

Glossary of Maritime Terms

This is a partial glossary; some remain current, while many date from the 17th to 19th centuries.

It should be pointed out that the practice of classifying a vessel by the rig of her masts did not commence until the end of the eighteenth century. Previously the terms ship, barque, brigantine, etc. referred to the shape and characteristics of the hull, irrespective of the rig. There was a period of transition in which the various rigs were rather loosely defined and this coincided with a period of development in naval architecture largely brought about by the Wars. The position was more or less stabilised by 1848, but developments and improvements in rig went on during the remainder of the century.

ABAFT, OR AFT	The Stern, or after part of a Ship.
ABEAM	On the beam, a relative bearing at right angles to the ship's keel.
ACCOMMODATION LADDER	A portable flight of steps down a ship's side.
ADVANCE NOTE	A note for one month's wages issued to sailors on their signing a ship's articles.
AFORE	In, on, or toward the front of a vessel. Or, in front of a vessel.
AFT	Toward the rear of the vessel.
ALLISION	A term used in maritime law. To impact a stationary object (not submerged), such as a bridge abutment or dolphin, pier or wharf, or another vessel made fast to a pier or wharf. More than an incidental contact is required. The vessel is said to "allide" with the fixed object and is considered at fault. As opposed to a collision.
ALOFT	In the rigging of a sailing ship. Above the ship's uppermost solid structure, overhead or high above.
ANCHOR BALL	Round black shape hoisted in the forepart of a vessel to show that it is anchored.
ANCHOR HOME	When the anchor is secured for sea. Normally resting just outside the hawse pipe, on the outer side of the hull, at the bow of a vessel.
ANCHOR STOCK	A wooden bar at the upper end of an anchor shank.
AVERAGE	The law of general average is a legal principle of maritime law according to which all parties in a sea venture proportionally share any losses resulting from a voluntary sacrifice of part of the ship or cargo to save the whole in an emergency.
AWNING	A sail set up like a canopy to prevent the scorching of the Sun.

BADGES	Quarter badges were ornamental carvings placed on the outside of the ship at the stern. They were sometimes mentioned in registers as an aid to identification.
BALE	To lade water out of the ship's hold. (see lade)
BALLAST	Heavy weights at the bottom of a vessel, to enable it to remain upright.
BARBETTE	An alternative to turrets. With a barbette the protection was fixed, and the weapon and crew were on a rotating platform inside the barbette. In the 1890s, armoured hoods (also known as "gun houses") were added to barbettes. These rotated with the platform (hence the term "hooded barbette"). By the early 20th Century, these hoods were known as turrets.
BARQUE (BARK)	A vessel with three or more masts, the aftermost, or mizzen mast, being without square sails.
BEAMS	Strong thick pieces of timber stretching across the ship from side to side to support the decks and retain the sides at their proper distance.
BEAR TOO	To sail before the wind.
TO BEAR WITH LAND	To sail towards land.
BELAY	To make fast any rope.
BEND A CABLE	To make it fast.
BERTH OR BURTH	A place for mooring of a ship.
BIGHT	A part of a Rope.
BILGED	The vessel has struck off some timber, and has sprung a Leak.
BILGES	The lowest part of the ship. Foul water collects there and emanates the most awful of foul smells.
BILLAGE	The breach of the place the ship rests on when she is aground.
BINNACLE	A wooden case or box that contains the compasses, log glasses, watch glasses and lights to show the compass at night.
BITTACK	That whereon the compass stands.
BITTS [THE]	Two square pieces of timber, to which the cables are fasten'd, when the ship rides at anchor.
BLOCKS, ELM	Solid pieces of timber placed under the keel of a ship, the upper pieces are generally free from knots, especially the foremost one being the splitting ones for launching a ship.

BOARD All timber sawn to less thickness than plank such as under one inch and may be distinguished thus. Beach, elm, fir, oak, sheathing and wainscot.

BOLT-ROPE Rope to which the edges or skirts of sails are sewn to prevent them from rending.

BONNET An additional sail added to another sail.

