



San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive

San Diego, CA 92101

September 1997 NEWSLETTER Volume 21; Number 9

Sterns

September						
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NEXT MEETING
7:00 PM aboard
Berkeley

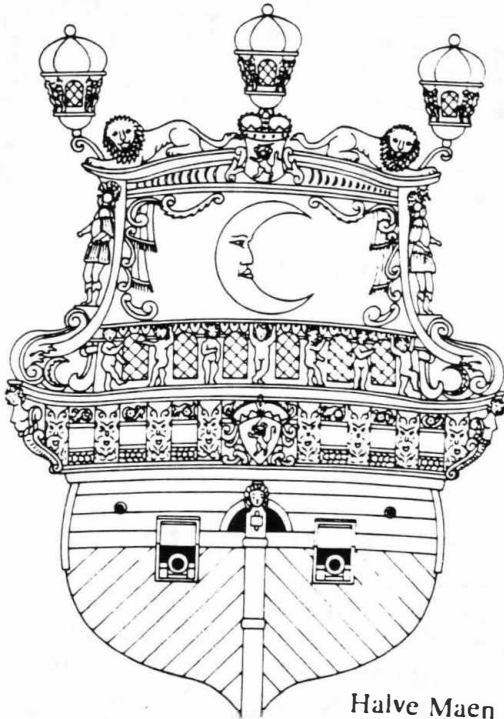
BRING A MODEL

MINI-AUCTION OF
MORE GOODIES TO
BE HELD.....

WELCOME ABOARD - NEW MEMBERS:

Leo Castanado
/redacted/

Dennis Reed
/redacted/

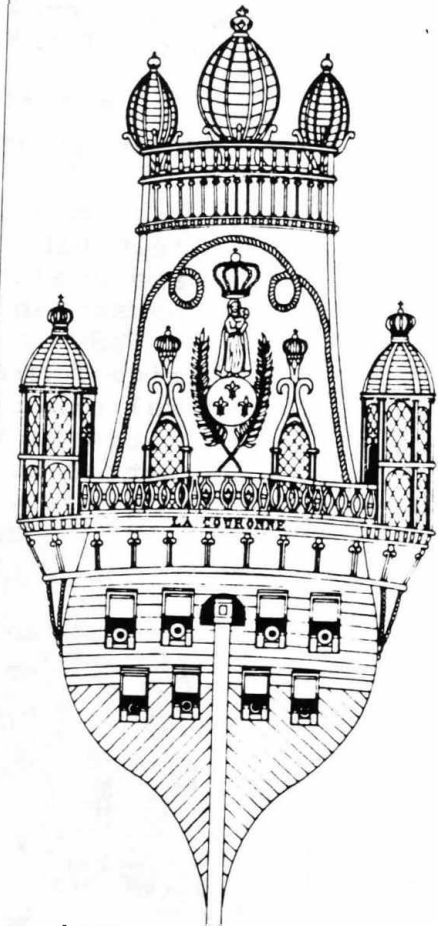


Halve Maen
Dutch two-decker
1666

"I don't like to
commit myself
about heaven and
hell - you see, I
have friends in
both places."
-Mark Twain



Rattlesnake American brig sloop 1780



La Couronne
French two-decker 1636

JUST OVER THE HORIZON:

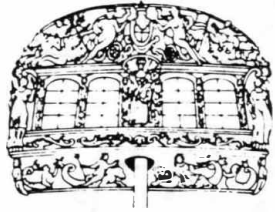
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|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 17 Sept - Wed. | Regular SDSMG Meeting |
| 20 " - Sat. | Museum Work/Fun Party |
| 24 " - Wed. | Quarterly Members Meeting |
| | Maritime Museum Assc. |
| 15 Oct. - Wed. | Regular SDSMG Meeting |
| 18 " - Sat. | Maritime Modelers Regatta |
| | Greer Park -Huntington Bch. |
| 8&9 Nov. Sa/Su | First Annual Veteran's Day |
| | Scale Meet Litchfield Pk, |
| | Arizona |

"Do what you can,
with what you
have, where you
are."
-Theodore
Roosevelt

Sterns



Angelo
Neapolitan 1695



Royal Caroline English yacht 1749



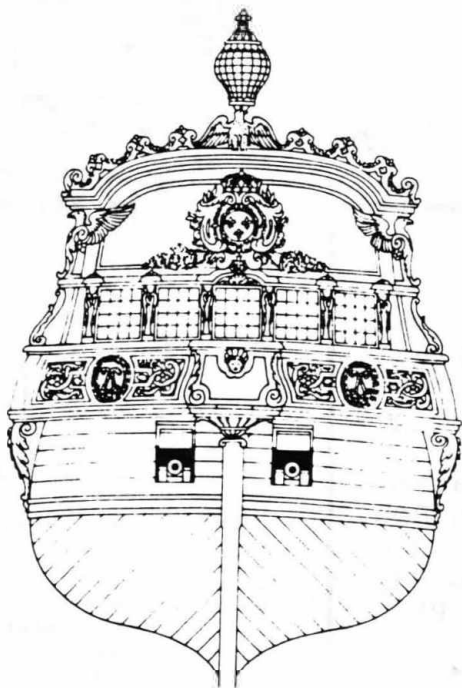
Royal George English three-decker 1715

BIG THANKS TO ROBERT HEWITT:

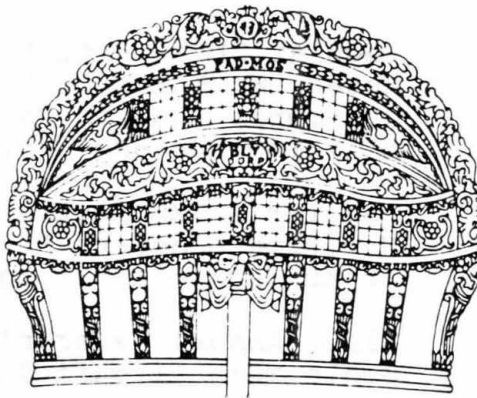
Your editor rec'd a large envelope filled with all kinds of newspaper clipping about period ships. This newsletter features an interesting article he sent on the USNA models from an unknown magazine. See pp 4-8. Thanks again, Robert.

