



February 2021

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 49, NO. II

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Have a Happy Presidents' Day, Guild!

This month's newsletter includes a remarkable historical survey of the Steam Yacht *Medea* written by **Isaac Wills**. *Medea* can be found alongside the Steam Ferry *Berkeley* at the Maritime Museum of San Diego and a reading of **Isaac's** paper will surely enhance a visit to her. Thinking about yachts brings to mind this bit of humor by David Lee Roth, "Money can't buy you happiness, but it can buy you a yacht big enough to pull up right alongside it."



Plan to join the Guild's next Virtual Meeting on February 9, 2021!

From The Quarterdeck

by the Guild Master

With the coming of Spring our annual Guild Elections cannot be far behind. Nominating Chairman **Tom Hairston** is accepting nominations for the following Officer positions:

Guild Master
First Mate

Purser
Log Keeper

Newsletter Editor



Submit your nominations directly to [Tom](#).

Each nominee will be contacted to determine availability for serving our Guild in the coming year. If you are nominated, I urge you to seriously consider how much a contribution of a few hours a month means. Now is the time to step up and ensure our Guild's continued fellowship.

Fair winds and following seas, **Alex Roel**



The San Diego Ship Modelers Guild is affiliated with and supports the
Maritime Museum of San Diego
1492 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101



Guild Officer Election Message continued:

Alex continued the election invitation to Guild service by noting that officer job descriptions, duties, and responsibilities for each position that can be found [here](#). Following is **Section 3.4 of the Guild Bylaws governing officer elections**: “3.4 Election of Officers. The Guild master shall conduct an election yearly. In January the Guild Master shall appoint a nominating chairman who shall report nominations at the February meeting.

Nominations from the floor shall also be taken. Ballots with the nominees shall be published in the newsletter prior to a vote at the March meeting. All votes received by mail, electronically, by phone and those given at the meeting will be tabulated to determine the winners. Mail, email and phone votes shall be made to the log keeper. In the event of a close election, telephonic votes will be verified. The elected slate of officers shall take office at the March meeting.” **The Guild’s bylaws can be found on the Guild’s website, [Guild Bylaws](#)**. Following the **February online Guild Meeting**, a newsletter addendum will be sent to Guild Members with a ballot and contact information for the [Log Keeper](#).

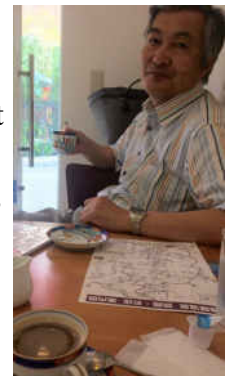
Attention on Deck!

Second call, Purser Jon Sanford reminds the membership that **it is time to collect Membership Dues!** Dues will remain at \$20.00. With COVID restrictions in effect, payment can be mailed to: Jon Sanford, <redacted>. Checks can be made payable to “San Diego Ship Modelers Guild”. **Please keep dues payments current and the Guild Active Roster up to date.**

12 JANUARY 2021 GUILD VIRTUAL MEETING REPORT

Participate in a virtual meeting and connect with the Guild. Send pictures of your project(s) or anything else you have to share with the Guild to the Editor at newsletter@sdshipmodelersguild.org and it can be added to the newsletter.

The Guild’s third virtual meeting, attended by twelve (12) members, was called to order by **Guild Master Alex Roel**. Besides member **Doug Yumoto** who is pictured to the right sipping a fortifying beverage, the meeting was joined by members from three States outside California. **Isaac Wills** logged in from New York, **Gary Seaton** from Tennessee, and **Ralph Martin** joined in from Kansas. Use your phone or computer to log in on February 9 and add your voice to the conversation! **Alex** quickly called for Officer Reports so that the meeting could move along to **Show & Tell** and members could talk about their projects or just to say hello.



February 2021

NEXT VIRTUAL ONLINE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 9 FEBRUARY AT 6:00 PM!

Notice: An email announcement will be sent with meeting details to the Membership.

PLAN ON ATTENDING!

SHARE A MODEL!

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Next Community Build Meeting Scheduled for 13 February, Cancelled.

Notice: The Community Build Leader will email an announcement when meetings resume.

A Trifecta! Valentine’s Day, Presidents’ Day, Mardi Gras!

Officer Reports continued:

Similar to the January meeting, **Purser Jon Sanford** provided the bulk of the Officer Reports and spoke briefly about the Maritime Museum Model Shop cleanup and the availability of model kits and model making supplies for the membership. The Museum is planning to open again with limitations as Covid restrictions are eased so the Model Shop cleanup will continue to be a “front burner” task. **Jon** has completed restorations of a number of donated models, see [Show & Tell](#) for pictures. The models are now available for sale in the Museum’s Gift Shop with all proceeds and donations to be directed to the Museum. These restorations are a worthy labor and **Bravo Zulu to Jon** for his efforts! Contact [Jon](#) to help out with clean-up or make use of the Model Shop supplies, kits, and tools!

Again, there is **NO CHARGE** for the kits found in the Model Shop but it is requested that a donation, large or small, be made to the Museum Gift Shop’s donation box. Following is a list of available model kits. Please email **Jon** at modelshop@sdshipmodelersguild.org to coordinate model pickup.

