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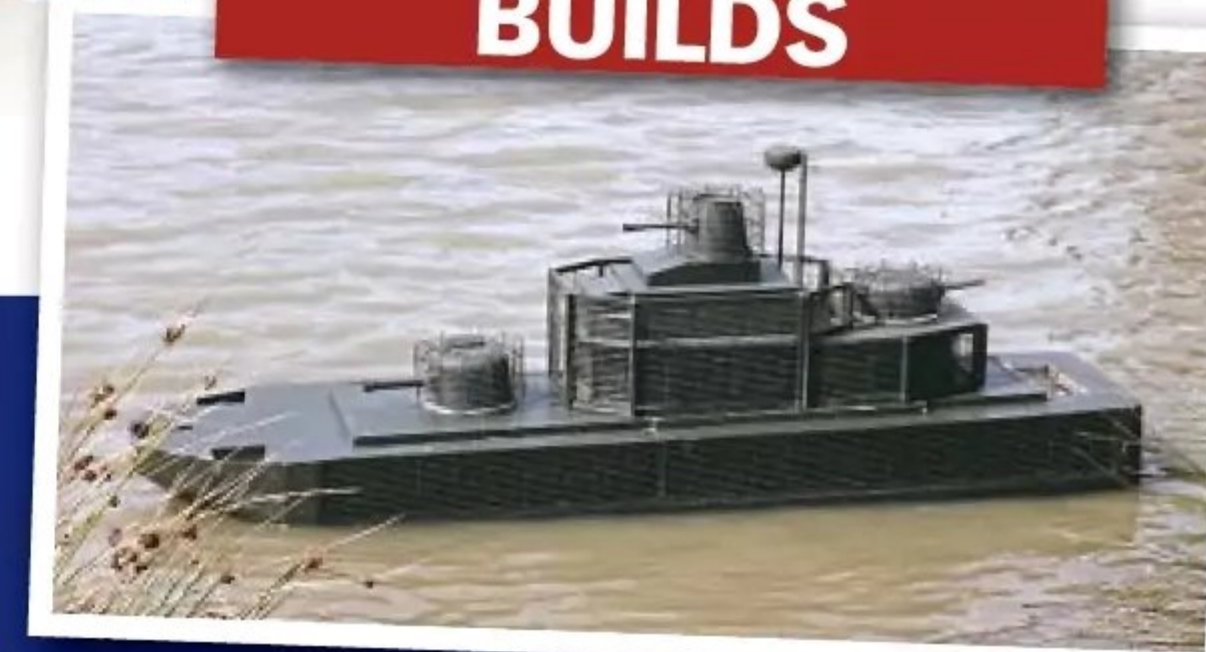
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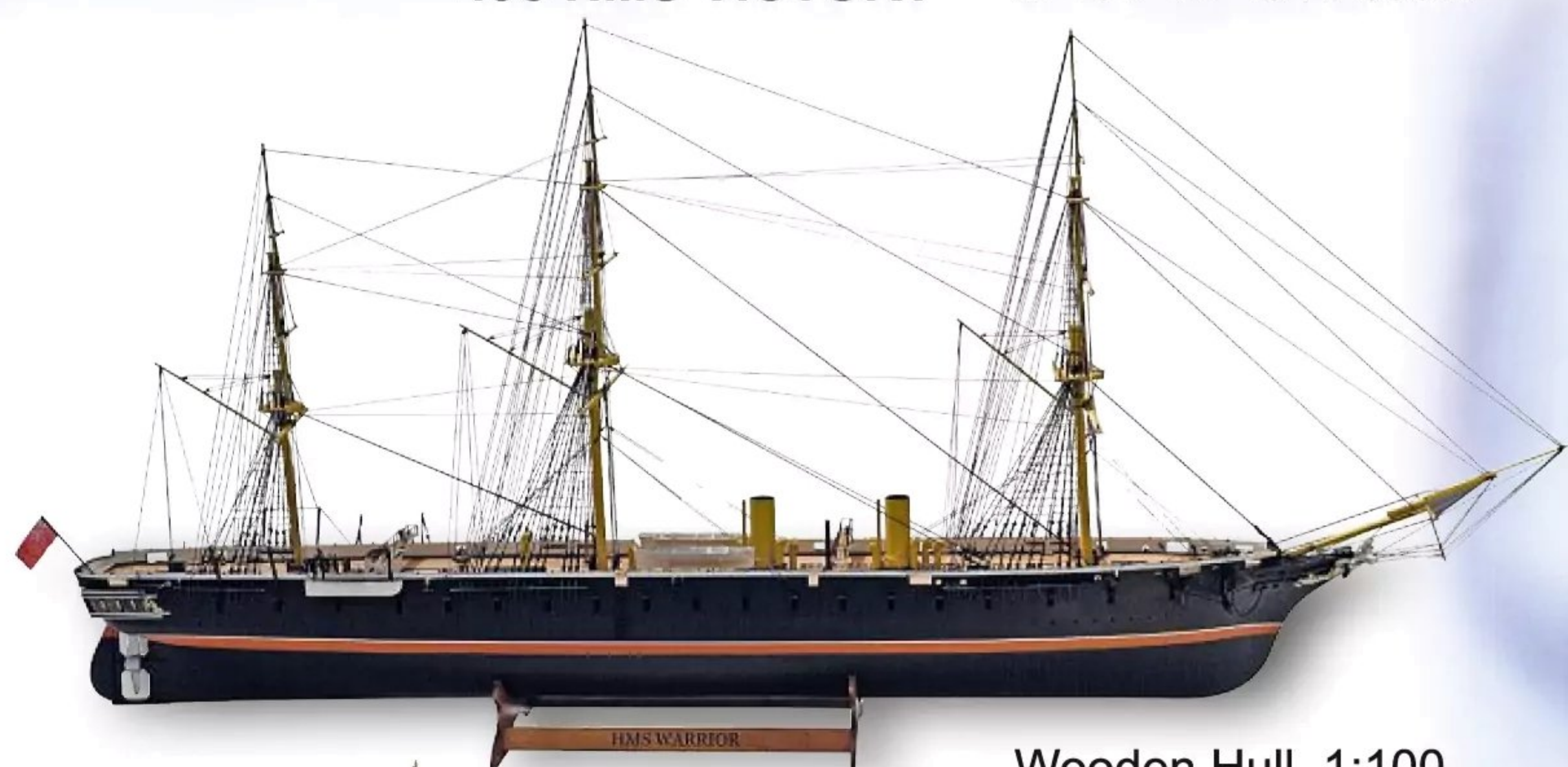
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Courtesy of the ever-generous crew at Billing Boats, don't miss your chance to win a handy modeller's toolkit plus a stylish Mercantile beanie hat





WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE OF MODEL BOATS...

We've got not just one but two great prize draws for you in this month's issue, so be sure to get your entries in this side of Christmas (closing date December 22). We will be drawing four lucky winners, so, with a bit of luck, your New Year could start off with a nice surprise!

Ahead of 2024, though, comes this and the issue cover dated January but on sale Friday, December 15 – a little reminder just so you don't forget to pick up your copy amidst all the pre-holiday shenanigans! Better still, to ensure you never miss an issue, if you haven't already done so, why not consider treating yourself to a subscription? You can check out our latest money saving deals on pages 38-39, and, as an added bonus, bag yourself a free gift in the form of a stylish black Model Boats t-shirt in a size of your choice.

As you will have seen from our front cover and the contents listing, within the pages that follow you'll find a first look at OcCre's exquisite new kit, a report from this year's Blackpool Model Boat Show and lots of inspirational build features, while in the January issue you can look forward to a free plan for a 1:16 scale Royal Navy LCVP 5 and the first of instalment of the two-part build guide for this model. Of course, as always, a couple more sneak peeks can also be found on our Coming Next Month page, while the full-line will be revealed on our website (www.modelboats.co.uk) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/modelboatsmag) a couple of weeks prior to publication.

And, by the way, to all of you who regularly visit our website and use our forum, thank you so much for your patience while we've been migrating everything over to a new and improved platform. As is so often the case with these things, it's taken us slightly longer than originally anticipated to iron out all the little wrinkles, so apologies for any frustrations you may have encountered during this period. Hopefully, you'll agree the updates have made everything a whole lot more user-friendly and that the end result has been worth the wait.

Enjoy your read!

Lindsey

22 Mississippi mesmeriser

Lionel Broadbent explains how he transformed the Mantua paddle steamer kit into an all-singing, all-dancing, motorised stunner

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With only one previous scratch build under his belt, Chris Wood fearlessly takes on a big, bold and incredibly brave endeavour

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Including plastic kit, glue, paints and decals

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Just three of the reasons why you won't want to miss the January 2024 issue of Model Boats



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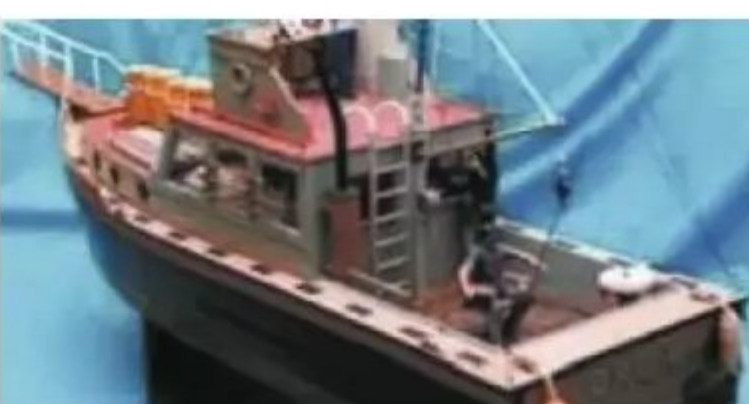
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Stress saving Christmas shopping

Let's face it, local shopping centres can get fairly chaotic during the festive season, so if you want to save yourself from the stress of all the hustle and bustle, not to mention the dreaded queues, why not check out the RNLI's online shop at <https://shoprnli.org>. From the comfort of your own armchair, you'll be able to select from a huge selection of cards, decorations, presents (including some really reasonably priced stocking fillers), etc, while at the same time knowing you'll be giving the gift that keeps on giving by supporting the RNLI and helping save lives at sea.



From greetings cards to decorations, the RNLI shop has Christmas all wrapped up!



The RNLI shop features some great budget buys, such as this Organise Your Crew kitchen whiteboard and neat little RNLI stationery set.



The RNLI online shop features toys aplenty, with everything from RNLI bears to junior binoculars to choose from.

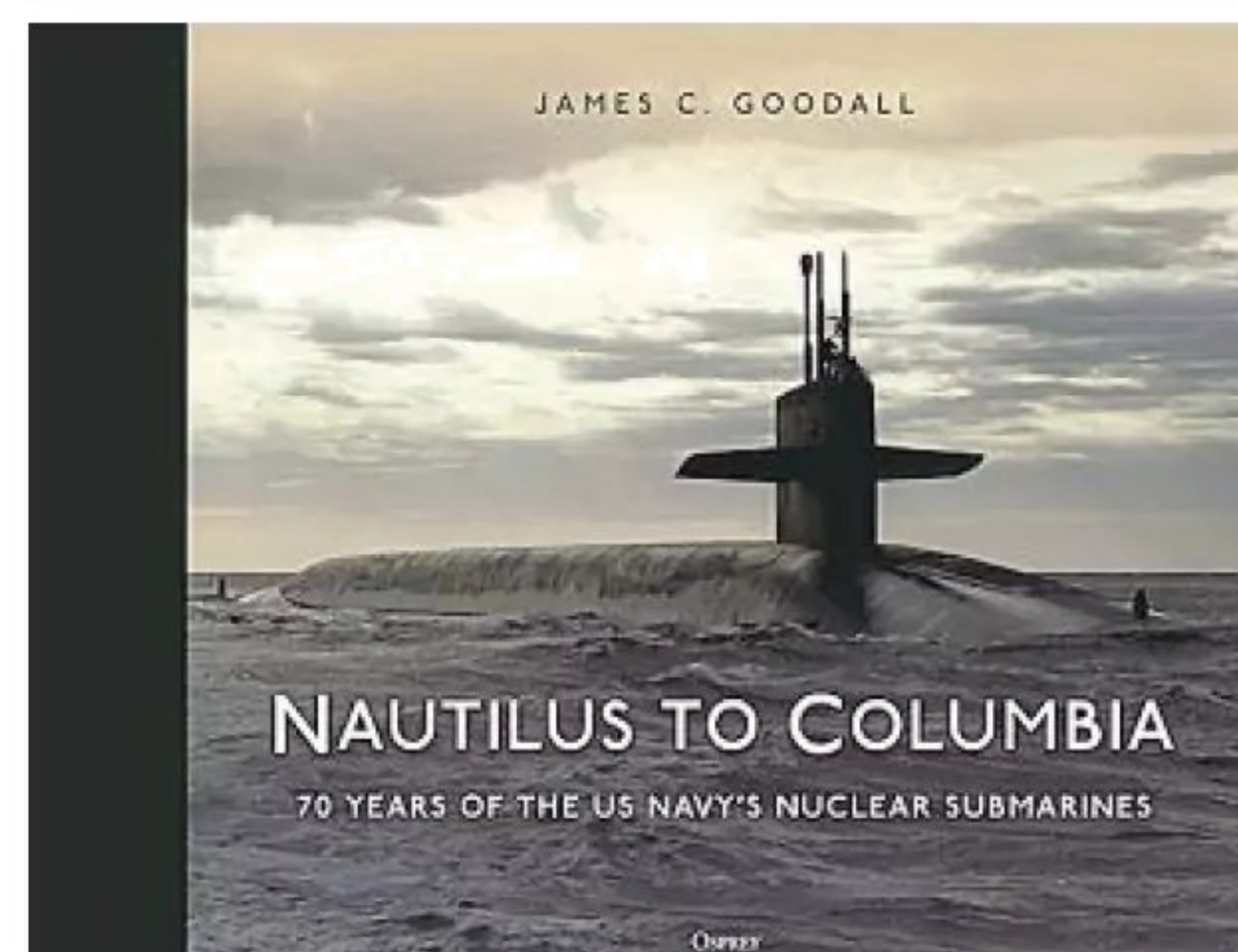


Parents of young children will thank you for these LittleLife iD bracelets. The card inserts on which essential contact/medical info details can be recorded make them perfect for popping onto tiny wrists while out and about, say, on a crowded beach or at a busy event.



There are even gifts for four-legged friends!

BUY THE BOOK



Nautilus to Columbia – 70 years of the US Navy's Nuclear Submarines

Scheduled for release on November 23 by Osprey Publishing, this new work from author James C. Goodall covers all of the 220+ submarine hulls built and delivered to the US Navy, from the USS Nautilus through to the newest class of submarine, the Columbia class SSBNs. Illustrated with 1,300 images from both official and archive sources, as well as the author's own personal collection, some of which have never been published before, the book, which will be presented in hardback format, will carry an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of £50, although a 10% discount can currently be claimed when reserving a copy of the title via www.ospreypublishing.com. Alternatively, pre-orders can be placed at all good bookstores by quoting ISBN 9781472856500

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- Extra filters (x2) and extra airbrush holder (x1)
- Plus, free gifts, including a Cleaning Brush Set, Airbrush Acrylic Colours (x2), Airbrush Cleaner (x1) and Christmas Stencil sheets

The compressor is a powerful but space saving and highly portable, and in keeping with its compact nature also has a built-in airbrush holder on its handle, while the airbrush itself features a 0.3mm needle and nozzle combination capable of everything from general purpose to fine detail spraying.



Priced at £225 (including VAT), customers also have the reassurance of a two-year warranty on the compressor and a five-year warranty on the airbrush (please note, the warranties do not cover fluid needles, nozzles, packing and o-rings, compressor pistons and automatic switches, since these parts need to be replaced occasionally due to normal wear and tear).

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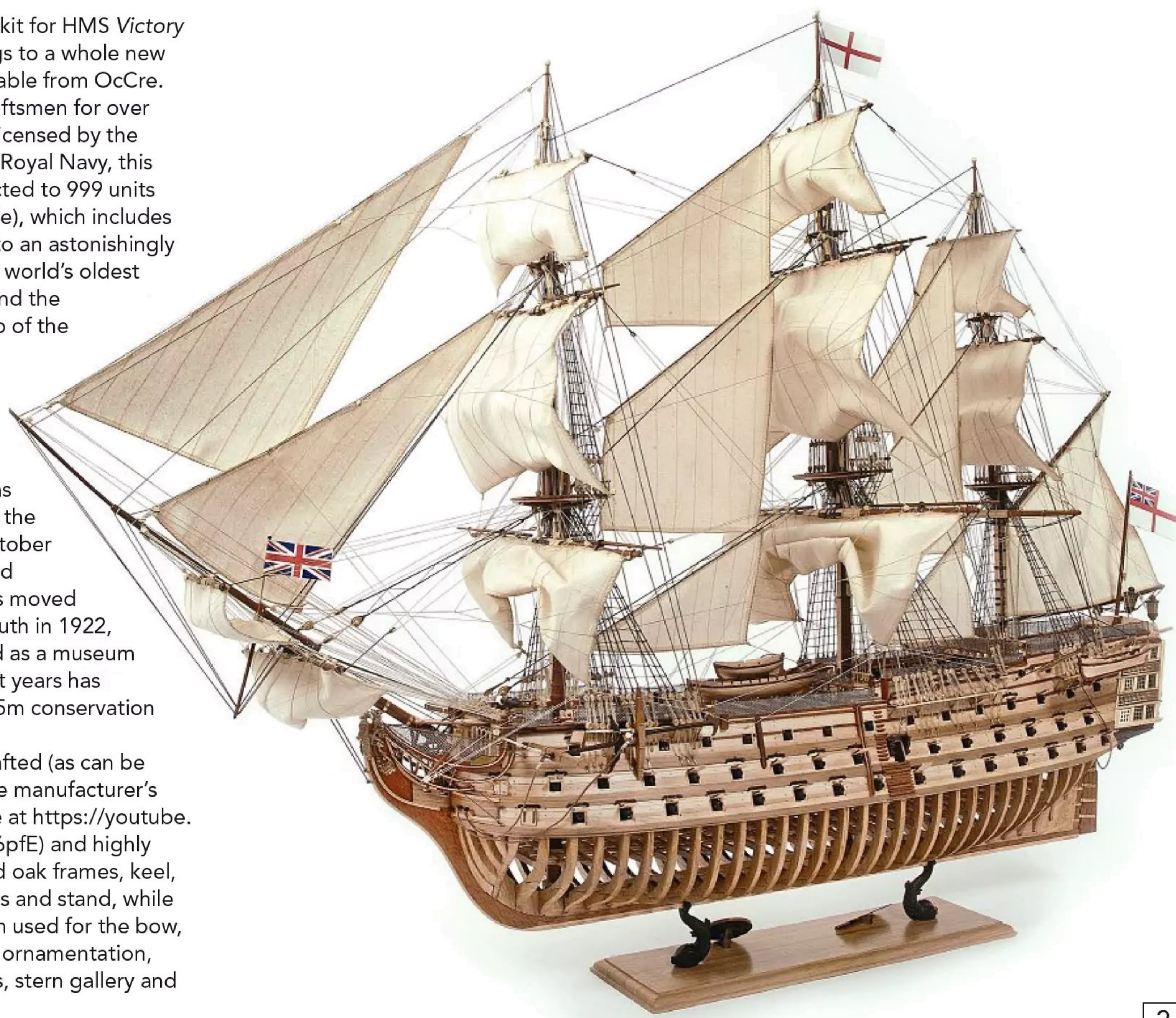


1

An new 1:87 scale kit for HMS Victory which takes things to a whole new level is now available from OcCre. Developed by expert craftsmen for over two years, and officially licensed by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, this limited edition kit (restricted to 999 units for distribution worldwide), which includes over 4,000 parts, builds to an astonishingly accurate portrayal of the world's oldest commissioned warship and the current (nominal) flagship of the First Sea Lord.

Launched in 1765 and with 245 years of service as of 2023, Victory is, of course, best known for her role as Lord Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805. After a long and illustrious career, she was moved to a dry dock in Portsmouth in 1922, where she was preserved as a museum ship and indeed in recent years has been the subject of a £35m conservation project.

OcCre's beautifully crafted (as can be evidenced by viewing the manufacturer's launch video on YouTube at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=oLnPRH6pfE>) and highly detailed kit includes solid oak frames, keel, interior longitudinal strips and stand, while solid mahogany has been used for the bow, sternpost, rudder blade, ornamentation, cannon carriages, wheels, stern gallery and quarter galleries.



2



The cotton sails supplied have been meticulously hand-sewn, with both ropes and dyed and braided threads. Brass fittings include various aspects of ornamentation, including to the stern gallery and quarter galleries, as well as cannons, supports, etc.

Options open to the individual modeller are the construction of either a shipyard, arsenal or constructional portrayal of Victory.

To certify the authenticity of the kit's limited edition status, the brass plaque for the ship's stand comes engraved with its own unique serial number. This number is also hand-engraved on the luxury wooden box in which the kit is packed. As a further measure of just how special this kit is, every example comes with an exclusive collector's coin celebrating the 'Expert Level' of skill the build requires.

Instructions come in the form of a perfect bound book that incorporates 759 step by step photos.

On completion, the resulting model measures in at 1172 mm in the length, with a height of 785mm and a 406mm beam.

Naturally, all of this doesn't come cheap, at €1,400! That said, the museum-quality end result is equally as breathtaking. ●

1. Cares Montero, passionate modeller and loyal OcCre customer for the past 15 years, enjoying a first up close and personal look at the exquisite new Victory.
2. OcCre's majestic HMS Victory has been officially licensed and certified by the National Museum of the Royal Navy. The Director of the NMRN has invited the team at OcCre to visit the museum this coming January, following which a model built from the splendid new kit will be put on display there.
3. Intricate detail, such as the threads to HMS Victory's bow shown here, abound.
4. The stunningly sculpted ship's figurehead casting and the sheer quality of the various different types of wood featured in this kit are truly remarkable.
5. As can be evidenced in this glorious shot showing off the Victory's transom and hull, all of the materials used in the creation of this kit are absolutely top-notch.
6. Even the ship's display stand, consisting of a solid oak base with ornately designed fish-shaped mountings, smacks of luxury. Note that the limited edition number (production has been restricted to just 999 units for distribution worldwide) of each individual kit is hand engraved both on the stand's brass plaque and on the premium wooden box in which the kit is packed (see Photo 1). Also included as part of the package is an exclusive brass plated collector's coin.





Showing off this IOM steamer from a bygone age, the Mona's Queen, the enthusiasm of the Sefton Park Model Boat Club for keeping the history of the historical link, at least in model form, between the Northwest and the Isle of Man is clear to see.

BLACKPOOL 2023

Dave Wooley reports back from this year's show, held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel over the weekend of October 14/15

The survival of this long-running annual event, this year held over the weekend of October 14/15, can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the show has sensibly moved with the times and evolved to encompass not just model boats but various other sectors of the wider modelling community.

Organised by the Components Ship and the Fairhaven Model Boat Club, the show as once again hosted by the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool. Accommodated in hotel's two ballroom areas, the larger was given over to displays by both individuals and model boat clubs, several IPMS club stands and, of course, suppliers, with the smaller (comparatively speaking, as we're still talking about a reasonably large space) featuring a model truck arena, crawlers, scenic railroad displays, a tank and AFV arena, and a large D-day diorama.

I am always impressed and amazed by the standard of the displays and the time and effort that's clearly been put into them. Each year exhibitors not only introduce new models or ones that have not featured previously but also somehow manage to take a fresh approach to how their stands are presented.



Tug enthusiasts from Southend Model Boat Club deep in discussion.



A well-presented and thoughtfully composed display from Stevenage Model Boat Club.



Le-Superb, which lived up to its name by taking this year's 'Best in Rigged and Sail' award.



The elevated wheelhouse of a model based on a plan originally drawn by Dave Metcalf, which featured in Model Boats magazine in the 1990s.



Proving it's not just a 'Northern' event, the Blackpool Model Show is now attracting clubs from far and wide.



An unusual canal boat exhibited on the Fleetwood Model Boat Club stand.



Not 221b Baker Street, official home of Sherlock Holmes, but Holmes's drawing room aboard that canal boat, detailed right down to Holmes' violin.



Above and right: The Steam Lifeboat Princess Mary featured on the Lifeboat Enthusiast Society's stand.





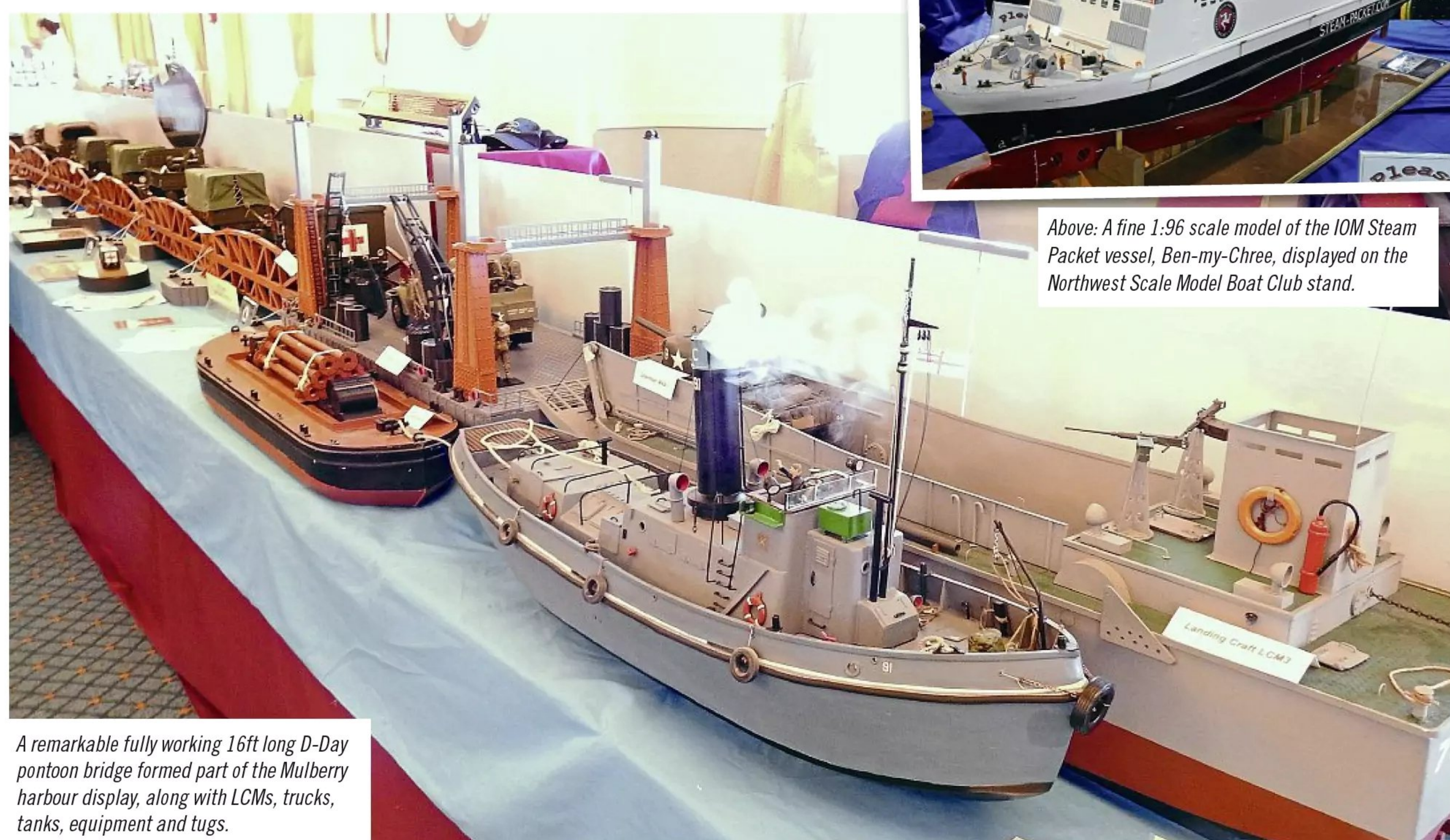
The Manx Model Boat Club's very effective three-sided display.



The Royal yacht Britannia in pride of place as part of the Stevenage Model Boat Club display.



The Bury Marine Modelling Society's super stand.



A remarkable fully working 16ft long D-Day pontoon bridge formed part of the Mulberry harbour display, along with LCMs, trucks, tanks, equipment and tugs.

This year there was more to take in from the model boating community than ever before, with an impressive 26 model boat club stands, nine individual displays and the attendance of the Lifeboat Enthusiast Society. All of this contributed to the continuous activity on the model boating pool, which as ever proved to be a hugely popular attraction and a great asset to the show.

Competition

The Blackpool Model Show is one of the few events for ship and boat modellers that still invites competition entries and presents awards. Basically, entries are divided into categories, based on the type of vessel modelled – for example, 'Best Tug', 'Best Pleasure Boat', 'Best Kit Build', 'Best Semi-Kit Build' and 'Best Scratch Build', etc, with judging undertaken by selected exhibitors at the show. This competition now also incorporates other facets of modelling, with awards for best tank, truck and construction model, etc. The ultimate 'Best in Show' accolade sees the winner rewarded with the coveted Tower Trophy, which very much represents the fact that the show's original venue was the venerable Blackpool Tower.



Above: A fine 1:96 scale model of the IOM Steam Packet vessel, Ben-my-Chree, displayed on the Northwest Scale Model Boat Club stand.



Making its debut on the Northwest Model Shipwrights stand was this impressive 1:24 scale MTB.



An imposing model of the Atlantic liner SS France as of 1965.

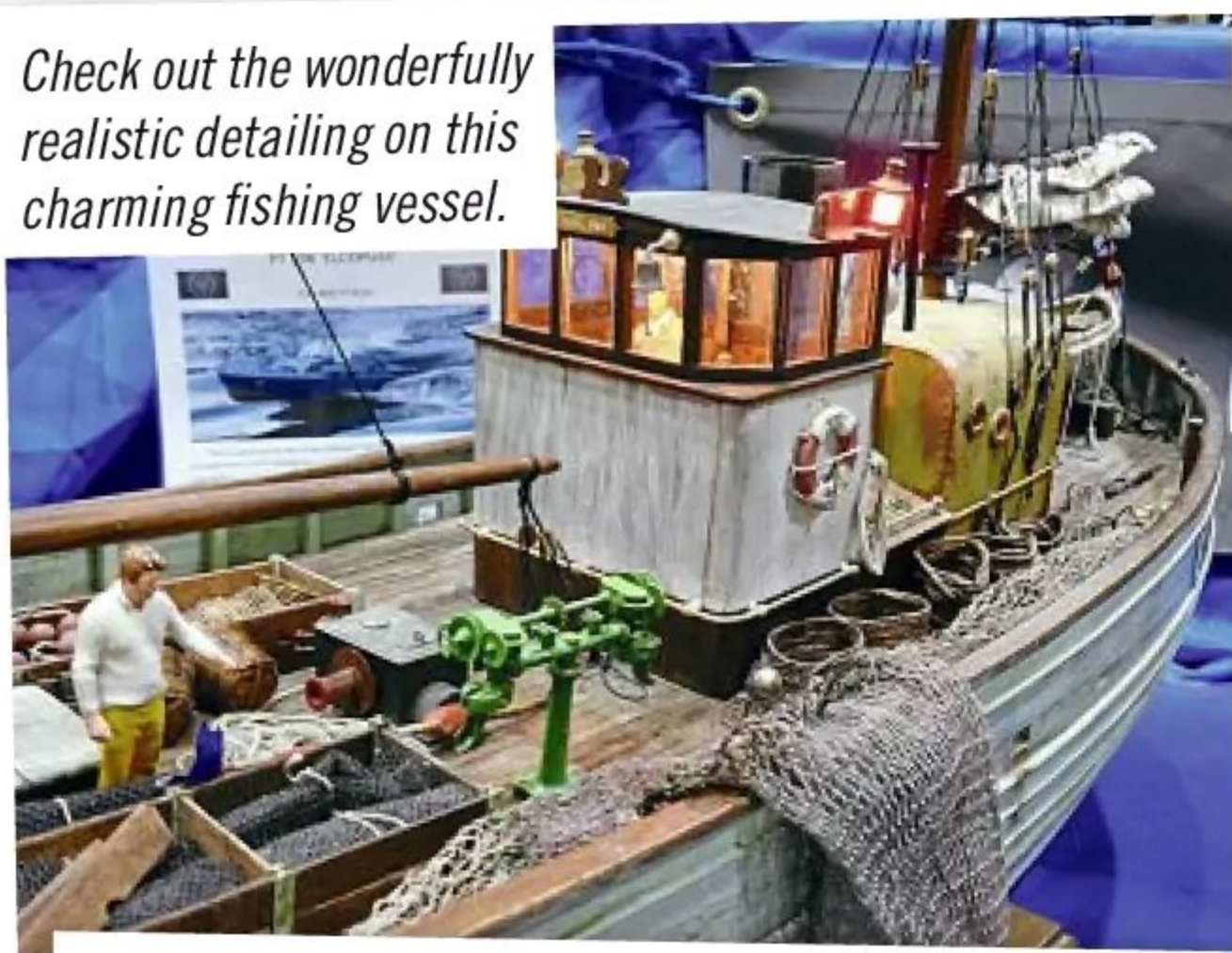


The Scottish Model Warship Association display featured many impressive builds. Shown here in the foreground is a superbly finished MTB 85 by Brian Cowell, while close by is USCGC Bertholf by Collin Miller.



