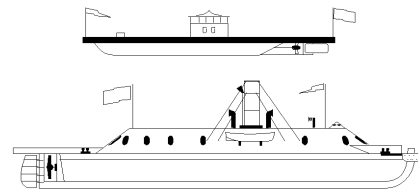


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook

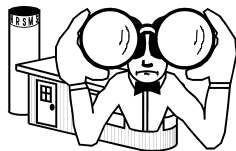


No. 259

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

JANUARY, 2008

From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



It is Our Society

Welcome to the New Year. I hope you all made a binding resolution to start or complete a ship model this year. That should be a goal you make and keep. The model doesn't have to be big and elaborate or even complicated. It doesn't have to be that heirloom project you've planned for, for years. Just get yourself in the shop and make something. And don't forget to bring the evidence to Show and Tell.

Every month, this Society schedules an informative program for the meeting. Bob Comet is the committee chairman and controls its content. If he calls on you, please agree to participate; but don't wait for the call, see him first. We need diversity in these programs. They can cover the gamut from "how I do this" to "how do I do this" to your pet nautical history subject. Any relevant item can form the basis of a tech talk. There are folks in this group who can help you with formatting and presentation—use them. Please make every effort to contribute.

The pages of this *Logbook* are yours as well! The editor informs me that he would like to see an eight page issue each month. That means that you have to help him fill those eight pages. We generally have room for short articles, plans, shop notes, book reviews, lost and found, and sale items. Take advantage of the space we have to get your message out.

The annual banquet will be here in late March. We are going to move the event to another location—details to follow. Please plan to attend and join everyone in celebrating our nautical heritage.

(Continued on page 3)

NOTICE

The Hampton Roads Ship Model Society has lost a long-time member, friend and mentor.

Jack Bobbitt died in North Carolina on Saturday, January 6th.

Funeral arraignments are incomplete at the time of publication.

Mystery Photo #258: This image should really test our college of nautical knowledge. To identify the vessel all we have to do is go back to basics. "Back to basics" is a phrase we often hear connected with professional sport teams when they don't perform as expected. Sometimes you hear it referred to as going back to fundamentals. The implication being that things either got too complicated or they were trying to be too clever. The basics of ship identification are simple as well and we should never really abandon them. So follow the basics, apply a little common sense, and the identity will surface.

The number one basic rule is to catalog what you see in the image. First, look for generalities. Think about what you see. For instance: Here is a sailing vessel resting comfortably in some protected waters—the hull is not disturbing the water, the ship's anchor is not set, and the sails appear slack. The water is dead calm and the only sign of wind is a light breeze pinning the sails to the masts and a slight ripple with the flag. At the bow, we see no riding chain extending to an anchor buoy. The port side boats are swung out but their gribes are still in place while several launches mill about off the starboard bow. The port boat boom is still secured at the hull. A close look reveals that the forward starboard boat davits have been run out. Do you think the vessel just arrived at an anchorage or is it, perhaps, in the act of departing? The hull seems very clean and orderly; perhaps she has been there for some time.

More observations: You can wonder if the sails are set out to dry; I cannot image a vessel making anchorage with its upper courses set and with no smoke coming from the stack. As for activity, one sailor seems to be on the bowsprit behind the sail at the foot of the jib. Several more are visible on the lower main yard and at various locations along the spar deck. And, of course, the boats in the water are occupied.

Now, let's look at specifics. What are the prominent features of this vessel? Well to begin with, there is a very prominent ensign correctly flown from the peak of the spanker gaff. The

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday January 12, 2008

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1400 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

rectangular flag seems to be a white field with a darker, centered cross dividing it into four squares, and there is a hint of another pattern in the upper canton.

We can use this to determine country of origin.

Next we clearly see three masts. The first two have yards displaying square sails while the third or mizzen carries fore-and-aft sails only. A ship with this type of rig is called a bark. A bark has a minimum of three masts and must carry yards and square sails on the fore and main masts. If additional masts are fitted, they will also carry fore-and-aft sails. An interesting feature of the yards is the fitting of stunsail booms.

Next we see a prominent smoke stack or funnel sited between the numbers one and two masts. This is clear evidence of auxiliary motive power. Its large size would indicate that the power plant is coal fired. In this case due to the absence of side paddles and paddle boxes we have to assume screw propulsion. This is important in helping to narrow the date range of our image. You can loosely use the dates 1860 to 1900 for now.