Name	Type	Company	Scale	Status	Year
ANDROMEDE 1790	Cutter	Modelismo Nav	1:50	Complete	English
BARQUENTINE	Barq	Ideal-o-Craft	Moulded	Complete	1939
BASS BOAT (2 kits)	Fishing	HOMA	HO Scale	Complete	Resin
BENJAMIN LATHAM	Schooner	Modelshipways	1/4"=1'	Complete	
BLUENOSE	Schooner	Modelshipways	1=100	Partial	
CONSTITUTION(4 kits)	Frigate	Megow	Balsa	Complete	1935
DESPATCH #9 1945	Tugboat	Modelshipways	5/32"=1'	Complete	paint inc
DIESEL TUG	Tugboat	Linberg Plastic	HO gauge	Complete	
ENDEAVOUR (8 3/4")	Jclass Sloop	Bluejacket	1/16"=1'	Complete	paint/tools
FRIENDSHIP (2 kits)	Sloop	HOMA	HO Scale	Complete	Resin
GREAT REPUBLIC	Clipper	Ideal-o-Craft	Moulded	Complete	1938
HANNA (Ship in Bottle)	Schooner	Modelshipways	1/300	Complete	
LIVELY LADY	Ship in Bottle	Ships-A-Sailing	1"=25'	Complete	
LOBSTER BOAT	FISHING	HOMA	HO Scale	Complete	Resin
NORSKE LODE	Man o War	Billings Boats		Complete	
PATROLTORPEDO BOAT	PTB-9	Comet		Complete	Balsa
PHANTOM 1868	Pilot Boat	Modelshipways	1/8"=1'	Partial	Mahogany
REVENUE CUTTER	Cutter	Ideal-o-Craft	Moulded	Complete	1939
RIVER TOWBOAT	Towboat	HOMA	HO Scale	Complete	Resin
ROYAL YACHT, 1661	Dutch	Modellbau	1=200	Complete	Germany
SLOOP FERRET	Sloop	Sterling	1"=7'	Partial	
SUSQUEHANA	Steam/Sail	IMAI	1/150	Complete	Plastic

Model Shop Kits and Officer Reports continued:

Name	Type	Company	Scale	Status	Year
USS CONSTITUTION	Frigate	Ideal Models		Partial	1947
USS MISSOURI	Battleship	Monogram	16"long	Complete	1946
WE'RE HERE 1897	Schooner	Bluejacket	1/8"=1'	Complete	
ZWARTE ZEE	Fireboat	Billings Boats	1=100	Complete	

Purser's Report: Purser Jon Sanford reported the following Guild Account activity:

Beginning Balance on December 11, 2020 \$<redacted>

Ending Balance on January 13, 2021 \$<redacted>

Log Keeper Report: Log Keeper Tom Hairston reported he is the Nominating Chairman for this year's Guild Officer Elections and that a ballot will be prepared and distributed in accordance with the Guild's bylaws.

Web Master Report: **On The Web** by Web Master Alex Roel

All Members are invited to submit photos and descriptions of any or all of your completed builds for inclusion in our [Build Gallery](#).

Information requested:

(Tom Hairston's *STAR OF INDIA* used as an example)

- Photo
- Type of vessel (Bark)
- Name of vessel (*STAR OF INDIA*)
- Date of vessel representation (1977)
- Country of vessel representation (United States)
- Primary materials (wood)
- Kit manufacturer or scratch (scratch built)
- Scale (1/8"=1')
- Month and year build completed (February 2020)

Scroll through the [Build Gallery](#) for examples. Your build(s) will be displayed according to the Gallery's yearly timeline.

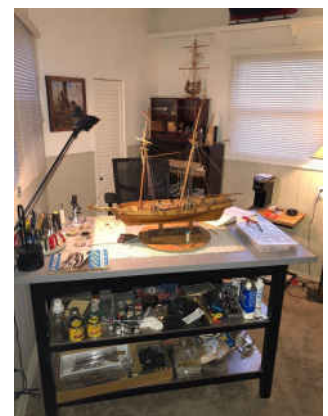
Email your submissions to [Alex](#).

End of Officer Reports

Presentations and Museum Model of the Month Programs were suspended over the past months until in-person Guild Meetings are resumed. As a reminder, the newsletter's new feature, **"Home Ports"**, is intended to provide an opportunity to get to know our fellow members outside of the Guild's general meetings and explore their interests in ship or other modeling crafts. The newsletter editor will be available to visit "Home Ports" to help with photography (the Editor only uses his cell phone camera) and to begin an article. Alternatively, a Guild member can easily create their own "Home Port" and send it to the [Newsletter Editor](#). Face masks and social distancing protocols will be observed, of course! So, with another "stay at home" order from the state, **Home Port** did not formally happen in January but with the picture contributions by **Mike Hite**, he is thought of as the **Home Port** contributor this month without the profile of his background that brought him to the Guild and model ship building.



Mike enjoys finding ships needing restoration including the one found in an antique store. The schooner is pictured above on the left before restoration and in the center picture during restoration. He tells us the person who started the build used fine wire for the rigging and the before picture is about as far as he or she got. **Mike** completed the rigging and placed the cannons and other details. The picture above right is of the completed restoration. The picture below left is of the schooner on display at the back left corner of his office. The two center pictures are of other models on display in his office and the picture below right is of Mike's "studio" where he labors on his models.



Mike Hite continued:

Mike's office also holds a display of an old whaling ship that he restored from a poor condition. He describes the model as very old and very large with a length of 48 inches. Mike enjoys sharing and he tells about finding the best set of scissors in his experience after starting modeling about 6 years ago. He said he struggled with frayed lines and cutting knots and utilized all kinds of scissors, fingernail clippers, toe nail clippers, hair shears, trying a dozen or more different cutters. Then he found these pictured below, **Dr. Slick (fishing) fly tying scissors**. Simply the best and he found this set on line for \$42. Worth every cent.

