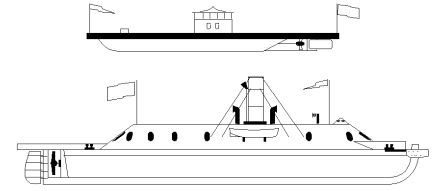


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 315

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

September, 2012

From The Bridge



It is hard to believe that summer is over and that we are moving into the fall season. My wife and I ended the summer by spending the third week of August on Ocracoke Island in North Carolina's Outer Banks. As I was sitting on the beach one morning staring out into the ocean, I wondered how many ships lie beneath the surface of the ocean. This area along the Outer Banks is known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic. There have been more than 2,000 ships recorded sunk in this area since 1526. Most were victims of fierce storms or the shifting sand bars, but hundreds were sunk during World War I and II by German U-Boats. With so many ships lying on the bottom of the ocean, the area has become a popular locale for sport scuba divers who explore the remains of the shipwrecks.

The area in the Outer Banks has several Maritime Museums. The largest is the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum located next to the Hatteras Ferry docks. This museum chronicles the history of the Outer Banks and includes artifacts from many of the shipwrecks from the period 1524 to 1945. The Museum promotes the maritime heritage of the Outer Banks. On Ocracoke Island, there is a small Museum that has information on Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard the pirate, who lost his life in a battle off Ocracoke with a British sloop in 1718. Another small Museum is the Chincamocomo Lifesaving Station located in Rodanthe. This site has seven buildings that house artifacts and they have a reenactment of a lifesaving drill during select days in the summer. The Outer Banks has a lot to offer when it comes to Maritime history.

Last month, we discussed the possible sale of the NRG Lending Library. After input from the NRG Membership, the Board of Directors has decided to sell off this Li-

(Continued on page 2)

Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #314: If anyone thinks that this Mystery Photo depicts an aircraft carrier with the deck cleared for landing, you are sadly mistaken. One quick look at the after flight deck will tell you so. And hold on a second there Pop-eye, if you think this column is going to be another in-depth report detailing a row boat turned model aircraft carrier, you are sadly mistaken. OK...so you're not completely mistaken; this will be another story about a ship to aircraft carrier conversion. Now I know that stories about conversions are good and all, but we can't have it every month. This superbly crafted essay will detail the conversion of the mystery as only the responses can offer. You all deserve that. And, for those of you counting, we are going down the "B" row again.

Funny thing about the "B" row, the "B" can stand for just about anything—Baker, Betty, battleship, Block Island, bathtub, bomb ketch, Bull Island, even buttress. This time, as you will see, it stands for British—as in I thought it was British when I studied the flag flying from the kingpost near the stern.

As you may have guessed by now the Mystery Photo details an aircraft carrier, but which aircraft carrier. And even with the giant hint in the last paragraph, you may still ask yourself: who's aircraft carrier. We know from our study of two World Wars that Britain pioneered converting plain old merchant ships into aircraft carrying vessels to help get planes

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday August 11, 2012

Place: Newport News Park

Time: 1100 Hours

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Picnic
Saturday September 8, 2012
Newport News Park

See page 2

HAMPTON ROADS SHIP MODEL SOCIETY ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, September 8, 2012

11:30 am, until. The event will be held rain or shine.

WHERE: Newport News City Park, Shelter #11. Enter off Jefferson Ave, just north of Fort Eustis Boulevard. Our picnic site is in a tree-sheltered area with rest rooms nearby, a lakeside view, tables, benches and barbecue grills. Guests are welcome.

The HRSMS will provide soft drinks, hotdogs, and hamburgers with all the condiments. Other items needed are salads, side dishes and deserts.

Contact: Event Coordinator: Bill Dangler (757) 245-4142 or Tom Saunders, E-mail, tesaunders@verizon.net

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

out on the pond to spot the Kaiser's u-boats. And we know that the United States followed this lead in converting merchant shipping for the same task in support of round two. And we should know that despite what Japan did to augment its carrier fleet that the US and the UK were the only real players in this Mystery. And we should know that while the conversions from the American shipyards numbered in the many, conversions in British shipyards numbered in the very few.

