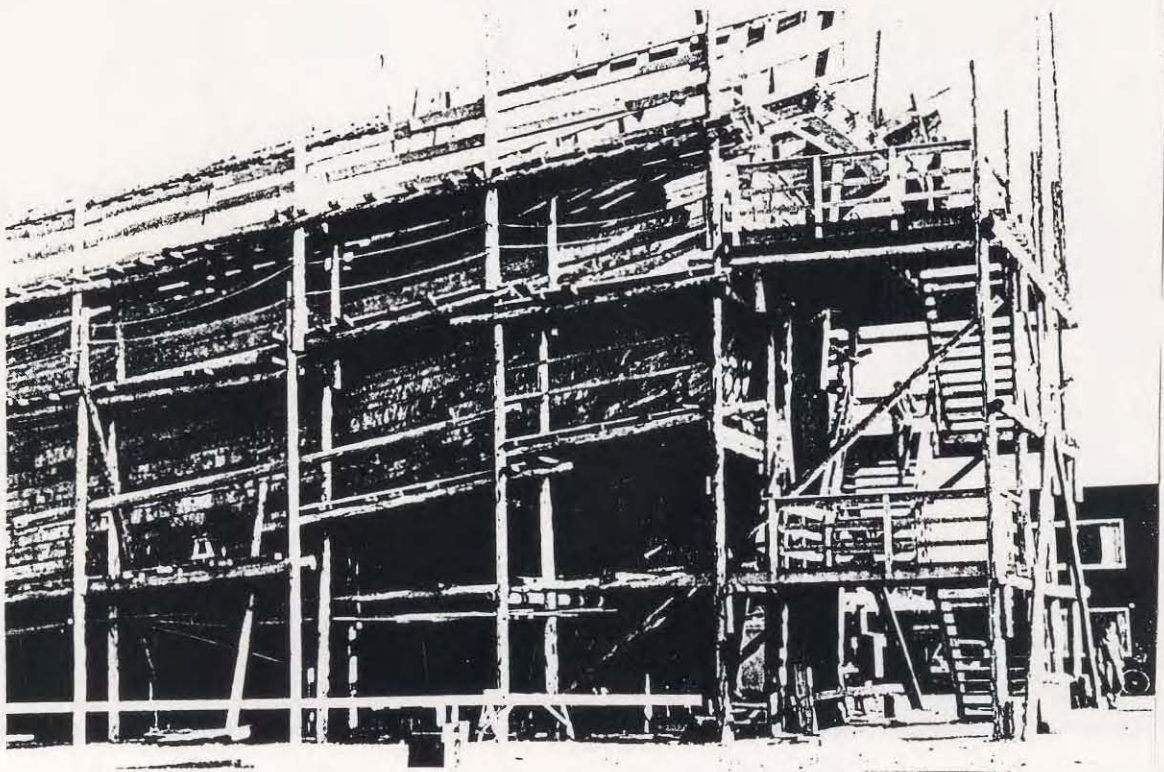


Report on Overseas Work and Study Programme
New Batavia Project
Lelystad
The Netherlands

11 June to 8 July 1990

By

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Introduction

I am involved in the finalization of the *Batavia* reconstruction here in Fremantle. Part of this work will be to produce a design for the lay out of the interior hull structure and associated structural work in order to make the reconstruction more understandable for the public; to liaise with display department on the arrangement of the reconstruction as part of the over all design of the *Batavia* Gallery display and; the recording and documentation of the completed hull structure. The aim of my visit to the Stichting Nederland Bouwt VOC Retourschip *Batavia*, Lelystad, Netherlands from 14 June 1990 - 4 July 1990 was to work in conjunction with Willem de Vos, shipwright and Robert Parthesius, archaeologist of the New *Batavia* Construction in order to get a first-hand impression of the whole ship as it is being constructed and before it is finished. I also wished to take measurements of the stern section of the replica so that we have information available to assist in the final stages of the *Batavia* reconstruction.

The three main projects during this study programme were as follows:

- i. Accurate measurement of the stern section of the *Batavia* replica in the areas associated with our reconstruction, to enable the shape of the hull to be projected into areas that are missing on our reconstruction. This would enable me to produce a light framework to show the complete shape of the hull. At the same time I would be able to liaise with the technical staff at Lelystad to compare the structures (see iii below).
- ii. To study the rigging, equipping and loading of the ship. I wished to make records of the standing rigging of the ship, for possible inclusion on the reconstruction, or as an associated display. Additionally, I wished to avail myself of new information available at Lelystad on the mounting of guns as they are building guncarriages for the project. I have already built a number of carriages including one for the *Batavia*. It was extremely useful, therefore, for me to gain some additional experience in this area as we have a large number of guns from the *Batavia*, *Vergulde Draeck*, *Zuytdorp* and *Zeewijk* which will require carriages in the future. Also I wanted to examine the hold arrangements on the replica, with the objective of preparing a plan for the way we can best display this area in our reconstruction. The details of these sorts of things would then be available for possible mock ups of gundecks, galley area, captain's cabin, powder room, etc.
- iii. To work in conjunction with Robert Parthesius and Jeremy Green to produce the archaeological documentation of the hull structure. This will involve taking detailed measurements of the reconstruction and the replica, with the objective of comparing, in detail, the differences and similarities of the two. I have intimate knowledge of the reconstruction, and I would expect to work in conjunction with Robert Parthesius on the documentation of the replica. It is intended to produce a detailed report of the structures for publication.