Next we only see four gun ports. The fewer the number of gun ports the better the cannons? The lack of an ominous row of closely spaced gun ports suggests that our vessel carries modern rifles. This observation narrows our search window by 20-years or so to maybe 1880 to 1900 or 1870 to 1890. One very interesting feature and one very hard to discern from the image concerns the fore most gun opening. If you look very closely at the image, you can see just the slightest of wiggles in the two accent stripes (more likely rub rails) that denote the sheer and run just at the base of the bulwarks right above and extending slightly forward of the gun port. This identifies a large notch in the hull designed to give these forward guns excellent forward arcs of fire. When viewed from above, these notches are very similar to those found on large capital ships. I imagine these made for very wet gun stations.

Next we can see an old style, iron-stocked anchor. Since one end of the stock is bent at the end it can be assumed that the stock is removable and the anchor collapsible. Can

we determine why it is carried so far aft of the cathead?

Finally along with minor details such as hull ports, anchor hawsers, the ash chute, ship's boats arrangement and

style, and the curved stem and figurehead, we can see a canvas ventilator. The ventilator suggests a hotter climate. Also the single flag suggests that the vessel is in home waters. If she wasn't, we would see the vessel fly the host nation's flag as well.

If I disregard the flag for the moment, I can find a very similar vessel in the United States section of Conway's *All the World's Fighting Ships 1860-1905*.

On page 129, there is an image of the wooden screw sloop USS *Ranger* whose hull and arrangement are surprisingly similar to the Mystery vessel. (*Ranger was the subject of the Sept., '07 Mystery Photo; check it out?*) The rig is different, however. *Ranger* is a three-masted barkentine. And there are other subtle differences.

Searching through the remainder of Conway's book yields other similar vessels but no clear match. The fact that Conway's does not include a photograph of every listed ship and vessel class is a hindrance, but with careful study, you can find features on existing ship images that match with those on our Mystery.

For instance, on page 12, an image of the wooden central battery iron-clad corvette (whew) HMS *Favorite* clearly shows the same white ensign seen in our Mystery image. Cross checking this find with flag images on page 3 of my 1931 *Jane's fighting Ships* proves that our Mystery flag is the British white ensign. More correctly: The White Ensign or St George's Ensign consists of a red St George's Cross on a white field with the Union Flag in the upper canton. Defining the vessel's nationality is a major step to identifying the vessel.

At this point I was puzzled by the "sloop" classification used for *Ranger*. Clearly she was a barkentine not a sloop. Could the answer to

my search be part of the "sloop" definition? I used a [Google](#) search to define "sloop" in its naval connotation. Quoting from a Web source we see that "The naval term "sloop" referred to ships with different rigs and sizes varying from navy

(Continued on page 3)



MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Monthly Meeting

December 15, 2007

Host, Bob Comet

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, John Cheevers at 1807 hours. There were no guests present. There were no corrections to the minutes. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report. Eric gave an accounting of the auction items from the Mastini Collection and Eric said that he would reimburse Tom Saunders for his expenditure to procure the Mastini items. Heinz Shiller said that he would make up any difference to the treasury as per his agreement. There was no Webmaster's report.

Old Business: Len Wine reported that he had contacted the Rivers Inn in Gloucester and they could accommodate our banquet. Len and Bill Clarke will work the details with the restraint and will set the date on a Saturday in the later half of March.

New Business: The Skipper mentioned that the nomination of officers would take place at the January meeting. John established a Founders' Award Committee. Those named were

Tim Woods, Bob Comet, Tom Saunders. John raised the question of changing the bylaws to reflect the trend to hold meetings on Saturday at the Mariners' Museum. After some discussion, it was decided that no change was necessary at this time. Bill Clarke announced changes in the hours at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. Bill also noted that the Mariners' Museum Library would be moving to Christopher Newport University in the spring. Len Wine inquired about a book he had loaned and had not been returned. The book had been passed through several hands and its current holder was identified. Bob Comet initiated a discussion on the Battle of Trafalgar.

Show & Tell: Tony Clayton talked about the fire that occurred aboard the *Cutty Sark* this past spring and the costs associated with the delay. Heinz Shiller talked about Nelson's Battle of Aboukir Bay and that sparked discussion about the English fleets versus their contemporary foes. Bob Comet showed his progress on his Peapod. John Cheevers showed a paper model and showed the nozzles for drive pod for his tugboat project. Henry Clapp showed his model of a three-log canoe. Len Wine showed plans for a 60 foot dragline boat. Dragline boats worked in pairs to mark obstructions in waterways.

The meeting was adjourned to a holiday social gathering.

