



Newsletter of the Chicago Tri-Club Association

December, 2022

• Scuttlebutt •

A Very Special Meeting

We had quite a lineup of special attendees at the November meeting. In addition to our guest speaker, Bill Emerson, author and professional modeler, Rob Napier, and the new owner of SeaWatch Books, Michael Ellison joined us.

Mr. Napier provided some insight into his new book, "Caring For Ship Models, A Narrative of Thought and Application". For those of us who are acquainted with Napier's other works on model ship restoration, it gave us a chance to make some comparisons. It sounds like a great book.

Mike Ellison encouraged everyone to sign up for the SeaWatch newsletter. He stated that new subscribers will get 10% off their first order. <https://seawatchbooks.com/pages/subscribe> For more information see page 17 in this Report.

The USS *Birmingham* The Model & The Ship By Bill Emerson

Bill Emerson is quite a unique individual. Not only is he a fine modeler but he is an author/editor as well! He was editor for a book about his great, great uncle titled "Don't tell father I have been shot at": The Civil War Letters of Captain George N. Bliss, First Rhode Island Cavalry. He was also author/editor for at least two other books about the Civil War era.

Bill also plays Banjo (he claims not well) and his dad worked for Hyman Rickover! He has donated many of his models to

Navy installations up and down the east coast. Included in these is a model of the USS *Langley*, the first US Navy aircraft carrier, which is on display at the Udvar-Hazy Center in Washington, DC.



USS Birmingham continued on Page 2

Tri-Club December Meetings

Organizing Some of Your Tools

By Rick Szydelko



When you work in your shop, are you constantly looking for certain pliers, tweezers or forceps? Rick Szydelko may have at least one simple fix for this common problem. His talk will have you wondering why you never thought of that before!

fore!

As an added attraction, Bob Filipowski will explain a technique he has developed for making simple rabbits. This is one you don't want to miss.

Proceedings will begin on Wednesday, November 2nd, at 7:00 PM CST, but you will be able to log on to this virtual meeting as early as 6:30 PM. Hope you can make it!

The NRMS December Meeting

Conducted by Kurt Van Dahm



Normally the Nautical Research & Model Ship Society holds hybrid gatherings in Westmont, IL on the second Saturday of the month. Unfortunately, due to a flair up in COVID-19, the NRMS has returned to conducting

only virtual meetings. Invites will be sent out a few days before the December 10th meeting.

The December MMS Meeting



After a short run of only one month, the Midwest Model Shipwrights were forced to cancel F2F meetings, and return to virtual gatherings. This was due to one of

our members who was at the October meeting testing positive. We quickly changed our meeting agenda, and rebounded nicely for the November session. The December program will feature John Mitchell and his technique for making ship's boats. John always does a nice job!



The Zoom invite will be sent out one or two days before the meeting, which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 21st at 7:00 PM, CST.

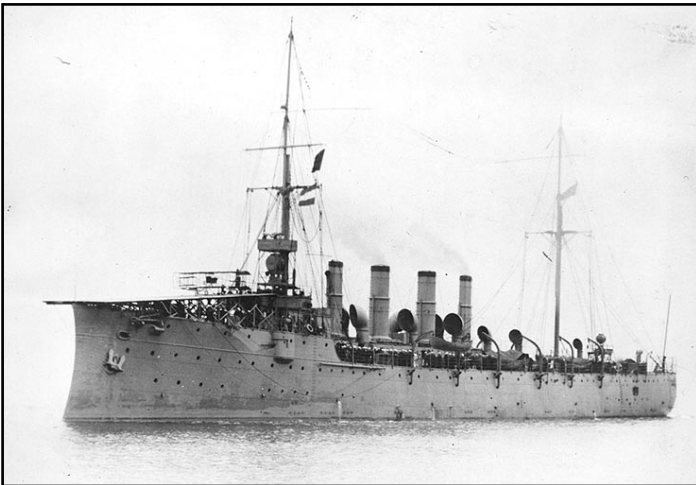


Ships on Deck



The USS *Birmingham* by Bill Emerson

Bill Emerson's interest in model ship building normally covers a period from the Civil War to about 1900. However, he admitted that his model of the USS *Birmingham* exceeds that period by about 8 years having been



launched in 1908. It was love at first sight when he saw a magnificent model of that vessel's sistership, the USS *Salem*, at the US Navy Museum in Washington DC.

He immediately obtained a set of plans from the National Archives. However, it wasn't long before he realized that over the life of the ship modifications had been made when the vessel was laid up for refits, and Bill wanted to construct the *Birmingham* as she was built. A certain amount of research was necessary.

A SHORT HISTORY

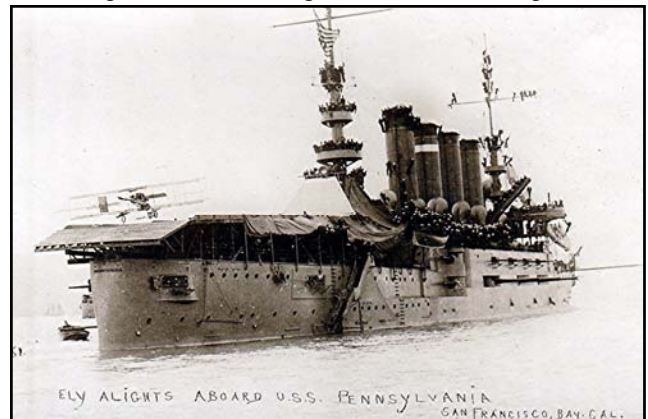
Unlike the British, the *Birmingham*, *Salem* and *Chester* were the only three Scout Cruisers built for the US Navy. Their primary function was to search out enemy ships. They were very fast, but they possessed light armor and



armament. With a top speed of 24 knots they were designed to outrun their adversaries if they couldn't outgun them.

These three vessels had active careers. Important missions included escorting convoys across the Atlantic during WWI. The *Birmingham* had two especially noteworthy experiences. After the war she was chosen to transport the body of the unknown soldier from France back to the United States, and in November 1910 this ship was the first vessel to launch an airplane off a modified deck mounted at the bow.

