

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.

March 2024



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Editor's Note

First I must apologise for the lateness of this edition of Scuttlebutt. My aim is to publish on day 1 of the quarter, but on this occasion, owing to an infection, my head had turned to mush and I had the mental agility of a fence post. Probably no-one noticed the delay, but it meant I got a solid late contribution. And thank goodness for that; otherwise this would have been a very slim volume indeed. I can't remember in my seven years as editor an edition with fewer pages and a quick look at past editions suggests it hasn't happened since moving to a digital format.

But the upside is that the contributions we do have are solid and well worth reading, plus there are some excellent photos.

Happy reading. And I look forward to a healthy return to a full contributors' in-box.

BRIAN VOCE

EXPO 24

Mount Rogers Primary School, Melba September 14-15, 2024

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

Hello again fellow modellers and others with an interest in the modellers' world. I hope this brand new year is being good to you so far.

You may wonder why this Edition is slightly later than usual. Our editor apologises as he likes to set the first of the month as his publication date. Brian explains in his Editor's Note. But he tells me that this issue has fewer articles than he has experienced in seven years. I think we have a high-class publication which needs a lot more of your input if it is to continue.

We don't have a great number of events early in the year to report on, in fact since our friend covid struck the number of shows seems to have diminished somewhat. This could be seen as a positive in some ways as it allows more time for us to construct more models for the events we do attend. Speaking of which, the two main events are of course our own Expo2024 which will be held over the weekend of September 14-15 at Mount Rogers School, Melba in the ACT, and our colleagues in the Sydney Model Shipbuilders Club who will be holding their Festival of Model Shipbuilding at Wests Ashfield over the weekend of October 19-20. In addition, the Annual Scale Model Expo of the Port Macquarie Scale Modellers will be held at the Panthers Club on July 8-9. Some food for thought there and good for weekends away as well.

The Lady Nelson model has been completed and the Lady Nelson Tasmania organisation is currently looking for an appropriate venue to display it and a sponsor to provide a case for the model. Additional information is inside this issue. A couple of reminders at the risk of being accused of nagging (again):

- The Newsletter will not fill its pages without contribution from both Members and Readers.
- Expo24 will not be a success without the input of Members' models. Readers' models are also welcome.
- The CMSS AGM will be held in April. A fresh Committee would be welcomed so step up; it won't bite you!

Best Wishes

Bob (President CMSS)

Lady Nelson Model Completed

We received our last update from model-maker Ian Summers a couple of weeks ago to report that he has completed the Lady Nelson and has handed it on to the Lady Nelson Tasmania organisation. Lady Nelson Tasmania is seeking a sponsor to make a case for the model and is also exploring options for a permanent display location.

Regular readers will recall that Ian has kindly kept Scuttlebutt supplied with updated photographs and commentary since he took over the project.

Ian told Scuttlebutt that he was very pleased with the model and had enjoyed working on it.

“I was especially happy to have been involved with you all. I feel like I’ve played a part in something special. I wish to thank the Society for trusting me with this, especially as it has such a history with the Society.

“I have enjoyed it and it will be interesting to see where she is settled...it was a privilege to be involved, more so when later I read the Scuttlebutt pieces of the story. I have also had a good look at the Society’s models on YouTube - you are certainly a talented bunch.”