With the field of possible navies narrowed to one, what features can we glean from the image to help identify this vessel? Well, we have the flag. While not stiff in the wind, it does wave enough for us to see we have a white field with a darker colored cross dividing the field into 4 cantons. In the upper right canton (as we view the flag) we see darker shapes indicating a design in that quadrant. The design of this flag immediately eliminates the United States and all but 10 of her Block Island-class converted lend-lease aircraft carriers from consideration. Since the British only converted a few vessels, the search should be easy.

How do we know she is a converted vessel from studying the image? The simplest way to tell is by the fact that you can see where her main deck has a pronounced sheer from stem to stern. Aircraft carriers carry airplanes. And airplanes have to be rolled around on deck for all sorts of reasons. Moving airplanes around on a deck that is not flat is difficult, so designers give sailors a sporting chance of success by making the flight deck as well as the hanger deck flat in terms of sheer. A vessel that is hurriedly or temporarily converted into an aircraft carrier may not receive a flat hanger

THE ANSWER

Mystery Photo 314

Escort Carrier HMS VINDEX at Melbourne, Dec. 22 1945

(Continued from page 1)

brary. The Sale of the Library will begin on October 1 and will end on March 31, 2013. There are over two thousand books to sell and the sale will be open to NRG members only. The books are being sold at 50% of their appraised value and many titles can be purchased for as little as \$5.00. For more information and a complete list of books to be sold, go to www.thenrg.org.

I want to thank Bill Fox for his presentation "Always Good Ships" at the last meeting. The Newport News area has a long history of shipbuilding and it was interesting to see a portion of that history.

Do not forget that Saturday's meeting is our annual picnic at the Newport News City Park on Jefferson Avenue. The picnic will start at 11:30 and we will eat shortly after noon. This will be a fun time for everyone. Please come with a hearty appetite.

LECTURE

John A. Tilley, East Carolina University Associate Professor of History and author, and former member of the HRSMS will give the lecture "Battle of the Capes" at the Yorktown Victory Center on October 6, 2012.

Public lectures begin at 7 p.m. Saturdays in Yorktown Victory Center's Richard S. Reynolds Theater.

Advance reservations are recommended at (757) 253-4572 or rsvp@jyf.virginia.gov

deck—our mystery vessel didn't. But as you can see the hanger is limited to the portion of the hull from just after the IH to the stern where the sheer is flattest.

One other glaring feature that will tell you the vessel is British and not from the United States is in the height of the island house (IH). While this IH is conceptually the same as what we are familiar with on the converted Long Island-class and the large Kaiser class of purpose built baby flattops, upon close inspection it will suddenly dawn on you that it is only 2 decks high, and the corresponding height of the lattice mast is very tall to get the antennae to their proper operating heights. Where on the American ships the 3rd level is partially enclosed, in the British style this level is completely open to the weather.

A search of Conway's [All the World's Fighting Ships 1922-1946](#) for British Aircraft carriers built through conversion yields 6 likely candidates: *Audacity*, *Activity*, *Pre-toria Castle*, *Vindex*, *Nariana*, and *Campania*. Which of these vessels will emerge as the ship noted in our Mystery Photo?

Too easy?

Dave Baker, John Wyld, Tim Wood, Rob Napier, and Bill Clarke think not and responded with vacillating choices between two of the most likely candidates, *Nariana*

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and *Vindex*. Dave says “The mystery ship photo in the August Log is HMS VINDEX, and the photograph was taken by Allan C. Green at Melbourne on 22 December 1945.” This fact is almost equally shared by John Wyld schlepping for an American cleaning products outfit: “The August MP is not very august, but rather quite workmanlike. The term the Brits would use in this case would be 'agricultural' - loosely translated as 'utilitarian' but not beautiful. And so it is with HMS VINDEX shown in the MP, presumably named for the heir to the window cleaning product fortune.” Tim appears to be siding with Wyld when he offers this: “If it’s ugly! It’s got to be British!!! This month’s photo is *HMS Vindex* (D15).” And Rob, who settled on *Nariana* as his choice, offers that “the two-vessel *Nairana* class looks like a comfortable fit. The other vessel in the class was *Vindex*. That rang a bell.” And finally Bill rang



Mystery Photo

the tele and rambled on about giant flying buttocks, or buttresses, or something or other and said that the three, beefy buttresses supporting the forward flight deck meant the vessel was British, specifically *HMS Vindex*. He rates no quotes because I’m trying to write what he offered from memory.

