SCUTTLEBUTT

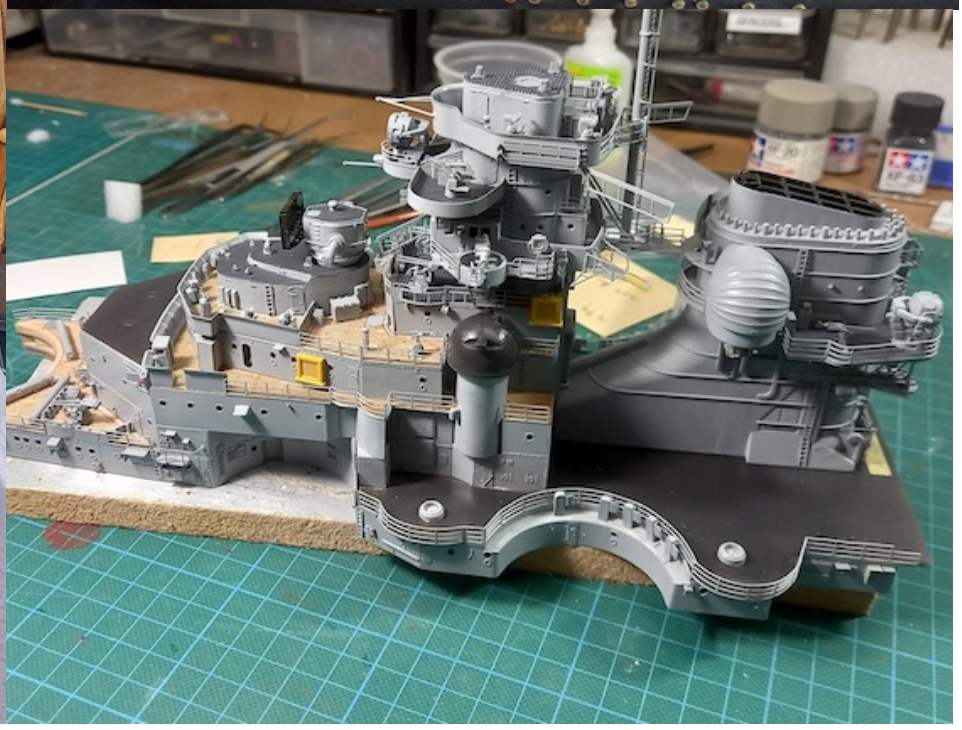
NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA MODEL SHIPWRIGHTS SOCIETY

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.

December 2023

It's that time of year when we wish our readers all good health, resilience, safety and happy modelling.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2022-23

President Bob Evans, Vice-President Peter Higgins, Secretary Elizabeth Hodsdon, Assistant Secretary Bill Atkinson

Treasurer Peter Hateley. Members - Peter Gaisford, Neville Miller, Ray Osmotherly. Appointments made by Committee: Public Officer Ray Osmotherly, Member Liaison Max Fitton, Webmaster Steve Batcheldor, Newsletter Brian Voce

Gatherings

The Society meets, until further notice, at the Men's Shed at Melba on the third Tuesday of each month (except December**).**

Society Web-page

Visit our website at:

https://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 interesting web-links and chat.

Society Facebook Page

The Society has a Facebook group to promote the Society and to attract new members. So please feel free to post items on the page and share it with your Friends. https:// www.facebook.com/canberramodelshipwrights

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.

At meetings, payments may be made using an EFTPOS terminal held by the treasurer.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Blink and it's gone, at least that's how it seems to me. The man in the funny red suit will soon be visiting and I hope he brings you everything you wished for.

The Special Edition of Scuttlebutt was a great run down of Expo23 and says all that needed to be said about that wonderful event which I feel we can all be proud of. Aside from a wide variety of top class models, it gives us the welcome opportunity to catch up with our colleagues from other Clubs and discuss all things modelling. I also find that it is a good place to pick up new ideas and to find solutions to some of those perplexing problems we experience from time to time.

Long may it continue!

The other major event for us was the ACTScale Modellers ScaleACT23, held this year for the first time at Thoroughbred Park. The organisers are to be congratulated on putting on such a well run event. I'm sure those of us who attended were suitably impressed and will be looking forward to this event again in 2024.

The record of this event can be found on the ACT Scale Modelers website and is recommended viewing. (Bill Atkinson's account is inside this issue - Ed.)

We have started thinking about EXPO 24 and are awaiting confirmation from Mount Rogers as to a firm date in mid-September 2024. I can only urge Members and others to dust off those unfinished projects so that we can show evidence of building activity to our viewing public. Remember to let me know if you have any ideas that will improve our display for any events we may attend into the future.

As probably the worst offender I will end now and retreat to my workshop!

I wish you all the very best for the festive season and look forward to another good year ahead.

Bob Evans

President CMSS

Progress on the Lady Nelson

Ian Summers reports

After a hiatus of some weeks/months with an eye problem, I recommenced work carefully, by completing a solid hull Santa Maria, unearthed in a Devonport garage during a family cleanup. Clean, repair, research and build! (Below)

I am now back on to the Lady Nelson, dressing the yards with their pulleys and footropes; three down, seven to go, counting the outer bowsprit. That will lead me to the sail-handling gear, which I particularly enjoy, followed by the remaining anchor tackle, the back stays and the flag. I will save the stern lettering till last! - Ian

Scale ACT 2023 Provided Excellence, Variety

And CMSS was there too

Story: Bill Atkinson
Photos: Alexis Atkinson

Scale ACT has come and gone for another year. The only way to summarise this event is by two words – excellence and variety. It was held over the week-end of 11-12 November at Epic which provided an adequate venue competing as it did with a dog show and the weekly Farmers' Markets. (Ironically, while hosting a display of scale models, Epic provided a full-scale maze to negotiate just in getting to the venue, but I digress).

The venue provided a light filled auditorium for the display of all models which were presented and well labelled on a large number of circular tables adequately spaced to give plenty of viewing and circulation room. The exception to this was a "Swap and Sell" room where, through the semi-darkness of this room off the main venue piles of boxed model kits of all types could be seen as far as the eye was able to see through the gloom. It seemed to do a brisk trade from what I could see.

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Another section of the display was given over to 'N' and 'HO' gauge railways, there being a layout operating over the weekend. I felt sorry for these guys as they had been squeezed into a back corner where not many people ventured. But they seemed to enjoy themselves.

The ACT Model Boat Club was well represented with a display of mainly fishing boats together with some vessels from TaskForce 72. Several of these models were set in dioramas of very wet and stormy seas. There were tables of military vessels displaying all manner of craft from destroyers to amphibious landing craft, some also set in small dioramas. The CMSS display was well received and we had a constant stream of people admiring the vessels and asking questions which is always rewarding. We did have one enquiry "I have never built a model boat before and I've got a kit of the 'Bounty'…" to which it was suggested that perhaps a less complicated model would be better to start with. This advice I am pleased to report seemed to be accepted.

Complementing the huge range of models on display were a series of trade stands selling all manner of tools and modelling requirements including Murray Burfitt and Peter Stum. There were also technical presentations made during the days on many topics of interest to modellers. Notably there were several stands and presentations dealing with 3D printing of componentry and characters or personnel. These displays were very informative as it highlighted the potential (or otherwise) of the application of this technology to the field of modelling.

Now we come to the 'askance' bit. One huge area of ScaleACT this year was that devoted to the modelling of sci-fi and fantasy characters and machines. It's a bit like going to a dog show. While the dogs are interesting, the people who own and display their dogs are more so as I have noticed that those who display their pets seem to take on the characteristics of their breed of animals. Thus I found it with those who were involved in modelling sci-fi and related fields. These folk just seemed to be a bit 'different' to us model boat, train and truck types, but there was no doubting their abilities and dedication to their chosen field of model making. This was a field of modelling where excellence in finish was on display as was the difference of those who undertook this type of modelling. The assortment of irridescent, luminous and metallic finishes in the minutest of detail on characters ranging from Ewoks to sci-fi and intergalactic spaceships and machines designed to take over the planet displayed the excellence that these modellers achieved. Many of these creations displayed very discrete led lighting and ultraviolet display effects combined with the most fantastic paint jobs. Going hand in hand with these models were those prepared and presented by members of the gaming community with a diverse range of Gundam and Mecha characters and creatures used in gaming. In short these models were exquisite.

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Scale modelling is practised by dedicated if not slightly askance individuals. (People who model boats are automatically exempt from this typecasting – it's a scientifically proven fact). Their efforts to recreate an item or a scene to the highest level of accuracy and precision is something to be admired, and it was on display in spades during the weekend.

The overall standard of the displays was exceptional and the subject range phenomenal with a huge number of models in all categories entered for judging. The judges certainly had their work cut out for them as not only was the overall quality exceptional but the range and variety of models offered for view and for judging quite amazing. I am not sure just how many different categories there were but amongst them were trucks, domestic, racing and rallying cars, a good display of commercial trucks and heavy equipment and an eclectic range of military vehicles including motorbikes of all nationalities.

