



Scuttlebutt

June 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA MODEL SHIPWRIGHTS SOCIETY

Established 21 April 1988. Incorporated 16 January 1991.

OBJECTIVES: To foster and maintain interest in building model ships, boats, associated fittings, gear, equipment, armaments and relevant items and structures and the pursuit of excellence in this field.



EXPO 2021 - MOUNT ROGERS PRIMARY SCHOOL - SEPTEMBER 18-19

COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2021-22

President Bob Evans
Vice-President Matt Shepley
Secretary Bill Atkinson
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Treasurer Peter Hateley
Members Robert Hodsdon, Rod Carter
 Elizabeth Hodsdon
Public Officer Ray Osmotherly
Appointments made by Committee:
Member Liaison Max Fitton
Web Master – Steve Batcheldor
Newsletter Editor - Brian Voce

EXPO 2021

Our Expo will be held in the Mount Rogers Primary School on the week-end of September 18-19. **NOTE: Set-up will be on Saturday morning - 7.30 a.m.** (Friday night is unavailable).

Gatherings

The Society meets at the Men's Shed at Melba on the third Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. (except December and January). Visitors are welcome.

See - Mud Map, Page 28, for directions.

Web-page

CMSS members are encouraged to visit our website at:
[http:// www.canberramodelshipwrights.org.au](http://www.canberramodelshipwrights.org.au).

Instructions for using this website are on the site itself where members will need to register.

The webmaster will help you in any way possible.

We seek content for the website - everything from photographs of your models through to interesting web-links and chat.

Facebook Page

The Society has a Facebook group to promote the Society and to attract new members. Please feel free to post items on the page and share it with your Friends.

<https://www.facebook.com/canberramodelshipwrights/>

Subscriptions

Annual Membership:

- a. Canberra Area-Single \$30.00, Couple \$45.00.
- b. Country/Interstate-Single \$15.00, Couple \$22.50.

Payment Details:

By Cash to Treasurer

Post by cheque/Money Order to: c/- 5 Stretton Crescent, Latham, ACT 2615 ; or

Bank Deposit to

Beyond Bank - BSB 325185

Acct Name - Canberra Model Shipwrights Society (or CMSS)

Acct No 03452396.

Editor's Note

American River on Kangaroo Island, SA, is close to my heart. I spent many summers of my youth there fishing, swimming, beach-combing and bush-walking. I remember fishing off the wharf there, seeking a common quarry, 'Tommy Ruffs', but on this occasion they were giants, the biggest I've seen before or since. That solid wharf is now the scene of a remarkable leap of faith as local artisans build a replica of the schooner Independence, the first ship to be built in South Australia. Read about it inside.

Other stories include Michael Pearson's euphoria at ending a long journey to complete his HMS Erebus model, Matt Shepley's first renovation, Max Fitton's visit to a Viking exhibition, Liam Mclean's latest challenge and Huia on display in her new home.

A sincere thank you to all our contributors for this issue.

Brian Voce Editor, Scuttlebutt

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‘Our monthly meetings continue to be reasonably well attended, despite the onset of Winter, and the mix of Technical and General issues seems to be working well, so please feel free to come along and judge for yourself.’

It seems like no time since our venerable Editor was asking, in his usual polite fashion, for my letter for the June edition. Brian has a way of asking for things that cannot be refused! He also has a way of producing a brilliant Newsletter that is both informative in regards to modelling issues, but also contains articles of general interest, mostly connected with a host of ship-related stories over a large variety of subjects.

My thanks go to him for his work and also to those who contribute to these pages. I can't stress enough the value of the Newsletter in keeping our far-flung membership informed and the availability on our website hopefully will whet appetites and perhaps gain us some new members.

Of course, none of this is possible without your contributions, however large or small, so keep them coming in. As I have said previously, anyone, Members or non-Members are invited to submit anything they feel is within the parameters of model shipbuilding.

The belated AGM was held in April and the Office Bearers appear in the front of the Newsletter. No real surprises here, but I was delighted to see 15 Members in attendance. Don't forget though that Committee Members (myself included!) would like to see a new team with fresh ideas step up at the next AGM.

I am delighted to advise that EXPO 2021 will take place this year on the week-end of September 18-19 at the Mount Rogers Primary School and I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Principal and Staff for supporting this event as they have done for many years now.

President's Letter



Naturally we will monitor Covid-related issues in the lead up to EXPO and will have an approved Covid plan. May I urge you all to support our principal event and display all those models you have managed to build during those periods of travel restrictions and lock-downs.

Speaking of EXPO, our Colleagues at the SMSC will be holding their Expo on August 28-29, this year at Wests Ashfield which is located at 115 Liverpool Road, Ashfield.

As you are no doubt aware by now, the Malkara event for this year has been cancelled. This is disappointing for the organisers, but seems to be a sensible decision considering the special-needs focus of the school.

November will see the Wagga Model Railway and Hobby Exhibition and also the ACT Scale Modellers Expo over the week-end of October 30-31. so there is plenty to look forward to.

Our monthly meetings continue to be reasonably well attended, despite the onset of Winter, and the mix of Technical and General issues seems to be working well, so please feel free to come along and judge for yourself.

Meantime please keep up the good work and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Bob

President CMSS

HUIA SAILS ACROSS THE TASMAN TO NEW HOME

Right - The restored model of the NZ topsail schooner Huia (1894) with L-R: Mr Matt Shepley; LtCol Lisa Kelliher; Mrs Kate Hambly; Dr Graham Taylor; Dame Annette King; Mr Bob Evans; Capt Shaun Fogarty.



In a fitting end to CMSS's involvement in the re-homing of the model of the topsail schooner Huia, the official handover event was recently hosted by the New Zealand High Commission, with the CMSS President and Vice President representing the society.

In 2020, Mrs Kate Hambly of Deakin, ACT, contacted the Canberra Model Shipwrights Society about re-homing one of her late grandfather's many models. She possessed a large model of the New Zealand-built topsail schooner Huia (1894) that she was no longer able to properly care for and which had suffered some damage in recent years. The model's maker, the late Mr Jeffrey Taylor of Cremorne, NSW, was an avid modeller and scratch-built (without kit or instructions) the model of the schooner Huia after reading the book Log of the Huia, by Clifford Hawkins.

The Society contacted the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra about donation of the model, noting the vessel's New Zealand heritage and rich shared history with Australia. After further research and effort by the New Zealand High Commission staff, the Huia Settlers Museum near Auckland, NZ was determined to be the most

appropriate venue and the museum was a gracious recipient.

With this plan established, the Canberra Model Shipwrights Society members have set about repairing the model back to its original condition, with the Society's President Mr Bob Evans doing the bulk of the work over December-January. Repairs included deck fittings, rigging, bowsprit and general clean, and a new display stand.