LACE ON THE BONNET To fasten it on.
SHAKE OFF THE BONNET To take it off.

BOOM-IRONS Two iron rings formed into one piece so as to resemble a figure of eight. Used to connect two cylindrical pieces of wood together when one is used as a continuation of the other.

BOWSPRIT A large boom projecting over the stem, or fore-part of the ship, and forming the lower support of the head sails. In the larger ships, this boom was fixed and termed a Standing Bowsprit.' On smaller craft it was moveable to assist working in small harbours and to allow of reduction of sail area in gales. It was then termed a Running 'or Lifting Bowsprit.'

BRANCH PILOT One possessing a licence, commission, or certificate of competency issued by the proper authority.

BREADTH Under the old measurement rules the breadth given in the register was the extreme breadth in the broadest part of the ship, and the same figure was used in the calculation of tonnage. It was stated if this measurement was taken above or below the main wales (strengthening timbers placed along the side of the ship, usually at main deck level). This was necessary because ships of the period often had great tumble-home, i.e. they noticeably tapered and reduced in breadth above main deck level. With the new measurement and later rules (1836 and after), the register breadth was taken amidships and was merely an identification figure. The breadth used in computing tonnage was then a mean breadth derived from a number of measurements taken when the ship's hold was empty.

BREAK A transverse gap in a deck.

BREAK BULK To take out the first goods of the cargo.

BREAMING Burning off filth such as grass, ooze, shells or seaweed from a ship's bottom that has gathered to it in a voyage or by lying long in harbour.

BRIG AND BRIGANTINE Vessels with two masts, originally identical in rig. Biddlecombe states that whereas the brig had square sails throughout on both masts, the brigantine was brig-rigged on the foremast, but schooner-rigged on the mainmast. In other words she had only the upper square sails on the mainmast. In more modern times the brigantine carried square sails only on the foremast.

BRIGHT-SMITH A person who works with polished or plated metalwork especially the exposed and often decorative metal parts of ships.

BUNG CLOTH	Bung cloth is a square piece of cloth that is put over the hole of a cask and then the bung inserted. It ensures a good seal.
BUCKLER	A “bung or plug” which was fitted into a porthole to keep the water out.
BULKHEAD	Wall inside a vessel.
BUNT	The middle of a sail, close to the mast.
CABLE	A thick, strong rope or chain which serves to keep a ship at anchor.
CABOOSE	The cook-room or kitchen of merchantmen on deck: a diminutive alternative for the galley of a man-of-war. It is generally furnished with cast-iron apparatus for cooking.
CAN HOOK	An instrument used to sling a cask by its staves.
CAPSTAN	Probably the most difficult task on any ship was hauling in the anchor rope. For this task the crew would use a large winch called a Capstan. Men would use heavy wooden capstan bars to push the winch around winding in the rope or cable.
CAREENING	The operation of heaving the ship down on one side, by the application of strong purchase to her masts which are properly supported for the occasion, to prevent their breaking with such great strain: by which means one side of the bottom being elevated above the surface of the water. Enabling the crew to trim and caulk the other.
CARRONADE	A short-barrelled gun which fired a larger ball a shorter distance than the usual naval guns. They were used for close fighting.
CARVEL	A system of building whereby the planks are laid edge to edge in contradistinction to clinker or clench built, where they overlap. All larger wooden ships were carvel built. When iron ships were introduced the plating had to overlap for riveting and the term clench-built was adopted in many cases to describe them, but being somewhat of an anachronism, its use was not universal.
CASKETS	Little ropes which tie up the sail when it is furled.
CATHEAD	When stored, an anchor would be lashed to a Cathead. A thick protruding beam on which a “sheave block” or pulley was mounted.
CAULK	To drive a quantity of oakum or old ropes untwisted and pulled asunder into the seams of the planks in the ship’s decks or sides in order to prevent the ingress of water. After the oakum, it is covered with molten pitch or resin, to keep it from rotting.
CHART	Sea map.
CLAYEDS, CLAYED SUGAR	To improve the whiteness of the sugar, repeated applications of a solution of white clay dissolved in warm water was applied to the broad end of the loaf.