The pilot was a civilian named Eugene Ely, and the aircraft was a Curtiss Model D biplane. As the plane left the deck she dropped down to the water with the wheels and propeller both touching the surface. The propeller was slightly damaged, and Ely was forced to land on a nearby spit of land. He thought he had failed, but the Navy was elated with the results. Two months later he would land and take off from a makeshift deck aboard the USS *Pennsylvania*. Misjudging a steep dive, Ely would die later that year during an exhibition flight in Macon, Georgia.



It's ironic that the *Birmingham*'s contribution to the development of Naval aviation would eventually lead to the ship's demise. As aircraft developed greater range and speed, the Navy no longer saw a need for the scout cruiser class of vessels. They would be decommissioned in 1923, and scrapped in 1930.

THE MODEL

As stated earlier, Emerson was quite taken with the *Birmingham*, and he wanted to build a model of her as she appeared at the time of Ely's epic flight off her makeshift deck.

"Ships on Deck", continued on Page 3



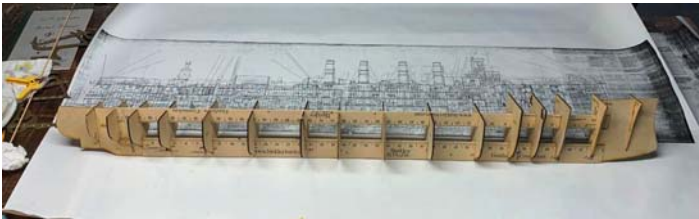
Ships on Deck



The USS *Birmingham* by Bill Emerson

Photos by Bill Emerson

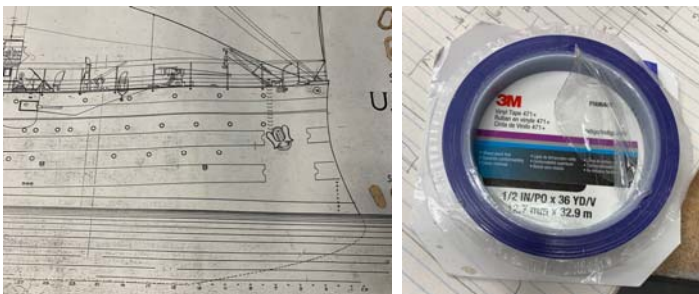
Using the plans from the National Archives, Bill made up a set of bulkheads and backbone very much like what is supplied in most kits.



He then planked the hull and applied a coat of USC Pro-Glaze epoxy over the entire surface. This product is a maximum performance polyester finishing putty.



This product lent itself well to the “over and under” style of hull plating these ships possessed. After the initial layer, strips of 3M tape were applied to the hull at proper intervals. Pro-Glaze was then applied to the areas in be-

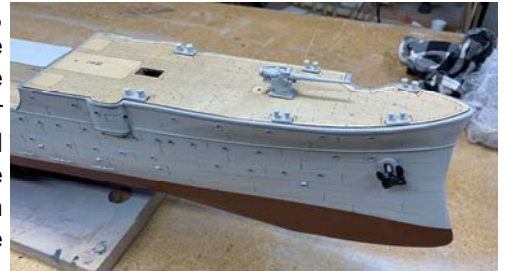


tween the strips. These areas were then sanded down so they were flush with the strips. The tape is then carefully



removed leaving the appearance of over and under hull plating.

Using Corel, Bill drew up the floor plan for the deck. A laser was then used to cut out the overall pattern and engrave the planking.



The smokestacks were a bit of a challenge for Emerson. Two were round and two were oval, so different construction techniques were developed for each pair. The round versions were produced using a lathe, but the oval pair presented a problem. Once again laser technology came to the rescue. These stacks were divided into layers, which were then glued together.



When it came to Ely's plane, Emerson's plans were not a match. He even searched the Glenn Curtiss museum for information with no success. Finally, Bill noticed that the photo of the actual takeoff shows an almost perfect profile of the aircraft. After creating a scale drawing



of the biplane, a soldered brass wire frame was made and the wings were made out of plastic.





