

Acker Marine Survey Co.

GLOSSARY

Abaft Toward the rear of the boat relative to a point of reference; e.g. the mizzen mast is abaft the main mast.

Abeam A direction off the boat at right angles to the fore-and-aft line amidships.

Aft Toward the stern.

Amidships In or near the middle of the boat, either along the longitudinal axis or from side to side.

Astern Behind the boat.

Athwartships Across the boat.

Ballast Weight, usually iron or lead, carried inside the boat or outside on the keel for trim or for stability.

Beam The width of the boat at its widest part. A boat is "on her beam ends" when heeled over 90 degrees.

Beat To go to windward in a sailboat by sailing with the wind first on one side and then on the other.

Belay To secure a line, usually to a cleat.

Berth Space allotted to a boat at a dock, mooring area or anchorage. To give a wide berth is to give plenty of room, Also a place to sleep on a boat, a bunk.

Bilge Area, usually beneath the floorboards, inside the hull near the bottom.

Binnacle Housing of the compass.

Block A wood or metal shell that encloses one or more sheaves, or pulleys, through which lines are led.

Boat Any small craft propelled by oars, sails or engine.

Boom A projecting spar used to hold down and extend the foot of a sail.

Bow The forward part of the boat. (The word prow, cherished by poets, describes a ship's ornamental stem and is otherwise avoided by seamen.)

Bulkhead Any wall in a boat.

Bulwarks The distance the hull extends above a deck.

Cabin The enclosed area below decks.

Cabin Trunk A structure built up above the deck and providing headroom below.

Caulking The waterproofing material packed into the seams of a planked boat to make it watertight.

Ceiling Anything used to cover the inside of a boat's hull.

Centerboard A plate of wood or metal, hinged on a pin and lowered into the water through a watertight housing or trunk. A centerboard resists the tendency of a sailboat to slide sideways when sailing.

Chain Plate A long, narrow metal plate attached to the side of the hull as a fastening point for shrouds and stays.

Chine A sharp-angled intersection between a boat's topsides and bottom.

Chock A metal fitting, usually mounted on or in a boat's rail, to guide hawsers or ropes for mooring or towing.

Cleat A wood or metal fitting with two projecting horns -- fastened to a boat's deck, mast or coaming -- to which a line is belayed.

Clew In a fore and aft sail, the lower aftermost corner, in a square sail, the two lower corners.

Close-hauled A condition of sailing when a vessel trims her sails so that she proceeds as close to the wind as possible. Also called beating.

Coaming A raised framing around deck openings such as hatches or cockpits to keep water out.

Cockpit A well in the deck, usually aft, where a boat's wheel or tiller is located.

Companionway A passageway through which a ladder or stairs lead from the deck down to the cabin.

Counter The underside of the overhanging part of the stern above the waterline.

Cuddy A small enclosed space or cabin in a small boat.

Cutter A sailboat with one mast stepped more than one-third of the way aft, usually carrying two or more sails ahead of the mast. Also a Coast Guard vessel.

Cutwater Fitting A metal fitting through the stem of a sailboat near the water, to which the bobstay is connected.

Daggerboard A removable centerboard with no pivot pin.

Deadrise The angle at which the bottom rises from where it joins the keel to the turn of the bilge, or chine.

Deck What a floor is to a house.

Displacement The weight of water displaced by a floating boat, equal to the weight of the boat.

Dock The water a floating hull is occupying. Also to bring a vessel into dock.

Dorade Ventilator A deck box with cowl and internal arrangement that allows air but not water to enter the cabin.

Draft The depth a vessel extends below the waterline. A boat is said to draw so much water.

Dry Rot Decay of wood caused by a fungus that flourishes in a moist, unventilated environment.

Fair Smooth, unfouled, favorable, as a fair hull or a fair wind.

Fend Off To prevent a moving boat from hitting a dock or other object.

Fender A device let down between the hull of a boat and a wharf or other boat to prevent chafing.

Ferrocement A form of construction of small craft that involves a metal frame over which a semi-liquid mortar mix is applied to the inside and outside.

Fiberglass A cloth, mat or roving of glass fibers laminated with plastic resin; used extensively in boat construction.

Flare Outward spread and upward curve of the topsides as they rise from the waterline, most noticeably in the bow sections. The final, most pronounced curve of flare is called flam.

Flying Bridge A raised platform that affords unobstructed vision for steering and navigation.

Foot Bottom edge of a sail.

Fore and Aft A boat's longitudinal axis.

Forestay A supporting stay leading from the mast forward, aft of the headstay.

Foretriangle On a sailboat, the triangle formed by the headstay, the front of the mast and the deck.

Forward In or toward the bow.

Fractional Rig A rig in which the headstay meets the mast at some distance below the masthead.

Freeboard Distance between the actual water level and a boat's rail or gunwale.

Gaff A spar used to support and spread the head of a sail of four generally unequal sides. A sail so rigged is gaff-headed.

Galley A seagoing kitchen.

