; a ramp was fitted at the aft end of the catapult structure and another was fitted to port of the structure just forward of the island. The armament of four quadruple 2-pdr, four twin 20-mm Oerlikons in "Boffin" powered mounting, and eight single 20-mm Mk 4 Oerlikon mountings was also removed. Our mystery ship

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The membership decided, at the recommendation of our librarian, Len Wine, to divest ourselves of the large collection of back issues of magazines in our library. It is too time consuming a job to catalog these magazines, so that the membership really does not know what we have. The magazines are also becoming a major storage problem. Therefore it was decided that over the next several meetings, Len will bring in the magazines and members can take issues that they want. Those left over will be disposed of by donation or sale. Len will arrange to put the catalog of books on the members only page of our web site so members will be better able to access books that they need.

And finally, if any new members need name tags, or if any new or old members wish to have a name tag for their wife, please contact Len Wine and he will obtain the name tags. I really cannot believe that we have members who cannot remember their wives names and have to have them wear a name tag. We really are getting old!

THAT IS ALL - Joe McCleary

(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 1)

conducted 1,560 test launches with the steam catapult during 1951 and 1952, and the device, invented back in 1936 by MacTaggart, Scott's C.C. Mitchell (who had the good sense to patent it in 1938), went on to be an essential feature of aircraft carriers to this day.

The mystery ship, however, had another role to play. The catapult structure and the workshop deckhouse at the stern were removed during a refit in 1952, and the ship emerged that October in her new guise as an aircraft transport. She made several voyages carrying aircraft (I have a shot of her with a deckload of 29 Avengers) but then was laid up again, finally being sold for scrap during May 1958.

The second COLOSSUS-class carrier to be modified as an aircraft maintenance ship was the similar PIONEER (ex-MARS, ex-ETHALION), which was built by Vickers Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness. The PIONEER, however, could be differentiated from the PERSUS by the installation of a tripod, lattice-structure sheer-legs crane forward instead of the other ship's electric, swiveling crane. The PIONEER went into reserve in the spring of 1946 and never operated again, being scrapped during 1954.

Taken on 17 October 1952, the mystery photo shows H.M.S. PERSEUS as an aircraft transport, fitted neither with a catapult nor arrestor gear and without armament. Joe McCleary got the identification on the nose, while Rob Napier came very close, having decided he was looking at the PIONEER. Bob Comet, Tim Wood, and Steve Rowe all stated correctly that she was a unit of the COLOSSUS class but came up short on which one, most of them seduced into believing that she was one of the numerous units of the class transferred to foreign navies.

PERSEUS was 690-ft. 11-in. long on completion and had a beam of 80 ft. 4 in. and a maxium draft of 23 ft. She displaced 16,475 tons full load and 12,265 tons standard, according to the Admiralty's April 1945 fleet handbook, and

her 40,000 shaft horsepower (36,000 sustained) drove two screws to provide a maximum speed of 25 kts. Range at maximum power was a respectable 5,900 nautical miles, and at 12 kts she'd have been able to travel around 12,000 nautical miles had she ever actually been deployed to the Pacific Theater. As with the other ships of the COLOSSUS class, PERSEUS was equipped with two sets of Parsons geared steam turbines and had four Admiralty 3-drum boilers. Although unable to launch or recover aircraft on her cluttered upper deck, the ship had an allowance of 30 18-in. torpedoes, 108 depth charges, and 24 mines for aircraft, although it seems unlikely that she ever actually carried them. The original aircraft hangar and two 15,000-lb. capacity aircraft elevators were retained. The hangar was 45-ft. long by 52-ft. wide and 17.5-ft. high.

Unlike British fleet carriers, the COLOSSUS class had no side or deck armor; their successors, the six MAJESTICs, had heavier deck plating to accommodate larger aircraft but carried less fuel oil in compensation; none ever served actively in the Royal Navy, being completed too late for World War II and eventually either sold abroad or scrapped.

A good test of recognition skills, and congratulations to the Skipper for his dead-on score and Rob Napier for a very near miss.

Dave Baker

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 215
HMS Perseus - October 17, 1952

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting
May 14, 2004
Host, Bill Clarke

Joe McCleary called the meeting to order at 2000 hours. A shot was taken at the Clerk for minutes as published. Luckily, it was small-arms fire and the din quickly subsided. A Purser's report was given. The Skipper gave the Webmaster's report.