(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

to navy. [A] "Sloop-of-war" was more of a reference to the purpose of the craft rather than the specific size or sail plan. Generally a sloop was smaller than a frigate; however, in the later days of the U.S. Navy's sailing fleet, some of the largest vessels were called sloops because they carried fewer guns than a frigate (fewer than 20) and the mission was that of a sloop (vague). The classification of sloop was similar to a corvette." While this definition does not clear up every question it is sufficient to understand that I needed to look at British sloops and not sloop or bark-rigged vessels.

Going back to Conway's I saw that Britain had classes of screw "sloops" that were wooden, composite, and steel hulled. Several of the accompanying profile drawings bore similarities with our Mystery ship while none of the photographs did. Momentarily stumped, I quickly decided to make a Google search of each type and see what turned up.

Before I reveal the results of my search, let's see what our responders say. Honest Bob Comet was the first to reply and say simply "This one has me stumped. I don't have a clue what ship it is." He then adds some fine and helpful comments such as: "The ensign shows she is a British man-of-war. She is an auxiliary screw propelled vessel - any where from 1840 to 1880. Ship rigged. Shows her hove to with sails backing. Ports do not look like gun ports, although they could be. Has port holes, which would place her in about

(Continued on page 4) **3**

NAUTICAL TERM

Dead Horse Was a name for the period of time after a ship's sailing that her crew was working off advanced wages, often a month or more. When it was ended, the custom in some British ships was to celebrate by making an effigy of a horse from scrap material, hoisting it aloft and outboard, lighting it afire, and cutting it adrift.

Submitted By: Tim Wood

(Continued from page 1)



Finally, make every effort to get to the meetings as often as you can. We enjoy a new meeting date and time, first Saturday after the second Friday at 2:00PM in the Mariners' Museum War Room. The space is generous and can hold a large crowd. Get thee to those meetings.

John

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 258 is:

H.M.S. Gannett

BOOK REVIEW

A Sense of the World: How a Blind Man became History's Greatest Traveler by Jason Roberts, Published by Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.

LT James Holman, RN, KW, F.R.S. was the fourth son of an owner of an apothecary shop in Exeter, England. The book is a biography of his life. As a twelve year old he entered the Royal Navy as a Volunteer First Class under the patronage of Admiral Lord Bridport, head of the Channel Fleet. He passed the examination for Lieutenant at age 18 and was assigned as Third Lieutenant in the frigate *CLEOPATRA*. Holman had spent most of his Naval career on the North American station. He narrowly missed the *Guerriere* – *Constitution* action by virtue of illness which had afflicted him. He suffered through the barbaric medical treatments practiced at that time, but his illness continued and ultimately resulted in his blindness. After all medical cures had been tried for his yet undiagnosed illness, the prescription of “coction” was made, which consisted of doing nothing and allowing the body to “expel the disordered humours”. Although his other symptoms seemed to cure themselves, his blindness persisted until his death. He was put on half-pay. He taught himself to write by means of a rigged up stylus, to navigate city streets and to ride horseback unaided. He managed to obtain an appointment as a Naval Knight of Windsor (KW) which resulted in his receiving room and board, and 34 pounds annually, plus the ability to continue to receive his half-pay of 50 pounds. The foregoing takes up the first third of the book.

The remainder of the book deals with his adventures as a pioneering world traveler. During these travels, despite his blindness he was on his own, and managed to be the most traveled person in the world. He wrote a travel book on his adventures through Europe and Siberia which made him famous throughout England. He managed to circumvent the rules sufficiently so that he was able to maintain his status as a Naval Knight which sustained him and gave him a place to write his travel books. His later adventures took him to West Africa, South Africa, Zulu land, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zanzibar, Ceylon, India, China, Australia, Tasmania, and South America. By 1846 he had logged over a quarter million miles of travel. His later years were again plagued by illness and he died in relative obscurity in 1857.

The book is well written, entertaining, illustrated with contemporary images, and completely supported by historic documents. An inspiring book about what a man can do, despite severe handicap, when self motivated toward his accomplishments.

Bob Comet

(Continued from page 3)



Mystery Photo

the Victorian era. Has lots of boats. Three in davits on the port side, another set of davits is empty, for a probable total of eight pulling cutters. The two lying off the starboard bow could be the ones from the empty davits. Her white hull is not in keeping with the typical royal sailing navy black. The wind screen rigged indicates being in warm weather or tropical waters. The back ground in the photo is nondescript, although there is what appears to be a funnel projecting above the building in the left back ground. The hull looks well painted, no visible stains or streaks from scuppers, etc.” Clearly he is on the right track.