Beginning a new project, *Lexington* (1775) kit by Aeropiocola, Mike is learning a new skill set. He reports this will be the first time he will be cutting bulkheads from the plans saying, "I'm sure this is a skill all in the club have but me. (I am) still an apprentice helper." Oh my, some of us might wish that was only so! **However, Mike is looking for plans in English, the *Lexington* kit plans are in Italian. Anyone who might be able to help can contact [Mike](#) at this link.**



Last up Mike reports he is returning to the *Black Pearl*, picture to the right. He reports it is from a "Chinese kit, not bad, picture plans only, started a couple of years ago before I had gained more experience. It won't be a real ship but it will look like the movie version, rather dilapidated."



Thank you, Mike, for a sharing a look at your ship modeling!

A Special Presentation

1904 Steam Screw Yacht

Isaac Wills

RESEARCH PROJECT - FALL 2020

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for HISTORY 101, American Civilization to 1865

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, Maritime College

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

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ABSTRACT

SY Medea, one of the last Edwardian Era steam yachts, resides in San Diego, California. In her time, she was not an outstanding vessel. The fact that she remains today, is what makes her one of the most valuable vessels afloat today. While much is already known about *Medea*, there are a few unanswered questions regarding her services in both World Wars. From cruising the Scottish Lochs among Elite families, to surviving unconfirmed torpedo attacks and possibly serving in the evacuation of Dunkirk, *Medea's* story is far from complete. By using several books, academic journals, internet research, as well as communicating with her current owners and my colleagues who work to maintain her, I have been able to intimately familiarize myself with this rare Scottish gem.

Through the journey of writing this, I have greatly added to my knowledge around *Medea* as well as hypothesized potential explanations to the mysteries surrounding her. I have created an in-depth glimpse into the whirlwind of adventure that this delightful little yacht has endeavored in her 116 years of existence. Furthermore, I delved into the story of her creation and early years, to give context to the early 20th century yachting world. While I may not have found the missing pieces to the mysteries of her service, I was able to speculate very likely scenarios of what might have occurred through involved research, following the footsteps of those who tried to answer these questions before me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without Kevin Sheenhan, Jim Davis, Richard Sharp, and Jake Williams, I would not have been exposed to *Medea* in the extent that I have.

Thank you!

“Steam is the closest man has ever come to creating life.”

-Jake Williams

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

Medea steaming past Point Loma on Bastille Day, 1973

INTRODUCTION

This recent summer, I spent my time volunteering at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, helping maintain the vessels and occasionally crewing them. I spent most my logged hours aboard the clipper bowed *Medea*. I spent my days revarnishing her teak deckhouses, chipping away at rusty chainplates, and assisting her steam engineers in the engine room, hoping one day to breathe life back into her dual expansion engines. Working with her has led to my deep appreciation of *Medea* and her eccentric history. I have become remarkably familiar with *Medea* as a vessel for I have spent many hours aboard her. But to not know her story takes a great deal of intimacy out of my work. Therefore, I have chosen to write about her.

From 1880 till the beginnings of World War I, steam yachts such as *Medea* were extremely common among royalty and the wealthy. *Lloyd's Register* of 1896 listed nearly 1,000 steam yachts between America, Great Britain, and Europe. However, after many were requisitioned for the war effort around 1914, few were wanted back by their owners. Furthermore, steam had been gradually losing favor to gasoline and diesel marine engines. This in combination with the Great Depression, rise of the automobile, and air travel effectively ended the "heyday" of the steam yacht.

While *Medea* was one of the hundreds of steam yachts, all of similar design and purpose, she is vital to be remembered and researched because she survived. She is one of two Edwardian Era steam yachts to grace the sea in present day. *Medea* has served under 6 flags, under three navies, and in both World Wars. She may have also been present at the Evacuation of Dunkirk as well.

Getting to work aboard *Medea* has given me opportunity to work amongst Richard (Pete) Sharp and Jake Williams, both of whom have been tirelessly working to get *Medea's* boilers lit again. Furthermore, I have been fortunate to work with the Maritime Museum of San Diego's Curator, Kevin Sheenhan, and 1st Mate, Jim Davis, on other projects around the Museum. They were the first people I went to regarding *Medea*. These men collectively have spent hundreds of hours working on her or researching her history.

Furthermore, I acquired several books, academic journals, and scoured the internet to find everything I could on *Medea*. These have greatly assisted in my understanding of *Medea's* rich history. While they encompassed a broad reach of her past, the uncertainty of her presence at Dunkirk was a point of interest for my research. Through my research, I am hoping to find out if *Medea* was in fact present at the 2nd largest maritime evacuation in recorded history.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Medea's life at sea has been very well documented. From her construction in Scotland to her services in the Wars; several books, academic journals, and her Museum home have recorded her life. Additionally, the *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* contained vital information regarding *Medea's* life.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

I have examined three books: *Medea, The Classic Steam Yacht*, by Craig Arnold, *The Steam Yachts, An Era of Elegance*, by Erik Hofman, and *Steam Yachts*, by David Couling. Furthermore, I utilized two academic articles, both of which were published by the Maritime Museum of San Diego; *Mains' L Haul, Volume 22, Medea, A Yacht of Varying Fortunes* and *Mains' L Haul, Volume 40: 3 and 4, Medea and the Classic Steam Yachts*. Lastly, I looked through the *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* 1896 and 1930-1940 as well as the *Lloyd's Register of Shipping: London Yacht Register of 1904*.

Craig Arnold's book, as well as *Mains' L Haul, Volume 40: 3 and 4, Medea and the Classic Steam Yachts* were by far the most useful to my research. Arnold put 4 years and a great deal of effort into writing his book. It encompasses, in excellent detail, a glimpse into her daily life. Everything from ship's logs to letters between owners and ship builder have been recorded.