ANOTHER MUSEUM WORK/FUN PARTY:

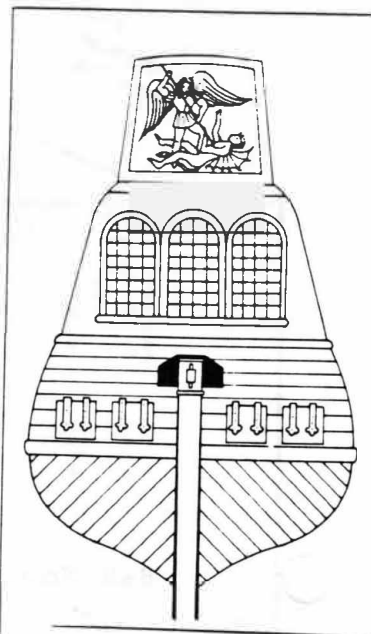
Bob Crawford is looking for a few good men again, to help him on Saturday, September 20. Among several projects are opening model display cases to insert an appropriate scale person and/or SDSMG logo card indication that model was built a SDSGM member. He also needs help in rigging his single square rigger mast which is built from the main deck up as well as several other smaller but necessary projects. If you can spare a few hours on that date, come on down and join the fun. You'll feel better for having helped out in a worthwhile cause.



L'Aigle French two-decker 1690



Padmos Dutch East Indiaman 1722



San Michele
Genoan
galleon 1600

ED. NOTE: This month's graphics are, again, from "HISTORIC SHIP MODELS" by Wolfram zu Mondfeld. A copy exists in our model shop library.

AUGUST MEETING NOTES:

Twenty members and two guests attended the meeting held on August 20 on board the San Francisco ferry "Berkeley." Model shop volunteers helped cart aboard the recently-acquired "goodies" before 7:00PM, and members gathered around the items, curious as to what they might be able to make off with, legitimately, of course. And that's only the half of it. It then must be slipped quietly and unnoticed into one's house to preserve the tranquility which always reigns there.

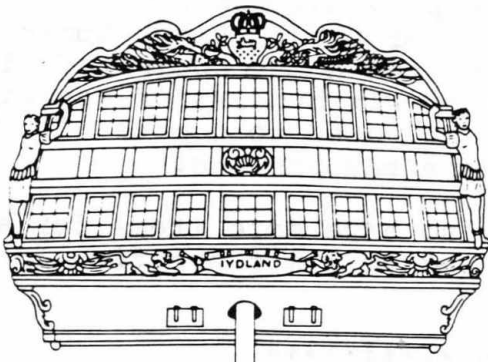
Tom Taylor called the meeting to order at 07:15, asking for any new business. This brought up introductions of new members and guests who were: Dennis Reed of Denver, Leo Castañado and his guest Espeso Icela Gonzalez of San Diego.

Bob Crawford announced that 100 year old records on the Berkeley have come to light, informing the reader of interesting events aboard the first Pacific Coast screw ferry, including four deaths aboard. One of them occurred when a loaded lorry went off the side of the loading ramplading aboard.

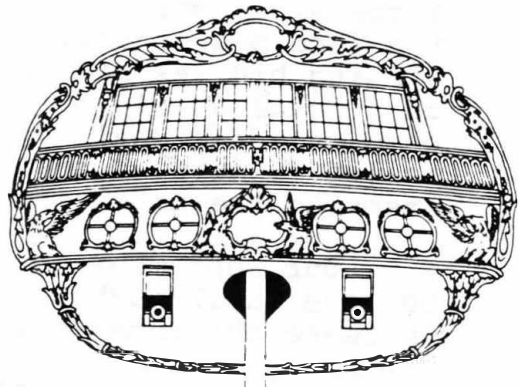
Bob also announced beginning construction of a typical square-riggers mast, so that vistors may sort out in their own minds, the lead of the running rigging used to control the sails. This is in miniature, of course, and will need help in the model shop from volunteers of our club. -- Bob noted that spare letter decals, including plimsoll (load line) markings were available in the shop. Come in and ask, should you need any of these decals.

Tom Taylor asked Newsletter Co-editor Gordon Jones, who is bowing out of the job after five years, what his ideas are about our monthly letter which seems very popular. In fact, Jones pointed out that it now is larger than Kaiser Permanente Health newsletter. Is that bad? But how grand do we want to make it? We started with a mere postcard announcing each meeting 20 years ago. Perhaps "new blood", computer intelligent (which Jones says he is not) can keep it running much more easily.

Let us know your thoughts - not forgetting that there are about half our membership who live out-of-town and/or cannot make meetings due perhaps to health or business reasons. They seem to like it; their dues show up every year.



Idylland Danish two-decker 1739



Jupiter Swedish privateer frigate 1760

AUGUST "SHOW & TELL":

Ex-Radioman Bob O'Brien of the USS WHITESIDE (AKA-90) displayed his 1/8th scale model of that ship. It was a C-2 WWII vessel built at Moore Drydock in Oakland in 1944. This ship was active at Iwo Jima, Okinawa and other sites until finally mothballed in 1958. She was withdrawn from the mothball fleet in 1971 and used as a target off the coast of Washington where she now is part of an artificial reef.

Bob used a Lee Upshaw hull and scratch-built the rest using styrene, balsa, and brass. He purchased fittings from BlueJacket and Dromedary and stated his biggest problems involved lack of detailed plans as he had to rely heavily upon photos. After 3½ years of work he has it done in time to take it to the ship's forthcoming reunion in San Antonio this month. Well done, Bob; we're sure it will be quite a hit at your reunion.

Royce Privett brought his in-progress solid-hull model of of the Continental navy ship "Essex." This is from a Model Shipways kit started by someone else before Royce acquired it in 1981. The kit did feature Britannia (alloyed-pewter) fittings, which in earlier kits often used lead which oxidized over time.

Co-editor Fred Fraas exhibited his BlueJacket kit model of the 2 stack coal-burning tug "Lackawanna" of 1900-1912. Her job was to haul barges of anthracite coal up the East Coast and she was painted white to impress viewers how clean the coal burned. It certainly must have kept the crew busy keeping the company's ad men "honest." This tug was 137 feet long with two boilers and a single screw driven by the 950 HP engine.