The New *Batavia* Project, Lelystad.

On arriving in Amsterdam and meeting archaeologist Robert Parthesius and project director Willem de Vos, it was decided that I would work four days a week on the construction of the *Batavia* at Lelystad, working with different teams to cover the various aspects of interest. The remainder of the week would then be free for research and to visit museums and other places of relevance. Primarily I worked with Rienk and his team, which involved marking and cutting out the planks, then bending and fixing the planks to the hull. Most of the workers spoke some English and they all took time to explain different aspects of the construction to me.

The bending of the planks was of particular interest. Using open-flame torches, the timber could be drawn into a very tight bend which was necessary for the bow and stern sections of the ship. Also of interest was the simple method of marking the planks using datum points on battens and measuring off the last fixed plank.

I learnt a lot about the construction methods being used, which can be compared with the original methods, and also be used in conjunction with our own reconstruction. I took numerous photographs, made sketches, took measurements and notes, especially in regard to the stern

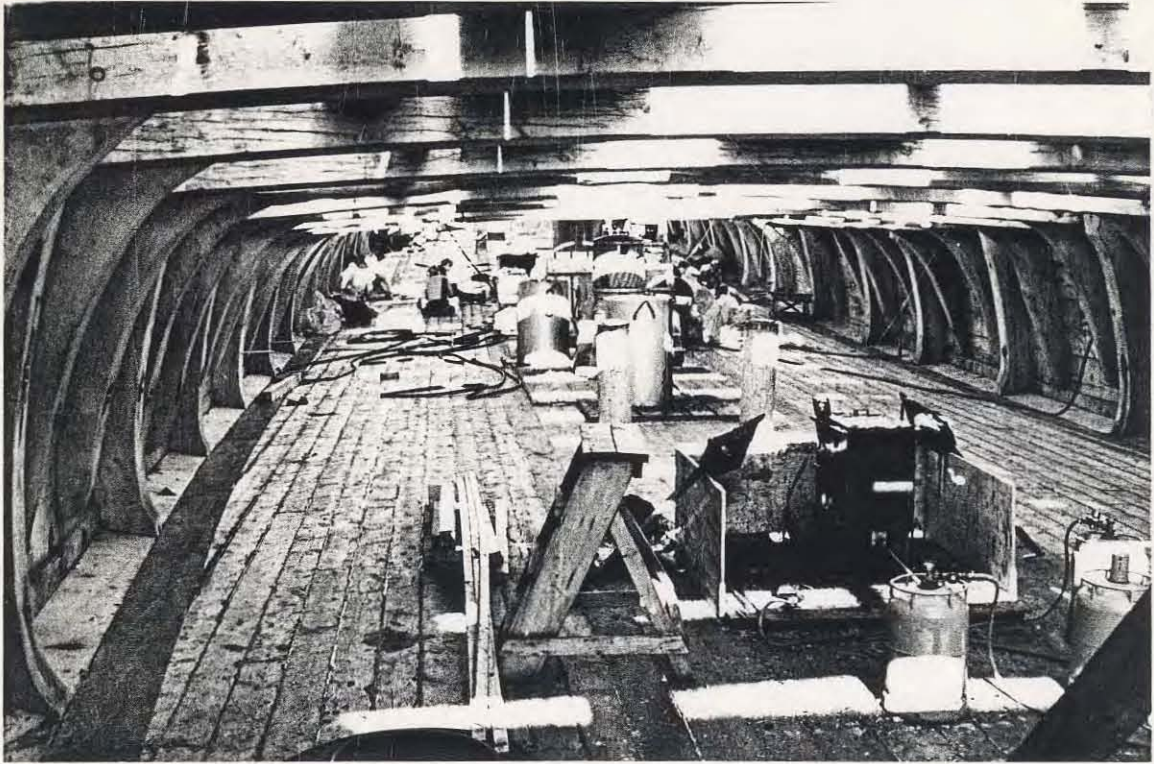


Figure 1. Caulking the gun deck of the *New Batavia*, Lelystad.