The range of military vehicles both wheeled and tracked was quite amazing. These were complemented by superb dioramas of both civil and military subjects as well as aviation dioramas of hangers, maintenance facilities and the like. There were hundreds of different types of aeroplanes on display ranging from a Sopworth Camel to a working (revolving rotors) model of a vertical take-off and landing craft. An excellent diorama of a section of a flight deck from an aircraft carrier was also presented. Civilian planes too were well represented.

There were military and civilian planes, both jets and propeller driven and helicopters of all types. Armoured fighting vehicles including tanks and multi-tracked vehicles from all theatres of war, desert and arctic, some on individual display or in magnificently crafted dioramas were presented for both display and judging. Complementing these were scaled individuals and busts of characters and a wide variety of personnel. Another collection on display were scale models of military weapons from all eras which complemented the displays of weaponry.

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I have not done justice to the range and excellence of the display in the above description. However one attendee has made a fifteen minute youtube clip which really does give a sense of the event. This can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuZaHjQlDcg&t=3s. I am unaware of just who made this clip, but I acknowledge his ownership of the footage. It is worth looking at and I thank him or her for the record that has been made of the event for others to see.

There is one last thing I need to say about the event, especially from a CMSS standpoint. Our display was varied and showed the range of models that come under the CMSS banner. It was manned by Robert LeLeivre, Peter Higgins and myself and Bob Evans was also in attendance on Sunday, fielding enquiries and representing the Society. I would also like to acknowledge my daughter Eliza's contribution to this write-up of the event with the photos that she took of the exhibition for inclusion with this article.

Barnacle.

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Contributions

Got something to share? We would like to hear from you if you have.

Send contributions to me at the email address below - or to discuss your ideas.

Please send your story as (typically) a doc file and photos as a separate file of jpgs.
Thank you

bvoce@ozemail.com. au

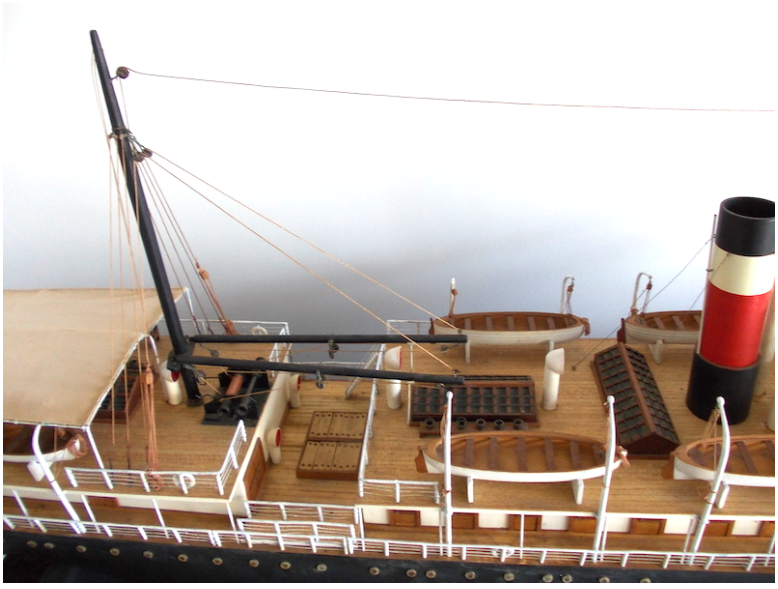
R&R for TSS Merimbula

I could hardly say no when I saw this 1.2-metre damaged vessel in distress, writes KEN JONES

I was asked by the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum to repair and restore an impressive model of the TSS Merimbula which was offered to the Museum by Doyle's Restaurant after periods of display and storage. The Merimbula involvement is particularly relevant to the Shoalhaven. The ship was built by Ailsa Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. at Troon, Scotland in 1908. It was owned by the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company and operated between Sydney and Eden.

The Merimbula was wrecked near Beecroft Head on 27th March, 1928.

I have had some previous experience with model ship repairs and exhibitions at the Museum and could hardly say no when I saw this 1.2 metre damaged vessel in distress. The masts and cranes were detached and devoid of most of the fixed and operational rigging, the port side had some distortion and fixture breakage, suspension of lifeboats fragile and the extensive railings were somewhat bent and corroded. This was however, a well crafted model and very worthwhile exercise!



I commenced the task with an amount of online research in an attempt to define the missing and damaged rigging only to discover that there were hundreds of steamships around in the early 1900s, but none meeting my need! Eventually, and with some much appreciated help from CMSS members, I managed to gain sufficient understanding of most of the connections. Not so with the details of swinging, lifting and storage of the cranes and winches? I had to rely on my now distant engineering past to create something at least possible. One particular aspect of the work related to securing matching rigging thread to join with the few viable remnants. In the end I identified three thicknesses (0.25, 0.5 and 0.75) and coloured them with spirit stain.

Overall, I enjoyed my three to four month project. It reinvigorated my model ship building interests – and I do miss my Merimbula experience.

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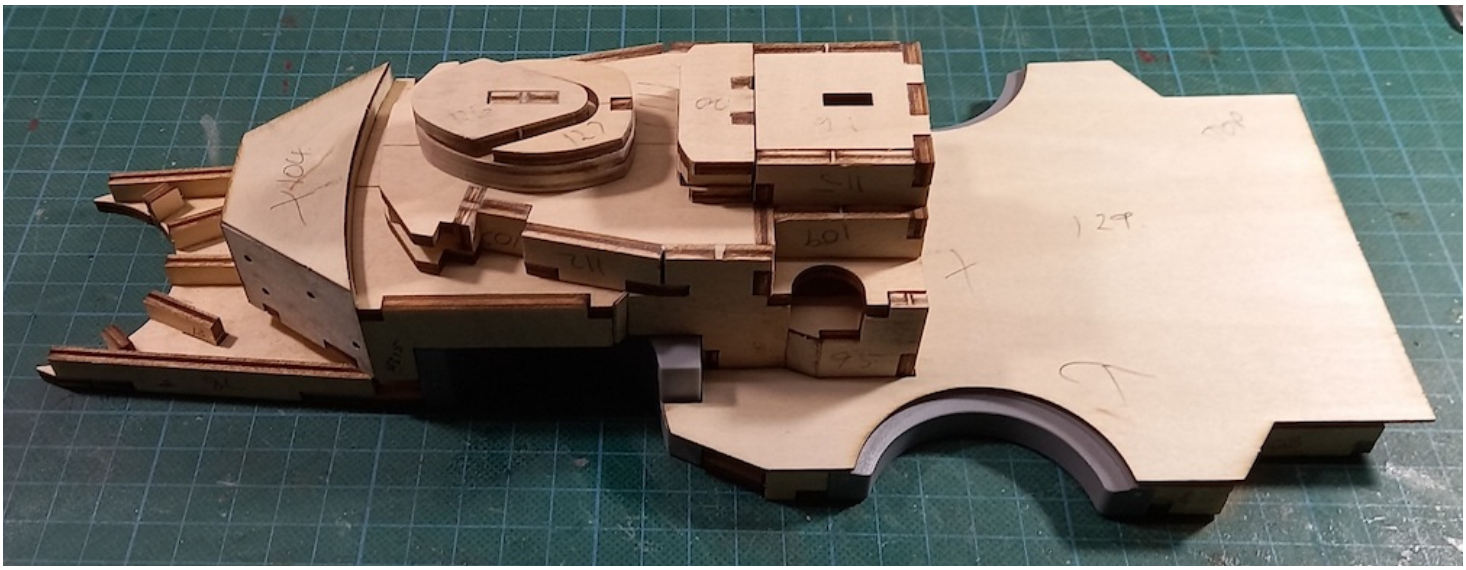
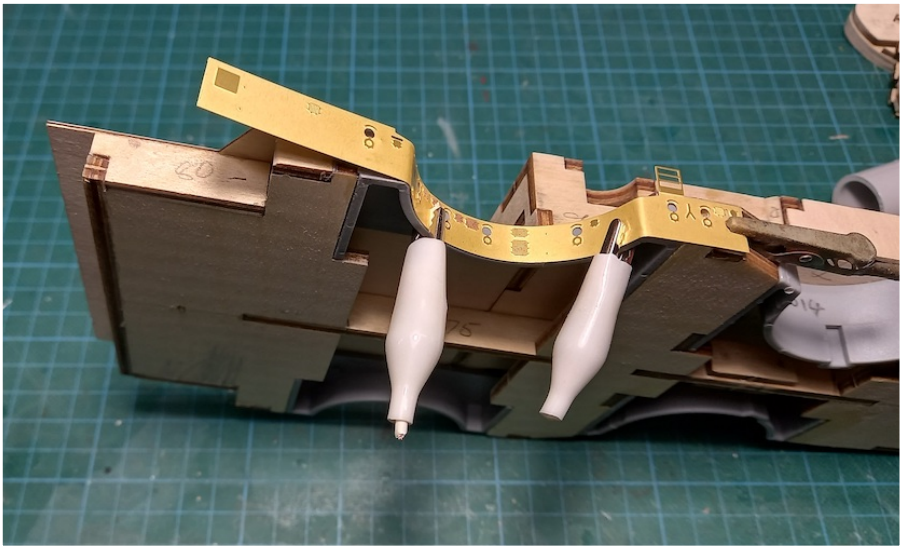
Warwick Riddle continues his story

BISMARCK

Part 4

With the framing for the forward superstructures finished, it's time for the attachment of the PE brass cladding and the many, many, many PE and plastic fittings. First I dry fitted the cladding and shaped it to match the wood frame and marked the position of the portholes on the frame. These will be drilled out later. While the cladding was removed it was a good time to attach as many of the PE and plastic fittings I could on this section of cladding.