Garboard The first plank, or strake, out from the keel.

Gear A general term for any collection of equipment, clothing or tools; e.g. oilskins and boots are foul-weather gear.

Gelcoat The thin, outer coat of a fiberglass hull, often impregnated with color.

Genoa Jib A large headsail set on the headstay and overlapping the mainsail.

Gimbals Two concentric metal rings which form the mounting and suspension for compasses and galley stoves.

Ground Tackle A general term embracing all the gear (anchors, cables, etc.) carried by a ship to enable her to anchor or to moor.

Gudgeon The metal plate carrying an eye bolted on to the sternpost of a vessel which takes the pintle of the rudder to allow it free movement in any direction.

Gunwale The rail of a boat. (Pronounced GUN-nel)

Halyard A line to hoist and lower a sail.

Hatch An opening in the deck giving access below; also its cover.

Hawser A heavy line or cable, five inches or more in circumference, used on ships for mooring and towing.

Head The top corner of a triangular sail. Also, a seagoing lavatory or bathroom.

Headsails Sails set within the foretriangle, ie. forward of the mast and usually on a stay. Headsails include jibs and staysails.

Headstay Foremost stay supporting the mast. The jib is set on the headstay.

Heel A sideways leaning of a boat caused by the wind's force on the sails. Boats that heel easily are called tender or cranky. Those that resist heeling are called stiff.

Helm The device, usually a tiller or wheel, attached or connected to the rudder by which a boat is steered.

Hull The basic structural shell of a boat.

Hull Speed The limit of speed imposed on a displacement hull by the resistance of its own wave systems.

Inboard Toward a boat's centerline. Also, a common contraction for a boat with an inboard engine.

Inboard Engine An engine permanently mounted inside a boat's hull.

Jib A triangular sail set on the headstay.

Jib-headed A triangular sail supported by a halyard directly attached to its head -- as opposed to a sail that is gaff-headed.

Jigger Common alternate name for the sail set on the mizzenmast.

Keel A main structural member, the backbone of the ship running longitudinally along the bottom from stem to stern. Also, the vertical downward extension of a sailboat's bottom, usually ballasted, for stability and lateral resistance.

Ketch A boat with a two-masted rig in which the larger, or mainmast, is forward and the smaller mizzenmast is stepped aft -- but forward of the rudder and usually of the helm.

Knot A fastening made with rope. Also a unit of measure of speed: one knot equals one nautical mile-per-hour. Since a nautical mile is about 800 feet longer than a land mile, a knot equals 1.15 mph.

Lazarette A stowage space in the stern.

Leech The after edge of a sail.

Leeward In the direction away from the wind. (Pronounced LOO-ard)

Leeway Drift, or side-ways slip, of a boat due to the pressure of wind on the sails.

Length The greatest length of a boat, not counting the bowsprit or other protuberances, is called length overall (LOA). Waterline length (LWL), usually shorter, is measured at the designed waterline and excludes the bow and stern overhangs.

Lifelines Safety lines and guard rails rigged around a boat's deck to prevent the crew from being washed overboard.

Line Nautical usage for rope used aboard a boat.

List A hull's more or less permanent leaning to one side due to improper distribution of ballast or from taking water aboard.

Locker A chest, cupboard or small compartment for stowing gear.

Lower Unit The drive shaft, gearing and propeller of an outboard motor.

Luff The leading edge of a sail. To luff up is to head a boat so close to the wind that the sails begin to flutter.

Mainmast Usually the principal and heaviest mast of two or more. In yawls and ketches the forward mast is the mainmast. In schooners and vessels with more than two masts, it is the second from forward.

Mainsail The sail set on the after side of the mainmast, usually the biggest working sail. Often called simply the main.

Mainsheet The line used to pull in and let out the mainsail.

Marconi Name to describe a three-cornered sail whose luff sets on a mast -- as opposed to the four-sided gaff-rigged sail. Also called a Bermuda or jib-headed sail.

Mast A wood or metal spar, stepped on the top of the structural keel or on the deck that supports the booms, gaffs, yards and gear for spreading sail. The mast is held up by the standing rigging.

Mast Step Socket in which the heel, or bottom, of the mast is stepped.

Masthead Rig A rig in which the jib and spinnaker hoist to the top of the mast instead of partway down, as in a fractional rig.

Mizzen The sail set on the after side of the mizzen mast.

Mizzenmast After mast on a yawl or ketch.

Moorings A fixed anchor or weight by which a boat is kept at a permanent berth.

Outboard Out from the hull, or toward the outside, away from the centerline. Also, a contraction for outboard motor.

Outboard Motor An engine mounted with clamps or bolts outside a boat's hull.

Overboard Over the side.

Overhead What a ceiling is to a house.

Pinch To operate a sailboat so close to the wind that the luffs of the sails are continually lifting.

Pintle A vertical metal pin attached to the leading edge of the rudder of a small boat.

Planking Collectively, the planks of a wood hull attached to frames or ribs.