Fred also pointed-out the four ventilators were solid brass and no doubt the real-ones were an irritation to the crew to keep them bright. A case made by Mark Hanna of Hanna Manufacturing covered this model and the two engraved plaques were done by Villiage Engraving of La Mesa. As indicated earlier, this kit was donated to our club by Chris Mathews of Coronado; acquired by Fred at one of our auctions and the completed model will be given to his mother for her 92nd birthday this month in Idaho.

At this point, Tom Taylor called for a coffee break, after which auctioneer Ed White began the sale of misc. items recently donated and sold to the club. These featured a Unimat 3 model lathe/saw combination, with fixtures including a 3 jaw chuck, extra face plates etc. and items the previous owner had made. The winning bid was made by Tom Taylor for \$150. Eight books brought in a total of \$40.50 and other assorted hobby tools and items fetched an additional \$61.00. Five or six bundles of assorted woods failed to raise a serious bid, so we voted to donate all of these items to the model shop for everyone/anyones use.

Our September meeting will also have more items for auction, but the total number will be reduced to limit the time taken and increase the interest.

By Edwards Park

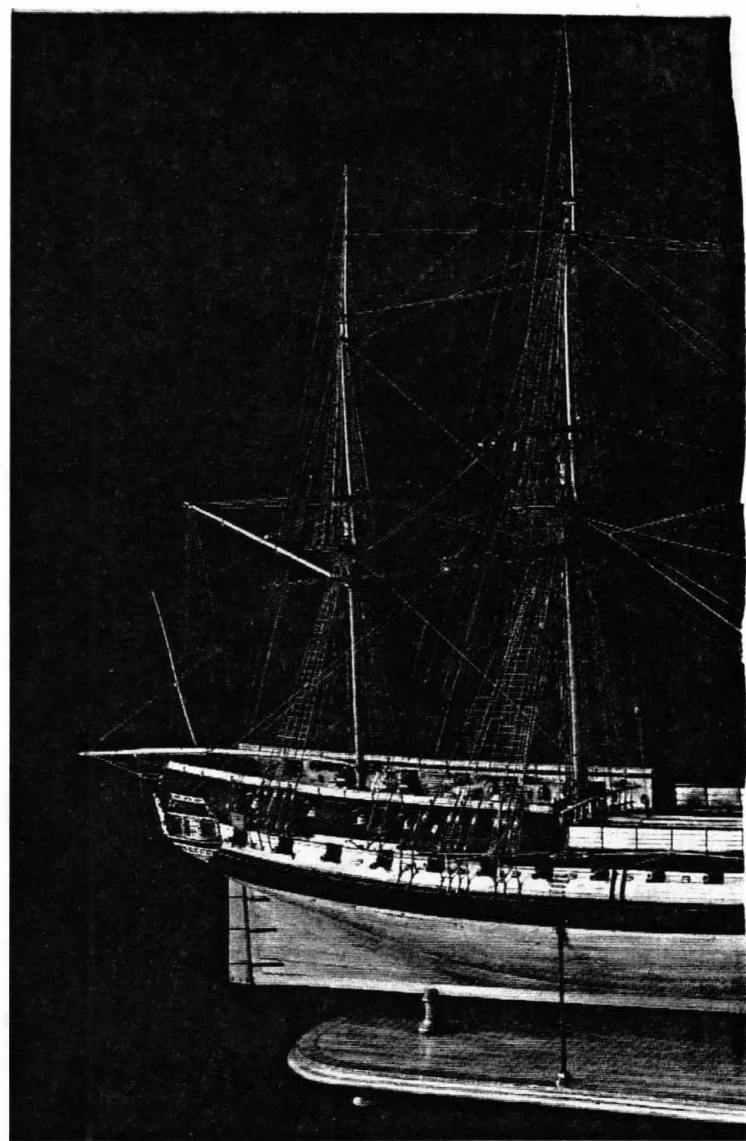
A Naval Academy gathering of mini men-of-war

A fine fleet—of meticulously detailed and crafted ship models from the age of sail—has found a permanent berth at Annapolis

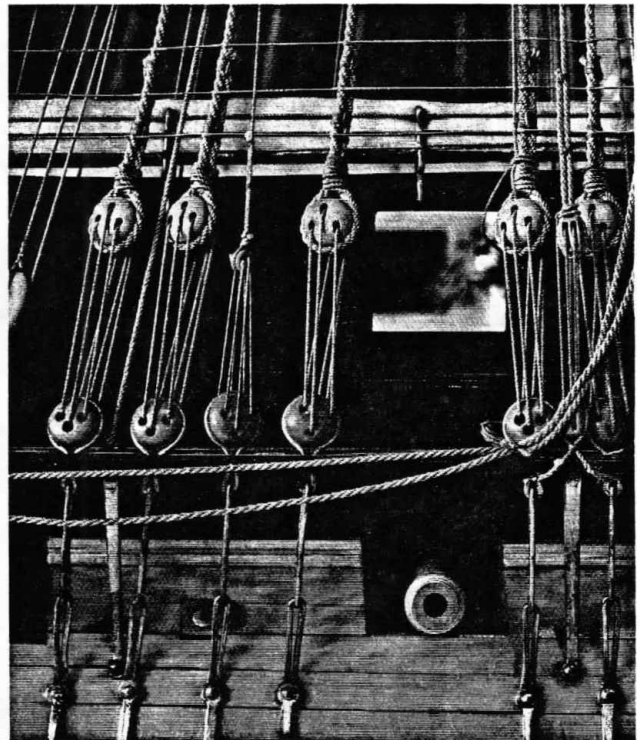
A splendid fleet of square-rigged ships is now moored at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The vessels lie at anchorage in a basement gallery in Preble Hall, the Academy museum. These warships are only about a yard long. They constitute one of the finest ship model collections in the world.