World War II warship enthusiasts with the Ribble Model Boat club displaying their 1:96 scale models in the foreground: a modified Black Swan class sloop HMS Pheasant and the four funnel Town class lend-lease escort HMS Rockingham—formally USS Swasey.

Check out the wonderfully realistic detailing on this charming fishing vessel.



Elegant J-class yacht hulls.



Right: Having contrast on the water allowed lighting on this 1:72 scale model of a Flower class corvette to become visible.





Helpful 'How to' aids and demonstrations formed part of the Kirklees Model Boat Club stand.



The Vale of Glamorgan Model Boat Club earned itself the well-deserved top spot for the 'Best Club Stand'.



The Goole Model Boat club stand.



In attendance at Blackpool, David Jak from Edinburgh, who specialises in various types of landing craft from World War II.

Trade

Despite the economic difficulties we've all been affected by over the past few years, the level of participation by the trade has remained fairly stable. And while admittedly several familiar faces were notably absent at this year's event, their places were filled by a number of fresh to the scene newcomers.

Bring and Buy

As always, the Bring and Buy section of the show, housed in a separate room adjacent to the passageway leading to the exhibition ballroom, seemed to be proving very popular, which was good to observe as 100% of the commission levied is donated to the RNLI and Northwest Air Ambulance.



This outstanding example of scale modelling in the form of an unusual Admiralty train ferry gained 'Best Scratch Built Model' placing for Steve and Nick Brown.



Chris Blaylock from Bury Metro receiving the 'Best in Show' award from the Component Shop's Natasha Lewis.



Left: It's not often models of French warships are put on display at Blackpool, so it was good to see this model of the central battery ship Devastation, circa 1882, a fine example of French naval design and construction during that period.

Right: Just some of the fine detailing that earned this model of the Bluebird of Chelsea the prestigious 'Best in Show' accolade.





On the water activities continued throughout the day and included lifeboats built and operated by members of the Lifeboats Enthusiasts Society.



An R/C fishing vessel being demonstrated on Blackpool's dedicated model boating pool.



A record £1,575 was raised for the RNLI and Air Ambulance at this year's show.



New to Blackpool this year, the National Forest Nomads, but the faces may well be familiar to many of you.



Even King Kong got a look in!



These ultra-fast power boats from the Kingsbury Waterpark Model Boats Club would have required a little more space to demonstrate their performances!



A concept RNLI inshore hovercraft in action on the pool.



Models of IOM steamers seemed to be popular both on and off the water at this year's event.

Conclusion

I am happy to report that broadening the scope of a show once solely dedicated to marine models so that it now takes in a whole variety of modelling disciplines has certainly not diminished the input from the model boating fraternity. Indeed, this has risen by over 30% in real terms, while at the same time having raised the profile and reach of the show, so it's definitely been a win/win situation.

Bearing in mind, therefore, the increased level of interest evidenced by this year's event and how the Blackpool Model Show is clearly going from strength to strength, I would highly recommend that anyone wishing to exhibit/trade at next year's show, scheduled for October 19-20, 2024, gets in touch with the organisers sooner rather than later in order to be sure of securing a stand. ●

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ONE OF THREE GREAT PRIZE PACKAGES!

This month, courtesy of the always generous crew at Billing Boats, we've offering you the chance to win one of three great prize packages. Each of our lucky winners will receive:

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HOW TO ENTER

To be included in the draw, all you need to do is complete the entry form included on this page, cut it out (photocopies of the form will be acceptable for those of you who do not wish to deface your magazine) and mail it back to us at:

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Please note, the closing date for entry submissions will be Friday, December 22, 2023.

Good luck, everyone!

TERMS & CONDITIONS

N.B. For this particular prize draw we can only accept entries from those residing in the UK, countries the European Union and North America. The competition closes December 22, 2023. There are no cash alternatives available. Terms and conditions apply. To view the privacy policy of MMG Ltd (publisher of Model Boats) please visit www.mortons.co.uk/privacy

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MISSISSIPPI MESMERISER

Lionel Broadbent explains how he transformed the Mantua kit for a Mississippi steamboat into a unique, all-singing, all-dancing, motorised stunner

I believe that many model boat enthusiasts often think that one of the ultimate boats to build is a Mississippi steamboat. There are many kits on the market, both twin paddle and rear paddle boats. I searched and found this one by Mantua. It's a really nice-looking model, with everything included in the kit you could ask for. But, me being me, I soon found myself wondering how I could make things even more interesting...

Building the (1870) Mississippi steamboat

Anyone who has built one of these kit boats will know how the hull cross members are created by a simple slotting system; effective

and strong. Planking is usually the harder part but instructions are often given in the manual. Here is the way I proceeded to build the boat from hull to skipper's cabin. One of the more difficult parts was the vertical planking of the cabins. Each plank was chamfered down both edges. This was a long laborious sandpaper job; you can see the number of planks on each deck and I actually skinned a finger once doing this. Talk about giving blood for your hobby!



The hull planked.





First hull forming.



The lower deck: hull/engine room and storage.



Second deck: accommodation cabins.



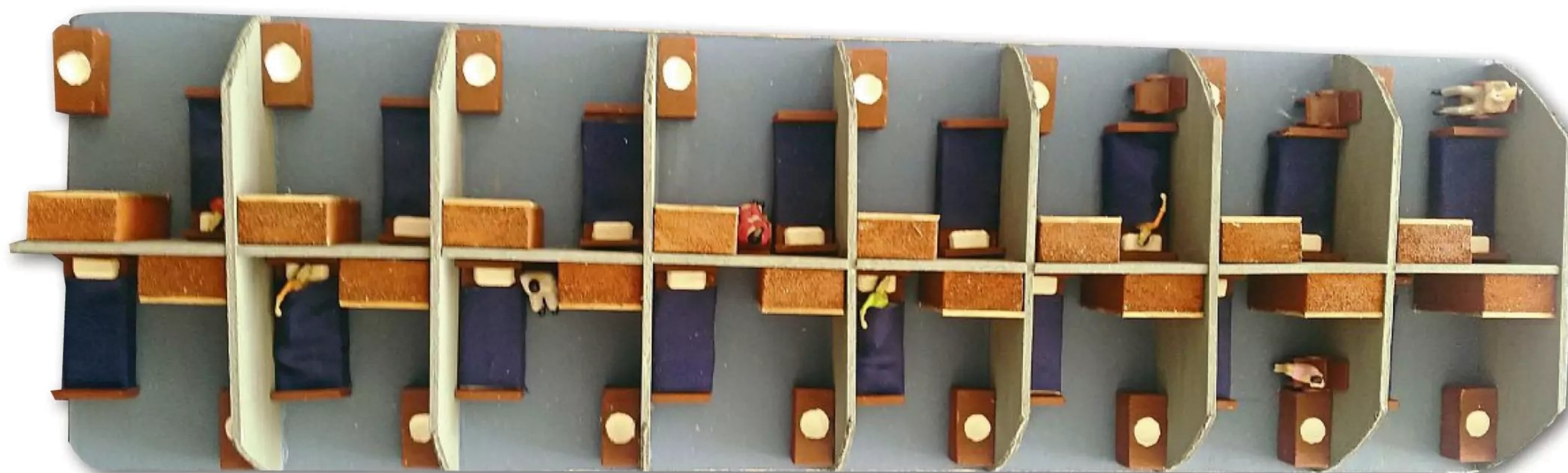
Third deck: casino.



Fourth deck: the bridge.



"A Mississippi steamboat, of course, has to have a casino"



The accommodation deck from above.

Added extras

Now, this is where I made some modifications. For the accommodation deck I decided to install a platform. My cabins would have beds, wardrobes, washing sinks, chairs and people. I scrap built the furniture and then added a few suitably posed and attired for the situation figures; some are in bed and some in a chair reading a book or just sitting contemplating life, the universe and everything.

A Mississippi steamboat, of course, has to have a casino. So, another platform would be needed, and everything required to set the scene scratch built. I found suitable images of roulette and card tables online, reduced them down, and after printing the tiny facsimiles stuck them on to their respective tables. Next came the addition of some croupiers and card dealer figures. Of course, a casino has to have a band, so a pianist, banjo player, double bass, drummer and drum kit complete with cymbals, were added, along with an attractive singer. Again, all the instruments were made from scraps of wood, wire, etc. The LMB (Lionel's Mississippi Band) was ready for requests. They would come later, too!



The accommodation deck angled.



Lionel's Mississippi Band platform mounted. The piano, banjo, drums, double bass and microphone were all built from scratch.



The casino platform, with customers and croupiers.



The joint casino and band platforms layout.

I installed lighting on the second and third decks; external on the second (the accommodation deck) and internally on the third (the casino). The casino deck lighting can 'disco' flash or be a steady clear white.

The main problem I then had to overcome was how to install the casino and accommodation decks and still have access to the bottom deck where the drive and electrics were situated. After a bit of fiddling and shaving of panels I eventually overcame this problem and can now remove each of the internal platforms and replace them as necessary (see photographs).

A few passengers are also relaxing, sitting outside on decks; it does appear though

that the ladies are the ones leaning and talking to the gentlemen; the gentlemen obviously paying full attention. What they are discussing I will leave to your imagination; I couldn't possibly comment!

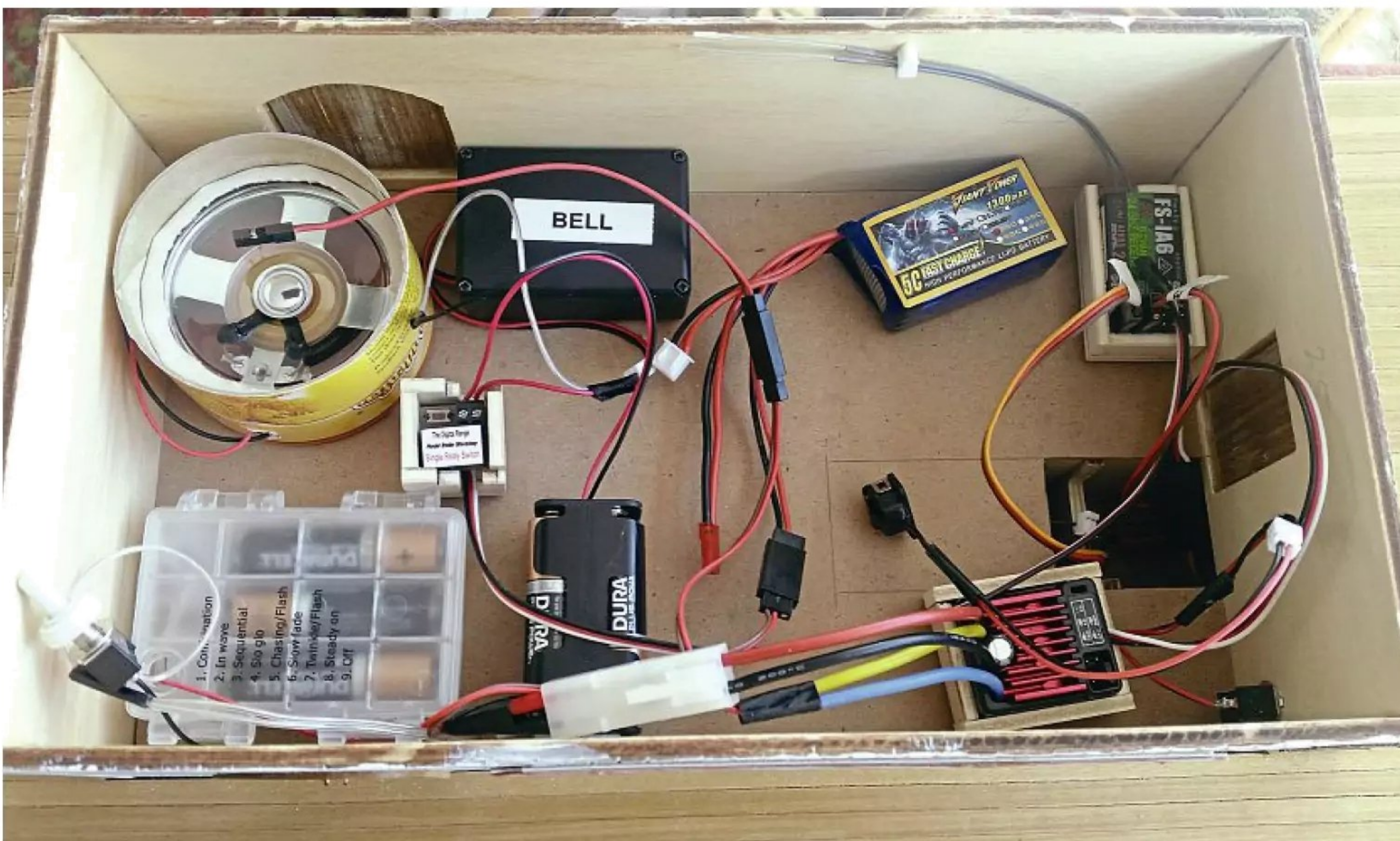
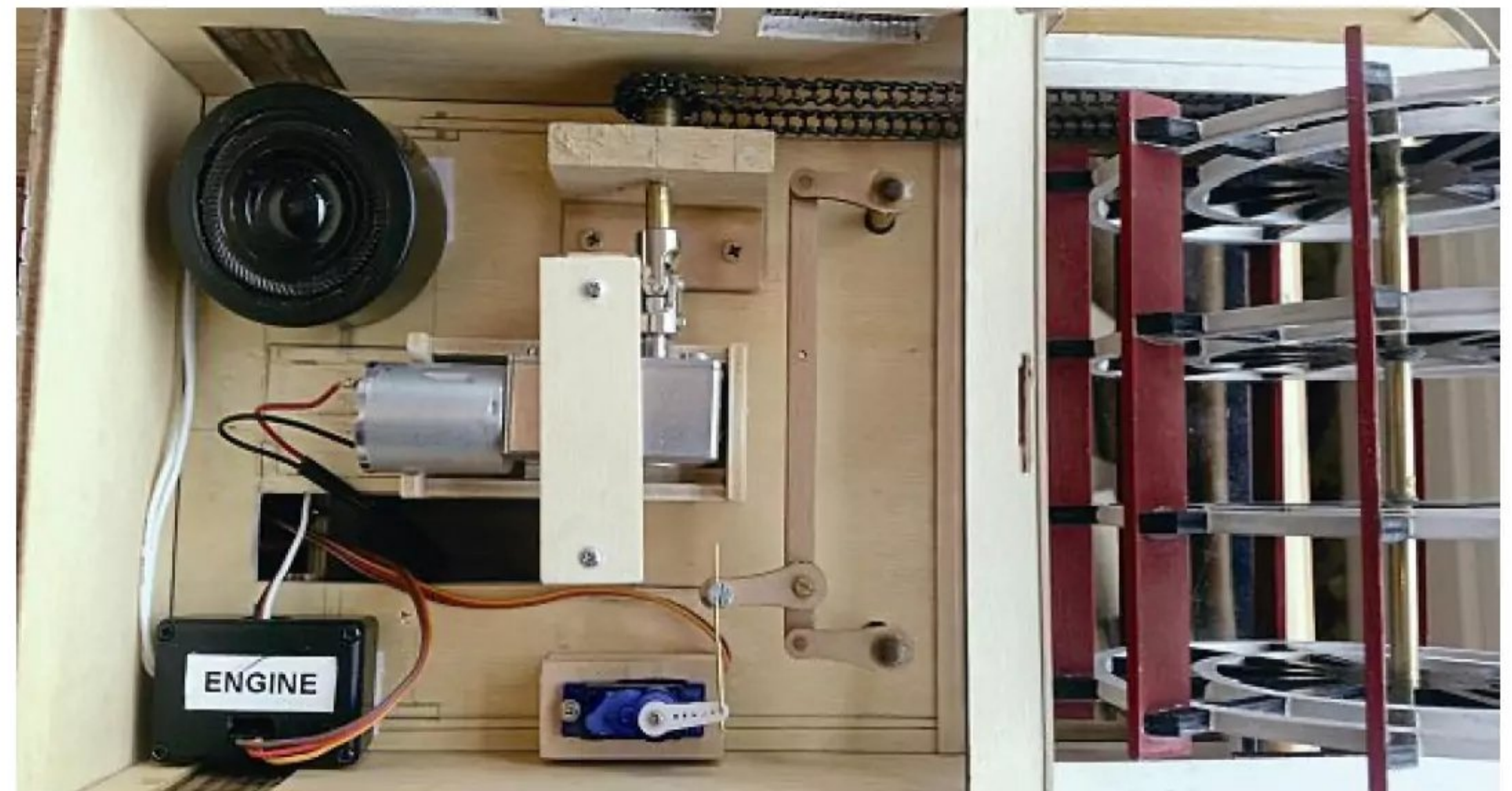
The shaft drive provided with the kit I tried, but it wasn't strong enough. I looked at several drive systems and eventually settled on using a mechano chain drive to one side of the paddle. I installed a bell sound rather than a horn for the Mississippi steamboat, which I think it is more in keeping with the style. I also added steam engine sound unit; this increases in tempo when the speed on the water increases – it is very realistic.



A through window view of the casino.



The underside of the top deck, housing the disco lighting and battery compartment.



The electrics (left) and drive (right) installed in the bottom deck.

“So that the LMB (Lionel’s Mississippi Band) can play requests I installed a micro MP3 player and downloaded some Southern honky-tonk music, plus a few of my own favourites”



The stable, complete with horses, on the bottom deck.



The skipper at the helm on the top deck.



The top deck.



The model's MP3 Player and speaker



Lionel's completed Mississippi steamboat.



The bottom deck has a storage and engine room. It also has a stable, so I placed four horses and their hay bales. Likewise, the top deck had to have a skipper, who you can see in my photo steering the boat.

So that the LMB can play requests I installed a micro MP3 player and downloaded some Southern honky-tonk music, plus a few of my own favourites; Bobbie Gentry's M.I.S.S.I.S.S.I.P.P.I. and others. Music can, therefore, be played while the ship is on the water. The MP3 and speaker are fitted under the skipper's cabin.

Modifications for waterborne operation

The steamboat is rather top-heavy unfortunately, due to the weight of some upper structures. The enhancing fixtures and additional sound and lighting I've added obviously affect balance, so the following action is taken before putting the model on the water...

- Brass and aluminium funnels are replaced with light balsa wood ones
- The MP3 Player and Solid State speaker is relocated to the Store (Radio) Room
- The casino lighting batteries and holder are moved to the engine room
- The casino and band models' platforms are removed
- Accommodation and models' platform are also removed

Obviously, everything can easily be changed back again for static display.



All lights and sounds (casino deck and accommodation deck lighting, honky-tonk, river boat bell and steam engine sounds), however, remain operational while the model is being sailed.

The boat needs to be fitted with twin rudder control, plus forward and reverse paddle wheel drive.

Paddler-wheeler crowd pleaser

My Mississippi steamboat gets a lot of attention when on display at shows, particularly when I turn on the MP3 player and point out the casino with its disco lights. Kids love it, and I think they can see people dancing. ●



Steamboat specifications

Model length:	42in/107cm
Model height:	18.5in/50cm
	keel to top of funnels
Model width:	9.25in/23.5cm
Static model weight:	12.7lb/5.7kg
Modified weight reduction:	2.2lb/1kg
Floating model weight:	10.5lb/ 4.7kg
Hull depth:	75mm

Fully floating she has a freeboard of 20mm, giving her a draught of 55mm.

She's a true flat-bottomed Mississippi rear-paddle steamboat!

A TRULY MAGNIFICENT SEVERN

With only one previous scratch build under his belt, **Chris Wood** fearlessly takes on another massive project....

"I think my next model will be a 1:8 scale lifeboat", I said to my wife, Emma. "Hmm, OK..." She didn't sound overly convinced.

In fairness though, I'd only begun scratch building 18 months prior to this while furloughed from work during the pandemic. In my teens I'd been into R/C cars and aircraft, and I'd built the odd Airfix kit, but this was an altogether different and more complex modelling discipline. My first ever scratch built project, prompted by time on my hands during the 2020 lockdown, had been the Svitzer Milford Haven. I used plywood for most of this boat, due to the fact it's easy to cut and shape using basic tools, and, as I was working from pictures found on the internet, I made a cardboard man to aid with scaling. I bought components like lights and thruster units but made many of the other parts simply from what I could scavenge from the garage and garden shed.



It almost beggars' belief that this Svitzer tug, the Milford Haven, was the result of Chris's first ever attempt at scratch building a model boat.





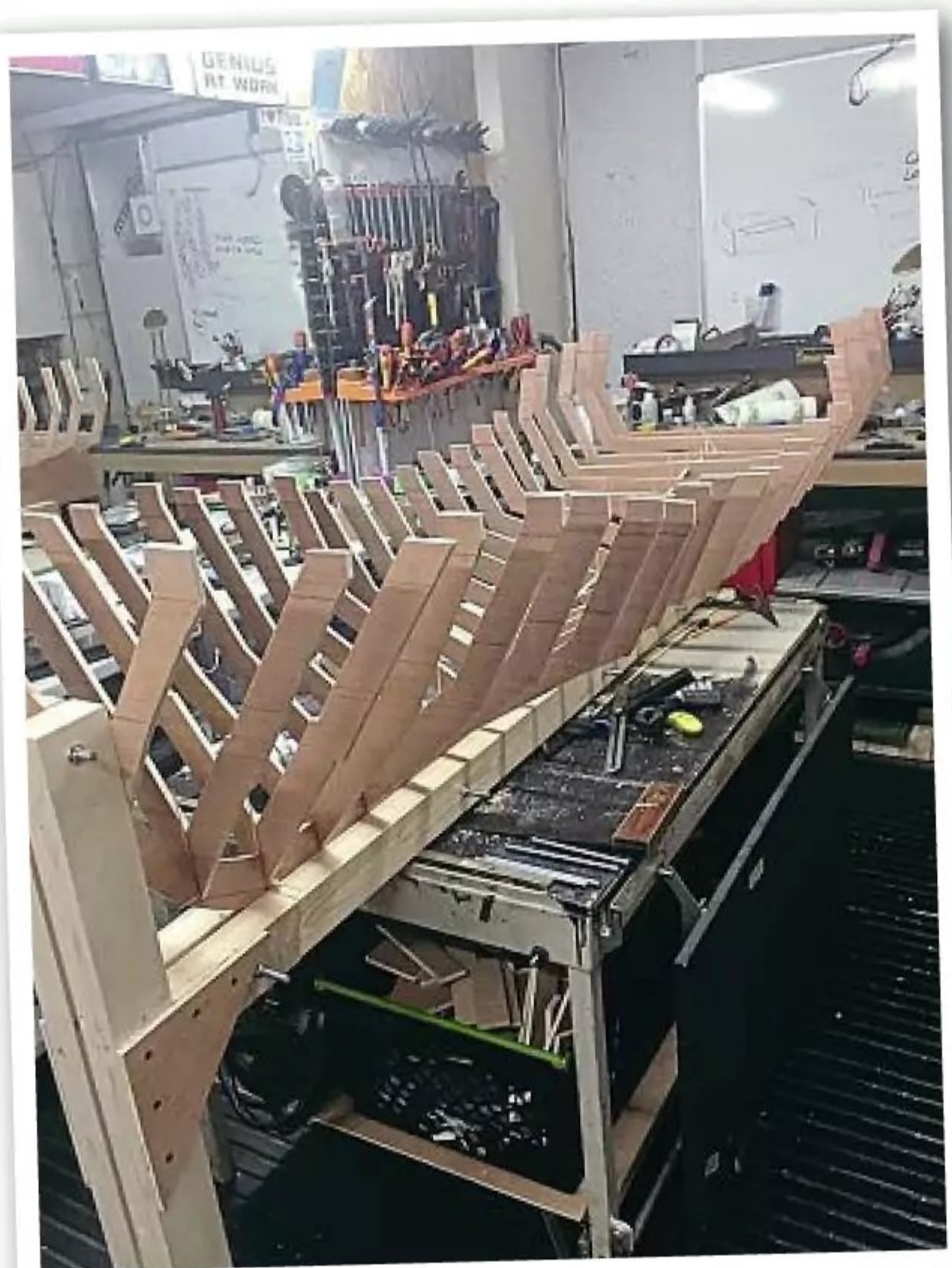
Chris Wood with his nearing completion 7ft (1:8 scale) model of the RNLI Severn class lifeboat, the Christopher Pearce.

Having pushed myself beyond my comfort zone and achieved both my end goal and a real sense of satisfaction, it wasn't long before I began considering what to build next. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, I decided on a lifeboat, a Severn class lifeboat to be precise. Although admittedly ambitious, I liked the idea of making everything from scratch, including the Rib launch and crane. I did, however, buy an Airfix 1:72 scale RNLI Severn class lifeboat kit as a reference point from which I could figure out the hull shape. After doing the maths. I scaled up and drew my own much, much larger hull sections and keel onto plywood sheets before cutting them out.

An epic build begins

As I began dry fitting the frames to the keel it started to dawn on me what a monster of a build this was going to be. At this point, even family and friends raised their eyebrows and asked "Why?". Well, why not!

Once happy with the frame positions on the keel, I cut the deck supports and glued them to the frame sections. I then made a second jig so I could invert the hull frames, thereby allowing me to attach the keel; this ensured nothing would move out of alignment while I was attaching the plywood sheeting to the ribs. Plenty of glue was used, and I invested in a compressor, a staple gun and lots of clamps. Where the timber curved to the bow, I temporarily screwed on the sheeting. The curved section where the propellers sit was fashioned from thin strips of ply, glued on and later filled, along with the low spots and imperfections, followed by plenty of sanding.



The hull frames for Chris's Severn class lifeboat clamped to the keel.



Fitting plywood sheeting to the hull frames.

"As I began dry fitting the frames to the keel it started to dawn on me what a monster of a build this was going to be"

After removing the hull from the jig and turning it the right way up again, work commenced on fitting the decking using the same method, along with making the steps in the hull at the stern and the centre section which the cabin would sit over. I also added fibreglass sheeting to reinforce the hull where the motors would sit. After many hours of sanding and filling the hull, I was happy and ready to proceed with the construction of the cabin.

Creating the cabin and flying bridge

I started off with the two side pieces, carefully cutting and shaping them to sit on the deck. I then marked out the openings and outlined

the shape of the cabin. Next, I glued cross supports in place and started building the rear section of the cabin. Once the rear section was glued, I was the able to add the roof section and the flying bridge. A lot of work was involved in getting the angles correct and keeping everything level and plumb. At times it was slow going, as I had to wait for the glue to dry before proceeding further.

A few weeks later, most of the plywood work had been done, and I was able to create the flying bridge console area from Plasticard and use some plastic tubing for the gantry over it.

I fitted some brass strips around the flying bridge and used a punch to create the

"This ensured meant nothing would move out of alignment while I was attaching the plywood sheeting to the ribs"



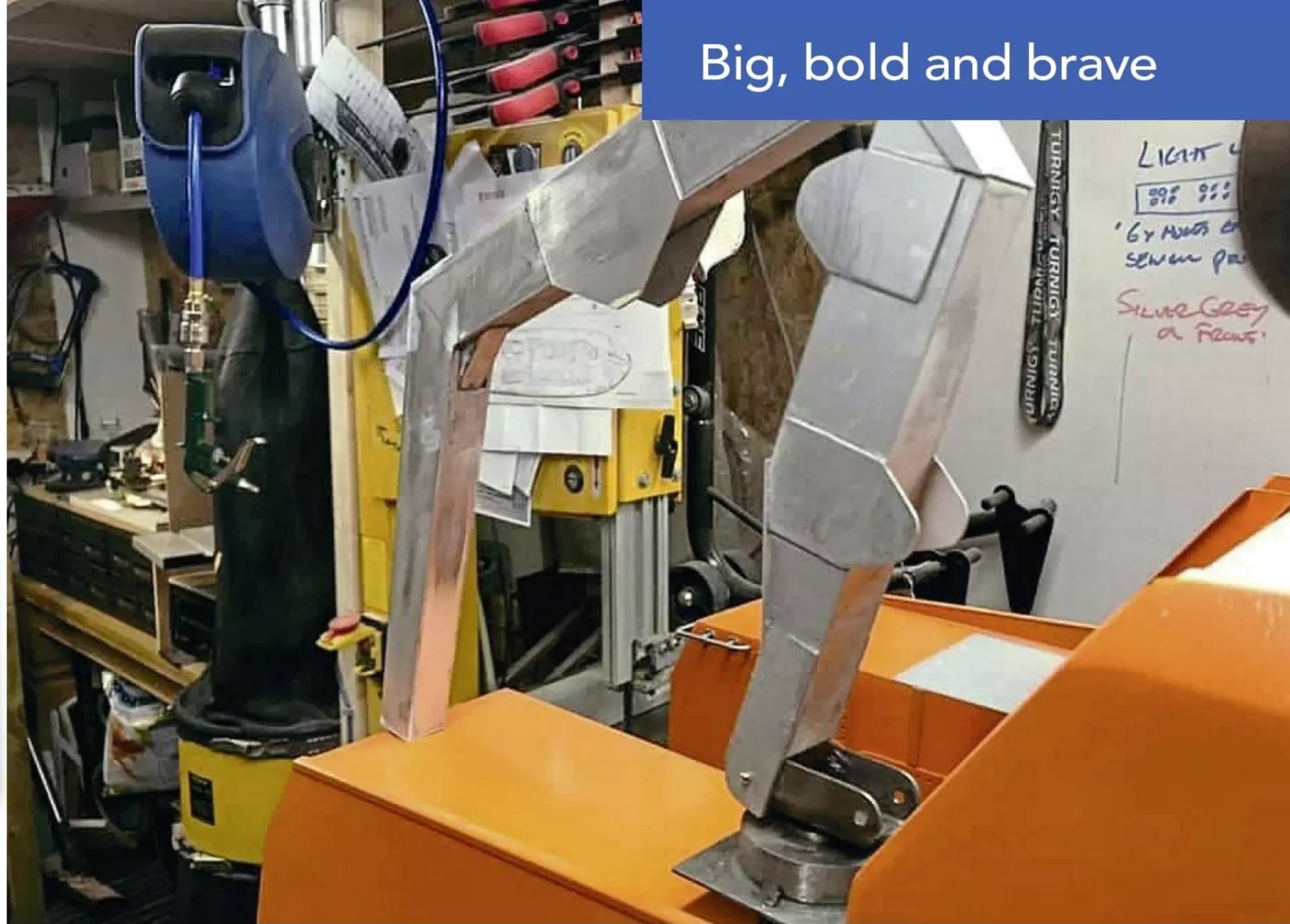
Starting to fit the decking.



Assembly of the cabin in situ on the hull.



Above: The front hatch assembled.



Right: The crane under construction.

“The front hatch hinges were made from scrap metal and here I had to learn how to silver solder, so a few failed to make the grade and had to be scrapped, but I was learning”

effect of bolts around the windows. I used Plasticard, again, to make the front hatch, the hatch surrounds, hatches and pates. The front hatch hinges were made from scrap metal and here I had to learn how to silver solder, so a few failed to make the grade and had to be scrapped, but I was learning.

