

Glossary

Aback: A sail is said to be aback when the wind presses on it in such a way as to impede the forward motion of the vessel or to force it astern.

Abaft: Astern or toward the stern, with reference to a ship or any part of it.

Aft. In, near, or toward the stern of a vessel.

Apparent Wind. The variation from the true wind caused by a vessel's speed. The force of the wind felt by an observer on a moving vessel.

Athwartship. At right angles to the fore and aft line of a vessel.

Back (to). To haul sails over to windward.

Backstay. Standing rigging that supports the mast from aft.

Backwind. To disturb the flow of wind over a sail either from another sail on the same vessel or by another sailing vessel.

Batten. A length of wood lashed horizontally to the shrouds.

Becket. A loop of line attached to a jackstay for attaching a safety harness when working aloft.

Belay. To make one or more figure eight turns around a pin or cleat without tying it in a knot.

Bend. To fasten by means of a bend or knot.

Bitt. A strong post of wood or iron for belaying, fastening and working ropes.

Block. A mechanical contrivance consisting of one or more grooved pulleys mounted in a casing or shell fitted with a hook, eye or strap.

Board the Tack. The command to bring hard down the tack of the courses so that the ship may sail as close as possible to the wind.

Bowsprit. A spar which extends forward from the stem of a sailing boat or vessel.

Brigantine. In modern times, a two-masted sailing vessel with a fully square rigged foremast and a fore and aft rigged mainmast.

Bull's Eye. A wooden or metal fitting on the fore side of a square sail through which a buntline passes.

Bulwark. The raised woodwork running along each side of the vessel above the weather deck.

Bulwark Stanchion. The upper part of the frames extending above the plank sheer and supporting the bulwark planking.

Bunt. The bag, pouch or middle part of a sail. In a furled sail the bunt is the middle gathering which is tossed up on the center of the yard.

Buntline. The line attached to the foot of a square sail for pulling the bunt of the sail up to the yard when dousing.

Cleat. A piece of wood or metal with single or double horns used for belaying lines.

Clew. One of the two lower corners of a square sail. In all triangular sails and in four sided sails where the head is not parallel to the foot the after lower corner is the clew.

Clew Down. The command to lower the yard of a square sail while keeping the sheets belayed.

Clew Garnet. The name of the clew line given to the courses only.

Clew Up. The command to haul a square sail up into its gear by slacking on the sheets and hauling on the clew lines.

Clew Line. A line attached to the clew of a square sail leading up to a turning block or sheave in the yardarm.

Cockbill. The term used to describe the angle of the yards when they are not parallel with the horizon or deck.

Crane Line. Standing rigging stretching athwartships between the shrouds or from a shroud to the truss of a yard for stepping on.

Cringle. Loop grommet or eye formed in the boltrope of a sail at the clew, leech, tack, throat or head.

Douse. To strike, take in or lower a sail.

Downhaul. A line by which a sail or spar is hauled down.

Eye of the Wind. Directly into the wind or windward.

Fairlead. A piece of wood or metal with a hole in it for running rigging to pass through.

Fake (to). The process of coiling a line in neat circles for running.

Fall Off. To change the course of the ship or vessel away from the wind.

Fanning. The process of bracing the yards so that the weather yardarm is slightly abaft the next yard below it.

Fender. Term applied to various devices serving to cushion a vessel from a dock, quay or other vessel.

Fife Rail. A rail arranged in a semi-circle at the foot of a mast provided with holes for belaying pins.

Flogging. The term given to a sail that is violently luffing.

Foot. The lower edge of a sail.

Foot Rope. Pieces of served wire rope extending under a yard from the middle to the yardarm upon which the crew stand when furling a sail.

Foretop. A platform at the doubling between the fore lower mast and topmast.

Forward. At or in the direction of the bow. Also the fore part of a ship.

Full and By. Said of a sailing vessel when all sails are drawing full and the course steered is as close to the wind as possible.