Thank you Ian

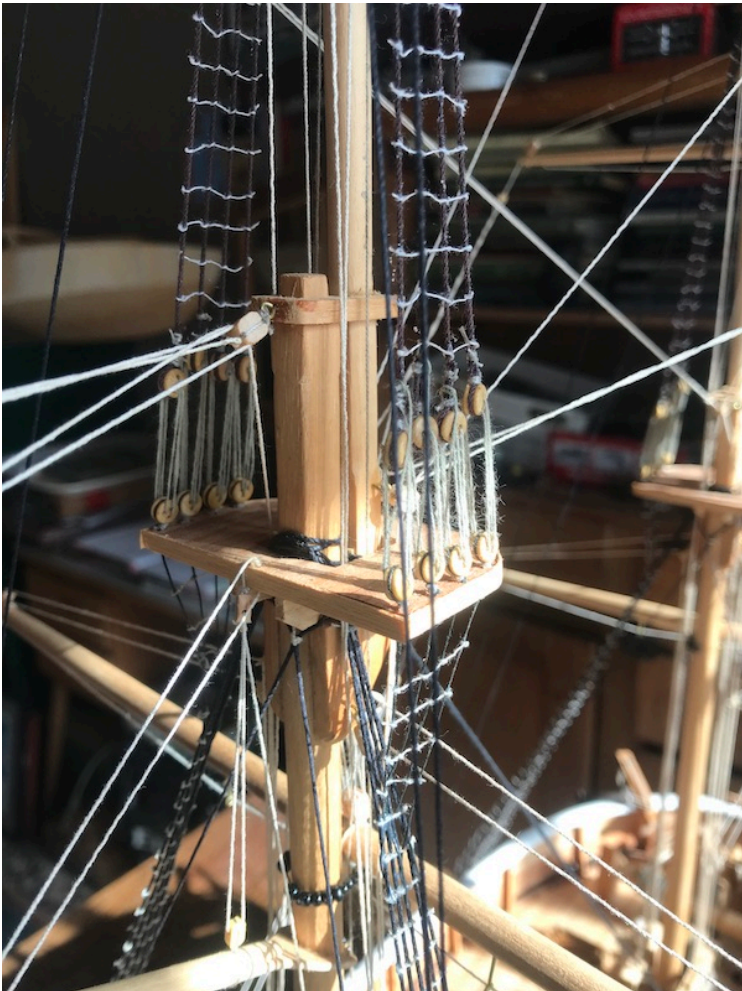
BRIAN VOCE

Ian’s photos of the completed Lady Nelson. this and following page



For background on the project,
see Scuttlebutt, June 2022.

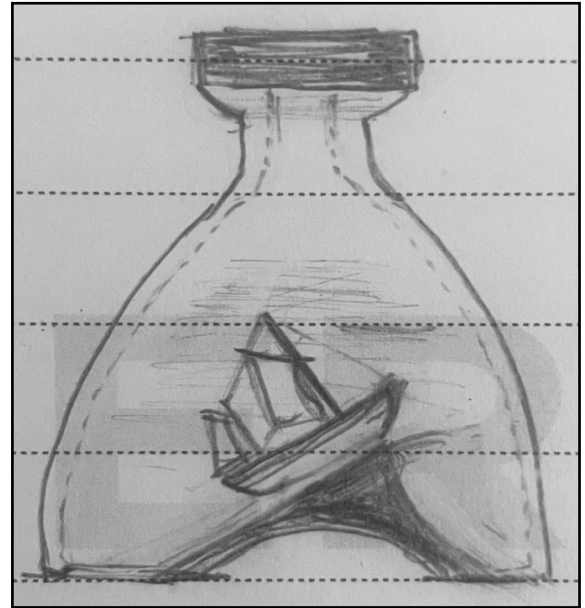
LADY NELSON



An Empty Gin Bottle Presents an Opportunity

The mighty James Caird in miniature

by Matt Shepley, CMSS annex, UAE



One of my many hobbies recently left me in possession of another interesting empty gin bottle, and my mind was drawn to what might now go inside it. I had also recently visited the Polar Museum in Cambridge, UK – and had renewed enthusiasm for all things Shackleton. So, hot on the heels of my return to ships-in-bottles (see [Bottling the Ethel](#), in the June 2023 edition of *Scuttlebutt*) I started planning a similar attempt for the James Caird, the little lifeboat made famous for its Elephant Island to South Georgia service in 1916.

The bottle at hand was a small upright affair, with a curved bottom, presenting two possibilities. First, I'd never attempted a 'top down' ship-in-a-bottle – so a new challenge; and second, the curved base evoked a wave... and recollections of artwork I'd seen of the valiant little lifeboat tackling the enormous seas of the Southern Ocean with six brave souls aboard ([above](#)).

With this in mind I started with a concept sketch ([top right](#)), bottle measurements, and dimensions of James Caird found on-line. The aim was to calculate the maximum sized model I could fit through the bottle's neck, and whether this would be sufficiently sized to aesthetically 'fill' the bottle. Satisfied I could make a reasonable hash of things, and again using plans found on-line, I roughed out the one-piece hull, then slowly improved it to include the open hatch, mast holes, rudder, and canvas top, all suitably painted to best reflect actual photos taken by the venerable Frank Hurley.

Next came the ocean, made from my usual modelling

clay, and layer upon layer of blues, greys and white paint to resemble a foreboding sea. Frayed white threads suitably suggested spray off the bow, as they crested a breaker before the stomach churning plummet down the



other side. Another first for me was a painted backdrop to reflect a bitter, wind-swept sky (see [next page](#)).