Old Business: It was reported that the Air and Space Museum had been contacted about participating in the 2005 NRG Conference. Thanks were given Heinz Schiller for initiating that contact. The Conference Committee will announce all details pertaining to the conference at a later date. The Skipper said he has gotten no response regarding to a joint

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meeting. Bill Dangler said that he would investigate the availability of a shelter at Newport News Park for a picnic to be held in the late-September timeframe. The HRSMS library was discussed. Our magazine collection is the issue. It was resolved that Len Wine would bring the magazines to the meetings for members to take what they want and the remainder are to be donated to the Mariners' Museum. Frank Mastini broached the subject of nametags for the member's wives. It was stated that anyone wanting a nametag should contact Len Wine and he will order them.

New Business: Bob Comet distributed a checklist for future presentations and asked that a copy be included with the next issue of the Logbook. This checklist will help determine levels of interest in various topics as the presentation schedule

is developed. Alan Frazer said that the Michigan Maritime Museum is looking for someone to build a 3–4 foot ship model by August. The details are sketchy. More information will follow. (Note: Members should see the e-mail from Greg Harrington, dated June 5th.)

Show & Tell: John Cheevers showed the progress on his tugboat project. Alan Frazer showed his whaleboat. Joe McCleary showed a book catalog on maritime fiction and a mini-tool handbook.

NOTE

Mark Heilinday is scheduled to have back surgery on Tuesday June 8th. The members wish him a speedy recovery.

Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is.
jfcheevers@juno.com



NOTABLE EVENTS

JUNE

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker
Model Painting ,Part 1; Jack Bobbitt
- 18-20 Antique and Classic Boat Festival , CBMM

JULY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, McCleary - Wine
Model Painting, Part II; Jack Bobbitt

AUGUST

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Eric Harfst
Jigs, Mass Production Techniques, Making Close Fits: Joe
McCleary

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Mid-Atlantic Maritime Festival, CBMM
- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dean Sword
Making Tapered Spars; Bob Comet
- 17-19 NRG Conference, Portland Maine

OCTOBER

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington
How To Make Art Work and other tips on Ordering
Brass Etchings; John Cheevers

NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller
Making Scale People; Bob Comet

DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt
Making Ventilators and other Metal Forming
Techniques; Joe McCleary

JANUARY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Comet

FEBRUARY

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker
Election of Officers

MARCH

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Tim Wood

APRIL

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Baycar

MAY

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

The *Schooner Virginia* is scheduled to be launched on October 16, 2004.

Thanks

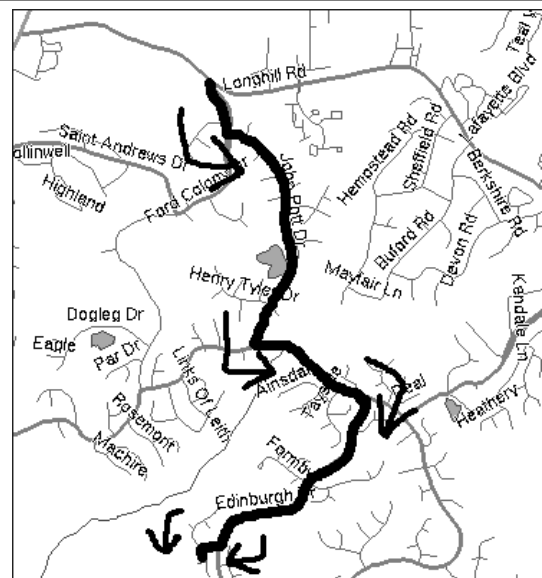
The members would like to thank Bill Claeke for hosting the May meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: June 11, 2004
Place: 100 Augusta, Williamsburg, Va.
Time: 2000 Hours
Host: Dave Baker

From East: Take Rte 64 west to Rte 199 exit. Continue on Rte 199 west about 8 miles to Longhill road (Rte 612 exit). Go West on Longhill, a total of about 2.5 miles. Turn left into Ford's Colony Drive. Make first left to Guardhouse on John Pott (guards will let you in, honest). Continue on John Pott for 1 mile to intersection with Edinburgh. Turn left on Edin and Edinburgh (second right). Go 1 mile to Shinnecock (fourth right turn, well lit). Turn right on Shinnecock and go about 200ft. to first left, Augusta. House is first on the right, 2 story white colonial.

From West: Take Rte 64 east to 199 exit. Turn right (east) on rte 199 and go about 4 miles to Longhill Road. Turn right on Longhill and follow directions as above.



WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Joe McCleary (757) 253-1802
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Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
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