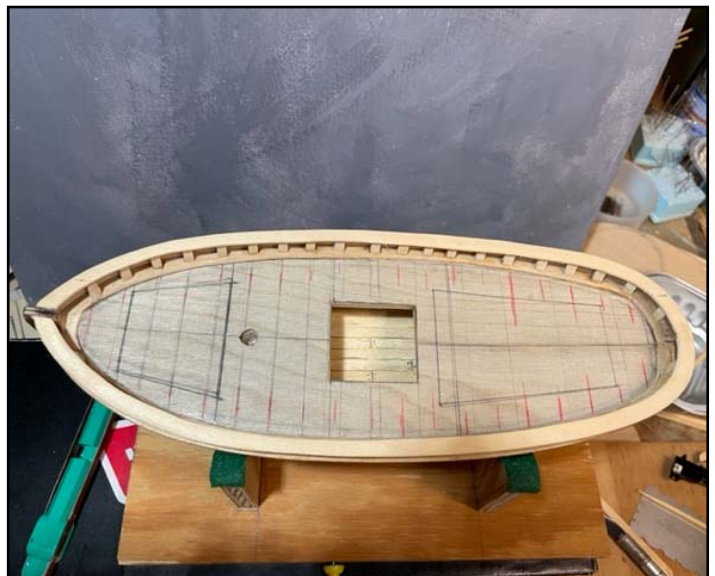
Ships on Deck

Presented by the North Shore Deadeyes



Danish Workboat *Gerda III*

Photos by Neil Hurwitz





Ships on Deck

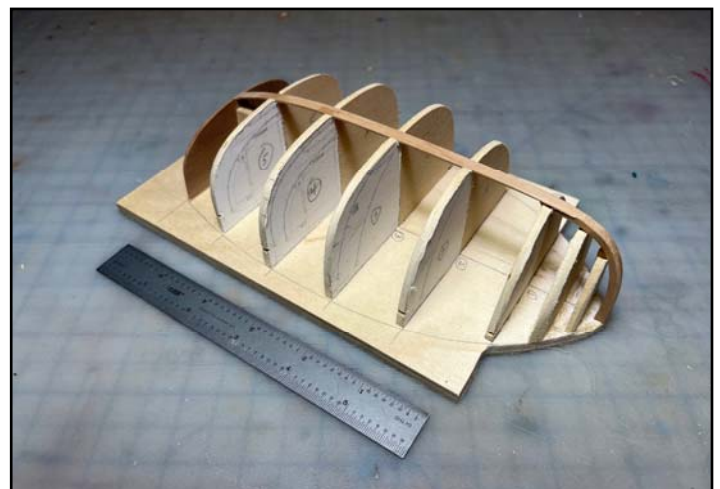
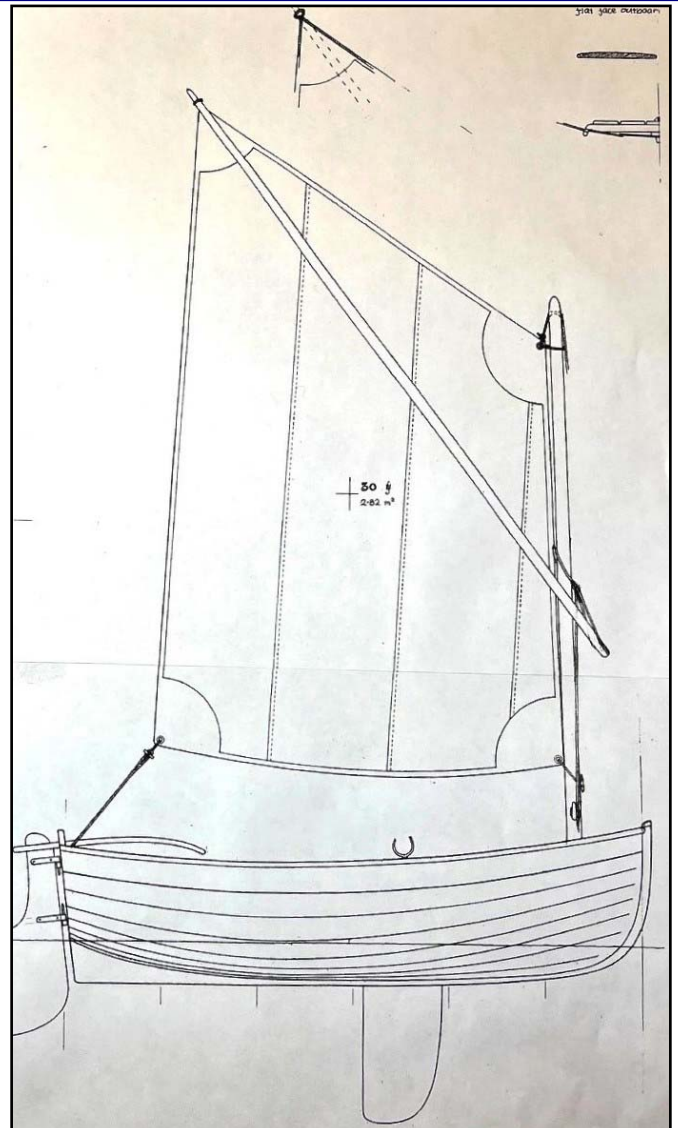
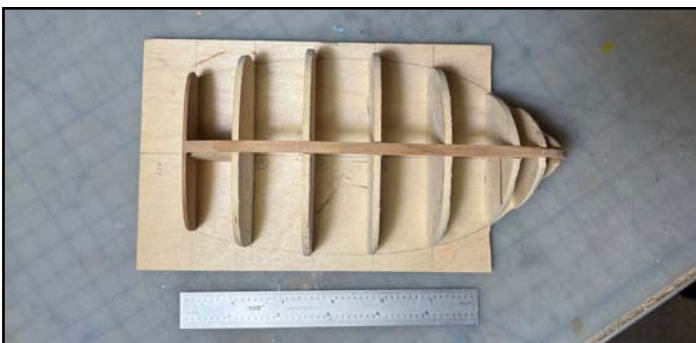
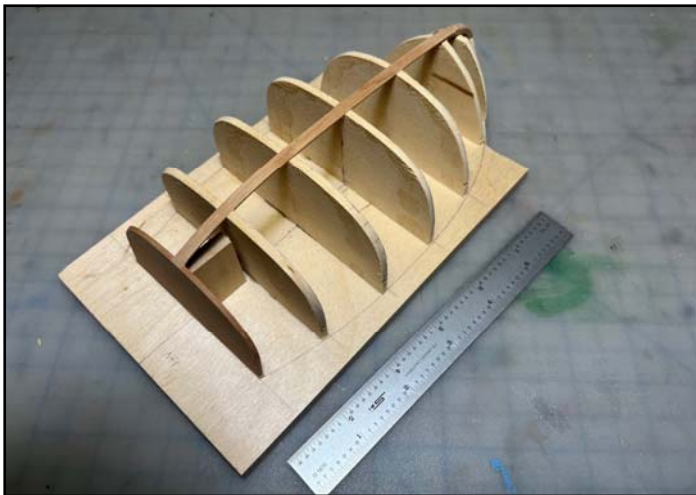
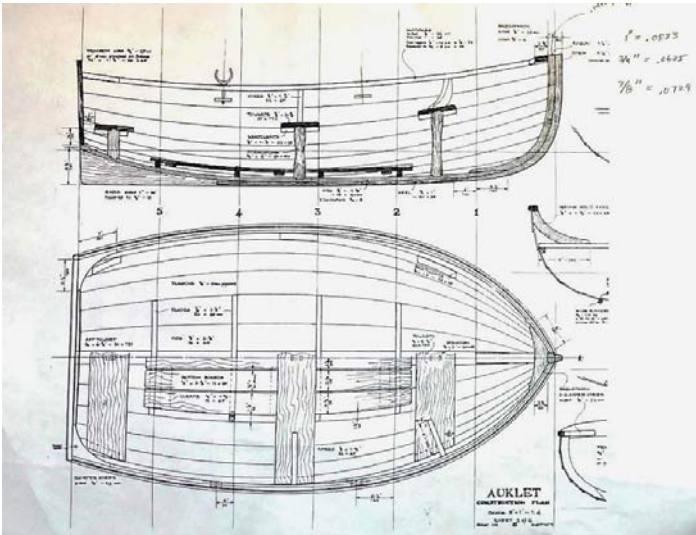
Presented by the North Shore Deadeyes