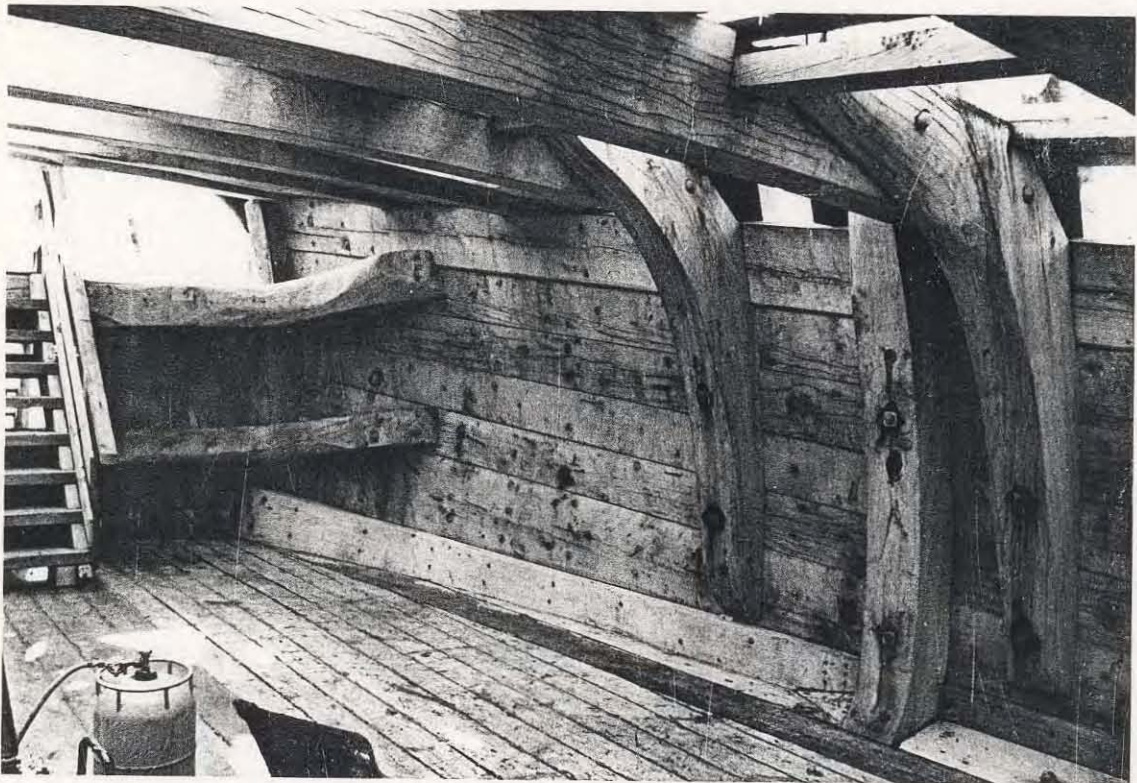


Figure 2. Section of the hull and transom of the *New Batavia*, Lelystad.

section which is very similar in shape and size to the *Batavia*. This information should be of value if it is decided that more false planking is required on the original *Batavia* for display purposes.

Other points of interest that were in operation, and that I was able to record, were the making and assembling of some rigging, including masts, rope and blocks and a team of wood carvers in action. I worked for one day with a crew laying the gun deck, including the caulking of the planks.

Unlike other ship replicas, the *Batavia* in Lelystad is being made as authentic as possible in every aspect. I believe this is the main reason for the large number of paying tourists who come to see the vessel in its unfinished state. It is estimated that over 200,000 will visit this year. This money, plus sponsorship money, is making the project viable and there is talk of building a larger eighteenth century Dutch East Indiaman after the *Batavia* is finished.

Visits to Museums and other places in the Netherlands

As part of my research and study programme I visited the following Museums and places of interest:

1. **Scheepsarcheologisch Museum, Ketelhaven** which housed a seventeenth century merchant ship (approx. 100 ft) found on the Lelystad flats after pumping out the sea. The vessel had Roman numerals on the sternpost which were of special interest, being horizontally placed. This observation helps to confirm that the orientation of the *Batavia* section is correct. Also, the stern post of a large East Indiaman, the *Bredero* of 1760, clearly demonstrated the size of these ships.
2. **Rijks Museum, Amsterdam**, which contained numerous artefacts, some similar to our Dutch wreck collection, also large scale models of seventeenth century ships.
3. **Amsterdam Maritime Museum**. Took details of wooden anchor stock on display.
4. ***Batavia* construction site**. The site where the *Batavia* was built.
5. **The Hague Archives**. Examined the original copy of Pelsaert's Journals and other material relating to the *Batavia*.
6. **Stedelijk Museum**.
7. **Ship *Amsterdam***. The 1:1 replica of the eighteenth century Dutch East Indiaman *Amsterdam* which is in the final stages of completion.