The Maritime Museum's academic journal delves deep into "The Heyday of the Steam Yacht." This includes the history of other significant steam yachts, steamers that shared similar design to *Medea*, and a unique first hand recollection of the *Medea's* glory days by one of her owner's daughters.¹

Medea's story begins long before her construction. December 11th, 1872, William Hall Macalister was born at Torrisdale Castle. This had been a home for the Macalister family since 1815, when General Keith Macalister came back from the bloody conflicts between Scotland and Great Britain, looking for a place to settle down. William grew up at the Torrisdale estate, enjoying the vast open spaces and rolling hills in the surrounding area. Encircling the estate were the Scottish Highlands, deep lochs, and the Kilbrannan Sound from which it is speculated William developed a love for the sea.²

As William grew up he attended his first school, Cargilfield. When the time came for secondary school, he attends Rugby, a challenging academy that was made notorious by the novel *Tom Brown's School Days*. After he completed secondary school, he was accepted into Pembroke College, Oxford where he excelled in rowing.

After his graduation from Oxford, William swiftly joined the Militia. He was predestined to join the Argyll and Sutherland, for Keith Macalister fought for the Argylls. This was one of 5 distinguished Highland regiments at the time. Just out of college William was an officer. After graduation he returned home to Torrisdale, where once a year he would train for two to three weeks with his regiment. With his service to the regiment continuing past his acquisition of *Medea*, he would frequently sail aboard her to the training grounds across the Kilbrannan sound. As said by Craig Arnold, "This was going to war in style!"³ It was not until 1899, when war broke out between Great Britain and the Boers, that William Macalister would see war.

Upon his return to Torrisdale in the spring of 1904, he was settled in as the Master of his estate. Being free from the shackles of service, William could reengage in his personal affairs. One of his favored pastimes was hunting. He travelled as far as Morocco, the Ottoman Empire, India, Turkey, Egypt, and even the most remote oasis of Touggourt to hunt exotic game. It was his passion for hunting exotic game that directly led to William Hall Macalister deciding to purchase a steam yacht.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

It was quickly and decisively chosen that the yard which would build his yacht would be none other than the naval architecture firm of Alexander Stephen & Sons. The chairman of the firm, John Stephen, had 5 years prior invented a countersinking machine that could expedite a ships construction by a month. June 10th, William's received a letter from the Firm.⁴

10th June 1904

Captain W. Macalister Hall,
Torrisdale Castle,
CARRADALE.

...You will be pleased to know that we have already a considerable quantity of material for the vessel in the works, and under manipulation.

Yours faithfully,

ALEX. STAPHEN & SONS, LIMITED,
Alex. Scott, Secretary

This vessel was to be built in Glasgow in only 51 days. She was 140 ft and 111.84 gross tons of steel, teak, and oak. She was outfitted with a steam windlass from Clark Chapman & Co., masts and rigging from John Wilson & Co., electric bells from Wm. Paterson & Son, and a "sail outfit" from Robt. Douglass & Son. She was christened *S.Y. Medea*, named for the sorceress of Greek Mythology. It is speculated that William learned the lore of Medea in school and consequently that is how *Medea* got her name. On August 19th, 1904, 2:55p.m., in all of 45 seconds, with steam already in her boiler, *Medea* slid off her ways and into the waters of River Clyde.

The next day, *SY Medea* was ready to conduct her sea trials with her first skipper, Captain Duncan Martin. Her trials yielded only a few minor problems that would be fixed within the coming week. On August 31, an ecstatic William Macalister had his brand-new yacht. A week after William acquisitioned her, he received a short letter from Alex Scott of Alex Stephen & Sons. The letter stated that there were still a few minor additions to be made to *Medea* before she was ship shape. Merely some pipework and a discussion of new boat davits was needed. Before the end of May, *Medea* had all her papers including her Certificate of Registry, Anchor and Chain Cable Certificates, *Lloyd's* Certificate of Classification, Machinery Certificate, and Boiler Testing Certificate.

For the young *Medea*, early life consisted of hunting trips and getting William to government meetings, visiting friends, sailing along the River Clyde to reach railroad platforms, and even on frivolous errands, such as taking him to the barber. It is said that on her first hunting trip, William took 10 guests. It was declared by the *Glasgow Herald*, "...The maiden voyage was triumph...Each guest bagged their grouse quota."

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

Medea took William to many ports in the following months, including Ayr (Macalister's regimental training camp), Dunoon, Gourock, Oban, Tarbert, Inveraray, and her homeport of Campbeltown. Eventually *Medea* even joined her first yacht club, the Royal Highland Yacht Club in Oban. She would spend much time in Oban Harbor awaiting William's return to take her home.

Only a year after her launch, *Medea* was pointing her nose away from Scottish ports. Her first major voyage was a Moroccan safari. This was followed by a long trip to the south of England in 1906. Later that year, she steamed to India so that William could hunt exotic Indian Blackbuck. Upon *Medea's* return to England, William Hall Macalister married Aymée Gilmour in 1907.

Despite Birthing 6 children to William, Aymée followed William on his many ventures, some, less than pleasant. For William to get to the western side of his grouse hunting grounds, *Medea* would have to sail round the Mull of Kintyre. Nicknamed the "Cape Horn of Scotland," it was a stretch of sea that could get very unpleasant, specifically around Deas Point. Here seas could be calm as ever, only to run high against foul winds. While *Medea* has made several pleasant passages around Deas Point, she had once been caught in seas so bitter that from then on, Williams new bride would cross over by land to meet him to the other side of the Mull. It was also recorded in the diary of a friend of William with the last name of Tetley, that *Medea* encountered sporadic heavy weather off Falmouth on her short 1906 trip from Padstow to Falmouth.⁵

Falmouth, June 6th

...all went well until about 12:30 pm, when...the yacht encountered a "race" with strong head winds.