Auklet

Photos & Text by John Pocius

Here are some images of John's newest project:
Auklet, a 7' 2", lapstrake planked yacht tender.
Scale 1:12
It was designed by Ian Oughtred





Ships on Deck

Presented by the North Shore Deadeyes



Valkyrie

Photos & Text by Sam Parent

Sam admits that he felt a bit guilty at the October Tri Club meeting when there were no ships featured for the SOD portion, so he did a quick shoot of the current progress on his *Valkyrie* for the next meeting. The first shot is an interesting piece of African Beli that he acquired for the mounting base. It has a very nice grain pattern, but isn't as contrasty as zebra wood. The golden hue is natural as this piece has only had four coats of tung oil hand rubbed into it after the initial sanding. The rest of the shots show deck details as the project moved along.





Ships on Deck

Presented by the North Shore Deadeyes



26' English Longboat

Photos by Richard Romaniak





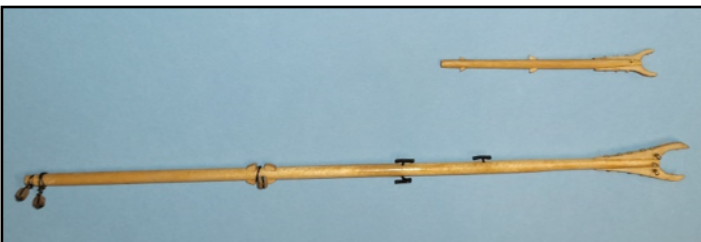
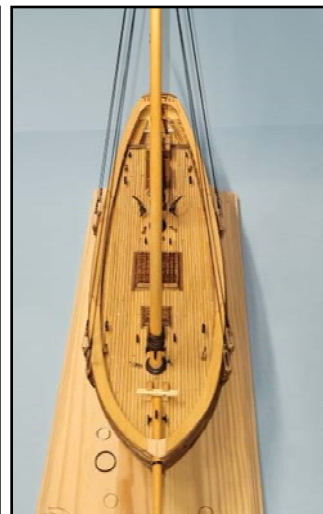
Ships on Deck

Presented by the North Shore Deadeyes



Katy of Norfolk

Photos by Dan Pacholski

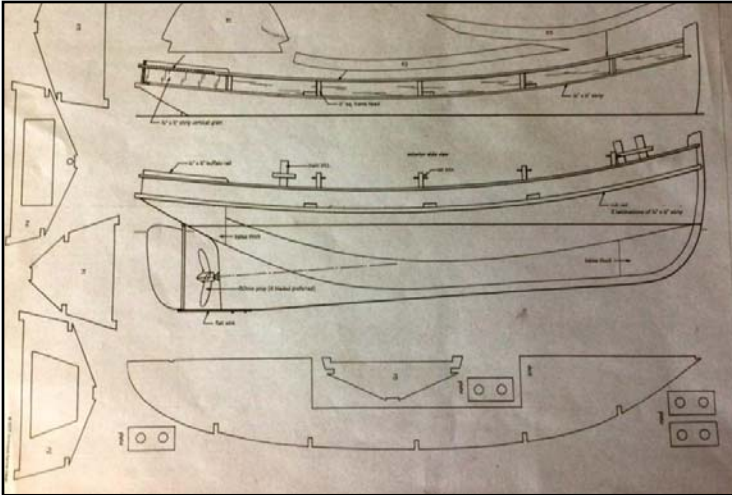




Ships on Deck



A scratch built tug from magazine plans Built by Dave Amstutz





Ships on Deck



A Phased Approach To Marine Painting In Oils

by Ian McLaughlan

This note is not a general comment on Marine Painting but a specific and focused description of a phased approach to producing an oil painting of your favourite ship or boat, in this case a Scottish fishing boat, the *Zulu*. They were 80' long and on a reach were the fastest boats for their length at the time.

One of the joys of painting in oils is that you can always amend what you have done. What is less well known is the value of being able to under-paint with a colour that will add some spark to the finished work despite the fact that in subsequent phases this underpainting may be completely covered with other layers. But of course, it never is and tiny bits will show through, besides which the underpainting has an effect on the later coats.

Slide 1



It does help if you draw (Slide 1) your subject as many times as you can, as this will give you confidence when you come to render the subject in oil paint.

Slide 2



I always start by making a rough sketch (Slide 2) of what I want to achieve either in ink or pencil and coloured

Slide 3



in with crayon. I then transfer this onto the canvas using a colour that will be complimentary to the final outcome (Slide 3). In this case the final will be mainly blues and greens, hence I chose red for my underpainting. For applying the under-painting, I use a decorator's brush and create a very rough impression of what I want.

Slide 4



The next job is to get the canvas filled in albeit roughly (Slide 4). I usually start with the sky and then match the sea to it in terms of tone and colour.