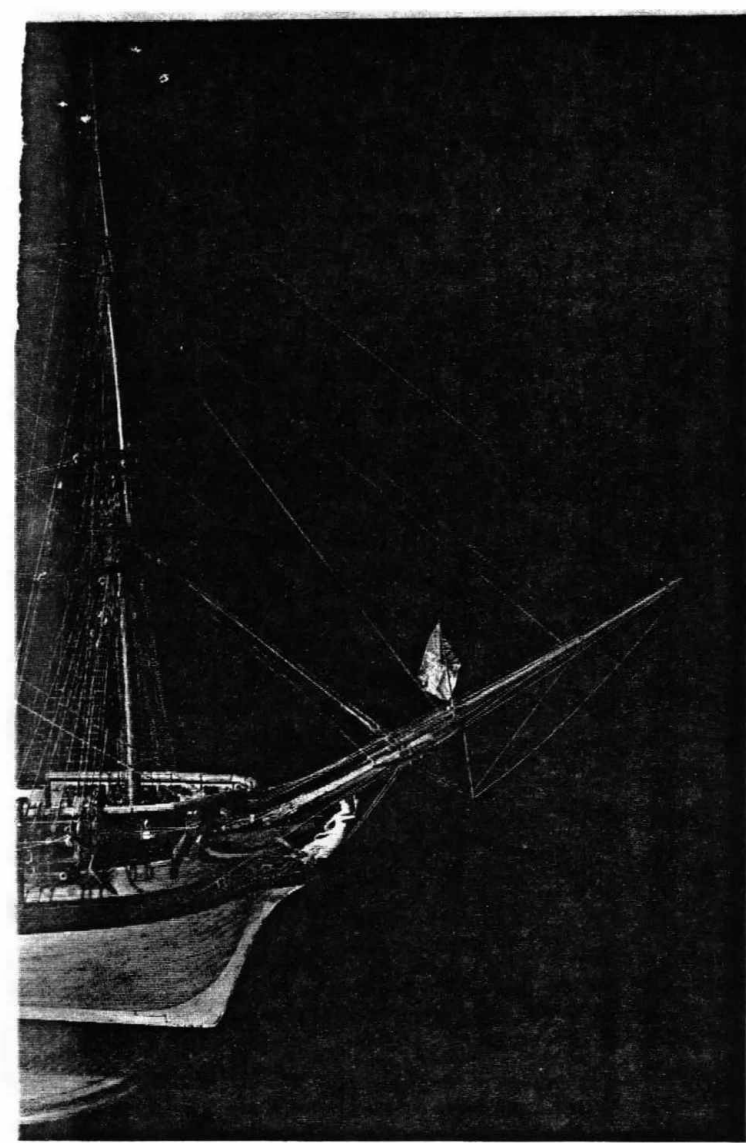
The little vessels, covering nearly two centuries, from the mid-1600s to the 1830s, are mostly “dockyard models,” built along with their originals in the dockyards of England, and scaled at one-quarter inch to a foot. They were painstakingly crafted to record for the benefit of the British Admiralty new quirks of design and construction, inventions and modifications that might affect seaworthiness or ship handling. Most were collected and given to the Academy in 1935 by an industrialist, Col. Henry H. Rogers. Now, with a gift from the Class of 1951, they have been gathered together from various Academy buildings, refurbished and put on permanent exhibit.

In their lighted cases—many of them antique—the ships flaunt elegantly decorated sterns and point their long bowsprits like admonitory fingers above ornate symbolic figureheads. Though the joy of miniatures lies in extraordinary details and precise workmanship, anyone who has been drawn into naval history will be stopped near the entrance to the gallery by a model of the 38-gun British frigate *Shannon*. She’s mounted on the same polished wooden base that held her when she was given to Philip Broke, captain of the real *Shannon* in the War of 1812. Grant Walker, an Army major who has taught naval history at the Academy, says that some mod-



British frigate *HMS Shannon*, 38 guns, destroyed the *USS Chesapeake* in a ship duel off Boston in 1813.





Amidships. model has sailors' hammocks lashed to gunwales as protection from flying splinters.



els were built as presentations to the actual ship's captain. This is one.

Early in the war, Britain lost three frigates in a row to the USS *Constitution* and her sister ships of the fledgling American Navy. But then the British blockade began to tighten, and the *Shannon* showed up off Boston Harbor and challenged the American frigate *Chesapeake* to come out and fight. The American captain, James Lawrence, never received the challenge, but he was headed out anyway, eager for a showdown despite his raw crew.

His British adversary had the well-deserved reputation of being a nut about accurate gunnery. The *Shannon* shattered the *Chesapeake*, mortally wounding her captain. As Lawrence was carried below, he gasped, "Tell the men to fire faster and not to give up the ship"—words that were shortened to "Don't give up the ship" and sewn into a blue battle flag later flown by Lawrence's friend Oliver Hazard Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie. It now hangs in Memorial Hall at the Naval Academy.

The *Shannon's* model shows her guns poking from their ports on the gun deck, her stubby carronades on the quarterdeck, ready for action. Amidships is a white line of bundled canvas along the gunwales. These are the crew's tight-packed hammocks, stowed in netting to form some protection during battle.

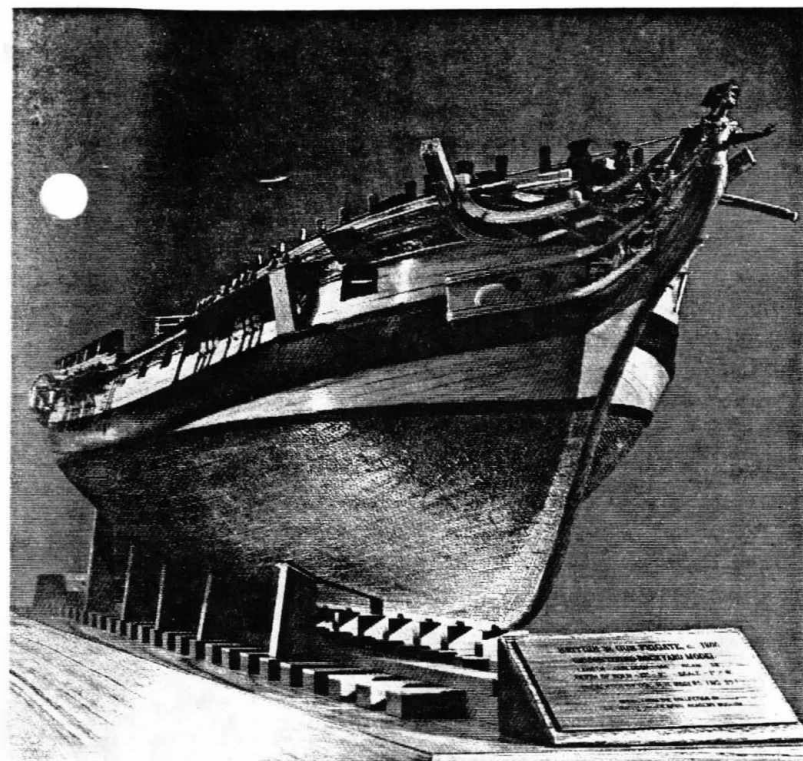
That kind of detail suddenly endows the model with life. Imagination takes over, manning that breastwork of hammocks with red-coated marines firing at the American quarterdeck. The bundled canvas shelters them from savage splinters shrieking through the air as 24- and 32-pound shot smashes into solid oak.