Once the in-bottle scene was complete, attention could be turned to the sailing rig and final details. I chose shortened sail, using painted Silkspan as the material, which allowed me to slightly reef the main. Another first. Masts are of painted brass wire, as close to scale as possible. These are not hinged (the usual method), and instead inserted individually after the hull went in the bottle, with the rigging lines then drawn up and glued off. Oars are also of brass wire, with their ends hammered flat to reflect the blades.



Anti-clockwise from top - Stages in construction, closeup of the inserted model, the completed ship in a bottle.



The other key feature was the human dimension. Shackleton and five men risked their lives to save the others, spending 16 days aboard in woeful conditions. It was important to include them. I started with the helmsman, braced against the mizzen mast with a hand on the tiller ropes. One man hunkered down facing forward, and the rest low in the hatch, out of the weather. I'm happy with the result, but a sculptor I am not!

Finally, after many rehearsals outside the bottle, insertion was completed with the bottle laid on its side, where I could reassemble the whole affair using long tweezers and ample patience, working each mast/sail into place and tensioning and securing the lines in turn. Once the cursing subsided it was time to upright the bottle, and carefully reintroduce the hull into its pre-formed and pre-painted indentation in the sea. The original cork topped the bottle...no need for further embellishment, as I hope the effort is memorial enough to an amazing tale of survival. #



Frank Hurley's photo of a trial launch on Elephant Island.



Bob Evans brings us up to date on construction of the **PACIFIC GAS**



The Pacific Gas continues its slow crawl towards completion. I am reminded of a radio serial called “Blue Hills” that went on and on and on; “when will that girl marry” was a question I think that was often asked!

On the ship’s final voyage to her resting place in Bootless Inlet, Port Moresby, I recall the Cairns Pilot asking me “what is the ship’s top speed Captain?”. When I advised him that it was “about 6 knots” he simply said “very well, full ahead please!” So slow was the passage through Grafton Passage that we were able to watch the last race of the America’s Cup which was won of course by Australia.

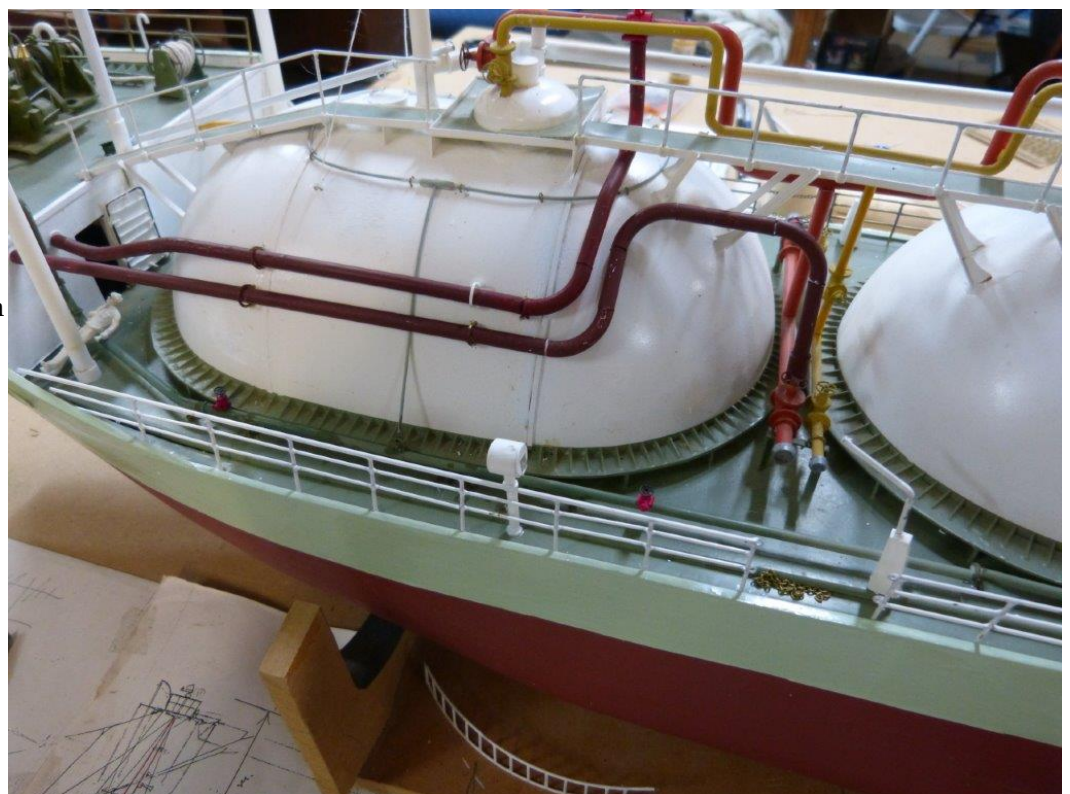
I seem not only to be building a scale model, but at a scale rate of building.