Slide 5





Ships on Deck

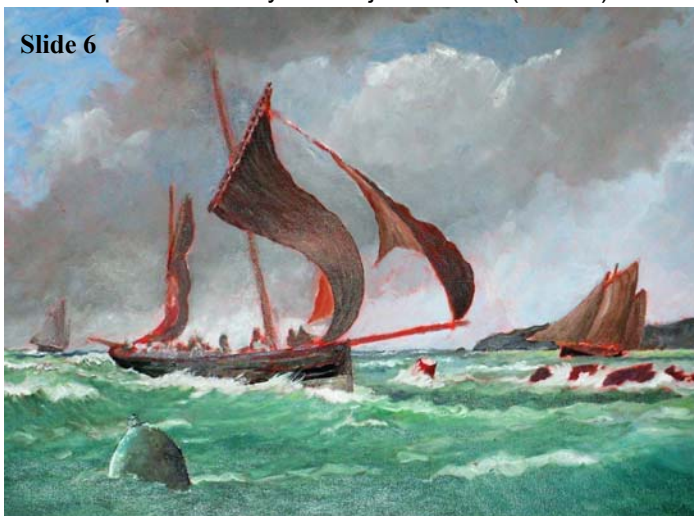


A Phased Approach To Marine Painting In Oils

by Ian McLaughlan

I also paint in loosely the major features (Slide 5).

Slide 6



The detail is then laid in with more precision (Slide 6).

Slide 7



Final tidying up and fine detail can then be achieved including any adjustments to colour (Slide 7).

In this particular case I had to adjust the colour of the sea, create the effect of waves and spray slamming into the boat from the side, detail the spars and rigging and soften and blue the fishing boat on the right to give it some distance from the main subject.

The fine detail was laid in using small brushes and a horizontal support. This support is, for the size I am working at, 40" long and has two short blocks at each end. The canvas is laid on a table and the support is placed over it.

In this way it can be adjusted to lie at the required angle over any part of the canvas. This is particularly useful when painting in the rigging. Since the support is two to three inches above the surface of the canvas the line can be given a slight catenary, if necessary, and it stops the line from looking as if it has been ruled. The only problem with working like this is that it gets to your back!



Slide 8

Of course (Slide 8) it helps if you have already made a model of the subject as you will be fully familiar with the anatomy of your subject and believe me, that helps. (Slide 9).





Subtle Trunnels

by Bob Filipowski



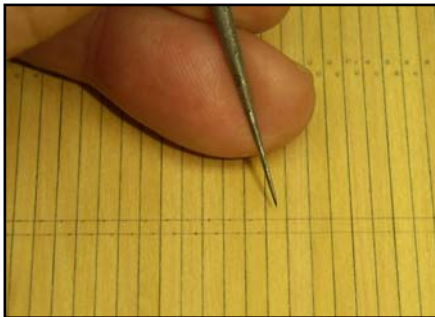
Applying trunnels, also known as treenails, to our models probably ranks right up there with ratlines as one of our least favorite tasks. Yet, to a casual observer, they impart some idea of what it took to construct a real ship, and certainly convey the modeler's dedication and attention to detail.

Bob Filipowski started his presentation by discussing the items he uses for this procedure. They included pin vices, micro bits, dental picks, a large needle or awl, a small Moto tool with variable speed capability, black chalk (not shown in the photo) and DAP Plastic Wood. This last item is a solvent based product, and the lid needs to be closed as much as possible. That's the reason for the small Testors bottle, which contains a quantity of the DAP wood filler.



According to Bob's references, trunnels could measure from 1" to 1 1/2" in diameter. Using a 1" trunnel for a 3/16" scale model as an example, he calculated that a #78 or #79 drill bitt would be the correct size. For his presentation he used a #79 bitt with a diameter of .0145".

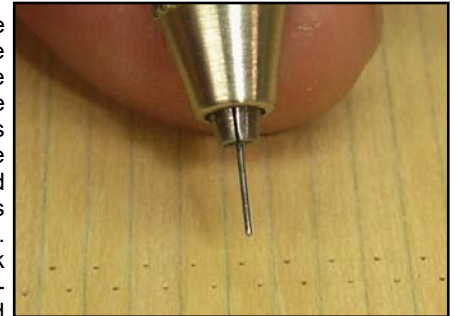
The first step involves laying out your row intervals, and deciding on the trunnel pattern you will use. In this example, a row is composed of two parallel lines, with a pair of trunnels being staggered on each plank. The locations are marked with a large, sharp needle or awl. With a little practice, you'll be able to consistently "eye-ball" the distance from the edge of each plank, while aligning the needle. Once all the locations are marked, the pencil lines are erased.



For drilling out the actual holes, Bob prefers an electric mini-drill, plugged into a variable speed control unit, and operated by a foot switch. This frees up his hands for optimum control of the drill. If you decide to use a power tool for drilling out the trunnel holes, be very careful not to stress the bit, which can be very fragile. Removal of the broken piece may be almost impossible without damaging a deck plank.

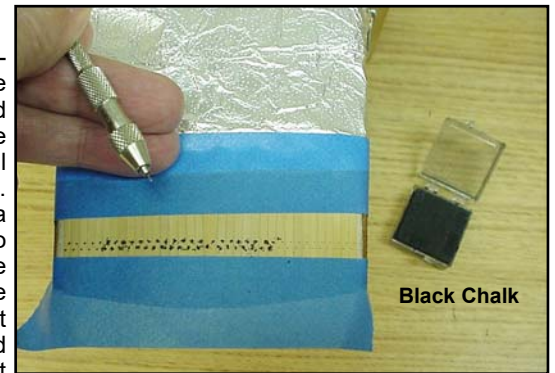


Next, ream out the trunnel holes with the shank end of the same bit used for drilling the holes. This insures that all the holes are uniform, and any wood residue near the lip is pushed out of sight. The end of the shank has been lightly chamfered with some sand paper or a sharpening stone.