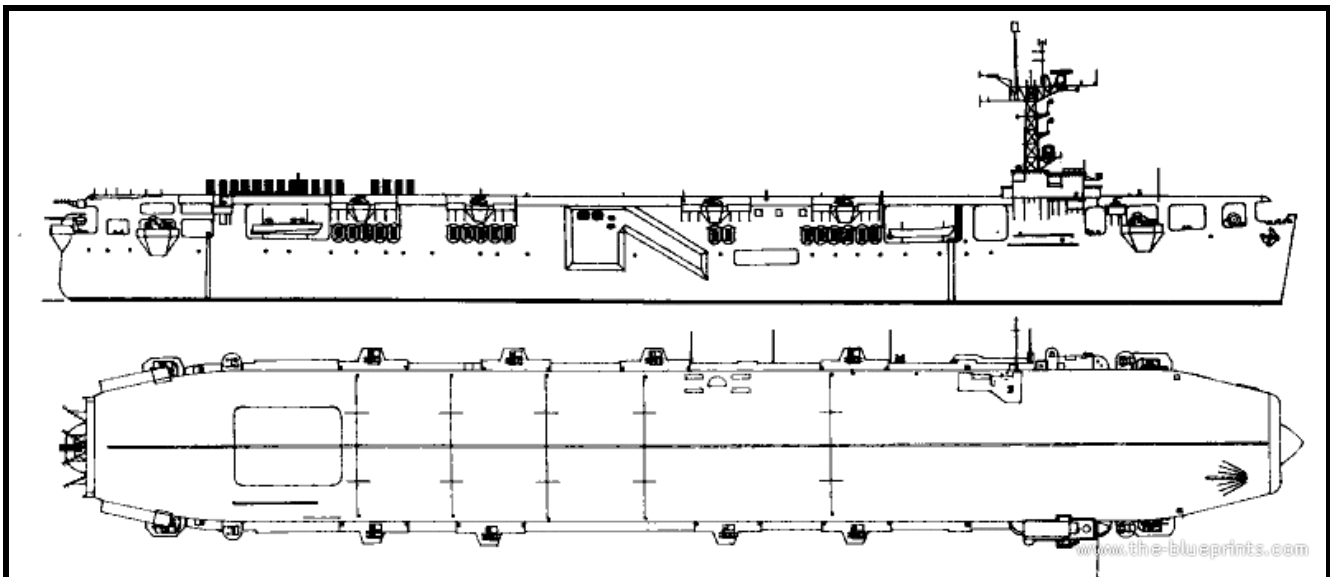
Dave, John and Tim found the Mystery image on line. Dave points out that “the image has been slightly altered (by Tom?) to delete the pennant number "15" on the hull side below the island.” Rob, wondering the same thing, adds this: “This one looks distinctly American to me, but I don't know much about CVEs. None of ours fit. I worked primarily with the large openings in the sides under the forward part of the flight deck, forward of that island that is so pathetically small that, if it was in the Caribbean, wouldn't be big enough for a beach bar and even a single babe in a bikini.” (Now that’s the best argument for a large navigational bridge that I’ve ever read.) Meanwhile, John stuck with his glass cleaning allegory.



If you didn’t find the Mystery image on line how can you be certain the Photo shows *Vindex*? The only thing I can point out is the distinctive “V” seen on the white painted part of the hull above the sheer line and between the two sets of carley floats. *Vindex* carried this “V” where *Nariana* only carried the aft sloping part.