The NZ High Commissioner, Dame Annette King, DNZM, accepted the model on behalf of the Huia Settlers Museum on Friday, February 26, in the presence of the model-maker's descendants, members of the Canberra Model Shipwrights Society, and staff of the High Commission.

Not long thereafter, the New Zealand Navy played its part by transporting the model aboard HMNZS Aotearoa in a fitting voyage across the Tasman. The model is now on display at the Huia Settlers Museum, about 30km south-west of downtown Auckland. ★

Matt Shepley



CMSS President Bob Evans explains the Society's involvement and restoration efforts.

More photos next page.



The model Huia presented to representatives of the Huia Settlers Museum aboard HMNZS Aotearoa at the Devonport Naval Base, Auckland.



The Huia now on display in the Huia Settlers Museum in Auckland. An enclosing case is being made for her.

WA 'Chapter' of the CMSS

Two stalwarts get together to discuss Life and Ship Modelling (aren't they the same thing?).

Max Fitton and Douglas Gordon chew the fat in the far West.



Dining in Wagga Wagga

Pam and Max Fitton called into Wagga Wagga, on their way east recently and caught up with long-time friends.

Around table, from left: Pam Fitton, Max Fitton, Phil Murray, Brian McRowe, Kerry James, Steve Batcheldor, Ron DeBrueys, Jan DeBrueys. Out of shot, Karyn Batcheldor, who took the photo.

Max, Phil and Steve are members of the CMSS; others (including Phil and Steve) are members of Task Force 72 Fleet Base Wagga Wagga.



Matt Shepley writes about **A SATISFYING FIRST RESTORATION**

My first little resto...

On the back of the successful CMSS involvement in the restoration and handover of the top-sail schooner model *Huia* (1894), I agreed to help the *Huia*'s owner, Kate, with another model she possessed by the same maker (her grandfather). After seeing photos, I agreed to the task, partly to thank Kate for her happy participation in the re-homing of *Huia*, but also because I was keen to give my first 'restoration' a go. Also good to 'take a look' before committing to anything!

The scratch-built model of *Capella of Kent* (1964) was delivered to me in, thankfully, fine condition. Apart from the obvious need for a clean, damages were limited to a wayward mainsheet, errant cordage, a dislodged hatch cover, and a small area of woodwork that had overcome its glued constraints.

A quick internet search revealed the subject vessel is still on the water, having been last sold in 2018. Designed by Alan Buchanan, she is a 41' Buchanan Sloop built in Cumbria in the NW of England. The connection to the model's maker is unknown, other than his propensity to model vessels he thought were attractive. It is believed the model was made in the 1980s.

Before repairs, I set about cleaning - first with a variety of brushes (a makeup brush being very effective and gentle on the dusty rigging), then damp cotton-buds of various sizes. This was very successful, and the extant defects improved access, so I didn't have to worry about re-damaging items already fixed. Next, I carefully re-waxed all accessible lines with black and natural beeswax, which further removed dust and fluff and greatly added to the 'definition' of the rigging. Wayward woodwork was easily coaxed back into position, the mainsheet was re-attached to the boom, and several lines were tidied. Once I was happy things were shipshape, I carefully applied tung oil to all upper woodwork, as it all appeared very dry and this gave the model a wonderful lift in colour.

The overall result was very satisfying. *Capella of Kent* is ready to sail into a new display case and be a treasured heirloom for Kate and her family.

★



“Are you ever going to finish that?”

Modelling Woes or The Art of Indecision

Bob Evans

I much admire those modellers who are able to decide on a project and forge ahead until such project is completed and another begun. Sadly, I seem incapable of such a thing. As my late wife was frequently heard to ask, “are you ever going to finish that?”. “Of course” I would dutifully reply, carefully omitting a completion date. I confess to having projects that have taken well over 20 years to reach completion.

There is occasionally undeniable motivation such as “I would like to see that model completed”. I have said before that my beloved wife was a huge supporter and such a request was not to be ignored. I am also the proud possessor of a substantial number of unbuilt kits, both wood and plastic consisting of a variety of ship types as well as aircraft, cars and other vehicles etc. This used to bring the comment, “You will not live long enough to build them all”. True, but if I don’t, I won’t know much about it.

I would like to look at some of the reasons, at least for me, why this butterfly approach to modelling exists and is it necessarily a bad thing?

Lack of focus. This is a significant factor and stems from having too many choices as to what model to build. The decision has to be made as to what medium to build in, ie wood, plastic, kit or scratch built. Not only that but subjects that interest me one week may not the next.

Quality. The quality of materials in a kit and the clarity of the instructions have a profound effect on holding my interest. The ideal combination of course is a good quality kit of a subject of interest with clear and well detailed, easy to follow instructions. Preferably with minimal rigging! Some kits are so woefully inadequate that it is hard to resist not starting something new. It is not until construction begins that any of these issues become apparent.

Tools. It should only be necessary to have those tools that match your capabilities, but what you do have should be of good quality and be in good condition. Nothing worse than having saws and

knives that make the job worse than if you were to use your teeth to cut out parts.

I am the proud possessor of a small metal lathe. Why did I want it I was asked. “Because”, that’s why. Do I know how to use it? Of course not, but it looks good on the bench.

Lack of interest. I can only vouch for myself here, but I’m sure others have experienced this. From time to time, no matter how absorbing a hobby is, interest wanes and productivity becomes almost zero. There may be many reasons for this, in my own case the loss of my wife is a prime factor. I no longer have my mate to encourage me and admire the work I produce. I won’t dwell on that, but the way out of a lack of interest is to find something that really stirs you into activity and gets you back on the modelling trail.

This is of course a very good excuse for having a number of models on the go at any one time, or to purchase something new! It is sometimes referred to as “retail therapy.” Don’t be deterred if this happens to you. The remedy is simple. Search for a kit, or a subject for scratch building that interests you and is not overly complicated and materials or kit are of good quality. Ensure tools are up to the task and away you go. Simple!

By the way, I have just begun the Mamoli “Victory” to get myself back in the swing of things, not a good move! See “Quality”

Can you have multiple products on the go? Why not? The pleasure is not always in the finished product - it can be in the getting there. It’s your hobby and whatever gives you pleasure is what you do!

Next page - A few pictures may help; I think they are self-explanatory.

★



Left - My constant companions and critics. One obviously with no interest whatsoever!

‘The pleasure is not always in the finished product - it can be in the getting there.’



TOOLS EXPLAINED - YOU KNOW THE NAME, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S USED FOR?

Provided by Bill Atkinson



DRILL PRESS : A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

WIRE WHEEL : Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, 'Oh sh*t'

DROP SAW : A portable cutting tool used to make studs too short.