And we had a response from Tim Wood. “This month is a tough one!” he said. “This month's ship appears to be flying the flag of the Channel Islands, it's a little hard to tell, so that is my guess and I'm sticking to it! The photograph is in good shape and is of excellent quality, which gives me a time frame of the middle to late 1800's. So, I started doing some snooping on Google for ships from the Channel Islands around the late 1800's, the only ship that comes close is the SS *Ohio*. The SS *Ohio* was built by Caird & Company Greenock, Yard 148.” While his arrow hit a little farther from the mark, he did go back to basics.

Your author hit pay dirt with a Googled search titled “composite screw sloop.” On page 2 of the results was our Mystery image proudly captioned “HMS *Gannet* underway, 1890's.” More research on the ship produced the image at another site that captioned it “HMS *Gannet* getting underway – Suez 1894.” Boy if it were always this easy. Actually it wasn't. I searched in vain, as Bob did, using many combinations of search criteria before I realized I had to return to basics to solve this mystery.

As it turns out, identifying the vessel only begins the story.

From the website: “HMS *Gannet* was built at Sheerness Dockyard on the River Medway in 1878. The ship is a composite screw sloop and is typical of the smaller gunboats built by the Victorian Navy to patrol the shores of the British Empire. As the last surviving small ship of Queen Victoria's Royal Navy HMS *Gannet* is a nationally important vessel. Her composite construction and transitional design reflects a key period of development in the field of ship design and marine engineering technology that culminated in wood giving way to iron and steel, and sail giving way to steam. Today HMS *Gannet* is preserved at The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, where she forms part of the core collection of the registered museum and is open to the public, she is also listed on the core collection of Britain's National Register of Historic Vessels.

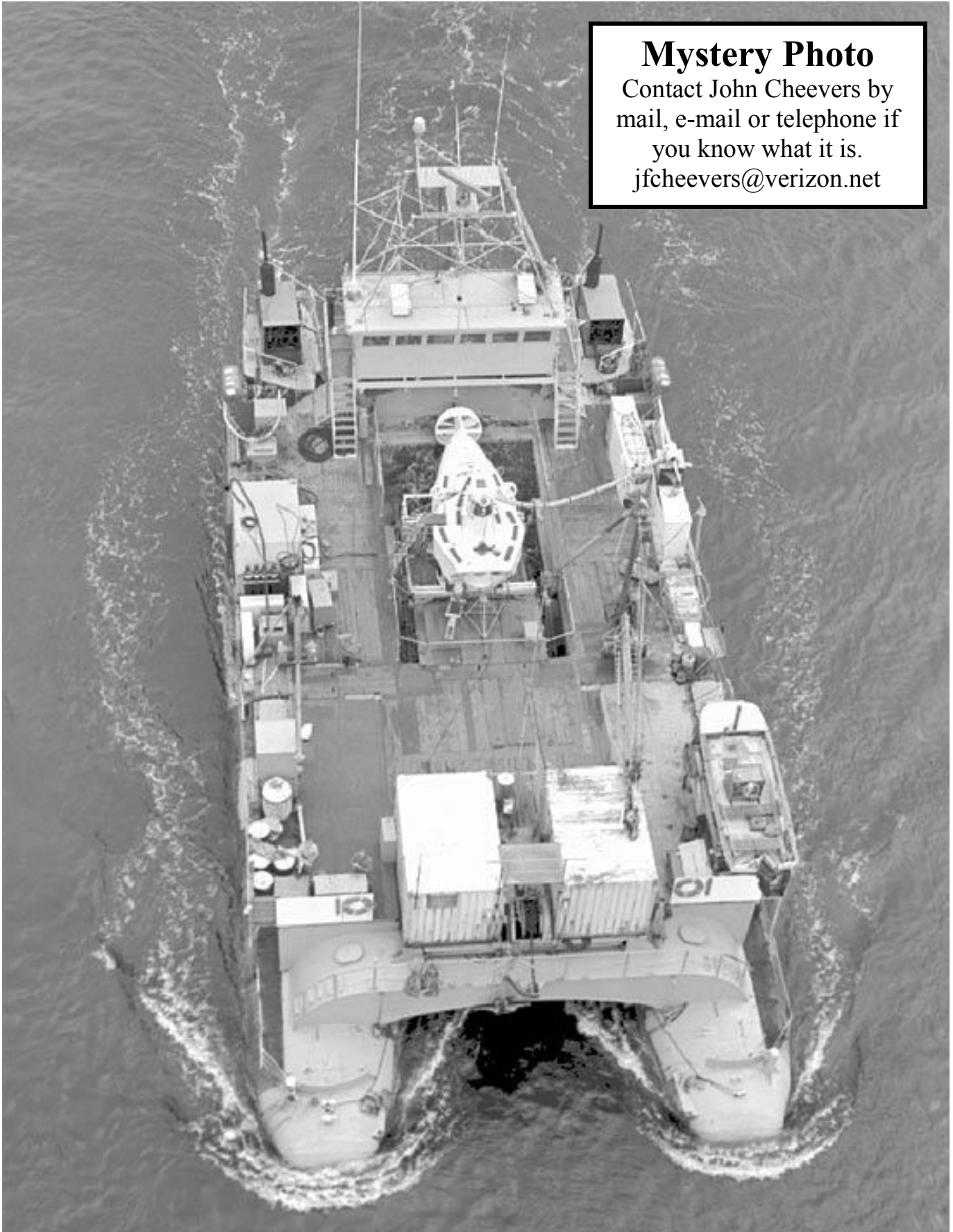
HMS *Gannet* had two very different lives—operational warship and drill ship. Between 1878 and 1895 she served as an operational sloop of the Royal Navy until being converted into a drill ship in 1902. From then until 1911 she served as HMS *President*, the Headquarters' ship of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and from 1914 to 1968 as the dormitory ship for a boy's pre-sea training school, TS *Mercury*, moored on the River Hamble. With the closure of

