



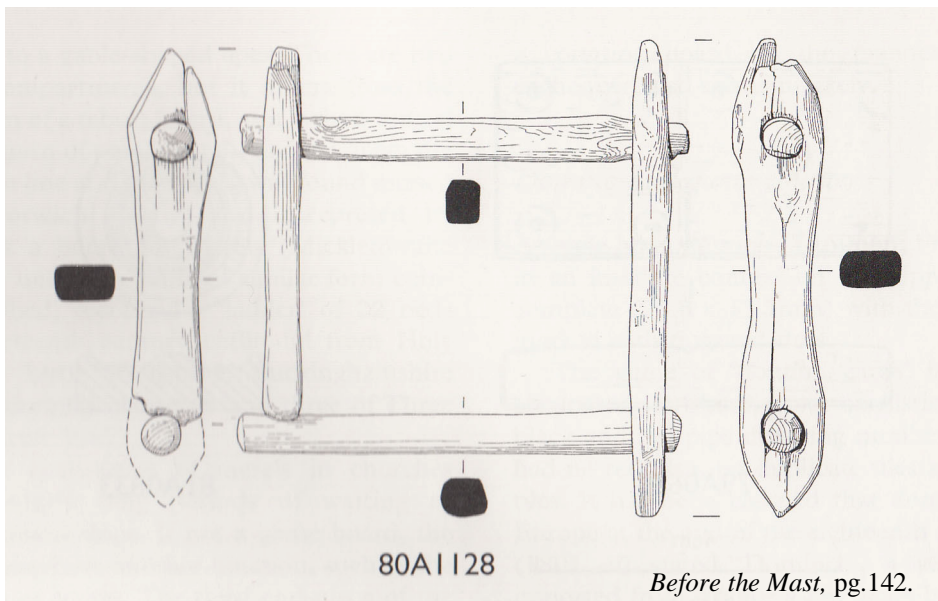
Before the Mast, color plate 22

Fishing Reel and Gear

Fishing was not a sport for the wealthy. It was practiced by peasants and commercial fishing operations. Nevertheless some fishing equipment was found on the Mary Rose. The equipment was found in 3 different chests, which implies it was for personal entertainment or to supplement the individuals' ship-board diet. If you have ever gone sailing with children, who do not have enough to do, you will understand why fishing equipment has been packed in William's bench chest.

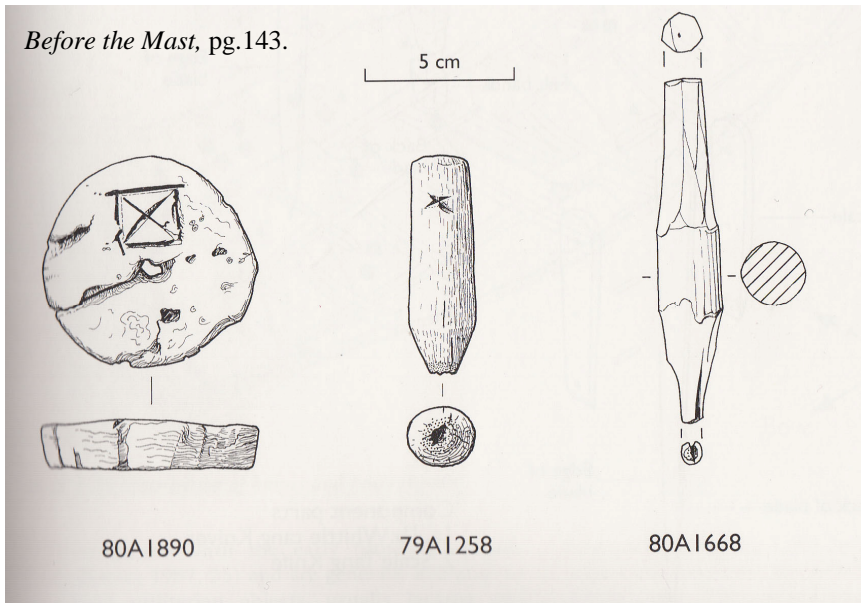
The fishing equipment found on the Mary Rose is a style that winds the line around a reel, places floats, sinkers and a hook on the line. The line is then dropped over the side of the boat. It is not cast. This is a different style of fishing than written about in the *The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle* (originally published in 1496 and reworked in 1561.) That treatise is written about fly fishing, however it provides a lot of information about metal fishing gear. Very little metal was preserved in the Mary Rose find.

