

# Viking Merchant Ship

## Billing Boats Kit 8128 1/25 Scale

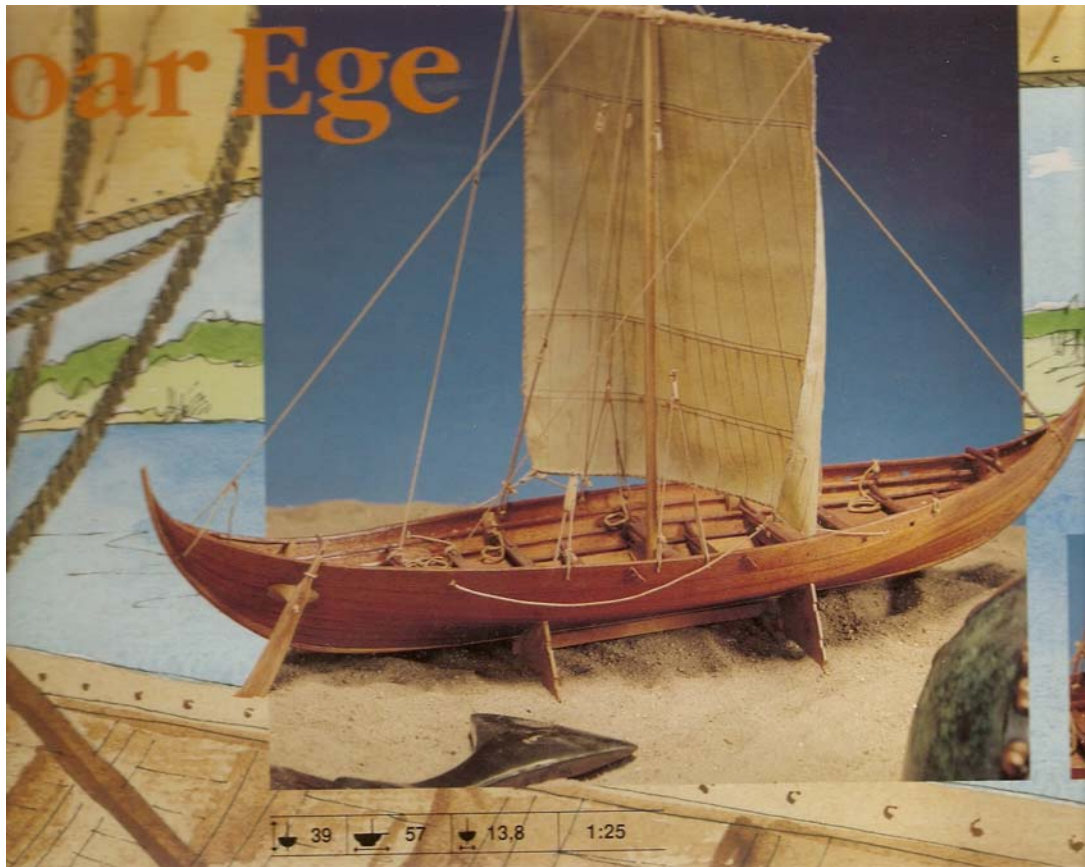
*by Al Glew*

This excellent wood kit was built about 1995 to 1996, taking about 6 months of off and on work to complete. As you can see, she came out very close to the boxtop photos.

Instructions are extensive, including full size plans of the basic framing as well as detailed side, top and front views and a large size, multi language booklet of step by step text.

The model is based on a actual boat recovered from a bay in Denmark by an archaeological research team.





It's been quite a while so bear with me through the updates that will be coming. I'll try to use those salty, manly sailor terms "like all tough sailors do when they're far away at sea". (Apologies to Bob Dylan.)

### **Hull**

The hull is built up in separate halves on a flat board over formers, similar in construction to a balsa model airplane. After the glue sets at least overnight, the hull is removed from the board and the halves are mated together. After another period for the glue to set up, the formers are removed and the scale ribs installed in their place.



Bow  
showing  
repairs

I had big problems with the bow and stern posts breaking off almost every time the model is transported. This is because the grain of the plywood runs horizontally here and has no strength. Of course, plywood was not used on the real ship.

### **Deck**

Now the fore and aft deck planking is installed. The midships section is left open. On the real ship, the lower parts of the hull were filled with stones to ballast the ship at the start of a voyage. As things moved along, this part of the ship would be filled with cargo and the stones thrown overboard in proportion to balance the ship. Except for the extreme bow and stern sections, the deck planks could be lifted and replaced as necessary for this operation.