With the front hatch complete I was ready to start painting. As a practice run, I trialled the orange I had selected on some of the smaller items first. Then, as it was February and still very cold outside, I left the cabin and hull for the time being and turned my attention to the crane. As I have a small metal lathe, I decided to make this and the hydraulic cylinders from metal. My initial attempt at a crane turned out to be very heavy, though, so I scrapped it off and made began again, using aluminium to keep

the weight down. I was still learning how to silver solder, so in between working on the crane I was also making more hinges for the cabin hatches.

Probably the biggest challenge I encountered was getting the window frames right. On the real boat they are impressive and replicating them was a struggle. I was determined not to 3D-print or outsource, so I persevered and finally figured out a method that worked. Basically, this involved gluing the frame to the Perspex before shaping and drilling, masking the window and spraying the outer silver trim, drilling out the surround and screwing to the



The front cabin windows attached.

cabin with minute screws. I rejected more windows than I used and fitting them was an uphill battle too, but ultimately well worth the effort.



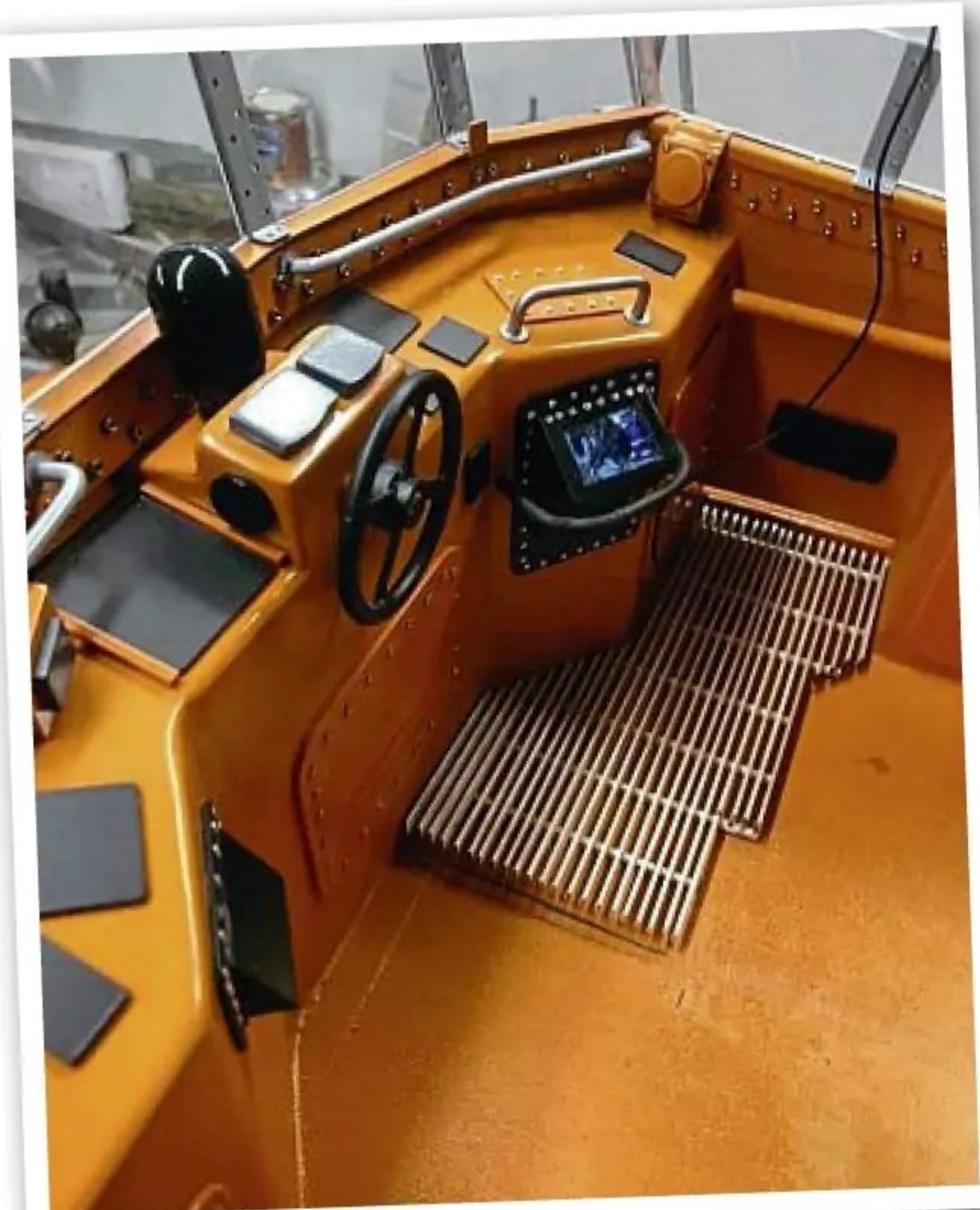
Work in progress on the window frames.



The cabin painted and drying in the sunshine.



Detail added to flying bridge.



Flying bridge flooring came courtesy of coffee stirrers.



Fitting the aluminium panels to the port side.

By April the weather had warmed up enough to start working outdoors so I began prepping the cabin for painting by sanding and filling. I also primed the hull, but to give myself sufficient room to work, I stored this away in the shed so I could first concentrate on the cabin.

Painting the cabin was a big job. I bought so many tins of Volkswagen Orange from

Halfords that they kindly gave me a trade card! Once this orange had been applied and allowed to harden, the blue was applied. Finally, the whole lot was given a few coats of clear lacquer to seal. I was now ready to start assembling.

The hatches and front window frames were fitted first (the tiny screws making this a very time-consuming job) and I also started fabrication of the wiper boxes and began construction of the gantry. I also made a start on the flying bridge and crafted a steering wheel and other smaller items. Due to the cabin being so big I could have worked on different areas simultaneously and made a lot more progress, but at this stage I tried to focus on the front only so I wouldn't become overwhelmed by how much work there was to be done.

I used brass strip soldered together to create the window frames for the flying bridge, and I drilled 1mm holes into these so I'd be able to fit tiny nuts and bolts that would secure the windows. I also made handrails from metal rod bent at either end, and glued tiny nuts to the inside of the flying bridge, plus I fitted some panels and drilled out and glued silver pins to represent bolts. I really went to town with the detail on the flying bridge and enjoyed getting creative. For example, I made the spotlight from an old electric motor casing and some scrap brass I had to hand, while the floor was created using coffee stirrers (regularly swiped from our local Costa by the dozen whenever my wife and I popped in for coffee and cake!).

The side panels/plates were made from aluminium door push plates (the width being just about spot on), which I found could be cut using a sharp Stanley knife. The panels proved very time consuming to make and a few failed. I seemed to spend a lifetime drilling all the holes out for the stainless-steel pins, but they painted up beautifully.

Again, in between fitting panels I began fabricating other items, like the two frames for the sides of the cabin and some of the

“Probably the biggest challenge I encountered was getting the window frames right”



The cabin, now really starting to come to life, sat on the hull.



A starboard view showing early work on Chris's scratch-built crane.

handrails. I then continued along the port side working towards the rear of the cabin. The steps to the flying bridge were made from scrap aluminium, along with some more panels too, so every few days I could batch spray. The light units were fabricated from bits of plastic and, likewise, pins and fittings from scrap brass. I even made padlock and locker handles (from filed down nails).

Once the decals I'd ordered arrived and I'd applied them to the port side, the cabin looked amazing. All the hard work and endless days spent drilling, screwing and gluing pins had paid off. This gave me the boost I needed to keep going. The orange and blue starboard side still nothing had fitted, so it was time to start the process all over again...

Constructing the crane

The starboard side features a crane, which, as previously mentioned, I'd already made a start on. I'd built the shoulder but still had the rest to tackle. So, I ordered some more aluminium push plates and plenty of Stanley

blades and began construction. A fair bit of tweaking was required to get things square and ensure each hole was in the right place. I made my own hydraulic rams, too. In fact, I enjoyed working on the crane so much this actually became my sole focus for a good couple of weeks.

Getting back to the side panels, etc, I was able to paint these at the same time as the crane.

How and Y

With the starboard side complete and the crane fitted, my attention turned to the Y boat at the rear of the flying bridge. Having first built a successful test trial prototype, a plastic waste pipe was cut at angles and superglued, while the floor came courtesy of some scrap plywood. The finished Y boat really looks the part, especially now painted. The stand it sits on was built from some scrap aluminium.

I also used some scrap metal and brass cylinder for the creation of the bow and stern bollards.



The Y boat under construction and sat on the upper deck.

"I really went to town with the detail on the flying bridge and enjoyed getting creative"



The neatly crafted lid to one of the lockers on the hull's decks.

It was now time to bring the hull back into the garage and get the deck sanded and primed and the cabin back on so I could work on both. I cut out the port and starboard lockers in the deck and using aluminium made the doors. A bit of scrap aluminium and off-cuts of metal wire were used for the cut out and recessed locker handles.

I made more aluminium panels for the rear of the cabin, and I had to cut a locker opening out under the crane; this was not

"I bought so many tins of Volkswagen Orange from Halfords that they kindly gave me a trade card!"



Y boat detailing complete. -

“As an added bonus, this tested my smoke alarm out, too!”



The rear decking with anti-slip texturing applied.

easy to get to, but where there's a will, there's a way, and I used my Dremel with a tile cutting disc. As an added bonus, this tested my smoke alarm out, too!

The next stage was to add the finer detail. The Y boat was given some grab handles and I made the oars from paintbrushes and scrap aluminium. The outboard motor was made from plywood and aluminium, while the towing rope spindle came from my wife's sewing kit.

As the weather was nice, I took the hull into the garden and polyester coated it both inside and out. To get the textured effect on the deck I used polyester resin with some grey pigment added, dusted over with aluminium oxide powder, the excess being brushed off once dry. I used the same process on the flying bridge.

With the cabin back on the hull, I returned to detailing. I made a control panel for the crane from some wood and scrap plastic. I used round nails to represent the buttons on the panel, and they actually look impressively realistic now painted.

The life raft boxes I made from plywood frames and plenty of filler, with the cradles they sit on being made from aluminium. I used blue ribbon for the webbing and made the D rings from some wire.

The handrails were next on the list, so I went to our local wire supplier and guessed at how much I would need. I paid about £30 and hoped I would have some left over when the model was finished.

The handrail wire was bent in a vice, and it didn't prove too difficult to follow the cabin and get the shape right. The hardest part was keeping the pieces aligned to solder and I made some mistakes, so had some reject pieces. These, however, I was able to cut up and use for smaller pieces. I also looked at the gantry I had made earlier. I wanted a metal mast as it would be stronger for all the detail I planned to add. I overheated the first one I made, though, and the brass melted, so I had to scrap it off. With its once bitten, twice shy replacement, I welded the baseplate and soldered the rest, and it all worked well. I also finished off the cabin handrails.

With the handrails painted and fitted I was able to start painting the gantry and mast, and to begin building the radar unit. For the latter I used an old servo and built the unit and scanner from plastic. I wanted the scanner to turn, and by varying the voltage it does so very realistically.

I made conduit from stretched springs inserted into heat shrink tubing, which I



"With its once bitten, twice shy replacement, I welded the baseplate and soldered the rest, and it all worked well"

Above: The rear cabin with crane control panel.

gently warmed up. I added some wiring too, so I could fit some lights to the mast. The weathervane I scratch built, adding as much detail as I could. The blue flashing light, flood lights, aerals and radar scanner all work, and the weathervane even spins in the wind.

For the cabin sides I made navigation light boxes, which light up green/red. All the wiring was fed into the cabin and connected to a distribution board, with switches fitted at the rear of the cabin.

I then put the cabin to one side so I could continue work on the hull. Having purchased two wheelchair motors, I made a cradle for these from metal and fitted them into the hull. Next, I cut out a hole at the bow for the bow thruster. The pipework was made from plastic waste pipe joints and glued into the hull, with filler added around the inlet/outlet holes, which I sanded back but left slightly raised.



The gantry with mast added.



The flying bridge with mast, radar and lights added.



The engine cooling cowls made up.



The inverted hull drying after wet sanding and a final coat of polyester resin having been applied.



Starting to fit the rubber fender to the starboard side.

“This epic, but surprisingly relaxing – almost therapeutic, task involved three months of relentless sanding and filling”

Following this, I fabricated the engine cooling tubes, along with the hydraulic pipe box. The pipe box was made from scrap metal. For the cooling tubes I used copper pipe fittings, with covers made from brass. I also made up the trim tabs from brass and metal. The two smaller keels were made from 10mm steel. I needed the keels to be solid and strong as my idea was the model would be slotted into a simple stand. These were drilled and threaded so that they could eventually be bolted into the hull.

I then made a trolley and inverted the hull so I could wheel it outside to prep ahead of sealing it with polyester resin; this epic, but surprisingly relaxing – almost therapeutic, task involved three months of relentless sanding and filling. Naturally, I had to wait for a guaranteed spell of dry weather before applying the resin, which I'd thinned by 20% with acetone, using a brush. This soaked into the wood really well and, as the hull was out in the sunshine, dried fast too, so I was able to apply three thinned coats in one day. Following this, I added three more coats without thinning, and, once dry, wet sanded to get the hull really smooth.

Happy with the result, the next mammoth task was painting. I covered the entire garage in polythene and coated the entire hull in red Hammerite paint (smooth). This was done on the hottest day of the year, so the paint dried really quickly, although I still left it a week to fully harden before masking off so I could apply the blue paint.

I was finally able to slot the hull into its new

stand and put the cabin back on so I could attach the rubber fender around the hull.

Once I'd added the exhausts and hydraulic box to the stern, my attention turned to making the handrails. I purchased about 30 meters of 5mm steel rod and spent the next few weeks cutting and bending, then soldering up. The stern rail has a rope guide in the middle and this piece had me head scratching, as it was hard to figure how to make this. In the end, though, it turned out great. I cut some brass strips and soldered these up, too. The stantions were made from the same 5mm metal, with a 1mm hole drilled in the middle and wood beads added. Having completed all of these, I painted them up and attached them to the hull. The rail attached to the front cabin is detachable to aid removal of the cabin.

I then began work on with deck fittings, etc. The bollards I made from metal and soldered up, like the handrails, and the V bollards were fabricated from plastic out of the off-cut bin before being painted with metallic silver and clear coated.

Likewise, the anchors were made from scrap metal and soldered up, while the anchor station was constructed from the plastic and metal off-cuts, as were most of the other fittings.

Nearing completion

At the time of writing, I still have the propellers to make. I've saved this task for last, as I think it will be a long complex process. In the meantime, I am still

continually adding to the detail and touching up the paintwork. After just over three years of building, I now envisage this model will be fully finished by early 2024.

Crew support

Building her has been a very steep learning curve but I've had great support, both from my wife and the crew from the *Christopher Pearce*, who contacted me after seeing I was attempting to build their boat.

'Cardboard man' blog

I began a Facebook build blog from day one, and have now uploaded hundreds of photos, so if you'd like to see more of the building work in progress and also the completion of the boat, search 'Cardboard Man Model Boat Building'.

Cardboard Man? Well, I thought I should give a nod to the 1:8 scale cardboard man I use now and again to check what I am making looks to be the correct scale.



Making the stantions.



The V bollards made and painted.

"Building her has been a very steep learning curve but I've had great support, both from my wife and the crew from the Christopher Pearce, who contacted me after seeing I was attempting to build their boat"





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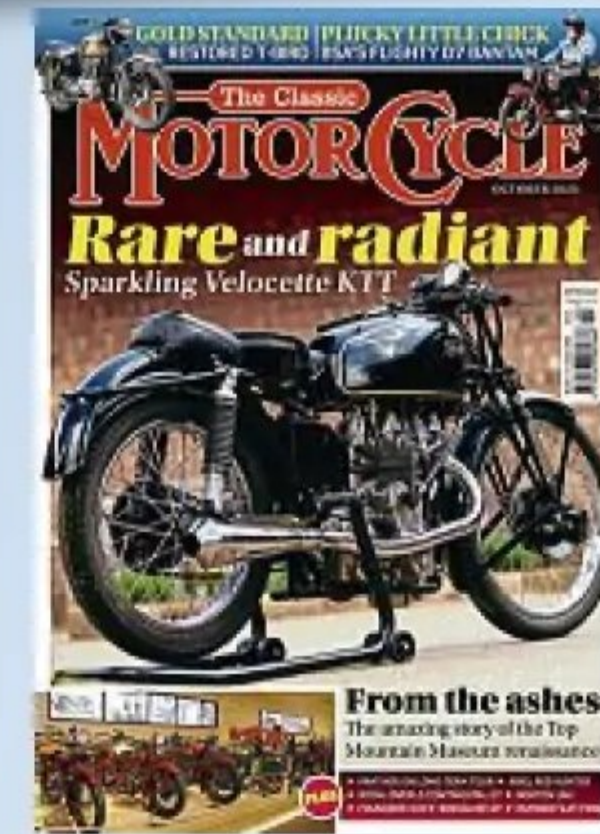
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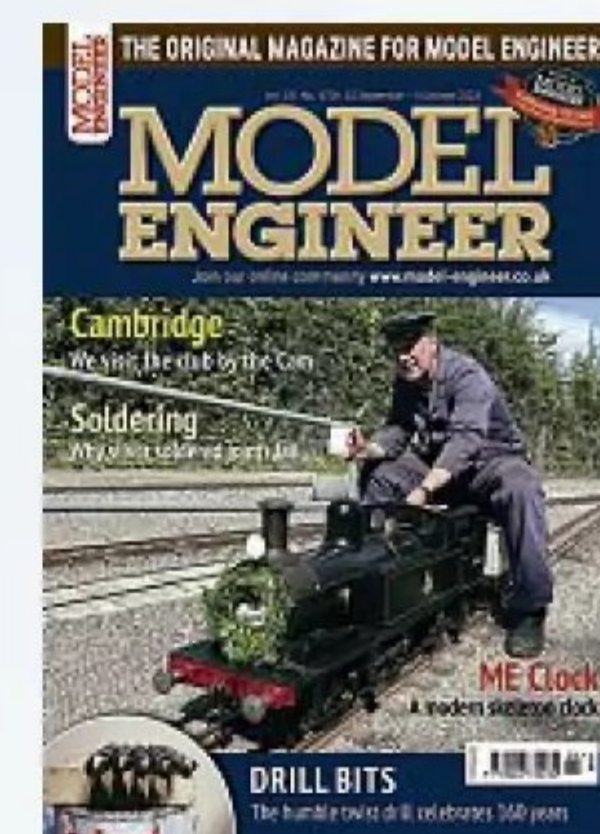
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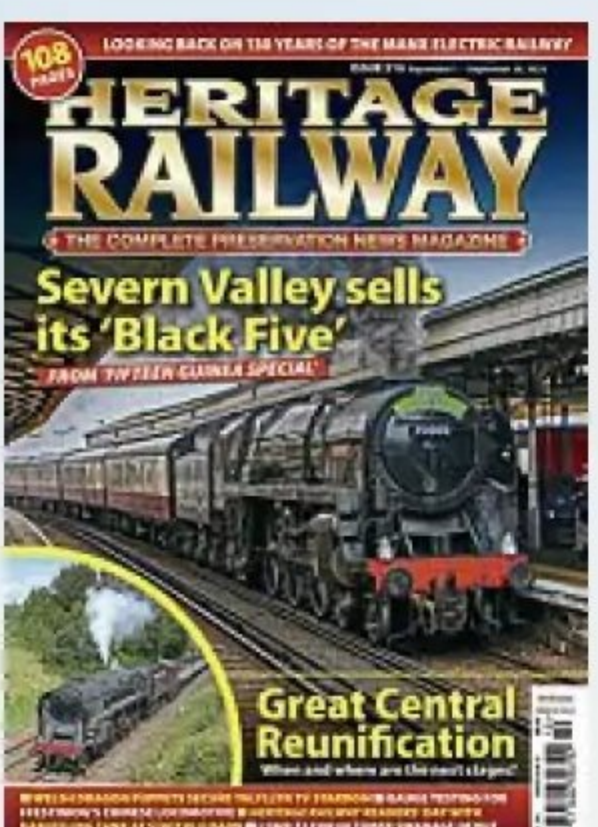
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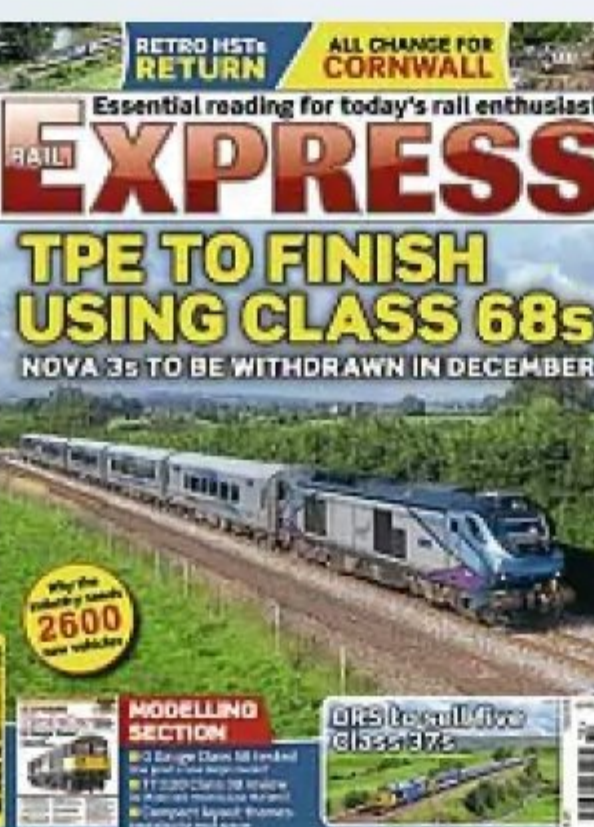
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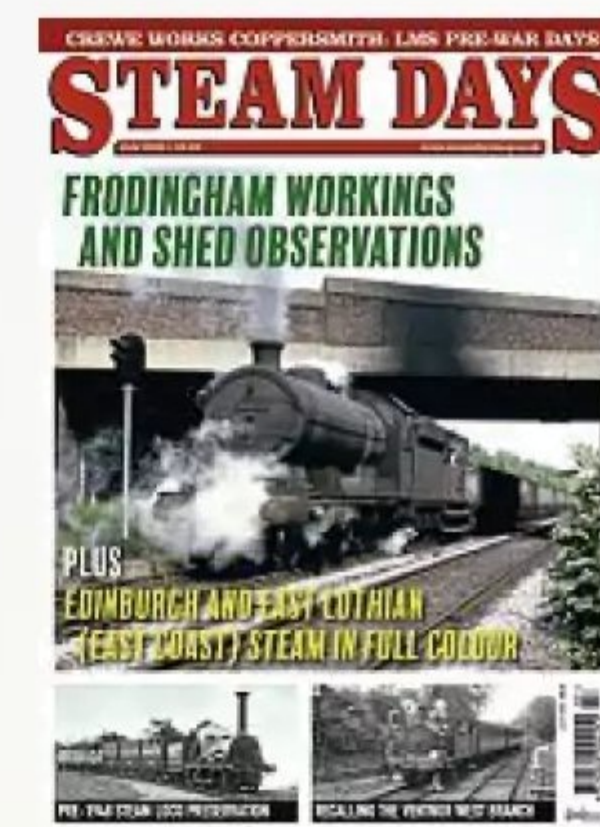
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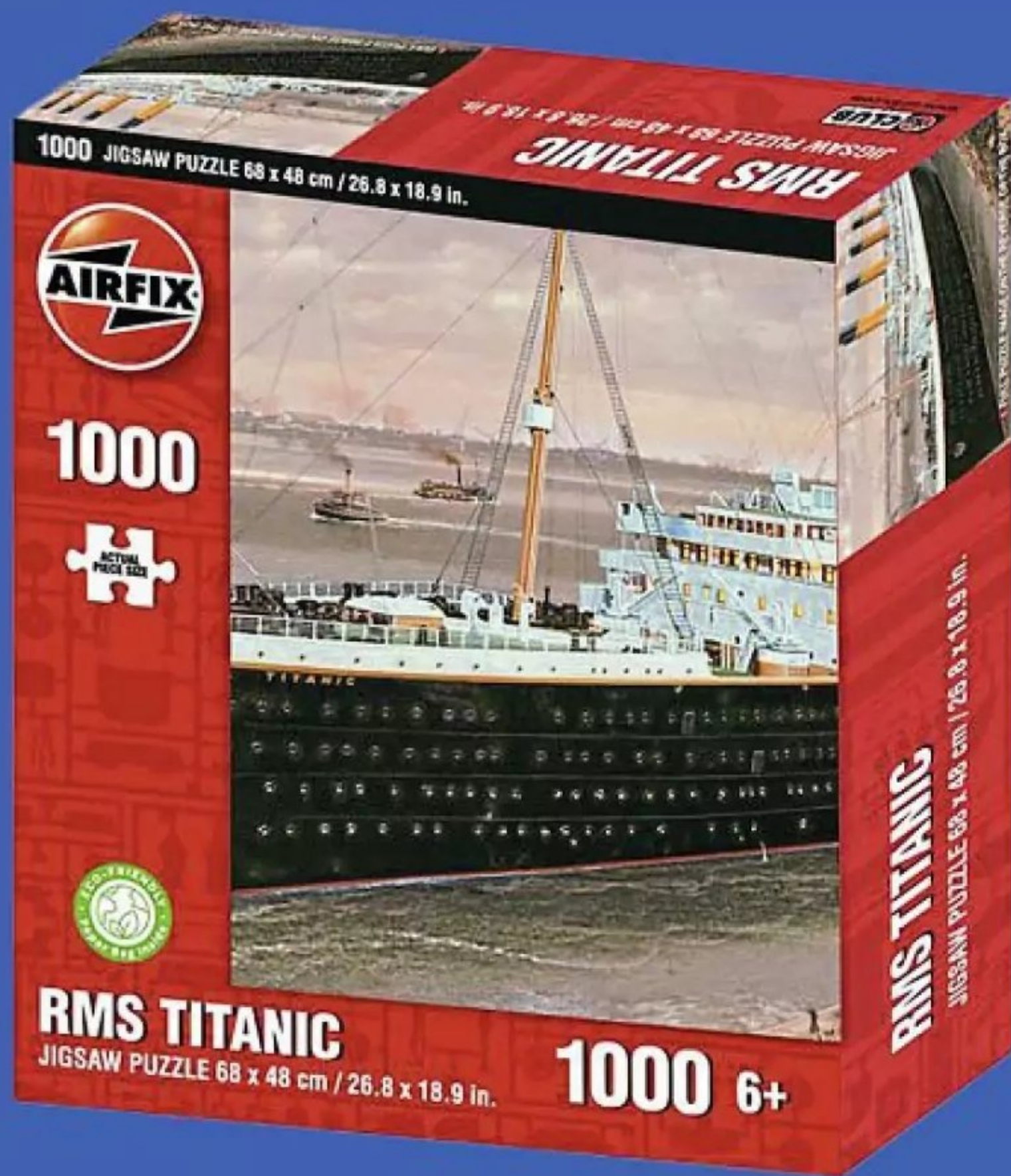
Carrying an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of £35.99, this kit is designated a Level 2 build and is therefore suitable for both intermediate modellers and confident/assisted beginners.



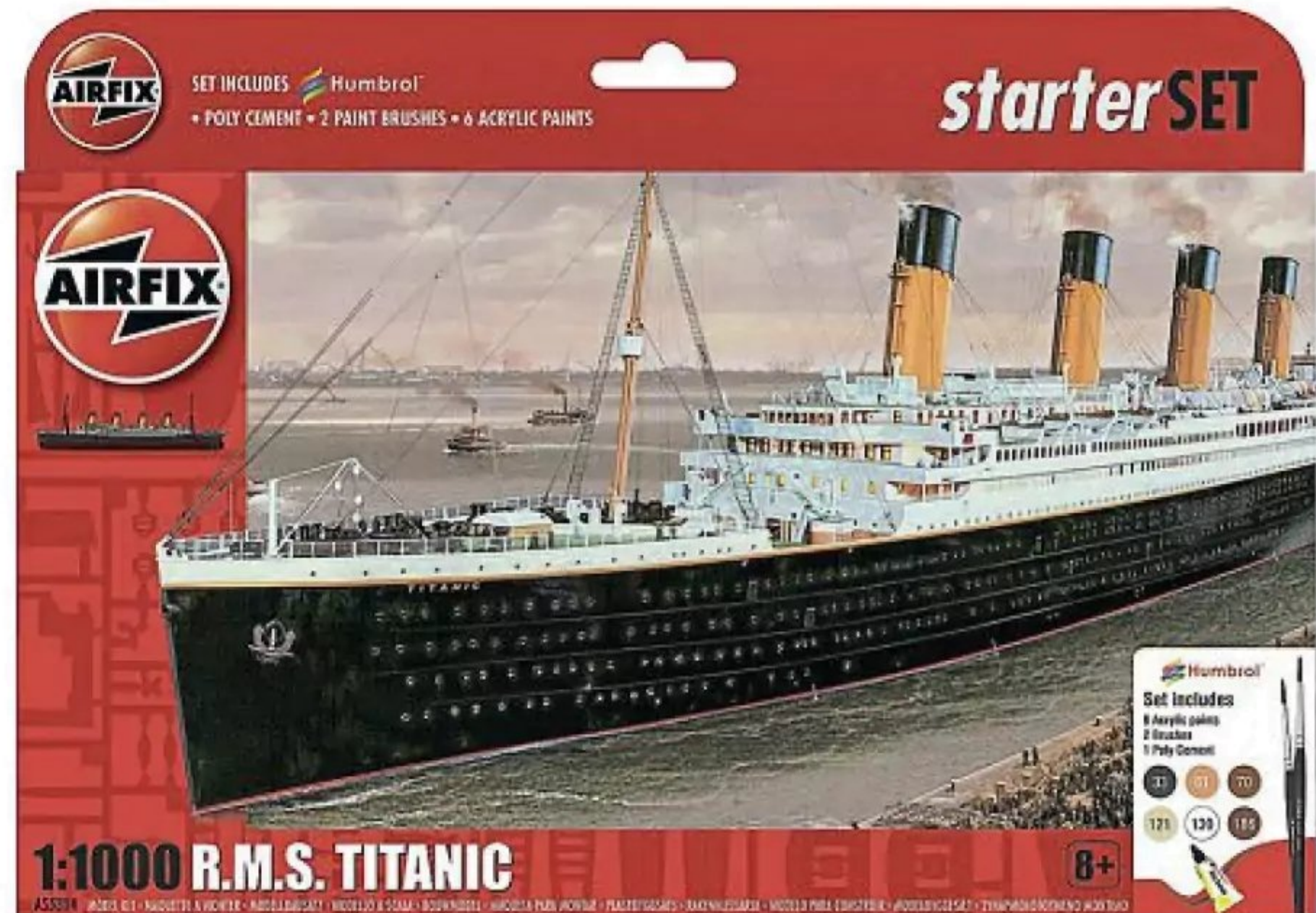
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To be included in the draw, all you need to do is complete the entry form included on this page, cut it out (photocopies of the form will be acceptable for those of you who do not wish to deface your magazine) and mail it back to us at:

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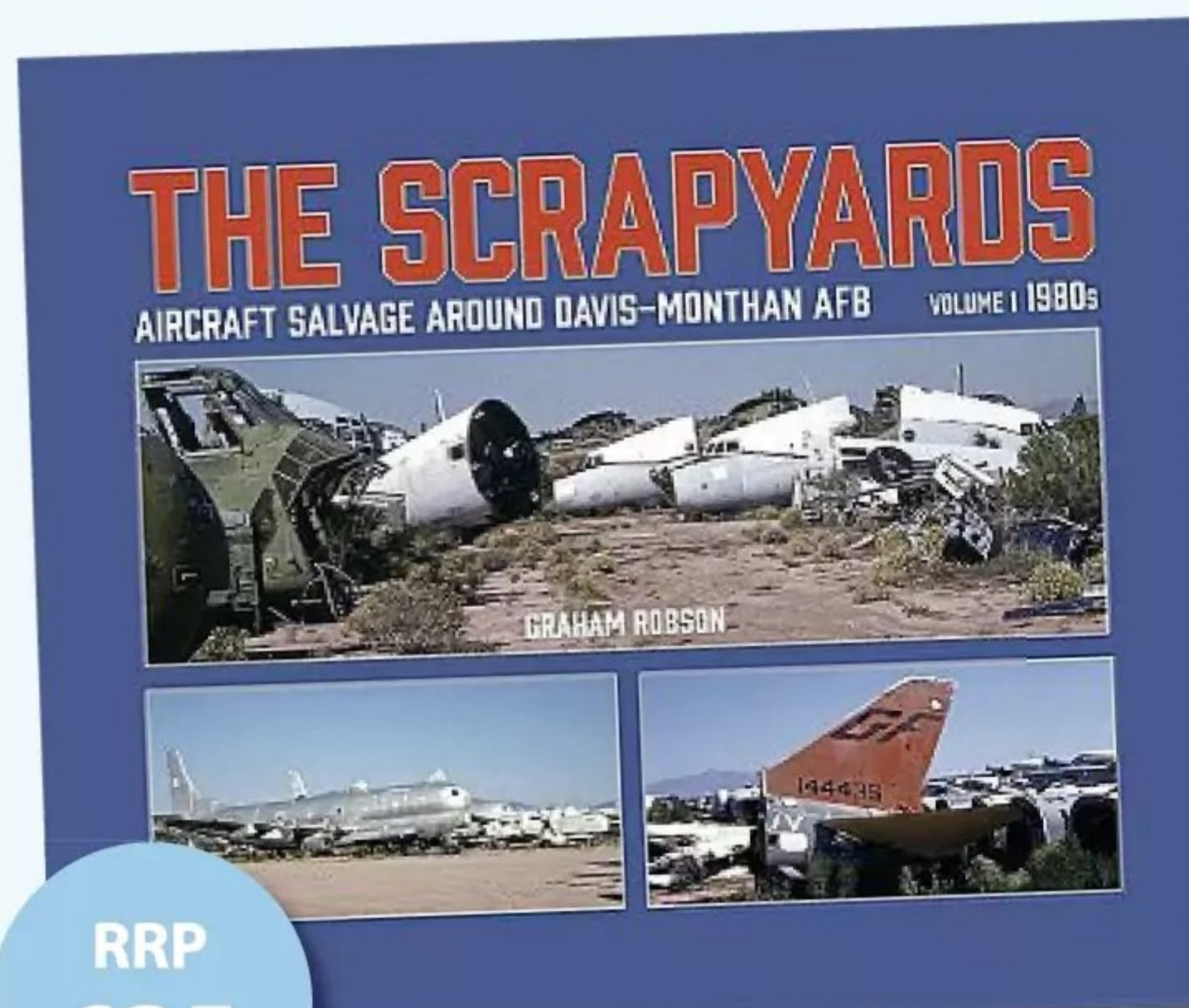
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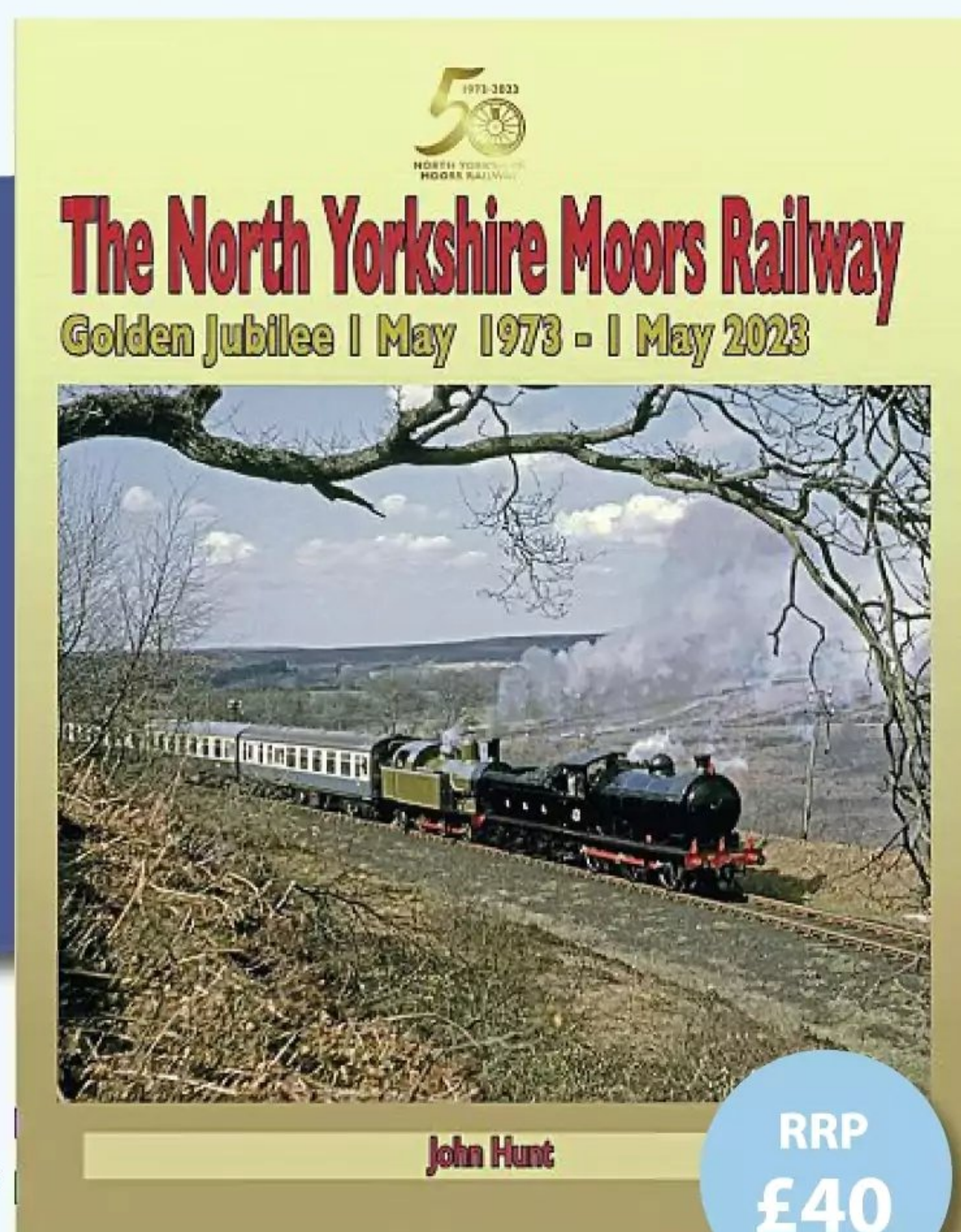
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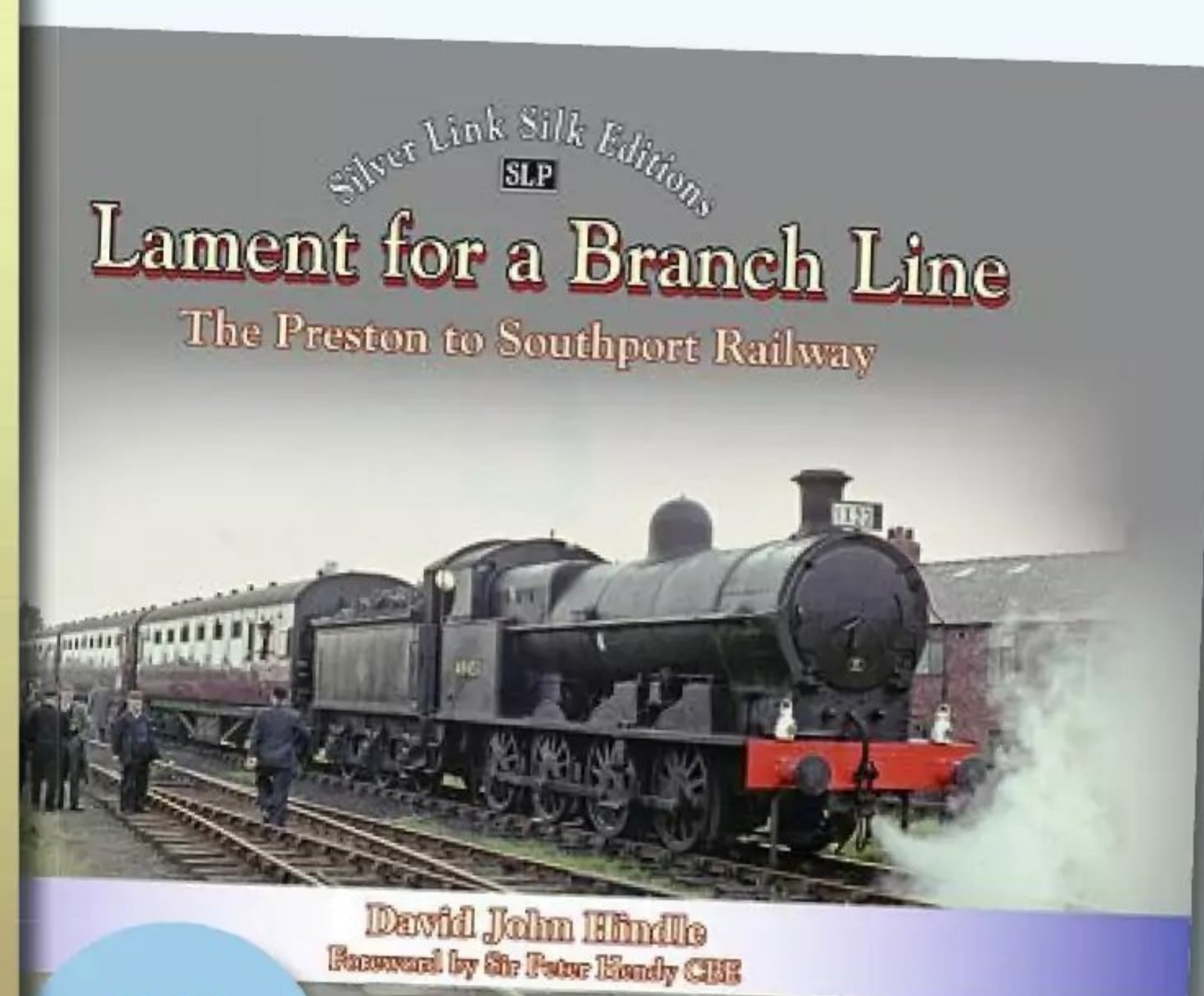
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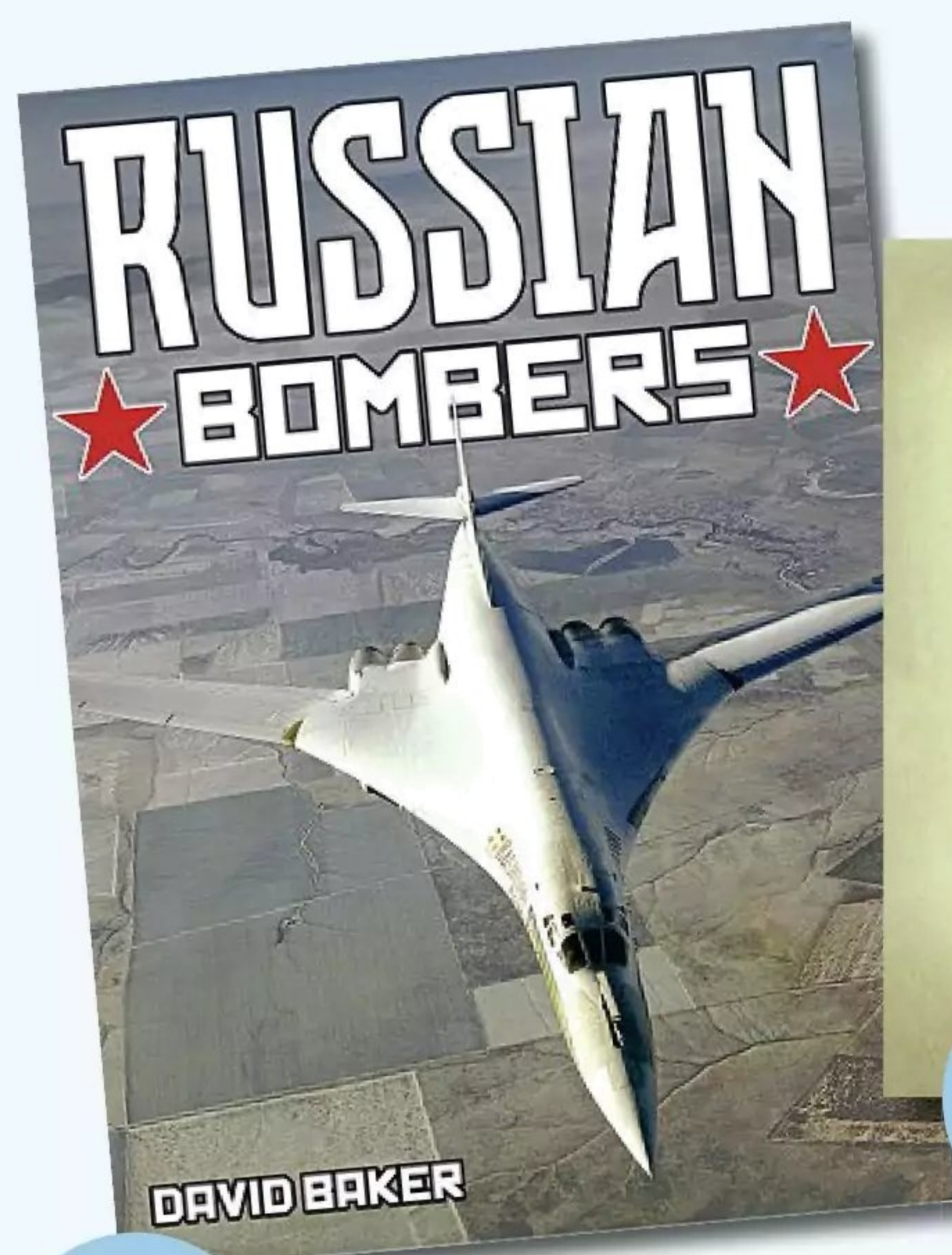
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THE SS NORMANDIE

John Parker tells the story of this innovative, fast and incredibly opulent French ocean liner, and considers the options open to those wishing to model her

Despite her short and ultimately tragic career, the SS *Normandie* can lay claim to being the greatest liner ever built. She was large and she was fast, taking the Blue Riband for the fastest Atlantic crossing on her maiden voyage; her design was innovative, even revolutionary; her interior appointments have never been surpassed; and she continues to influence designers today. Yet this French liner was never as popular with passengers as her contemporary rival the *Queen Mary* and was memorably described by the American writer John Maxtone-Graham as “unrealistic, impractical, uneconomical and magnificent”.

Conception

Work began on the new flagship for the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, or CGT, line in January 1931 at the shipyard of

Chantiers de Penhoet, Saint Nazaire, France under the designation T-6. By the time of her launch on October 29, 1932, she had been named *Normandie* (without the usual pronoun ‘le’ or ‘la’ to designate gender). It was not a propitious time for launching a luxury liner, as the world was still recovering from the Great Depression brought on by the stock market crash of 1929 and most of the 200,000 spectators that had gathered to witness her launch could only dream of being able to afford a ticket to travel on her. National pride was at stake however, and the ship was completed with the help of a government subsidy by May 1935. Changes to laws by this time limited immigration to the USA, a traditional source of revenue for shipping lines, and the hope was to attract affluent American travellers seeking to escape Prohibition in the USA.

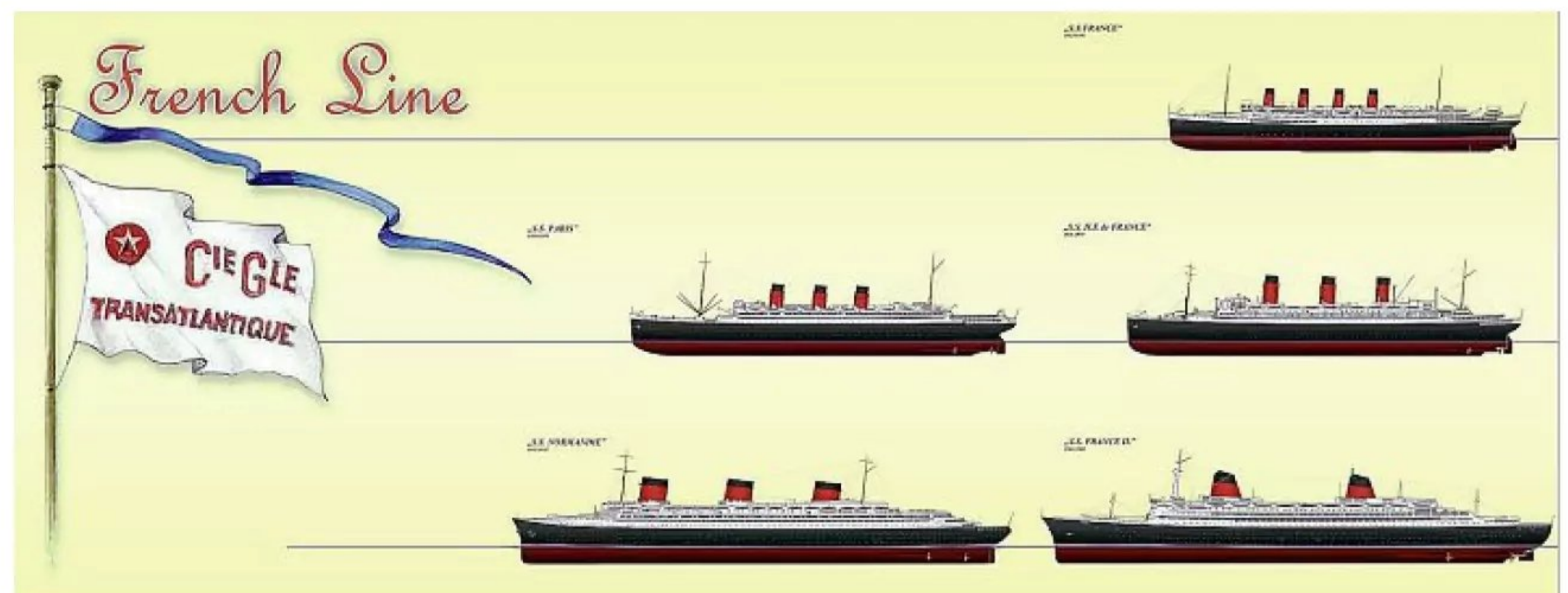


Vladimir Yourkevich, the Russian naval architect credited for the more advanced hydrodynamic design of the *Normandie*'s hull, inspects a model of the magnificent liner. Image courtesy of Wikipedia.

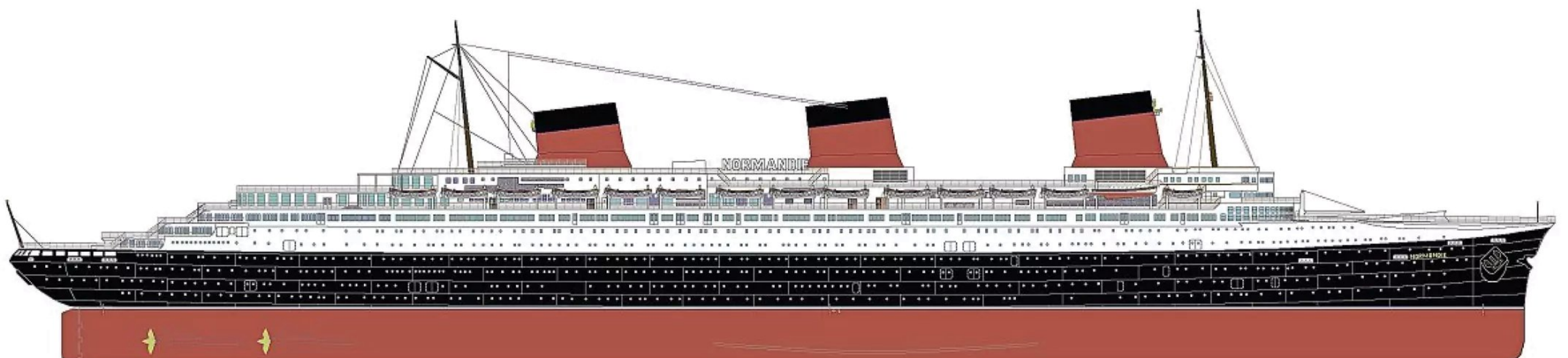
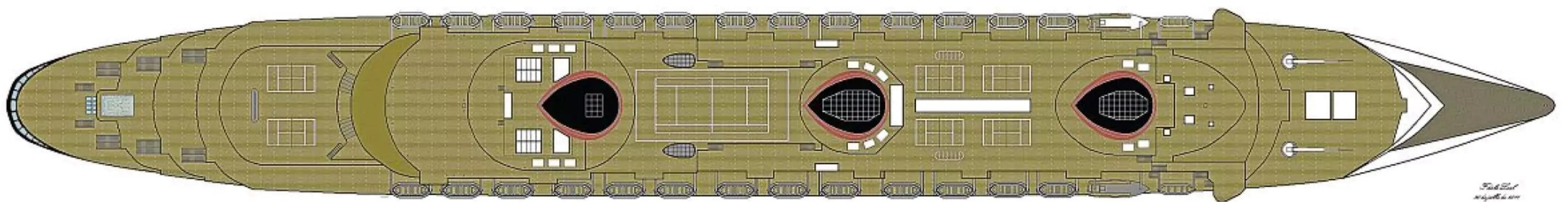
“She was large, and she was fast, taking the Blue Riband for the fastest Atlantic crossing on her maiden voyage; her design was innovative, even revolutionary; her interior appointments have never been surpassed; and she continues to influence designers today”



The palatial main dining room of the Normandie, Image courtesy of Wikipedia.



Liners of the French CGT Line compared. Image courtesy of Wikipedia.



Normandie in profile. Image courtesy of Wikipedia.

Right: From *Ocean Greyhounds* – a series of cigarette cards issued in 1938.

To this end the ship was designed to offer the ultimate in luxury for her 848 first class passengers, showcasing the best of French décor and cuisine. Her main dining room was 93 metres long and three stories high, longer than the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles which it inevitably drew comparisons with, and the largest room of any ship. This was made possible by one of the innovations adopted in the design of the hull: the uptakes for the boilers, which normally would be a major obstruction on the centreline of the hull, were split and carried up each side before joining again to exit at the funnels. Her propulsion too, broke new ground, for the *Normandie* adopted a turbo-electric system and remains to this day the largest example of such a powerplant ever used in a liner.

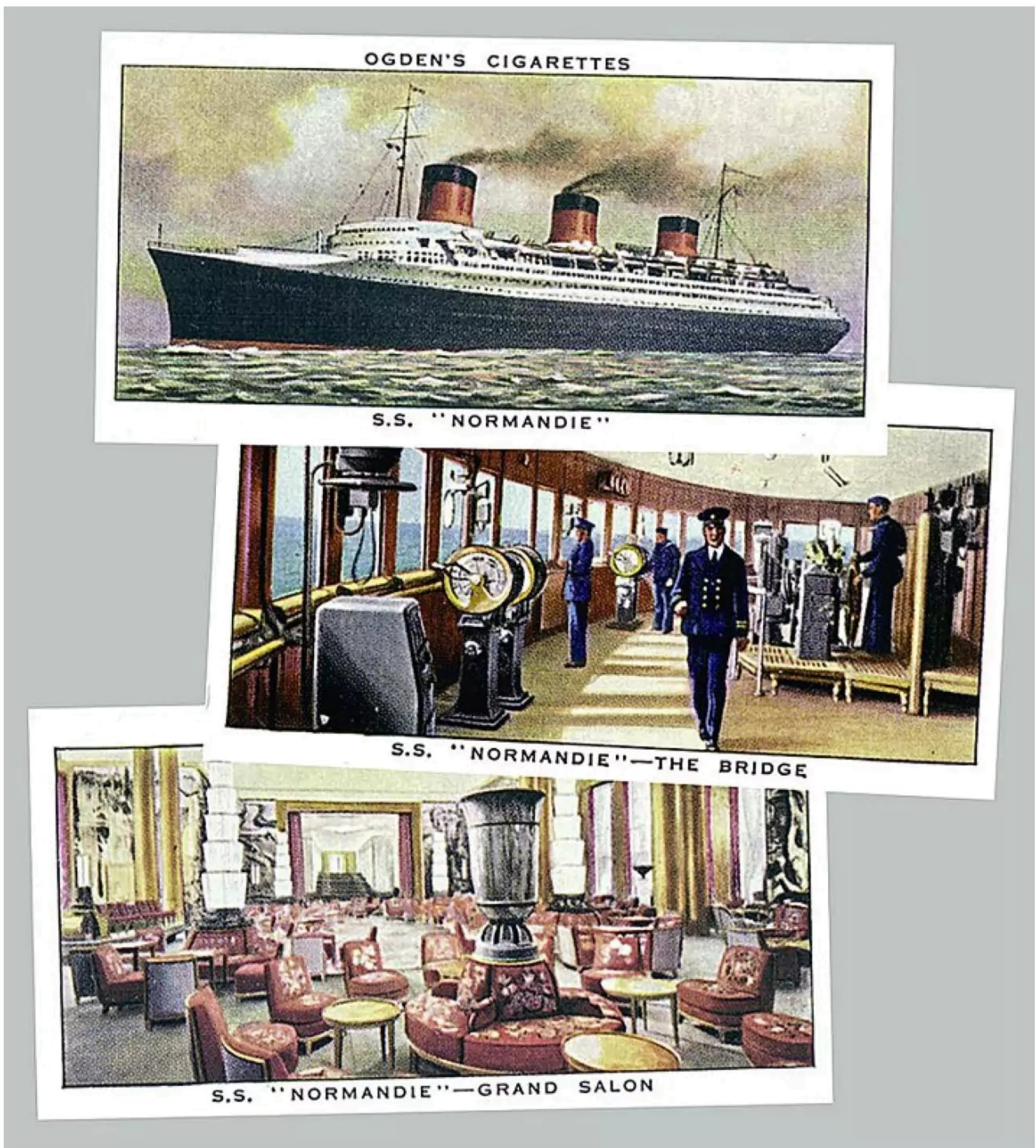
In a turbo-electric power plant, the main turbines are not coupled to the propellers but instead drive large generators which supply their power to electric motors to drive the propellers. Such an arrangement, despite its greater complication, offers a number of advantages. The weight of the plant can be spread around the bottom of the hull since it is not needed to be in line with the propeller shafts; the heavy reduction gearing required for direct drive is not necessary, eliminating a source of noise and vibration; full power in reverse is available for manoeuvring; and symmetrical propulsion with all four propellers is available even with one turbogenerator taken off-line for maintenance. The four turbo-electric generators and four electric motors in the *Normandie* provided a total of 160,000 horsepower to drive the four propellers, achieving a maximum speed of 32.125 knots on trial.

Entry into service

Claims that the *Normandie* would attempt to take the Blue Riband away from the *Queen Mary* on her maiden transatlantic crossing on May 29, 1935, were strenuously denied, but the truth came out when the ship began streaming a huge blue banner as she approached New York harbour,

having calculated her average speed to be a winning 29.8 knots. So began a period of intense rivalry with the *Queen Mary*, which saw the Blue Riband accolade pass from ship to ship until the outbreak of World War II.

Normandie's entry into service did reveal some problems. Most serious was the degree of vibration which could be felt throughout the ship and made the rear cabins uninhabitable – passengers had to be relocated forward during the maiden voyage. This was particularly ironic since turbo-electric drive had been adopted principally to minimise vibration. The stern of the ship was extensively strengthened to alleviate the problem, while the three-bladed propellers were increasingly suspected to be the principal cause. Eventually it was decided to cast and fit new four-blade propellers, and trials showed this had indeed been the cause of the original problem. But all was not yet plain sailing. After the trials, a diver was sent down to inspect the propellers. He reported back that, yes, all three propellers were in good condition! So, they had lost one of the propellers, which was now on the bottom of the ocean, and there was no spare. The ship had to be fitted with two three-blade propellers and two four-blade ones until a replacement four-blader could be made.



Can you spot the mistake on this colourised postcard? (See text!)

The wreck of the Lafayette at New York, 1943. Image courtesy of Wikipedia.



Another puzzling issue was ultimately traced to the behaviour of the turbo-electric propulsion. Approaching her destination at the end of an Atlantic crossing, the ship's engines would sometimes cut out and the ship would lose way. There seemed to be no rational cause, until it was realised that on encountering shallower water, the loading of the propellers was adversely affected by wave interference from the seabed, tripping the circuit breakers that were designed to protect the motors from overload. Overcoming this simply required a change in operating procedure.

Advanced hull design

The *Normandie* achieved a level of performance on 160,000 horsepower that the similar sized *Queen Mary* needed 200,000 horsepower to equal. This was credited to the more advanced hydrodynamic design of the hull, the work of the Russian naval architect Vladimir Yourkevitch, who had fled his homeland for France following the Russian revolution and taken a job in a Renault factory. The hull is said in some sources to have a pear-shaped cross section, which makes no sense to me, but photos of the ship being launched clearly show the bulged forefoot, which improved the flow around the wide midsection of the hull and thereby reduced drag. Noticeable too is

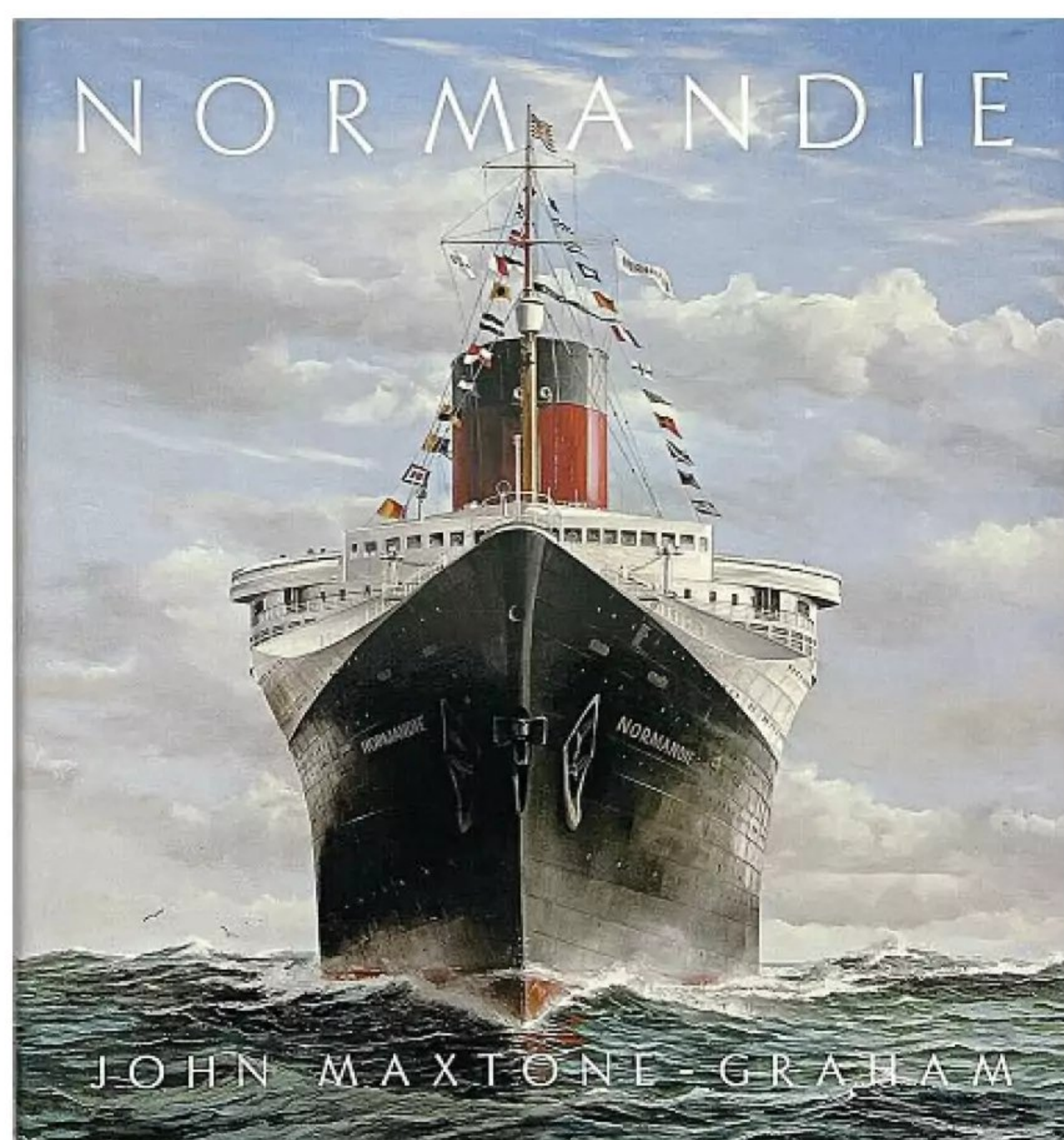
the curved clipper bow at a time when a straight near-upright bow was the norm. The *Normandie* left a calmer wake than similar vessels and 'crashed' less through waves.