PLIERS : Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER : An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

HACKSAW : One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle... It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

VICE-GRIPS : Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH : Used almost entirely for lighting on fire various flammable objects in your shop. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race..

TABLE SAW : A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK : Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed

your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

BAND SAW : A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to cut good aluminum sheet into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the trash can after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside edge.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST : A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER :

Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER :

A tool for opening paint cans. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws and butchering your palms.

PRY BAR : A tool used to crumple

the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

HOSE CUTTER : A tool used to make hoses too short.

HAMMER : Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit.

UTILITY KNIFE : Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on contents such as seats, vinyl records, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund checks, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use.

Son of a bitch TOOL : Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling 'Son of a b*tch' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need. *



HMS EREBUS - Joyful ending to long journey for Michael Pearson

I would like to share with members my joy at the completion of a scratch model of HMS *Erebus*. I started the model in April 1999, and completed it at Christmas 2020, though getting it into its display case only occurred in April this year. So the model is now legally an adult. I had a piece in the newsletter in 2015 when the wreck of the *Erebus* was rediscovered in Canada, but more of that later.

A little history:

HMS *Erebus* was built as a bomb vessel of 372 tons burthen at Pembroke dockyard and launched in 1826. Variouslly rigged as a ship and a barque during her colourful life, the vessel is most famous for her polar exploration, carried out in company of her fellow bomb HMS *Terror* (325 tons launched in 1813). Bomb vessels were very strongly built to withstand the concussion of their large mortars, and had large holds to hold the cribs that stored the bomb carcasses, ideal for conversion for extended polar navigation.

Built in a time of peace, *Erebus* had been in reserve for nine years before she was converted for Sir James Clarke Ross's Antarctic expedition of 1839-43. The *Terror* had previous polar experience on Sir George Back's Arctic expedition of 1836-37. *Erebus*'s conversion saw the bomb accommodation removed; her guns reduced from 12 to 2 and the gun ports planked in; the quarterdeck and forecastle merged into a flush deck; the hull strengthened with 6 inch oak planks increased to 8 inches at the wales; the decks doubled with diagonally-laid 3 inch planking with felt between the layers; and the removal of her quarter galleries and carved work on the bows (see the model of the ship in its original form).

The Ross expedition was sent to make systematic observations of the magnetic variation in the southern hemisphere, leaving England in September 1839. Ross arrived in Hobart in August 1840, where the expedition spent three months, and he built the 'Rossbank' observatory in what are now the grounds

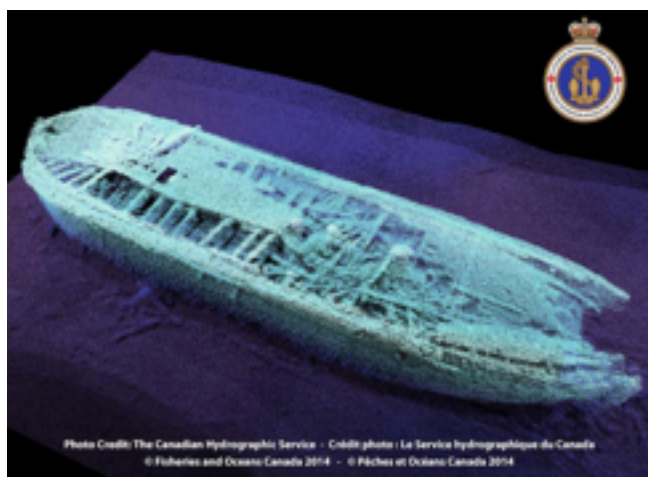
of Government House. The then Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land was no other than Sir John Franklin, and as a former Arctic explorer (as was Ross) Franklin took a great deal of interest in the expedition as it prepared for its venture into the Antarctic.

In November the *Erebus* and *Terror* headed south, and explored deep into what is now named the Ross Sea and making a new 'farthest south' record. They discovering (on Ross Island) Mt Erebus and Mt Terror, named after the ships. After three weeks sailing along the length of the Ross Ice Shelf (originally called the Great Ice Barrier by Ross) then forcing their way north through the ice pack, the ships returned to Hobart, then to Sydney, New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, before returning to the Antarctic. They experienced terrible weather as they fought their way eastward in high latitudes before heading north-east through the Drake Passage for the Falkland Islands, the two ships suffering a collision in a gale among icebergs along the way. After another Antarctic sortie into the Weddell Sea, the expedition retreated to the Cape of Good Hope and then headed home, arriving back in September 1843 after 4 and a half years away.

At that time a new expedition in search of the North-West Passage was being organised by the Admiralty, and the newly returned Sir John Franklin was appointed as its commander. The *Erebus* and *Terror* were refitted with auxiliary 20 horse power steam engines with propellers, and the spar deck was enclosed to improve habitability in an Arctic winter. *Erebus*'s bows were strengthened with iron reinforcement. The expedition left England in May 1845 with 134 officers and men, Franklin in command of the *Erebus* and Francis Crozier in command of the *Terror* (as he had been on the Ross Expedition). The ships became entrapped by ice in the Victoria Strait off King William Island in the Canadian Arctic in September 1846, and were unable to be freed in the following summer. Franklin died in June 1847, and by April 1848 twenty nine of

the crew were dead. In that month the 105 survivors abandoned the ships, and under Crozier's command headed south overland towards the Great Fish River, perishing from starvation and exposure as they went. Their fate was not revealed until 1859 after a massive search effort, and the details of the escape party's gradual death along the trail has been filled in by subsequent expeditions.

The *Erebus* was discovered in amazingly intact condition on the sea bed (sonar picture below) in September 2014, having drifted in the sea ice nearly 200 km after abandonment before finally sinking. Archaeological work is proceeding on the wreck, and that of the *Terror*, located in 2016, 50 km away.

