

## HM YACHT CHATHAM

Built by Max Fitton



This is what I hope the finished product will look like.

History.

The King's Ships  
H S Lecky  
(Horace Muirhead, London, 1913)

Extract

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The *fifth* “Chatham” was a 6-gun vessel, launched at Chatham in 1741. She was of 74 tons, and carried a crew of 10 men. Her length, beam, and draught were 59 ft., 17 ft., and 6 ft. She replaced the previous vessel as Commissioners’ yacht.

In 1793 this ship was rebuilt at Chatham.

In December 1805 this little vessel, then acting as yacht to Captain the Hon. George Grey, the Commissioner at Sheerness, assisted in the arrangements for the obsequies of Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson, who had been killed in action off Cape Trafalgar some three months previously, and whose body had been brought to English waters by his flagship “Victory”.

The Commissioner had received an order from the Admiralty to send his yacht to the Nore for the conveyance of the body to Greenwich Hospital, where it was to lie in state, previous to the national funeral at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> it blew so hard that any communication with the “Victory” would have been impossible, so it was not till the 22<sup>nd</sup> that the “Chatham” proceeded in search of the “Victory” which was sighted at noon crossing the flats from Margate.

In the evening, when the Commissioner and his officers arrived on board the “Victory” and had declared the melancholy purpose for which they had come, “a general gloom and impressive silence pervaded the whole ship”. The body, which lay in the Admiral’s cabin, was placed on a table with the Union Jack before it; it was so well preserved , wrote Clarke and M<sup>c</sup>Arthur in their three volume edition of Lord Nelson’s Life, that all who had known Lord Nelson immediately recognised it. The officers of the “Victory” and some of the late Commander-in-Chief’s friends attended to their last farewell. The body was afterwards attired in the Vice-Admirals uniform , and laid in the coffin made from a part of the mainmast of the French ship “L’Orient”, while a second coffin of lead covered the whole. On the coffins being lowered into the “Chatham”, the flag of the Vice-Admiral, which had been flying in his flagship, half-mast high, ever since the battle of Trafalgar, was struck on board the “Victory” for the last time, and sent aboard the “Chatham”, where it was again hoisted at half-mast.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> the yacht and attendant vessel, having anchored below Gravesend, got under way with favourable light air, and directly the vessels were seen from the shore, those military honours commenced that were paid throughout the “Chatham”’s passage up the river. As she passed, and while the “Chatham” continued in sight, minute guns were fired from Tilbury and the batteries from Gravesend, all ships lowered their colours. And the shore was lined with volunteers under arms. At high water the yacht anchored about two miles below Woolwich, and at 11 a.m. of the Next day, December 24<sup>th</sup>, she got under way again. The military were drawn up in line with reversed arms for a mile below the Arsenal at Woolwich, and in the same way in the Arsenal and Dockyard; all the colours were lowered, minute guns were again fired, the bells tolled and the bands played a solemn dirge, making a truly impressive scene as the “Chatham” passed. The navigation of the river was much impeded by the number of boats present, and on approaching Greenwich these increased considerable, many persons being anxious to be admitted on board the “Chatham”, earnestly begging to be allowed to touch the coffin.

The yacht continued to pass slowly along the line of troops under easy sail, and anchored of Greenwich Hospital during the afternoon. At 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve, the body was landed at the Centre Gate of the Royal Hospital, amidst an immense number of spectators, and was conveyed through the crowd with much difficulty to the Record Room to wait until the Painted Hall was ready for its reception.


Here the “Chatham”’s connection with this historic progress ends; a full account of the subsequent obsequies will be found in the sixth volume of the work under Victory.