Design innovation was carried through to the upper works. Instead of a deck festooned with winches, anchor chains, ventilators and all the other paraphernalia of ship

“The Normandie achieved a level of performance on 160,000 horsepower that the similar sized Queen Mary needed 200,000 horsepower to equal”

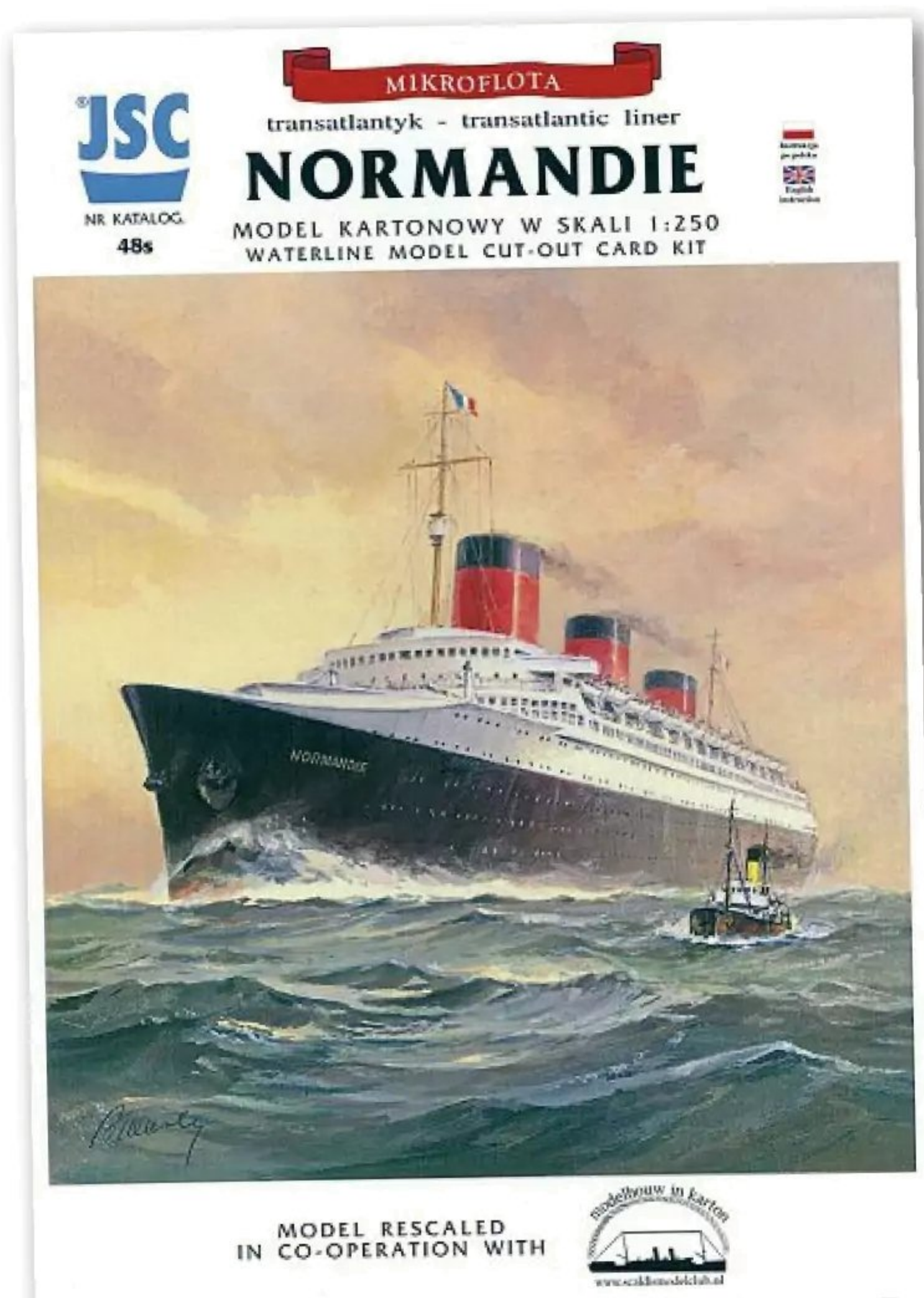


The Normandie-inspired architecture of the Normandie Hotel, Puerto Rico. Image courtesy of Wikipedia.



The cover of John Maxstone-Graham's book on the Normandie.

operation, these were hidden away within the superstructure or under the characteristic curving turtleneck that gave the *Normandie* her unmistakable appearance when viewed head-on. This left more of the deck space for passenger amenities and resulted in a much cleaner appearance. The third funnel was a dummy, there purely for aesthetic reasons, to provide a more balanced profile. It housed the air conditioning plant and 22 dog kennels. Unaware of this (and the discomfort it would cause to the dogs), artists tended to depict the ship with smoke billowing from all three funnels.



Package artwork for JSC's 1:250 card kit of the Normandie.



Another photograph of the late Nigel Allom's stunning large-scale model of the Normandie out on the water – the first appearing on the introductory page to this feature.

“A welder’s torch set fire to the hundreds of kapok life preservers that had been carelessly stacked in the First-Class lounge. Within minutes the fire took hold...”

A sad ending

After five years of service, the *Normandie* found herself in New York Harbor in 1939 when World War II broke out. Unable to return to France, she was interned by the American government, transferred to the US Navy and in late 1941 slated for rapid conversion into a troop carrier, the *Lafayette*. Stripped of her elaborate décor and fittings and with her sophisticated fire warning system deactivated, a welder's torch set fire to the hundreds of kapok life preservers that had been carelessly stacked in the First-Class lounge. Within minutes the fire took hold, and with a hapless fire department pumping thousands of gallons of water into the ship she soon began to list. Adding to the tragedy of the scene was the fact that Yourkevitch himself was at New York Harbor at the time, and pleaded for the sea cocks to be opened so that the ship could settle level on the bottom of the harbour. His pleas were ignored and by the next morning the once magnificent *Normandie* was a burnt-out capsized hulk, to be eventually sold for scrap in 1946.

Modelling the Normandie

Mixed media kits of the *Normandie* are available from OldModelKits (<https://www.oldmodelkits.com/ss-normandie-ocean-liner-model-kit.php>) to 1:350 scale and BlueRidgeModels (https://www.blueridgemodels.com/brm_product/1-700-blue-ridge-models-ss-normandie-uss-lafayette-model-kit/) to 1:700 scale. JSC produces a 1:250 scale card kit, another, unbranded, is available from China at 1:400 scale, and there may be others. 3D printer files are



A choice of 3D printer file kits are available from Cults (<https://cults3d.com/en/search?q=Normandie>)

available from Cults (<https://cults3d.com/en/search?q=Normandie>) and scratch builders are directed to a 1:200 two-sheet plan listed as available from the French MRB magazine (<https://boutique.mrb-magazine.com/521-normandie.html>).

I consider myself privileged to have witnessed the launch of the late Nigel Allom's large scale model of the *Normandie* at Patterson Lakes here in Melbourne some years ago. This involved the hull moving down a slipway to the tune of the *Marseillaise* and a rendition (in English) of the speech given on the occasion of the full-size launch ceremony in 1932. The superstructure was then quickly fitted, and the model sailed stately off on her maiden voyage. Serving as fitting memorial to this magnificent liner, photographs of the model could quite easily be mistaken for the real thing. ●

“I consider myself privileged to have witnessed the launch of the late Nigel Allom's large scale model of the Normandie”



Aziz is an Anchor Handling tug / Supply Vessel.

Built for worldwide operations to service and tow drilling units and support production and support production platforms Aziz and Arif were commissioned in 1983 for Prince offshore Ltd of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.



The kit is to the usual high standards and includes building manual, GRP hull, other materials; CNC cut styrene decks and superstructure, full size plan, resin, and white metal fittings.

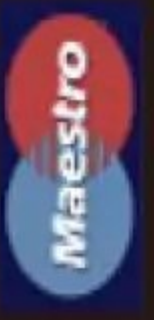
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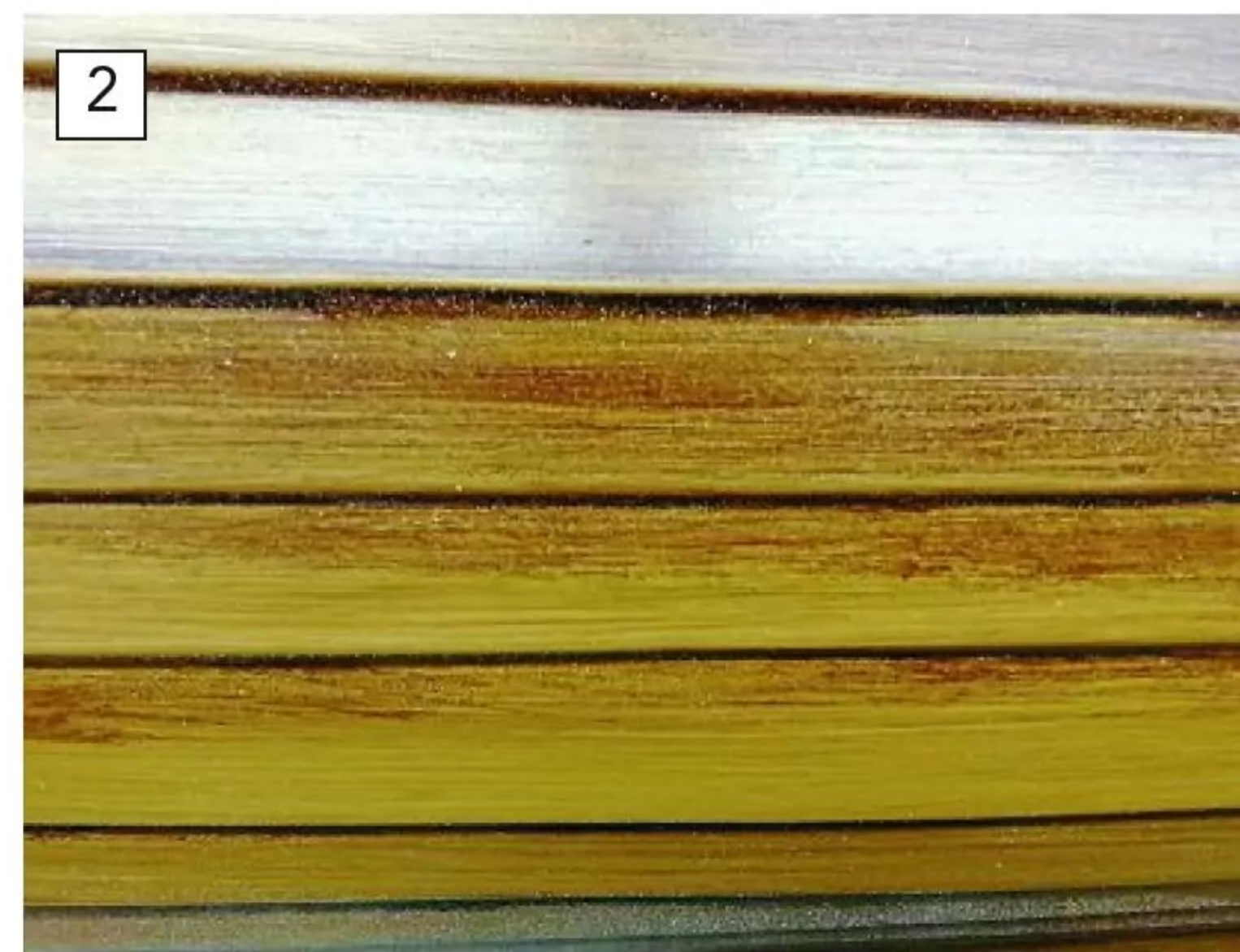
River launch build

La Mouette

John Mileson presents a very versatile
pre-moulded hull based project







If, like me, you're a Daphne du Maurier fan and familiar with her novel *Frenchman's Creek*, you may, considering the title of this article, be expecting a pirate ship build. If so, sorry to disappoint. Despite having no actual association with the book, I just couldn't resist adopting *La Mouette* (the Seagull) as the name for this particular build, based on Orion Mouldings' superb fibreglass 'wood effect' river launch hull (see **Photo 1**).

I was immediately excited about putting Orion's hull to good use, because, as can be evidenced in my close-up (see **Photo 2**) the wood effect really is most convincing.

Measuring 35 inches long, with a beam of 10 inches, I found this hull to be ideally suited to steam propulsion, but it could just as easily employ an electric motor as its source of power. In either case, much of the construction would follow the same build pattern.

As I'd elected for steam power, I decided to use one of the Clevedon Steam vertical steam plants; the beauty of these is that they

"I found this hull to be ideally suited to steam propulsion, but it could just as easily employ an electric motor as its source of power"

can be swapped over between models in a matter of minutes – although personally I like to put a new plant in each model. Anyway, if, like me, you do decide to purchase a new steam plant from Clevedon Steam for the purpose of this build, the one to go for is the Virgo vertical steam plant, which includes the engine.

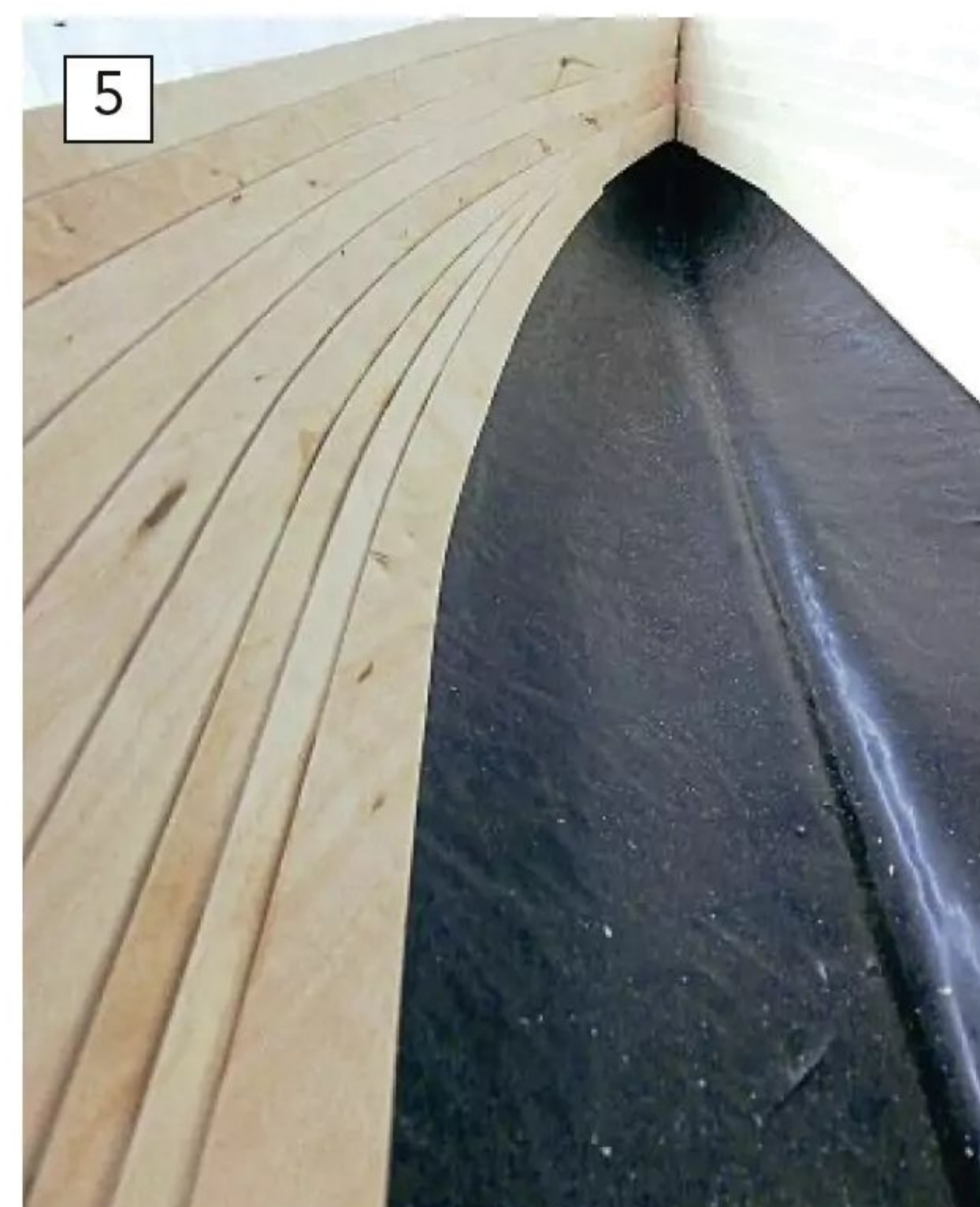
Fitting out the hull

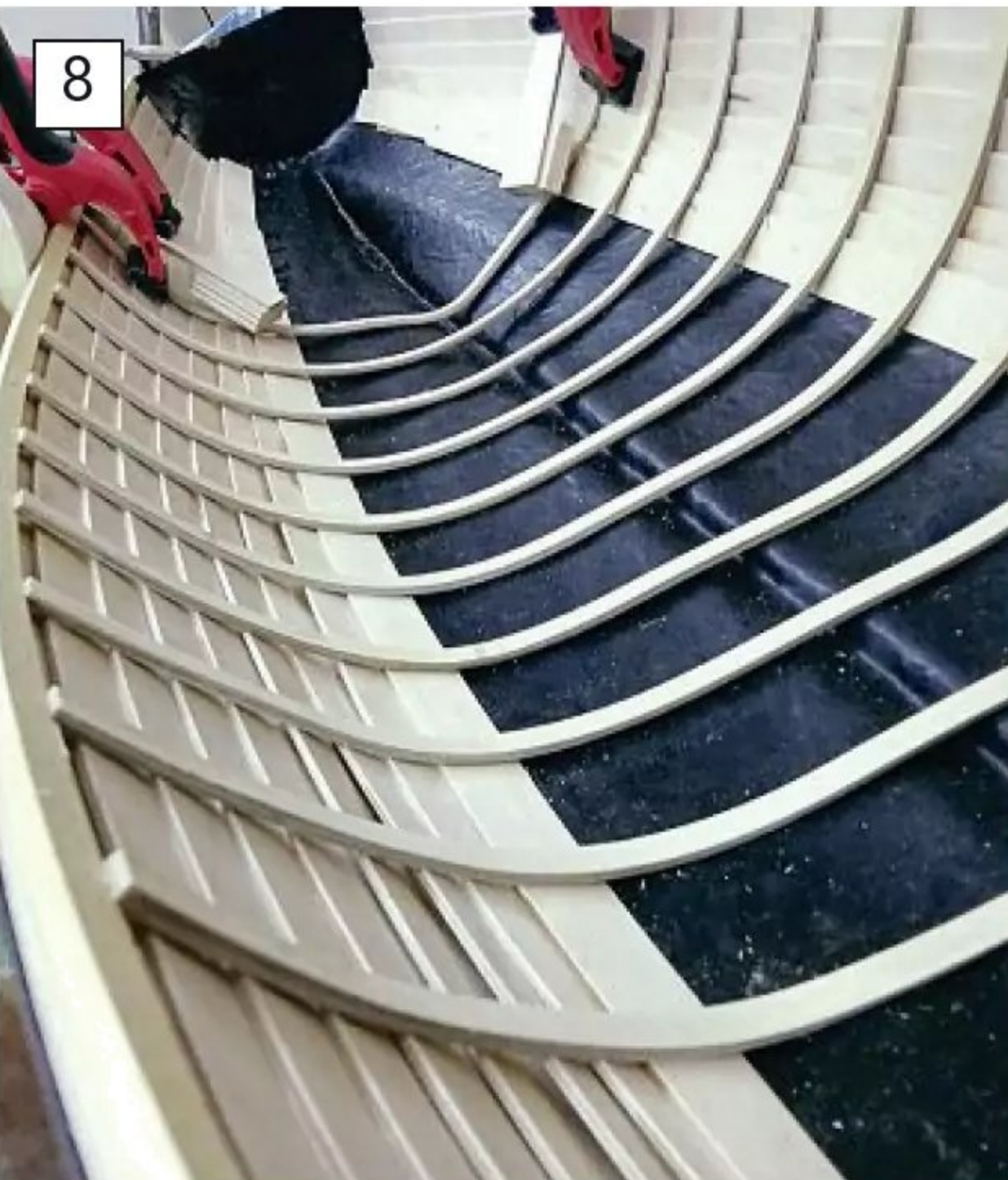
I should point out that the Orion hull does not come with any instructions or plans. Looking at this from a glass half full perspective, though, what this means is that the simplicity or complexity of your build will be entirely up to you.

Before getting started on the build itself, I first constructed a cradle to support the hull while working on it. This was made up from 9mm birch faced plywood.

I then thoroughly washed, dried and then wiped over the hull over with a meths soaked cloth. This may not actually have been necessary, but the idea was that, hopefully, all releasing agent would be removed (I steered clear using bathroom cleaner for fear of scratching the wonderful wood effect finish).

The inside of this hull is finished in black, which, of course, if wishing to simplify the build could be left as is, or, if you're prepared to go the extra mile, painted in an appropriate colour. However, to make things





"I knew making the ribs would prove tricky, as these had to follow the contour of the inner wood-clad hull"



more difficult for myself, I decided to mimic the external planking with wooden strips inside of the hull.

For this inner planking I used 1.6 mm birch faced plywood, cut into 20 mm strips, with the edges carefully sanded down to remove any possible splinters. I wasn't quite sure which adhesive to use to secure these planks to the hull, but in the end opted to use epoxy resin (5-minute). I fully expected I'd need a couple tubes of this, but the reality was the job took four!

Fitting the first few planks proved easy, the plywood easily bending to the inner curves of the hull (see **Photo 3**). It did however, become increasingly difficult to form the planks the deeper they went into the launch. Indeed, because the clamps wouldn't reach into the full depth of the hull, wooden extensions had to be made to hold strips in place (**Photo 4**). But, while not perfect, I was pleased with the end result (see **Photo 5**).

I knew making the ribs would prove tricky, as these had to follow the contour of the inner wood-clad hull. I experimented using strips of .8 mm plywood cut across the grain. Each strip was 6mm wide, and three strips made up the full thickness of the rib. To see how effective this would be, the strips were glued together with aliphatic resin and taped around a tin of a similar diameter to that required (see **Photo 6**).

The finished ribs were amazingly strong, but were, of course, the wrong contour. The method I had to employ therefore was to bond the strips together and, before they set, clamp them around the inside of the hull until the glue went off (see **Photo 7**). Cellophane was used to stop the ribs sticking to the planking. By doing this I was able to bend them slightly to shape while gluing them into the hull (see **Photo 8**). Fortunately, the overall effect proved satisfactory (see **Photo 9**).

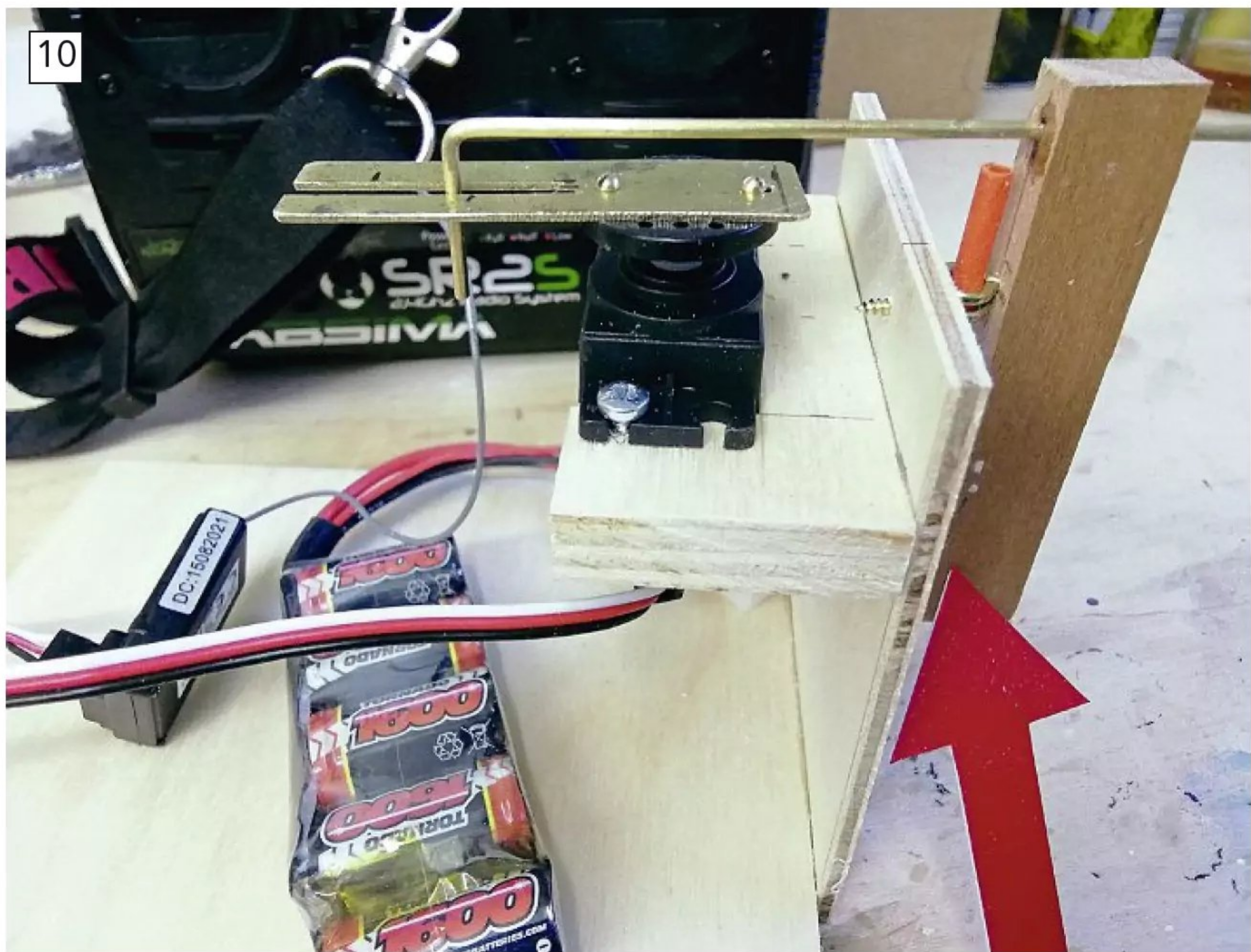
The prospect of drilling through for the propellor shaft was a cause for concern. The proposed shaft was 6mm diameter and the moulded keel about 8mm across. I don't mind admitting it was with some trepidation that I drilled through into the hull. As it happened, the drill broke through along the centre line of the hull but at a steeper angle than was expected. Filing out the resulting hole eventually remedied this, although the hole was decidedly egg shaped!

I was loath at this stage to progress the hull any further, since the steam plant had not been delivered. In the meantime, therefore, progress was made on the rudder assembly.

The rudder assembly

Before making the rudder, the servo unit was fitted in the stern beneath the small deck. I used 9mm plywood for the support bracket for this servo, as I need something thick and solid to for screw it onto; I am always aware of the tremendous force that servos can exert.

The proposed rear deck was to be fairly small, so a means of activating the rudder was devised, using a slotted arm attached to the servo. Being unsure of how efficiently this would work, a mock-up was first made and tested (see **Photo 10**). It worked well, so provided this could be replicated on the transom of the boat, all should be OK. The original slotted arm test piece was replaced by an aluminium version.



The rudder itself was made from scrap pieces of Parana pine and teak. This was simple enough, but the 'pintle and gudgeon' hinge was going to be the difficult part. In the end, I made up a long hinge plate, consisting of a length of brass tube soldered to a strip of brass. Across the strip of brass, and at right angles to it, strips were soldered on at the same time. The 'hinge' was then cut into 12mm lengths. Two would be screwed to the transom, and two attached to the shaft of the rudder. The latter two would be glued and pinned. The pintle and gudgeon are illustrated in **Photo 11**. The finished rudder blade, and stock, plus the 'hinge' are shown in **Photo 12**. My rudder assembly was then temporarily fitted to the transom and tested. All worked just as I'd hoped.

The fore and aft decks were made from 3mm plywood. Pre-stained (teak dye) 1.6 mm plywood planks were then glued onto the plywood bases (see **Photo 13**).