The archeological notes in *Before the Mast* about fishing state that iron concentrations were found on the floats, "suggesting that the float was attached to the hand-line by means of a small iron ring or hook inserted into the end." (*Before the Mast*, p.143) A similar snippet about the line being possibly made from hemp has guided my fishing gear kit. Clear pictures were provided from the Mary Rose find on what the floats looked like. There were nine floats found and three with clear pictures published. I have made both styles. There were "two roughly made objects have been identified as possible disgorgers (used to remove hooks from the fish)" (*Before the Mast*, p.143) The only reason the fish disgorgers were identified was due to the location they were found. The chest 80A1217 had several other pieces of fishing gear. A disgorging is a stick with a slot in one end.

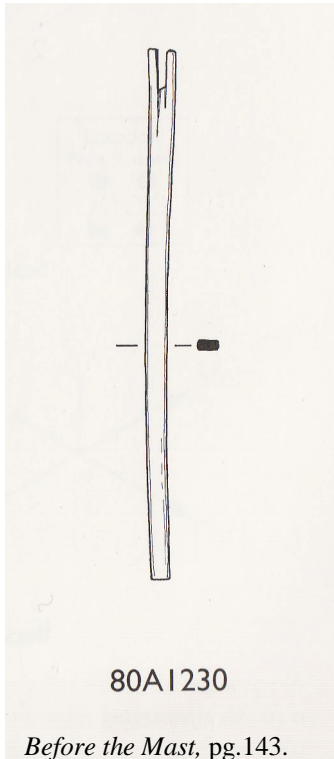


I like the shape of this fishing reel. It is slightly more fancy than the other two reels. The sides taper in and make a nice shape. All four of the reels are made in the same box style. My reel is made from oak, two of the reels on the Mary Rose were made from willow and ash, the other two are unidentified. This was a simple project to make using a drill, belt sander and a saw.

Before the Mast, pg.143.



Floats were made from light-weight woods, such as cork, willow, hazel and alder. The disk style float was made from cork with a hole punched in the center. I used a hand saw to slice the cork and a knife to pierce the hole. The other floats were made from pine and balsa wood, as those were the lightest woods I could find in my home. The balsa float works great. The pine float works as well, at slightly less successful rate, but not to the point it needed to be relabeled as a sinker.

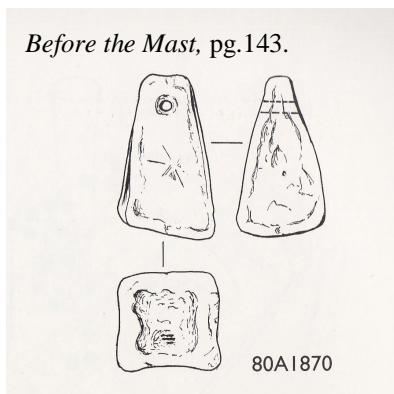


The disgorging stick is a stick with a notch cut in the end. I have included a nice oak stick and a pine stick from my shop. Both have notches cut in the ends with a saw. *Behind the Mast's* archeological report did not include information on what wood the disgorging stick was made out of, just a scale drawing.



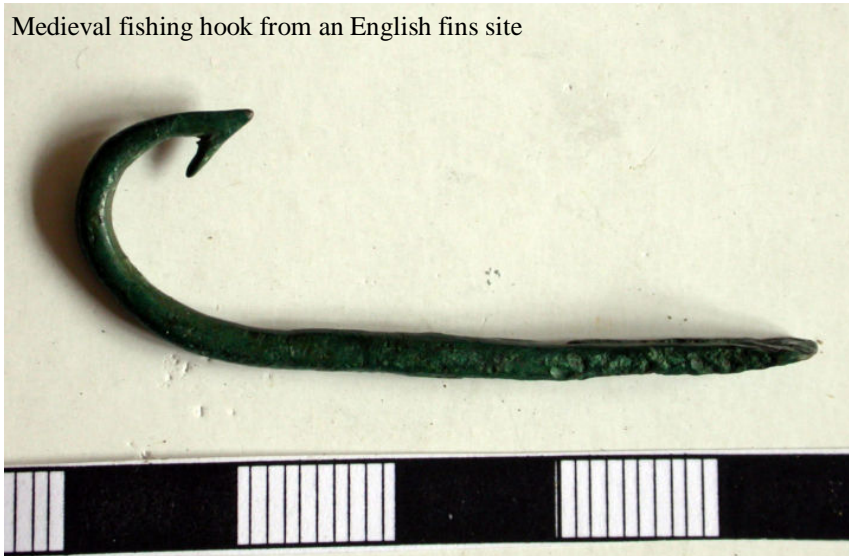
The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle

Before the Mast, pg.143.



Lead fishing weights are pretty common and have not changed much over time. I have purchased the weights for William's fishing kit. I have followed the advice from *The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle* and only purchased smooth round weights, so they do not snag on seaweed. I also purchased the weights because I will not cast with lead and William tends to lose fishing weights and hooks. He needs to be able to use the fishing kit and not worry about lost gear.

Medieval fishing hook from an English fins site

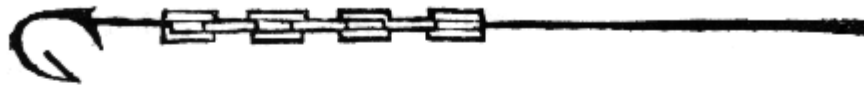


The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle gives a very clear set of directions on how to make a fishing hook. It starts with buying a tailor or shoe-makers needle of good steel, tempering it and putting a bend in it for a hook. I found a little information that some fishing hooks were made from tempered copper. I made my fishing hook from copper. It took a long time, for something so simple. I do not think William will be allowed to catch a fish with my

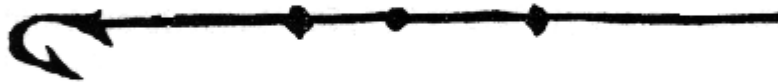
hook, he can use the ones from the bait and tackle shop. The main difference between Medieval fishing hooks and modern fishing hooks is an eye. It is easy to remove an eye from a fish hook with a set of snips. That is what I have done for the hooks which William will use.

The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle makes it clear you are to tie your hook to your fishing line with red silk. I have done that using a lashing knot.

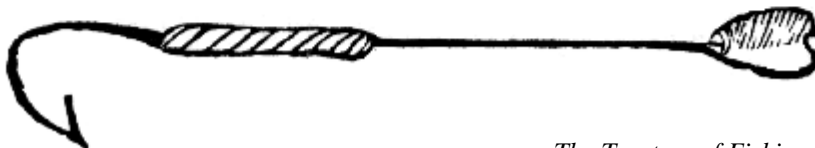
☞ The ground lyne, rennyng and lyeng.



☞ The Flote lyne, and the lyne for Perche or Tenche.



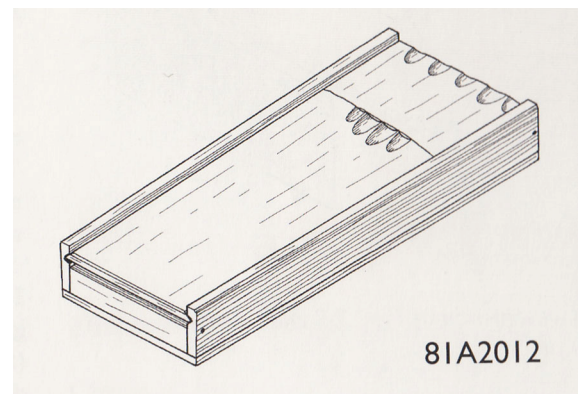
☞ The lyne for a pyke, plu[m]be, corke, and armed with wire.



The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle

I have included some hemp thread from the craft store to act as fishing line. *The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle* has clear directions on how to make fishing line from twining white horse hair. Again we came up against the problem of too much time invested on a small item, which might end up being taken by a fish.

All of the fishing gear fits nicely in a small wood container from the craft store. The container is similar in construction to find 81A2012.



81A2012