Dave highlights *Vindex*’s beginning by pointing out that “[she] was under construction as a refrigerated cargo liner at Swan Hunter, Newcastle, for the Port Line when she was requisitioned by the Royal Navy. The ship was launched on 4 May 1943 and completed on 3 December 1943.” *Vindex* remained in British hands after, as Dave and John point out, being “placed in reserve in 1946 after her final voyage, when she transported

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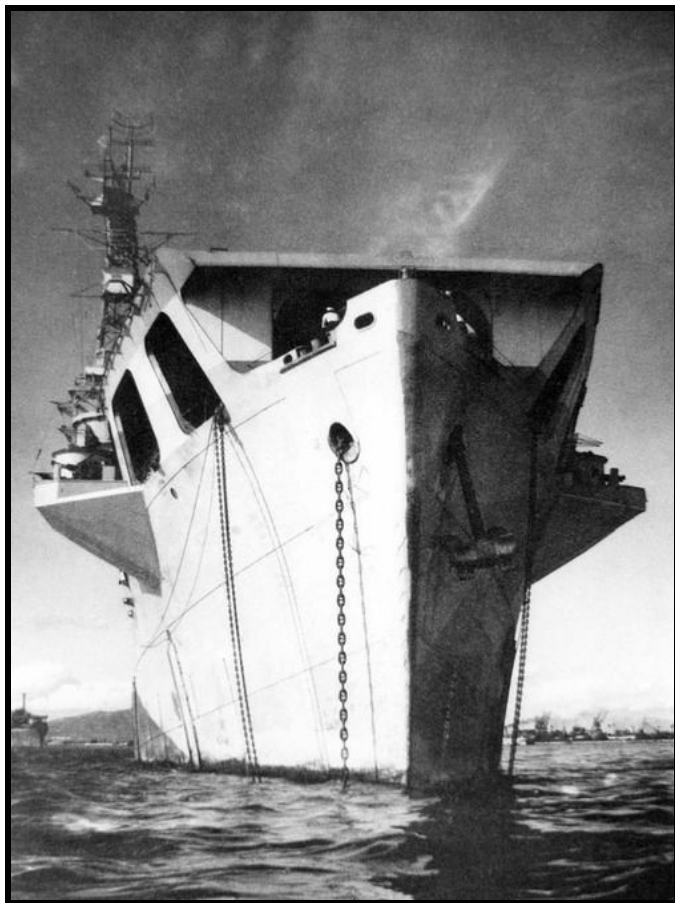
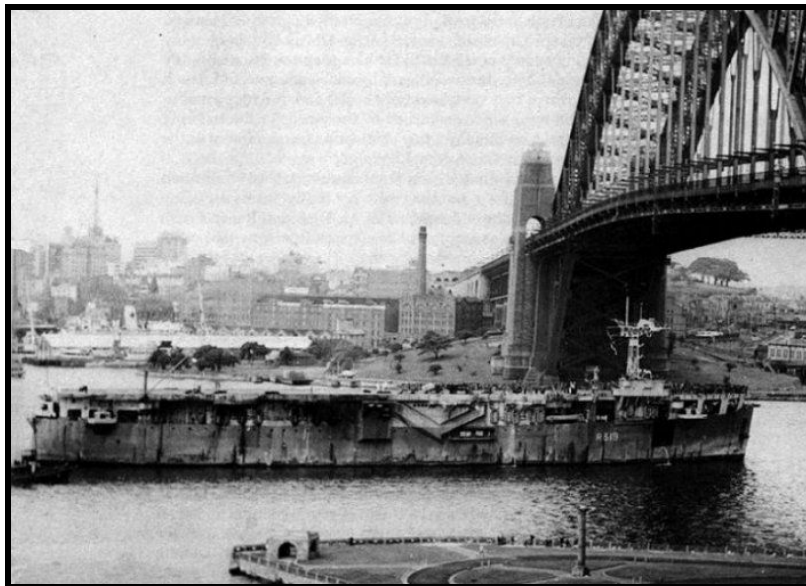
(Continued from page 3)

the Greek Government's crown jewels and gold bullion from Simonstown, South Africa, to the UK (with the gold bars welded into the ships ammunition magazines for safety)." John says "the picture shows VINDEX approximately in mid-career, at least metaphysically speaking." Tim concurs. And Dave points out that "at the time the ship was photographed here, she was being used to repatriate Australian prisoners-of-war; later, she was later used to take surplus Lend-Leased aircraft to sea for dumping (which thereby avoided the need to pay the USA for them)."