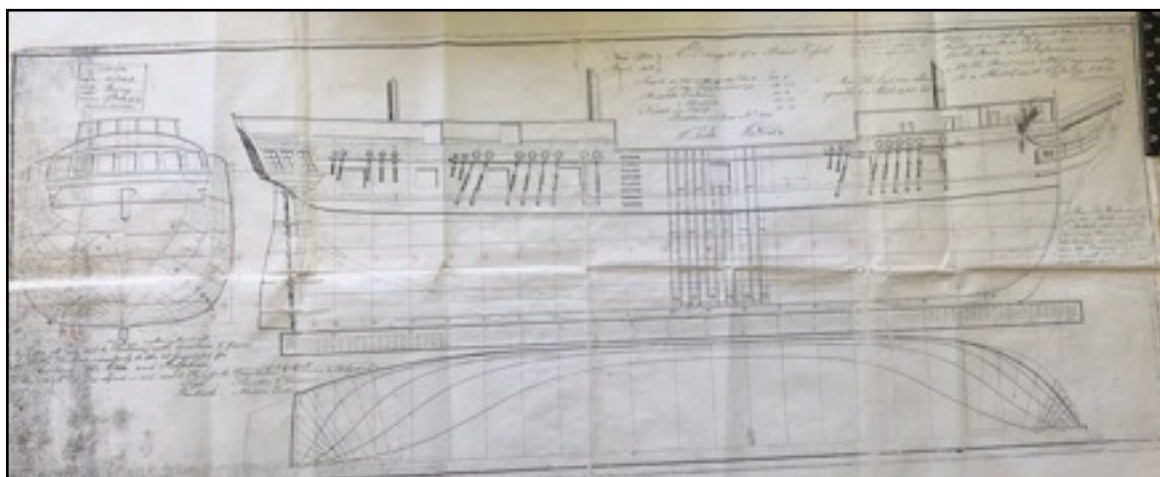


The model

The model is based on the Admiralty plans as first built as a bomb vessel, purchased from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. The model is at 1:48 scale, the same as the plans. It is double planked, walnut over limewood, on an MDF frame. Good quality PVA woodworking glue was used throughout, except when joining metal to timber etc (liquid nails or superglue - used as little as possible).

Interesting challenges (mainly for the scratch builder, but maybe of general interest):

- The Admiralty plans only give you the hull and internal form, not the deck furniture or rigging. I had to do a LOT of research to try to get it right for an 1826 ship. Key reference books were:
 - James Lees *Masting and Rigging of English Ships of war 1625 -1860*, Naval Institute Press, Conway Press, 1995.
 - Chris Ware *The Bomb Vessel – shore bombardment ships in the age of sail*, Conway Press, 1994.
 - Peter Goodwin *The Sailing Man of war 1650-1850*, Conway Press, 1987.
 - Brian Lavery *The Arming and Fitting of English Ships of War 1600-1815*, Naval Institute Press, Conway Press, 1987.
 - C. Nepean Longridge *Anatomy of Nelson's ships*, Nexus Special Interests, 1995.
 - David White *The frigate Diana*, Anatomy of the Ship series, Conway Press 1987.
 - Alan McGowan, *HMS Victory: her construction, career and restoration*. Chatham Publishing, 1999.
 - John Harland, *Seamanship in the age of sail*, Conway Press, 1985.
 - And lots of photos taken of ship models and preserved ships around the world.



One sheet of Admiralty Plans



Mortars built and fitted

Finding details of mortars, and hand-turning mortars from dowelling (one is a broom handle). Eventually based on plans in McConnell *British smooth bore artillery*, with mounts based on Peter Goodwin, *The bomb vessel Granado 1742*, Anatomy of the Ship series, Conway Press 1989, and the Admiralty plans themselves.

Bending the planksheer rails at bow and stern – I made them from three layers of walnut bent, laminated and bent again before setting.

- Lesson learnt —do the linings of the bulwarks in the waist before putting on the deck above. I didn't, and it was very fiddly.
- Getting the course sheets and tacks to hang in a catenary curve. I rubbed diluted PVA along the line and let it set, adjusting the curve as it did so and adding more glue until it was reasonably fixed in shape. Seems to work well.
- Hammock cranes – I made the first set with heat-bent styrene strip, with superglue fixed cross pieces, which worked well but proved to be very fragile and constantly broke if bumped. So I gave, in bought some metal cranes from Modeler's Central to replace them.
- I remembered to plan and install the system for the pedestal to support the model at the right time (ie the fixings for bolts – a model this size needs a strong mounting). Unless you are using an external cradle mount, this

needs to be planned well in advance of building, so the system decided upon can be installed in the hull without stuffing up work already done later.

- Working out the curve and length of the head rails so I could cut them accurately was mind-boggling. The plans, of course, only show the rails in square-on profile and plan, so you have to redraw them, then offset the angles to arrive at an accurate curve and length. Thank God for high school technical drawing (remember that?).

