



THE SCUTTLEBUTT

The Scuttlebutt is the official newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Shipwrights. Its objective is to promote, develop and further scale model shipbuilding, as well as study maritime subjects, including art, history and traditions.

May, 2023

May Your Modeling Go Smoothly.

Meeting Information:

Shipwrights meet the THIRD Saturday of every month at Rockler Woodworking and Hardware, 2553 S. Colorado Blvd. Denver. Store opens at 9:00 am and meeting starts at 9:30.

The Next Meeting Will Take Place on May 20, 2023

Chuck Stroble will demonstrate his vacuum machine

And remember our Arvada workshop.

It is held at the Arvada City Hall, Police entrance.
The address: 8101 Ralston Road.

This workshop is scheduled for the FIRST Saturday of every month beginning at 9:00 am

Next workshop: June 3, 2023

Officers:

Commodore.....Alice Sampson
Skipper.....Bob Fivehouse
First Mate.....Ralph Buckwalter
Purser.....Steve Lofshult
Clerk.....Jim Cuscaden

Committees:

Library: Bob Bunch
RMS History: Roger Hanson
Mentoring Program: Ralph Buckwalter
Scuttlebutt & Website: Martin Jelsema

Website:

<http://rockymountainshipwrights.org>



Minutes of the April 15, 2023 Meeting

Skipper Bob Fivehouse called the meeting to order at 9:32am, April 15. The group then pledged allegiance to the flag. Jon Sorenson announced he has several boxed models for sale which he displayed at the back of the room. Jon is going to be moving to Gulf Shores Alabama next week and wishes to downsize. By the meeting's all but 2 models had sold.

Pursers Report

Steve Lofshult reported that we collected \$525 from the book sale in March. He was able to deposit \$625 into Checking last month. The savings account accrued \$0.24 in interest. Currently 45 active members have paid their dues for 2023.

Old Business

The skipper announced this to be the last day for the book sale/giveaway, All must be gone by the end of the meeting.

New Business

Martin Jelsema asked that we discuss buying a PC for the club. The PC that a member brought in to be part of Jay McKeown's presentation could not access the internet. Having a reliable PC for presentations would be a great benefit for the club. The only counter argument was that once you buy a PC, it is out of date within a couple of years. It was decided that the Exec council will discuss this and get back to the group.

Ralph Buckwalter brought up the topic of possibly getting a 3D scanner for the club. The estimated cost would be \$800-\$1000. The benefit would be that an object can be scanned to generate a 3D image file that could be used on a 3D printer. Without the scanner someone was to write a program and no one in the club knows how. Martin Ters mentioned that as a dentist, he uses a scanner that cost \$32K and he was not sure how good a "budget" scanner would do. It was also discussed about paying someone to make the 3D image; but not knowing who to contact would be the issue there. It was decided that the Exec council will discuss this and get back to the group.

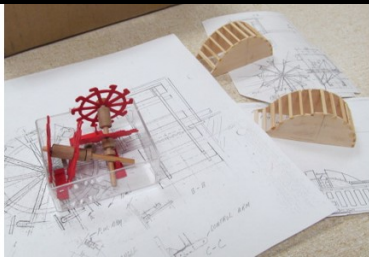
Show n Tell

Ralph Buckwalter showed his paddle wheels that he is making out of wood and plastic for his scratch-built blockade runner. The issue with the paddle wheels is that they are articulating and modeling them is a challenge. But with everything he models, they look really good and he has made great progress on them.

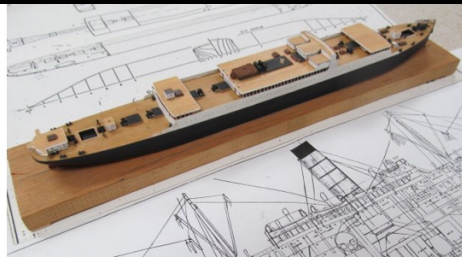
Bob Fivehouse showed his in progress model of the Carpathia, a Cunard Liner built in 1903. His model is being built in the 1 to 600 scale which equals 1 inch equals 50 ft. The Carpathia was listed a 540ft between perpendiculars and Bob discussed what this means and the different ways ships are listed. The hull is carved from bass wood and it was made with two halves. Bob mentioned that when he glues the two halves together, he adds black paint to the glue so that after it dries, it has a permanent centerline down the model. The history behind the model is that the Carpathia was the ship that was sent to rescue the survivors of the Titanic disaster.