As for *Nariana*, following a similar naval requisition, Rob points out that "[she] was sold to the Netherlands. She then became *Karel Doorman*, named for a rather stodgy looking fellow named Karel Willem Frederik Marie Doorman. Glad they left out the three middle names. If they'd used them all, it



Mystery Photo



wouldn't have fit on the stern of that little ship." I agree.

From the replies we see that *Vindex* was a rather larger commercial freighter for the time. "VINDEX displaced 13,445 tons normal, 14,046 tons standard, and up to 16,830 tons "deep" full load. The ship was 524-ft. 6-in. overall (498-ft. 3-in. between perpendiculars) by 68-ft. hull beam and drew 25-ft. 8-in. at deep full load. Powered by two Doxford 5-cylinder diesels driving two propellers and producing 10,700

bhp total, she and the slightly longer *NAIRANA* could make 16 kts. Carrying 1,655 tons of diesel fuel, they had a range of over 6,000 nautical miles. Also carried were 75,000 gallons of aviation fuel for the normal aircraft complement of 21 aircraft (she carried Swordfish biplane ASW and torpedo aircraft, Firefly and 2-seat fighters, and in 1944 embarked two radar-equipped Fulmar 2-seat night fighters for use on the Arctic run. The flight deck had a length of 508-ft. and was equipped with a 45-ft. by 34-ft. elevator that could lift aircraft of up to 15,000 lbs from the hangar, which was a rather low 17-ft. 6-in. high. One Type C II catapult was fitted; it could fling a 14,000-lb aircraft into the air at a speed of 66 kts.

The normal crew complement for *VINDEX* was 700 total officers and enlisted. She was armed with one twin 4-in. 45-cal. Mk 19 dual-purpose gun mount on the fantail, four quadruple 2-pdr (40-mm) AA, and 16 single 20-mm Oerlikon AA."

Both ships were returned to commercial service in the late 1940s. Both were re-purchased by the Port Line stripped of their flight decks and warship fittings and completed as originally designed. *Vindex* was renamed *Port Vindex* and *Nariana* became *Port Victor*. Both ship lasted until scrapping in 1971.

John Cheevers

Deltaville Maritime Museum

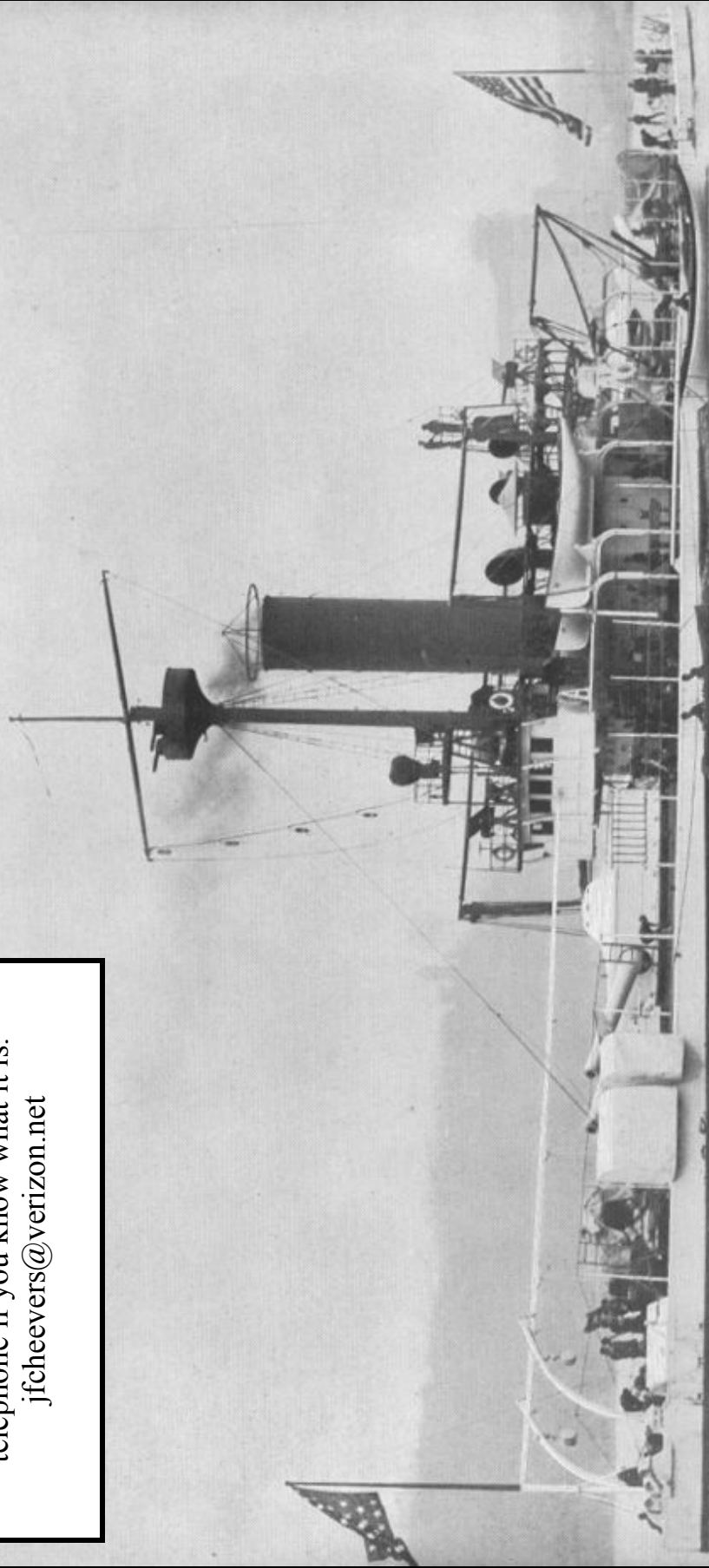
287 Jackson Creek Road
Deltaville, VA 23043
Phone: +1 804.776.7200

