

Nautical Trivia



by Ginny Hauff

1. Did you know that an iron ball attached to a long handle was a loggerhead? When heated, it was used to seal the pitch in deck seams. It was sometimes a handy weapon for quarrelling crewmen.
2. Did you know that tending the side with side boys, as we know it in modern practice, originated a long time ago? It was customary in the days of sail to hold conferences on the flagships both when at sea and in open roadstead; also, officers were invited to dinner on other ships while at sea, weather permitting. Sometimes the sea was such that visitors were hoisted aboard in boatswain's chairs. Members of the crew did the hoisting, and it is from the aid they rendered in tending the side that the custom originated of having a certain number of men always in attendance. Some have reported that the higher the rank, the heavier the individual, therefore, more side boys.
3. Did you know that a continuous fog signal indicates a boat is in distress?
4. Did you know that if Iron is introduced it will cause a compass error?
5. Did you know that freeboard is the vertical distance measured on a boat's side from the waterline to the gunwale?
6. Did you know that swivels used to keep equipment level are gimbals?
7. Did you know that Rummage Sale comes from the French "arrimage" meaning ship's cargo. Damaged cargo was sold at a rummage sale.
8. Did you know that the most common method of punishment aboard ship was flogging. The unfortunate sailor was tied to a grating, mast or over the barrel of a deck cannon.



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