Chuck Stobel did a brief demonstration on his Vacuum press and he mentioned that he would be giving a talk on this machine next month. The items that the machine can reproduce must be able to fit within a 5' by 5' square

Martin Ters and **Alice Sampson** spoke about the Seaworth Small Ships. Martin brought several models of these ships that he and his grand kids are working on. He mentioned that he found that the models are very good and of high quality and that he was impressed with the design. Alice and a business partner have purchased this company and she would be heading out to Maryland to pick up what existing stock the company has.



Ralph Buckwalter's paddle for his Confederate blockade



Bob Fivfehouse's 1903 Carpathia It rescued many Titanic survivors.



Chuck Stroble's Vacuum machine



Martin Ters build of Alice Sampson's small boats.

Presentation

After a 20-minute break, **Jay McKeown** provided an excellent demonstration on how he makes realistic water for his models. He said that why would you just make a model when you can use it to bring history to life and commemorate a story of the model in a diorama.

His technique is to use gesso and Quaker oats. The process involves fist getting a base (wood, Styrofoam or whatever you can find) and then adding a thin layer of gesso and then spreading the Quaker oats over it. After it dries, he shakes off the excess oats and then coats the oats with shredded paper towels. This technique produces a life like ocean surface that he then paints.

As everyone knows, oceans have different colors so he uses a blend of 5 different colors (blues, greens, black and finally white) to generate the color of the water. Depending on the time of day and if there is cloud cover, the color of the water will be different. He then uses a varnish which provides a nice sheen to the paint.

Jay then went into how wakes are created by ships and how to model them. He also described that the propellers of ships also create their own types of wakes and he demonstrated creating these by using cotton balls and gesso. By pulling on the cotton and elongating them and placing them on the water with gesso, it creates a life like wake.

Bob Fivehouse mentioned that he likes to use modeling paste as it acts like gesso and it has crushed marble in it so that you can build up swells and wakes with that.



Jay McKeown demonstrating his process for making water, waves and wakes.

Meeting was adjured at 11:20 am.

Submitted by Acting Clerk, Rob Cuscaden

Get Your Gear at the Next Meeting

- For polo shirts and vests, ask Steve Lofshult at the next meeting.
- For caps, ask John Lamb at the next meeting. (They are back in stock)

For name badges, ask Rob Cuscaden at the next meeting.



May Workshop

Another lightly-attended workshop, but those there had a good time.



Jay Phillips



Jeff Potter



Charlie Krinsky



Steve Lofshalt



Martin Jelsema



Ralph Buckwalte

Lists of Modeling Resources Updated

Last month the Scuttlebutt contained a list of tool and material resources, both local and on-line, It has been updated instead of incorporating it in Scuttlebutt both lists are attached to the email. Hope they are useful.

Photos of the Real Cutty Sark

Your editor has a friend who shared with me the photos of the Cutty Sark in its home at the Greenwich Museum outside of London. Thought they may be inspiring.



To Tar or Not to Tar: Is That The Question?

Our Tennessee-based member and master shipwright, Bruce Bollenbach asked himself the question: “Which rigging is tarred and which isn’t, besides the obvious”. He then went about researching the subject, and was kind enough to share his findings. They follow. And if you have insights/resources to share, please send them to your editor.

I was busy spending a few hours at the workbench rigging a model of an 18th century ship when I realized “I don’t know what I’m doing!” This revelation led me to several books on rigging, which developed into to several other questions, which led to still more questions, and so on. You know how it goes. So, I had to hit the brakes and formulate some conclusions, or I’d never finish the model!!

My initial question was whether a standing lift is tarred and part of the standing rigging or is it left natural and considered part of the running rigging? I’m looking for a first-hand source, or a reliable second-hand source (no opinions please).

As I started researching, I also got to thinking about other lines such as lanyards, horses (foot ropes) and stirrups, and halyard ties. These are lines of occasional movement with minor structural use. Are they a tarred part of the stationary standing rigging or is it a part of the constantly moving running rigging?

Here are some of the things I found in my search.

Standing Rigging definitions include:

“Ropes that are “used to sustain the masts, remain usually in a fixed position, and are called standing rigging; such as the shrouds, stays, and backstays.” Falconer (Universal Dictionary of the Marine).

