

# 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.

June 2026

## Committee Members 2026 – 2027

President Neville Miller. Vice President Grant Dale. Treasurer Peter Hateley.  
Secretary Peter Gaisford. Assistant Secretary Bill Atkinson.  
Committee Members Tony Payne, Robert LeLievre  
Public Officer Ray Osmotherly. Liaison Officer Max Fitton.  
Webmaster Steve Batcheldor. Editor Elizabeth Hodsdon

## MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month except December, commencing at 10am.  
New venue from February 2026, Southern Cross Club, corner of Bowman St and  
Catchpole St, Macquarie. ACT 2614.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great sadness that I have been informed of the passing of Robert Hodsdon, a very valuable and long time member of Canberra Model Shipwrights Society. Robert passed away suddenly on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of April. He has been the constant companion of Elizabeth Hodsdon, Life Member and Editor of Scuttlebutt. Condolences to you and your family on this sad occasion.

The AGM was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and was well attended. There was no change in Office Bearers, the only change to the Committee being Tony Payne and Robert LeLievre replacing Tony Merriott and Robert Hodsdon as general members. I was very disappointed that no one stepped forward for the President's position even though there are a few that would be well suited to fill the position. I will be unavailable for most of the next twelve months due to prior commitments.

The new venue for meetings at the Jamieson Southern Cross Club is a real hit and a great choice by our Vice President Grant.

The Canberra Boat Festival was on again this year at the Canberra Yacht Club on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April. There was a good selection of timber Canoes, Dinghies, Sailing and Steam Vessels on show along with a line-up of Seagull Outboard Motors.

The Canberra Model Shipwrights Society Expo 2026 will NOT be held at the Mt Rogers Primary School this year. The Expo will be at the Woden Southern Cross Club, 92 – 96 Corinna St, Phillip, ACT, on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2026. Looking Forward to seeing you all there.

Happy building  
Neville Miller.

# MARY ROSE

Frank Harrington

Kit model of Mary Rose. Originally started construction by Richard Uttley. Scale 1:80.  
Donated and I brought it home with me as a freebie. I have since added to it with the high stern and forecastle.



The Mary Rose was a famous carrack style warship in the navy of King Henry VIII. Built between 1510 and 1511 she was launched in 1511. She served for 34 years, including wars against France, Scotland and Brittany. She was substantially rebuilt in 1536 before sinking on 19 July 1545 in the Battle of the Solent in full view of the king.

It is believed the open lower gun ports were flooded when the ship was caught by a strong gust of wind during a turn. It was put down to a combination of human error, unstable top-heavy design and overloading following a refit that added more heavier guns.

Some parts were salvaged in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was re-discovered by marine archaeologists in 1971. The main starboard hull was raised in October 1982 with much media attention. That is now on display in a dedicated museum at Portsmouth, along with some artefacts. Significant portions of the Mary Rose remain buried at the original wreck site.

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## THE CANBERRA TRADITIONAL BOAT FESTIVAL

### Neville Miller

The Canberra Traditional Boat Festival is an annual event, and was on again this year on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of April, as part of Canberra Fest at the Canberra Yacht Club, despite the windy conditions.

There was a good representation of traditional craft including canoes, dinghies, petrol powered and steam powered boats, trailer sailers, racing yacht, a river ferry and the paddle steamer Enterprise.



There was a very nice line-up of restored historical Seagull Outboard Motors on display and for sale. Due to the strong winds not all the vessels took part in the sail to Government House for lunch.

The paddle steamer Enterprise was very popular with the crowd with visitors allowed access to the wheelhouse for photo opportunities and to blow the steam whistle.

The Canberra Sea Shanty Club was there along with a Jazz band to entertain the crowd. George the miniature steam train was on hand to provide rides to the children there.



## EARLY MODELLING DAYS

Brian Voce

I know that from an early age I was interested in model ships and boats which might have been a flow-on from swimming on Adelaide beaches and being entranced by the racing sharpies and cadet dinghies which were literally out of reach across the waters they sailed and another world away from me in realistic terms of being able to sail one, or an unbelievable thought – own one.

I was also greatly impressed at a very early age by a bronze model on a mighty pillar on Glenelg's foreshore which depicted the migrant ship the Buffalo which brought Adelaide's first free settlers to its shores and thus immortalised that historic event. When we revisited Adelaide over the years, somewhere we fitted in a visit to Glenelg and I still gazed up in awe at that metal model with metal rigging, yet still evoking thoughts of the days when sail was so dominant in long distance travel.