The two worthies, who at the time were sitting aft, received the first intimation of what was to happen by a perfect deluge of water, which poured down from the bows of "Medea." Sea after sea followed and soon the whole deck was one surging mass of water barrels, chests, etc., and the water streamed in cataracts down to the cabins.

From the 29th of April 1908 up until the 21st of September 1910, Aymée Macalister kept an extensive diary of *Medea's* endeavors through the seas in and around the United Kingdom. The diary describes *Medea's* actions during each yachting season, between which she was laid up, presumably in Glasgow. The entries do not go into much detail about these trips because for William and Aymée, these were common and Aymée was remarkably familiar with the events and people encountered. Between April and September is when *Medea* was active, months during which the Macalister's social life were heavily dependent. She was called from places all over Scotland and England including Torrisdale Bay, Campbeltown, Carradale, Arran, Tighnabruaich, Tarbert, Stonefield, Ardrishaig, Balliemore, Loch Striven, Lamdash, Rothesay, Loch Long, Achnacarry, Loch Goil, Gourock, Eaglesham, Loch Nalany, Skipness, and dozens of other ports of call.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

On November 17th, 1911, William Hall Macalister decided to part with *Medea* on account of “family commitments.” It is speculated that Aymée would be more reluctant to go cruising with her first daughter who was expected in 1912.⁶ She was sold for £2,231, approximately \$79,400.00 in today’s money. She was purchased by Frederick G. Todd. It was not long before she was sold again in 1914 to John Stephen, chairman of Alexander Stephen & Sons (*Medea*’s builders). John Stephen was not allowed much time to enjoy *Medea* for the days of peacetime were numbered.

During the Great War, *Medea* laid tranquil in Scotland until John Stephen’s passing in 1917. Her builders offered her to the Red Cross to ferry wounded soldiers across the River Seine. Due to a prolonged confirmation of acceptance, she was sold for military service instead. On April 24th, 1917, the French Naval Commission purchased *Medea* in Glasgow and renamed her *Corneille*, after the 17th century playwright Pierre Corneille.⁷ In the following months she shed her sparkling white livery for navy grey and was converted to a sub killer. *Corneille* was outfitted with 6 Guiraud type anti-submarine depth charges, a captive weather balloon, and a fighting crew of 22 men.

On June 15th, *Corneille* was assigned to the *2eme Escadrille* patrol boat squadron based in Cherbourg. Her armament was further increased to carry a 75 mm deck gun on her foc’sle as well as a considerably basic wireless. It is likely she was equipped with a “soixantequinze” 75-mm gun, a highly efficient rapid firing cannon. The *2eme Escadrille* was responsible for patrols and convoy duty. With *Corneille* having an effective cruising range of 800 miles at 8 knots, her billet was to escort sailing vessels to Norman ports. Notably, *Corneille*’s Captain at the time, Peter Metcalfe, claimed that she was nearly struck by a torpedo that flew 3 meters off her hull. This was the only alleged interaction she had with a submarine during the War.⁸ *Corneille* finished up her convoy duties and was tasked with minesweeping in the Cherbourg area. On November 11th, the Great War ended, and *Corneille* was put in the reserve fleet. On June 21st, 1919, France decided to sell her from the service.

After the War, *Corneille* changed hands a great many times. Her first buyer was M. Grahame-White of Warsash House, Hampshire. Upon buying her from the French, he re-renamed her *Medea*, where she remained in Glasgow. In 1921, she changed hands to Mr. Dudley Ward, a member of Parliament. He berthed *Medea* at Southampton until she was sold again the very next year to Capt. The Right Honorable F.E. Guest. She remained in South England. One more year passed before she was passed along to A.M. Symington in 1923. He would hold *Medea* until 1926 in Gibraltar, where he would take her into the Mediterranean and as far South as the Canaries. Under Symington she would make stops along the North African Coast, specifically Morocco. She likely spent time in the exotic ports of Tangier, Rabat, Casablanca, and Agadir. During this period, *Medea*’s most frequent stomping ground would have been the Sea of Alboran, inside of Andalusia and Rif. She was once again sold, to Mr. B.H. Piercy and was berthed at the Isle of Wright.⁹ Here, *Medea* would be thrown into the world of the British Elite and their many luxurious sea going toys. It is unquestioned that she would have been attending the renowned Cowes Yacht Regatta each year until 1929 when she was sold again. This time, back once again to the Stephen family.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

Medea fell into the hands of Frederick Stephen, John Stephen's Nephew. Frederick, like his predecessors, was a naval architect. Upon purchasing *Medea*, he took immediate interest into making extensive modifications to his new steam toy. From 1929-1932 he logged, extensively, changes that he made to *Medea*. From late 1929 through most of 1930, *Medea* was put through rigorous trials, including sea trials and including experiments. Before Frederick's passing in 1932, he proposed *Medea* would get a complete overhaul. Her breadth was to increase by 2 feet, her depth by 9 feet, LOA was to be increased by 5 feet, switch her from coal to fuel oil, have a wheelhouse installed on the bridge, and even fitting her out with a smaller figurehead. However, the actual modifications he made were quite slight. Her most notable modifications dated to January 16th, 1931 are as follows:¹⁰

- New steam windlass by Thomas Reid & Sons
- 9ft x 2ft of added galley space along the port superstructure
- Replaced her 15 ft gig with an 18 ft motor launch
- Several Berthing rearrangements in the fore crew accommodations
- Replaced skylight on aft sun deck with larger skylight with bench

In 1933 when Fred Stephen died, *Medea* sat under his estate's name until she was sold to A.A. Paton. 2 years later she was sold to Job Longson Wild. With her new port of registry as Colchester, she would remain under his ownership for 20 years with a 5-year interruption due to her service in the second World War. Just prior to World War II it was noted that *Medea* was ported in London and Wild would take her to the Isle of Wright during the summer for leisure time. On September 3rd, 1939, *Medea* was laid up for the coming cold season.