“Ropes used to sustain the masts remain fixed; as shrouds, stays, and back-stays: such are called standing rigging.” Steel (Steels Elements of Mastmaking, Sailmaking, and Rigging)

“Those ropes which are fixed and stationary, such as shrouds, stays, and back-stays are termed Standing Rigging.” Lever (Young Sea Officers Sheet Anchor)

“That which sustains the masts, and which remains in a fixed position; as shrouds, stays and back-stays.” Biddlecombe (The Art of Rigging)

Running Rigging definitions include:

Ropes “whose office is to manage the sails, by communicating with various blocks, or pullies, situated in different places of the masts, yards, shrouds, etc. are comprehended in the general term of running-rigging. Such are the braces, sheets, halyards, clue-lines, brails, etc.” Falconer (Universal Dictionary of the Marine).

The ropes leading through various blocks, and to different places of the masts, yards, sails, and shrouds, and which are moved according to the various operations of navigation, such as the lifts, braces, sheets, tacks, halyards, clue-lines, bunt-lines, leech-lines, bow-lines, spilling-lines, brails, down-haulers, etc., are called running rigging. Steel (Steels Elements of Mastmaking, Sailmaking, and Rigging)

“Those which reeve through blocks, or sheave-holes, are demoninated Running Rigging; such as Halyards, Braces, Clue-lines, Buntlines, etc. These are occasionally hauled upon, or let go, for the purpose of working of the ship.” Lever (Young Sea Officers Sheet Anchor)

“Running-Rigging is that which is fitted for the purpose of arranging the sails, by passing through various blocks, in different places about the masts, yards, shrouds, etc.; as the braces, sheets, halyards, etc.” Biddlecombe (The Art of Rigging)

To sum it up, ropes that do not run through blocks and are more difficult to replace were tarred. Marquardt (Eighteenth Century rigs and Rigging)

The Standing Lifts:

Steel defines them (p. 123) as: “Standing Lifts are made fast, and belong to yards that never require to be topped.” In the reference I have quoted above, information on Lifts is included with the running rigging. However, the type of lifts Steel defines ran thru blocks. I didn’t find anything, other than this definition, that explained “standing” lifts in the late eighteenth early nineteenth centuries.

I could not find a reference which would tell me whether standing lifts were tarred or not. They seem to fit the definition of Standing Rigging (structural in nature, does not run thru blocks) but, they are not mentioned in the texts of the limited library available to me.

Tyes:

A Tye is “a sort of runner or thick rope, used to transmit the effort of a tackle to any yard or gaff, which extends the upper part of a sail.” (Falconer)

“Tye is a sort of runner, or long rope, used to convey the effort of the tackle to hoist the upper yards and gaff.” He continues (in the rigging section) “Tyes are wormed, parcelled, and served with spun-yarn for three fourths of their length.” (Steel)

Tyes and their halyard tackle are explained as running rigging in the references quoted above. The Tye is served and structurally supports the yard, the halyard tackle takes most of the movement.

Halyard Tyes travel through blocks or mast sheeves. Compare these to the Foremast Stays, which are tarred and also travel through blocks and sheeves.

Yard-Horse and Stirrups

A Yard-Horse (footrope) is “a rope reaching from the middle of a yard to its extremity, and depending about two or three feet under the yard, for sailors to tread upon while they are loosing, reefing, or furling the sails.” “In order to keep the horse more parallel to the yard, it is usually suspended thereto, at proper distances, by certain ropes called stirrups.” (Falconer)

“Yard-Horses are ropes depending from the yards, for the men to stand upon in loosing, reefing, or furling the sails.” He continues in the rigging section “Horses for the yards have an eye spliced in one end, and the circumference of the yard arm, and served with spun-yarn over the splice.” (Steel)

The Horses, “have an eye spliced in one end, large enough to fit the yard-arm: the other end is reeved through thimbles, spliced into the ends of short ropes, called Stirrups. A thimble is spliced into the other end of the horse and it is lashed around the yard by a laniard, (spliced to a thimble), on the opposite side of the slings.” The Stirrup “has an eye spliced in one end and stopped with rope yarns and plaited to the end.” (Lever)

Yard Horses and stirrups are commonly grouped in with the running rigging information when setting up the spars. However, they did not run through blocks and they supported the crew when furling sail. Perhaps they were tarred, akin to ratlines, but I could not find a primary source that could tell me.