And an older cousin owned his own fishing boat – a small wooden sailer in which I accompanied him on adventurous trips out from Grange. While he trolled for snook, I took in the basics of our craft, mast and boom, ropes and canvas, pulleys and a sturdy tiller. And in due course fish coming over the side.

But whatever started it, I was intrigued with wooden models in the SA Museum, within walking distance of my home in an inner suburb and which I haunted as a youngster. Model ships and boats had me hooked from early childhood, especially examining the details and admiring the workmanship of unknown model-makers.

It was a long time before I felt ready to tackle a model for myself, but sometime early in our marriage, having built, but not quite yet finished our first home in the Adelaide Hills, I bought a plastic kit of the Endeavour (doesn't everyone start with the Endeavour?). Having made the purchase, I remember staring at the box, the many parts and instructions that I wasn't yet ready to digest. So my impulse purchase sat in a corner noticeable, but not noticed waiting for my creative juices to do their thing.

I have no memory of starting the build, but I do recall learning to glue edges of plastic together until the ship started to take shape – and a place in my future as well, I hoped. Somehow, between enjoying a marriage, helping with the kids, finishing the house and paid work, I was drawn back to this project and somewhere along the line I painted it, tackled the rigging and so on until I felt it was as good as it was going to be. I was very proud of it.

One of the features of the house was a wall of stone which included a fireplace, flue and through a whim when I picked up a particularly well-shaped stone, a small ledge over the mantle. That became the home for my Endeavour.

Having completed this kit, I found another of my favourites – Bluenose. This was a delightful build and soon I had another vessel to add to a very small collection. What next? The Cutty Sark perhaps? I was getting a bit ahead of myself, but youth is a great driver of ambition. Anyway, I bought the kit and made a start.

My next-door neighbour and good friend – I must tell you his name, Ted Sidebottom – dropped over one day and saw what I was about to start. He got very enthused about the idea and the next thing I knew he had bought a kit of the Thermopylae. Like the old rivalry between those two tea clippers, I suddenly felt I was in competition with Ted.

And it spurred us both onwards. Ted finished the Thermopylae first and a great job he did. I finally completed my Cutty Sark and we were both proud of our efforts and they took pride of place in our houses

What happened to these models of early endeavour?

I know the Endeavour and the Bluenose came to Canberra when we made that move. I remember later giving the Bluenose to my sister-in-law who was visiting, and despite her delight, I never saw it on display in her home. (I suspect it never survived the road trip back to Adelaide).

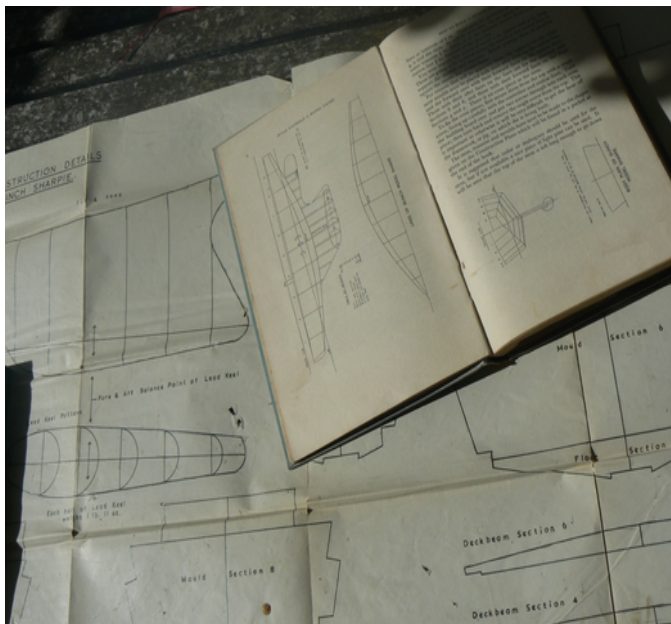
The Endeavour. It was on display in our Aranda home for many years – having arrived there safely in its own tea chest packed in immense quantities of cushioning shredded paper. It made the move to Bungendore where it stood on a fireplace mantle. A playful cat knocked it off and that was the end of that.

As to the Cutty Sark – I have no recollection of it beyond our first home. But in much later years a good friend, who was convalescing took it upon himself to build the Cutty Sark from a later plastic kit. This guy was very creative, but had never made a model in his life. Nevertheless, the result was amazingly good. He protected it in a display cabinet and presented it to his (then) future father-in-law. I imagine he too has lost touch with his Cutty Sark as the marriage never occurred.