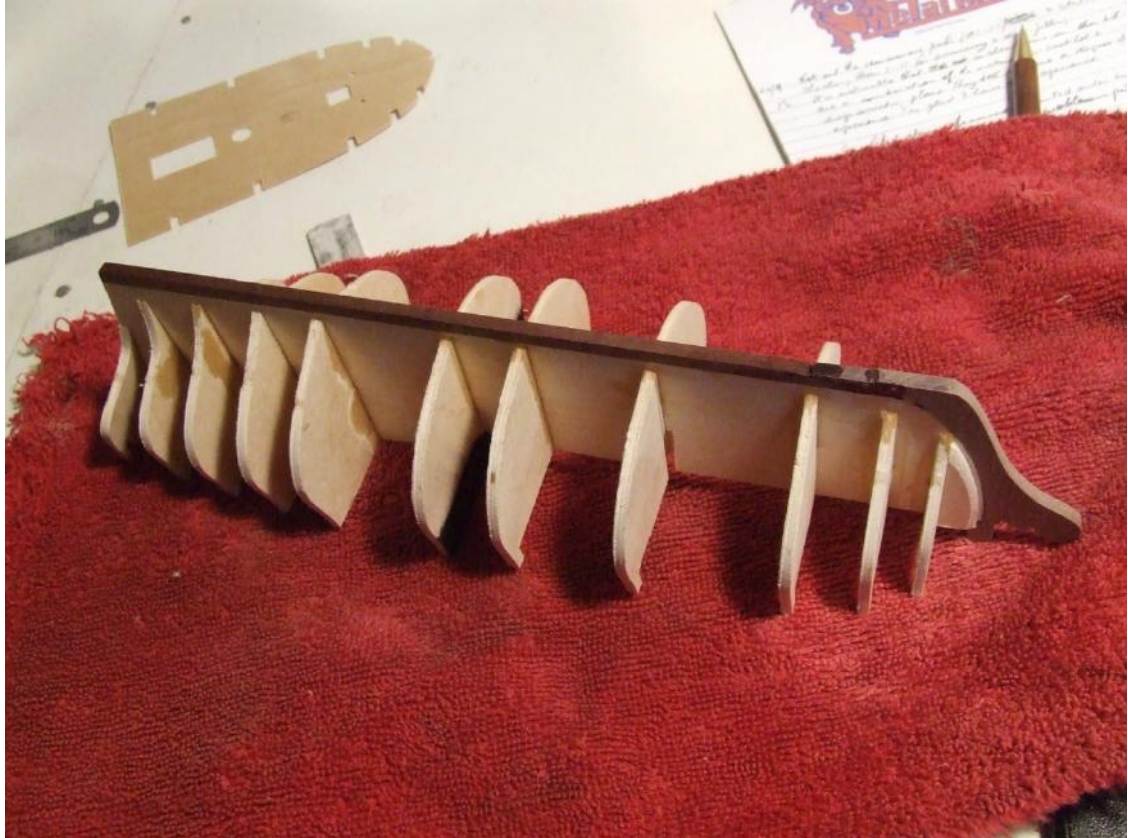
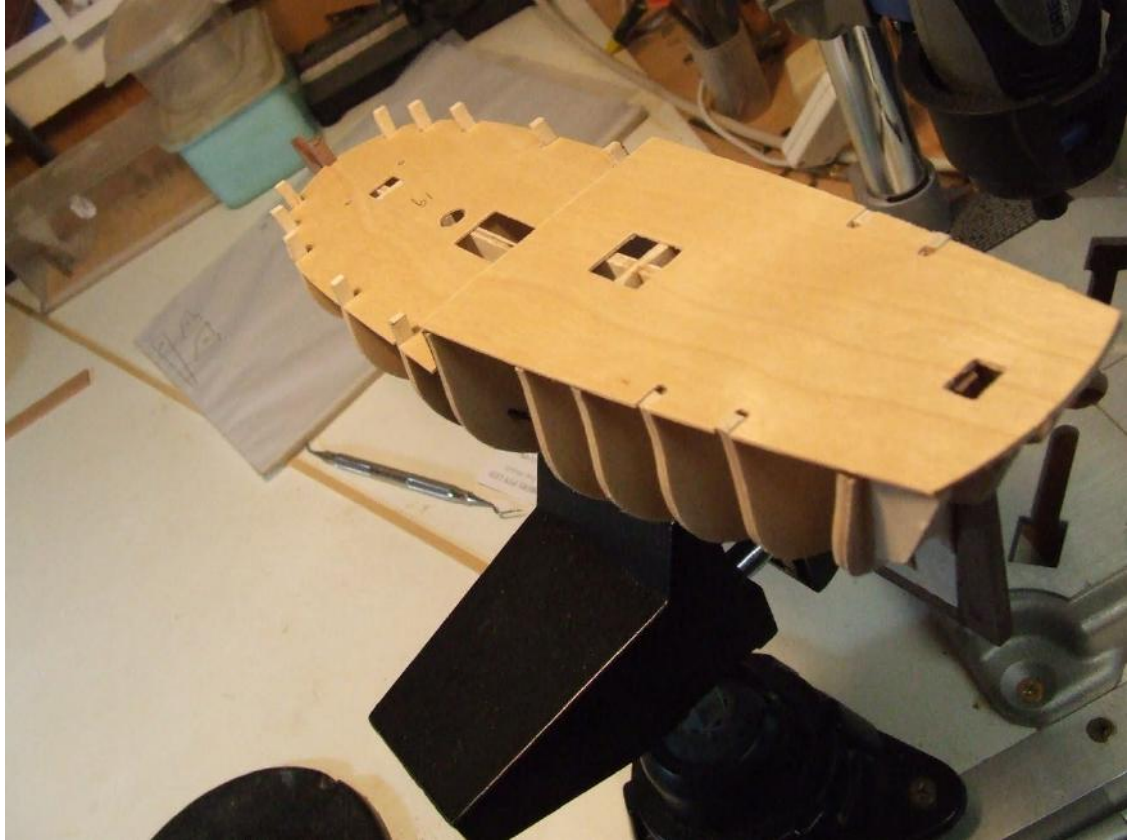
In 1842 this “Chatham” was lengthened 10fr., and her new tonnage was 104 tons.



