



Terminology of yacht parts, fittings etc.

Some of the obvious, and not so obvious, parts encountered on yachts.

Bowsie, flat. Small drilled 'plate' through which runs a line, or cord, for adjustment of that line. Pre-war bowsies were often made in ivory, some were made in hardwood or plywood; today a hard plastic is normally used.

Bowsie, ring. A circular version of the flat bowsie.

Deck eye. An eye on a horizontal plate with fixing holes, located on the deck. Normally used for shroud attachment.

Eyebolt. An eye, at the end of a threaded spigot, or bolt.

Eyelet, sail. A sail eyelet is a brass part, in the shape of a 'funnel' before compression and when pressed into a hole in a sail it makes a firm metal ring. It is then used to facilitate making off a line (or on occasions a wire hawser in full size practise). Larger eyelets were **turnovers**, where a brass ring was firstly sewn in place over a hole punched in the sail, the turnover was then hammered in place using a rawhide mallet and dies. It made an immensely strong eyelet.

Ferrule (or crimp). A brass ferrule, or sleeve, which when crimped, or made off, on a wire, secures/attaches it by means of a loop made in the wire to a fitting.

Head crane. A crane which fits into the head (top) of a mast, usually to accept a backstay (and in some cases to accept the mainsail hoist).

Kicking strap, gooseneck (American; vang). Apparatus fixed at base of mast to facilitate mainsail boom movement, control & adjustment of.

Line. A cord travelling from, and made off to, a sail, to facilitate adjustment, tensioning.

Mast foot. A fitting, or insert, to the base of the mast, either a fixed fitting, or to facilitate some kind of lateral adjustment.

Pulley. A grooved wheel or disc, generally running between a pair of cheeks, to accept travel of a line, or sheet, to change its direction of travel.

Rigging screw. Turnbuckle, otherwise bottle screw (double ended), which has a threaded body with adjustable eye at each end, used to adjust wire shrouds. Modern rigging screws are often single ended with one end using a wire hook which hooks into a deck fitting such as a deck eye.

Sheet. Cordage, and which runs from a sail winch to control the sails.

Shroud. A wire (or on small yachts, a cord) side stay to a mast, for supporting same.

Spreader. A fitting used on a mast, to 'spread' the shrouds to stabilise and resist side thrust of the mast.

Upon sails (and sailcloth).

Gaff sail. A four sided mainsail/mizzen used on a barque, barge, or lugger, or similar.

The leading edge of any sail is the **luff**. The after edge is the **leech**. The base is the **foot**. The very top is the **head**.

On a gaff sail the top 'edge' is the **head**.

The fore corner of the sail (at the foot) is the **tack**. The after corner is the **clew**. The top corner is the **head**.

A 'turned' strengthened sewn edge on a sail is termed a '**tabling**'.

A **bolt rope** is a rope sewn on the edge (tabling) of working sails (such as those on gaff rigged vessels), to strengthen that edge. In days past they were hand-sewn in place.

Bermudan rigged (triangular) sails. The foresail is also known as the **jib**. The **mainsail** is the sail aft of the mast.

On a Bermudan sail the **after edge** (leech) often has a curve, or **roach**, which requires battens (stiffeners).

A **flying jib**, in full size practise, would be made in two parts, and will have an upper and a lower **gore**, each gore then being sewn together at the bisection (of the angle at the clew). The lengths of cloth on a full size sail are sewn together along the **selvedge** to make a sail. The selvedge are the edges running along the full length of a **bolt** of cloth and of course there two outer edges. Where a cut edge occurs on the 'biase' of the cloth it receives a separate piece of cloth which sewn on that edge and which is cut from the length, i.e. with the '**warp**'. That tabling is then termed a '**false tabling**'.

A sail is sewn from cloth cut off the roll; a roll of cloth is referred to as a '**bolt**'. A bolt is supplied rolled, or in days past sometimes felled, or flaked.

Palm. A leather 'palm' which fits the hand and with a steel insert which facilitates passing a sail maker's needle through the sailcloth.

Warp. Threads stretched *lengthwise* in loom; those crossing the warp, i.e. running across the cloth, are the **weft**.

Throw us a 'line' (knowing the ropes).

In maritime terms a rope is something that lays on the deck or quayside. As soon as it is on board ship and made off to a yard, or a sail, it ceases to be 'rope'. When attached to a sail it becomes a '**line**'. When made off to a sheeting winch it becomes a '**sheet**'. A **halyard**, or **halliard**, is a rope or tackle for raising or lowering a sail, yard etc. It is not a term used relating to model yachts unless of a scale vintage vessel of the particular style.

Which side is port?

Port is left; **starboard** is right. **Aft** (or abaft) is behind; **for'ard** is to the front; the **bow** is the forward end of a vessel and the **stern** is the after end, or **transom**. Port in times past was called larboard. A nice little ditty, easy to remember, "there is no **red port left** in the bottle".

History. The word 'Larboard' may derive from the Middle-English 'Ladebord' deriving from 'laden' meaning that side of the ship presented to the quayside, the side where goods were 'laden' on board. In the 16th century 'port' came to replace the

old word 'larboard' but it was not until the 1840's that the Royal Navy officially abandoned the term larboard in favour of port.

'Starboard' was the side of the ship where the rudder was set (before rudders were set centrally). It comes from Old-English (Anglo-Saxon) 'Steobord' and that descended from Old Norse 'Styri' from the verb Styra, literally 'steering' (at the helm) and the word 'Bord' meaning board, meaning (the side of) the ship.

'Aft' comes from Middle-English 'baft' meaning in or near to the stern; in turn derived from Old-English 'beaftan' meaning 'behind'.

Lights. A red light is set on the port side of a vessel, and a green light on the starb'd side. Running lights at bow and stern are set facing forward only and are white.

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