You can almost hear the sounds and smell the lighted matches in the linstocks held ready to set off the next crashing broadside. And you need no miniature human figures to sense the shocked silence as the American colors are struck, the thunder ceases and the British crew—barefoot men in bloodstained striped jerseys—unlash great timbers from the spar deck to repair the *Shannon's* heavy damage.

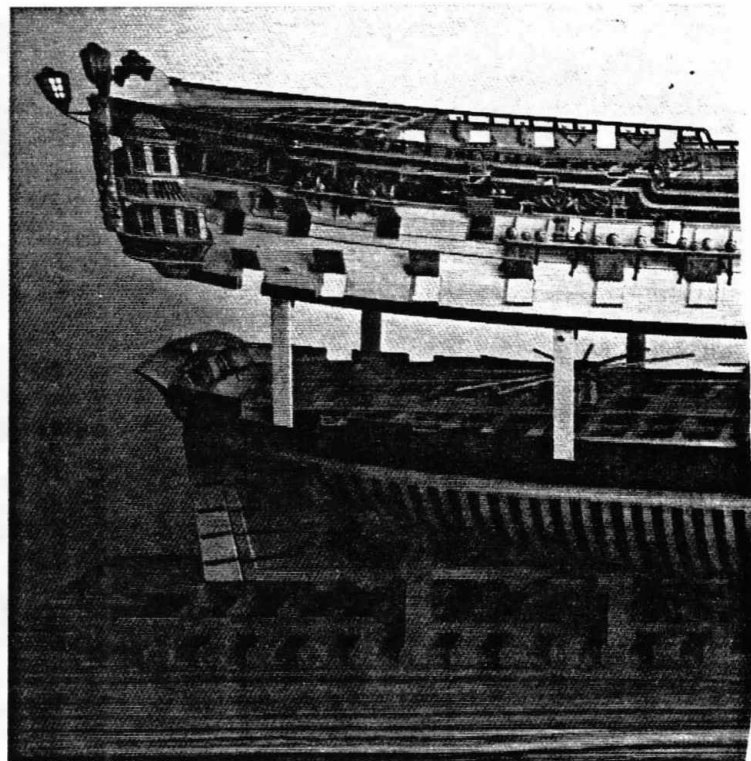
For Americans, the most famous ship represented here is John Paul Jones' *Bonhomme Richard*. Her model was done by a modern craftsman, Robert W. Cook of Nova Scotia. Since the original ship was a French merchant vessel, the *Duc de Duras* of 1765, later converted for war by Jones, Cook presents both phases of her existence in a single model. The port side is a cargo ship, the starboard, Jones' *Bonhomme Richard*, refitted and beefed up in 1779 with 20 guns to a side, ready to fight the heav-

Cannon (opposite) pokes muzzle through *Shannon's* gunport. Above it, blocks, called deadeyes, provide mechanical advantage in tightening the shrouds that support masts. Female figure (left) is on ship's stern.

Photographs by Henry Groskinsky



Model (c. 1800) shows off a copper bottom meant to frustrate attacks by wood-eating marine worms.



A 70-gun ship-of-the-line, this is a rare example of a pull-apart model that lets people see into interior.

ier-gunned HMS *Serapis*, off Flamborough Head in the North Sea, in what was to become one of the most famous battles in American naval history.

Soon after the first exchange of broadsides came the legendary moment when Jones, seeking always to sail “in harm’s way,” supposedly answered the British captain Richard Pearson’s shouted demand to surrender by shouting back, “I have not yet begun to fight!”

While British crowds watched the battle from the cliffs and headlands nearby, Jones fought his creaky old vessel to her death, but not before the *Serapis* had struck her colors, and Jones had got his crew aboard the captured British vessel. When Pearson was knighted by King George III after the battle, Jones quipped, “Let him fight me again and I’ll make him an earl.”

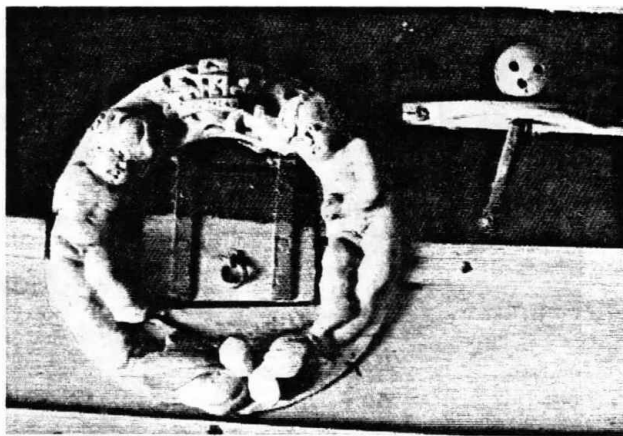
The exhibition was put together under the direction of naval historian Kenneth Hagan, Naval Academy museum director. The earliest ship model in it dates from about 1650, just after England’s terrible civil war. Charles I had lately been beheaded, and Oliver Cromwell’s austere Commonwealth established. Curator Robert Sumrall, a big, soft-spoken naval architect and former battleship chief petty officer, points out small differences between this sparsely decorated ship and the next model, built in 1679, whose carved details are more floral, more joyous—a sure sign to experts that it was built during the Restoration of Charles II, when fun was no longer frowned upon in England.