In 1867 this yacht was broken up at Chatham.”



This extract was kindly provided by John Chambers. Librarian. Royal Dockyard Library. Chatham.


19 Sep	1.5	The majority of the day was spent clearing/cleaning up my workshop after completing my last model – Baltik. I thought I had kept it clean but one knows what thought did. So, late in the afternoon I got the kit out and, put the first page of the plans up on the wall in front of me and opened the instructions. NOTE: I previously checked the contents and all seemed present and correct. Despite the outlines left after the removal of the cut outs I decided to trace the majority of the pieces as finished before fitting.
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20 Sep	2	I cut out the remaining parts 1 – 11, dry fitted and checked them for accuracy
21 Sep	4	<p>I rechecked the fitting and shape of all the frames and the false keel and was pleasantly surprised in the small amount of work I needed to do. Whilst I don't think the cuts have been made by laser the accuracy of them must have been guided by laser/computer. I then glued them from the stem to the stern so that I could get my square against the frame and the false keel at the same time.</p>  <p>I then cut out the plank termination patterns, the stem, keel and stern posts and glued them in place. I must now leave them for the glue to dry properly.</p>

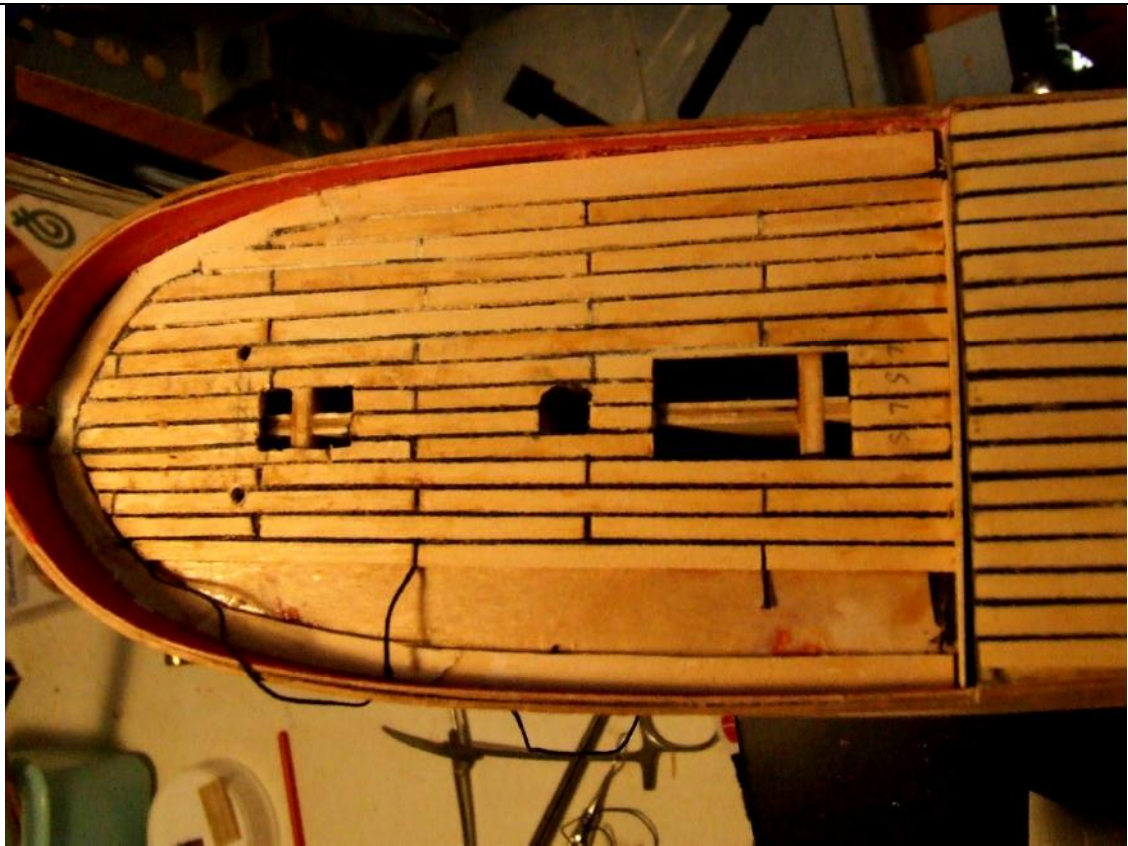
		
22 Sep	3	<p>Both decks were affixed and the bevelling was completed to match the hull lines. Again there was very little adjustment required. Whilst waiting for glue to dry I started sanding the black walnut base. It is a beautiful piece of timber and will polish up well.</p> 
23 Sep	2.5	<p>Whilst waiting for glues to dry I made up the companionway and the hold cover. This required more work.</p>




24 Sep	2	Completed the hold cover including painting and fitting the brass window frames.
25 Sep	3	<p>Started making and fitting the first planking.</p>  
28 Sep	1.5	Because of Pam's recent operation, I couldn't spend a lot of time on the model so having fitted the first plank along the fore deck level on each side I decided to make up the upper bulwarks. There were no pieces included in the kit so I made them up from some 1/32 ply on hand. These came up quite well.
29 Sep	1	I had little time again and painted the inside of the bulwarks red as required. I also completed a few more planks.



		
30 Sep		<p>I had a ring around and found it nearly impossible to get the correct size brass pedestals and I asked Arnold if he had any spares left over. He really is most generous with his time and said he would make some up for me and let me have them on Thursday. He wouldn't take no for an answer.</p>
4 Oct	3	<p>I fitted the pedestals and completed a little more planking, just in time for the 2007 show, which starts tomorrow with the setting up.</p> 
18 Oct	1	<p>I attached the timber bar to the pedestals – without glue, and I am now using this to put in my vice instead of using the Amati vice. When I have a bit of spare time I'll remove the Amati vice base and move my Dremel vice which will give me quite a bit more space. I completed some more planking. I've now done about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> each side.</p>