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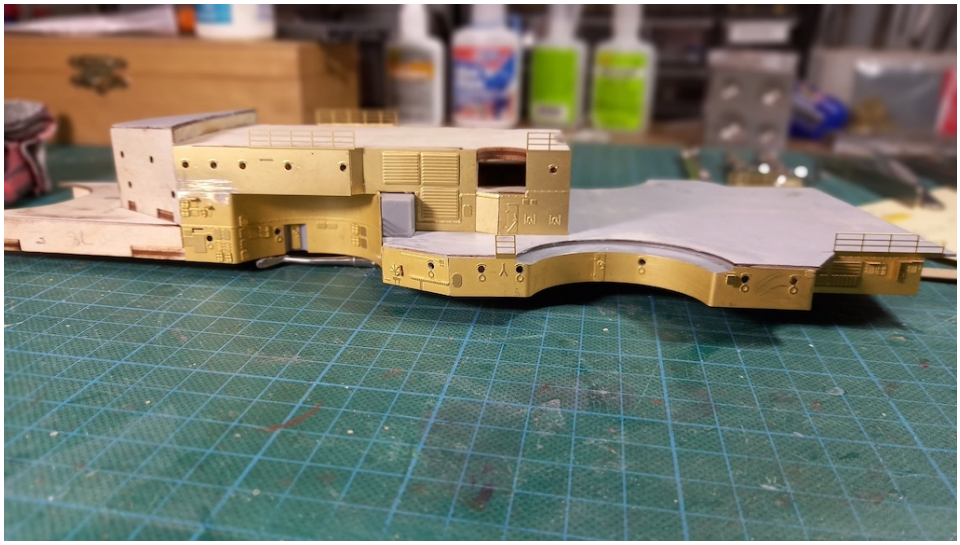

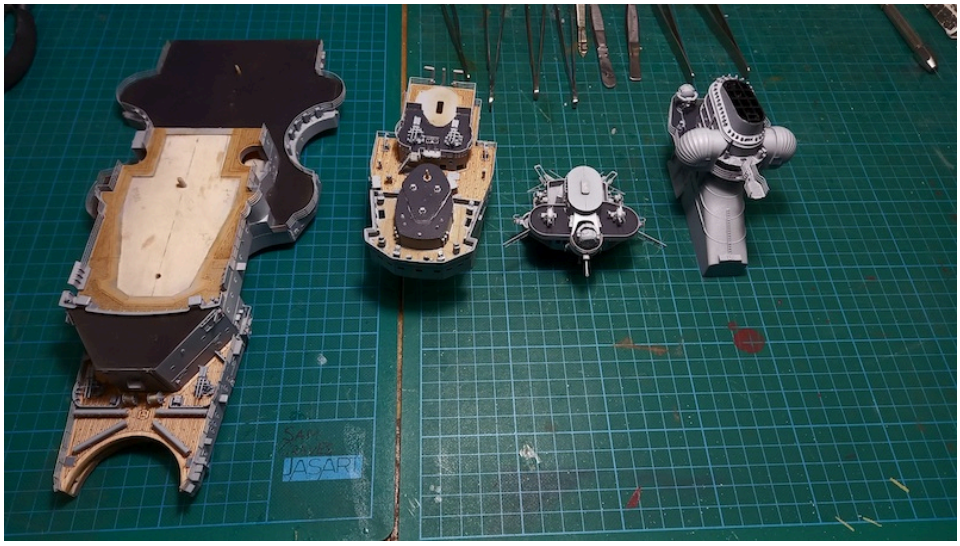

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The forward superstructure was assembled in sections on the work bench making it easier to assemble the PE cladding and small plastic and PE fittings reducing the possibility of knocking and damaging any fittings already attached. Once a section was completed, it was spray painted and other details painted on with a brush and bent railings straightened. It was then put aside.

When all sections for the forward superstructure were completed they were glued together and where possible also secured with screws or dowels.

Until next time, Merry Christmas to all.

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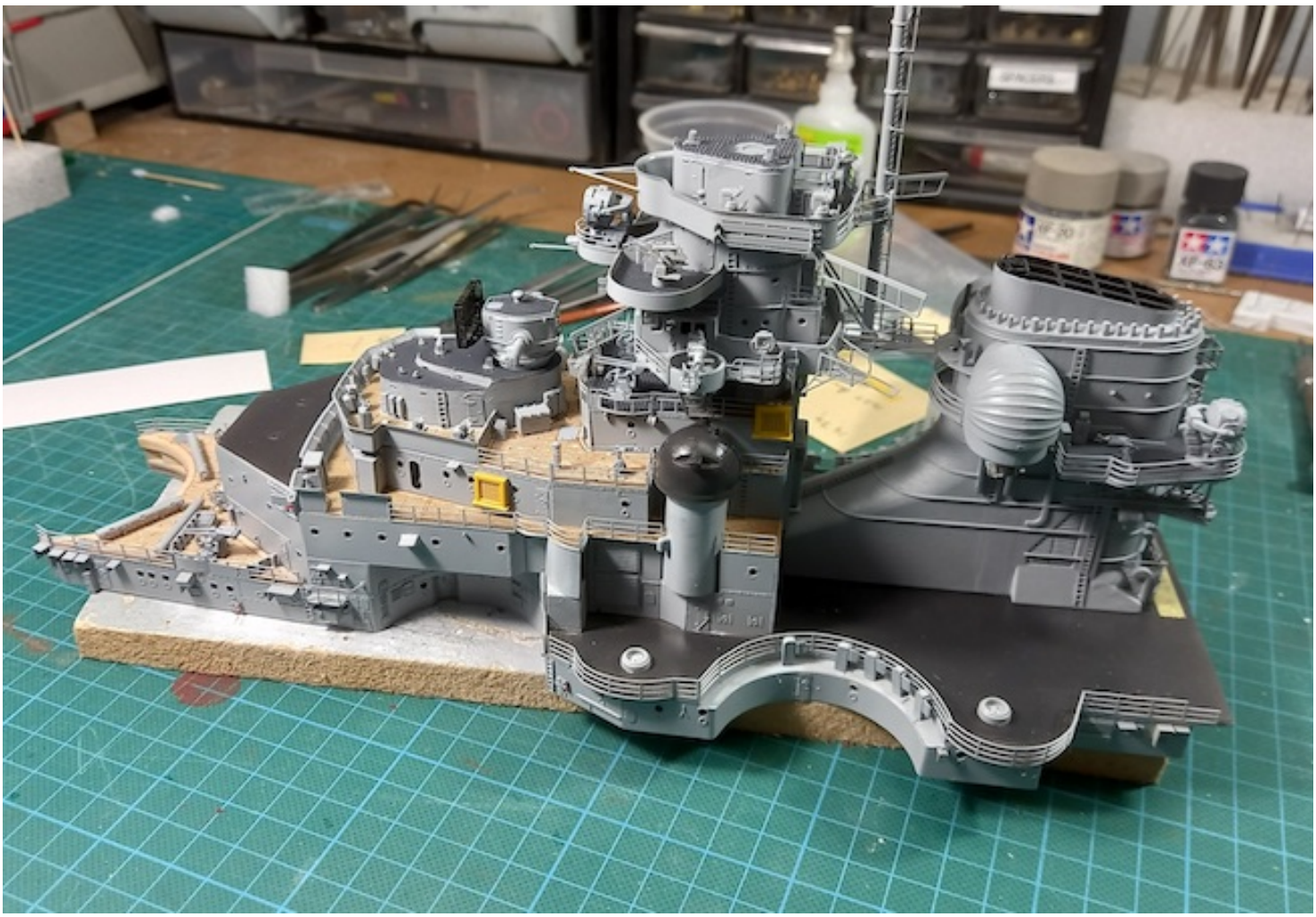

A Hapless North Sea Fishing Trawler and the sad tale of a rescued model - And this is only Chapter 1