Opening Hours

The museum office is open during the following hours:
Tuesday-Friday 10-4

Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting, Picnic, NN Park
- 19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

- 6 John Tilley "Battle of the Capes" Yorktown Victory Center
- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Vasa , Heinz Schiller
- 13 NRG Symposium, New York City

NOVEMBER

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

DECEMBER

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JANUARY

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers,

FEBRUARY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers

MARCH

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

APRIL

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

MAY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JULY

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

AUGUST

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Mate: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Bill Dangler (757) 245-4142
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 (757) 867-7666

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Mariners' Museum
August 11, 2012
Guest: Mike Scammon, 1st meeting

Skipper, Ryland Craze at 1018 hours, called the meeting to order. The Skipper recognized the guest, Mike Scammon. A correction to the minutes was made. The 1013 date for the March meeting was a typo. The reference should have been the March 2013 meeting. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report.

Old Business: The September picnic was discussed. Bill Dangler circulated sign-up sheets so members could indicate the number attending and what items they would like to bring. Ryland reminded everyone that the meeting room at the Museum would not be available for the March meeting. Tim Wood said the he would be willing to host the March meeting. There was further conversation about having an auction in March. Ron Lewis talked about the museum's library at Christopher Newport University. He said that parking passes could be obtained from the museum security office and that reserved parking spaces are located adjacent to the library.

New Business: The Skipper noted the Nautical Research Guild seminar to be held in New York on October 13th. The Nautical Research Guild is contemplating the disposal (sale) of its 2000 volume library as a cost-cutting measure. Ryland said that he received an email asking for the HRSMS to voice its concern. There was discussion about this issue and the consensus was that individual NRG members should respond to this initiative. Ron Lewis talked about the recent fire at the Deltaville Maritime Museum. He said they needed volunteers to help with restoration and cleanup. Ron gave an overview of the museum and the damage sustained. Tim Wood asked about the NRG membership offer. Ryland said that we did not have enough participation to qualify for the shop notes.

Show & Tell: John Cheevers showed 4 sheets of plans for the sardine carrier William Underwood. The plans were drawn by Arthur Herrick. Tim Wood showed the progress on his half-hull of the yacht *Endeavour*. John Cheevers talked about replacing a bearing in his 15 inch planer. Lee Martin showed his work on the Mamoli kit of the 1780 *Royal Louis*. Lee talked about working with this kit.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation "Always Good Ships", by Bill Fox.

"If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable."

Lucius Annaeus Seneca