### **Mast**

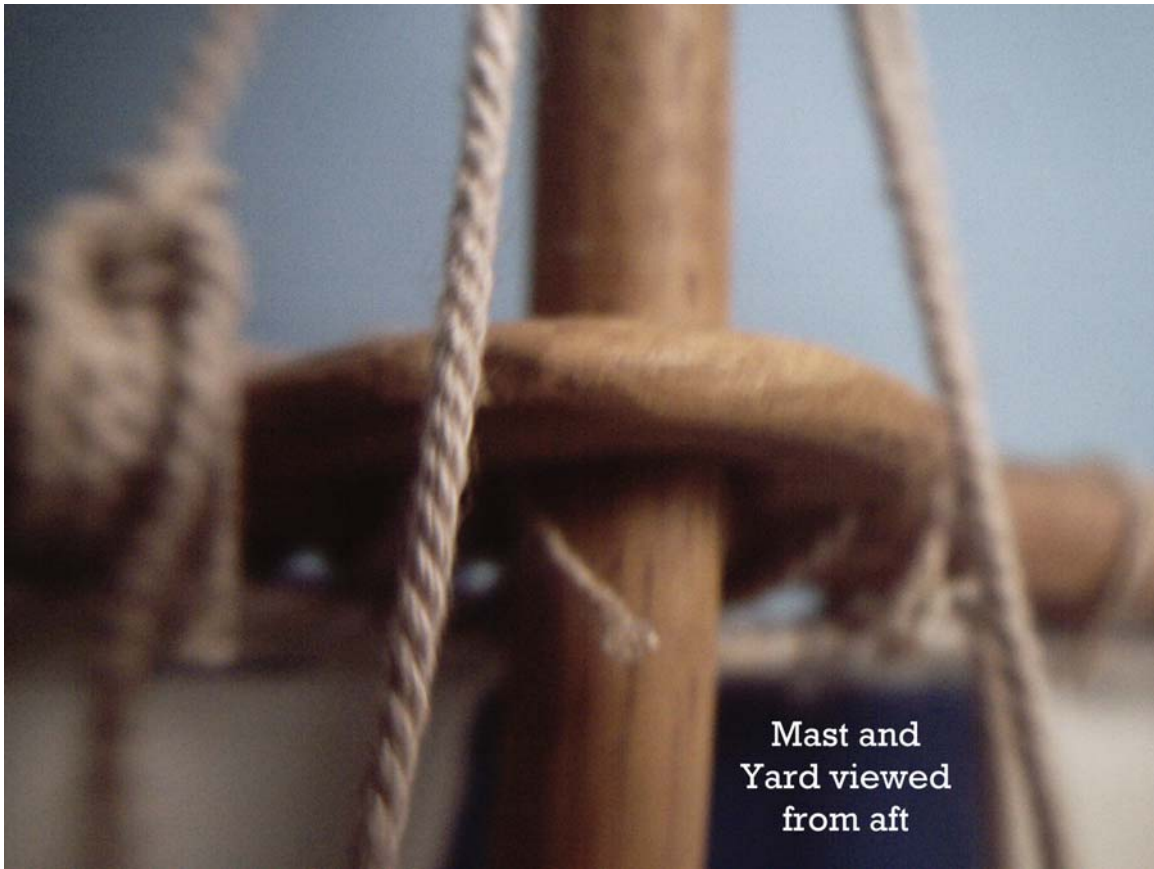
The mast and yard came pre-tapered in the kit. I did not glue the mast in place. As on the real ship, it is supported by the stays, and can be taken down for ease of storage. On the real ship, the mast could be stepped down, for instance when going up a river under oars, when low hanging tree branches might have been a problem for a ship with a fixed mast.





Mast Top  
with  
Stays

**Yard**



### **Sail**

The cloth sail material is provided in the kit.

### **Rudder**

In the days before centerline rudders, they were called *sterbord* (steering-board) and hung on the right side of the stern. That side of the ship came to be known as **starboard** and because the rudder was easily damaged, the ship was always tied up to a dock on the opposite side, which came to be known as **port**. This is one of the many bits of naval jargon handed down to us by the Vikings.

### **Rigging**



Tom H Johnson Photo November 2007



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Comments or questions email [blackhawk1939@yahoo.com](mailto:blackhawk1939@yahoo.com)

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