CLENCH OR CLINKER	A system of building wooden ships whereby planks overlap. Its converse is carvel.
COMB PILOT	The term for an Ilfracombe [Devon, England] pilot.
COND OR TO CUN A SHIP	To order the man at the Helm, how he is to steer.
CONSTANT TRADERS	As their name implies, were vessels intended to sail regularly, with or without cargo, to a named destination.
CORD (OF FIREWOOD)	A statute stack is 8 feet long, 4 foot broad and 4 foot high.
CORDAGE	Rigging, cords and ropes attached to masts and sails on a ship or boat. Or rope, yarns, plies or strands twisted or braided together into a larger form.
CRINGLE	Small hole formed in the bolt-rope of a sail.
CRUTCHES	Support for the main boom of a sloop, brig or cutter when sails are furled.
CUTTER	A single-masted vessel with fore-and-aft sails.
CUTWATER	The foremost part of a ship's prow.
DAVIT	An on-board crane, often used to raise or lower a boat.
DEAD WATER	The Eddy at the ship's stern.
DEAL	Plank 14ft long by 8 or 9 inches wide. Pieces of timber in form and thickness exactly similar to plank, but the term is applied to fir timber only.
DEAL-ENDS	Planks less than 6ft long.
DECKS	The planked 'floors' of a ship. A 'flush' decked ship had her upper deck a solid and continuous line from stem to stern. The 'quarter-deck' (sometimes 'raised quarter-deck' or 'high quarterdeck') was above the upper deck, but reached only from the stern to the gangway approximately amidships. The 'half-deck' was the part under the quarter-deck. The 'poop deck' was a short deck situated high and right aft.
DEPTH	The depth measurement given in the register was the depth of the hold. It must not be confused with draught, the depth of water needed to float the ship.
DISPART	To find the difference of diameters in the bore of a cannon.
DISEMBOGUE	To go out at a gulf's mouth.
FALSE KEEL	Fitted under the keel of a ship to preserve it from friction. Usually made of elm. A kind of supplemental or additional keel secured under the main one, to protect it should the ship happen to strike the ground.
FATHOM	A length of 6ft.

FISH A MAST OR YARD	Tie a piece of plank to the mast or yard to make it stronger, that plank is called a Fish.
FLOGGING	To be whipped as a punishment.
FORECASTLE	A raised deck which covers the main deck at the bow.
TO HEAVE OUT THE FLAG	To untie it from the Staff, and let it fly.
TO STRIKE THE FLAG	To pull it down, which either shows respect, or yielding to the enemy.
FISH TACKLE	Once the anchor was fastened to the Cathead, a Fish tackle was the rig used to raise the other end.
FLUKE OF AN ANCHOR	The web which fastens in the seabed.
FORE	Towards the head of the ship.
FORELOCKS	Small flat pointed wedge of iron used to drive through a hole in the end of a bolt to hold it firmly in place and prevent it drawing.
FREE THE SHIP	To put up the ship dry.
FRIGATE BUILT	A term corresponding roughly with the modern 'well-decked ship' as opposed to 'flush-decked' (see DECKS).
FURL OR HAND A SAIL	Wrap the sail all together, and bind it close to the yard.
FURZE	Another name for Gorse. A shrub used as kindling to burn off old paying composition from the bottom of wooden ships.
GAFF	A sort of boom used to extend the upper part of the mizzen sail.
GALLERIES	Quarter galleries were projecting covered balconies on each side of the ship at the stern. They were sometimes mentioned in registers as an aid to identification. 'Sham' or 'false' galleries, i.e. ornamental work in the form of galleries, were also common.
GALLEY	Kitchen.
GALLIOT	A type of vessel formerly much favoured in Holland, of which numbers reached English owners as prizes. Their rig varied, but was often that of a topsail ketch, i.e. two-masted, the foremost mast being the taller, or mainmast, and carrying a fore-and-aft mainsail and a small square topsail above. The aftermost mast, or mizzen, was short and carried fore-and-aft sails.
GORSE	Species of evergreen European shrub of the pea family. See Furze.
GRAVE THE SHIP	To burn off her old filth when she is dry, by lying aground.
THE SHIP GRIPES	Turns her head to the windward more than is requisite.
HAIL A SHIP	To call to another ship to know whether she is bound, or from whence she came.