Point To sail close to the wind. Also, one of 32 divisions on the compass, each equal to 11 1/4 degrees.

Port The left side of the boat, looking forward. Also a contraction for a porthole.

Porthole A small, usually round, opening or window in topsides or cabin trunk.

Pulpit A strong railing mounted at the bow or stern of ocean-going sailboats to prevent crew members from going overboard. Also, a railed platform extending forward from the bow of a sport fisherman, used as a vantage point for sighting, spearing or gaffing fish.

Quarter Either side of a boat's stern.

Reach A course sailed between a beat and a run, with the wind coming more or less at right angles over the boat's side. In a close reach the wind is farther forward; in a broad reach, farther aft.

Rig A noun indicating the arrangement of masts, rigging and sails by which a vessel is distinguished, as a ketch or yawl, etc. Also, a verb meaning to prepare a boat or some piece of nautical gear for service.

Rigging The lines or wires fitted to spars and sails for support and control. Standing rigging is made up of the fixed shrouds and stays that provide lateral and longitudinal support to the spars. Running rigging comprises the halyards, sheets, tackles, outhauls and downhauls to put up, take down and adjust sails.

Rope Cordage with fiber or wire strands twisted or braided. Rope used aboard a boat is called a line -- with a few traditional exceptions, such as a bucket rope or bell rope.

Rudder A flat vertical piece extending from the hull aft, by which the vessel is steered.

Run To sail before the wind. Also the narrowing part of the hull, aft, below the water.

Running Lights Navigation lights required by rules of the nautical road in different combinations for different sizes and types of vessel. Usually they consist of a red light to port and green to starboard, plus one or more white lights.

Sail A piece of fabric rigged onto a spar or a stay to extract energy from the wind.

Schooner A sailboat that generally has two masts (though some have had up to seven); the mainmast is aft of the smaller foremast and the sails are either jib-headed or gaff-headed.

Scupper A hole or opening in a rail, hatch or ventilator, to allow water to drain off.

Seacock An on-off valve attached to the through-hull pipes.

Shaft Transmits engine rotation to the propeller.

Sheave The grooved wheel (or roller or pulley) in a block over which a rope turns (Pronounced shiv).

Sheer The curve of a boat's rail from stem to stern.

Sheet A line attached to the clew of a sail or boom by which the sail is controlled.

Shrouds Ropes or wires, usually in pairs, led from the mast to chain plates at deck level on either side of the mast to keep it from falling sideways.

Sloop A sailboat with a single mast that is stepped not more than one-third of the way aft from the bow. A sloop usually carries only one headsail.

Spar General term for any wood or metal pole - mast, boom, yard, gaff or sprit -- used to carry and give shape to sails.

Spinnaker A full-bellied, lightweight sail set on a spinnaker pole and carried when a sailboat is reaching or running.

Spreaders Pairs of horizontal struts attached to each side of the mast and used to hold the shrouds away from the mast, thus giving them a wider purchase.

Starboard The right side of the boat, facing forward.

Stay A rope or wire running forward or aft from the mast to support it.

Stem The forwardmost part of the bow.

Stern The rear, or after, part of the boat.

Stern Drive A system of power propulsion in which an inboard engine drives a propeller unit that resembles the lower unit of an outboard in appearance and function. Sometimes called inboard/outboard or I/O.

Storm Jib A small, strong jib used in heavy weather. Colloquially called a spitfire.

Strake A row of planking or plating running the length of a hull, identified by name as the sheer strake, the hull's topmost plank or the garboard strake, next to the keel.

Stuffing Box A fitting around a moving part, such as the propeller or rudder shaft, that is located where the moving part goes through

the hull. A stuffing box contains oiled packing, compressed by a packing gland, to lubricate the shaft's movement and also to seal the through-hull passage from water.

Tack A noun indicating the lower forward corner of a sail. Also, as a verb, to alter a boat's course through the eye of the wind so that wind blows on the other side of the boat. A vessel is on port tack if the wind comes over the port side.

Thwart A crosswise seat in a small open boat.

Tiller An arm or lever connected to the rudder for steering.

Topside On deck.

Topsides The sides of a boat's hull from waterline to rail.

Transom The aftermost part of the stern which usually carries a boat's name generally surmounting the counter.

Trim To adjust a boat's load so that the craft rides at the desired attitude. Also, to adjust the sheet controlling a sail.

Tumblehome Inclination inward of a vessel's sides from waterline to deck.

Waterline The actual level of the water on a floating hull; a painted line marking the designed waterline is called a boot top or boot stripe.

Wetted Surface The immersed area of a floating hull including keel and rudder.

Winch A machine around which a line is turned to provide mechanical advantage for hoisting or hauling.

Windward The direction toward the wind source.

Working Sails Those normally used in moderate weather -- as opposed to light, storm or racing sails.

Yawl A boat with a two-masted rig in which the mizzen, or jigger, is abaft the rudderpost and the helm; the yawl's mizzen is smaller than a ketch's, as well as being placed farther aft.