19 Oct - 22 Nov	+/- 30	<p>During this period I completed the first layer of planking of the hull. I wasn't able to spend as much time on the project as I would have liked. I just completed the planking without spending much time in any one day. I also completed framing the windows for the stern fitting.</p> <p>I managed to get hold of some jelutong and decided to make the decking therefrom. This was because I did not like the limewood supplied in the kit. I managed to successfully cut 3 mm strips from the block then cut them 1 mm thick using the Proxxon saw. Easy!</p>
25 Nov		Sadly this day I broke my wrist so there will be no more modelling for few weeks.
18 Dec	5	I had a new cast on 12 <sup>th</sup> and now it's settled down a bit I can do a little modelling albeit very slowly. I started on the after deck planking using linen thread to simulate carking. Initial impressions are good.
23 Dec	6	<p>I finished the after deck planking today and I am happy with the results.</p>  <p>I have considered the various ways to plank the decks to make it like a real ship deck. I tried the marking of the edge with a permanent marker which did not prove as permanent as advertised, tending to spread somewhat when a lacquer was applied. I tried the method Warwick Riddle recommends – that of gluing some black photographic cover paper to the edges of a number of planks laid side by side and I tried marking with a pencil. The gluing of the photographic paper was so successful that I glued all the planks together as well!! And the pencil marking was just not good enough. So I decided to try putting a black linen thread between the planks. It's rather fiddly but it does look better than anything else I have tried. The after deck really does look as if it has been caulked.</p> <p>My next step is to make the waterway strips so that I can work out the joggling points.</p>
26 Dec	3	Despite my efforts with the decking, I now find that I really cannot do much more, my cast causing more problems than I thought possible. Two more weeks before it comes off so a further 2 weeks lay off.


27 Dec to 9 Jan	+ 30	<p>I have been trying to work out how to make the waterways and the margin planks. A photo I took on the Alma Doepel has come in helpful because it shows quite clearly the method used on that vessel.</p>  <p>I also found it difficult to determine how wide the margin plank should be. I found a reference to it in <i>The Construction and Fitting of the English Man of War 1650 – 1850</i> by Peter Goodwin at page 60. “Parallel to the ship’s side and fayed to the waterway was a stake of planking known as the margin plank. The function of this was to prevent the normal straight deck planking from being tapered to a fine angle where it met the curvature of the ship’s side at the fore and after ends. The margin plank was thus fashioned to receive the butts of those planks.... It was stipulated that no plank was to be ‘joggled’ into the margin plank unless the length of its tapered edge was more than twice the width of the plank, and that the plank was only to be tapered or ‘snaped’ to half its width at the butt end. The margin plank was the same thickness as the deck plank, but one and a half times as wide.” The photo above also really shows the effects of joggling.</p> <p>When I regain my manual dexterity I will draw up the necessary templates to cut the waterways and margin planks to correct size for the model. I’m using 3 mm deck planks so will cut some 45 mm pieces from stock.</p> <p>Another tool that will be handy is a light box. This is a simple box with lights inside and a suitable glass top about 750 x 400 x 300 mm. I should be able to make one soon.</p>
Feb/Mar	2	During a 6 week trip to see Kakadu in the wet, I managed to get in all of a couple of hours and made up the waterways. That’s all!!
31 Mar	2	Affixed the waterways after some massaging.
2 Apr	3	Started the foredeck planking.
3 Apr	2	Did some more deck planking
4 Apr	2	I realised that I needed the hatch combing completed otherwise I would not be able to complete the deck planking satisfactorily.
5 Apr	3	Oh Lord!! I made up the hatch combing without looking at the plan – what a silly thing to do!! It turned out to be twice the size it should have been. Fortunately this turned out to be a good thing because I had not got it as square as it should have been. Cutting it down turned out to be a boon, until I realised that I had made a complete OO’s of the planking. I had to rip out the planking and that included the starboard waterway.
6 Apr	3	I remade the waterway and restarted the deck planking.
7 Apr	4	Continued the deck planking. It is beginning to look quite good now, I think.



