



Knots & Splices

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This picture is of the replica of the Dutch East India Company ship *Batavia*. The replica was built between 1985 and 1995 in Lelystad, Holland. One of our members, Tom Kalkman, was able to visit the ship while the work was under way and gave us a description of the project upon his return. Traditional materials were employed but records of the original ship were sketchy. Pieces from the recovered wreck were helpful and construction methods from the early seventeenth century gave guidance to the builders. The replica is on display at Lelystad. A story about the original *Batavia* begins on page 2.

BATAVIA

In 1602 the States-General of the Netherlands granted a charter to the Dutch East India Company (known as the VOC from the Dutch words for “United East India Company”) a 21 year monopoly to carry out colonial activities in Asia. The company was a huge success, doing more business in the spice trade than all the other European East Indies companies together and more than twice as much as the runner-up, the British East India Company. Unfortunately by the end of the eighteenth century the VOC was overcome by corruption and in 1800 went bankrupt and was taken over by the Dutch government.

The company operations were based in the collection of islands which are now Indonesia. In 1619 the VOC established their Asian headquarters on the island of Java at the port of Jayakarta, which they renamed “Batavia”. (When the Dutch left after World War II the name was changed again, to “Jakarta”, now the capital of Indonesia.). The company employed dozens of ships to carry out their trade and over the nearly two centuries of operations had over 4700 ships.

One of these ships, built in the Netherlands and completed in 1628, was named *Batavia* after the chief settlement. There were never any drawings made for the construction of the original vessel but the 1995 replica (see the cover of this issue) was built as close as possible to the design of the original and we do know the statistics for the replica. She is about 1200 tons displacement and is 186 feet long with a 34 foot beam and a draft of 17 feet. She carries over 12,000 sq ft of sail.

The *Batavia* left Texel (a Dutch island at the entrance to the Zuiderzee, which existed then) in October, 1628, with 322 passengers, including women and children, and a crew of 19 aboard, bound for the East Indies. She carried a cargo of gold and silver for trade and her intended return cargo was spices. An intermediate stop was made at Capetown where she replenished supplies of food and especially water.

Some time on the voyage the skipper (second in command to the captain who was also the senior merchant) and a junior merchant of the company cooked up a scheme to take over the ship and its cargo of precious metals. They recruited a few of the crew to assist them. After leaving Capetown the skipper deliberately sailed the ship south of the usual track and staged an incident which should have caused the captain to exact punishment. The mutineers then intended to take over the ship. However the captain didn’t take the bait – he was too ill.

On 4 June, 1629, the *Batavia* struck Morning Reef near Beacon Island in the Houtman Abrolhos group of islands off the west coast of Australia. All but forty of the passengers and crew were able to reach the island including all the women and children. However, the islands had no water and little potential food. After discovering this the captain and

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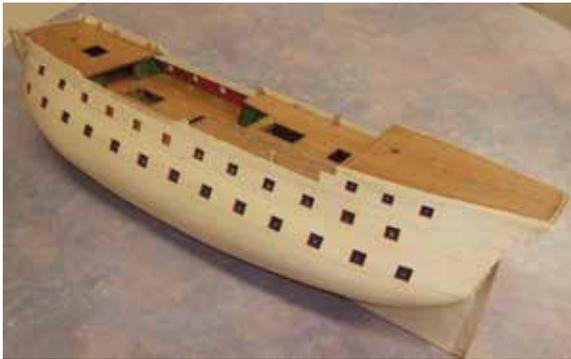
LAST MEETING

There were nine members plus one visitor, Peng Mok, present at the February meeting of the club.

Captain Lorne is having his problems dealing with a new printer which seems to have the capability of doing much more than you want it to do. However, he claimed one small victory – a new sign up sheet, used for the first time at our meeting.

Neil Lund is contemplating an item for “Knots & Splices” about model paints – what is available and what the experience has been with their use. He asked all the members to send him an e-mail at cnlund.2@shaw.ca letting him know what paints they have tried and what results they have had (good or bad).