Laniards

“The principal laniards used in a ship, however, are those employed to extend the shrouds and stays of the masts, by their communicating with the deadeyes, so as to form a sort of mechanical power, resembling that of a tackle.” “the laniard is stretched as stiff as possible by the application of tackles and that the several parts of it may slide with more facility through the holes in the deadeyes, it is well smeared with hog’s lard or tallow, so that the strain is immediately communicated to all turns at once” (Falconer)

“The principal laniards used in a ship are those employed to extend the shrouds and stays of the masts, by their communication with the dead-eyes and hearts, so as to form a sort of mechanical power, resembling a tackle.” (Biddlecombe)

“The Laniard is well smeared with grease.” (Lever P.24)

Steel mentions greasing in the definition of Deadeye and the setting up of the laniards.

“Dead-eyes: Round flat wooden blocks, with three holes instead of sheaves, through which the laniards reeve, when setting up shrouds or stays. The power gained by dead-eyes, is as by the number of parts of the laniards rove through them; but, if the laniards be not well greased, the power will be greatly lost by friction, so that they are never applied as purchases, but merely for the better keeping the quantity gained of any shroud, or stay, when set up, and are much stronger than blocks with sheaves, when strain lies on a single pin.” “To make the whole slide with ease through the holes in the dead-eyes, it (the laniard) is smeared with tallow, that all the turns bear an equal proportion of the strain.” (Steel)

Kipping (Rudimentary Treatise on Mastmaking, Mast-Making and Rigging of Ships) Explains setting up the deadeyes and points out that where shroud meets wood a layer of tar is applied first.

p.85 “a Dead-Eye is used to turn in the ends of shrouds and backstays; the three holes are used to reeve the laniard through, which is well greased to reduce the friction when setting up the shroud or backstay.”

p.96 “Turn the dead-eye in as near the end as possible, so that all parts of the shroud may be equally stretched. The score of the dead-eye being well tarred, is thus turned in, the end of the shroud is taken underneath round the deadeye”

p. 102 “the laniard being well greased, to make the whole slide with ease through the holes in the dead-eyes.”

The sources above tell me that lanyards (in the case of shrouds and stays) are considered a part of the standing rigging and that they must be well-greased when setting up to distribute the strain evenly between the deadeyes.

See also a good discussion on the Model Ship World website on Shroud Lanyard Color: Shroud lanyard color - Mastmaking, rigging and sails - Model Ship World™

Enough about tarring, what about “Blackening of the Rigging”?

“Ropes are a combination of several threads of hemp,” (called rope-yarns). A proportion of yarns (covered with tar) are first twisted together. This is called a strand; three or more of which being twisted together, form the rope.” (Lever) Falconer defines tar as “a sort of liquid gum of blackish hue, which distils from pines or fir trees”

Murphy & Jeffers summarize: Black the rigging. Various compositions have been used for this purpose. Glascock (Naval Officers Manual) recommends “Stockholm tar, with a certain portion of salt-water, boiled together – and put on hot.” Fordyce (Outlines of Naval Routine) says, “Stockholm tar, coal-tar, and salt water, in equal proportions, heated up in a fish kettle.” Brady (Kedge Anchor) suggests the following. “To half a barrel of tar, add six gallons of whiskey, four pounds of litharge, four pounds of lampblack, two buckets of boiling beef-pickle, or hot salt-water; mix well together and apply immediately.” (Murphy & Jeffers P. 27, 1849)

Reading the above blackening recipes, I wonder if my standing rigging should be dark brown (tar) or black (lampblack added)? They would blacken shot, blacken guns, blacken hammock-cloths, blacken yards, blacken bends, (Brady p.389) why not blacken the rigging? Although Stockholm tar is pretty close to black as it is.

I found a reference by Brady (Kedge Anchor) to blackening the topsail and lower lifts (p. 130) in 1847, but he doesn't say if these were the standing or running type.

Time periods and countries differ of course but I've had enough research for now.

What I discovered:

There seems to be another issue as to whether a line is natural (running thru blocks), tarred (a deep dark brown), or blackened (A blackening agent such as lamp black added to the tarr).

Standing Lifts: I'll probably tarr (and blacken) them (for this time period, USA privateer 1799) per definition of standing rigging

Tyes: I'll probably tarr (and blacken) them. They are mostly stationary and their primary use being the support of the lower heaviest yards.

Yard-Horse and Stirrups: I'll probably tarr (and blacken) them, following the ratlines example. They structurally support the men and maintenance is cumbersome.