In late May, the evacuation of Dunkirk was underway until June 4th. Yachts and small boats from all of England were hurried to evacuate the troops from the Normandie beaches. To this day it is uncertain if *Medea* was present at Dunkirk. The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich report her name was not on the list of ship that were there. I hypothesized that *Medea* could have been identified by her name during the Great War as *Corneille* and was misnamed on the registry of small boats, however this is just speculation.¹¹ Many vessels that did assist in the Dunkirk evacuation were not listed in the mayhem of those months. So, while is it tantalizing to believe that she steamed through the channel to evacuate soldiers, there is simply not enough evidence to confirm if she was present or still laid up.

Medea did see action during April of 1941 when she was requisitioned by the Royal Navy to become a barrage balloon vessel. She was listed with the reference number, 137/04 (taken from her tonnage and build year) and posted to the Balloon Barrage at Sheerness at the lower end of the River Thames. *Medea* remained there until July of 1942. By September 25th, she was transferred to the Ministry of War Transport and was repurposed as an accommodation ship at Peterhead, Rosyth Command, Scotland. It was just prior to her relocation when she outfitted with a small wheelhouse on the fore deck above the dining salon.

On December 1st, 1942 *Medea* was once again transferred, to the Royal Norwegian Navy, however she remained in Peterhead. She served as the headquarters for the secret Royal Norwegian Navy Unit housing officers, M16 Spies, and the Secret Intelligence Service, AKA the "Students of Espionage." They were executing highly dangerous covert missions through their small fleet of fishing boats.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

One of these missions detected the *DKM Tirpitz*'s exact location in the months prior to *Medea*'s arrival. *Medea* remained at Peterhead, however she switched over to the British Royal Navy and continued as an accommodation ship until she was once again laid up on August 9th, 1945 and finally sold back to Job Longson Wild on August 14th.

Medea had a very vapid few years where J.B. Wild took her to Brightlingsea. After the war, yachting was close to impossible. The country had exhausted all its resources into fighting, specifically coal. Beaches and harbors were mined, barbed wired, and covered in anti-tank blockades. With *Medea* being unable to cruise, Wild "mud berthed" her and built her into a quaint houseboat.¹² With slight modifications and an extension to the aft deckhouse to make the common areas more comfortable, *Medea* continued as an accommodation ship for local businessmen and the like.¹³

When J.B. Wild passed away in 1960, *Medea* was sold to Mr. C.E. Reffitt. Reffitt got *Medea* in working condition once more. Around 1964, she was sold once more to Capt. Miller of Padstow. *Medea*'s port of registry appropriately shifted to Padstow as well. She was overhauled from coal burning to fuel oil burning and she was once again steaming along the English Channel to the Isle of Wight and its surrounding areas. Miller would own *Medea* for about 6 years while chartering her out to excursions around Scotland. The charters were managed by Bell's Travel Services Limited of Oxford and she was kept at the shipyard of McGruer & Co. Limited in Rosneath, Helensburgh, and Dunbartonshire.

These trips were very strenuous for *Medea* and she was slowly beginning to wear. Appearing weathered and awkward with her unsightly cabin extension she began having technical issues. On April 12th, 1963 she broke down and required a tow 7 miles off Portland Bill, Dorset to the port of Weymouth by motor lifeboat. In another instance, in early November of 1966, there was an engine room fire as the result of a boiler furnace blowback. While she was not significantly damaged in either of these events it was clear her age was starting to show.

In 1969 *Medea* was sold once more to Capt. K.G. Holmberg. He would be *Medea*'s last private owner. She was patiently tied up in Oskarshamn, Sweden where she served as Holmberg's "floating art gallery" until March of 1971 when she was purchased one final time by Nelson Paul Whittier.¹⁴ He first saw *Medea* in 1967 in England and it was from that moment he fell in love with the little yacht. He offered a spectacular offer to Joseph Jessop, Sr., the President of the Maritime Museum of San Diego. Whittier proposed that he would buy *Medea*, bring her to the west coast of North America, restore her to her 1904 condition, and donate her to the Museum. The Board of Trustees at the Maritime Museum of San Diego were quick to accept.

Medea began her journey to her new home by steaming through the Baltic and down through the English Channel to the Port of Falmouth. *Medea* was preparing to steam across the Atlantic through the Panama Canal and to her new home. A rapidly approaching hurricane season urged Whittier to do otherwise. *Medea* was to return to Rotterdam to be shipped aboard the German freighter *Riederstien*. She arrived at Rotterdam on June 24th and all 137 tons of *Medea* was loaded on deck. 2 months later, she arrived in Long Beach, CA. *Medea* had to patiently wait out a 6-week longshoreman's strike before she was finally offloaded into the Pacific. *Medea* was steamed up to Gouge Island in British Columbia. From here a nearly 2-year process of restoration began. Upon a complete restoration to her 1904 configuration, *Medea* steamed back south. Over \$300,000.00 had gone into *Medea*'s transport and restoration to the Maritime Museum of San Diego.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

From Gouge Island in British Columbia a nearly 2-year process of restoration began. Upon a complete restoration to her 1904 configuration, *Medea* steamed back south. Over \$300,000.00 had gone into *Medea*'s transport and restoration to the Maritime Museum of San Diego.

