

Chapter Eight

Deck Planking...

Before we begin planking the deck let us talk about the possibilities. There were two forms of deck planking used during this period. If you examine the plans for *Cheerful* you will see one of them. The deck is shown with STRAIGHT planks which are nibbed into the waterway. You can follow this method if you choose and it would be perfectly fine. The nibbed plank ends are simply cut into the waterway. This poses a danger however in that if you should make a mistake cutting away the waterway it would be a hard thing to fix.

The second method is commonly found on contemporary models and even drafts from the period. Rather than straight planks nibbed into the waterway which is commonly seen on most kits, the planks are tapered and curved at the bow and stern. Their ends are scarphed to one another rather than being cut INTO the waterway. They simply lay against the waterway.



The photo above of the frigate *Winchelsea* 1763 shows a contemporary example of this curved decked planking at the bow. Another good example can be seen on the contemporary model of the frigate *Minerva* in the Rogers collection. You can see how the deck planks at the bow are curved and

tapered. The ends are scarphed. This is how I will plank *Cheerful*.



Note how the scarphed planks sit against the waterway rather than being cut into it as shown on the plans. The same will be done at the stern on the *Cheerful* model. To do this, we must line-off the deck in much the same way that we did for the external hull planking.

To begin, first create lines across your false deck where the deck beams would be located. These can be taken from the plans. Just examine the plans and look for where the butt joints are located. In reality you can draw these lines anywhere across the deck from port to starboard but why not use the probable locations for the deck beams a guide instead. When it comes time to establish the shift of the plank ends and the butt joints it will be much easier with these references.

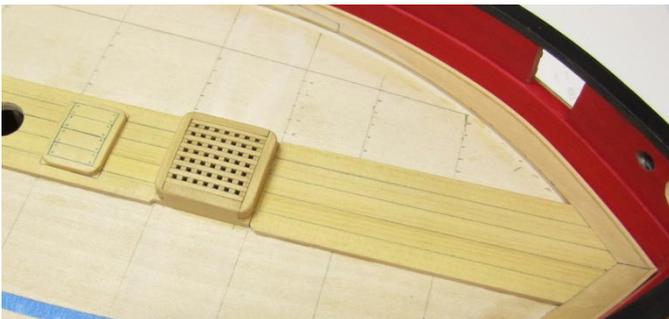


The last photo on the previous page shows these lines which represent the probably locations for all deck beams.

With these completed, You can begin planking the center of the deck. I used 3/16" wide planks. The first of which, is placed right down the center of the deck. Cut each segment to fit between the deck fittings glued on top of the false deck. You will be placing five deck planks in total. No taper on these. Just place the first down the center and two more on each side of that one.

Should the last plank not sit flush with the hatch coamings, and if they are slightly larger than needed, avoid notching it out so a small tiny sliver is left alongside the coamings.

Rather than do that, angle them as shown below. The thin slivers of deck planking would be avoided at all costs because they were very weak and prone to rot. This will of course mean that the very next deck plank will have to be much wider and a small tab cut out of its side in order to fit in this space.



But let's not get ahead of ourselves just yet...

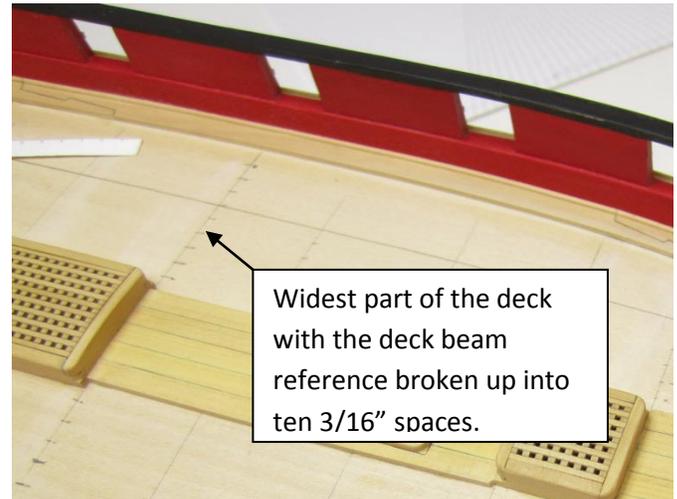
The deck planking is 3/64" thick and 3/16" wide. One edge of each strip was darkened with pencil before they were glued onto the false deck shown above. The first five planks are now completed.

Lining off the deck....

To begin lining off the deck, think about how we did this for the external hull planking. It is done the same way. We know that the deck planks are going to be 3/16" wide at their widest point. This

will be at mid ship. Let us use the deck beam reference line on the fore side of the main hatch. Divide it into equal 3/16" segments. Use a tick strip. You should have ten...or ten planks

Let's examine that same photo shown on the previous page a bit closer. **Step One....**



Is now completed...as shown in the photo above.

Do this on both sides of the deck port and starboard. Keep in mind that the last plank against the waterway may be slightly larger than 3/16" wide. That is perfectly fine.

Step Two – Divide those ten planks into two belts. I decided to make the outside belt smaller and contain only 4 planks. The inner belt contains six. You can mark this off on the reference line for the deck beam.

Step Three – This is more visual than an exact science. Just as it was for the external hull planking. Use a thin length of artist tape to establish the two belts down the length of the deck. I used blue painters tape cut into thin strips.

You need to play with these strips to define the curve of the deck planks you want. The curve will be more extreme at the bow and stern and not very noticeable mid ship. You will have to establish a nice curve on one side of the deck and then try to



recreate that same curve on the other. The large photo (above) shows my blue tape defining the two belts on the starboard side. Once satisfied, trace the tape with a pencil to define the belts. I have already removed the blue tape in the photo above

on the port side. You can see the pencil line going from bow to stern that defines the two belts.

Step Four – Break out your planking fan!!! I think you know what to do at this point. Use a tick strip to measure the width of each belt at each referenced deck beam. Then place it on your planking fan to break it up into six planks for the inner belt.....repeat the process to define the four planks in the outer belt. Do this for every deck beam. You can see my tick marks in the inner belt on the port side in the above photo.

Step Five – There is a reason why I have six planks on the inner belt and only four on the outer belt. The six inner planks will be tapered as you are finding out after marking all of those tick marks.

But...



Only the three outer planks in the outer belt will have hooked scarphs on the plank ends.

You can actually use the tick marks to draw in the run of every plank at the bow and stern. Then draw the shape of the scarphed planks on your false deck. It will take all of the guesswork out of it while you actually plank the deck.



The photo above shows how I actually drew the planks onto the false deck. I did this at the stern and at the bow. It allowed me to see the shape of the scarphed planks. They are actually called hook scarphs.

Step Six- Start planking the deck.....cut your planks to scale lengths. Taper them just like we did for the external hull planking. Then darken one edge to simulate the tarred seams. You can see the butt shift pattern I used on the plans. I actually marked the locations for these on my false deck so I can use them for reference as I planked the deck.

The photos that follow show the deck planking completed. It is easier to see the hooked scarph planks in the completed photos.