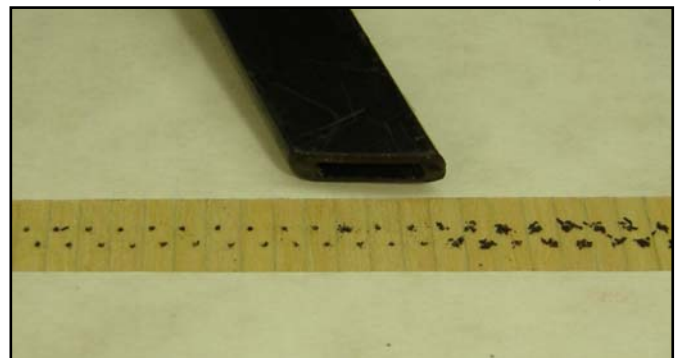
The wall of the trunnel hole is then accentuated with black chalk, which can be purchased at any art supply store. Turn the bit back around in your pin vise, and gently twirl the side of the bit against the chalk. A small amount of chalk will be picked up by the flutes. Insert the bit into a trunnel hole, and carefully rotate the bit.

This process is a little messy, and some of the chalk will fall on the deck. It would be a good idea to mask off the areas of the model not being worked on. Do not disturb the residue at this point. Repeat the process for an entire row of holes.



Originally, when developing this technique, Bob tried a very sharp #2 pencil for blackening the holes. This certainly was faster, and not as messy, but the results were inconsistent. Excess pressure would increase the diameter of the holes, and there also was the chance that the soft lead could break off, causing other problems. Nevertheless, if you are reluctant to use the chalk, you may want to consider this option.

Once a row of holes has been treated with the chalk, a mini-



vacuum attachment was used to remove the residue lying on the deck. By holding the vacuum nozzle to the side at deck

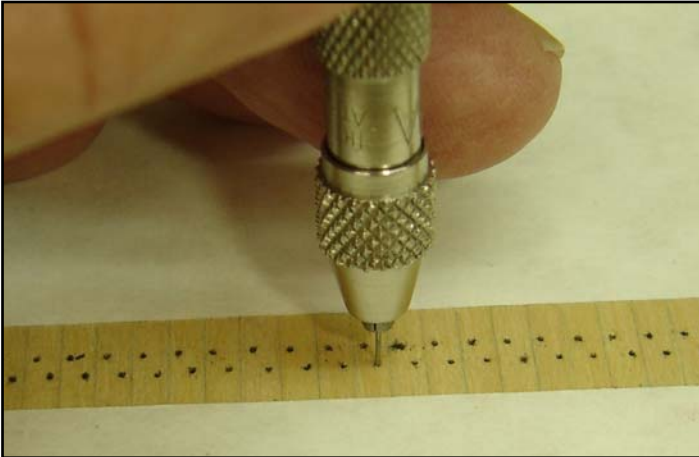


Subtle Trunnels

by Bob Filipowski

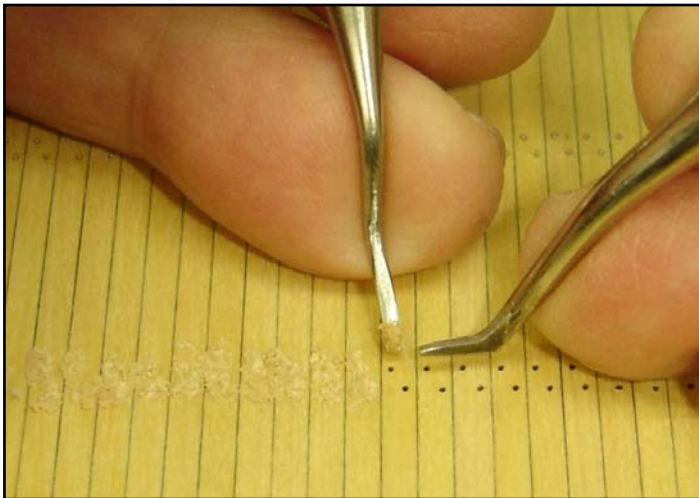


level, only the chalk on the deck is removed. Again, using the shank end of the bit, the chalk inside the holes is compressed.



Carefully inspect the holes to insure that they have been completely blackened. You can now vacuum the area one more time, but don't be too aggressive.

The next step is a spinoff of a technique that has become popular with many model ship builders. It involves packing the trunnel holes with wood filler, rather than using wood pegs. Most



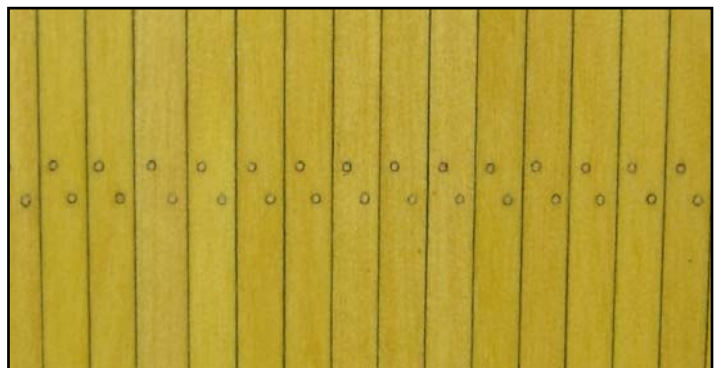
modelers prefer Golden Oak for this technique, which provides a little more contrast. However, Filipowski opted for Light Oak, which is a closer match for the boxwood decking used in this example. The Golden Oak, being darker, also has a tendency to subdue the contrast between the filler and the black chalk.

A word of caution concerning this product: DAP Plastic Wood contains flammable solvents, and should be used in a well ventilated area, and kept away from heat, sparks and flame. It can also irritate eyes, skin, nose and throat. For these reasons, transferring a small amount to a clean paint bottle can provide better control of the product. As small quantities of filler are removed from the bottle, the cap is immediately placed back on top to prevent vapors from escaping. The material remaining in



the bottle will thicken over a period of time, so a few drops of acetone mixed in periodically will keep the material workable. Two modified dental picks were the tools of choice for packing the trunnel holes with the filler.

Once dry, the excess filler is carefully removed by gentle sanding. The net result will be a barely discernible row of trunnels. If you feel that the look is a little too extreme, the trunnels can be accentuated by applying a wood finish of your choice to the deck. In this example, a coat of Floquil Swedish Wood Oil was applied.