Laniards: I'll probably tarr (and blacken) them to match the black shrouds, stays, and deadeyes. Some of my thoughts include:

- Setting up a shroud is an infrequent process compared to trimming the sails. Laniards are loosened and tightened as deemed necessary but those occurrences are few and far between.
- Laniards are an extension of the shroud, a structural standing rigging system. Tarring (and blackening) provide protection to the structure from the elements.
- Once the lanyards are hove taught a coat of tar is applied to keep the rope protected and free from swelling and shrinking (contracting and expanding).
- Laniards were more-or-less finished off with hitches, and/or seizings, as opposed to belaying pins or cleats where a ready access and release was needed.
- The mechanical advantage of tightening a rigging system between the combined six holes of a deadeye is considerable when one looks at all the resistance due to friction that must be overcome. Running rigging are "lines that run," that is, they go thru blocks, etc.

There are also some excellent discussions on "Model Ship World" and "Ships of Scale" websites that add to the richness of this discussion.

These are my thoughts anyway. I'm no expert, just a model builder who finds ship modeling a pleasant past time. If you have a source that I've overlooked I'd like to hear from you. I'm just offering my research for you here to use or dismiss. On a final note, I have had the opportunity to view a lot of old models in museums around the world. On those old models most seemed as though all the rigging was close to the same color (?), aging into subtle shades of browns and greys, and not this stark contrast of black and tan we see in models today. This would be a better direction to go?

Now, back to the workbench!

Bruce Bollenbach

Sources:

"Universal Dictionary of the Marine" William Falconer, 1784 edition

"Steels Elements of Mastmaking, Sailmaking, and Rigging" David Steel, 1794

"Young Sea Officers Sheet Anchor" Darcy Lever, 1819

"The Art of Rigging" Capt. George Biddlecombe, 1848

"Rudimentary Treatise on Masting, Mast-Making and Rigging of Ships" Robert Kipping, 1859

"Spars and Rigging from Nautical Routine, 1849" Murphy and Jeffers, 1849

Selected Informational Resources for Model Builders

Modelshipbuilder.com

This website has a popular forum with over 1900 members and an extensive group of building logs. They also sponsor group builds and provide an opportunity for members to place articles. In addition archived issues of "Warships and Workboats" and "MSB Journal" can be accessed here. www.modelshipbuilder.com/.

Ships of Scale

This website provides a forum and build logs from around the world, though it is an English language site headquartered in the USA. It was never associated with now-defuncted *Ships In Scale* magazine (whose intellectual properties were acquired by the Nautical Research Guild). <https://shipsofscale.com/sosforums/>

Nautical Research Guild

Official website for this premier ship building organization. There are articles, links, and NRG news. <http://www.thenrg.org/>

NRG's Model Ship World

This large, comprehensive site is now operated by the Nautical Research Guild. It's a major forum w build logs and plenty of response to modeler's questions. Also access shop notes, tips, techniques and research. <https://modelshipworld.com>

FAQ for Ship Model Builders (by John Kropf) This is a model ship building site which answers all sorts of questions about ship modeling. Many of the links do not work. <http://sites.google.com/site/shipwrightsfaq/>

John's Nautical & Boatbuilding Page This site includes mostly life-size boat building material, but its self-proclaimed "Mother of All Maritime Links" can be helpful. <http://www.boat-links.com/>

Bottled Ship Builder This is a forum that is all about ship in bottle and miniature building. there's a lot of information on the site for any one interested in ships in bottles and miniatures <http://Bottledshipbuilder.com>

Model Ship Building Secrets This is an English blog with a directory , "50 of the Best Model Ship Building Sites" <http://www.modelshipbuildingsecrets.com/resources.html>

Modeler's Central – An Australian commercial site that features a blog with many modeling tips as well. <https://www.modelerscentral.com/>

DeAgostini Model Space A British commercial site selling kits and tools with a forum filled with build logs of large models <http://forum.us.model-space.com/>

Arsenal Modelist – Olivier Bello's ship modeling site featuring 43 short tutorials, closeups of his fine work and a building log. <http://www.arsenal-modelist.com/index.php?page=accueil>

Wooden Ship Modeling for Dummies (aka Naval Model Making for Dummies) contains illustrated photos (3000) and videos (200). However, unless you pay to subscribe, you may only access a limited amount of this instructional material. Those unrestricted tutorials are certainly worth exploring. <https://shipmodeling.ca>



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