Bill Atkinson sets the scene

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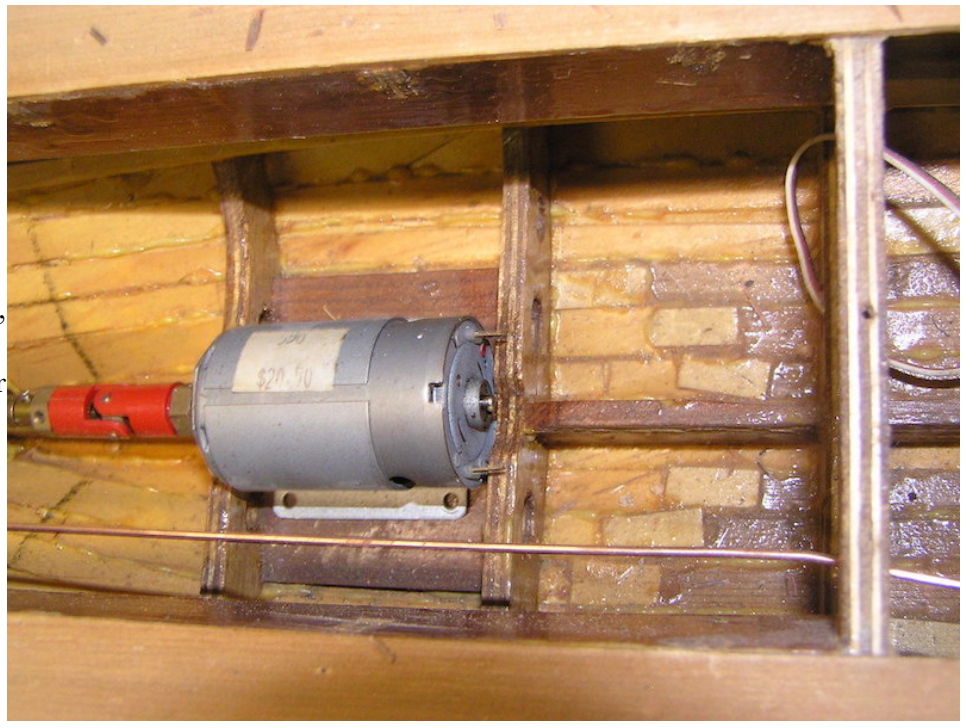
This is the tale, true and unembellished of a very ordinary fishing trawler, you know the sort of scruffy vessel that is hidden by nets and rigging and partly out of sight and hopefully mind of any respectable fisherman or mariner or passerby.

'…orphaned model boat hull desperately signalling for a safe berth in a friendly harbour…'

A hull of a model boat came into my custody by way of a successful (?) low bid at an auction. I did not place the bid. All that was important at the time was that it was an orphaned model boat hull desperately signalling for a safe berth in a friendly harbour. And so she quietly slipped into port and came up alongside, not attracting too much attention to herself. On initial survey it had all the hallmarks of a kit build and that is where any semblance to maritime modelling ceased. Rather, imagine if you will, what would be the result if a kit of a wooden boat was given to a drunken group of patchwork enthusiasts working on piece-meal rates with the threat of no more beer for a week if the job wasn't done by closing time. Now, add to this, some of the patchworkers were on LSD. I looked at this model and considered the option of invoking the help of the Patron Saint of Lost Causes, Saint Jude, but came to the firm and unshakeable conclusion that even he would have a serious problem mustering encouragement for this one. Miracles can only achieve so much and I thought that at the time miracles were needed elsewhere in the world. And so began my association with the hapless North Sea motor trawler Navena.

Maybe made by
'… a drunken group of patchwork enthusiasts…'



My initial investigations revealed that the M.T Navena was a diesel powered trawler launched on 5 December, 1975, at the Beverley Shipbuilding and Engineering Co Ltd, Beverley, for Marr and Sons, Fleetwood. She was 352 gross tons, with a nett tonnage of 124 tons, a length of 132'9", a beam of 27'1" , a draught of 12'2" and had a 7-cylinder diesel engine rated at 875 horsepower. On reflection I feel that these 875 horses' power would have been better utilised if they had been left

in the 875 horses, but I digress. She was completed on 5 May 1975 and registered as Fleetwood FD323 on 2 July 1976. Together with all the Company's remaining Fleetwood-based trawlers (eight in number) she was transferred to fish out of Hull and thus she embarked upon her illustrious maritime career.

All seemed to go well for a bit but then in January 1984 she arrived in Aberdeen and struck the quay departing for Hull. On 26 January in severe weather, she started to take on water due to flooding of the factory deck and developed a list to starboard. Fearing that the vessel might capsize a distress call went out and the crew took to the life rafts, the skipper remained onboard to direct the rescue. The life raft capsized, but all the crew were picked up by a RAF helicopter. The skipper was subsequently rescued by the RAF helicopter.

The tugboat Yorkshireman was engaged to take the trawler in tow, but in the meantime three fishing vessels joined up to claim salvage rights and secured the services of the fishing trawler Cassamanda to tow the stricken vessel to Scarborough (canny Yorkshiremen this lot). On 27 January she was refused entry to Scarborough Harbour due to her parlous condition and was directed to be beached and be put ashore south of the harbour where she promptly capsized. She was abandoned to the maritime underwriters and United Towing Ltd of Hull was engaged to refloat the vessel. Attended by the salvage ship Recovery, a leak in the engine room was sealed and loose gear was removed. Two failed attempts to refloat her followed in March 1984, but only managed to render the vessel on her beam ends on the beach from where she was sold to a firm of marine underwriters.

In late April 1984 the Scarborough Council took possession of the wreck in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act (1894) and the 122 gross ton hopper dredger Skarthi beached alongside the Navena as the salvage company Salvage and Marine GmbH of Hamburg had been contracted to refloat the vessel and deliver it to Middlesbrough. On 23 May 1984 the Fleetwood registry closed the case on the vessel taking a total loss. Two days later she was salved by the floating legged sheerlegs crane Hebelift and two days after that she the Navena was sailed from Scarborough to Tees suspended from the sheerlegs towed by the tugboat Erland. She was subsequently shipped to Middlesbrough where she was slipped, declared a total and constructive loss, was unslipped and beached. In 1985 she was initially sold for possible repair and was towed back to Sunderland where she was subsequently resold to S&S Sunderland Marine Ltd, again for possible repair. On 7 March 1985 the Navena was

Top photos - The Navena in happier days
Below - Beached at Scarborough.

Photos - courtesy of Fleetwood Motor Trawlers and the Bosun's Watch.

Special thanks to Jim Porter of the Bosun's Watch for assistance with the history of the Navena and access to photos.

refloated by the tugboat Cherry and on the 18 March she was towed (once again) back to Sunderland. Here she was assessed for what would be required for a total rebuild of the vessel, with work commencing with the removal of damaged steelwork and machinery. Late in 1985 the project was reassessed as the vessel, being no longer registered, would have to have repairs done in accordance with the latest rules and specifications. It was decided that the project was uneconomical to proceed and the vessel was laid up in the Sunderland Docks where over May of that year she was broken up.

'more brawler than trawler'

Of peculiar interest in this case, the three skippers who were working in the approximate vicinity of Navena when the crew abandoned ship took the skipper off the Navena before taking her in tow. The saga turned sour at the entrance to the port when the Harbour Master told them not to bring her into the harbour as intended, being mindful that she could sink in the harbour mouth. In giving this instruction he cost the would-be salvors about 300,000 pounds each, but the decision also put the onus onto the local authority resulting in a 150,000 pounds bill to get her lifted off by the giant shearlegs from Holland, after several other failed attempts using other methods. The only good thing about this whole sorry saga was that there was no loss of life.

And so, in my shed there it sits – the patchworked model hull of the illustrious fishing trawler Navena. To call her a 'Lady -in-Waiting" would be to do an injustice to all Ladies, for there seems to be little of the finer refined graces and mannerisms of a well behaved vessel in this one. No, she's more of a brawler than a trawler I would think. Nevertheless I continued my search on information and details of the vessel and was amazed that I came across an 8 minute video of the vessel beached in 1984, and the information that I have presented above in the history of the vessel. In addition to this I found an American site selling plans for a 1:48 scale 35" model of the Navena, and a site with several photos of the vessel while she was more co-operative with the Gods of the sea. But most interesting of all was a chance site I came across that detailed a complete build/build log and discussion of this model as a 3D printed 27" model. The site presented how each component was prepared and manufactured over a series of photographs which went from the basic formation of the hull to each and every detail of the vessel when it was a working proposition. Of added interest was the final section of the production story where, through a process called rendering, the entire vessel was painted and very effectively aged and presented with the wear and tear of a vessel such as this. As a card-carrying luddite I don't understand all of this, but what I believe was done was that a sample area from digital photos of a rusted hull of a random container vessel was further digitised and then transferred in repetition and applied over the vessel. The same technique appeared to have been used for much of the deck machinery as well. The finished result was quite realistic and was yet another example of the extent to which scale modellers will go to effect realism in their models. When this technique was applied to the superb 3D manufacture of the model the detail and the results were quite outstanding.

It is always surprising where research into a topic will take you, quite often into areas quite unexpected. Such has been the case of my association of the hull of the Navena. At this point in time however, having other matters taking my time and attention, I am still keeping my eye out for a small but significant representation of St Jude to grace the model. I hope he doesn't get seasick. After all, he has certainly earned his title as the Patron Saint of Lost Causes with this vessel.