If this procedure interests you, Bob strongly suggests that you practice off the model, using a mock-up. Make sure the technique described here, and the look you achieve, is right for you and your model. Only then, should you proceed.



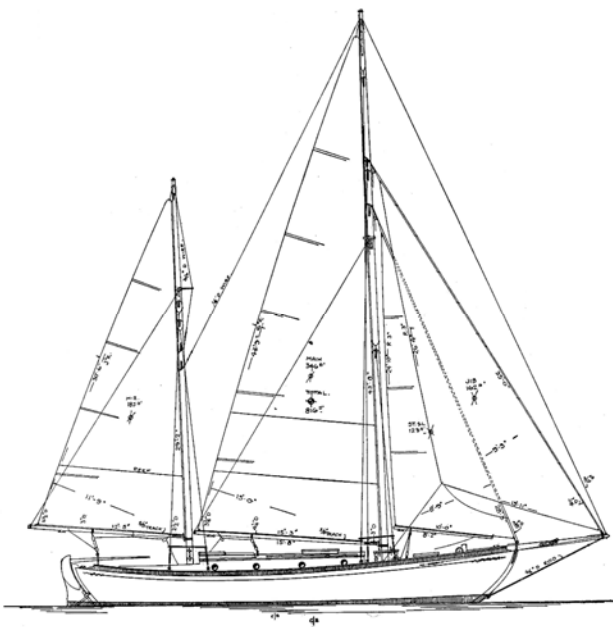
Historic Ship Profiles



INGRID

A Colin Archer Type Double-Ender Submitted by John Pocius

The *Ingrid*, later called the *Ingrid 38*, from the pen of William Atkin is a heavy displacement blue water ketch derived from Colin Archer's famous double ender designs, which in turn were inspired by Viking boats renowned for their heavy weather characteristics. Perhaps Atkin sums it up by saying it's "the kind of boat that behaves herself in rough water, and can be depended upon to sail herself". It is not uncommon to hear frequent mentions of the superb one-finger-on-tiller tracking and comfortable ride.



Around 1934 American naval architect William Atkin was bombarded with demands for a larger ketch-rigged version of the *Thistle 31*, a double-ender which he had recently released plans for. Atkin took the lines of Archer's design and drew the plans for the *Ingrid 38*.



The first *Ingrid 38*'s were privately built from wood, steel and cement from the plans, but it wasn't until 1971 that production began in fiberglass by Blue Water Boats Inc (ironically located in a town called Woodinville in WA). The plug and mold for the first *Ingrid* was built by two Seattle sailors James Musser and Donald J. Pitblado working together, as the story goes, in a commercial chicken coop. James Musser's original plan was to build *Ingrid* hull #1 and embark on a Pacific Ocean cruise but others were so impressed by his *Ingrid Sandaldust* that they requested similar hulls from the mold. From this demand Blue Water Boats Inc. was born. His co-worker Donald J. Pitblado went on to become the owner of *Ingrid* hull #2 the *Donna Marie*.



In 1973 the company took on Jerry Husted, an experienced Puget Sound sailor, as an equal partner which allowed Musser and his wife to sail off in *Sandaldust* to live their Pacific dream. By 1974 Husted bought the balance of the shares and production of the *Ingrid* continued until about 1985 when the molds and patterns were sold off and were stored for a long time in Graham, WA. Around 1997-98 the molds were purchased by Bill Ingerson and he shifted them back to Woodinville in 2000. Ingerson tried to get a few commitments for hulls but never got much interest at today's production costs.



The *Ingrid 38* was produced at the rate of one a month for 10-12 years and there are thought to be around 143 of these boats in existence as well as those constructed from other materials. Many boats were bought as hull and deck kit sets from Blue Water Boats and finished by their owners to a variety of standards and configurations including cutter rigs.



The 39th Annual Butch O'Hare Chapter Open Model Contest



Review by Kurt Van Dahm, Photos by Gus Agustin

Several members from the Tri-Club entered the contest and all won medals and one won the Best Nautical Award.

Toni Levine entered her magnificent 1/48 scale model of *Atalanta* and her NRG Planking kit half hull prototype in 1/48 scale that was used to illustrate the Monograph that accompanies the kit. Each earned a gold medal with the *Atalanta* winning the Best Nautical Model award. Gus Agustin entered two models. The HMS *Royal William* in 1:192 scale and the HMS *St. George* in 1:384 scale. Both were awarded gold medals.



composite model using the kit hull and scratch building the rest with woods. The rigging job with furled sails is magnificent. The model was awarded a gold medal and best US Navy model.

Bob Sykes entered two models. His model of the 1707 *Halgabob* in 11/64 scale won a bronze medal.

One of the Manitowoc regulars Eric Mante of Waukesha,

WI entered two 1/350 scale Battleship models in the "What If?" class. Both ships were modeled as updated versions of what the ships might have looked like if they had undergone conversions to futuristic weapons systems. We failed to catch if either of his models won awards but they certainly should have received something.



Kurt Van Dahm entered his framed *City of Peking* model in 1/12 scale. The starboard side was based on the way the Historic American Merchant Marine Survey plans portray it. The port side of the model was constructed per the plans from the 1996 archaeological survey of the boat's remains. This model received a gold medal.

Kurt also entered the 1/12 scale model of *Hunter* and its 12' Punt. Steve Wheeler made both models and Kurt was gifted the models after Steve passed. Both received gold medals in Steve's name as the builder.