The photo above shows the model as it is at the time of writing. Principally the progress here is related to the pipeline system . Further work has been done on the railings but there are many more such railings to be made. Can’t have the crew falling overboard can we?

The pipework utilizes Plastruct tube and bends. I found out the hard way that polystyrene cement doesn’t work with Plastruct, but superglue will work provided there is not too much stress involved. On the construction that is, not the builder!

The other problem I had was determining the layout of the pipework (below). The General Arrangement plans I have are somewhat tattered and therefore difficult to decipher. My memory of my time on board as Mate and then Master did not help much either so I had to employ a bit of logic, principally that both the liquid and vapour lines could not come from the tanks to the pump and compressor and be discharged back through the same line. What I have shown I must confess, may not be truly accurate. Since the cargo tanks and lines were used ashore in Port Moresby and Lae and the rest of the vessel is now a dive site, I am not overly concerned.

Continued next page

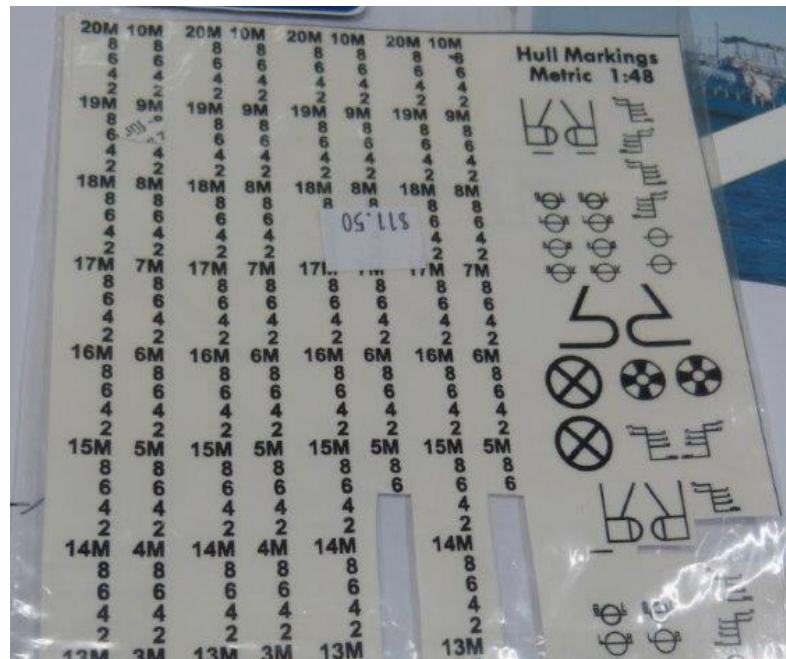




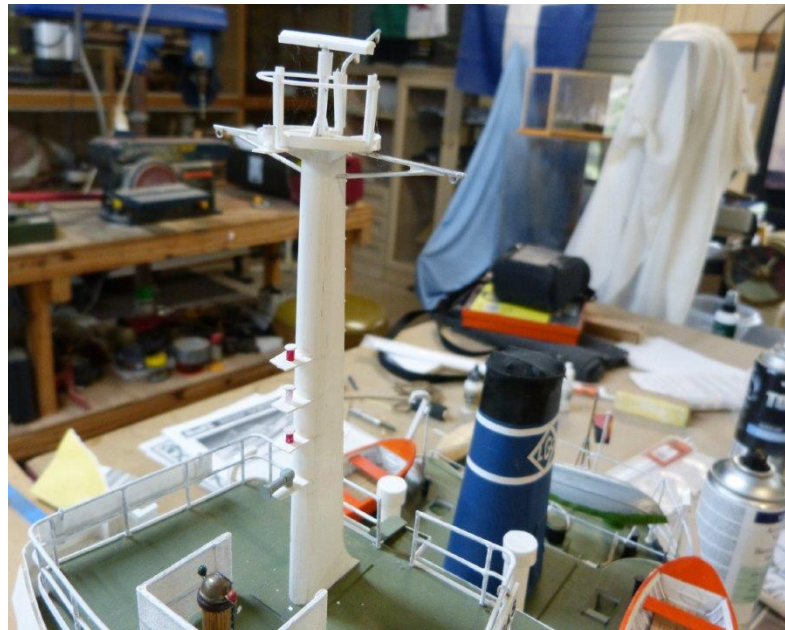
The draft marks and hull markings presented a problem until I found BECC's lettering ([right](#)). These were obtained through Float-a-Boat in Melbourne who, thanks to Rhonda, had them on my doorstep only two days after ordering them.