Furl. To roll up a sail to its yard, boom, mast or stay and to fasten it with a gasket.

Futtock Shrouds. Short shrouds made of iron or steel rods which extend from the futtock band up to the fore or main top for attaching the shrouds of the next mast above.

Gaff. A spar for extending the head of a fore and aft quadrilateral sail.

Gasket. A small line or canvas strap used to secure a sail to a yard, gaff or stay when furled.

Halyard. A line or purchase used for hoisting yards, spars or sails on their respective masts or stays.

Hank. A metal fitting seized to the luff of a sail, which is made to run on a stay.

Hard On the Wind. Said of a sailing vessel that is sailing as close to the eye of the wind as possible.

Head. The upper edge of a square sail or quadrilateral sail, or the upper corner of a triangular sail.

Heave To. The act of stopping a vessel's progress by causing the sails to act against each other.

Helm. The helm proper is the tiller, but the term is often used to mean the rudder and the gear for turning it.

Hitch. A (usually) temporary knot by which a rope is fastened to another object.

In Its Gear. The term used to describe a sail which has been unfurled but that is still held up by its attendant clews, bunts and leeches.

Jackstay. A metal bar running along the top of a yard to which a square sail is attached by robands.

Jigger. A tackle purchase used to take an additional strain on running rigging.

Lanyard. A small line used to secure a tool or other item to keep it from falling when laying aloft.

Lazy Jack. Lines rove under the boom and attached to the topping lifts for preventing the folds of a fore and aft sail from falling on the deck when the sail is being lowered.

Leader. A line running from the deck to the main topmast for attaching the nock of the gaff topsail when preparing to set the sail.

Lee Helm. The tendency of a vessel to turn downwind because of an imbalance in the sails. To keep the vessel on a straight course the tiller has to be held to leeward.

Leech. The side of a square sail or the after edge of a fore and aft sail.

Leeward. Situated on the side opposite to the wind. Toward the lee.

Lizard. A short length of line with a spliced or seized thimble through which running rigging is rove.

Locking Hitch. A final half hitch put into a line that is belayed around a pin or cleat.

Lubber. An inexperienced or clumsy sailor; landlubber.

Luff. The forward edge of a fore and aft sail.

Luff (to). To bring a vessel's head nearer to the eye of the wind by putting the helm down.

Luffing. To cause a sail to shake by slacking the sheet or turning the vessel up into the wind.

Marlinespike. A pointed steel spike used by riggers and seaman to separate the strands of rope when splicing and also as a lever when putting on seizings.

Mast Hoop. A formed wooden hoop around a mast to which the luff of a sail is attached.

Miter Seam. The seam of a triangular sail where the cloths come together at an angle.

Nock. The term applied to the forward edge of a gaff topsail where it is curved to accommodate the doubling between the lower mast and topmast.

Norman Pin. A device like a belaying pin set horizontally through a bulwark stanchion or bitt for belaying lines.

Outhaul. A rope for hauling on the clew of a staysail or quadrilateral sail that sets on a boom.

Painter. A line attached to the bow or stern of a small boat.

Parceling. Long strips of tarred canvas wound around a rope prior to its being served.

Peak. The angle formed by the head and leech of a gaff sail.

Pendant. A short rope hanging from a yardarm or the clew of a sail having a block or thimble spliced in the free end. Pronounced "pennant".

Pin Rail. A rail placed along the side of a vessel for holding belaying pins.

Point (compass). One of thirty-two divisions of the compass card. Each point is equal to 11 & 1/4 degrees.

Pole Mast. A mast all in one spar.

Port. The left hand side of a vessel when facing forward.

Purchase. A general term for any mechanical arrangement of tackle which increases the force applied by a combination of blocks or pulleys.

Ratline. One of the small horizontal lines attached to the shrouds forming a ladder used by sailors when going aloft.