Visits to Museums etc. in Europe and America.

Other museums visited during my own time outside of the Netherlands included:

1. **Musée Maritime, Paris**, which has a large collection of ship models including seventeenth century models. A gun port cover was of particular interest, also the *Titanic* exhibition which displayed objects recovered from the wreck and conserved by the Electricité de France, Paris..
2. ***Mary Rose* Museum, Portsmouth**. Here I met maritime archaeologist Chris Dobbs who showed me through the *Mary Rose* Exhibition Hall which had some very impressive displays. One in particular, which I thought would be good in our museum was a gun on a carriage protruding through a gun port incorporating a section of hull with all the rigging etc.
3. **H.M.S. *Victory*, H.M.S. *Warrior* and the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth**.
4. **St Mawes Castle Museum, Cornwall**. Interesting displays of cannon mounted on guncarriages.
5. **St Austell Museum, Cornwall**. Information about the seventeenth century Dutch East Indiaman *Campen*, wrecked off the Needles at the Isle of Wight and the *Hollandia*, wrecked off the Scilly Isles.

Conclusion

The overall objective of this overseas programme was to learn more about the construction and fitting out of the *Batavia* so that display proposals for possible additions to the *Batavia* hull remains, such as internal partitioning, keel lines etc. may be devised to make the hull more intelligible to the visitor and thus enhance visitor appreciation of the hull remains. To this extent, I consider my visit to the construction of the New *Batavia* to have been most worthwhile.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Director and Trustees of the Western Australian Museum, Dr Ian Crawford, Head of Human Studies, and Jeremy Green, Head of Maritime Archaeology, for their support in making this trip possible. Also, Mr Willem de Vos, Director of the *Batavia* Project at Lelystad, and Mr Robert Parthesius, Archaeologist, for allowing me to participate in the programme and benefit from their skills and expertise.

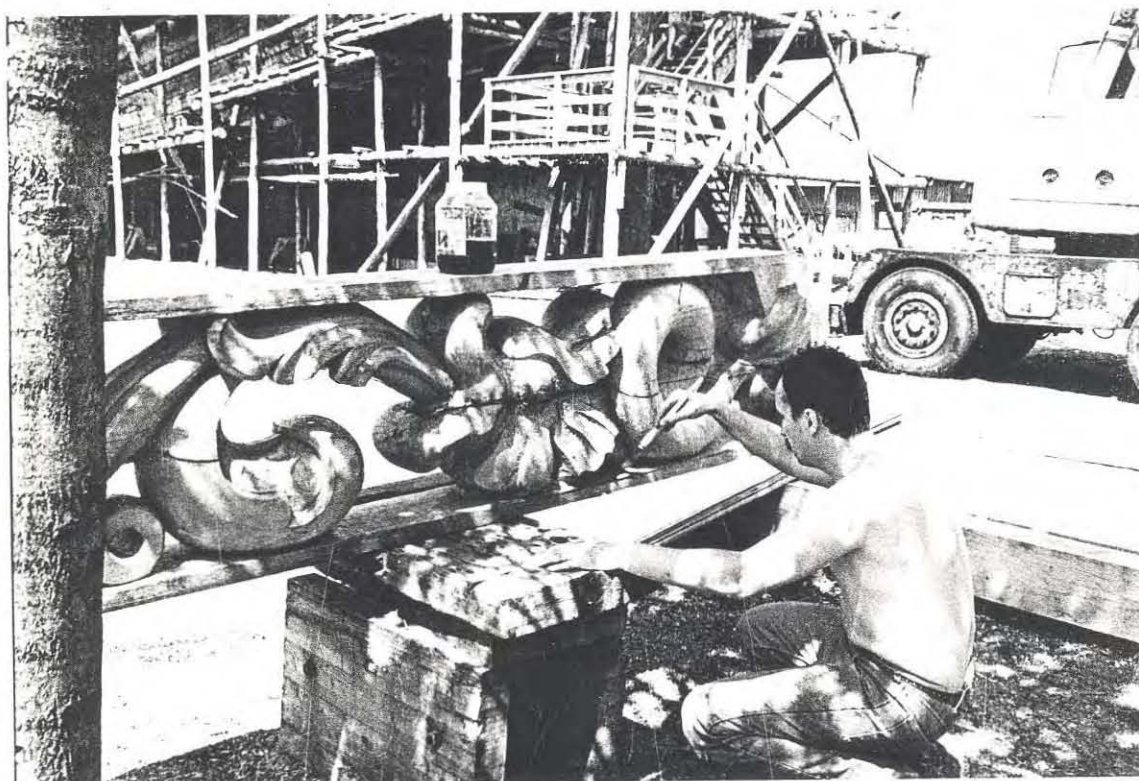


Figure 3. Carving the decorative features of the New *Batavia*, Lelystad.