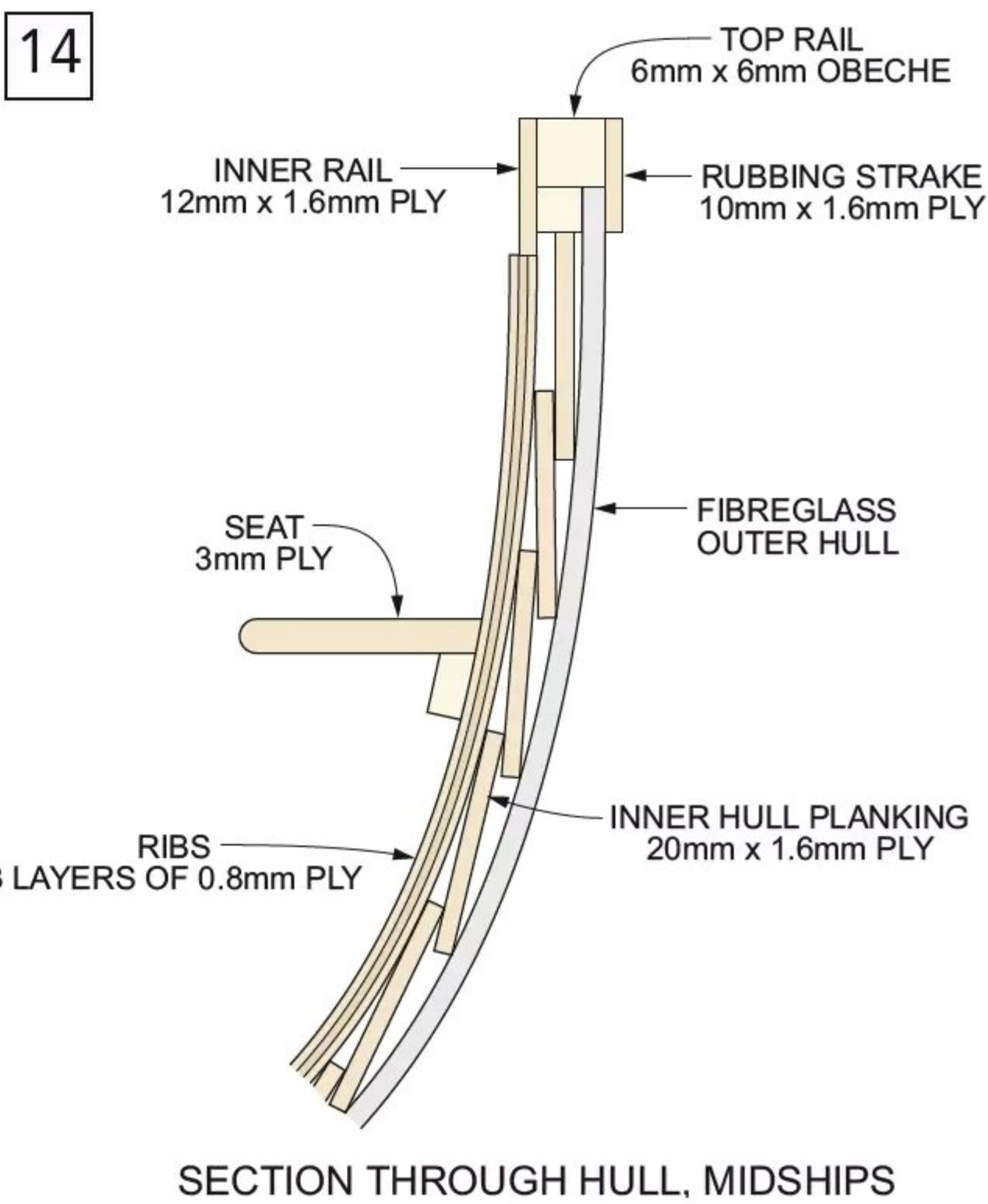
"Being unsure of how efficiently this would work, a mock-up was first made and tested"

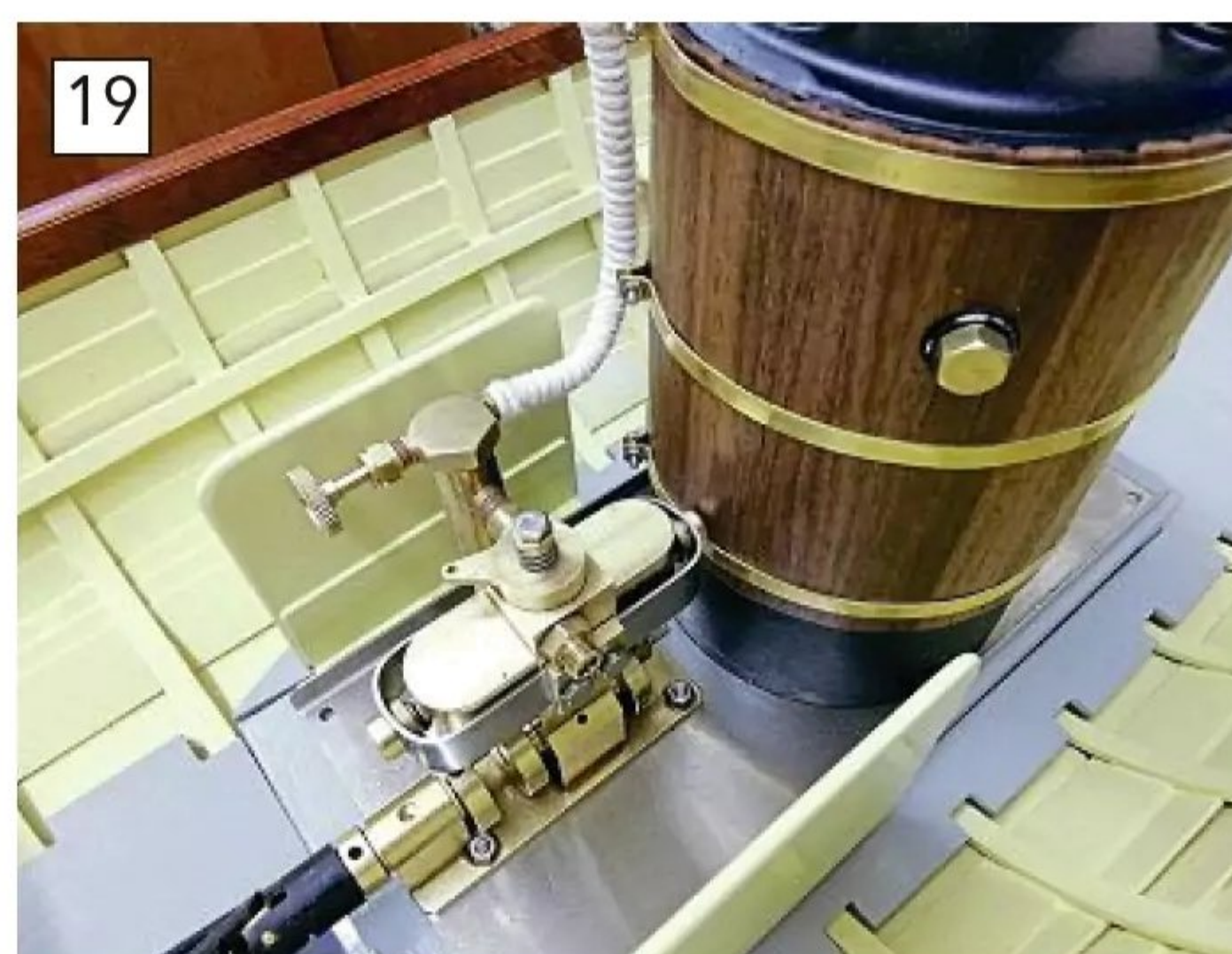


The inside of the hull was given a coat of sanding sealer, followed by two coats of gloss enamel. It was, as can be imagined, a tedious job ensuring all facets of the planks and ribs were well coated and without runs. Once dry, the fore and aft decks were glued on. Work to complete the gunwales, particularly the top 'handrail' followed. As can be seen from my sketch (see **Photo 14**), the gunwale was made from a series of strips of obechi and plywood. The assembly and fitting of these strips turned out to be an easier job than anticipated. Finally, once set, the rails were sanded down, stained with teak stain, and satin varnished (see **Photo 15**).

The inner hull was now complete, save for the fitting of a 'floor', the steam plant and accessories.

The 'floor' was made from 3mm plywood (see **Photo 16**), which although would be hardly seen was painted with grey primer and gloss varnish.

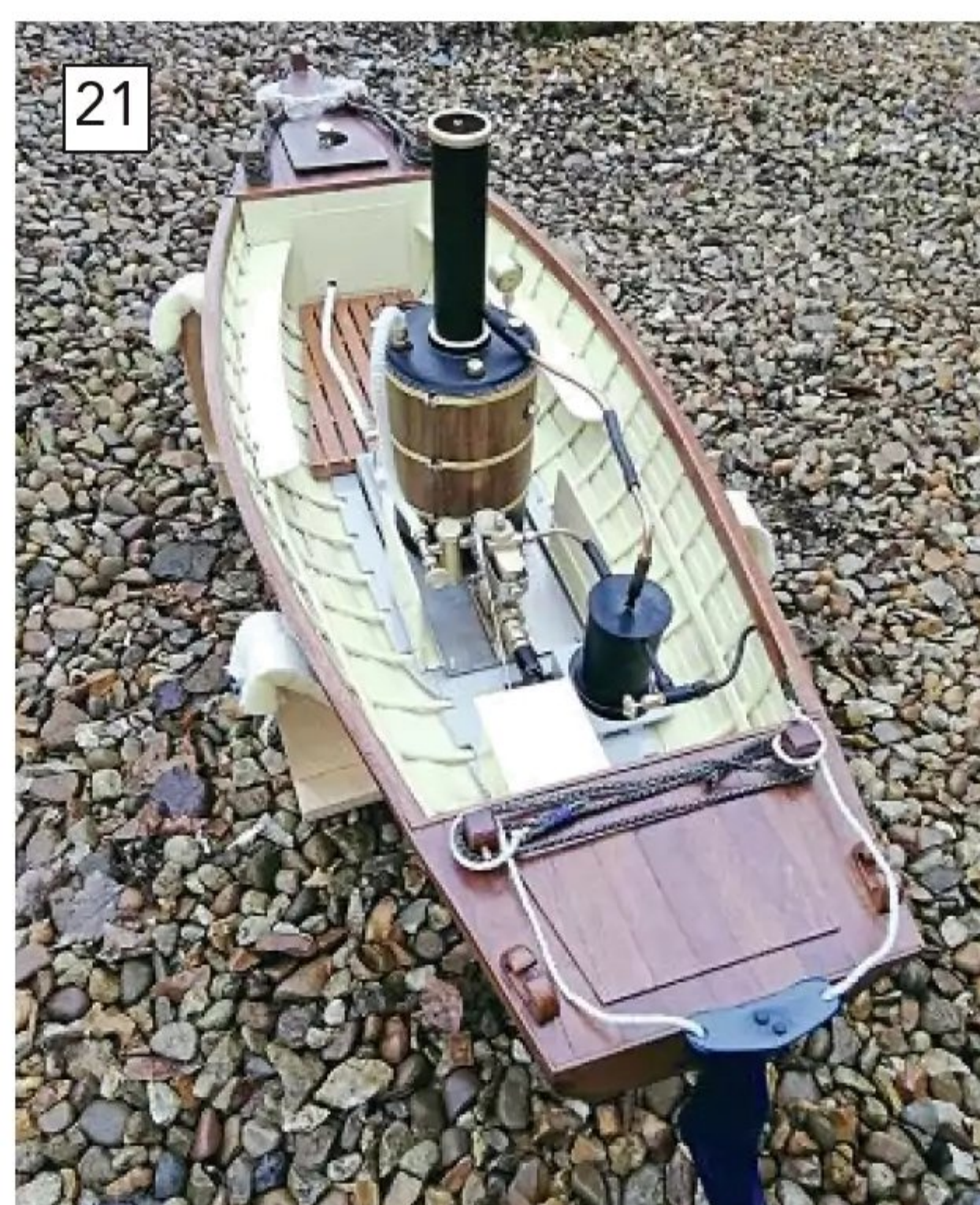




Next came the assembly of the Clevedon Steam boiler and engine. This proved fairly easy, the most time-consuming part being fitting the wooden insulation to the boiler. It was then steam tested on the bench (see **Photo 17**). This is always an exciting time for me – clearly, I need to get out more!

The pre-made rudder assembly could now be fitted (see **Photo 18**) and the electronics tested to ensure everything was working. The drive train, propellor shaft, propellor and universal joint were also fitted, and the engine and boiler were bolted down to the previously fitted 9mm plywood pad (see **Photo 19**).

All that remained to be done was the installation of the servo for the regulator on the engine and the condenser (see **Photo 20**), and some minor detailing. My launch was complete (see **Photos 21 and 22**).



SUPPLIERS

Fibreglass hull
Orion MOULDINGS
www.orionmouldings.com

Steam plant
Clevedon Steam
www.clevedonsteam.co.uk

Plywood
SLEC www.slecuk.com

Drive train components
Howes Models
www.howesmodels.co.uk
Deans Marine www.deansmarine.co.uk

Electronics, etc
Howes Models
www.howesmodels.co.uk

Paint and varnish
Phoenix Precision Paints
www.phoenix-paints.co.uk



Over to you...

This is a fairly simple build, based on two tried and tested components: the Orion hull and the Clevedon Steam engine plant. As previously mentioned, there are no plans to work from, but that's no bad thing. Why? Well, once the position of the engine plant in the hull has been determined (by testing in a bath of water), you can pretty much do as you please. There's no need to fit planking to the inside of the hull, and indeed there's no need to fit a fore and aft deck. You really can either keep things very simple or totally go to town on the detailing – the choice is yours. In either case, I'm confident you'll find this a most rewarding project. Go on, give it a go! ●



BEAULIEU & BUCKLER'S HARD

If you've only ever associated Beaulieu with its National Motor Museum, perhaps it's time to take a more in-depth look. **Stephen Paul Hardy** explains....

Unless you're a bit of a petrol head as well as a model ship/boat builder/restorer/collector, you may never have considered a treasure seeking expedition to one of the popular International Autojumbles held in the grounds of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu in the New Forest, Hampshire (S042 7ZN). If not, however, perhaps you should – because, as I discovered when attending this year's event in September, amidst all the automotive jumble you will find numerous model boats and ships (covering a wide range of thematic interests and scales, constructed from equally diverse materials and methods of build), along with all manner of nautical paraphernalia, to browse.

While there are, of course, no guarantees of finding exactly what you're looking for, the real thrill lies in the possibility of coming across the unexpected – an exciting project-

inspiring find, or perhaps a previously unknown to you curio. After all, as boats and ships are not the main focus of this event, anything non-automotive tends to be an off-chance addition to a stall. The likelihood of items that have long sat forgotten in lofts/sheds/etc resurfacing, perhaps now in need of some skillful restoration or just some simple TLC, is, therefore, high.

A river in maritime history

Interestingly, while Beaulieu is associated in most people's mind with automobiles, the reality is that the Montagus and the Beaulieu estate have a far longer-association with shipbuilding, watercraft and sailing than with cars!

The Beaulieu River is one of the few privately owned rivers in the world and has been under the custodianship of the Montagu family for over four centuries.



Just a few of the models spotted while Stephen was browsing this year's Beaulieu International Autojumble in September.



“While there are, of course, no guarantees of finding exactly what you're looking for, the real thrill lies in the possibility of coming across the unexpected”



“While Beaulieu is associated in most people’s mind with automobiles, the reality is that the Montagus and the Beaulieu estate have a far longer-association with shipbuilding, watercraft and sailing than with cars!”



Walk just two miles downriver from the Montagu family home and you will reach the Buckler’s Hard Museum. Between 1745 and 1814, the construction of 50 Royal Navy ships as well as a variety of merchant vessels kept Buckler’s Hard five launchways very busy. It was here that master shipbuilder Henry Adams and his sons built ships such as the *Agamemnon*, *Euryalus* and *Swiftsure*, all of which fought at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

At the end of the Napoleonic wars, the advent of iron ships saw the demise of wooden ship building at Buckler’s Hard. By the late 19th century, however, pleasure steamers began bringing day trippers to the village. And then, as more people started sailing for leisure, with the Solent becoming a favourite body of water for this pursuit, the Beaulieu River became a popular place for the mooring of yachts.

The second Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, John Walter Edward Douglas-Scott-Montagu, (1866 – 1929) was a keen himself a keen sailor. One of his first boats (in 1885) was the 18 ft cruiser *Grebe*, which he would sail on the Beaulieu River and the Solent. This



practically marked the beginning of small class racing in the Solent. He also owned the *Calva* (2½-rater), the *White Swan*, the *Siola*, the *Cygnat*, and the *Calisaya* (a 30-ton cutter), winning several matches with the *White Swan* and *Siola*.

*“It was here that master shipbuilder Henry Adams and his sons built ships such as the *Agamemnon*, *Euryalus* and *Swiftsure*, all of which fought at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805”*



Between 1745 and 1814, the construction of 50 Royal Navy ships as well as a variety of merchant vessels kept the launchways at Buckler’s Hard very busy – with this diorama displayed in the onsite museum portraying a typical scene.

In 1904 he became interested in marine motoring, and for that season ran a motorboat. The following year he and Lionel de Rothschild became joint owners of the *Napier H*, built by Messrs. S.F. Edge, Ltd. She was raced most successfully throughout the season, was the winning boat in the Eliminating Trials in the Solent, and then represented England in the International Trophy Race at Arcachon, where, with Lord Montagu acting as steersman, she won easily. John and Lionel then went on to acquire the fast racer *Yarrow Napier*, which they raced at Monaco early in the season of 1906. Lord Montagu again won the International Trophy with this boat and was elected a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron that same year.

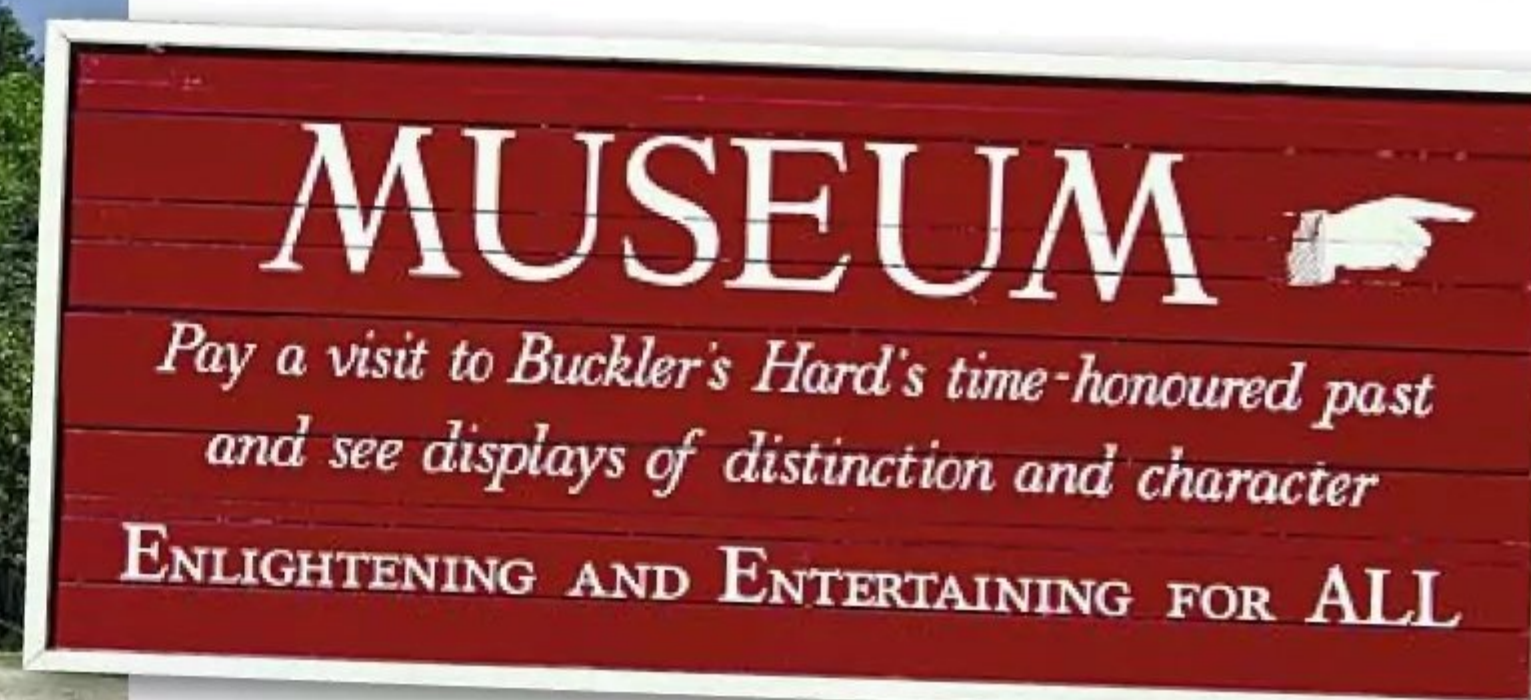
His story, though, is one of tragedy as well as success. During his first marriage he'd had a daughter with his mistress and secretary Eleanor Velasco Thornton, the woman whose form he commissioned sculptor Charles Robinson Sykes to capture for the creation of a beautiful and stylish bonnet mascot for his much-loved Rolls-Royce. Sykes design 'The Whisper' became the precursor of the 'Spirit of Ecstasy' the famous winged beauty that has adorned nearly every Rolls-Royce car built since 1911. On December 30, 1915, however, Ms Thornton was with Lord Montagu on board the *SS Persia* when the ship was torpedoed by the German U-boat U-38 in the Med on route to India, and while Lord Montagu survived the sinking, sadly, Ms Thornton, along with hundreds of others, did not.

During World War II, Buckler's Hard was pressed into service as a motor torpedo base, while nearby Bailey's Hard was used for fitting out minesweepers. Further downstream, sections of the Mulberry harbours were constructed in the old oyster beds in preparation for the D-Day landings.



Both outside the museum and within, the 343 souls lost on the *SS Persia*, including the 2nd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu's secretary and mistress Eleanor Velasco Thornton, are commemorated.

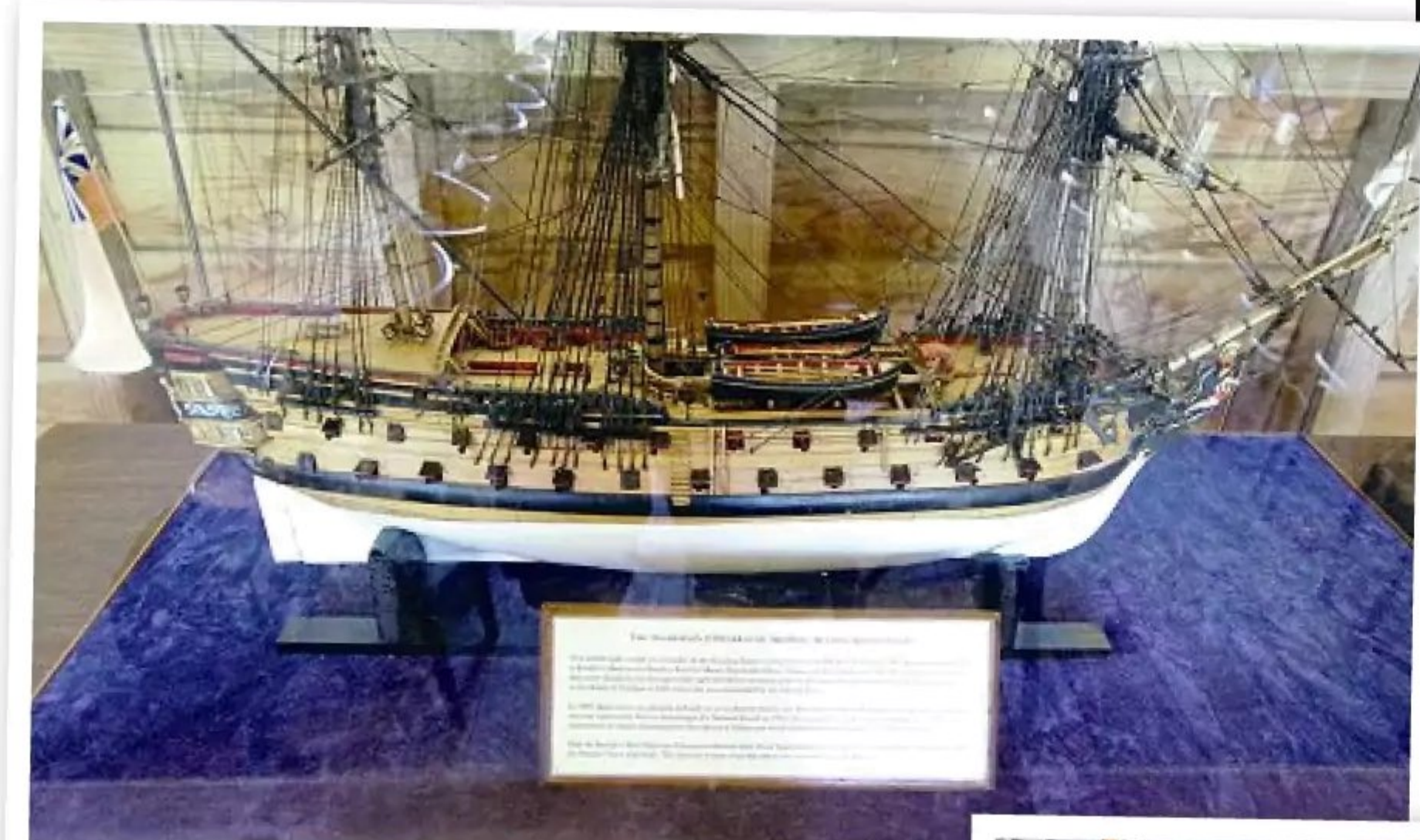
Post-war, private yachts returned to the river. During the 1950s Sir Francis Chichester became a mooring holder, before rising to fame in the late 1960s when he became the first person to sail single-handedly around the globe. His famous yacht *Gipsy Moth IV* is now cared for by the *Gipsy Moth* Trust and can still occasionally be seen moored on the Beaulieu River.



The Buckler's Hard Museum, opened in 1963 in what had been the New Inn, pays tribute to the local workforce and the many magnificent men-of-war they built.



As well as all the other exhibits on display at Buckler's Hard, there are numerous beautiful models to browse and marvel at.

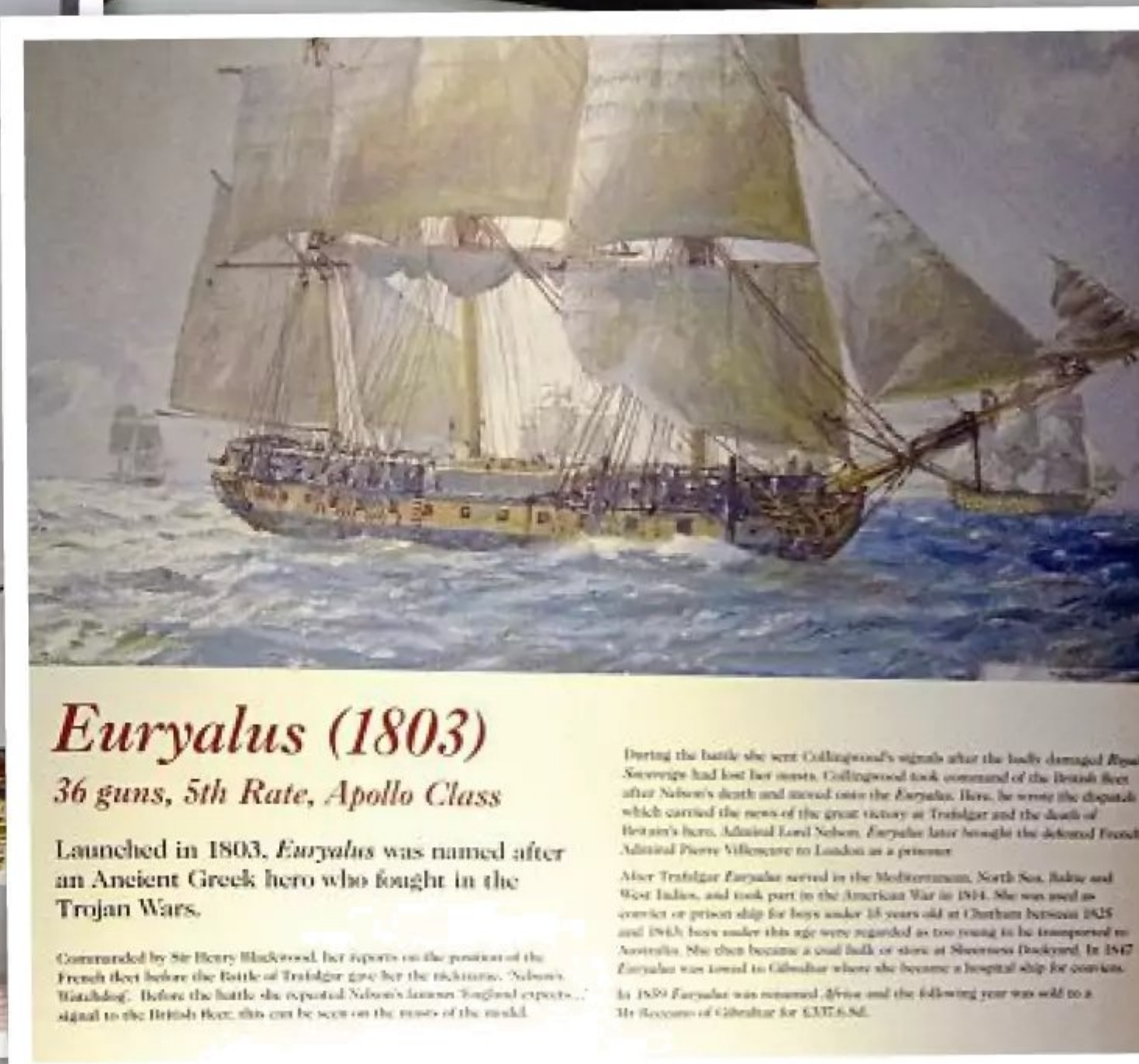


The Buckler's Hard Museum was opened in 1963, and in 1973 the river was dredged to make way for a 76-berth marina (later enlarged to 115) with a new chandlery and boat yard. Elsewhere along the river, though, moorings were restricted so as not to diminish the area's natural beauty. Today, the Beaulieu River remains a beautiful and tranquil stretch of water, much appreciated by yachtsmen and nature lovers alike.

So, if you decide to attend next year's autojumble, or indeed simply to visit the Beaulieu Motor Museum, a visit to historic Buckler's Hard Museum is also a must. Although much smaller than the Motor Museum, it is, in many ways, just as rich in its contents and includes a superb display of models. ●



*'Make haste, little Pickle' the Admiral said,
'Go and tell England that Nelson is dead.'*



Discover more about Buckler's Hard Museum

<https://www.bucklershard.co.uk/attractions/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bucklers-Hard-Historical-Village/2033507966881484>

<https://www.facebook.com/bucklershard>

When Brighton rocked

Dave Wiggins reflects on Sprengbrook's contribution to the R/C scene and how design and quality sadly came to be ousted by cost-cutting mass-production manufacturers

During the summer of 2022 the opportunity arose to affordably acquire, and feature here, another British-built radio made during what was, in hindsight, the closing era of our home R/C industry.

Sprengbrook Precision, based in Portslade, Brighton, had established itself as a popular UK brand as early as the 1960s and had done so by buying-in the design skills of the well-known American engineer Doug Spreng. The earliest Sprengbrook radios were dual badged with the Union Flag and the Stars & Stripes to indicate this transatlantic co-operation, and there is no doubt this was an effective decision given the undoubted dominance of the US R/C industry in those days.

Priced at the top end of the market, the initial two radios were very successful sellers for a few years. Mr Spreng, however, was quick in returning to California in order to build himself a career with Kraft Systems, and as time passed and Britain joined the European arena under the government of the time, other influences pervaded pretty much every business in Britain.

Finding himself alone, company owner Harry Brooks sought to build new alliances, but, wisely, did this in stages. At first, he introduced a few 'new' radios by offering complete sets and even home construction kits under the name 'HB Precision'. Both were basically the proven Doug Spreng design simplified a bit and offered with cheaper sticks and servo mechanics in order to lower prices, so there was no new design work done as such.

Home assembly

One could write an entire column (a book indeed!) on the perils of selling electronic construction kits to inexperienced home builders, but this is perhaps not the place to do that. Suffice to say that a combination of poorly written instructions, dodgy home soldering and a hundred other 'nasties' resulted in a very low success rate, even for truly superb examples of the genre; the very best of which (by far) came from Heathkits (a.k.a. Daystrom), in actuality being a Kraft-designed radio kitted under licence. Not surprisingly, therefore, HB Precision kits were not around for that long, with Mr Brooks sensibly deciding to move swiftly on.

