



CUTTY SARK CARVING & GILDING OF THE GINGERBREAD

Greenwich, London | National Maritime Museum | Completion November 2018

Cutty Sark is the worlds' only surviving extreme clipper, due to celebrate 150 years in 2019.

Launched on 22 November 1869 in Dumbarton, Scotland, it embarked on its maiden voyage from London to Shanghai on 16 February 1870. On its first voyage, Cutty Sark carried 'large amounts of wine, spirits and beer', and came back from Shanghai loaded with 1.3 million pounds of tea.

Cutty Sark was built to last for just thirty years but served as a working ship for fifty-two years, a training ship for twenty-two years and has been open to visitors in Maritime Greenwich for sixty years.





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Campbell Smith & Co were commissioned to undertake a condition survey of all 'gingerbread' carvings. Following an assessment of need, extensive repairs to the carvings and backboards from both the bow and stern of the ship were carried out. The aim was to retain as much original timber as possible, whilst ensuring that all joints were stable and that missing and rotten elements were replaced using appropriate durable materials.

The Star of India, which is the focal point of the stern of the ship was completely rotten and replacement was the only option. Working closely with the National Maritime Museum, a new design emblem was created using archival resources to ensure the design was as close to that of the 1870 piece as possible.

Layers of flaking gold leaf and failing varnish were carefully removed in order to re-gild all repaired and new carvings. All gilding was completed in 23.5ct gold in situ by our gilders working on top of the glass roof, secured by a fall arrest system.