HALLING	Modern spelling haulage being the carrying of goods by land or towing of ships from place to place in the port.
HAND-SCREWS	A box of elm containing cogged iron wheels of increasing powers, the outer one which moves the rest is put in motion by a winch on the outside and is either single or double according to its increasing force.
HARNESS TUB (CASK)	A large conical tub for containing the salt provisions intended for present consumption. Harness casks were made in various sizes to hold from 1 to 3cwt. They were straight sided with the larger head at the bottom. The top head was hinged with a hasp and staple so it could be locked keeping contents safe from rats and thieves.
HAWSE OR HAWSE-HOLE	The hole at the Head of the ship through which the cable goes.
HEAD	The 'head', was an ornamental finial for the stern-post, but the word is often incorrectly regarded as an abbreviation of 'figure-head.' If it was a 'figure-head' proper it could take the form of a bust, half-length, three-quarter-length or full-length figure of a human being or animal. A 'scroll' head was a simpler carving of side whorls possibly with a central shield bearing a heraldic device. Scroll heads were divided into two classes, 'fiddle' heads which curved upwards and outwards, and 'billet' heads which curved upwards and inwards. A 'gammon knee' was a right-angled timber which was usually carved ornamentally, but fulfilled the essential function of holding the gammoning or turns of rope which held the bowsprit in place.
HEADS	or "seats of ease" the ship's lavatories.
THE SHIP HEELS	Lays more to one side than another.
HELM	A ship's steering mechanism; see <i>tiller</i> and <i>ship's wheel</i> . The wheel and/or wheelhouse area. Take the helm, means take over the steering of the vessel.
HEIGHT	The height measurement given in the register was the distance between decks in a vertical line. It ceased to be recorded with the introduction of 'new measurement' in 1836.
HOA, HOA	To call to another Ship.
HOGSHEAD (LIQUIDS)	A large cask or measure of capacity for wine, equal to 52.5 imperial gallons or 63 US gallons (238.7 litres).
HOGSHEAD (SUGAR)	Blocks of sugar were packed into large wooden barrels known as hogsheads. Each hogshead would weigh between 800 and 1500 pounds.
HOLD	Located at the bottom of a vessel. The hold is used to store cargo, provisions, spares etc.
HULL	Main body of a ship.
KEEL	The spine of the vessel, at the very bottom and centre of the hull.

KETCH	A two-mast vessel with mainmast and mizzen. Nowadays fore-and-aft rigged, but in the early 1800s was often set with a square topsail on the mainmast.
KNEES	Crooked pieces of timber having two branches or arms and generally used to connect the beams of a ship with her sides.
LADE	To use a ladle or dipper to remove something (generally water). also: lades, lading, laded or laden, to put cargo or freight on board.
LARBOARD OR PORT	The left side of a vessel when looking forward.
LEEWARD	The downwind side of a vessel.
LENGTH	The length measurement in a register was the extreme length aloft, under 'old measurement' rules, but under 'new measurement' it was the upper deck length, which would be shorter than the former by the omission of the stem and stern post thicknesses.
LETTER OF MARQUE	A letter of marque and reprisal was a government license in the Age of Sail that authorised a private person, known as a privateer or corsair, to attack and capture vessels of a nation at war with the issuer.
LIMEY	When it was discovered that citrus fruit was a cure for scurvy, sailors were encouraged to drink lime or lemon juice. This earned British sailors the nickname "Limeys".
LOG	Captains diary.
LUBBER	Slang for an inexperienced sailor.
LUMBER	A general name for felled and seasoned wood. (North America)
MAGAZINE	An especially secure room at the bottom of a ship where gunpowder and ammunition were stored.
MANGER	The ship's Manger was used to hold livestock.
MARLINE	Particular form of small line, composed of two strands twisted very little. Here it is both tarred and white marline.
MASTS	The 'mainmast' is, properly, the tallest mast of the vessel. The 'foremast' is the foremost one and the 'mizzen' is the aftermost one. Thus a three-masted vessel would have, from bows to stern fore, main and mizzen masts. With the two masted schooner, brig and brigantine, the aftermost was the mainmast, but with the ketch and smaller craft such as the dandy and yawl, the foremost was the mainmast. The snow had an additional rudimentary mast aft, called a 'trysail mast'. When four masted vessels were introduced the names were usually fore, main, mizzen and jigger. With numbers greater than four the names were not standardised. The Great Britain originally had six masts which were named by her designers fore, main, one, two, three and four, but the crew named them after the days of the week, Monday to Saturday (there being no Sunday at sea to their way of thinking).