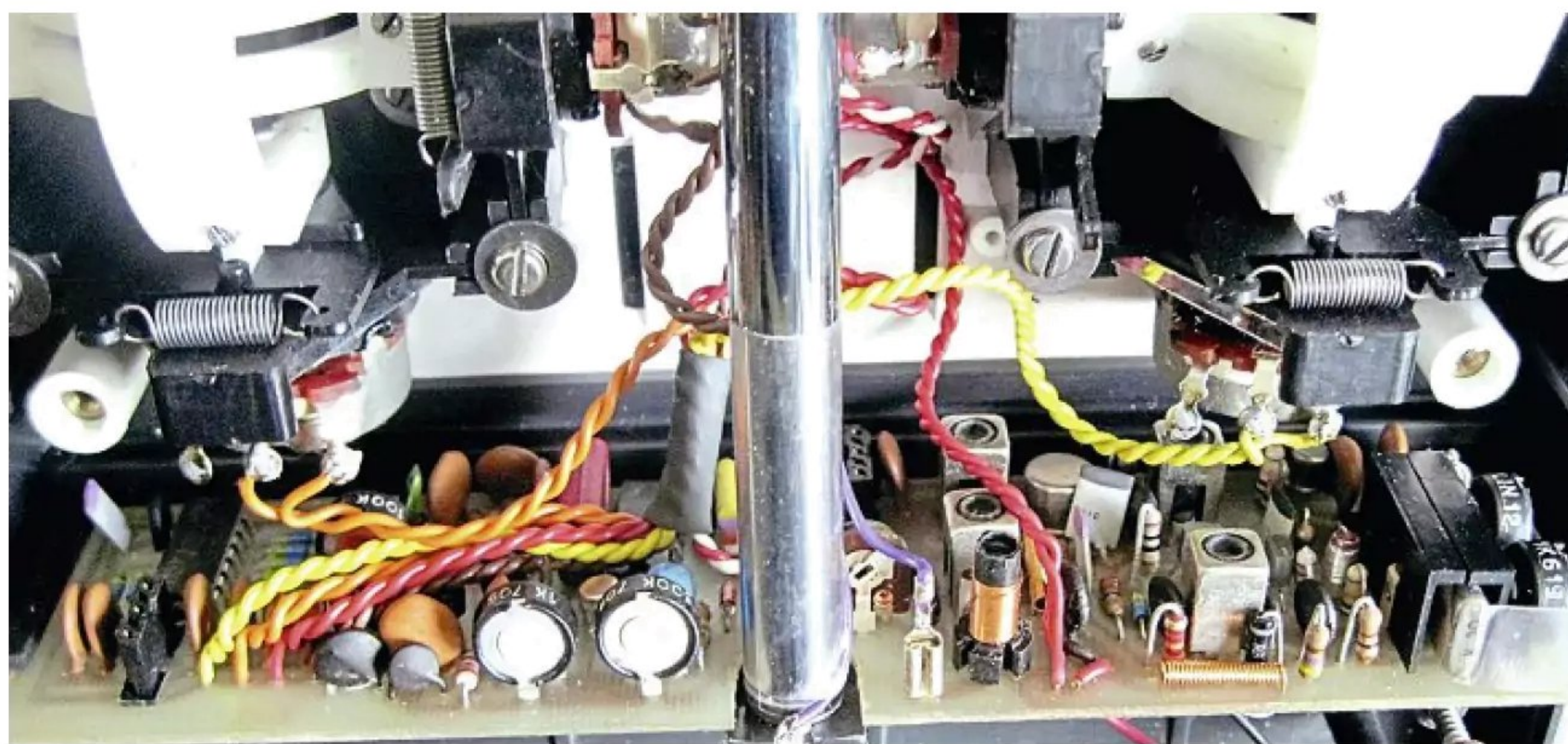
"The earliest Sprengbrook radios were dual badged with the Union and Flag and the Stars & Stripes"

European links

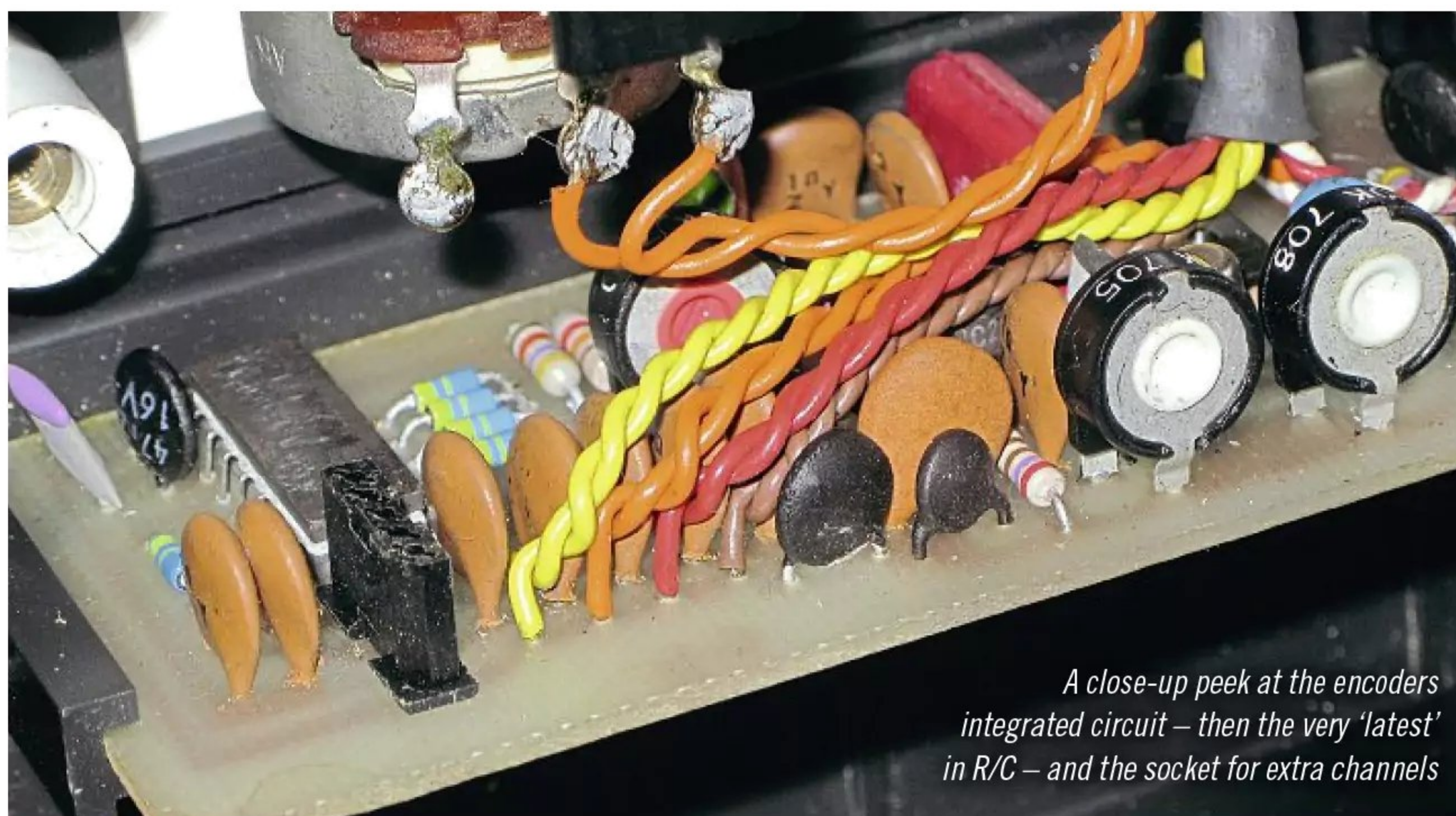
Skipping a generation, the 'Sportsman' is, for me, a rather interesting radio to take apart and look at. Firstly, it is an NBFM (Narrow Band - Frequency Modulation) transmitter, so from a totally different (much more recent) era to the kind of radios usually discussed here in Memory Lane. Indeed, it might even be that this is the first FM set I've ever written up in over 30 years of writing vintage columns. And even though it's still a 27-band radio, to test it you need a 4-channel FM receiver, and I don't own one. Fortunately, I do own a scanning receiver, so I've been able, in less than five minutes, to check that it's all still functional. A more difficult thing to determine is exactly where this was actually made. As soon as the back is off, all sorts of influences can be seen, with some components obviously German and others Far Eastern. It's not easy to be sure.



The 'Sportsman' set was one of the last Sprengbrook radios to be made.



The circuit board of our 'Sportsman' featured an I.C. encoder – new at the time.



A close-up peek at the encoders integrated circuit – then the very 'latest' in R/C – and the socket for extra channels

“One could write an entire column (a book indeed!) on the perils of selling electronic construction kits to inexperienced home builders. A combination of poorly written instructions, dodgy home soldering and a hundred other ‘nasties’ resulted in a very low success rate”

What I can say for sure is that the outfit is clearly pre the fitting of rate switches, servo reversing and retracting under-cart switches, etc, so one can date it that way up to a point. The high frequency section is very ‘Japanese-looking’, I will say.

Casing

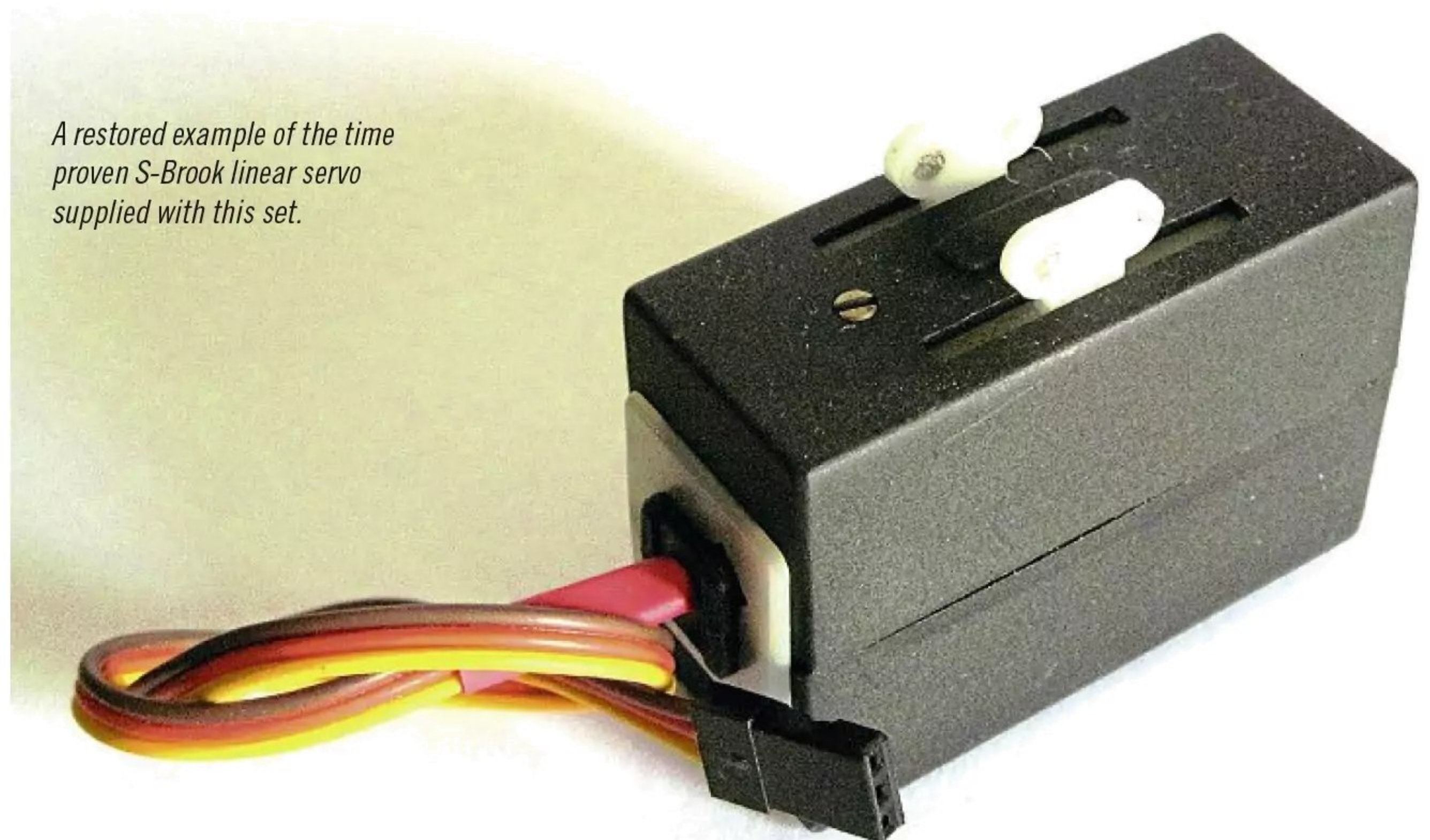
Probably the most interesting thing to examine and write up would be the case and its styling. Going back as far as my R/C memory takes me, the first of these (to my eyes, horrible) moulded cases was used for the Japanese G45 ‘Space Commander’.

The rationale of moulded constructional methods was to drastically lower product cost by true mass manufacture. In Britain the first of these sets seen was the 4-channel GEM from Mainstream; this was an item I simply refused to service at the time as it was so poorly made. As with almost any product you care to name, ‘cheaper’ will almost always appeal, and such items did indeed sell very well, especially as radios such as this one proved affordable to boat fans seeking a bit more than 2-channels for scale modelling.

Big cost savings were achieved by making the control columns part of the case. The numbers of screws are much reduced and component quality cheapened in some products of this type, although, I hasten to add, not the Sportsman. Component quality is really no different on this PCB than it would be in Sprengbrooks’ more expensive radios, or in a comparable Skyleader of the period, for example.

I would draw attention to the fact that the four control ‘pots’ are not wired as true potentiometers, merely as two wire variable resistors, which is a technique that may be peculiar to the integrated circuit used for the encoder (type number invisible). This is certainly not reckoned to be good practice. The PCB is expandable up to a full six channels and a socket is provided for (no doubt) a simple drop-in module with the two extra variable resistors on board.

Sadly, we were looking at ‘the future’, with the increasingly dominant big Far Eastern electronics manufacturers deciding to abandon hand-made top quality metal cases,



A restored example of the time proven S-Brook linear servo supplied with this set.

decent sticks, solid hardware and ‘avionics quality’ circuit boards in favour of cheaper mass production alternatives, effectively, in my mind, moving R/C equipment design backwards.

The Sprengbrook Linear Servo revisited

Browsing about (as I often do!) on a well-known auction site, I came across a set of four hardly used Sprengbrook linear servos, complete with their spring steel ‘quick’ mounting clips. I was the only bidder, which surprised me. Surely, I’m not the only one to appreciate just how nice these items actually are?

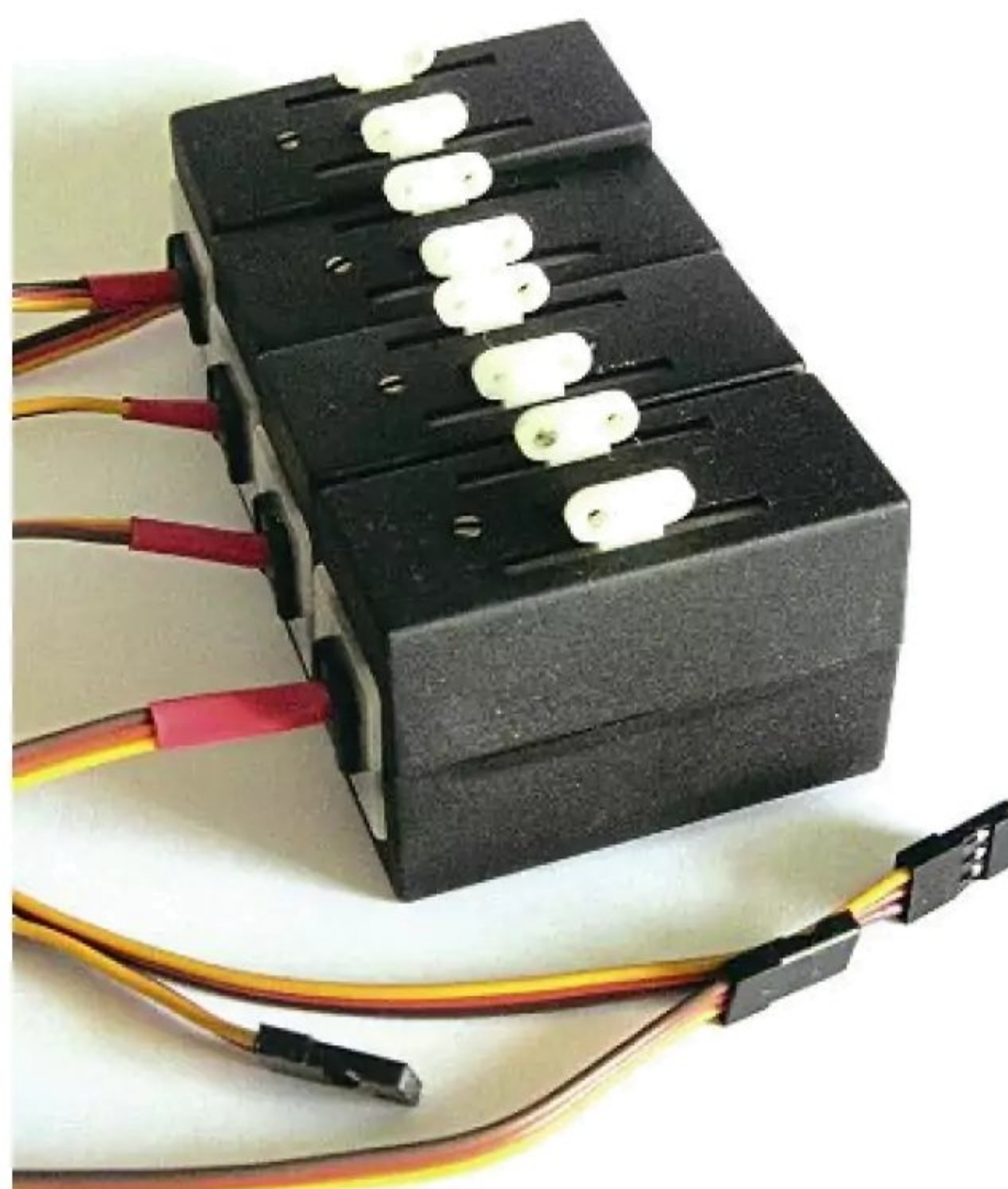
The very first (dark red) Sprengbrook radios were offered with similar servos supplied by Doug Sprengs’ previous US employer, Micro Avionics Inc. These early items came in light grey cases and were fitted with discreet 4-wire electronics. The black cased mechanisms shown here are much later and are the servos that went with the

more modern S-B radios cased in black and chrome, and, of course, with this ‘Sportsman’. The same servos were later seen in red cases as well.

The servos shown are equipped with 3-wire amplifiers and therefore have higher voltage Mitsumi motors and ceramic feedback pots to suit, making them an attractive modernisation project. I replaced all the amplifiers and cables, resetting the centring (using those handy external adjusts), for compatibility with literally any modern radio on 1.5mS (millisecond) centres. The close-up shows one of these useful servos prepped for its amplifier replacement.

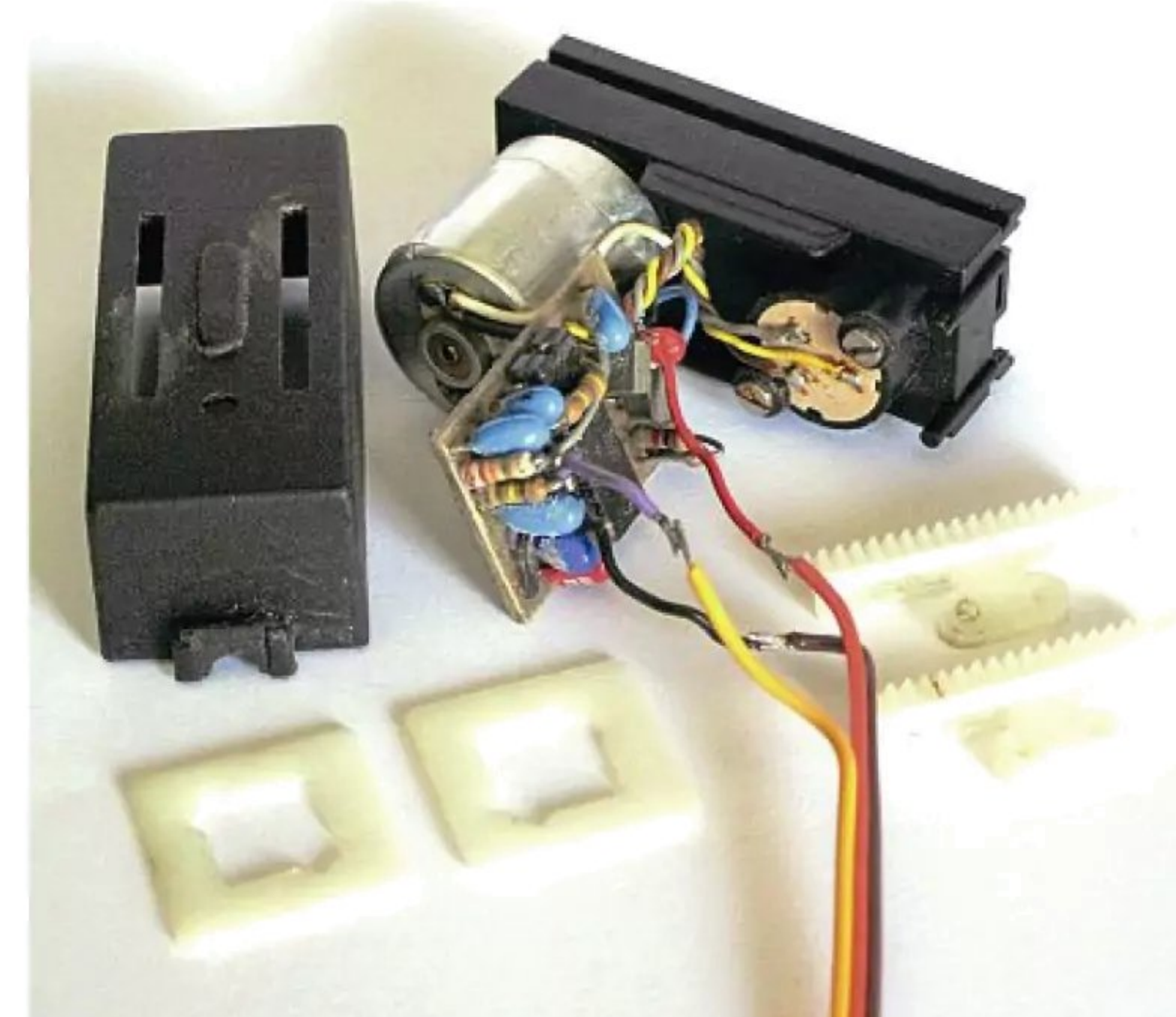
Sharing the learns

In light of some very interesting recent input from Chris Jesuiter, a fellow enthusiast and Model Boats reader, I will be returning to the subject of (very early) Sprengbrook gear in a future instalment of Memory Lane, so watch this space! ●



Left: An ‘as-new’ set of four linear servos for our ‘Sportsman’ (or any) radio.

Below: A Sprengbrook linear servo under modernisation.



“This was an item I simply refused to service at the time as it was so poorly made”

BOILER ROOM

1

Richard Simpson extols the virtues of power saws



Above: The Axminster AW405FS Scroll Saw. Notable is the plain table to allow free movement of the work, hence not so easy to cut perfectly square or parallel. The Axminster also includes a hand-held rotating head for detail finishing work. Image by very kind permission of Axminster UK.

Right: A typical circular saw of the table type: the Proxxon 27070. This is probably larger than most of us would want for modelling use but still suitable for mounting on a workbench. The blade can be tilted for angled cuts, and blades of different capabilities, including nonferrous metal, can be fitted. Image by very kind permission of Axminster UK.



2



3

With the doors open, the layout of a band saw can clearly be seen. Two pulley wheels have the continuous flexible blade mounted on them, which passes the table through a guide. The height of the guide is adjustable to clear the particular workpiece.

Over recent months we've looked at workshop set ups and how one can be put together, along with a couple of basic hand tool skills that are well worth developing. This was followed, last month, by an overview of the milling machine as a versatile and very useful machine tool to have to hand. This month, therefore, I want to round off the workshop topic by covering another machine tool that I find absolutely invaluable, and that is the power saw. It could be argued that power saws are mainly aimed at cutting wood and therefore do not merit being included in Boiler Room, but this is not

necessarily the case. Most power saws can be fitted with a blade suitable for cutting non-ferrous and even ferrous metals, thereby making them a very convenient means of cutting copper and brass pipe, bar stock and rod, so they are well worth considering for inclusion in your workshop. In fact, I would go so far as to say that a power saw, of the correct type, correctly set up is the best way to cut copper pipe, as its use will ensure a perfect, square, neat cut, with absolutely no burr on the end. This makes producing reducers and sleeves a doddle. So, let's have a look at what the world of power saws has to offer.

"A power saw is not about sparing oneself the effort, it's about ensuring accuracy"



Richard settled on the Proxxon KS230 table saw. Small and compact, the blade does not tilt but the standard supplied blade cuts woods, plastics and non-ferrous metals without having to change it. Versatile, accurate and incredibly handy.

A standard size port is moulded into the body to enable an extraction unit to be fitted. This makes a huge difference to the cleanliness of the workshop.

Why bother with a power saw?

Sawing a piece of metal by hand, neatly and to a line, is a skill that can take time to develop. The standard workshop engineer's hacksaw is certainly a tool we should all have available, but it does have limitations. Most of what we are going to be cutting in the model engineering world will be bits and pieces of brass and copper, either for manufacturing an engine, boiler, pipework or fittings, consequently, nearly always smaller items of non-ferrous material. Probably the largest item we might be considering cutting would be a boiler shell from a piece of pipe, which is certainly a job that can be tricky with a hacksaw. A lot of modellers tend to dismiss power saws as they see them as nothing more than effort saving, and so an unjustifiable expense. My argument would be that a power saw is not about sparing oneself the effort, it's about ensuring accuracy. The boiler shell mentioned above can be cut

from pipe in a power saw to give a perfectly square cut with almost no burr, which is a significant achievement for me. Added to that, of course, any power saw can also be used to cut wood accurately and with a finish you could only hope for with a hand saw. I use my power saws on an almost daily basis for cutting copper pipe, brass bits and pieces, wooden stock and ply and even plastics and resin. I couldn't live without them.

The basic types of power saw

Not surprisingly, there are a number of different types of power saw, each with its own strengths and weaknesses and so each lending itself to a particular type of job. Below are just a couple of the common ones worth considering for our model engineering purposes.

The first to consider would be the scroll saw (see **Photo 1**). The scroll saw is fitted with a very fine blade, held under tension at



The Draper vacuum unit has a socket on the head to connect the saw into. This means that the vacuum unit becomes a slave to the power saw. It turns on immediately the saw is turned on and turns off just a few seconds after the saw is turned off.



After changing the mitre setting a number of times, Richard decided it was worth another five pounds to buy a spare mitre and leave it set at 45 degrees. This means that framework corner braces can be cut in seconds and will fit perfectly.

both ends, which is basically reciprocated up and down by a crank arrangement. The advantage of this type of saw is that the fine blade means that the workpiece can be rotated around while the cut is being made, thereby allowing very intricate curves to be generated. This makes it ideal for making jigsaw puzzles. I don't like it for metalwork however, as while it cuts on the downstroke, it also tends to try to lift the job on the upwards stroke, which has the effect of making the job vibrate quite a bit. This makes it more difficult to generate a high-quality finish on metals. The table also requires freedom of movement of the work piece, so usually doesn't have any means of guiding the job squarely. One advantage for fine work is that the blade can be dismantled and passed through a hole in the job, making it that bit more versatile. This saw is probably more useful for the woodworker than it is for the metalworker.

Circular saws not only come in hand-held varieties but a large range of fixed sizes too.

For modelling purposes, we are obviously looking at bench top varieties, of which there are a few on the market (see **Photo 2**). Most will mount the blade within a housing below the table and be adjustable for height, and most will have an adjustable side fence to allow consistent thicknesses to be cut, as well as a sliding mitre square to push work through the blade. Some may have a tilting table for angled cuts. The great advantage with a circular saw is accuracy of the cut. This is mainly as a result of a continuous and consistent cutting action as the blade rotates through the work piece and the wide blade to guide the workpiece. The blade cuts downwards as you pass the work into the front edge of it. With the blade set up correctly it should be very easy to cut many types of non-ferrous metal bar stock, woods and plastics quickly, accurately and with a superb finish.

Next up would be a variation on the circular saw: the mitre saw. The mitre saw sees the work piece fixed and the saw blade, the same as used in the circular saw, mounted on a moveable head that is then passed over the work piece. It is easy to set the work piece up to a specific angle and clamp it firmly, hence the name, but the movement of the head can be a little bit limited, so it tends to be more suited to cutting bar stock and extrusions at an angle and is not even useable for cutting plate or ply. Again, consistent cutting is generated so a nice clean cut is achieved, but the work piece has to be clamped firmly.

The last main type to consider would be a bandsaw. A bandsaw basically consists of a top wheel and a bottom wheel with a continuous blade wrapped around the two (see **Photo 3**). This generates a continuous cutting motion as the wheels are rotated and the blade passes through the work piece. Again, the cut is consistently downwards as



The band saw is bolted right through the 1-inch-thick benchtop with four 8mm bolts, making it very secure. Mounting it on a standard height workbench puts the table at a perfect height.

the work piece is passed into the blade. I've found over the years that bandsaws tend to get bad press, which I think comes mainly from users who do not know how to set them up properly. The angle of the wheels, the tension in the blade and even the support of the blade at the table all play a part in the accuracy of the cut and the reliability of the machine. I've heard many stories of blades breaking, cuts not square and even blades seizing, all of which can be attributed to poor setting up. Consequently, I would have to say that the machine requires care and attention to set up correctly, which could put some people off. Again though, side fences and squares mounted in slots help generate the highest quality cuts, and with a bandsaw this can be through quite a thick piece of material, way beyond the capabilities of a circular saw.

There are of course a whole range of other saw configurations aimed at workshop use, however, in most cases these are aimed at larger work than the sort of stuff we're going to be dealing with in model engineering, so it makes sense to stick to the kind of machines that will be useful to us.



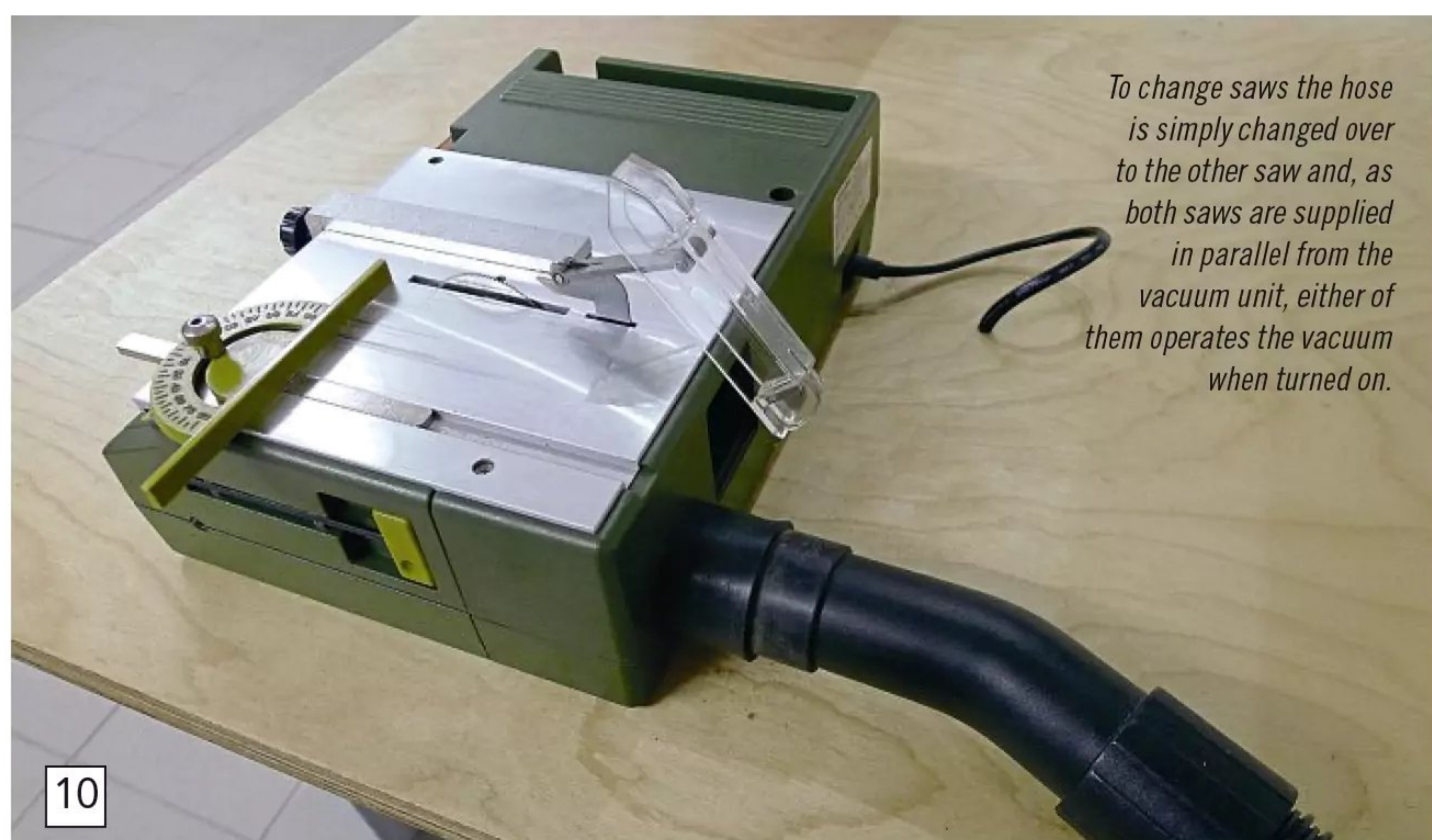
The same sized port on the back of the Axminster allows the hose from the vacuum unit to be simply pushed on when this saw is in use. Again, this keeps the workshop clean and free of any dust.

My own journey

The next question from everyone would, based on the above, therefore be: "So which one should I consider buying?" Probably the easiest way to explain this would be to take you through my own journey so you can see where my thinking went and why I ended up with what I have now.

I had thought for some time that a power saw was going to be a very useful tool to help with my model making. I was fine at cutting wood neatly and accurately, but I was also well aware that I couldn't match the quality of a cut from a power saw. Also, particularly when building a structure from wood with many pieces requiring cutting, a power saw was going to give me consistency and allow things to be progressed a good bit quicker. I didn't want a large saw, I had plenty of those already for domestic use, I wanted a small, bench-mounted saw that remained handy and convenient all the time. I was only going to be cutting small pieces of wood, mainly stock lengths cut to size and angle, and possibly thin ply. I eventually decided on the Proxxon KS230 circular saw (see **Photo 4**). This had a fence and a mitre, reliable back up when it came to spares and consumables, a good build quality, a connection for a vacuum extraction unit (see **Photo 5**) and an excellent reputation. The biggest challenge was the price, but I've always been a believer in the fact that you get what you pay for and therefore buying cheap tools is a false economy, so I bought the saw and mounted it on my work bench.