On Bastille Day, July 14th, 1973, *SY Medea* steamed past Point Loma into the San Diego Yacht Club where she was warmly greeted with bands, bubbly, curious crowds and over 100 escorting vessels. On August 25th, proclaimed *Star of India* Day by San Dieagans, she made a head of steam to join her sisters, the 1863 iron barque *Star of India* and the 1898 Ferryboat *Berkeley* in her new home.

Since then, *Medea* has been intriguing the public and providing a glimpse into the luxurious Edwardian way of life. Until 2017, she would occasionally take important guests of the Museum on cruises around the bay. However, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic forced the Museum to close. With 6 months of no upkeep, our little yacht has need of much care.¹⁵ Jim Davis, Richard Sharp, Jake Williams, I, and several other have been working tirelessly over the past months to restore *Medea*, so that she can one day steam again.

METHODOLOGY

To tell *Medea*'s story, a great deal of research was carried out. While much of her story was present through books and other resources, I went directly to *Medea*'s owners to start my research. I went to the curator of the Maritime Museum of San Diego, Kevin Sheenhan, and the 1st mate, Jim Davis. I emailed them to point my research in the right direction. I was tipped off about *Medea*'s possible presence at Dunkirk through an email conversation with Kevin. Furthermore, he brought to my attention *Medea*'s covert operations at Peterhead under the command of the Royal Norwegian Navy.

The next step of my Research was to read through everything I could regarding *Medea* and steam yachts of the time. I read through all the books and academic journals listed in the previous section. This gave a very in-depth understanding of every aspect of *Medea*'s life. Furthermore, I used 5 internet articles, several additions of the Lloyds registry as well as two sets of plans that I personally acquired from the Maritime Museum. Both sets of plans were drawn by the Stephen family of Naval Architects. With this massive wealth of information, I was able to put together a mosaic of events from 1872 to the present day that tells the story of *SY Medea*.

Regarding the *Medea*'s presence at Dunkirk, I not only ran out of time, but of resources to confirm if *Medea* was, in fact, present. Despite this, I formulated a hunch as to why we still are not able to confirm this. While I did not have the means to prove my theory, I hope to one day revisit this project to prove it.

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED PROJECT

While the age of steam yachting has long passed, *Medea* and her surviving sisters are important and unique reminders of the luxurious and eccentric days of the steam yachtsman. *Medea* is one of the most important vessels afloat today. She is the last of her kind, has served in both World Wars, served under 3 navies, and flown 6 national flags.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:

Medea's design constantly changed and she accommodated hundreds of souls and carried them where they needed to go, all while keeping up with the times. Today she is a dear to many, including myself, as a charming epithet to her eccentric past. As Jake Williams once told me, "Steam is the closest man has ever come to creating life."¹⁶ Upon working aboard our little Scottish lady, myself and many, past, present, and future folks will keep telling her stories and striving to make sure her furnaces stay warm so her engine can clank away.

FUTURE WORK

I hope that my research will motivate someone to research historic vessels or even continue research on *Medea*. Historic ships such as *Medea* have a surprisingly large impact of history with the rich and illustrious careers they follow. With even more knowledge of *Medea*, her historical value will soar and there will be that much more to love about the little yacht.

ENDNOTES

1. Ross MacTaggart entitled his entry in Mains'L Haul, "The Heyday of the Steam Yacht."
2. Craig Arnold speculated that Macalister growing up in the Scottish highland is part the reason he was so fond of the outdoors and eventually led to him buying *Medea*.
3. Craig Arnold described Macalister as "going to war in style" when he steamed *Medea* over to his training grounds across the Kilbrannan sound.
4. Through diligent research, Arnold was able to acquire several letters between Macalister and Stephen & Sons.
5. This entry was not in fact written by Tetley but by one of *Medea*'s engineers at the time. His name was signed as Daniels and he wrote about the rough conditions she faced. Daniels also signed as "One breath". He earned this name by every now and then, poking his head out of the engine room to get a breath of fresh air, when *Medea* was underway.
6. An educated guess on Arnolds behalf.
7. In my opinion, this is a great example of the outstanding level of Detail that went into Arnold's research.
8. The ships log during this event has long since been missing so we only have the good Captain's word on this event
9. The Isle of Wright was a frequent stop for *Medea* while she was serving under William Hall Macalister
10. There were well over 11 significant changes, I omitted several.
11. While this is just theory, I find it is enough to investigate this scenario. Perhaps others have already looked into this.
12. As very eloquently explained by Arnold, "mud berthing" is when a vessel drives up on a mudbank at an extreme hightide, where she can then be repaired/ maintained.
13. It was noted by several that the extension to *Medea*'s deckhouse made er look awkward and top-heavy. It was said to have ruined the balance between hull and structure.
14. Holmberg was an amateur marine artist and he used *Medea* as a gallery to display his art while he had her.
15. Those who recounted the days of *Medea* described her with affectionate wording, showing the amount of care and passion they felt towards her.
16. Jake Williams spoke for many with this quote. For many of the crew who volunteer at the MMSG, we do believe that the vessels there indeed have souls and are somewhat sentient. Despite being a "hunk of metal" one can develop quite profound relationships with these vessels.

Steam Screw Yacht *Medea* continued:**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Pictures Below:

Medea berthed at the Maritime Museum, the Smoking Salon, and teak decks where spirits might still walk



Show and Tell

Making an anchor for the USS *Lexington*

By Jay MacMaster

Fabrication is an art as shown by **Jay's** transformation of raw materials into anchors of beauty!