MESS	A group of seamen who share their meals.
MESS BEEF	From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century beef was graded according to the weight of cattle, the best being 'mess' followed by cargo and then small beef.
MESSENGER CABLE	Anchor rope is too thick to wind directly onto a capstan, so a length of thinner rope called a messenger would be tied to it, then wrapped around the capstan to wind the anchor rope on.
MUSCO	A dark raw sugar produced on the plantations by initial boiling of the fresh cane juice.
OAKUM	Rope picked to pieces for caulking.
ORLOP DECK	Derived from a Dutch word meaning "overlap" because this deck would overlap the hold.
PARBUCKLE	Rope looped around a barrel, enabling it to be rolled up a ship's side.
PAY A SHIP'S BOTTOM	To cover it with a combination of materials, such as tallow, sulphur or resin or tar mixed with hair, or brown paper dipped in tar and oil.
PITCH, BLACK	Tar and coarse resin boiled to a fluid yet tenacious consistence. It is used in a hot state with oakum in caulking the ship to fill the chinks or intervals between her planks.
PITCH, STONE	Mineral pitch from the ground.
PLANK	Thick boards 18ft long at least, from 1½ to 4 inches thick, and 9 or 10 inches broad. Strong boards from 1-4 inches thick cut from various wood especially oak, pine and fir.
PLANTAIN	A green-skinned fruit, resembling a banana but more angular in form, that is a staple food in many tropical regions.
PLATE	A small piece of iron or tin used on various occasions in a ship to strengthen the part to which it is fastened.
POOP DECK	The highest deck on the ship. On a man-of-war the Poop deck was unarmed and used mostly by the officers.
POSTING	A posted entry in one of the 'corporation' registers was an amendment or addition made after the original printing. For ship owners residing in London this service was performed by the printers, using hand stamps. In the provinces postings were made by hand.
PRIMAGE	A small allowance paid by the shipper or consignee of goods to the master of a merchant vessel for loading the same.
PUNCHEON (BARREL)	A container for wine or spirits.
PURSESHIP	A payment to the ship's husband for administering a ship.
QUARTER	A term given to any piece of oak or fir timber that is 2 ½ inches by 3, or 3 inches by 4 and from 10 to 40 ft in length. It is used for various purposes in a ship.