(Continued on page 6)

“Laughter is but a frown turned upside down”

Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by
mail, e-mail or telephone if
you know what it is.
jfccheevers@verizon.net



NOTABLE EVENTS

JANUARY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of Officers
Presentation "Tools for the Ship Modeler", By John Cheevers

FEBRUARY

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of Officers
Presentation "Making Water", By Charles Landrum

MARCH

- 15 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation "Ship modeling research via the Internet", by John Wyld

APRIL

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum



WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Mate: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Len Wine (757) 566-8597
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer

(Continued from page 4)



Mystery Photo

the *TS Mercury* in July 1968, *Gannet's* role as a school accommodation ship ended and responsibility for her reverted back to the Royal Navy, from whom she had been on loan for nearly sixty years. In 1971 the Royal Navy transferred the ownership and the responsibility for the restoration and preservation of the *Gannet* to The Maritime Trust.

In 1987 The Historic Dockyard at Chatham chartered *Gannet* from The Maritime Trust and started a restoration program. The objective of which was to return *Gannet* to her 1886 appearance - when she saw action for the only time in her naval career at the defense of the port of Suakin, [Sudan]. In 1994 ownership of the vessel was passed to the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust. The restoration completed by late 2003 has seen the ship's largely original hull fully conserved and re-coppered, as well as the re-fitting of the original decks, cabins, masts and spars."

It seems that *HMS Gannet* is the last surviving example of a Victorian Royal Navy warship showing the transition

of sail to steam. "A sloop of the 'Osprey' class fitted with a clipper bow, she was built of teak on an iron frame and weighed 1130 tons. She was rigged as a bark, but carried a two cylinder Humphrey and Tennant horizontal compound engine developing 1107 h.p. The propeller could be drawn up above the water into the stern in order to reduce 'drag' when the sails were being used, and the telescopic funnel could be lowered out of the way of the set of the sails."

Her particulars are as listed:

Class: *Osprey/Doterel* class sloop

Length: 190 ft overall (57.91 m), 170 ft perpendiculars

Beam: 36 ft (58.81m)

Draught: 16 ft maximum

Displacement: 1130 tons

Machinery: Single shaft two cylinder horizontal compound expansion steam engine. Three cylindrical boilers

Speed: 15 knots (under sail), 12 1/2 knots (under steam)

Range (under steam): 2,014 nautical miles @ 11 1/2 knots (7.3 days) 3,240 nautical miles @ 5 knots (27 days)

Complement: 13 Officers & Warrant Officers, 27 Petty Officers, 64 Seamen, 11 Boys, 24 Marines

Armament: 2 x 7" Muzzle Loading, Rifled guns (pivoting), 4 x 64 pdrs (2 pivoting 2 broadside)

Ships' Boats: 1 x 25 ft. steam cutter, 1 x 30 ft. cutter, 2 x 27 ft. whalers, 1 x 16 ft. jolly boat, 1 x 12 ft. dinghy

One interesting feature of *Gannet* is her unique figurehead. This ship does not sport the usual buxom woman or noble beast. Instead she sports the likeness of her name. Webster's defines the noun gannet as a large fish-eating sea bird. Not sure about you but I think the carving bears more than a passing resemblance to a goose.

The accompanying photos show *Gannet* as restored.

John Cheevers