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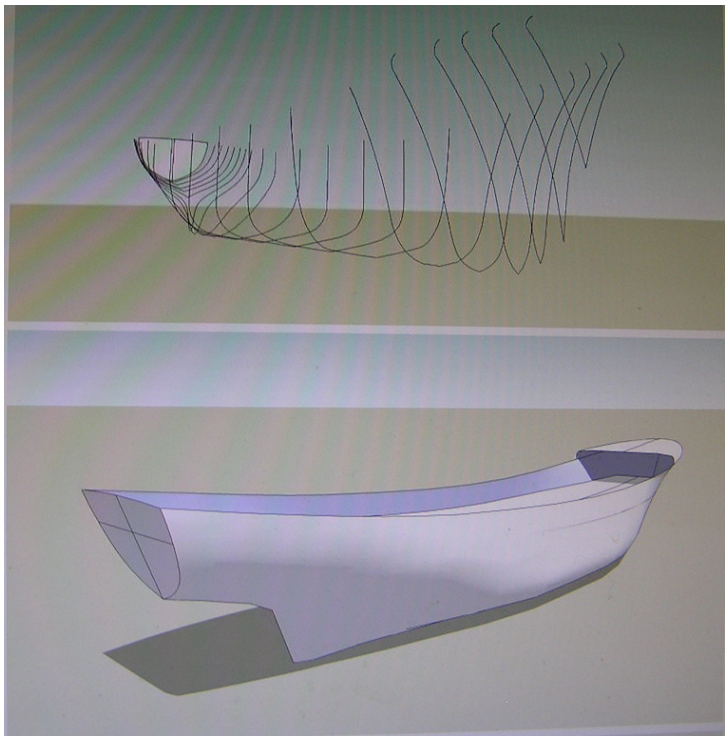


The finished result was quite realistic and was yet another example of the extent to which scale modellers will go to effect realism in their models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCES.

- Video www.youtube.com>watchv=6hYMQc93dHY (8 min video of the M.T. Navena beached in 1984).
- Photos of the Fleetwood fishing fleet: www.fleetwood-fishing-industry.co.uk/2016/09/24/m-t-navena-3fd323/=
- Scale drawings of the Navena: *text and details and history of vessel from commissioning to salvage.* www.TugandFishingBoatPlans.com >Full size Printed plan Scale 1:48 Length 35" Trawler M.T.Navena suitable for radio control
- 3D production and rendering: www.sketchucation.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=333&t=35820

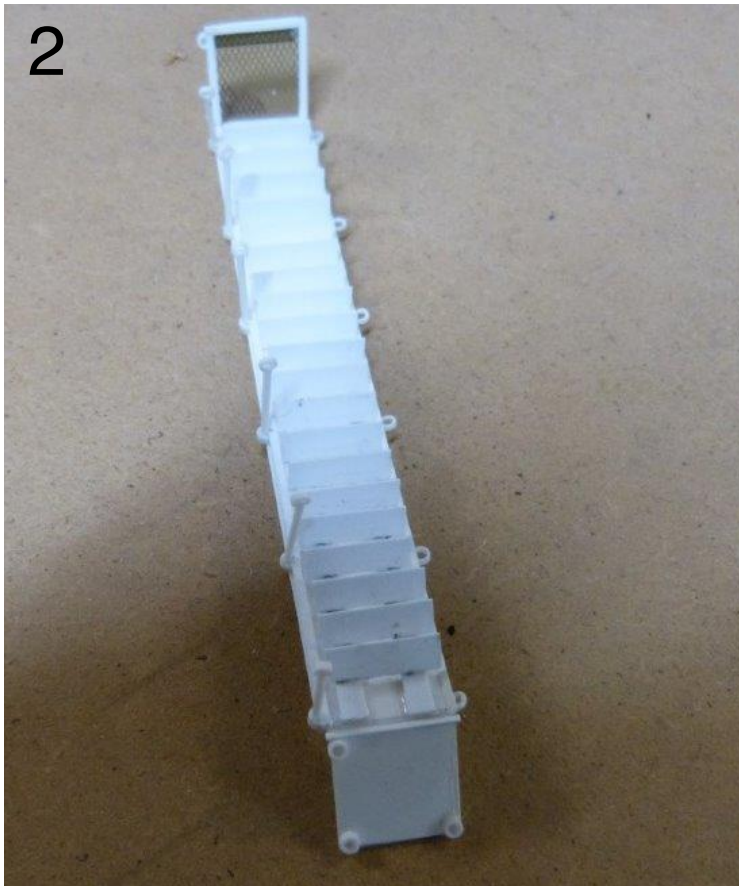
Pacific Gas Gets a Gangway and Other Details - Bob Evans

Photo 1 shows the completed gangway in place with the small winch also in place, but not yet painted and the lifting wire still to be connected to the winch drum.

In the last issue this item was labelled “Moving On”. Although I have made some progress on some smaller items, I think it would be more appropriate to call it “Crawling On”.

I decided to tackle the gangway. Strangely, this vessel was provided with a gangway only on the starboard side; there was no housing on the port side so it is safe to assume there never had been another gangway. When using this means at the behest of Pilots for boarding purposes it sometimes created some consternation and hurried conversations over the VHF when the vessel would do a quick about turn and point its nose back towards the way it had come. This was of course to enable me to create a lee for the Pilot to allow him to board in certain sea conditions.

Strangely, this vessel was provided with a gangway only on the starboard side



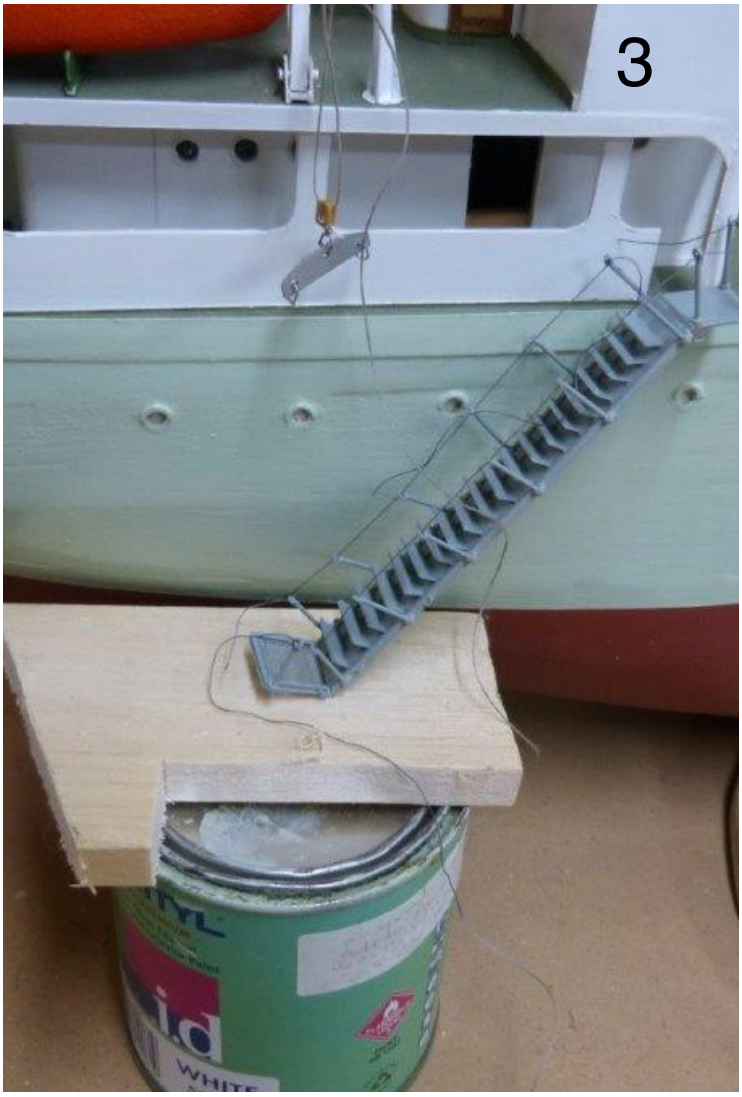


Photo 2 is an above view of the gangway under construction. Plastic card was used throughout with the exception of the lower platform which was brass mesh plate which I just happened to have lying around.

Photo 3 shows the complexity of fitting the gangway so that the bridle chains, lifting arrangement and handrail ropes all fitted with the correct tensions. A few words were used which fortunately only my dog could hear, but couldn't understand.

Refer to Photo1 (previous page) which also shows the small davit and lifting winch.

<u>Lifeboats</u>

Photo 4. In the last issue I showed a plug made on which to form the lifeboat shells. I was visiting the local shoe maker and we discussed how this could be done. What's a shoemaker doing with an interest in lifeboats? Well, it just happened that he was making some orthotics for me and it occurred to me that the procedure might have some parallel application so I left him with the plug to see what he could do.