QUARTER GALLERY	Small balcony on the quarter of a ship.
QUARTER DECK	On a man-of-war, this was reserved for officers, it would also have been armed with cannons. [up to 12]
QUARTER-PIECE	Pieces of timber at the after-part of the quarter gallery near the taffrail.
REGISTER	At the present time the term register, when referring to ships, is popularly applied to several things and can therefore be a source of confusion. The ship's register is normally kept by the Registrar of her home port and an extract entitled a 'Certificate of Registry' is issued to the ship's master as a means of identification and proof of her ownership. The master will often inaccurately refer to it as his 'register'. Another form of register is the periodical volume containing particulars of all the vessels classed by a corporation or society of underwriters (e.g. Lloyd's Register, Bureau Veritas, etc.), but these would more accurately be termed 'lists' as the Crown is careful to do in the case of its own similar publication the Mercantile Navy List.
RENDING	Violent tearing, to separate into parts with force or violence.
RIGGING	Ropes used to hold and control the masts, yards and sails.
RIGGERS	Men employed on board ships to fit the standing and running rigging or to dismantle them.
ROPE	Composed of hemp, hide, wire, or other stuff spun into strands, which twisted together forms the desired cordage.
ROUND HOUSE OR ROUND ABOUT HOUSE	An erection usually on the poop or on the quarter-deck. Being thus in the most airy part of the vessel it provided accommodation for officers or privileged passengers.
RUDDER	A flat vertical structure attached to the stern by means of a hinge mechanism. It is turned to change the direction of travel.
RUMMAGE	A search by customs officers for smuggled goods.
RUNNING SHIP	An armed ship licensed to sail without convoy.
SAILS	The sails of Northern European types of vessel broadly fall into three categories, viz. square, fore-and-aft and lug. Square sails are rectangular in shape with the upper and lower edges parallel and are set on yards normally at right angles to the keel of the ship. Fore-and-aft sails can be rectangular, with no edges parallel, or triangular, and are set normally in line with the keel of the ship.
SCHOONER	A vessel with two or more masts rigged in rather lighter fashion than brigs and vessels of larger categories. The sails of the schooner have changed considerably from time to time, but the basic sail-plan embodies gaff mainsails on all masts (i.e. fore-and-aft mainsails). At the beginning of the nineteenth century schooners also carried square sails on the foremast and square topsails on the mainmast. Later the square rig was reduced to fore-topsails, and a class of schooner has now evolved with nothing but fore-and-aft sails.

SCURVY	Disease caused by lack of vitamin C. Symptoms included – sunken eyes, pale skin, tender gums and loss of teeth, muscle pain, internal bleeding. It wasn't uncommon for wounds which had healed years before to re-open. Eventually death ensued.
SEW-SEW BOYS	Seamen often made and repaired their own clothes. Crew members who were good with a needle, would often barter or be paid for this work. They were called sew-sew boys.
SHACKLE	U-shaped iron, with a screw pin at the open end used for securing stays to sails, allowing easy removal.
SHAKES	Pieces of barrels or casks broken down to save space. They are worth very little, leading to the phrase "no great shakes".
SHEATHING	A casing or covering nailed all over the outside of a ship's bottom to protect the planks from the pernicious effects of worms, particularly in hot climates. Pioneered and developed by the Royal Navy during the 18th century. A standard sheathing plate is 48in long by 14in wide. This allows a 1in overlap on a standard ships plank (12in). Copper or 'Muntz' metal [Named after George Fredrick Muntz] are the most common materials.
SHEAVE	The wheel in a block, which rotates as the rope runs. [traditionally pronounced "shiv"]
SHIP	Although used as a generic term for all types of vessel larger than a boat, the term ship, to a seafarer of the old school, indicates a 'full-rigged ship'. This is a vessel with three or more masts all of which carry square sails throughout. [This has been applied throughout the Maritime Archive.]
SHIPS GAUGE	Her depth of water, or how many foot she draws.
SHOAL	Shallow water that is a hazard to navigation.
SHORES	Props or stanchions fixed under a ship's side or bottom, to support her on the stocks or when laid on the blocks in the slip.
SHOT	Any type of ammunition for a cannon.
SMALL STUFF	The term for spun-yarn, marline and the smallest kinds of rope, even for yarns.
SNOW	A snow was rigged as a brig, but had an additional rudimentary mast stepped immediately aft of the mainmast to carry the fore-and-aft mainsail. By this means there was no interference with the working of the square mainsail which was set on the mainmast itself.
SPANKER	Small fore and aft rigged sail fixed to the mizzen mast.
SPAR	Large round pieces of timber fit for making top masts.