ON THE WAYS



Bob Reeves brought his *Norske Love* (left) with the planking complete and ready for painting. He steamed the individual planks so they could be bent to the hull shape and then secured them to the frames using carpenter's yellow glue. Bob held the plank in place until the glue set, which it did quickly. He didn't use any nails or other fasteners on the job.

Patrick Henry showed the progress he has made on his Japanese *I-400* class submarine. At 1:350 the size of the detail parts is so small one should have a magnifying glass to admire them! He brought one of the books he uses for reference on the sub - “*I-400*” by Henry Sakaida, Gary Nila and Koji Takaki. Patrick also showed a casting he had just received for the bridge area of the 1:350 scale model of HMS *Belfast* (next on his list?).

Lorne Yacuk is regaining his interest in his partly completed model of HMS *Unicorn*. Now he has to gather the strength to actually do something about it!

Campbell Ross is working on the rigging for his HMS *Unicorn*. He has run out of the glue used on the rigging and is looking for an equivalent replacement.

Campbell brought in three books which he has found to be very interesting.

□ “*Fighting Ships 1750 – 1850*” by Sam Willis – colour reproductions of paintings and drawings of maritime scenes (many battles), with commentary.

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ON THE WAYS

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- “Nicholas Pocock 1749 – 1821” by David Cordingly – the life and adventures of Royal Navy captain Pocock during some of the wars with the French
- “Patrick O’Brian’s Navy” edited by Richard O’Neill – an illustrated companion to the novels about Jack Aubrey’s world - life in the Royal Navy during Napoleonic times.



Steven Swystun is shown (left) with the hull of his model of USS *Constitution*. It is from a Revell kit which he brought in last month. The hull is assembled from two moulded plastic halves. Steven has glued them together and applied paint. The original *Constitution* had copper plates fastened to the part of the hull below the waterline to reduce attack by marine organisms. This will be simulated on the model by strips of copper tape supplied with the kit. Steven also brought the kit for his next project, Cook’s *Endeavour* by Mamoli.

Alan Thain obtained from the Edmonton Public Library on a one week loan a two disk DVD set covering Captain Cook’s voyages of discovery. Besides relating the adventures of the expeditions, the tapes gave a good description of their ship *Discovery* which might be of use to anyone attempting a model.

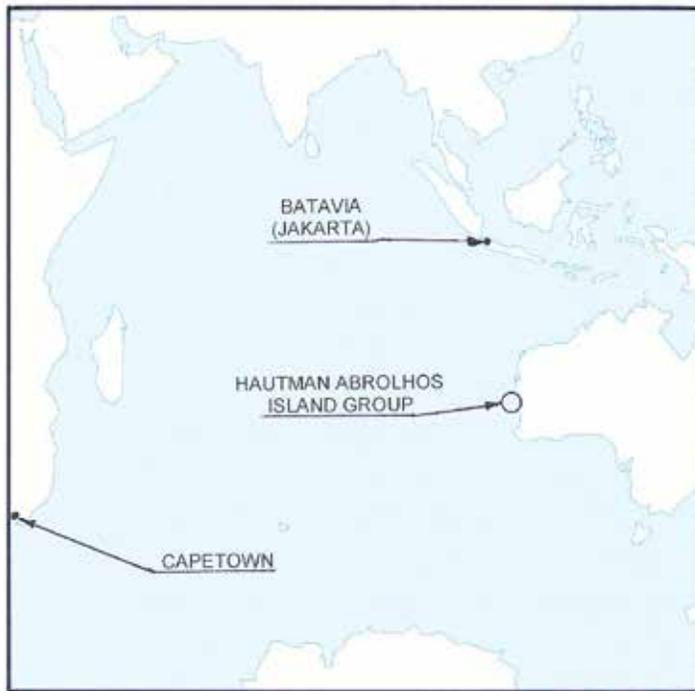
Our visitor Peng Mok is the son of our late member Kelvin Mok. He is in the unhappy process of disposing of his father’s estate. Kelvin was a great collector, including some kits for ship models. Peng brought four of them which he hopes to sell, probably on eBay, Kijiji or the like, but he wanted to give ASMS members the chance to buy them if they were interested. The kits on offer are: *African Queen* by Billings, *Mayflower* by Model Shipways, HMS *Victory* by Sergal and HMS *Victory* cross section by Corel.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Alberta Ship Model Society will be on Wednesday, 19 March at 7:00 pm at McNally Senior High School. Bring your current project, or bring a favourite completed model.

