

Object Summary



Oral history of the Malta Dockyard: Anglu

Farrugia

Date

6 July 2021

Primary Maker

Anglu Farrugia

null

Dimensions

27 minutes 26 seconds

null

Extent

1 digital audio recording (WAV)

Object Type

Oral history

null

null

Collection

Malta Dockyard Oral History project

Museum

Malta Maritime Museum

Registration Number

MMM.AV0054

Description

This recorded interview was made as part of the Malta Dockyard Oral History project by the Digitisation Unit, Heritage Malta, under the direction of Joe Meli. Anglu Farrugia joined the yard as a shipwright apprentice in 1966 up to 1971 when he was assigned to the Plate Shop, where Anglu worked through the transition from the labour-intensive manual steel manufacturing processes to the use of more modern fabrication methods. Eventually he was promoted to Chargeman, Foreman and Steel shops manager up to 2008, when he left during the closing down process of the shipyard.

Transcript / Summary

(This summary is a work in progress. Timings are approximate.) (00:30) Entered the dockyard as an apprentice for five years which was reduced to four years with some extra certification, and chose to continue on the trade of a shipwright. As a tradesman he always worked in the plate shop. The plate shop foreman saw potential in him when it came to work on the heavy machinery in the plate shop, so he was allocated work on this machinery. Worked on various machines including 1500/500/300-ton presses, used for shaping of steel plates for ship sides, turn of bilge and bulbous bow shaped plates. Education-Apprenticeship process(01:45) During the apprenticeship, they would be allocated to different instructors and in different shops. They were taught the different skills required. The steel shops included also the boilershop and smithery. They also had training at the Manoel Island yacht yard and the boat house where he spent around three months. (02:00) When he started at the plate shop, the pre-fabrication shop was not built yet, there was just a small work area, that was built using rivets. He describes briefly the riveting technique. Entering the dockyard-Trades (From approval to the departure of a vessel)(02:45) He remembers the

plate cutting machines, were still using wooden templates, which were made onboard to the shape on the required plate. Then transported to the plate shop on machine table. The machine, through a worm wheel, would follow the template and cut it to the profile. The plate is then marked with the positions of its stiffeners, such as frames, brackets, etc. After this, the plate is shaped accordingly, on the pressing machine. The rolling machine operator is given the rolling-line, that assists him to correct shape the plate. The rolling-line is marked by the shipwrights afloat or by the drawing office. If there is more than one rolling line, then they would use a procedure using a cradle-mode. This duplicates the actual shape of the plate onboard. (05:00) At the plate shop, there was a lot of work in relation to the new building, such as the buoys which were made in sections and assembled either in the assembly hall or in the drydock. The period was around 1975/1976. He recalls the buoy which had the connecting arm (Ifrikia project). The connecting arm was fabricated in the open area behind the pre-fabrication shop, and transported for connecting to the vessel. Education-Projects(06:30) They carried a lot of works on parts, generally the complicated blocks, of the Russian and Chinese vessels. The drawing office provided the CNC reel, that was fed to the cutting machine to cut the shapes of various items on a plate with a specified thickness. They would then mark all the parts for identification in line with the drawing markings. The markings indicated each item with a code number which would be painted on each cut item, that instructed them where each part should fit. (08:00) He remember the difficult work to fabricate bulb angles for rivetted structures. This required heating and shaping using a sledge hammer. To shape it, they had a large steel block (blata) with holes. They would put round pins in various positions to shape the heated frame and bend it by hammering. This was before the introduction of the frame bender machine was installed in the shop, which made work less laborious. They had a special oven where they heated up the plates for the frames (majjieri) and pipes. The pipes before bending, were filled and packed with sand. (11:00) During his time at the plate shop, he remembers managers such as Tony Sammut, Philip Sapiano and Cutajar. Up to the time when the yard was working on shift (End 60' s), there were two foremen, one for each shift. The foreman was in charge of the plate shop and the assembly hall. As time progressed it was just one foreman for both sections due to the reduction of workers. (13:15) The pressing and the rolling machine, was run by a gang of three persons.

They handled plates from 6 up to 40 mm and more. Handling was with cranes. (16:30) He was also responsible for the galvanising plant. They galvanised pipes for ships repairing at the yard, as well galvanising work of steel structures, apertures, etc., for private companies and individual clients. (17:45) The Pressing machines had a capacity 500 and 300 tons. The rolling machine could also be used as a press, where they would install a knife shaped former and press the plate to shape. Anglu gives details on the development of the work procedures on these heavy machines. (21:00) One of the major works he remembers was the stern modification on of USS La Salle. The modification involved removal of the original stern door/ramp and fitting of a fixed permanent transom, manufactured and fitted onboard in one section. He also remembers the damaged bulbous bow of the Royal Viking Sun. The bulbous bow was removed in block and transported to the assembly-hall. They managed to save a small part of it and renew the remaining damaged parts. This saved mainly time. He also remembers the bulbous work on the Rover, which was completed renewed. (26:00) When he had already left the yard and Palumbo took over the yard, they required to use the rolling machine, and there was nobody who could operate it, so they sent for Anglu to do work for them.