		
8 Apr	3	Finished off the deck planking. I didn't like what I saw. The end product showed the "caulking" as being far too thick. It will have to come off and be redone.
18 Apr	2	Started removing the deck planking. Not easy.
19 Apr	3	I removed the remaining deck planking
20 Apr	6	<p>I restarted the deck planking. First I had to decide whether I was again going to use jelutong and decided against it. I have some mahogany which will look rather nice although it will take a lot more sanding to get it looking really good.</p> <p>By the time I finished this evening I had re-planked the after deck and made new waterways for the foredeck. Whilst waiting for glue to dry I painted the white metal of the anchor fittings and subsequently glued the stocks to the flukes. I am much more satisfied with the planking results.</p>
21 Apr	3	Started planking foredeck
24 Apr	6	Made new waterways and continued planking foredeck. Scraped planks and painted waterways.
27 Apr	0.5	Gave waterways second coat of paint. Sanded deck planks. I also painted the other white metal decorations.
28 Apr	1	<p>Fitted and glued the waterways.</p> <p>Assembled the winch. This was very difficult because the pieces were so small and were thus difficult to cut out. I'm not really happy with the 'finished' product and may well decide to remake it. I'll wait to see what they look like with the anchor chains attached. I reckon I did a better job with the winch on the Baltik when I remade it than this one.</p>
30 Apr	5	I completed the decking and applied the first coat of varnish. I am very pleased that I replanked the decks. They look so much better.


		 <p>I re-started the hull second planking and worked out how I was going to fit the wales and what colours I was going to use.</p>
May	6	<p>I have only been able to do about 6 hours work on the model, much of which was taken up with remaking the winch. It looks so much better now. I have also commenced the hull planking.</p>
27 May	2	<p>Finished remaking the winch having to remake the octagonal section yet again. It is so much better now. Also I managed to get a small gear wheel, that fits nicely in the centre. A great improvement.</p> 
30 May	3	<p>Continued with hull second planking.</p> 

6 June	2	Continued with hull second planking.
8 June	3	Continued with hull second planking.
9 June	2	Continued with hull second planking. I made up the pintles and set them into the fixer. It will be interesting to see how they come out.
10 June	2	Continued with hull second planking.
11 June	3	Continued with hull second planking. I had a look at the pintles after they had dried out after immersion in the fixer. They've come up rather better than I had expected.
12 June	3	Continued with hull second planking.
13 June	4	Finished second planking, and started making the mast.
14 June	4	Finished the lower mast after breaking it twice in the lathe. The wood is very fragile (limewood) and takes little pressure from the sanding process before breaking. I finished up having to use a scraper to fine down the thinnest parts. Drilled two pintles and remade one.
15 June	5	Finished the top mast after having to treat the timber with TLC, and started making up some blocks before assembling the mast on to the hull.
16 June	6	Started painting the hull as required. 
18 June	4	Set up laser level to mark off the waterline. This took quite a long time, but eventually it got marked off.
19 June	1	I masked off the area not to be painted based on the laser level lines. This worked out well. I also made the mouse. This is the first time I have made one and it came up quite well 
20 June	2	Applied 3 coats of white paint and now have to let them dry really well,
21 June	3	Attached a number of blocks to masts and spars
22 June	2	The paint was now nice and dry so I decided to put on some varnish to stop dust biting in to the acrylic paint. I shook the can well and applied a squirt and suddenly found I had picked up the wrong can – a black quick drying gloss paint. What was that famous saying? Woe is me for I am undone and my end is in sight!!!! That's not quite what I said but it's close enough for this practicum. I did <b>not</b> take a photo of this debacle. I felt stupid enough just having to admit such an idiotic error without a pictorial display here/
24 June	2	I had to repaint the yellow wales and the blue bulwark white to be able to get the correct colour back. I then masked off the black hand rails and repainted the wales. They will