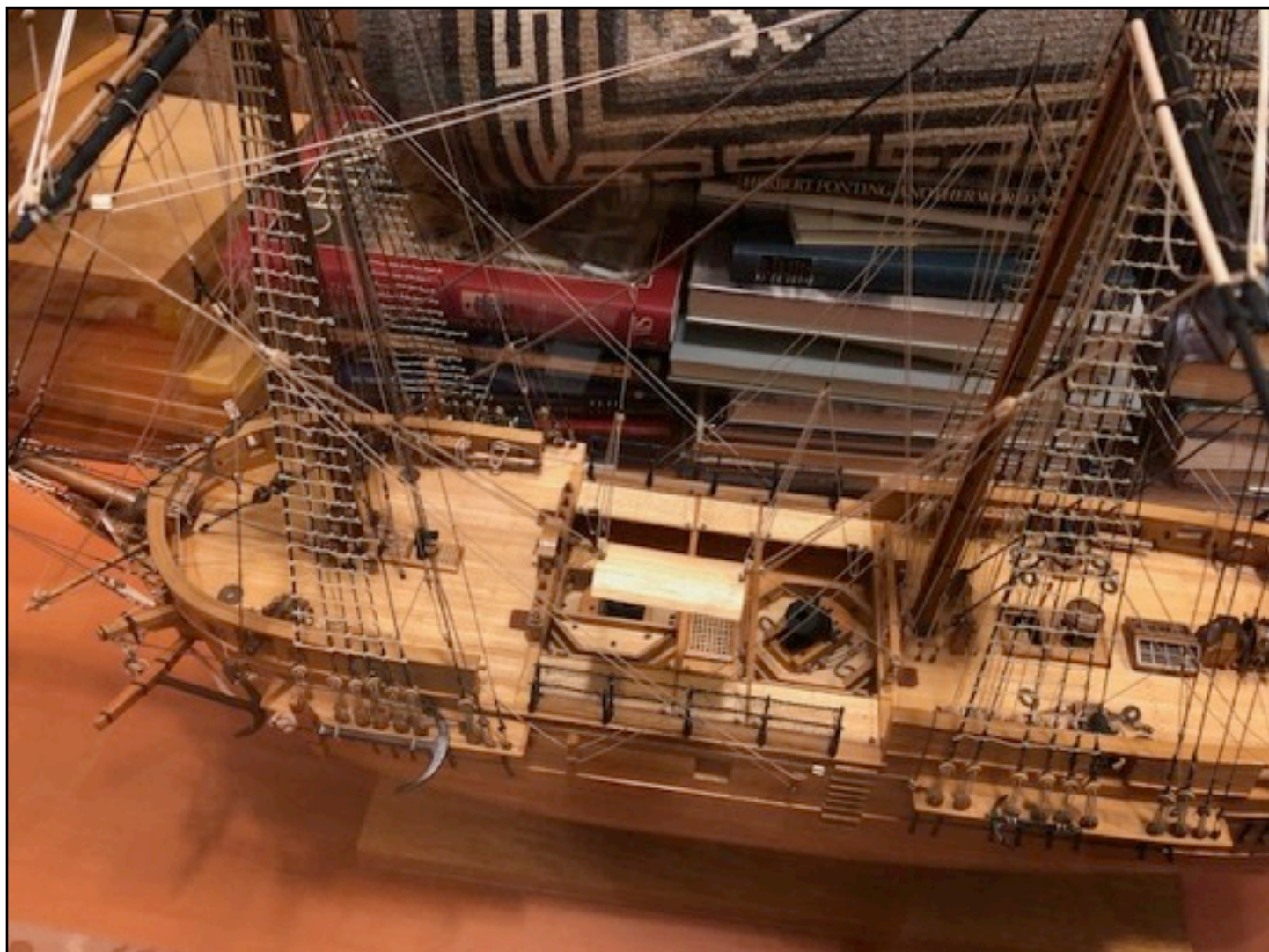


Head rails and bow detail nearing completion. Also shows cat head release mechanism and heads

Getting accurate information about rigging in the 1820s – a bit different from Napoleonic-era rigging. Lees *Masting and Rigging* was the best guide, but even he is a bit vague at times on post-Napoleonic details.

- I wanted a few different features, so I portray the raising of the anchor with a fish, and also modelled the release gear on the cat heads, and show the raising of a cover from the bomb beds by tackle from the fore and main yards, a similar process to raising boats. This weight displaces the angle of the two yards, so the model does not have all yards parallel and horizontal, as they never were when working.

★



Detail of yard tackle. Also shows hammock cranes and netting

Mistakes: I've made a few! – divulged on request.

A recent easy-to-read book on the *Erebus* by Michael Palin is aptly named *Erebus: the story of a ship*, Hutchison, 2018.

The following photos show some of the steps in the build.





Frames of MDF



Erebus hull, showing walnut planking being laid over limewood inner planking



Left - Stern gallery windows under construction

Below - Completed





Left - Painting hand-made chain-plates

Below - Detail of chain-plates fitted





Above - Hull completed

Left - Model finished
Christmas 2020

★

MAX FITTON took his camera to the Viking Exhibition at the Western Australian Maritime Museum

I visited the WA Maritime Museum specifically to view the Viking Exhibition in February.

Thankfully there were no Covid restrictions, but I was quite surprised, on seeing the quality of the exhibits, that there were so few visitors. The exhibits speak for themselves, so I shall present my tour in pictures, with very few comments.

Highlight of the exhibition was the story of The Gokstad Boat, a ship from the Viking Age which was used as a grave chamber that contained, among other objects, three smaller boats. One of these boats has been reconstructed for this exhibition, using traditional Viking methods of construction and materials. Shown left below, It is 6.5 metres long with a draft of 0.18 metres.



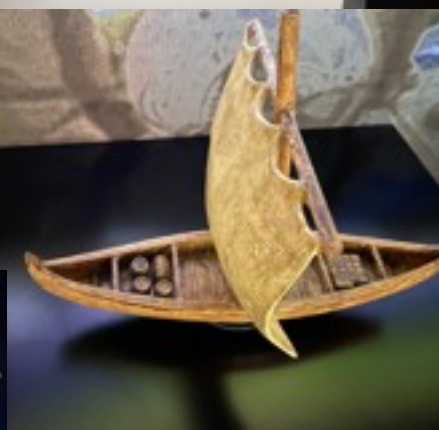
Iron rivets

A 30 metre long Viking Age longship required around 7,000 hand-forged rivets used for fastening the planks together in clinker-built ships. Little is known about how long it would have taken the blacksmith to produce such a number of rivets but today it would take around 1,000 man-hours and some 400 kilograms of pure iron. Probably around 30 tons of bog iron would be needed for producing rivets enough for just one Viking age longship.

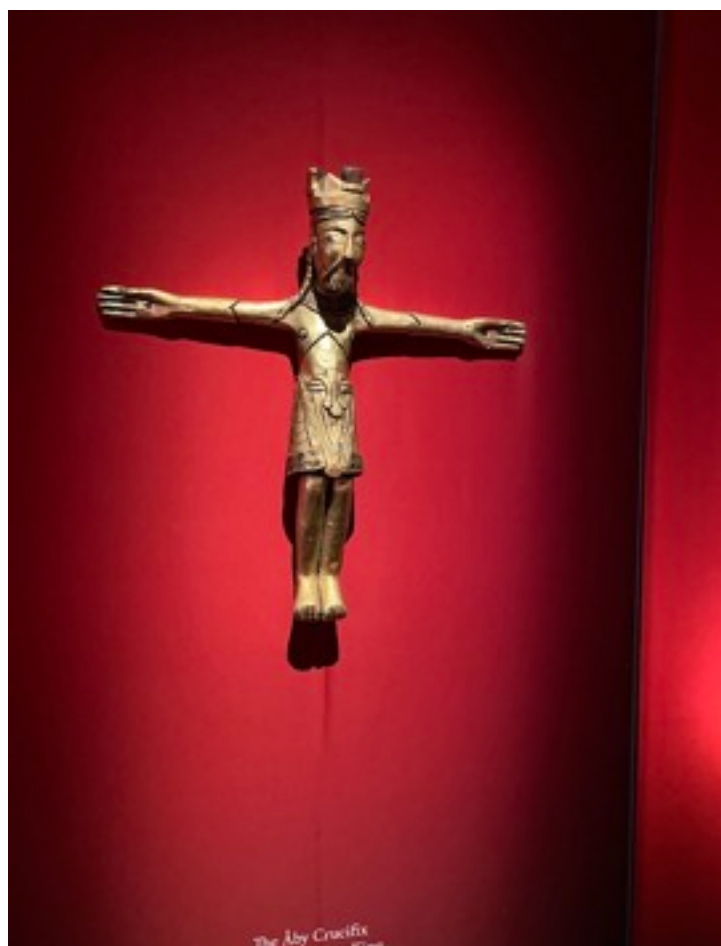


Mastering the Sea - Side Rudder

Steering was controlling and the rudder was the focus of attention and power. He who held the rudder was the one in charge, the captain or captain of the ship. The Vikings steered their ships using a rudder placed on the right side. The steering side = starboard side of the ship became known as the starboard side = starboard side. Today, the right side of a ship is known as the starboard side, even on ships where the rudder is elsewhere.