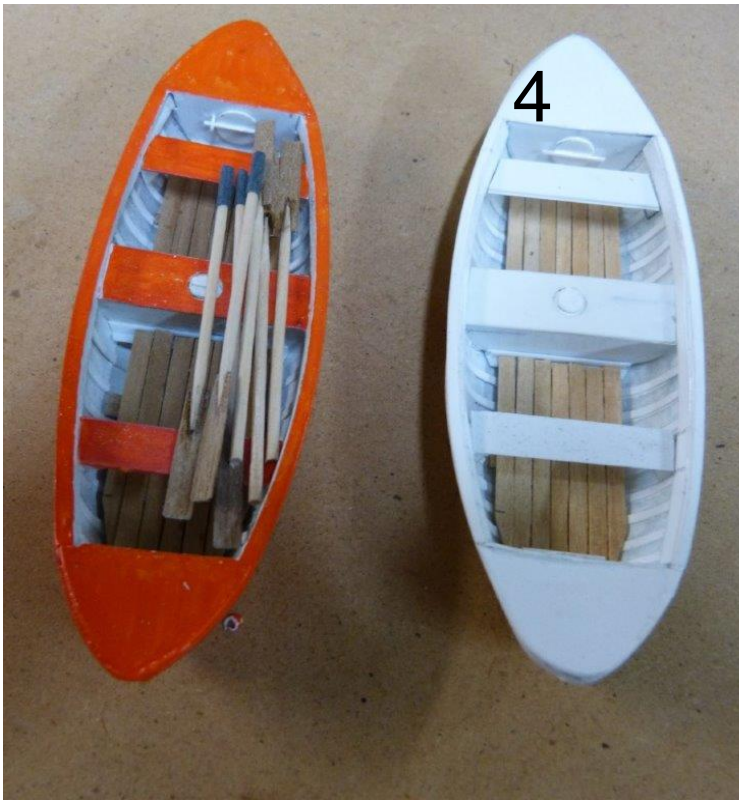


Photo 5 shows the plug on the left with a rubber attachment made by John (the shoemaker) for ease of handling. Centre is the plug made by heating shoe upperworks material (I haven't a clue what it is called) and stretching it over the mould . The result is a rather rough product (centre) which can be cut with some ease to produce a shell (right) .

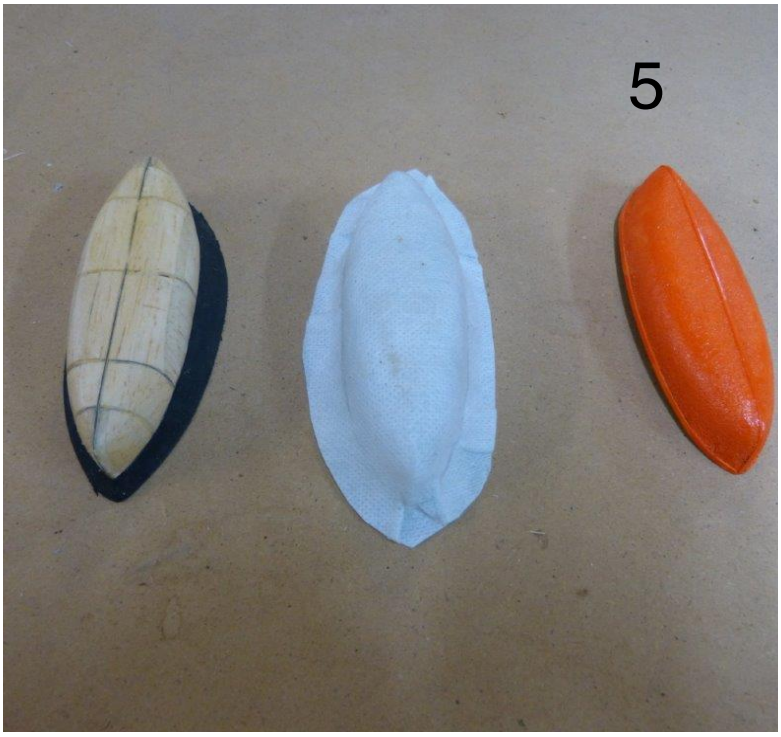


Photo 6 - The shell is initially quite weak but with the addition of internal bulkheads and thwarts the rigidity becomes more than adequate.

Yet to be added are things like oars, compass, provisions, sea anchor etc. This is the port lifeboat under construction.

Photo 7 - Below is a photo of the starboard lifeboat in position. The boat sits in a simple wooden cradle and will be rigged using a three fold purchase to the quadrant davits. The boats were lifted clear of the cradle, the davits swung outboard and the lifeboat falls slackened off to lower the boat to the water. Very labour intensive and all done by hand.

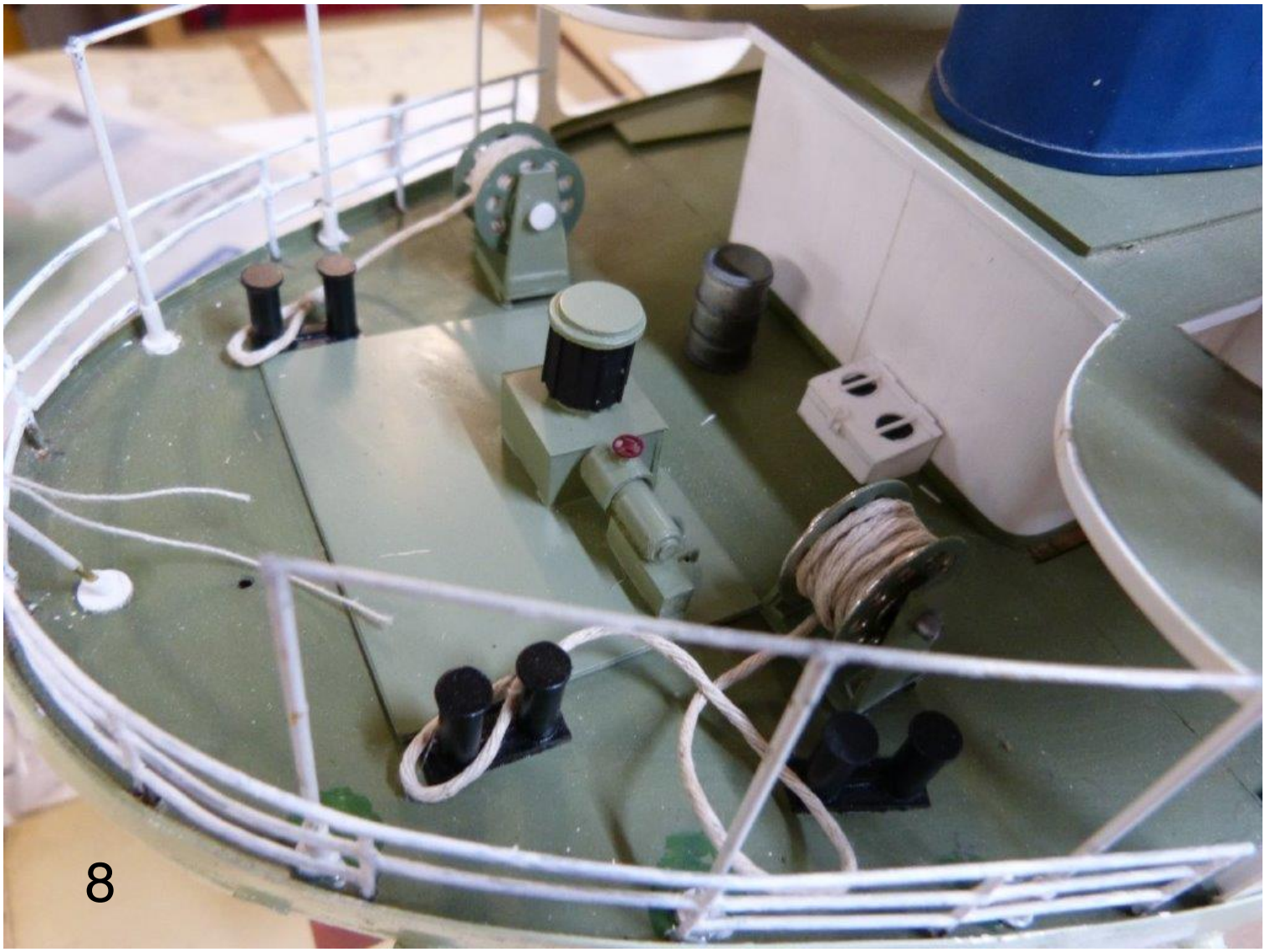


Photo 8

This photo shows some of the poop deck detail . Note that the rope reels, small skylight and drum are not yet secured in place. The empty drum is used for running fresh water through the outboard motor used to power the dinghy when running cargo lines to the shore when the vessel is not alongside a wharf, such as in Norfolk Island and Wewak. The dinghy will be located atop a frame which will be fitted after the poop deck detail has been completed.

That's it for now I'm afraid. A very slow process, but Rome wasn't built in a day!!

Bob

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Found on a Teatowel in the Atkinson household

WHY IS A SHIP CALLED A "SHE"?

"A ship is called 'she' because there is always a great deal of bustle around her; there is usually a gang of men about, she has a waist and stays; it takes a lot of paint to keep her good looking; it is not the initial expense that breaks you, it is the upkeep; it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly; and without a man at the helm, she is absolutely uncontrollable. She shows her topsides, hides her bottom and, when coming into port, always heads for the buoys."