“This model is the *Grafton*,” says Sumrall. “And we think Samuel Pepys may have owned it.” The irrepresible

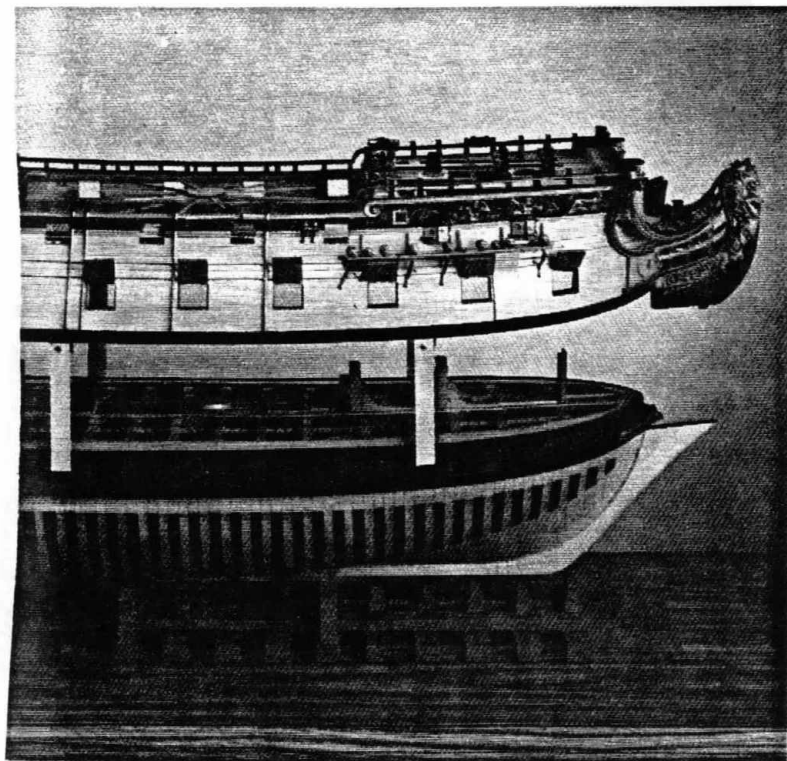
diarist, Secretary to the Admiralty in the 1670s and ’80s, mentions just such a model in *The Tangier Papers* of 1684.

Most dockyard models lacked rigging because they were built for sailors. “Any sailor back then,” says Sumrall, “knew how every kind of rigging looked as well as we know how tires look on cars.” The earlier miniatures also generally showed only bare ribs below their water lines. For it was the gun decks and quarterdeck, the forecabin, the shape of the bow, the great stern cabin with galleries and embellishments, that mattered to authorities.

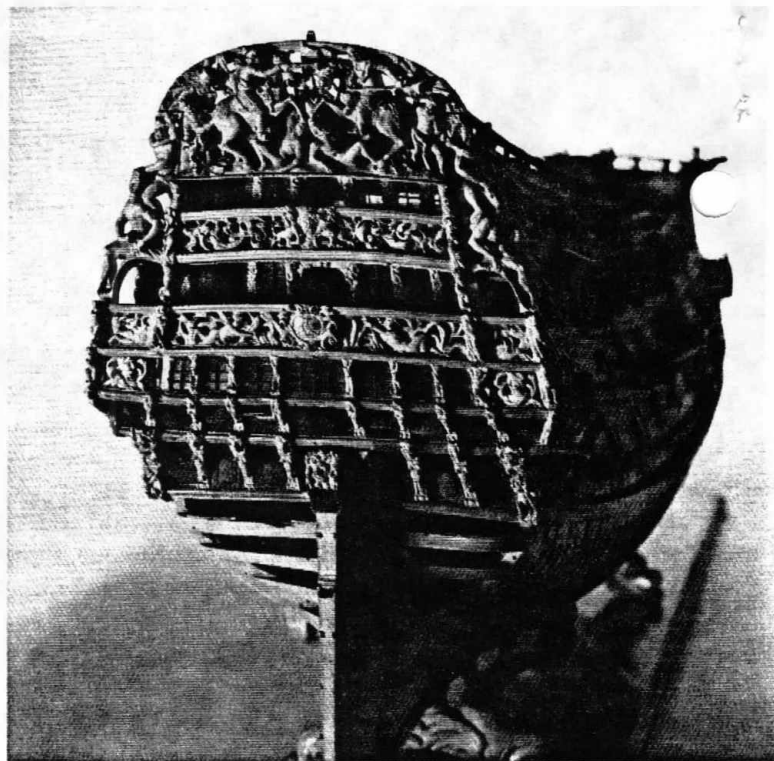
Dockyard models were not usually signed, but clues



During 17th century, decoration on warships often included individually carved wreaths around gunports.



It shows structural details of main and lower decks, with the capstans used to haul up anchors and sails.



Ornate taffrail of 100-gun ship *Britannia* was topped by a carving of two warriors on horseback.

and hints help identify a few builders by name. A 1634 autobiography by the famed shipwright Phineas Pett describes a “model for the great new 110-gun ship.” Researchers learned that this model was carved by Peter Pett under the watchful eye of his father, Phineas. Pepys’ entry for December 30, 1663, written 29 years later, refers to a gift model (“indeed it is a pretty one”) wrought by “Mr Chr’ Pett,” which sounds as though Christopher Pett was a third-generation model carver.

In 1992 a Naval Academy volunteer found a note folded on the keelson (the top of the keel) inside the model

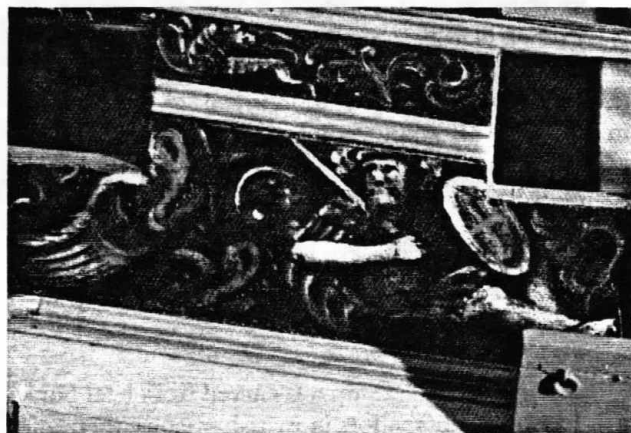
of a 36-gun frigate thought to be HMS *Perseverance*. It read, “Sheerness. 25 October 1820, the frigate *Inconstant*, 36 guns, made by Geo. Stockwell, son of Geo. Stockwell, Moddler. Son Mark 14 months.” The model was rechristened the *Inconstant*.