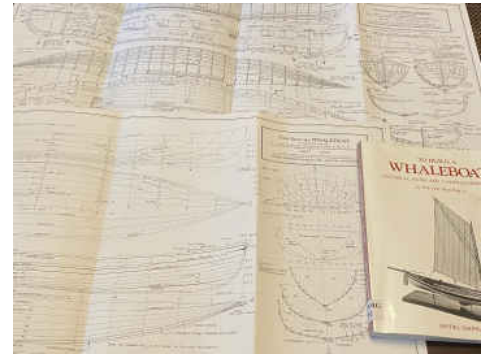
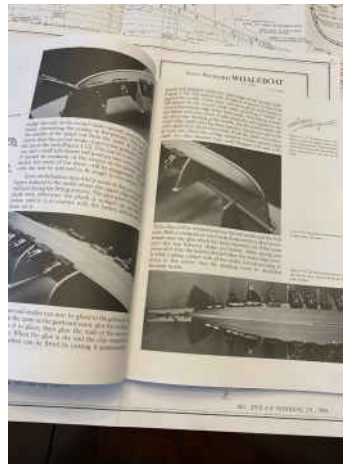
Show & Tell continued:**A Whaleboat Project****By Gary Seaton**

Following is a message sent from **Gary** while in Tennessee that demonstrates a bit of brightness to having virtual meetings and how they can in some way bring the Guild together for sharing the ship modeling craft. “As I said on Zoom, I am reviewing this manual and 6 pages of detailed drawings for a good looking whaleboat. I am a bit separated from a bunch of my tools, so I’m getting organized for the new project. It’s an involved and challenging approach to model building. Hopefully, I will have something to share with the Guild when we next get together in person.

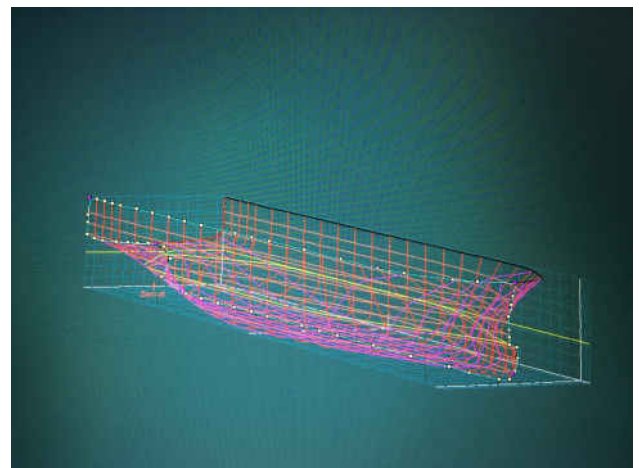
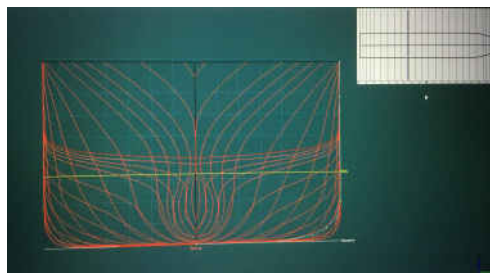
I’m sending along a couple photos from the manual also.

Enjoy; see y’all later...”

Indeed, Gary!

**Various Projects shared during the Guild’s January online meeting****By Isaac Wills from New York**

Computer aided design classes, yipes!



Isaac showed the above images that he described as, “a MAXSURF model of the NSMV (National Multi-mission Security Vessel). This was a project for my ship form class. This will be SUNY Maritime's new training ship in 2023. She just recently had her steel cutting ceremony .”



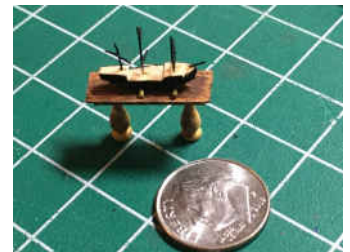
Isaac next offered a “before” picture of the J-class yacht, *Endeavor*. He said, “Around campus, I’m known as the “model boat guy”. One student came to me with this beat up model that was ready to be tossed out. I’m glad he came to me because it was a beautiful model that now looks very good in my dorm room after some repairs and TLC. Also, notice the makeshift workshop I made in my dorm. Nothing can stop me from modeling!” The “after” picture is on the following page.

Show & Tell Isaac Wills continued:



The picture to the left is **Isaac's** "after" picture of the "J" class yacht *Endeavor*.

The below series of pictures are of a substantially modified model by **Isaac** that has been tracked over the months in the newsletter . He reports the model is the "Revell 1:72 *Black Pearl*. I got this model my second semester at college and have been working on it since (about 1.5 years now). I got a lot of practice with weathering on this one. Also, I went a bit cray (Ed. young speak for "crazy") and furnished the great cabin as well. I even included a tiny model, a model of the *Pearl*. I've been staying real busy at school!"



Model Restorations

By Jon Sanford

The picture to the right and on the following page are models restored by **Jon** and for sale by the museum. He noted that most of the models were donated by the **Kyle** family. Donations are always welcomed.



Show & Tell Jon Sanford Restorations continued:

Models are displayed in the Maritime Museum's Gift Shop for sale or donation. All were restored by Jon!



The two models pictured above are pictured in the Museum's Model Shop after restoration and ready to go!

Last Words

As meetings continue to be online for some months still, **Show and Tell** can also include reports of continued modeling activity like that told about by participants of the January Virtual Guild Meeting. Some activities are even off the ship modeling track like the mechanical glider launcher by UGears shown by me, a simple diversion for these times though not for a very young person. Be well and safe - **Guy the Editor**



And a favorite picture of the Maritime Museum's Mark II Patrol Craft Fast Swift Boat from the bow of which the picture of *Medea* on page 17 was taken last week.