Chinese Junk Red Dragon

Article by Tony Merriott

Artesania Latina 1:60

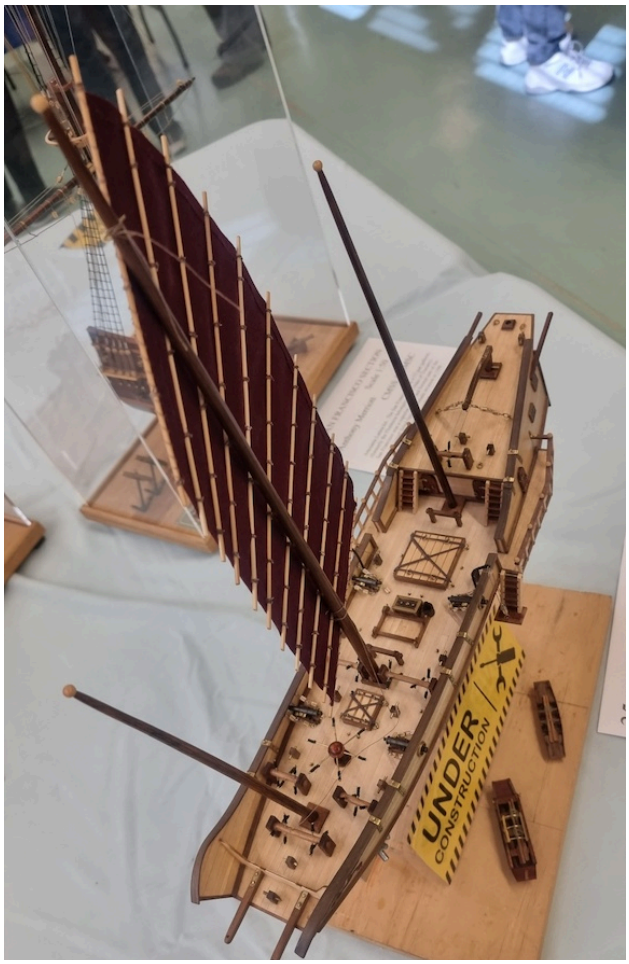
Junks have been recorded since 600BC, these vessels were used for trade, war and were the preferred vessels used by pirates off the coast of Southeast Asia. The later southern Chinese-designed junk appeared during the 3rd Century CE. The larger of the Treasure junks of the 16th century are believed to have been 127m (417ft) long and 52m (171ft) wide. The hull design with large rudders, no keel and fully battened sails provided great stability for both open sea, coast and estuary trade, but didn't sail well close to the wind. Junks plied China and Southeast Asian trading well into the 20th century and can still be found as house, charter, and trading vessels today.

This shows one technique of securing planking during gluing.

This shows the completed planked hull and fore and aft bracing. This model's laser cutting tolerances were quite loose, so bracing was required to keep all the rib sections true and square.

The forming of the poop deck. The instructions were not clear here, so it is important at this stage to mark and drill all decks to get a true alignment for the installation of the rudder shaft later in the construction.

This shows the finished hull and progression of the underside of the main deck.



Progressive photo when presented as a work in progress at CMSS Expo October 2023. Note the main sail is only hanging in place to demonstrate the vessels rig.

The completed main deck with all deck furnishing.

Poop Deck progress.

Completed Poop Deck.

Expected completion date

January 2024

The Kitamaebun Route and Woody Joe

Rod Carter

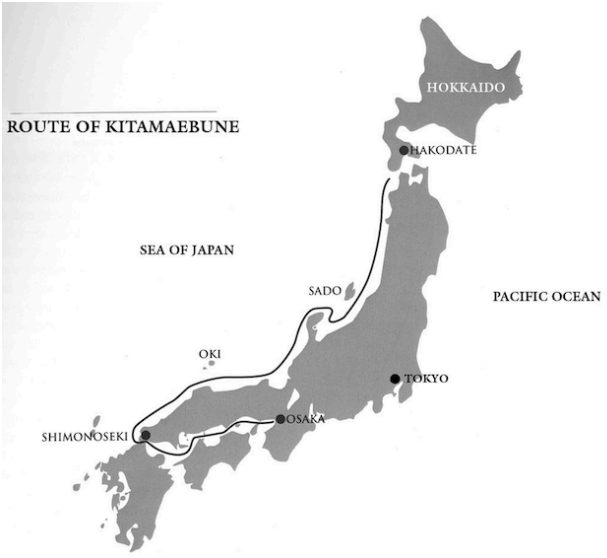
This was to have been an article about King Khufu's Solar ship, but having broken three of the very fragile ribs I put the build aside until I could think of a way to repair the damage. I now have that thanks to Peter Higgin's suggestion, but still have to screw my courage up to attempt the delicate task. Consequently I've shifted focus to another Woody Joe kit, the 1/72 scale Kitamaebune model.

Kitamaebune (sometimes translated as Northern ships or Sea of Japan ships) was the name given to both a seaborne trading route along the North coast of Japan during the Edo - Meiji period (1603-1867), and the type of ship serving the trade.

Early Kitamaebune were single-sail, oared vessels with a 75-tonne capacity, but by the early 18th Century, 24-metre Sengokubune (ie 1,000 Koku ship equating to a cargo capacity of 150 tonne) were appearing. The ships typically had a cargo capacity of around 150 tons and were usually single-masted. The new vessels had solid hulls and sharp bows designed to cut through the waves, and large, single-piece square sails. These enabled sengokubune to complete the voyage from Hokkaido to Osaka in just 12-13 days, and because they could sail without oarsmen, these large robust vessels required a crew of just a dozen people.

Trade goods would be loaded at Osaka and sold or exchanged along the route to Hakodate in Hokkaido. These ships were floating trading houses and by far the fastest route for communications in Edo Japan. By taking advantage of regional price variations, it was possible for owners to double the return on a single voyage. They were sometimes called Bai-bune, meaning double ships referring to the potential for owners to double the return on a single voyage and carriage by sea overcame the slow overland transport options in Edo period Japan. Profits from a single voyage could be as much as 100 million yen, $US706,000 in today's currency. The Honma's, a shipping family in present-day Yamagata Prefecture, grew to be the largest land owners in Japan, their wealth surpassing that of even the feudal lords.

Typically the ships would take on sugar and sake in Osaka, salt from the salt farms along the shore of the inland sea, then perhaps iron in Shimane, paper and knives in Fukui, and a wide range of goods such as vinegar, tobacco, candles, pottery, cotton, textiles, indigo, dolls, and sweets. Cargo was sold at a profit at each port. At the Hokuriku ports (North Western Hionshu) they would load buckwheat, medicine, and especially rice and straw products for Hokkaido since it was too cold for rice to grow there. Cargoes on the return trip from Hokkaido typically were marine products such as kombu kelp, herring, dried sardines, dried sea cucumber, salmon, and cod. Herring from Hokkaido was an especially valuable item. The fish were processed for the oil, the remains fermented and the nutrition-rich mash used as fertilizer for the rapidly developing cotton industry in farms along the Seto Inland Sea. It was sold for five to ten times its purchase price.



The Kitamae route was initiated in the early 1600's when Maeda Toshitsune, third lord of the Kaga Domain, ordered shipment of 15 tonnes of rice from Shimonoseki to Osaka (a major economic and trade hub in Honshu). Previous shipments relied on the laborious and slow overland route from Tsuruga to Otsu, Kyoto and Osaka via Lake Biwa. The route was formally established in 1672 when Tokugawa Ietsuna, fourth Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, ordered that the Sea of Japan passage between Osaka and Hokkaido be charted.

The return voyage was usually along the North coast although storm activity sometimes diverted the route down the South coast. The Kitamebune route encompassed some 100 ports. In the early 20th century traditional Kitamaebune were superceded by railways, steamships and telegraph. The Kitamaebune survives with the Shin Nihonkai Ferry with stops along the *old r*oute at Maizuru, Niigata, Akita, Tomakomai, Hokkaidō, and Otaru.

Woody Joe is a Japanese wooden 'toy' firm which produces a large range of wooden construction kits: Japanese castles; scenic vignettes; and particularly ships of both Japanese and European design.

The Kitamaebune kit assembles into a relatively small model, length 445 mm and height 415 mm. Its current price is 26,000 yen, with approximately $A50 postage cost. Hull planks and other components are already shaped and etched in veneer sheets, a plus for anyone tired of tapering or otherwise shaping timber, but with it's own traps for the unwary. As a single-plank kit, each hull component must be precisely placed to avoid unsightly gaps.

The thin veneer pieces bend quite easily when required after soaking in warm water, but won't stand much sanding. The same-scale Higaki Kaisen is a very similar ship, but includes internal structure. Instructions are contained in a booklet showing coloured pictures in 58 panels with Japanese script clarifying (?) assembly).

All photos showing construction phases are taken from the Catopower build log (Model Ship World), since I started my build before I'd

Higaki Kaisen model, very similar to Kitamaebune, but with full internal structure

decided to write this article for Scuttlebutt and had no photos of the build. Thank you Catopower.

As said earlier, the parts are laser-cut into thin veneer sheets which each have a number stamped on to them, with an alpha label for the separate parts where appropriate. The veneers are contained in plastic envelopes with a blue tag listing the sheet numbers therein. Some of these veneer sheets containing the parts are quite flimsy so that if some pieces are detached the sheets fall apart and the sheet number reference to a specific part is lost. That was my first mistake - tape the sheet so that each part stays with its parent sheet until required.