Model makers used special tools and sometimes worked with magnifying glasses to achieve minute accuracy of detail. They used fruit tree woods or boxwood, which is hard but peels away cleanly under a carver’s knife. They often used ivory for tiny fittings: blocks, bits, belaying pins, as small as one-eighth of an inch. When they rigged a model it was generally with silk.

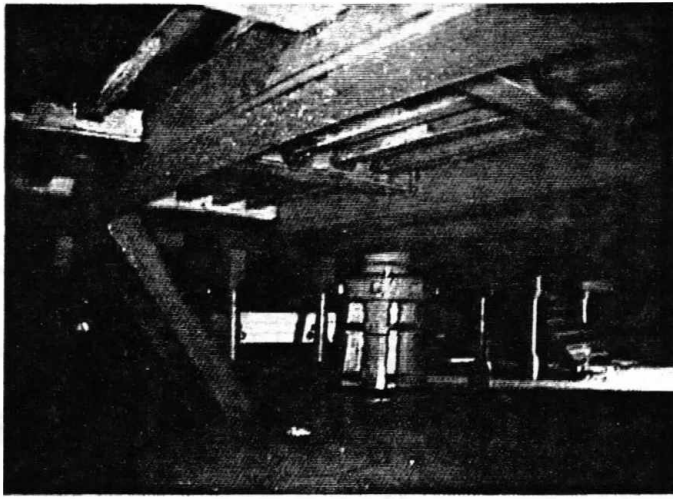
One modeler’s oddity is a fire ship displayed in an early 18th-century case. Its gunports are not hinged at the top but at the bottom, so they drop down, helping create a draft to keep the flames roaring as, crammed with a mixture of gunpowder, saltpeter, resin, sulfur and linseed oil, it drifted onto an enemy fleet or battle line. Fire ship crews towed a couple of small boats astern so they could escape.

Dockyard models were built from the keel up, deck upon deck, and some cutaways allow a glimpse belowdecks. But the insides of a fully planked and decked model like the *Princess Royal*, a 90-gun warship built in 1773, were permanently sealed off from view. At least until the Academy arranged for orthopedist Stephen Faust to see them. Dr. Faust’s instruments—usually used to look inside a football player’s knee—light up hidden areas and transmit views electronically to a monitor.

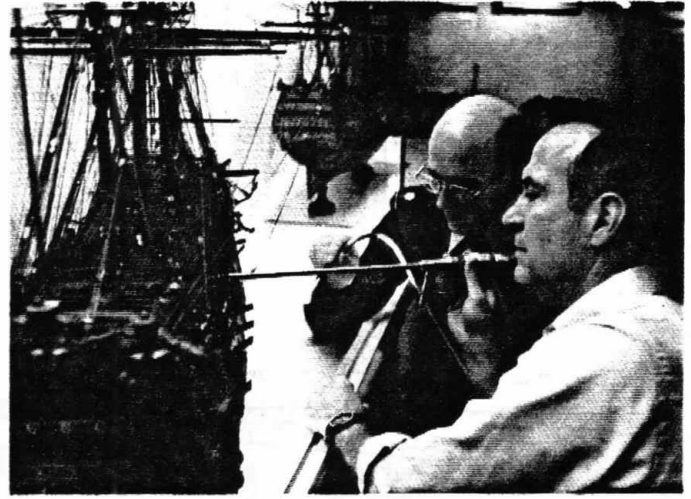
At the touch of a button, the operator produces a pho-



Upbeat design on bulwark of pull-apart model has fanciful dolphins, knight with St. George shield, sword.



Interior of *Princess Royal*, as seen by laparoscope, shows details not seen since the model was made in 1773.



Maj. Grant Walker and Dr. Stephen Faust join forces to produce digital optic view of model ship's insides.

tograph, and the resulting belowdecks images from models often look a bit like the underwater views of the insides of sunken wrecks. They are surprising. Though never meant to be seen by the human eye after the model's completion, the *Princess Royal's* insides are carefully wrought. Her gun deck, as on all men-of-war, is painted bright red to lessen the shock of seeing blood during battle. Tiny ringbolts appear inboard of the gunports, where heavy breaching lines reined in the kick of the cannon. The handles of a pump (1/2 inch by 1 inch) appear ready for cranking the bilge dry.

Only modern fiber-optic or, more often nowadays, liquid-light instruments can reveal these details. If medieval cathedrals had carvings on the unexposed sides of statues, for the eyes of God alone, the same could almost be said of these beautifully crafted vessels.

Craftsmanship becomes even more awesome in an adjoining, unlighted section of the gallery, where a dozen models gleam ghostly white in their darkened cases. They were fashioned from bones by French prisoners of war. The carvers were Napoleon's sailors, taken by Britain's navy and stuck for years in rat-infested hulks or ashore in prisons like the notorious Dartmoor.

Unlike the British, the French did not rely on press gangs to provide crews for fighting ships. Instead they used conscription, sometimes picking up tradesmen and craftsmen from inland cities and villages along with veteran seamen from the coast. "When a craftsman was captured by the British and imprisoned," says Sumrall, "he fell back on what he knew to keep from going mad."