In Canberra, I made a sailing boat from scratch, following the plans and construction details in a how-to-do-it book I had purchased on a whim. When I noted the list of materials required, I wondered about the model size three-ply essential for cladding the hull. I visited the toy/model shop then in Garema Place and found they stocked that very material. It was a touch lighter than the book recommended, but it worked well and the very fact of its availability encouraged me along the path of construction. My three boys and I had lots of fun sailing it and learned a lot about trimming the boat, including the Bailey self-steering gear.

I later progressed to wooden models and was particularly interested in fishing vessels, which probably takes me back to my first encounters. Shaky hands and double-vision of which I wasn't aware of at the time, hindered later efforts and like many others I have an unfinished model and others that need repair.

But I do relish the memories and still have that desire to enjoy the work of others.



An early model of a sharpie built from plans in a book detailing how to build two pond boats. Built in the early 70s and the finished model provided lots of family fun.

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# BUILDING HMS WOLF

## Part 1

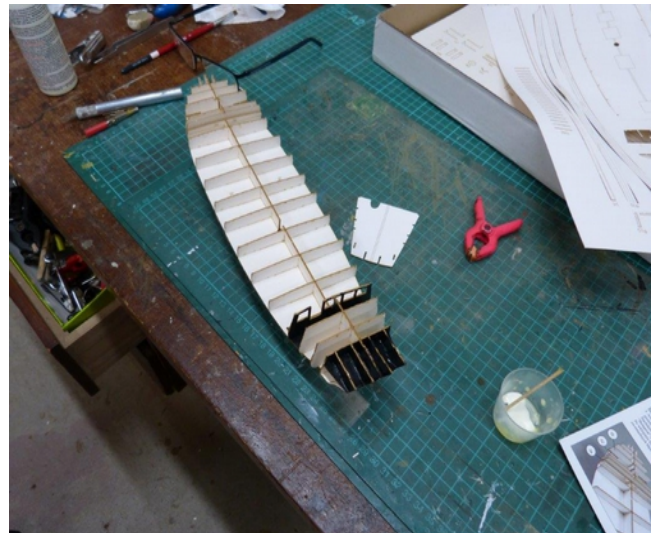
Bob Evans

This is a card model produced by Shipyard Models of Poland. Called a “paper” model, only a few of the sheets could be described as paper.

The kit is from our good friend, Gary Renshaw at Modellers Central. The box is well packed containing a number of laser cut sheets of card of varying thicknesses, the thickest of course being the frames, decks and centre line profile.



1.



2.

There are also clear parts for windows which are also laser cut, printed instruction sheets for masts, spars and rigging and some paper flags and decorations which do need careful cutting out. Sails are provided and look to be very well done.

There is a tray containing all sorts of fittings and various sized blocks which have to be made up. A challenge for the eyesight I suspect! There is also a selection of paints provided, unfortunately mine were dried up and not usable, however Vallejo paints were used and are quite satisfactory.

Also included are lengths of various sized threads for the rigging and wooden masts and spars.

The instructions (apart from rigging diagrams) come as a coloured booklet with photographic instructions. There is very little in the way of written instruction which is probably as well given the vagaries of Polish English. In addition there is not always a logical sequence to the construction steps. An example is the poop deck steps. These appear in the photo at the bottom of P11 but the construction is not shown until P14. Beware, this is not the only example!

The materials are great, the laser cutting superb, and the large pieces that form the first layer covering the frames have been excellently drafted and fit perfectly.

Now I must digress for a moment, not wishing to be accused of instructing Grandmothers in the art of egg sucking. Essentially this is my first card model so my comments are generally directed to those in the same boat.

Firstly the glue. I am using Deluxe Materials Aliphatic Resin as I understand that this has less water content than other woodworking glues such as Selleys. It has a fast grab time which is good in a way

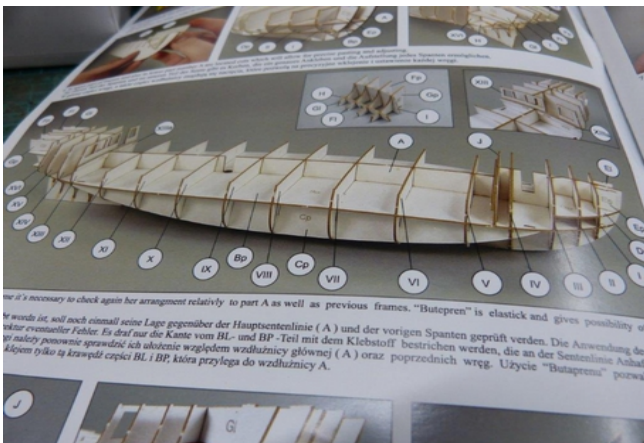
as prolonged holding times are a bad idea, however it does require accurate first time placement of parts as there is not a great deal of time for adjustments to be made. More so than super glue but remember this is paper we are working with.

