

From The Bridge



Nautical minded

Not quite by accident, I found a way to increase my ship modeling libido—perusing back issues of the NRJ from about 1980 to 1998. I found myself doing this the other weekend, looking for modeling info for a friend, and suddenly noticed I had a strong urge to make sawdust. That's sawdust, not hay! Not to knock the efforts of those who labored in that Journal before or since but I often identify those years as the "golden age." The articles are well written, well illustrated, and the magazine in general seems to be jam packed with nautical/modeling goodies. I say not quite by accident, because I know from experience that thumbing through these old issues gets me in the mood.

Is there such a thing as ship model addiction? My wife would say there is. Does this addiction make for a narrowly focused individual? I don't think so, she may say so, and I say this as someone who may need a ten step program. I can't help it if I like ships and all things nautical. I also like baseball, college basketball, and Formula 1 racing and I try not to miss any of that either. Great looking cars and fine architecture catch my eye as well. And, as a mold loftsman, I can state with emphasis that truly fair buttocks are a sight to behold!

I think what it really comes down to is I like to make things with my hands, I admire wonderful man-made objects, and I enjoy good sporting contests. So kill me, I'm a cave man. But my number one avocation is ship model making and that is where I remain focused the most. Making scale representations of ships and their fixtures is fun and rewarding and a great way to exercise the mind. I recommend it anyone.

So, if I have it this bad, why do I need to leaf through those back issues? Sometimes even I need to recharge my batteries.

Thinking clearly
John

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday October 11, 2008
Place: Newport News Park
Time: 1130 Hours

Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #268: I know this may be hard to believe, but this, quite possibly, is the only known image of the legendary lost Poquoson Mail boat. Some of you may have mistaken the image for the ferry over the River Acheron, often misidentified as the River Styx, but I'm quite sure this is the mail boat. The fact that this image surfaces in October, by far the scariest month of the year—the time for ghosts and goblins, may not be purely coincidental. Legend has it that looking directly at the vessel afflicts the observer with temporary nautical paralysis. While some may regard the legend of the mail boat as myth, others regale her as a Southern Maid in the Mist as it is

rumored she is only visible in swampy low-lying areas during the harvest moon and or during a hard nor'easter. It seems that conditions were just right several times this fall for the maid to make her appearance. Did Bill catch this mythical vessel as she ghosted past his front lawn or is Charon coming for the corpses of ship modelers past?

A recent news article supports the Maid theory. Dredged from a recent issue of the Daily Press we find a revealing image where a local Poquosonite (Bull Islander or just Islander to us land-lubbers) may have caught sight of the boat, lapsed into a frozen state, and put his truck in the drink. Whether this is true or not, the legend and legion of disciples continues to grow.

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Mystery Photo

But is there truth in the legend? Does this Maid exist and does it contain mystical powers? Does sighting it place the observer into a temporary paralytic state? Are only Islanders affected by its sightings? Could this phenomenon finally explain why Bill has not been able to produce a ship model? Have other Islanders in our group been afflicted by the same modeling paralysis? Perhaps.

Let's look closely at the vessel for clues. Her outward appearance suggests a powered Venetian gondola. Beginning on the left, since we are occidental, we see an ensign bearing the symbol for Britain in the upper right (in this case) canton. Moving right we see a tall, thin smoke pipe with a narrow vent attached on its right side. The vent is spewing steam. Continuing on we see a rather ugly, but perhaps very practical, bridge structure with what looks like a bell on the forward face. Then we come to the bowed-roof enclosed cabin of Italianate design. Atop the cabin we see another flagstaff bearing a yet to be identified standard. Outside the cabin we see a grim looking figure in nautical garb. Finally, we follow the simple pea-pod shaped bow to where it ends at the stem revealing fancy carved trail boards, a jack staff flying the British merchant jack, and a serpent (or maybe a weasel.)



Shadow of GONDOLA'S former glory, aground and an eyesore

But what of the flags? One part of the legend claims that the markings on the Maid change relative to the secret desires of the observer in an obvious bid to dupe the unwary into stepping aboard. Does this include the flags? Are these flags revealing Bill's secret desire to return to the mother country? Would someone else see different flags?

To solve the mystery, let's study what we see and consult our reports from the membership. Only Bob Comet reported on this odd vessel's identify. To quote him: "[he

doesn't] have a clue on where to look this up, but [is] hazard-ing a guess on the mystery photo." Bob, being an old salt, for some odd reason doesn't seem at all superstitious, but here is what he saw in the image:

"I see a strange looking harbor craft, a personnel carrier by its looks, about 52 feet long. It has a definite oriental cast to it with the rising sampan-like bow and unusual bow decoration. The deck hand forward looks like he's in a naval uniform complete with pea jacket. The jack and ensign are of a British or Commonwealth country, or Crown Colony."