Artefacts from the Gokstad ship



Two silver plated stirrups
Jutland, Denmark
900-1000 CE

Horse bridle
Zealand, Denmark
700-1000 CE

THE FORE STEM

Reconstruction of a stepped stem for a 12 m long fishing boat from the Viking Age

The stems of the Skuldelev 6, built in western Norway ca 1030 CE, are not preserved. The Viking Ship Museum's Boatyard used the stepped stem known from other finds of Viking ships for the first reconstruction of Skuldelev 6. The fore stem is made out of one single piece of oak. It has a V-shaped cross-section and seven steps cut into the sides. The ship's planking consists of eight strakes that are fastened with iron rivets to the steps, with the fourth and fifth strakes sharing the fourth step. In the Viking Age ships were built of fresh wood without the use of saws. The tree trunks were cleaved and the planks and stems were shaped with axes. The shape of the stems was essential to the size and form of the ship. The stem was thus meticulously carved by a stem smith, who was able to envisage the design of a well-working vessel.

Stem from the fishing boat Skuldelev 6 (reconstruction), from Roskilde Fjord, Denmark, ca 1030 CE. Material: Oak. Height: 2.5 m. The Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, Denmark.



The dragon's head

Reconstruction of a dragonhead for a warship from the Viking Age

Depictions from the 9th and 10th centuries CE show warships with stems ending in animal heads and curly tails. Some of the warships depicted on the famous Bayeux tapestry in France from the late 11th century also have stem-tops in the shape of dragonheads.

In 1990-1991, the Helge Aak longship was built at the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde. Using experimental archaeology-researchers and boatbuilders reconstructed a small warship known as Skuldelev 5 found in Roskilde Fjord. This included adding a piece not found on the Skuldelev 5 find from ca 1030 CE - a loose stem-top crafted with a dragonhead design. On the original ship a rare decoration in the shape of a leaf-tailed dragon in Ringerike style is carved on the sixth strake aft to port. Inspired by carvings on Swedish runic stones the dragonhead for Helge Aak was carved in similar style. When fitted to the Helge Aak, the dragonhead stem-top showed a remarkable likeness to a dragonhead depicted on a small Viking Age fitting shaped as a longship found at Sæters, close to Roskilde. This image represents a ship seen from the fore stem with its dragon-head in Ulfen style turned 90° to enable it to be seen.

Reconstruction of a dragonhead for a Viking ship, produced for Helge Aak, the reconstruction of the small warship Skuldelev 5, from Roskilde Fjord, Denmark. Built ca 1030 CE. Material: Oak, painted. Height 115 cm. The Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, Denmark.



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ENTERPRISING SHIPWRIGHTS AT AMERICAN RIVER

Good ideas often
become sustained and
hard fights to bring to
reality



by Brian Voce

American River on Kangaroo Island, SA, got its name from American sealers who sheltered there or used it as a base, way before settlement of the South Australian colony. There is no 'river', but the inlet has the appearance of a river estuary. To seawards American River Bay's waters complete the illusion as the 'river' emerges from its south-western edge.

A sailor today entering American River from seaward would pass Ballast Head to starboard, sail on, past Strawbridge Point to port, then make for the wharf on the other side and tie up. Dominating the wharf today is an eye-catching, colourful and substantial shed where a remarkable undertaking is underway.

* * *

Our story begins over 200 years before this though, and has its beginnings in the early days of exploration of Australia's coastline.

English and French explorers, Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin both charted Kangaroo Island's coastline at different times in their

ventures into Terra Australis. They met by chance off Encounter Bay, east of Kangaroo Island, in 1802 and exchanged information about their voyages of discovery. (The mix of English and French names that note coastal features of the island reflect the separate sailings of the two explorers).

* * *

A year later, the American captain of the sealing brig Union, Isaac Pendleton, also met Baudin near what is now Albany in WA. Baudin advised him of the plentiful seals around a large island to the east and generously shared some charts.

Thus, Pendleton in the Union sailed for Kangaroo Island where he decided to winter. During this period, he and his crew built a smaller vessel to complement the Union's abilities. Foresight had ensured the Union carried the basic framing for a 35-ton schooner that would become the Independence – the first ship built in South Australia. It was constructed at American River by the Union's crew under the guidance of the ship's carpenter Daniel Wright.

* * *

In more recent times an American River local builder-carpenter Tony Klieve took a long-held idea to the town's Progress Association and sold the idea of building a replica of the Independence to be used to boost the languishing tourist trade, offering cruises and sailing experiences to pay the way. He had already tracked down plans (pictured right) that he was sure were close to the original's specifications.

Good ideas often become sustained and hard fights to bring to reality and this project was no exception, but in time a site was approved at the town's wharf (thought now to be close to the original site of construction of the original Independence).

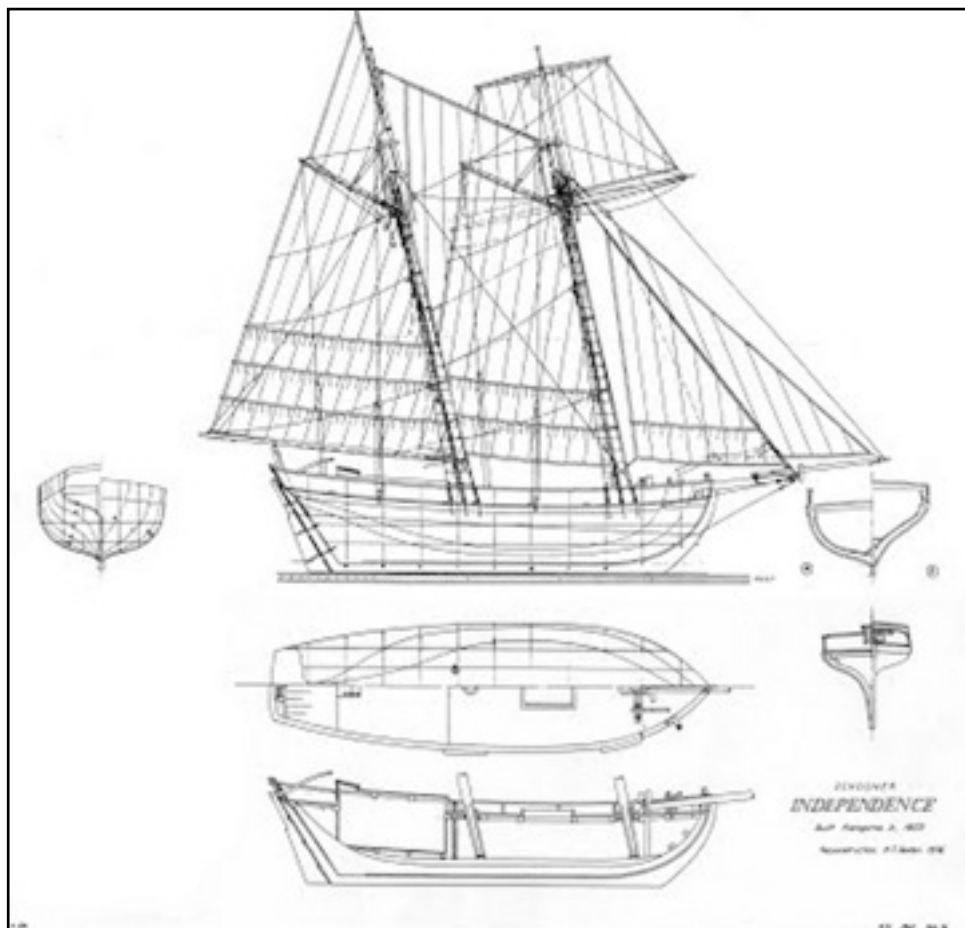
A council grant saw the construction of the impressive boat shed that now stands there. Inside, the new Independence's hull is taking shape under the guiding hand of boat-builder Bob Imeson and funded through donations, volunteer labour and in-kind support. Volunteers in for the long haul also include David Cowans, David Churchill and Tony Stockton.