Now back to the model itself. In photo 3 you can see how the basic hull frames and sub-decks go together. It does pay to dry fit everything before gluing. It is not always abundantly clear in what sequence various parts fit together and it is quite easy to miss where and when glue should be applied. As I said, glue of any description, once applied will be very unforgiving. Trying to get things apart will only result in torn and misshapen soggy pieces.

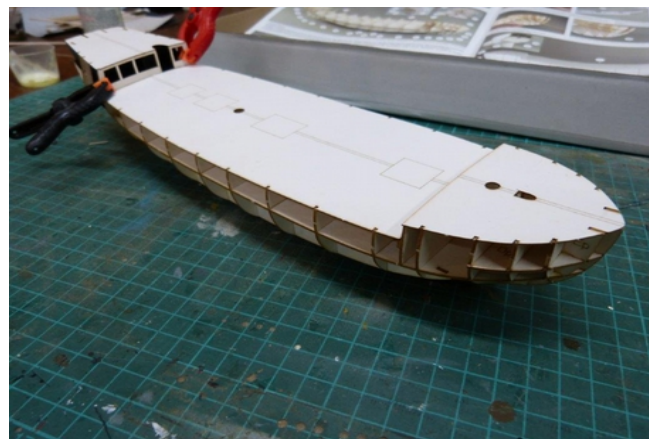


3.

The resultant frame is quite strong but still doesn't react well to pressure when handling. I cannot stress enough the need for accuracy in assembly, even .5mm adrift might well cause grief further on in the construction. Photo 4 is the appropriate page from the instructions.



4.



5.

Photo 5 shows the decks and poop deck bulkhead in place, again the fit and laser cutting are superb.

Photo 6. The first hull covering, (it can't be called planking) were the large pieces I referred to earlier. The frames are only made from 1mm card and with the covering pieces butting together on the frame edge, accuracy and alignment of frames is critical. This did not prove too difficult but please take your time and ensure everything is lined up before committing to glue.



6.

In photo 7 we see the decks and the starboard side bulwarks in place. The decks should be painted before gluing in place. Acrylic paint of varying shades of brown were applied randomly and I hope resulted in a reasonably wood like appearance.

Photo 8 shows the first layer of planking. Be extra careful when inverting the model as the bulwarks are by no means able to take any weight. The “planks” come in sections of 4 planks each, are laser cut and again very accurate and fit well.



7.



8.

There now follows another two layers of planking. The first are in lengths consisting of 4 planks each while the third and final layer comprises individual planks. Tedious yes, but there is no cutting to size, no fitting or sanding and filling required, swings and roundabouts really. The handling must be gentle and done with forethought if crushing is to be avoided. Photo 9 shows the construction to date.



My thoughts in summary:

**Kit:** Well packaged and contains a number of laser cut sheets of varying thicknesses. Paper parts need to be cut out with either scissors or a sharp knife. Your choice but the emphasis is on sharp.

Premade sails look to be good and made from suitably fine material. I have left them in the protective packet for the moment. Thread seems to be good as are the white metal parts and the doweling provided for the masts and spars.

**Paints:** Completely dried up and unusable. There are two paint brushes supplied.

**Sail and rigging plan:** I have not studied them in depth but they appear OK.

**Instructions:** Very few words and all photographic. Although the quality is good, I found some difficulty in following the building sequence and I also found the locating of parts on the sheets to be extremely frustrating.

Hopefully the photos show that it is well worth the effort.

More in part 2. Bob

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## HMS WOLF

## Part 2

I was truly amazed to find that I wrote the first part of this for the December 2010 Scuttlebutt. My rate of model building has slowed to almost nothing!! Have to improve on that I think. I confess that not much has been achieved but what I have done is at least progress of a sort!

Whilst I still believe that this kit is exceptionally well produced, I continue to be frustrated by two issues, namely:

1. The length of time it takes me to find parts on the numerous sheets of varying thicknesses of printed sheets. The die cutting process quite probably dictates this. Many items have a number of laminations to make up the finished piece and their location is quite often on multiple sheets depending on the thicknesses of the part. Perseverance and patience is the order of the day, and I seem to be getting less of both as time goes by!!
2. Some of the parts, although well die-cut are exceptionally small and fragile. This could well become problematic when it comes to the blocks which are made up from several parts which (for me at least) will become difficult when it comes to running the rigging – it is very difficult to re-drill the holes through the made up blocks.

A few photos illustrate what has been achieved.