Acting on his "British" clue he went with the "Hail Mary!" In Bob's opinion we have "A personnel launch assigned to the Royal Hong Kong Police Force Marine district

built by Hip Hing Cheung SY, in service in 1975, 16 meters long which calculates to about 52 feet. Speed 25 kts, 2 diesels, 2 props, 700HP. Source (no photo) *Combat Fleets of the World 1986/87.*"

Is this correct? Is he shielded from the legend? Is he describing his manifestation of the mythical ferry? Is the lack of an image in *Combat Fleets* a clue to how dangerous this image can be? Has he been afflicted by the image and, as such, is he revealing a secret desire to go to the Orient?

Nah!

I took a different tack in identifying this image. Something about the image made me think that we may have an actual Bill Clarke photograph. Big clue! Most of you know that Bill makes a yearly pilgrimage to Merry Ole England to see old friends and to revel in all things nautical. I suspect that he took this image on his latest visit to see the no-name ship model group. Based on that thought, I made a Google image search using the most obvious name string I could think of: British-steam-launch. I got a lot of good "hits" and one that joggled my memory (sort of a V-8 moment!) That hit was for a steam launch on Britain's Lake Windermere. That rang a bell. I remembered reading about that lake and the antique steam powered vessels that were refurbished there, and used daily as interpretive tools. I remembered a certain club member bringing a completed kit model of one launch to a meeting. I remembered a superb article on this subject in a past issue of *Wooden Boat* magazine. I remembered to narrow my next Google search to "Lake Windermere steam launch."

Four pages deep into that search's results I found an image titled the "steam launch *Gondola*" at WWW.trekearth.com. I sure looked like our mystery vessel. If this month's mystery is *Gondola*, then we definitely do not have photo-

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NAUTICAL TERM

Holystone A block of sandstone, when last they were used for scouring decks. The origin of this term may be from the British Navy's people who were said to use blocks of gravestones, specifically those borrowed from a churchyard in Great Yarmouth, England.

Submitted By: Tim Wood

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Mystery Photo

graphic evidence of the lost Poquoson mail boat and we all are safe to continue reading this column and pursue nautical interests.

In upper Wales there is a lake region. One of these lakes is Windermere, but another is named Lake Coniston and it lies a little to the west of Windermere. On it plies the restored steam launch *Gondola*. Looking at the vessel it isn't hard to see where she gets her name. But more fascinating is her story.

Gondola was first launched in 1859 and is properly called a Saloon launch. Built by Jones and Quiggin, in Liverpool, England, she was commissioned for the Furness Railway Company, and was built of iron and steel. Her construction cost a paltry, in today's sense, 1,000 Guineas. (How much is 1,000 guineas in Gloucester County?) Her design was produced by "Sir James Ramsden, Secretary and General Manager of the Furness Railway Company. The design produced by Sir James Ramsden, Secretary and General Manager of the Furness Railway Company, was a combination of a Venetian ferry...and the English steam yacht." Initially named *Burchiello* (pronounced burr-key-ay-lo) she was renamed and sailed under the more familiar title *Gondola*. It is surmised that the name change provided a more convenient and identifiable way to relate to the vessel.

Sometimes the Internet is our friend. One of the "hits" from my Google searches put me at the place on the day the image was made. From a web site dedicated to ship model blogging, there is a reference and images of an excursion taken by a certain no-named ship modeling society sim-



ARH enjoying the refined and elegant interior of the *Gondola*.
by Dave Wooley on Tue Apr 29, 2008 4:41 pm



She entered passenger service in 1860 and continued until retirement in 1936. After retiring, she was converted into a houseboat and was a live-aboard "until the 1960s when a storm left her beached and derelict. In the mid 1970s, a group of National Trust enthusiasts decided to raise her. She was rebuilt in 1979 by Vickers Shipbuilding Group, Barrow with an engine by Locomotion Enterprise, Gateshead. In 1980, 120 years after her first launch, she re-entered service on Coniston Water."

And that is where Bill found her this past April.

ply referred to as "our ship society" that has this to say: "Saturday 26th April [2008] our ship society took a visit to Lake Coniston to sail on the 150 year old steam yacht *Gondola*, it was a cold day but the 30 society members plus our American friend Bill had a great time." This is absolute, conclusive proof of the day the image was made. Their American friend Bill is our English wanna-be. Several accompanying images reveal a close up of the stem showing the serpent in great detail and a certain no-name ship modeller simply referred to as "ARH."