Construction is fairly straightforward conforming to the instruction guide and has proceeded well so far . I had some trouble with the Japanese script which is mostly superfluous. but on occasion seems might clarify some of the instructions. I'd earlier tried to activate Google Translate, but no cigar. After speaking with Bob Evans to whom I'd shown some pages of the Instruction Guide, I tried again with some success (thank you, Bob). I didn't find it easy holding the phone still and at focal length long enough for a clear shot (and it made my eyes water after more than a few photos), but it does work. On occasion, the translation makes no sense e.g. I didn't know what a 'Kawara' was until I re-read Michael

Pearson's article and found it was a box keel. The AI-powered translator, Bing, translates it as 'tile' as in on a roof.

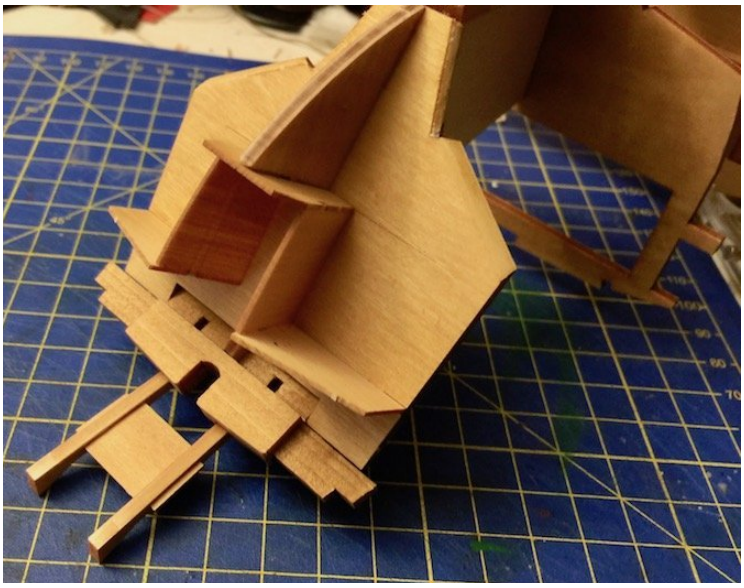
The kit has nicely laser-etched lines to indicate how far to bevel the transom piece.

I carved the stem to trapezoidal cross-section (tapering thinner aft to match the thickness of the kit's spine) using a #11 scalpel blade, a fine file and a Dremel grinder, and a seamstress's needle threader for the cable on the stem.

Before glueing the 'garboard plank' into place, a 1.5 x 2 mm strip needs to be fitted to the bottom edge of the box-like 'keel'. This holds the garboard plank in position against the 'keel'.

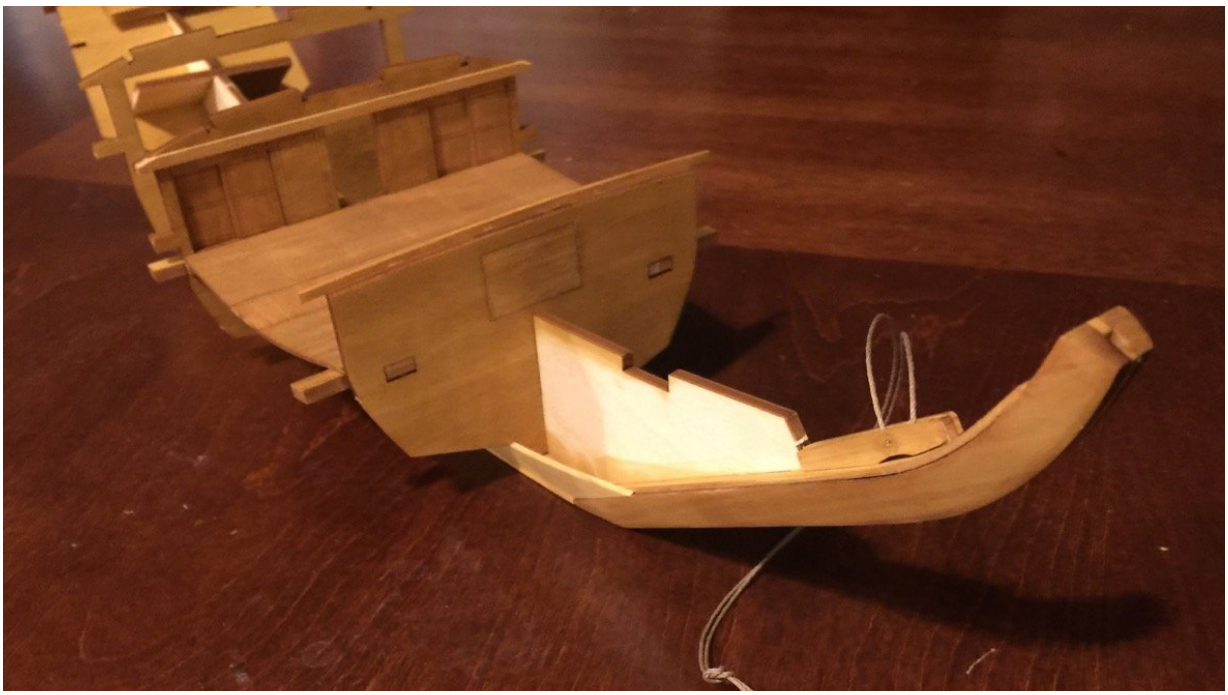
Not sure I've got the forward end of the bulwarks positioned properly between the stem and the first bulkhead.

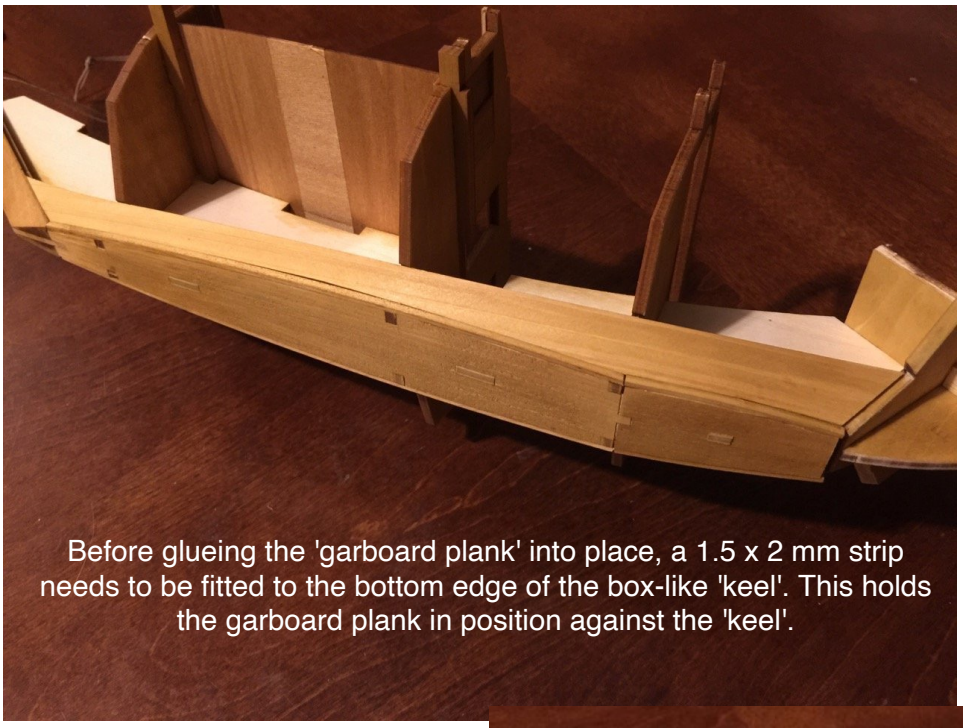
I encountered some difficulties with parts 23B and 24B (planks next to the 'garboard') since they require a sharp twist forward of the first bulkhead to meet flush with the stem. I used a soak in cloudy ammonia for the twist and clamped the pieces in place overnight before glueing the next day. I thought that would hold the strake in place, but found the next morning I'd split the forward end of 23B (port strake) and had to repair using ACC. That may require a smear of filler, but my intention is to paint the lower hull so any visible repair should be concealed. One of the problems with the kit is that the angles at which component parts fit together, and the relevant areas (eg fit of parts 23 and 24B against the garboard strake), make clamping for a tight fit difficult.



Above - Stages in construction

Below:
I carved the stem to trapezoidal cross-section (tapering thinner aft to match the thickness of the kit's spine) using a #11 scalpel blade, a fine file and a Dremel grinder, and a seamstress's needle threader for the cable on the stem.





Before glueing the 'garboard plank' into place, a 1.5 x 2 mm strip needs to be fitted to the bottom edge of the box-like 'keel'. This holds the garboard plank in position against the 'keel'.

I would recommend Woody Joe's Kitamaebune or Higaki Kaisen to anyone who wants something different on their shelves. It's perhaps not as demanding as standard plank-on-bulkhead or -frame models, making it a good and relatively inexpensive introduction for a newcomer to model ship building .

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Not sure I've got the forward end of the bulwarks positioned properly between the stem and the first bulkhead.