		still need a couple of more coats.
25 June	2	Did another coating of yellow and touched up the black and blue parts.
14 Jul	5	Continued repainting blackened side
15 Jul	4	Finished repainting the blackened side
17 Jul	3	Fitted bollards to deck also fitted a number of eye pins after blackening in used fixer. They came up well. Did some more touching up of the paintwork.
4 Aug	4	<p>Attached some of the deck fittings that look quite good. Stepped mast and bowsprit and cut out Headrail Cross Timbers and painted the Headrails and bowcheeks</p> 
5 Aug	4	I promptly lost Headrail Cross Timbers and gave Headrails and bowcheeks a second coat of paint. I needed help from Warwick to show me how to assemble the chainplates. It is really simple and in line with my thoughts. Glad to know I was right. I set the brass parts of the chains in the Fixer and will have to wait till tomorrow to get the required level of black. I recut the larger of the two Headrail Cross Timbers and broke it in the final finishing off.
6 Aug	5	<p>I recut the Headrail Cross Timbers and fixed both the Headrail Cross Timbers and Headrails and bowcheeks to the model satisfactorily</p> 

		
7 Aug	2	<p>I started the rigging today. Naturally I wasn't ready to do that because I hadn't blackened any of the parts of the chains – a 24 hour turnaround. I had another look at the windlass and decided that it wasn't too bad after all especially after a little adjustment with the chisel. I attached the anchor rope to the anchors using the recommended bends but only after getting hold of some very small split rings – fishing tackle. I also worked out how I was going to fix the hawser holes where the anchor ropes go through the hull. It may not be perfect but a brass ring on either side of the bulwark will be most effective. Thank goodness for fishing split rings and brass rings.</p>
8 Aug	2	Continued with running rigging
9 Aug	3	Continued with running rigging
14 Aug	4	Continued with running rigging
16 Aug	4	<p>Continued with running rigging. This comment might be becoming rather boring so here are a couple of photos of where I am at.</p>

		 
22 Aug to 1 Sept	15+	<p>I was dragged away to the Coast for a break and managed to smuggle a tool box and the model in the car, so I bravely started the finishing touches.</p> <p>During this period I attached the yards, fixed the rudder, attached the dead eyes to the ends of the shrouds, threaded the lanyards to apply tension to the shrouds, completed the running rigging, and tidied the sheets off to the cleats. This leaves the coiling of various ropes to the deck and the ratlines.</p> <p>I must say it was rather pleasant sitting in the sun, looking out over a lovely harbour and beach. Of course, there were a number of tools that I hadn't seen fit to pack and they were, according to Murphy's law the very ones I really needed.</p> <p>Whilst close by I visited a modelling colleague, George Crossan, when he showed me,</p>

		inter alia, a couple of very interesting tools. The one he designed for preparing coils of rope was so simple that I immediately went out and acquired the necessary aluminium bar, the most important of the 'bits'.
2 Sep	3	Today I started the waxed ratlines. This is a slow process but I do enjoy doing it.
3 Sep	6	Today was spent at Arnold's place where I made the coil 'machine', one for Arnold and one for me. When I got home I tried it and found that the extra hole beside the spindle was unsatisfactory so I drilled it out completely. This worked beautifully.
5 Sep	4	Completed all the necessary coils. They came up very well. What a great tool. It saved so much time.
6 Sep	3	Continued with the ratlines and finished the first side.
8 Sep	2	Continued with the ratlines.
9 Sep	5	<p>Finished the ratlines.</p>  <p>The black paper behind the ratlines was to provide a background for tying off the footropes.</p> <p>I then applied the extra beeswax and cut off the surplus 'string'. I next fitted the hammock nettings.</p>
10 Sep	2	There were just 2 decorations to attach and touching up of some paintwork and the model is finished. These tasks were completed satisfactorily without problems.



My version of the HM Yacht Chatham