Photo 10. This shows the stern area with the window decorations completed, the wheel and capstan fitted and a tiller arrangement fitted. I imagine the tiller offers an alternative method of steering if required. The rudder is shown, obviously not in the correct position! The small box lying on its back in the front of the wheel contains the compass and is still to be positioned and fixed.

The white circle on the deck does not belong anywhere.



10.

Photo 11. This photo shows the midships area with various sub assemblies in place. The pin rails are constructed with three laminations each for the posts, the rail itself is one lamination and holes for the pins mercifully installed as part of the laser process.

The hatch covers are made up stuck to the deck.

The gallows like structures are for the stowage of spare spars etc.

The boarding stairs have yet to be painted. There are two parts to each step but all these parts were put together with minimal fuss.

The picture also shows the beginning of the gun carriage construction. This is a nightmare of impossibly small pieces which, if not built in small stages, will leave you with tiny pieces stuck to your tweezers!



11.



12.

Photo 12. Apart from the mess my work table has become, this shows the fore part of the vessel with the fore mast yet to be fixed.

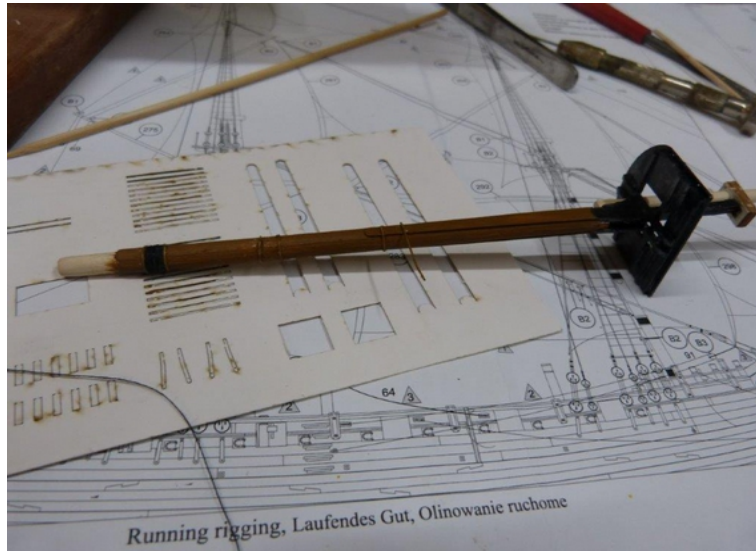


Photo 13. This shows the main mast under construction.

Progress is painfully slow and I'm certainly not sure of achieving completion by Expo 26. Maybe 27 !?



## PORT JACKSON – SYDNEY HARBOUR Edwin Lowry

Man O War Steps, The First and Last, Scotsman's Ferry, Tram Shed, Garden Island Dry Docks.

Of the above, only the Garden Island Dry Dock and Man O War Steps remain, and Garden Island isn't an island any more!

Before WW2, warships were moored at Garden Island or anchored, so to go on leave the Navy had Dockyard Motorboats to get people to shore. The boats tied up at Man O War Steps. Where the Opera House is now stood a huge shed for electric trams. Crews would board the trams and alight at the hotel named the First and Last, which was the first pub they met on leave, and the last going back to their ships. As the tram sections didn't start until the head of Circular Quay the crews didn't have to pay, as the Pub came before the section started, hence the name Scotsman's Ferry. Given the RAN's losses during WW2 it may have been the First and Last was the last Australian Pub they drank at!

Dry Dock.

During WW2 a Dry Dock was built by the Civil Construction Corps. Sydney Water Board was contracted to build it as they had built large concrete dams and large pumps. As a result the huge excavations made a lot of backfill which caused Garden Island to be joined to the mainland. Lots of waterfront homes and flats lost their harbour views! Workshops were built on the reclaimed land. One was the Motor Shop, and an apprentice working in the injector and fuel pump diesel room could see ladies hanging out their washing. Very educational!

Editor's note: The First and Last was demolished in 1981 to be replaced by a high rise building. The Man O War Steps is still in use as a wharf for ferry services and pleasure craft.



## Annual Membership Fees

Canberra area: single member \$50, couple \$75.

Interstate: single member \$25, couple \$37.50

Fees may be paid to the treasurer by cash or card.

Bank Deposit Beyond Bank BSB 325 185

Account name Canberra Model Shipwrights Society

Account number 03452396

Please give your name as reference

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Visit the society website at <https://canberramodelshipwrights.org.au> We seek content for the website – everything from photographs of your models through interesting web-links and chat.

The society also 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>.

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My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue. Contributions for the next issue will be welcome. Please send to me at [elizhod@gmail.com](mailto:elizhod@gmail.com).

Elizabeth Hodsdon

