

VANE STEERING GEARS

by A. Wilcock

*Reprinted from a series of articles
titled 'Notes for the Novice Model Yachtsman'
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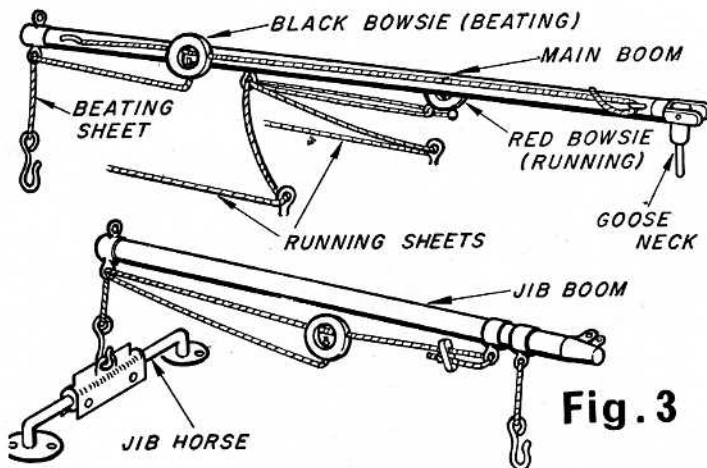


Fig. 3

This booklet is reproduced from a series of articles which appeared in *Model Boats* in 1965. References to "last month", "an earlier article", etc. may therefore be encountered.

Introduction

THIS is the first of a series of articles the intention of which will be to cover, as comprehensively as possible, all aspects of vane steering as applied to steering sailing yachts and in particular model yachts. It is very evident to the author from the questions he is asked at the pondside by free-lance skippers unattached to a club and just enjoying their sailing, and the more sophisticated talk in the clubhouse, that great interest is shown in the vane gear and that it still holds mysteries to many. It will be the intention to resolve these both for the novice and the more experienced. So many of the complications of the gears used by racing skippers are just devices to meet racing regulations without being impeded, or at a disadvantage, that attention will be paid to the simpler devices which can adequately meet the sailing requirements of the free-lance skipper, as well as invariably being easier to construct and therefore within the ability of many more enthusiasts. It must however be said that there is much more fun and satisfaction for even the lone sailer if he has a gear capable of executing the more complicated manoeuvres.

There are many controversial matters and opinions on getting the best both out of a boat and its steering gear. So far as practicable these will be given so that the reader may be led to try methods for himself, even if the author's own opinions are not expressed.

Later in the series designs will be given as well as considerations affecting design to enable and encourage the reader to experiment for himself. We must first, however, turn our attention to more mundane things. It is apparent that many do not realise that a yacht sails, or should sail, primarily on the "set" of its sails and that the steering gear is an adjunct: very necessary on some points of sailing but still an adjunct.

This leads us to the first instructive section under the title of 'Know the Parts', in which the various parts of the hull and rigging are described.

Know the Parts

Before trying to sail a boat it is worth while knowing the names of the various parts and what they are for. The front end of the boat is called the *bow* (pronounced bough) and the back end is the *stern* (pronounced stern, not starn). Looking forward

towards the bow the left hand side is called the *PORT* side while the other is the *STARBOARD*. The cords or wires holding the mast in place are called the *standing-rigging*. The main ones, from the hounds where the jib sail is attached to the foreside of the mast (about three-quarters of the way up from the deck), to the sides of the boat are called the *shrouds*. Their point of attachment to the sides should be behind the mast by about one sixth the width of the boat. These should be very strong to stop the mast giving in a sideways direction under wind pressure. That from the bow to the foreside of the mast, to where the jib is fixed, or to the top of the mast, is the *forestay*. That running from the top of the mast aft to the deck is the *back stay*. With vane steering this stay is invariably split about a quarter of the way up from the deck and secured on the port and starboard sides so that it clears the end of the main boom and also the vane gear. It is desirable to strut the mast above the hounds with *jumper stays*. A worthwhile refinement is to fit *running back stays*: these come from the mast at the point of attachment of the shrouds and jibsail and terminate on the side decks behind the shrouds on runners so that they can be pulled tight backwards or slacked off against the shrouds when not required, a point which will be dealt with in due course. Fig. 1 shows the points already detailed.

This may seem a strange introduction to 'Vane Gears for All', but if you think so, then these introductory pages are just for you. The availability of the correct standing rigging and its correct use will make the world of difference to how your boat will sail.

The cords which hoist or hold up the sails are *halliards*, while those which adjust the swing of the foot or base of the sails are the *sheets*. These working cords (ropes in full size) are called the *running rigging*.

For the sails, the Bermudian sloop rig is now so universally used in model racing yachts that that will be the only one we will consider. This rig consists of two triangular sails. That before (in front of) the mast is called the *jib* and that behind, the *main*. The jib on its forward edge—the *luff*—is attached to the *jibstay*. The head or peak of it is secured to the mast by the jib halliard which is adjustable to enable the tension of the luff to be varied. The bottom edge of the sail is called the *foot*. The forward