Richard Romaniak entered his USS *Constitution* a



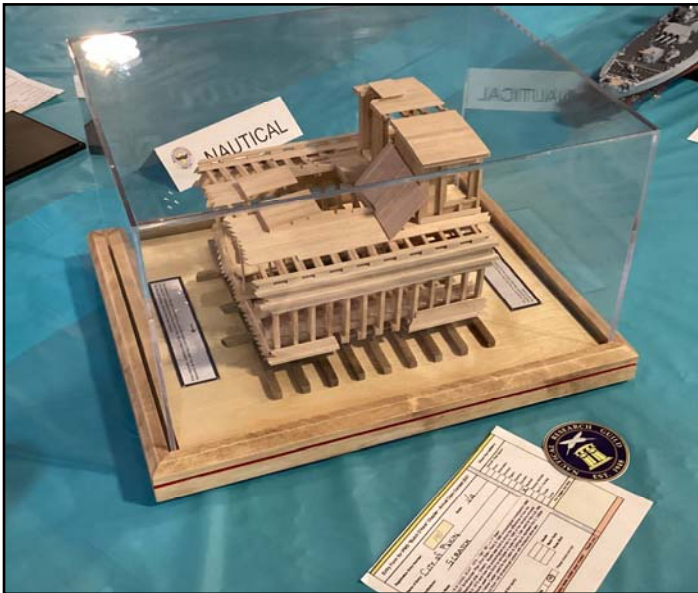
Toni's model of *Atalanta* and Kurt's three models as well as Gus' 1:1912 scale model of HMS *Royal William* were photographed by Aaron Skinner and Tim Kidwell of Fine Scale Modeler Magazine for a future issue of FSM's coverage of the contest.



The 39th Annual Butch O'Hare Chapter Open Model Contest



Kurt provided NRG logos for each of the models that belong to NRG members. They were placed by the models as the NRG is the largest IPMS Chapter with 1700+ members. We also had NRG publicity handouts to pass out to interested attendees.



We will wait to see if we gain any new members from this. Mary Van Dahm always tells new NRG members from our area about the three clubs, and we have gained club members as a result.

Let's get more club members to attend next year's contest.



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MMS President - Bob Filipowski—logline2@gmail.com

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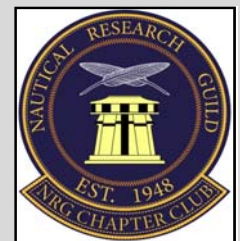
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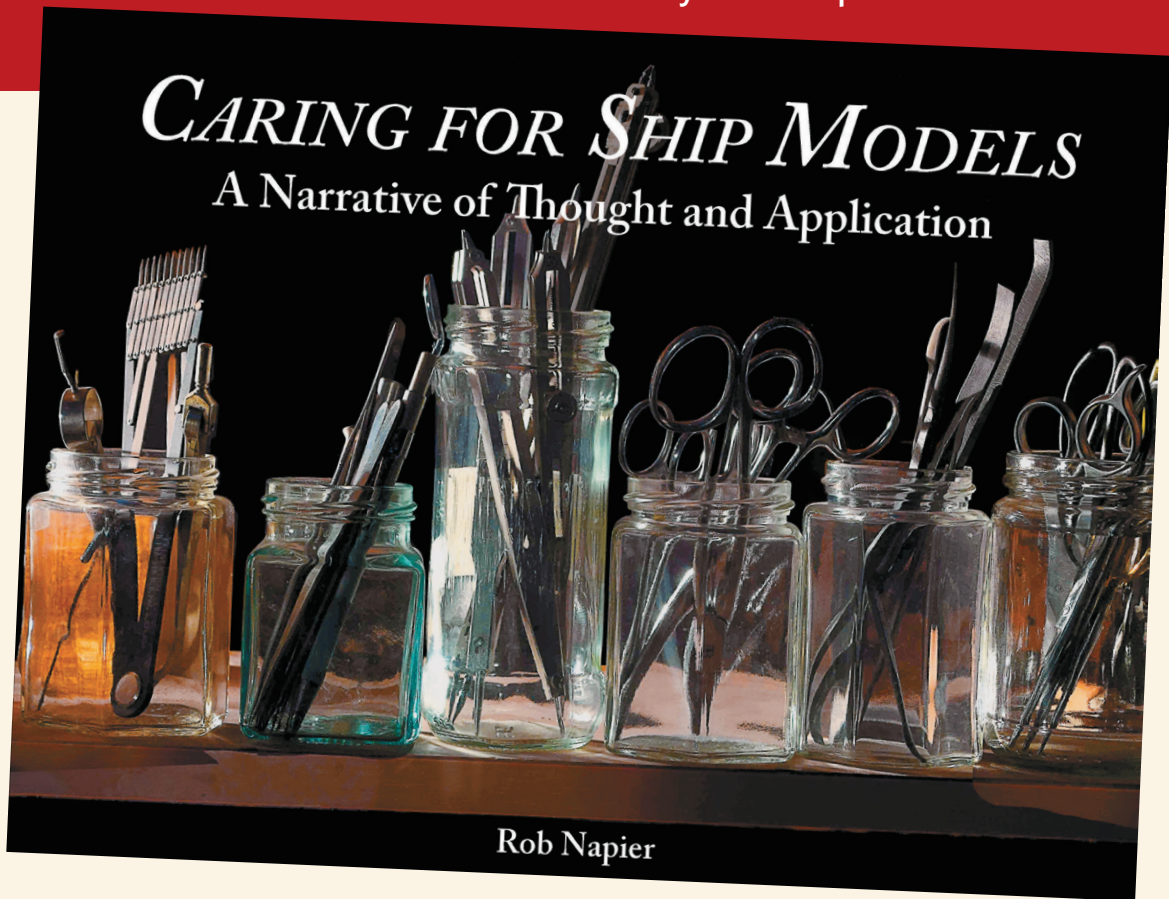
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www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com



CARING FOR SHIP MODELS: A Narrative of Thought and Application

Text and illustrations by Rob Napier



Rob Napier is back with an excellent book on his life's work that is both a revealing look into his professional career and also a treatise on how to care for your models to last for generations. *Caring for Ship Models* is delivered in four parts: Part One, a prologue, introduces Rob and his involvement with ship modeling. Part Two offers perspectives on various aspects and philosophies of the ship modeling experience. Part Three focuses on physical processes Rob has used during his career. Part Four reviews what might be called case studies that examine influential and interesting projects.

This book is one you will absolutely want in your collection and will be a valuable reference for years to come.

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FEATURES

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