Reef (to). To reduce the size of a sail by rolling or folding up part of it and securing it by reef points.

Reef Nettle. Another name for reef points, which are short lines attached to a sail for reefing.

Reeve. To pass or run a line through any hole in a block, thimble, cleat, or ringbolt.

Roband. A seizing or knot for securing the head of a square sail to a jackstay or a fore and aft sail to hanks or mast hoops.

Running Rigging. That part of the rigging which includes the moving or moveable ropes hauled upon to brace the yards, make and take in sails, operate gaffs and booms, raise and lower upper masts, hoist weights and so on.

Sailmaker's Palm. An instrument used instead of a thimble by sailmakers and sailors in sewing canvas.

Seizing. A binding made with small stuff of one rope to another, a rope to a spar, or different parts of the same rope.

Serve. To bind or wind a rope tightly with small cord, spun yarn, marline, or seine twine, keeping the turns very close together.

Set Flying. A general term which refers in most instances to a sail which is so rigged that it can be sent aloft and set from the deck.

Shake Out. To shake out a reef; that is, to untie the reef points and spread more canvas.

Sheave. A grooved wheel in a block, mast, yard, and so on, over which a rope passes.

Sheer Pole. An iron bar or wooden batten seized

across the shrouds above the turnbuckles
serving
as a first ratline.

Sheet. A rope or chain fastened to one or both
of
the lower corners of a sail, and used to extend it
or to change its direction.

Sheet Home. To haul on a sheets thereby
bringing the foot of a square sail down and
making it as taut as possible.

Shroud. One of a set of strong wires extending
on each side of a masthead to the sides of the
ship to support the mast laterally.

Slack (to). To pay out without losing control
over the rope thus handled.

Slot. The gap between triangular sails when set.

Spar. A general term used for a timber of round
section used for masts, yards, booms, gaffs,
bowsprits and so on.

Standing Rigging. Semi-permanent rigging
which acts chiefly to support the masts, and
when
once in place, is not moved except for
adjustment
or renewal.

Starboard. The right side of a vessel when
facing toward the bow.

Stay. A strong rope, generally of wire, forming
part of the standing rigging, used as a support
for
spars and especially masts, leading forward
from
the masthead to another spar or the deck of a
vessel.

Sternboard. The backward motion of a boat
generally under sail. The movement of a vessel
carried or impelled backward.

Stirrup. One of a number of short pieces of
served rope suspended from a yard which
support the footropes.

Stopper. A short length of rope used on board
ship for checking the running of a rope, or for
holding it firmly while it is being belayed.

Tack. 1. The rope holding down the weather

clew of a course. 2. The lower forward corner of a fore and aft sail. 3. The direction of a vessel's head with regard to the trim of its sails. The run of a vessel on one tack.

Tack (to). To bring the wind from one side of the boat to the other by bringing the bow of the vessel through the eye of the wind.

Throat. 1. The forward or inner end of a gaff. 2. The upper forward corner of a quadrilateral fore and aft sail where the head and luff join.

Two Blocked. A tackle is two-blocked when it has been hauled upon until the two blocks meet.

Wearing. To bring the wind from one side of the boat to the other by turning the vessel so that the stern passes through the eye of the wind.

Weather. The weather side of the vessel is the side that the wind is hitting first.

Weather Helm. A ship is said to carry weather helm when it has a tendency to come up into the wind and requires up helm constantly to keep a straight course. The opposite of "lee helm".

Well (that's). That's good.

Whip. A rope rove through a fixed single block.

Whip (to). To wind the end of a rope with twine to prevent it from fraying.

Windward. The general direction from which the wind blows. Toward the wind.

Yard. A long, nearly cylindrical spar, tapering toward the ends, used for supporting and extending a square, lateen, or lug sail.

Yard Cloth. A sacrificial cloth sewed along the backside head of a square sail that protects the sail from the weather when the sail is furled.

Yardarm. The end of a yard supporting a square sail.

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