

Restoration of “Maud of Great Yarmouth” 1982-1999

Photo No 32

The first task – repairing the framing



All sections of oak framing in the hull of Maud were removed for repair or replacement. Large quantities of 4” (10.16cm) thick oak were sourced from a wide area, from Kent, Sussex, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. Most of the oak had to be grown curves so that the grain of the wood followed the shape of the frame, giving it natural resistance to breaking. During Maud’s working life frames had been doubled up. The pattern of frames was restored to the original.

Photo No 33

After the framing – repairing the outside planking



Again, sourcing materials was a challenge. Maud’s hull planking is of English oak, the thickest planks being 2.5” (6.35cm) thick. Joints in the planking of a boat are always kept to the minimum number. Maud is 60’6” (18.5m) long and so it was essential to get oak planking that was as long as possible, at least in excess of 20’ (6.2m). Most of the oak planking for the restoration came from Humberside in one consignment, a very costly purchase. The oak had to be steamed so that it could be bent around the curves of Maud’s hull and each plank had to overlap the adjacent planks snugly.

Photo No 34

Lifting Maud back into the water



Once the hull had been made watertight it was essential to put Maud back in the water as quickly as possible. The planking of wooden boats shrinks when dry for too long. Maud would be finished afloat at Womack on the outskirts of Ludham.

Photo No 35

Laying the decks



Maud has oak-planked foredeck, after deck and side decks. The side decks are made of single-width wide oak boards while the foredeck and after deck are made of narrower planks. There is a hatch in the foredeck to allow the mast to be raised and lowered. The after deck is small and is laid around the steering well. Under the after deck there would have been storage cupboards but they have not been replaced.

In this photo note that the mast support (called the “tabernacle”) has been reconstructed.

Photo No 36

Constructing the cabin



Here you see the back wall of Maud's cabin under construction. Access to the cabin is via the steering well and doors in the back wall of the cabin. The cabin windows, one either side, have wooden sliding shutters rather than glass.

The cabin has a wood-burning stove, two wide bunks and plenty of storage space for the wherryman's food and clothing as well as fuel for the stove.

For sailing the cabin doors are removed, allowing the wherryman to brace his feet against the door posts when steering.

Photo No 37

Maud's original mast-top vane



It was fortunate that Maud's original vane had been lodged with the Bridewell Museum in Norwich. The owners of Maud were able to view the vane and to take a rubbing of it with brass-rubbing materials. Vincent then made a new one from steel sheet.

Photo No 38

Maud's new name board



This was painted by the late Jim Codd, a retired graphic artist working for Coleman's Mustard.

Maud's colour scheme had been arrived at with reference to surviving paint on the boat and from a description of Maud in one of the early books about wherries.

Photo No 39

A new winch for hoisting sail



The winch is an extremely important part of the wherry's equipment. As Maud's winch was missing, the new winch was designed on the basis of other remaining winches on wherries built by Halls of Reedham. Although no other trading wherries built by Halls survive there are two pleasure wherries built by them, the Solace and the Hathor. When Maud's restoration began the pleasure wherry Sundog was also fairly intact. It has since been broken up.

Photo No 40

Maud ready for a celebratory sail



On the morning of 20 September 1999 Maud was alongside the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club at Wroxham waiting for guests to arrive for her recommissioning party. It had rained hard overnight but there was a suitable wind for sailing round the broad and other wherries had arrived to join in the celebrations.

Photo No 41



Maud sailing in public for the first time since 1918 or 1919

On 20 September 1999, after 18 years' work, it was the beginning of a new life for Maud. Now she would carry human cargoes but she would not be converted to do so. Instead she would retain her open cargo hold in the hope of one day carrying a cargo of Norfolk reed.