Building (and Carving?)
“Royal Caroline”

Photos by Janos Nemeth, commentary by Tom Wolf

Janos’ “Royal Caroline” has won a multitude of awards over the past 5 years, and that is just about how long it has taken Janos to build and decorate the model.

**HMY Royal Caroline** was a ship-rigged royal yacht, ordered in 1749 to replace HMY Carolina as Britain’s principal royal yacht. Built at Deptford Dockyard under the supervision of Master Shipwright John Hollond to a design by Surveyor of the Navy Joseph Allin, Royal Caroline was launched on 29 January 1750 and commissioned later that year.

She was renamed **HMY Royal Charlotte** in honour of the occasion of transporting the Duchess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz from Cuxhaven, Kiel to marry George III in 1761.

Royal Charlotte continued in service until July 1820, when she was finally broken up after seventy years of continuous service.
Ordered: 22 August 1749
Builder: Deptford Dockyard
Launched: 29 January 1750
Renamed: HMY Royal Charlotte in 1761
Fate: Broken up in July 1820

**General characteristics**

Class & type: Royal yacht
Tons burthen: 232 11/94 (bm)
Length: 90 ft 1 in (27.46 m) (gundeck)
          72 ft 2.5 in (22.009 m) (keel)
Beam: 24 ft 7 in (7.49 m)
Depth of hold: 11 ft (3.4 m)
Sail plan: Full rigged ship
Armament: 8 x 4pdrs (or 10 x 3pdrs)
          8 x ½pdr swivels

The model is based on the double plank-on-bulkhead kit from Mantua-Panart and is scaled 1:47.

Nothing but some bulkheads were used from the kit, everything else is made from scratch by Janos with reference to *Anatomy of the Ship Series "Royal Yacht Caroline"* by Sergio Bellabarba and Giorgio Osculati.
For the external planking Huon Pine stained in Golden Oak was used. Deck planking is Holly and deck furniture is made of a variety of timbers (boxwood, walnut, dogwood and pear wood). The original cannon was made of turned brass, this was used as a master to cast the barrels from Pewter (white metal) in a heat resistant silicone rubber moulding.

Regrettably Janos did not keep a photo-progress of the build which he reports was nothing out of the ordinary, but we report on this project because of the variety and number of modifications with decorations/ornaments created by Janos to make this the award winning model it has become.

All ornamentations and decorations are carved from European Boxwood. The cover of the Royal Cabin can be removed revealing the highly decorated interior, including the exquisite and intricate parquetry.
The stern art was finished at the same time as the hull, it also is heavily decorated with carv-ings made with the precision that only Janos can do.

Next the masts were set, both the standing and running rigging use self-made rigging cords and blocks.
The figurehead was carved
Royal Yacht Caroline figure head carved by Janos is finished in gold leaf. The gilding process was quite painful and had to be done a number of times (and the result of the previous process to be scraped off). The reason was that the LeFranc seize (seize is the name of the adhesive underneath the golden leaf) did not want to 'cooperate' with the timber.

The figures had been carved in Boxwood and different processes had been tried for the gold leaf.

First the seize had been applied directly on the timber. It did not work because the seize provided a very wide range of drying time. On the end grain areas it had been sucked into the timber very quickly, while on the other parts it took longer to dry. In Australian conditions even on these latter parts the drying time was 8-9 hours rather than the nominal 12 hours in accordance with the manufacturer's description. Then different acrylic paints were tried as a primer but still the result wasn't satisfactory. At times, trying to follow the quicker than expected drying time, the leaf was 'drowning' in the crevices where the seize was still too wet. It was a big struggle.

So after the last leaf remnant had again been scraped off, Janos finally hit on a method which finally worked up to a certain extent. A quick-drying shellac spray primer was applied first. This primer worked very well and it dries really quickly, so it could also be used whenever there is a need for priming timbers.

From a friend on the web site ModellShipWorld, Janos received a small amount of a seize, recommended by users in Europe. Its name is Schnellmixturen Vergoldermilch. It dried quickly (25-30 minutes) and provided a workable surface for the gilding for about 20-15 minutes afterwards. With this the work-flow was nearly continuous which was a very welcome change for Janos.

Finally the whole figure (rather group of figures) was gilded but the end result was definitely worse than expected by Janos as a few spots were not properly covered.

Also, and of significance to Janos, the fact that the figure is not completely covered by the leaf, it does not provide any 'proof' of the material from which it is made. Anything could be below the leaf: resin, white metal, 3D print, everything. The fact, that the figure is manually carved from boxwood (which is no doubt the most time consuming among any methods) is well hidden underneath the shiny cover - which is not perfect in itself in any event.

Janos suggests that any carvers thinking of covering up their carvings should give thorough consideration as to whether any carving should be gilded at all.
13 ROYAL YACHT CAROLINE
Jane Nemeth

Scale: 1:100
Natural Length: 1200
Natural Breadth: Yes

The original ship was built in 1740 and abandoned in 1807. The model is based on the original.
Even in its partially completed condition Janos exhibited the model at Expos (and winning prizes with it).

Janos also completed building the ship’s boat, his method is demonstrated by the photo below:
What is fair to be said is that over the years Janos has continued to instal further artwork such as scrolls and other decorations about the model which has become a platform for the display of his expertly executed carvings, as can be seen by the ensuing photos.
Thank you Janos for sharing photos of your model with the readers of Chatterbox.