As mentioned, *Gondola* is operated by the National Trust of England. The trust is a charity which supports and "protects and opens to the public historic buildings and gardens, industrial monuments, important landscapes of all sorts and archaeological remains etc. and is completely independent of [the] Government." This is so that there is no confusion with the National Truss which supports the rest of the country.

The flag flying from the middle staff is the emblem of the

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THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 268:

Steam Yacht *Gondola*

Built 1860

Photo by, Bill Clarke, 26 April, 2008

Coniston Waters, Lake District, United Kingdom

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National Trust. It consists of white lettering on a dark green field under an oak branch with leaves and acorns.



Mystery Photo

The other two flags deserve mention as well. At the stern flies a large British Red or Merchant ensign and at the bow we see what is called a Pilot or Civil jack. It is sometimes referred to as the Merchant jack. This jack, by convention, “is generally only worn in harbor.”

One thing you know about Gondola from reading this essay is that she is steam powered. What was not mentioned previously is that she is coal fired. In a bid to Go Green in 2008, she will abandon her traditional fuel and “will burn logs made from wood waste. This will result in a massive reduction of 95 tonnes of carbon each season representing approximately 10 per cent of the carbon emissions produced by Gondola when burning coal. Gondola’s carbon footprint will be reduced even further by the fact that previously the only suitable coal for Gondola’s boiler had to be imported from Russia and Poland. The ‘blazer’ logs now being used are manufactured much closer to home in North Wales.”

All right, so we don’t have a mysterious Maid in the mist or the ferry crossing the Rivers of Hades as this month’s Mystery. We have a unique treasure of a bygone era that can be enjoyed by all. But, if this boat is not a myth, then what is causing the persistent modeling paralysis in Poquoson and why do people continue to loose control of their vehicles on the ever-sinking Bull Island?

John Cheevers

Removing a Broken Drill or Tap in Nonferrous Metals (brass - aluminum, etc.)

At most any grocery store, buy a box of alum. Select a glass or ceramic container (made for stove top use) or an aluminum pot large enough to place your part in so it can be submerged in water. Remove the part and bring the water up to just below the boiling point of the water. Add alum until no more will dissolve, then place your part in the solution. Keep the solution at a simmer and you will soon observe a trail of tiny bubbles coming from the broken drill/tap. Keep the solution at a simmer and add water as needed as long as the trail of bubbles continue. When the bubbles stop, remove the part and let cool for inspection. You should discover that the steel drill or tap has turned to a rusty mud, which is easily removed from the hole.