Currently, the meticulously built hardwood frames are now being clad with the first of three layers of different thicknesses of Oregon. This is expected to take to the end of the year when the boat will be turned over for the final stages of construction.

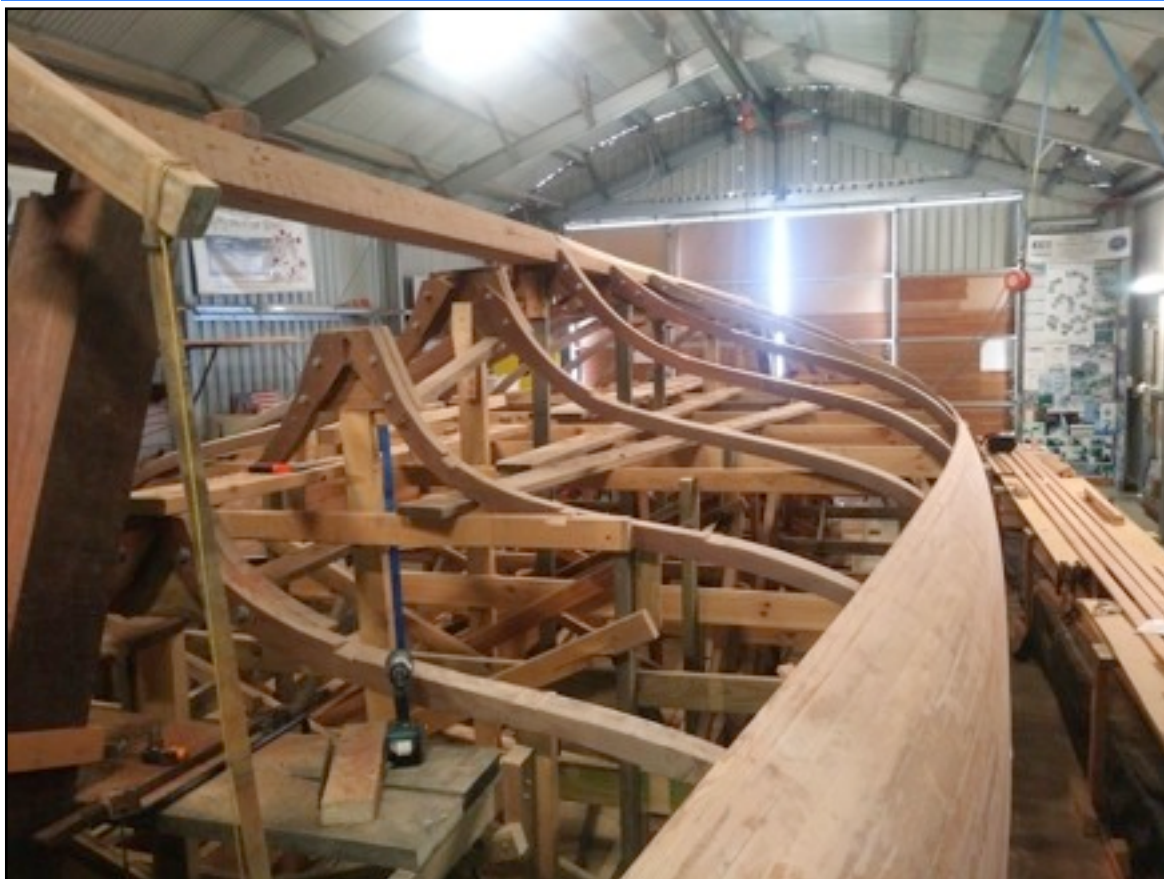
Funding for the vessel includes a personal touch, where donors can 'buy' a plank for \$20 with all proceeds going towards the build.

See the website: rebuildindependence.org for details of how you can subscribe, along with heaps of information on the on-going story honouring South Australia's first home-built vessel .

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The new Independence takes shape. The first of three layers of planking was begun recently.



Port side view of progress on the Independence

All illustrations provided by The Rebuild Independence Group (RIG)

Special thanks to David Cowans for help in compiling this article

Below some members of the team: From left: Tony Klieve (RIG President); Des Lanthois; David Churchill (RIG Project Planner); Greg Roberts (RIG VP). Photo: David Cowans



Liam McLean explains how he came to be Making a Model or three of a Marine Rescue Boat



The models I am currently working on stem from a request from my cousin and his wife, who are volunteers at their local Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) at Midge Point just north of Mackay. Their VMR Unit thought that instead of taking their actual boat to fund raising venues, a model of their rescue boat would better suit that role. It would also give them greater flexibility in exposure opportunities, such as informational talks on the role of the VMR at local schools etc.

The VMR group approached a few professional model makers, both here and overseas, only to find that they were way too expensive for the VMR Unit's budget. My cousin then asked me if I were able to make a model suitable to put on their fund-raising table. People are most likely to donate if they understand where their funds are going to. I agreed to build and donate a model, but made the point that I did not know how it would turn out.

For ease of transportation, I thought that the model had to be as light as possible, while still being big enough to stand out. A fibreglass construction about a meter long was my starting point. So I had at least something to work with, I asked them to send me photos showing various aspects of their rescue boat. After receiving a half a dozen photos I set to work.

The photos on the following pages show the step-by-step process I took to get this model up and running. A wooden plug for the hull was

formed where a fibreglass mould was formed over top. This fibreglass mould allowed me to make as many hulls as needed. I originally thought that two models would be wise so I could pick the best one to donate to the VMR. This duplication principle was the same used when I was building the Vasa (*Scuttlebutt*, March 2021). In this case, however, the second hull did not set after the usual amount of time. Realising that I probably did not put in enough hardener, I set aside that hull and proceeded to make another. To my surprise I found that after a few days the earlier one had also set. Now I felt obligated to try to complete all three.