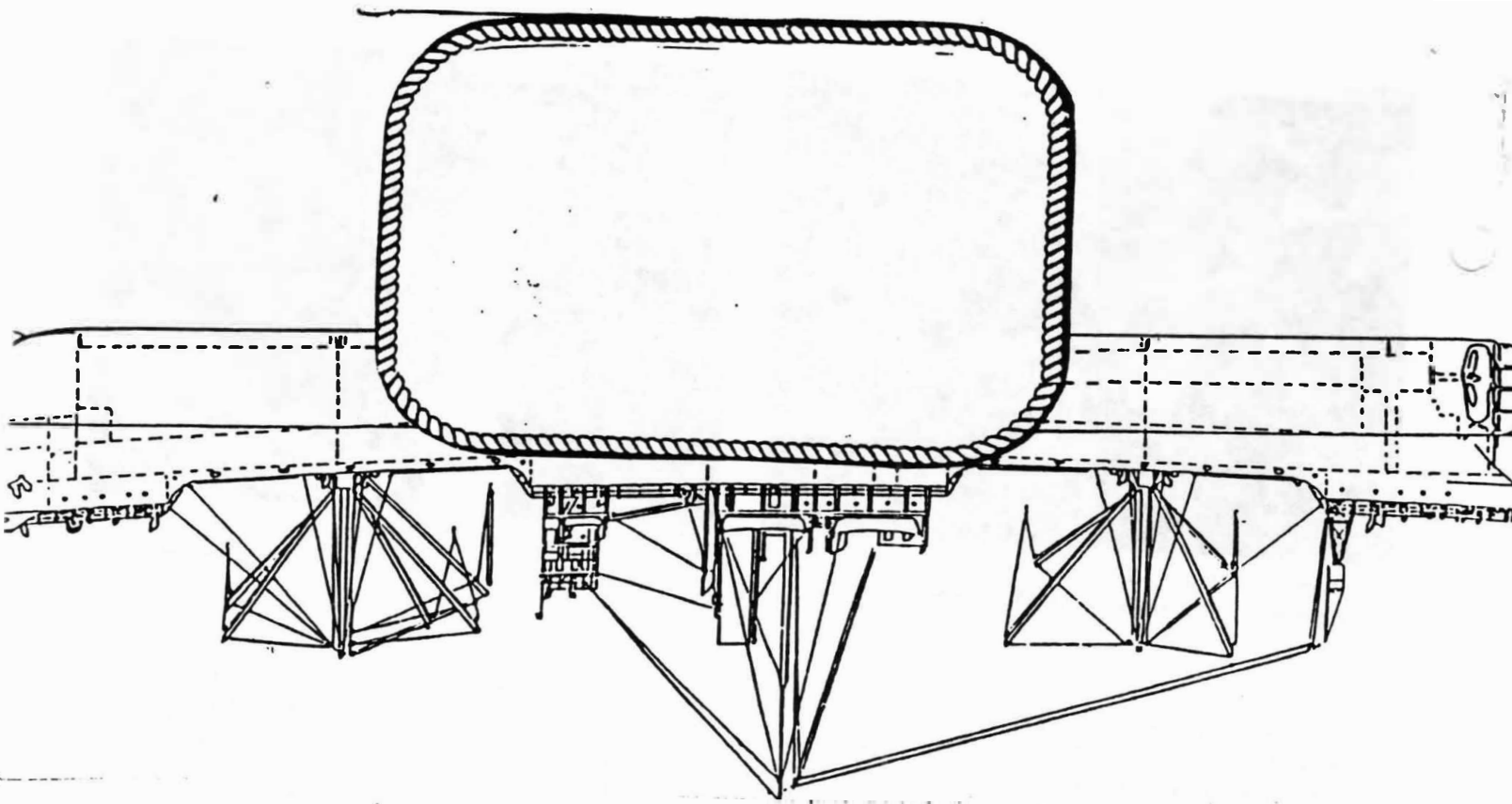
The prisoners built models of their ships from memory and found they could sell them to their wardens. So, though most of these ghost ships are French, they fly little Union Jacks for luring British buyers. British captors saved steak bones from their own meals and tossed them into the French cells. They let the prisoners fashion tiny knives and chisels from bits of metal and shards of glass.

Beautiful white ships gradually took shape, planked with thin, curved strips of bone. Soon English civilians began buying them and commissioned the prisoners for more. Business boomed.

"Apparently, there were cases when a man was freed but wouldn't leave his cell until he'd finished his ship," says Sumrall. Some prisoners were allowed to stay on in England after the wars ended, to work at this new trade. Many married Englishwomen and raised families.

Though the bone models are not to scale, they're built with such care that all is forgiven. White, delicate, jewel-like, they fetch \$15,000 to \$20,000 today. The finest of them all stands at the top of a stairway leading down to the ship model gallery. She's Nelson's flagship, HMS *Victory*, done in bone and ivory. French POWs at Dartmoor were commissioned to build her soon after Nelson's death at Trafalgar in 1805. This time they were given drawings of the famous old vessel to work from, so this *Victory* is quite accurate. She was given to the British royal family, who placed her above Nelson's tomb at St. Paul's Cathedral. There she rode quietly at anchor until World War I, when she was sold to raise money for Royal Navy relief. Now here she is, not exactly at home, but at least back in the bosom of another—and these days friendly—navy whose inclination to sail "in harm's way" is in the best Nelsonian tradition. The *Victory* herself, on which Nelson died during the Battle of Trafalgar, may still be seen in Portsmouth, England, where, like her contemporary, the USS *Constitution* up in Boston, she is still a commissioned ship in her country's navy.

Intricately rigged ship was carved from beef bones by Napoleon's sailors in British prisons, then sold to captors. Created from memory, "bone ships" were usually French, flew the British flag to please clients.



San Diego Ship Modelers Guild
 c/o Maritime Museum Assoc. of San Diego
 1306 North Harbor Drive
 San Diego, California 92101

**San Diego Ship Modelers Guild
 Officers for 1997**

Guild Master	Tom Taylor	/redacted/
First Mate	Jack Klein	
Purser	Ed White	
Logkeeper	(open)	
N'letter Editors	Fred Fraas	/redacted/
	Gordon Jones	
Regatta Commodore	VACANT	

Founded in 1971 by Bob Wright and the late Russ Merrill

Schedule of Activities:

Membership:

- WEDNESDAY -
 Meetings -- Third-Thursday of the month. 7:00PM Social, 7:30PM Meeting, held on board the ferryboat "Berkeley."
 R/C Operations -- Saturday mornings at the Model Yacht Pond. (Mission Bay)
 Annual Regatta -- Third weekend in June.

Dues are \$15 annually (\$7.50 after July 1st)
 We strongly encourage all to join the San Diego Maritime Museum as an expression of appreciation for the facilities they provide for our benefit.