I have used BECCs for the ship's name and port of registry and found them to be excellent, but (there always seems to be a "but"), whereas the individual letters for the ship's name peeled of the backing sheet and left no background sheen, the markings are not individual separate letters and numbers and the result can be seen (arrowed) in the [above photo](#) I have not worked out what to do about this as yet, so anyone reading this who has an answer please let me know.

Below - I have completed the poop deck awning framework and added the small dinghy, inverted and with its cover. I have yet to provide a lifting arrangement and small davit for this. The lifeboats have been put into position, but as yet I have to make the 3-fold purchase blocks and rig the lifting gear for the lifeboats.



The mainmast below. I have installed the yardarms for the flag halyards. Behind the radar scanner is another small yardarm for additional flags, and before you ask, yes the radar scanner is clear of this! The front of the mast carries the navigation light, three signal lights and the air horn. #



This photo is of the actual engine room telegraph which was "removed" from the vessel by my friend who was the Superintendent for the vessel when she became a dive site in Port Moresby. It is now in my proud possession and can hopefully be displayed with the model.



Chinese Junk- Red Dragon

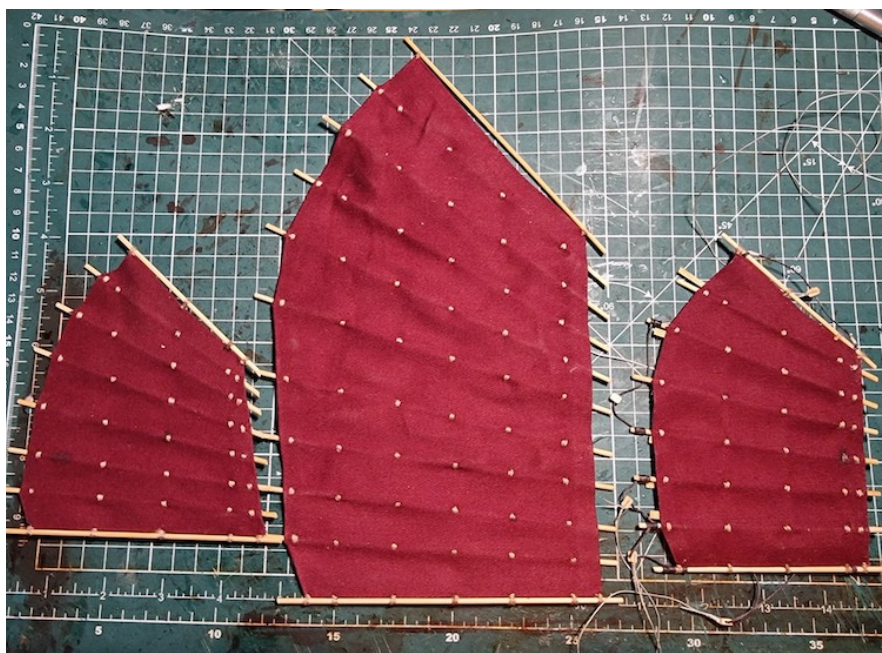
*Tony Merriott
Artesania Latina 1:60*

Completed March 2024



Photos and
comments

TONY MERRIOTT



Left - The completed sails attached to the main battens. Below - The secondary battens, saturated and bent with clothes iron, then secured to the luff end of the main battens.





Sails in place with the mast positioned between the main and secondary batons



Sails in place with the secondary batons ends secure towards the leech end of the main batons



Left - Leeward view of the Red Dragon.



More photos next page

Right - Completed model in acrylic display case

Below - Bow decoration



Above - Chinese lucky money chest for wealth and prosperity

Below - Decorative stand



Rear quarter starboard aspect