As you can see from the photos, I have now completed the main structure, with the numerous small fittings and the outboard motors still to make. It is my aim to have all three finished by the end of the year, which takes into account that I will be away travelling for a couple of months.

Once I have finished these models, I will be able to return to fitting the running rigging and sails to the Vasa and her sister-ship models.

Liam McLean

Member - Hervey Bay 'Chapter' of the CMSS



Step-by-step photos next page



Love my Keel Clamp, says **Bruce Kirk** as he discusses building

The IJN ISUZU Part 1



It's quite amazing how often I have to use "my precious" (apologies to The Ring Cycle) modelling tools for other domestic or foreign chores. I sometimes wonder how such time spent relates to their actual use in building wooden ships? Used for holding a model wooden ship hull during the building process, my Amati™ *Keel Clamp* was employed in a novel way to assist my building a plastic ship model.

Diverting, for a change, into the world of plastic, I decided to build Tamiya's Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) light cruiser Isuzu. This is one of their 1/700 "waterline" series.

Irrespective of the medium, modellers are familiar with unseen building challenges: in this case, one doubled-sided page with an introduction in both Japanese and English (grammatically very good) outlining the ship's history (with some historical inaccuracies), a painting diagram and full-page pictures-only assembly instructions. With some of the other 1/700 IJN WW2 model ship kits I have, however, information is only in Japanese (allowing you the pleasure of attempting to learn a new language), while one other kit provides Japanese, English (with beautiful translation!), German, French, Spanish or Chinese instructions – your choice!

A Brief Background

Isuzu was built by the Uruga Dock Company, being launched on 29th October 1921 and commissioned on 15 August 1923. The ship was named after the Isuzu river near the Ise Shrine in the Chubu region of Japan. It was the second of six vessels in the Nagara Class of light cruisers which were designed to be flagships for cruiser, destroyer or submarine sentais (divisions).

These Nagara Class ships were 163m (532 ft) in length, 14.2m (46.5 ft) in beam with a mean draft of

4.8m (15.9 ft). The standard displacement was 5,708 tons. They were very fast with a maximum speed of 36 knots, a performance required to keep pace with the new high speed Japanese fleet. They carried the deadly "long lance" torpedoes in four double mounts. Gun armament was 7x14cm (5.5") Type 3 main guns in single mounts (four forward and three aft), with a secondary armament of 12.7cm (5") dual purpose guns in one double mount. Anti-aircraft armament of 25mm (1") heavy machine guns in single, double or triple mounts were carried, increasing up to 36 units throughout the war. Initially having a single seaplane/catapult, this was removed later in the war in favour of increasing anti-aircraft armament.

Isuzu was modified during May-September 1944 as an anti-aircraft cruiser. Its main armament was replaced by 3x2 12.7cm naval guns and adding additional triple and single 25mm AA guns and carrying depth charges. The aircraft catapult was removed.

This ship initially saw service off the central Chinese coast. Following the outbreak of World War Two, Isuzu saw extensive war service off Hong Kong, the Dutch East Indies, Indian Ocean theatre, the Solomon Island campaigns, Battle of Leyte Gulf, Singapore and again Dutch East Indies where she was torpedoed and sunk on 7th April 1945.

The Model

I will not go into a step-by-step detail about building the model. Rather, I will discuss some of the considerations I had to contend with in the build, including those peculiar to Japanese warships.

Scale

1/700 scale can be a challenge and I sometimes wonder why I persist? The excuse offered, however, is that one of the problems building large models is where does one store/display them once finished? Being only 228mm long, 19mm beam and 44mm in

height, this 1/700 scale model easily fits into a commercially available display case with the added advantage that such cases are stackable. The only downside is another cost and to ensure you don't knock any such stack over. Unfortunately, this scale is not particularly sympathetic to arthritic hands/fingers and deteriorating eyesight. Also dropped parts are remarkably hard to find on the floor! Notwithstanding, the 1/700 scale can make for an attractive model while still allowing for some build modifications. This can be done either through commercially available photo-etch or plastic parts or for those brave enough to tackle some scratch building.

The base

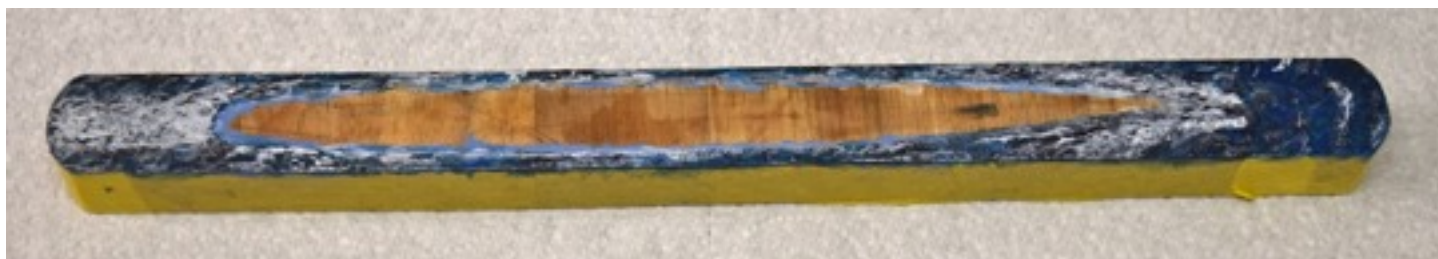
The model is "waterline", meaning it is not a full hull. It is designed to sit flatly on the display surface and represent the ship at its waterline level. This has an advantage in that you don't have to worry about attaching propellers or rudders etc which have a

storm conditions relating, if possible, to some aspect of the ship's history.

For the Isuzu, I have shown it leaving Bima Bay, Sumbawa Island, located within the Java Sea on the 7th April 1945. The ship was subsequently torpedoed and sunk later that same day by the submarines USS Gabilan and USS Char. Isuzu was the last of the Nagara Class cruisers to be sunk in the war. It was a case of calm conditions to begin with, but certainly did not end calmly!

For the base, I used a cut-off from an old wooden chopping board. Remember, unless you require a specific sea/ship aroma, you first need some hard elbow grease on both the upper and lower surfaces to remove the old original "surface" contents.

Below - Painted sea diorama (masking tape around base to protect during painting). Note where the finished model will be located.



propensity to dislodge at the slightest bump. The issue then becomes one of whether you incorporate a "sea" surface or just leave it as is. I think incorporating some form of "sea" for the base adds interest. You can represent calm, rough or severe

I will continue with my thoughts, including my keel clamp, in the next issue.

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LOCATING OUR MEETING PLACE

MEN'S SHED, MELBA

Elizabeth Hodsdon has prepared this 'mud map' to help Members locate the Men's Shed in Melba where the CMSS monthly meetings are held

