

A BRIEF SUMMARY DESCRIBING THE BUILDING OF "SUMARA" VERTUE 198

1) INTRODUCTION

It all started by my seeing that superb drawing by Illiff's chief draughtsman Max Miller of Vertue35 in the book of that name. This was a long time ago(about 1950 I think) I thought at that time.I would like to build a Vertue. I remember repeatedly looking and studying how the many elements related to each other to form what I thought to be an ideal cruising yacht.

In the space of time since being given that book by my mother, I have served an apprenticeship in Carpentry and Joinery, widened my knowledge in the use of wood, worked in a couple of boatyards, built several boats, sailed many boats, owned and maintained boats and generally gained the skills and knowledge to enable the dream to become a reality.

In 1981 the plans were purchased from Laurent Giles. Much time was spent in study and detailed planning of the construction. I would not build her until I was sure of the best choice of material, fastening and arrangement, based on experience and knowledge, to provide a long ,trouble free life. Particular thought was given to avoiding electrical/chemical decay, or galvanic corrosion of fasteners. The aim was to build a Vertue designed for serious ocean cruising. The freeboard, length and draught were increased slightly. The rig was modified with a shorter boom. A cutter rig provided extra staying forward.

An Iroko log 27.5 feet long was bought, sawn into boards varying from 1 1/2" thick to 3/4" thick, the most being 1 1/8" (850ft sq.) for planking.

American white oak, English oak, English elm were bought. The English woods were especially selected for centre-line structure(sternposts, keel, deadwood etc)

Only the best construction would be used A lead keel was decided on, together with Aluminium bronze keel bolts and all fastenings were silicon bronze or copper The yacht will not suffer from mixed metals

A start on construction was not made until all the major components had been purchased and the project totally planned, including building a construction shed. Final details of cupboards and layout were finalised during actual construction of joinery . I lofted and constructed the wooden pattern for the lead ballast keel Two tons of lead was melted and cast into the sand mould. I was ready to start building. A large piece of elm 1 ft 3" x 5" thick formed the wood keel to which the lead keel was attached, together with the laminated stem and the oak stempost forming the centre line construction. This was set up in the building shed and the moulds were then positioned accurately for temporary ribbands to be bent around the outside thus providing the form of the hull and a basis for stem bending the American white oak timber ribs each carefully fitted into the elm keel.

Planking was expertly done by Mike Patrick(Spike) The planks varied in width and shape in order to cope with the very wide hull surface aft and the smaller surface forward and the constant change of shape of the hull at each mould All planks were full length. Each plank was fixed with two copper nails (later riveted) on every timber. Silicon bronze screws were used at the transom, stem and garboards. I think about 2000 fastenings were used in planking Unlike most painted yachts, all fastenings were dowelled,(wood plugs) Seams were splined and later planed and sanded to form a perfectly smooth and fair hull.