

## Changes in Rigging

With regards to the change in The Cutty Sark's rigging when during the time she was with the Worcester II and Worcester III. Mike wrote on the 11th Aug 2009

G'day,

I raised the topic of the changes to the Cutty Sark's rigging at our OW/OC/Op Brisbane lunch today- which was great because not only did we discuss this but it led to many tall tales and true and reminiscences of various peoples' lives at Worcester and at sea.

In terms of the rigging of Cutty Sark- by 1949 the rigging on Cutty Sark had deteriorated to such a state it was dangerous making it extremely hazardous to climb the rigging. This came from Peter Pickup 47-49 who was assigned to work on the Cutty Sark and who worked with the then bosun to remove the masts and rigging off Worcester 2, bringing them across from Greys to Worcester 3.

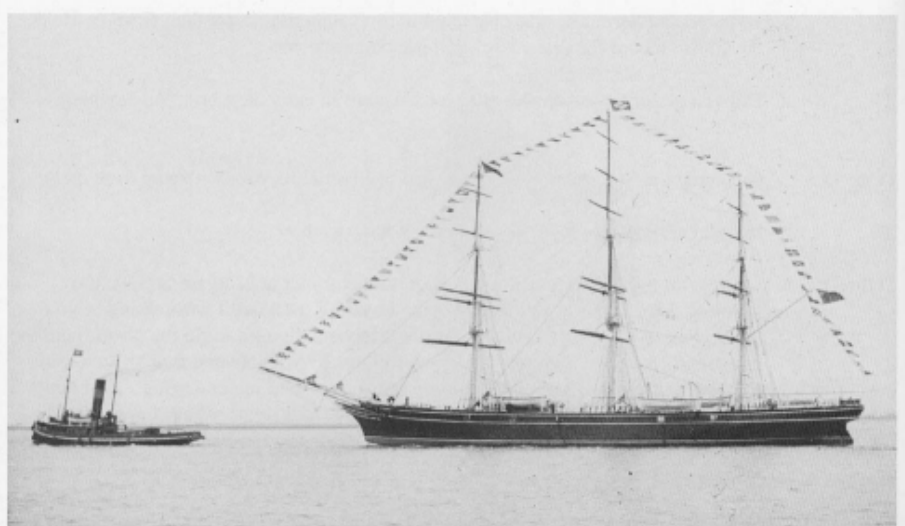
By 1951 according to Loriot Williamson the state of Worcester 3's finances was such that it could not afford to maintain Cutty Sark and much of the rigging had deteriorated so it was decided to remove the topmasts as the lower masts were not capable of supporting them safely.

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Comment from Patrick Toomey 8th Aug 2009

In answer to Colin's query about the rigging of "Cutty Sark", I do not know the real reason for cutting it down, but I suspect that the bowsprit might have been shortened to avoid having it snagged by the odd Everard vessel cutting across to the mooring buoys close upstream. As for the top-gallant masts being sent down after arrival at her Thames mooring, there are two or three possible reasons. No.1: I would suggest that having masts that high would add extra windage being applied to the anchors in stormy weather; No. 2 could be that extra height would be further for cadets to fall as some of them would be sure to want to climb to the trucks; and No.3, which is the most likely in my opinion, was that the topmasts were not in good enough shape to support them.

I well remember the occasion (which I have mentioned in this space before), when Diddy was doing his annual demonstration of firing a Schermuly line-throwing rocket, when the rocket embedded itself in the rotting mizzen topmast of "Cutty Sark" and almost passed right through the wood. There was obviously not much strength left in that spar at least, and a topgallant would certainly have brought it down.

Patrick R.M.Toomey. OW 1949-51. Fore Starboard.



The Watkins' tug *Muzia* towing the renowned Tea Clipper, *Cutty Sark* up the Thames to Greenhithe from Falmouth on 18th June 1938. Prior to her arrival she was owned by a Captain Downman until his death, following which his widow presented her to the Thames Nautical Training College. After twenty-five years she was handed over to the Cutty Sark Preservation Society and was placed in the dry dock at Greenwich in 1954, where she has been open to the public for almost fifty years.