Colorado Model Engineering Society
<http://www.metal-club.org/Remove.html>

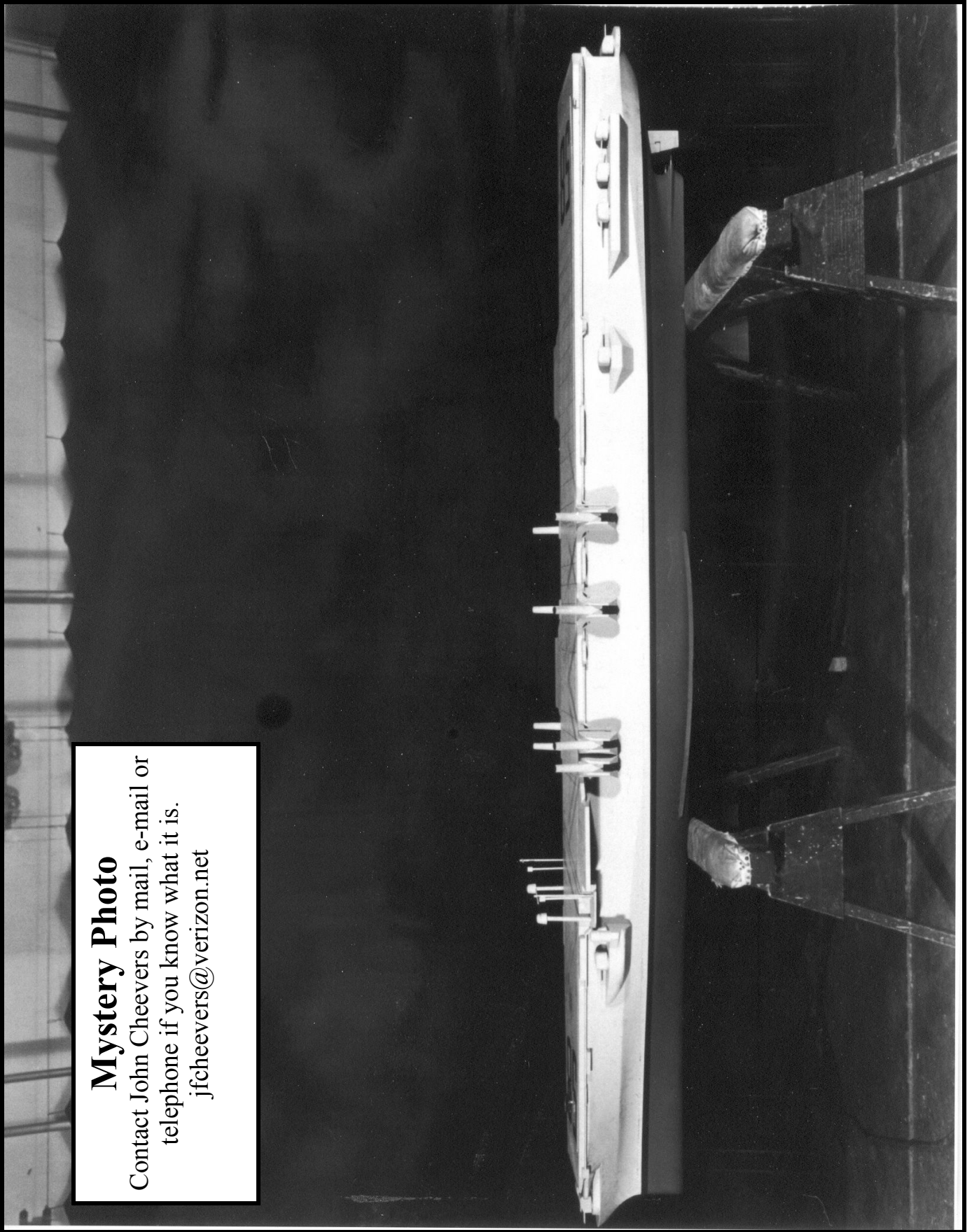
Pride of Baltimore II

Winner of the 2008 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race



Mystery Photo

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



MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Newport News Park
October 11, 2008

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, John Cheevers. John asked if there was any pressing business. Nothing was brought forward from the floor. A motion was made and passed to conclude the meeting and defer all business until the November meeting.

The meeting was adjourned so everyone could enjoy the picnic.

NOTABLE EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 15 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation "Photographing Ship Models using Digital Cameras", by Tim Wood

DECEMBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation by Dave Baker

JANUARY

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers
- 16-18 Cabin Fever Expo 2009; York, Pa.

FEBRUARY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers

MARCH

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Mate: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
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 (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer

Metal Foil

I came across a product that may be useful in ship modeling. It is a thin adhesive backed metal foil that can be burnished into compound curves according to the manufacturer. The foil is available in chrome, black chrome, gold, matte aluminum and copper. The web site has a "How to Use" slide show. Check out the web site.

<http://www.bare-metal.com/>

Tom Saunders

THANKS

The members would like to thank Bill Dangler for his efforts in making the October picnic a success.

NEWS FROM FORTRESS MONROE

Marine Disasters in the Chesapeake-The Storm Subsided.
FORTRESS MONROE, Monday Feb. 23.

The most severe storm witnessed at Fortress Monroe for a year, commenced on Sunday morning, about 2 o'clock, and continued for twenty-four hours without intermission.

A number of marine disasters are reported.

The following schooners are ashore at Old Point and Hampton Beach. and between here and Back River:

The schooner E. W. Farrington, with hay, from New York to Washington.

The schooner Elliott, from New York, with hay.

The schooner Ovoco, with hay, from New-York for Washington.

The schooner J. P. Cunningham, with hay, from New-York for Washington.

The schooner Emeline Chesterr. Capt. Foster, from Unlonville, N. J., with coal, sunk on Old Point.

The schooner D. E. Sawyer, Capt. Pierson, from New York, with hay and oats, for Alexandria.

The schooner Success, Capt. Reveland, from New York for Washington lost deck-load, bowsprit and cutwater, and is now in tile harbor.

The schooner Fanny Baker, with coal from Philadelphia for Washington. lost foremast and mainstay.

Several other vessels have put into Hampton Roads in distress. '

The schooner Vanme is aground on Hampton bar.

The Baltimore boat Georgiana, due here on Sunday morning, did not arrive until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

She had to out into the Potomac for a harbor.

The storm has at last subsided.

From the New York Times
February 23, 1863