

Why do people build ship models?

The enlargement of the Nautical Research Journal and the expansion of its readership have brought answers to this question to the forefront as I work to make each issue as useful and interesting as possible to our membership. While it may be most accurate to say that there are as many answers as there are modelers, some degree of crude categorization may assist in providing better insight into modelers' motivations and, thus, clearer guidance for the shape of the Journal.

Taking the risk of oversimplifying (and perhaps irking readers), it seems that modelers, in general, fall into two broad categories: those whose main motivation is rising to the challenge model making presents to their craftsmanship and those whose principal passion is recreating the past in miniature. Membership in one or other category is rarely exclusive; many modelers enjoy the challenge to their skills an historically accurate model presents just as many also revel in the research required when building a complex miniature. Nevertheless, awareness of these two broad approaches to ship modeling may provide a useful guide when deciding the content of the Journal.

If this categorization is correct, it is clear that each issue needs to contain an array of articles that meet the interests of both camps. We cannot fill its pages solely with material covering scratch building at the highest level nor with coverage of basic kit assembly. Simultaneously, the Journal's pages must include both discussion of research processes and sources and of tools, techniques, and materials. Furthermore, we need to appreciate that our members' interests are not confined to single genres but include seventeenth- to nineteenth-century sailing warships, merchant sailing vessels, steel warships, cargo carriers and liners, wooden small craft, river boats,

and even vessels from antiquity. Furthermore, their interest in these various types can spread well beyond the confines of the 'western' tradition to include countries and regions around the world and the huge range of indigenous and vernacular craft.

Fortunately, at least some members have assisted by letting us know what kind of articles they would like to see in the Journal. Since the enlargement that began with the September issue, over forty such suggestions have arrived, and for some of the topics there have been multiple requests (which, obviously, gives them greater credence). Some of the material in this issue responds directly to several of these suggestions. Nevertheless, this is an ongoing process, and all members should feel free to suggest or request topics for publication by contacting either nrjeditor@gmail.com or nrghomeoffice@gmail.com. Such suggestions are invaluable in guiding the content of your Journal and informing me of areas for which I should commission contributions.

I further encourage all members to consider moving beyond either simply reading each issue or presenting requests for articles covering specific topics of interest to adding to the Journal's content by submitting material for publication. There are quite clear guidelines for submissions on the Guild website at <https://www.thenrg.org/nrj-editorial-guidelines.php>.

Of one thing I am certain and that is that the Guild's membership is collectively interested in essentially everything connected with ships. With this challenge before me, however, the only guarantee I can make is that not everything in every issue will please everyone.

Editor — Paul E. Fontenoy