BATAVIA

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the skipper, with the boatswain and a few passengers and crew members, made a remarkable 33 day voyage to Batavia in the 30 foot longboat. Their reception there was mixed. The skipper was arrested for negligence and probably died in prison while the boatswain was executed. The captain was given command of another ship, the *Saardam*, to rescue the survivors and try to salvage the rich cargo. It took them two months to reach the islands only to find that a mutiny and massacre had taken place with at least a hundred killed.

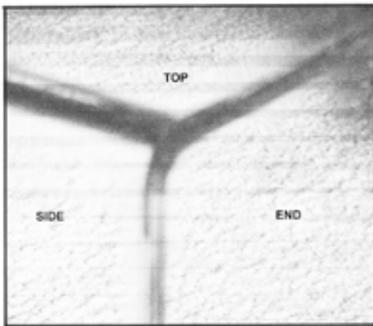
While the captain was absent the junior merchant, who had been left in charge of the survivors, knew that if the captain got to Batavia he, the junior merchant, would be in trouble. He made plans to hijack any rescue ship that came and use the vessel to escape, taking the treasure with him. Through a ruse he marooned on another island all the soldiers who had been among the passengers and then proceeded to have his co-conspirators murder all those who he considered might oppose his scheme, killing at least 110 including women and children. However the soldiers found both food and water on their island, and when they became aware of the massacre they armed themselves. The mutineers did attack but were losing to the soldiers when the captain arrived with the *Saardam*. The combined force of soldiers plus the new arrivals was able to overcome and capture all the mutineers. Because there too many of them to carry back to Batavia the captain held a court right on the island. Most of the mutineers were hanged but the leaders were taken to the capital to face punishment, which varied from flogging to various unpleasant forms of death. When the final count was made only 68 people who had sailed on the ship *Batavia* made it to the port Batavia.

Despite knowing the approximate place where the *Batavia* went aground it took many years to confirm the location. It wasn't until 4 June, 1963, 334 years to the day since the sinking, that the wreck was identified. Some of the artefacts from the wreck are displayed in western Australian museums in Fremantle and Geraldton, Most of the cannon and anchors plus some of the timbers are still at the wreck site which today is a premier dive location.

DUST COVERS FOR MODELS

At our January meeting there was some discussion of dust covers. I know that the amount of dust which collects on top of a cover would otherwise be on the model which would be a real problem for me to clean. Our late member Russ McAllister used 100 pound air to blow the dust off his models on the principle that if anything came loose he hadn't fastened it properly. My models are too fragile for that treatment so I have gone the dust cover route. I'll try here to recount some of my experience.

It begins with the base on which the model is mounted. I'm not building a piece of furniture but I do try to make a good looking base. I have used walnut, mahogany and oak. It is important that the base be ½" to 1" or so larger on all sides and ends than the outer dimensions of the model (including anything that hangs over the side) so that the cover can slide on easily.



My covers are of about 1/8" thick sheet acrylic which is more durable than other plastics. They are held on to their bases by two #3 or #4 countersunk brass screws at each end. The screws should be located so the bottom edge of the plastic clears the surface of shelf by about 1/16" and so doesn't scrape the shelf. I also glue felt over the whole bottom of the base to protect the shelf

surface. The builder may choose to make the sides and top of the cover from a single sheet of plastic bent at the top as shown in the picture above. (The dark line between the top and side in the photo is not a joint; it is caused by light on the curved surface of the plastic as it follows the bend between the side and top.) My covers were built by Mac Plastics here in Edmonton though I'm sure there are others who can do the job.

Alberta Ship Model Society

Society Website = www.albertashipmodelsociety.ca