SPILE	A stake or piece of wood formed like the frustum of a cone. A vent-peg in a cask of liquor. Small wooden pins which are driven into nail holes to prevent leaking.
SPITKID	Due to the risk of fire, smoking would be banned. Instead sailors would chew tobacco and spit into a bucket called the spitkid.
SPUN-YARN	Made of two or three old rope-yarns twisted together on a winch. General purpose small rope.
SQUARE RIG	The term covers the larger types of sailing vessel. Carrying square sails. It was used in registers all too frequently when a more specific term would have been preferable.
STAGE	A machine composed of plank let over the sides of a ship by ropes whereupon the people may stand when repairing, caulking or paying the sides.
STANCHIONS	Small pillars of wood or iron used for various purposes in a ship.
STARBOARD	Right hand side of a vessel when looking forward.
STERN	The description of the stern, or after-end of the vessel, was of great importance for identification purposes. 'Square' and 'round' stern are self-explanatory, and the terms were used in registers to describe many variations in shape. 'Counter' stern is a misuse of a term which correctly describes the under part of the stern where it overhangs aft of the stern-post, irrespective of the shape of the stern above. It is probable that in using 'counter' the registration officials indicated one of the round stern forms where the overhang was particularly noticeable.
STERN BOARDING	Or 'making a sternboard'. Using the sails, especially in square rigged vessels, to go backwards.
SUPERTARE	An allowance for the pulley and rope used when weighing containers.
TAFFRAIL	The carved work at the upper part of a ship's stern.
TAR	Liquid gum of blackish hue procured from pine or fir trees. Difficult to put in barrels as it expands with heat and can leak or crack open the barrel.
TARE	A deduction from the gross weight of a substance and its container made in allowance for the weight of the container.
TARPAULIN	A broad piece of canvas payed over with tar.
TEREDO WORM	Teredo Navalis. A particular kind of boring mollusc which abounds in the tropics.
THIMBLES	Iron rings whose outer surface is hollowed throughout its whole circumference in order to contain a rope spliced about it.
TIDDLY SUIT	A sailor's shore clothes, much cleaner and well-fitting than their on-board attire which they would often have made themselves.

TILLER	A tiller or till is a lever used to steer a vessel. It is attached to a rudder post or stock to provide leverage in the form of torque for the helmsman to turn the rudder.
TIMBER	A general name for felled and seasoned wood. (Europe)
TOMPION	A block of wood inserted into the barrel of a gun on a 19 th century warship to keep out the sea spray. Also used for covers for the ends of the barrels of more modern ships' guns, the larger of which are often adorned with the ship's crest or other decoration.
TONNAGE	A quick method of noting by which rule an early tonnage measurement was obtained, is by observing to what fraction the figure is taken. If to 94ths the tonnage is by old measurement. If to 3,500ths it is by new measurement and in the same period 92.4ths were used for calculating such spaces as engine rooms, half-decks, etc. Decimal figures usually indicate measurements under the Merchant Shipping Act, which came into force 1 May 1855.
TOPMEN	Crew members who worked on the highest sails.
TREE-NAILS	Long cylindrical oak or other hardwood pins driven through planks and timbers of a vessel to connect her various parts.
TWINE	Strong twisted thread. Measured in fathoms to the pound.
WATCH	A duty period, usually fours long. Or the crew members who work it.
WEATHER GAUGE	When one Ship is to the windward of another.
WEDGE	A wedge driven into the inner end of a tree-nail to secure it.
WHARFINGER	<p>(pronounced <i>wor-fin-ger</i>) is an archaic term for a person who is the keeper or owner of a wharf. The wharfinger takes custody of and is responsible for goods delivered to the wharf, typically has an office on the wharf or dock, and is responsible for day-to-day activities including slipways, keeping tide tables and resolving disputes.</p> <p>The term is rarely used; today a wharfinger is usually called a "harbourmaster".</p>
WINDWARD	Side of vessel facing the wind.
YARD	Horizontal beam fixed to the mast. These would support the sails.
YARDARM	End of the Yard.
SHIP'S WHEEL OR BOAT'S WHEEL	A device used to steer a vessel and control its course. Together with the rest of the steering mechanism, it forms part of the helm.