I have a fairly OCD approach to keeping my workshop clean, so I also looked into the options for a vacuum extraction unit to connect to the saw. I was very impressed with the Draper unit, which not only draws the air out of the machine it is attached to, along with any included sawdust, but also allows for the machine it is cleaning to be powered from a socket in the head of the vacuum unit. This detects when the machine is turned on and so automatically turns the vacuum on accordingly. When your power tool is switched off, the vacuum also then



To change saws the hose is simply changed over to the other saw and, as both saws are supplied in parallel from the vacuum unit, either of them operates the vacuum when turned on.



“I have a fairly OCD approach to keeping my workshop clean, so I also looked into the options for a vacuum extraction unit to connect to the saw”

The job that prompted Richard to buy the band saw was cutting these resin buildings at 45 degrees for a model railway project. Despite the coarse appearance of the blade teeth, the resultant cut was perfect in both alignment and finish and there was no splintering of the resin.

switches off after just a few second delay. Perfect! I mounted the vacuum unit below the workbench (see **Photo 6**), fed a power cable to it, plugged the Proxxon into it and got some scraps of wood to play with. I was absolutely amazed at the quality of the cuts in the soft wood and ply I was feeding into the saw. One thing I did quickly realise was that there is practically no set to the saw teeth, *i.e.*, the teeth are not offset alternately from one side to the other, making for a cut slightly wider than the saw. This means the saw can snatch if you do not push the work through perfectly in line with the blade. The advantage is the finished cut is almost mirror like.

I had probably been using the saw for a couple of years before, while playing around with the age-old challenge of cutting copper steam pipe perfectly square without deforming it or creating a burr on the end, I began thinking about the Proxxon. When I investigated the supplied blade characteristics, I realised that it was suitable for non-ferrous metals, so I decided to do a few test cuts. Again, the saw surprised me. It cut through copper pipe beautifully, with a perfect square finish and just a sliver of a burr that was quickly removed by wiping a blade

around the inside. I had never cut copper pipe so quickly, neatly and without any deformation whatsoever before. Since then, the Proxxon has been used regularly to cut copper pipe and brass fittings, hardwoods, softwoods, ply, plastics, resins and anything else I care to run through it. I bought a spare mitre and set it permanently to 45 degrees so I can make framework braces accurately and in seconds (see **Photo 7**).

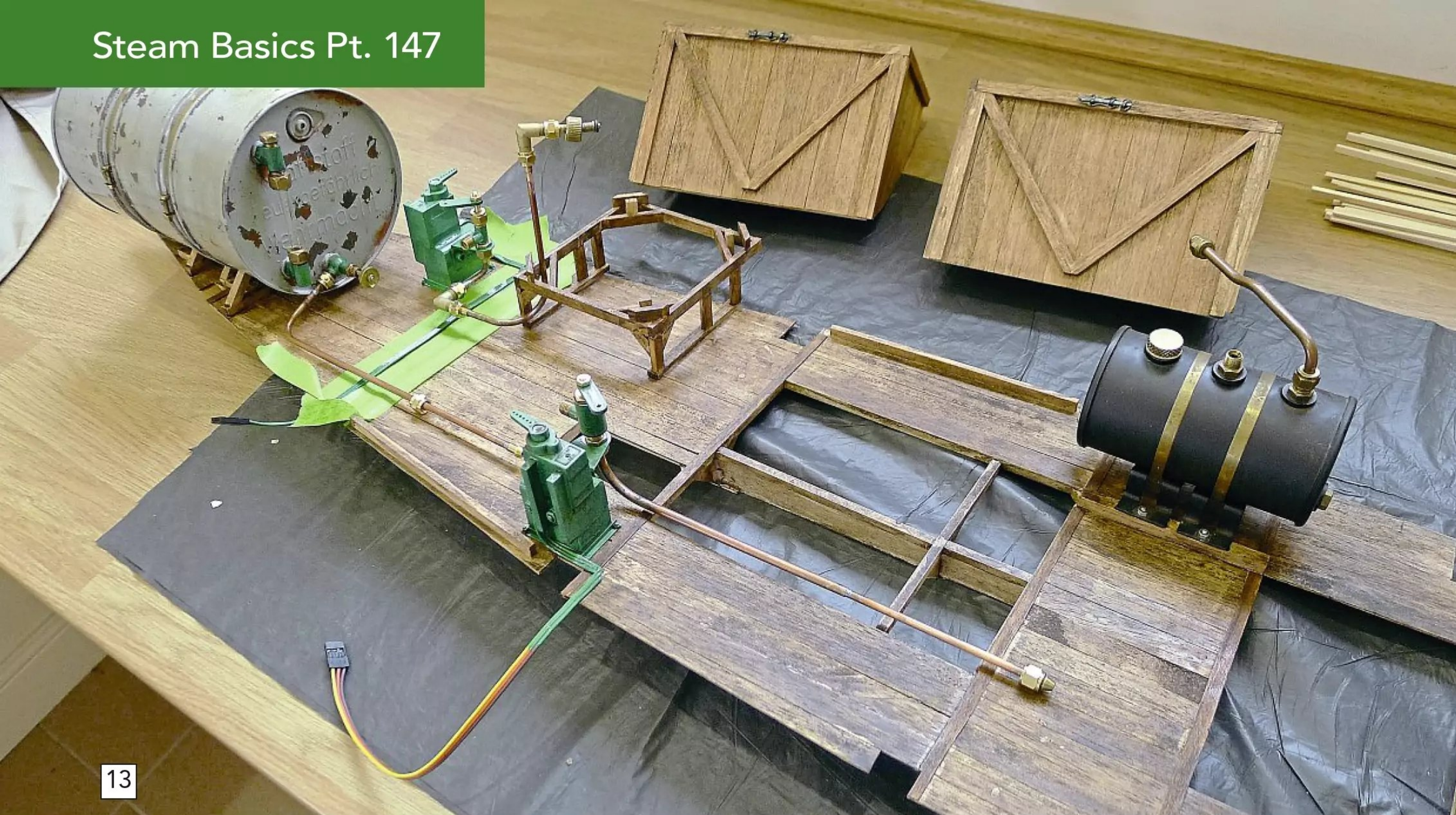
After another few years of using the

Proxxon, however, I started to realise that there were a couple of things that it didn't do so well. The blade doesn't protrude very high from the table, thereby limiting the depth of cut, and while with wood stock sometimes this can be turned around, cutting through a thicker material might not always be possible. I was working on a project for the model railway one day and wanted to cut up some readymade resin buildings at an angle. The Proxxon was never going to be able to do

“This led me into thinking that the Proxxon might just need a friend”



Complex wooden framed structures such as these lockers incorporated into a clinker-built hull are made extremely easy by using the circular saw. Consistent dimensions are a breeze using the fence, and internal frame braces take seconds by simply changing the mitre.



13

The gas tank base, the below deck framework, the decking, the water tank frame, the copper pipework and the two side lockers were all cut with the circular saw, without having to change the blade. Pipework in particular is so much easier when the ends are cut perfectly square, with no deformation.

this for me and my own sawing skills were not able to guarantee the perfect angled cut through a resin structure that I wanted. This led me into thinking that the Proxxon might just need a friend. I wanted something with a continuous cutting action, I wanted a fence and a mitre for controlled square cuts, I wanted a bit of flexibility to rotate the cut as it is being made, and I wanted a much larger cutting capability. It all tended towards a band saw but the bad press put me off for a while. I did quite a bit of research and watched a superb set of YouTube videos produced by Axminster on its own range of bandsaws. So, I called the company and spoke to a very knowledgeable chap who explained all there is to know about setting a band saw up correctly, and why some may tend to blame the saw rather than their own shortfalls. He put my mind completely at ease, so I purchased an Axminster band saw. Again, not the cheapest but immediately obvious was the quality. This was mounted on the workbench with some substantial bolts (see **Photo 8**). Luckily, the extraction port in the Axminster was exactly the same diameter as the port in the Proxxon, so the Axminster was connected to the same power supply on the Draper vacuum unit, meaning all I have to do is change the hose over to whichever saw I am using (see **Photos 9 and 10**). After which, having watched the step-by-step YouTube tutorial again to be sure everything was perfectly set up, I went to get a few bits of scrap wood.

The teeth on the Axminster saw appear to be quite rough, but they give an amazingly clean cut. When I eventually got around to cutting up the resin buildings, I couldn't believe how neat and perfectly finished the cut was (see **Photo 11**). What it also made me realise was that this would be a perfect saw, with the correct blade fitted, for cutting large diameter copper pipe when making home-made boilers.

Conclusions

I have now ended up with a power saw set up that can cope with both model boat building or model engineering tasks, from repetitive wood cuts, as required in making boxes (see **Photo 12**) and frameworks (see **Photo 13**), wooden frames and intricate one-off parts, through to cutting copper and brass pipe and fittings. The work area remains spotless, as all dust is removed during cutting, so I can cut metals, woods, plastics and just about anything else quickly, accurately, easily and cleanly (see **Photo 14**). We will all have our own preferences, but I think I now have a set up that covers just about anything.

Whatever your own journey may involve, I can only suggest that you avoid the temptation of cheap machine tools. They will almost certainly lead to frustration and disappointment.

Finally, please do not forget to never touch the blades before they have stopped rotating and the power is switched off, and always wear some form of eye protection.

"We will all have our own preferences, but I think I now have a set up that covers just about anything"



14

The complete set up: the Proxxon table saw, and Axminster band saw with the Draper vacuum unit below the bench. Fitting a non-ferrous blade to the Axminster makes cutting up large diameter copper pipe for boiler manufacture very easy and very accurate.

Tool manufacturer contact details

Axminster Tools are available from local suppliers or via the website:
<https://www.axminstertools.com>
 Proxxon Tools are available from local suppliers or via the website:
<https://www.proxxon.com/en/>

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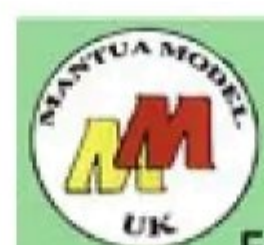
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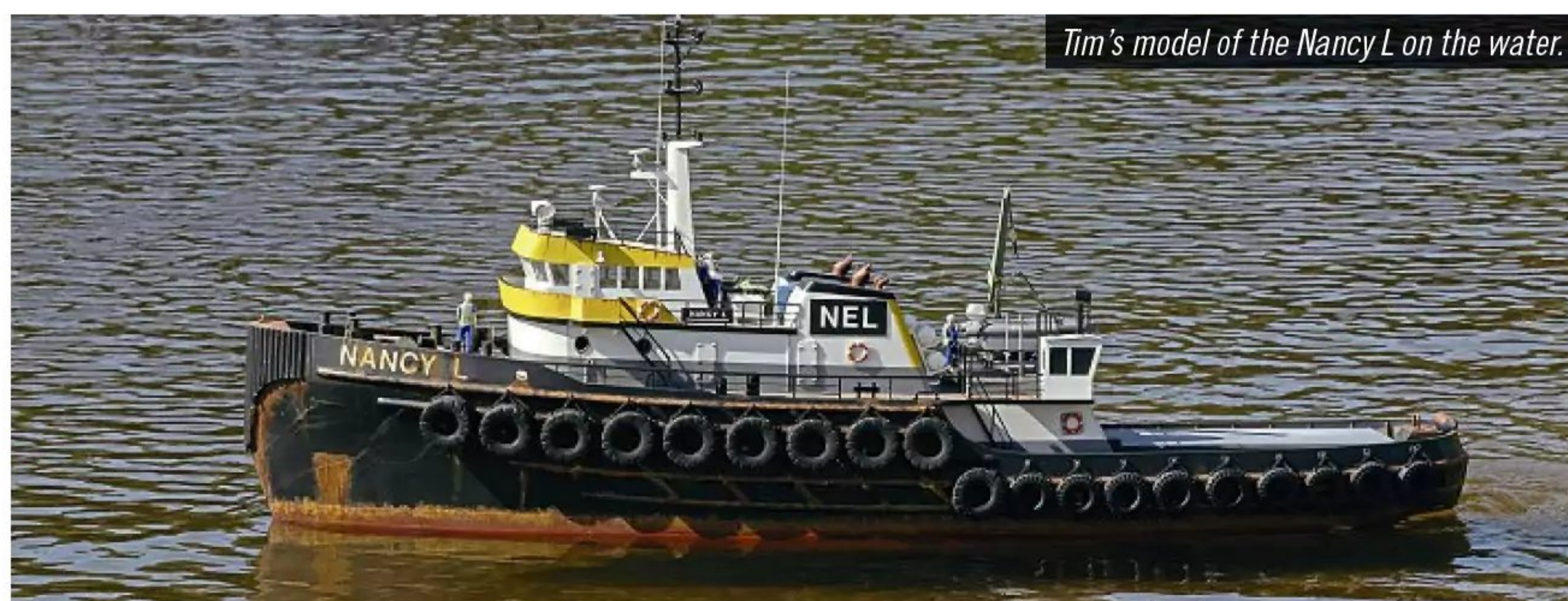
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Your Models

Whether you're highly skilled and experienced or completely new to the hobby, you're definitely invited to this launch party! So please keep the contributions coming by emailing your stories and photos to editor@modelboats.co.uk



Nancy L

Following on from my feature on the build of the RNLI Waveney class lifeboat, the *St. Patrick*, I thought I would share a couple of photos of my second project, a 46" *Mr. Darby*, highly modified with my personal tug preferences into the fictitious *Nancy L*, owned by the NEL Company. My wife's name is Nancy, and her initials are NEL.

I weathered this based on a photo of the real life *Atlantic Salvor* (the renamed *Mr. Darby*).

TIM LOGAN
EMAIL

Loving this, Tim – and I am sure so is Nancy! Ed.



Captain Nancy on deck!

Decades apart

Like so many others, my modelling started with plastic kits, mainly aircraft, but I did make a model of the *USS Constitution* which I still have. My first venture into building boats to actually sail was a Matchbox corvette, in which I managed to install radio control, followed by a pilot boat.

My current model is a cargo vessel which I've built from a Graupner kit. I have, though, liveried this model for the Canadian Pacific Steamship Co. and am sailing her under the fictitious name of *Beaver Ash*. She still needs a little bit of work, as can be seen in my photo.

I served with Canadian Pacific before becoming a marine pilot, hence my choice of model subjects. I did, at one time, consider making the *Empress of Scotland* but in the end decided this would be too big a project for me.

Thank you for such a great magazine, which I look forward to reading every month. I have been, and still am, a member of the Ellesmere Port Model Boat Club since 1990

MALCOLM WATTS
EMAIL

I absolutely love how these two models, your very first static kit build and your most recently completed R/C beauty, give us a little glimpse into your modelling journey over the past few decades, Malcolm.



Above: Malcolm's latest achievement is this splendid cargo vessel built from the Graupner kit for the Nautic, but which he's liveried for the Canadian Pacific Steamship Co., with whom he once served, and renamed (fictitiously) the Beaver Ash.

Right: One of Ellesmere Port MBC member Malcolm Watt's earliest forays into model boat building was this static display model of the USS Constitution.

I do hope you that you, and your fellow Ellesmere Port MBC members, will submit more of your fabulous work for inclusion in future issues.

Thanks, too, for your very kind comments about the mag. Ed.





Vietnam Monitor

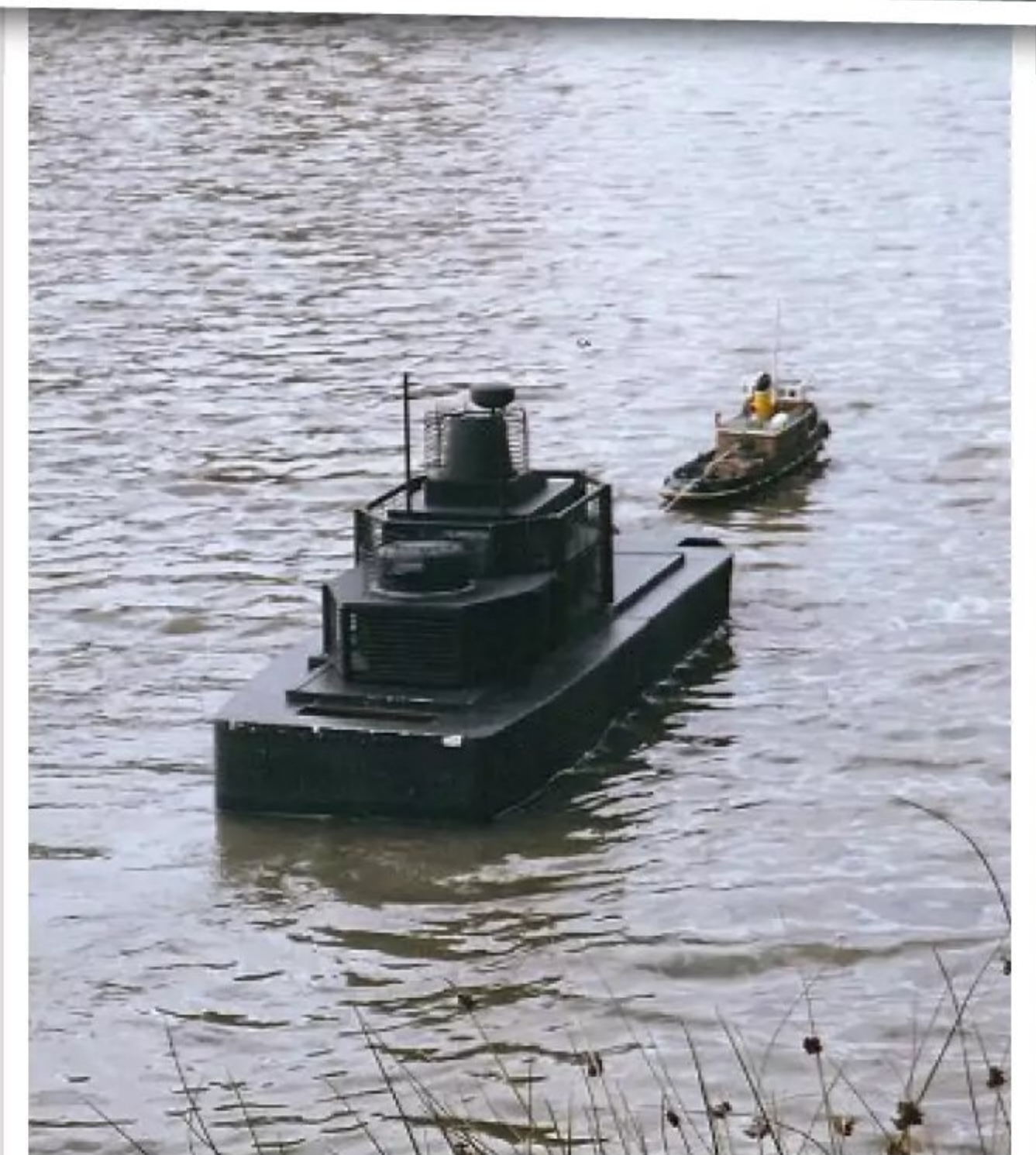
Over the past few years, I have, together with a few of my incredibly skilled mates at the York Model Boat Club, namely Steve Agar, Chris Dove, Peter Pratt and David Stephenson, been working on this 1970 'stand-off'/approx. 1:8 scale Vietnam Monitor (a highly modified version of the LCM-6 developed by the United States Navy for use as a mobile riverine assault boat). The model, which is of wood and ply construction, is a massive 88-inches long, with a 26-inch beam, and is ballasted by four concrete breeze blocks and a car battery! A motor has now been installed, along with shafts and propellers courtesy of the Prop Shop. A big shout out, too, to Martin at Max Mouldings, for his invaluable help in creating all of the model's resin fittings. She's yet to be fitted with a radio, something we've got planned for

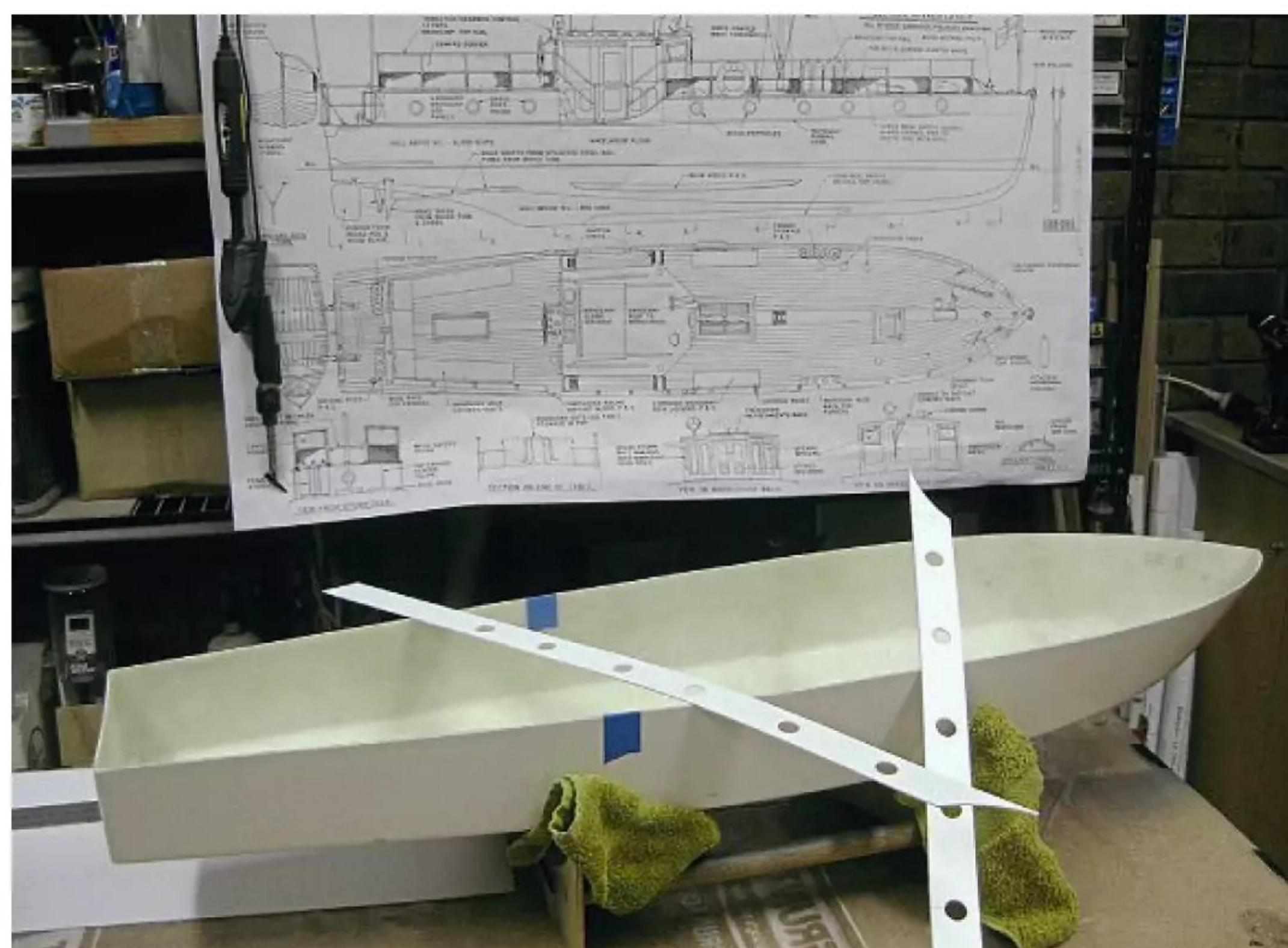
this coming weekend.

I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed working with my brilliant and innovative fellow enthusiasts on this project, so I am sharing some photos, one including an Action Man figure to give idea of scale, and a couple of others with our very own real life action man, Club Secretary Ian Johnson, in the water with the Monitor (she's yet to be fitted with a radio, something we plan to attend to this coming weekend) during one of her recent on water trials.

BOB ALLISON
YORK MODEL BOAT CLUB

What an incredible achievement! Love the friendly and co-operative nature of this project and how menacing the massive Monitor looks on the water. Ed.





Above: Once the raised sides were glued in place and fibre-glassed from the inside, they ended up being 3mm thick – the same thickness as the hull.

Left: The raised sides were cut and shaped from 2.5 mm glass sheet and pre-drilled for the portholes.

Bluebird of Chelsea

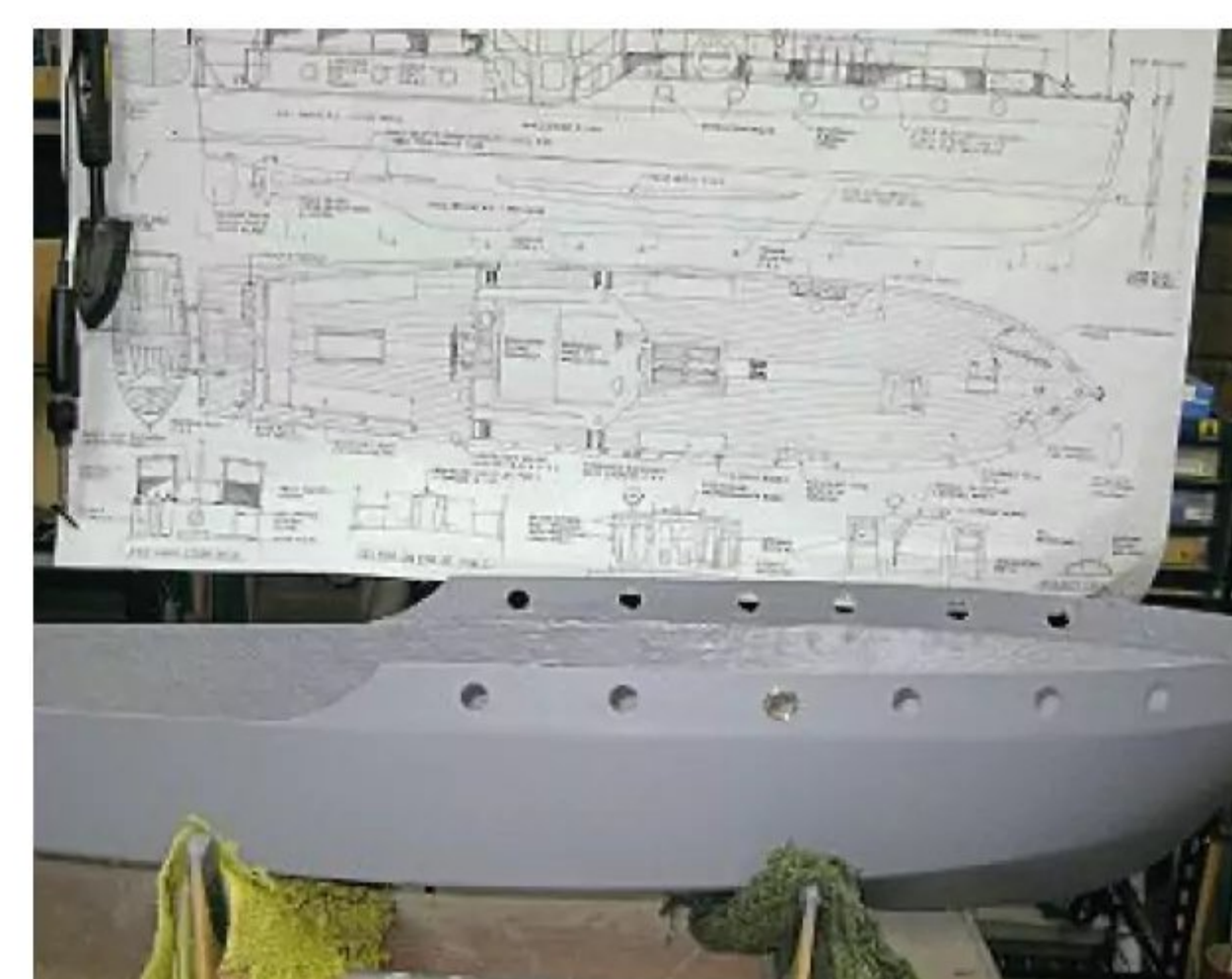
Although I cannot sail model boats anymore, I can still build them (indeed, I am a self-confessed compulsive builder) and usually sell them on.

My latest model, *Bluebird*, was inspired by a photograph of her full-size counterpart that I came across some years ago. Struck by what an elegant-looking craft she was, I set about undertaking a little research. I discovered she was built in 1931 by Thornycroft for Sir Malcolm Campbell in order to mark his Knighthood and celebrate his breaking of the Land Speed Record in his now famous car of the same name. This delightful gentleman's motor yacht then went on to take part, along with hundreds of other civilian vessels, in the remarkably courageous evacuation of troops from Dunkirk during World War II. Not surprisingly, over the ensuing decades changes in ownership saw *Bluebird* undergo a number of refits, so in order to keep things as accurate as possible I decided to base my build, as closely as possible, on how she looks today.

Not being very good at building hulls, I bought a fibreglass unit (around 900mm in length) for this project. The bow was different in that it is curved back rather than being more to the vertical, and the beam is wider than it should be, but that was what I had to work with. The hull also had to be modified by the addition of taller sides from the mid-section to the bow. This was essential to the overall look and, fortunately, was quite easy to do as I have had a fair bit of fiberglass experience gleaned from building scale R/C model aircraft. It's fair to say, I have taken a bit of poetic licence here and there, but, overall, I think the model now looks the part.

When finishing a boat from this era I'd normally weather my build with a bit of airbrushing, but in this case I have left *Bluebird* in the well-looked after condition I imagine she is kept in today.

**IAN THOMPSON
AUSTRALIA (EMAIL)**



Once glassed, filled and primed, porthole fit could be tested. Note the enlarged plan from Vintage Model Plans in the background.

What absolutely superb work, Ian! Not only have you obviously gone to great lengths to accurately capture *Bluebird's* shape and overall look but the attention to detail and sense of quality when it comes to all the fittings is outstanding.



Ian laid the planks out in order on the workbench and with the aid of a sliding weight taped them together in about lots of twelve. He then brushed glue onto the decking support ply, laid the planks on this ply and weighed them down until dry. It took a few lots of taped planks to complete the deck, but the other than that the method proved quick and easy.



The top and lower deck installed and cut out for access to motors, batteries, radio, etc – fortunately, there was heaps of room. As Ian sells his models on (being a prolific builder but no longer able to sail his creations himself) he's installed the prop shafts and props and rudder only, leaving it up to the new owner to supply his/her own preferred gear.



Main: The 3D-printed captain, lifeboat detail, life jackets, spotlights and horn, etc, on the cabin roof. You may also just be able to see the essential decanter of cognac – most befitting of a vessel such as this one! Inset: These components were kept removable to allow for full hull access, with everything lifting easily off.



Note the mushroom vents, mesh fencing and anchors (which, strangely, but accurately, are of two different types). Ian's guess is that this is for two different types of sea bottoms, i.e., sandy or rocky. Maybe someone reading can confirm or advise here?



The fittings on the deck and cabin make this a very 'busy' but era-appropriate looking boat.



Twin motors need twin screws, and an interesting fact is that Bluebird only had one rudder.

Your Letters

**Got views to air or information to share?
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Letters can either be forwarded via email to editor@modelboats.co.uk or via post to **Readers' Letters, Mortons Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR**

Landing Craft up for grabs

With the start of the dark evenings, I searched around in my man cave for odd bits and pieces of thin plywood, and started to put together this landing craft, which was shown in last month's magazine.

As you can see, I used little wooden pegs to make my men, and fashioned their helmets from washers and modelling clay. The aluminium prop shafts I made from straws bought in a pound shop.

I've yet to fit electrics. However, if anyone wants to take this craft of my hands before I do so, please let me know. All I would ask is that the recipient makes a small donation to the RNLI.

TERRY FARROW
EMAIL

Love this, Terry. It's great to see that, with a bit of nifty recycling, it really is still possible to enjoy the hobby even on the tightest of budgets. Thanks, too, for the kind offer. I will, of course, forward the details of any interested parties on to you via email. Ed.



Anyone fancy finishing off this landing craft model, based on the free mini plan in our October issue? If so, reader Terry Farrow is happy to pass it on.



Test model territory

Regarding the article by Ashley Needham covering the refurbishment of the HMS Exeter model featured in last month's issue, his theory that the model was possibly used during the design and development of the full-size vessel could well be correct, particularly as Ashley lives in the Teddington area, which is the home of what was the National Physical Laboratory (NPL). This

was a government funded organisation responsible for the maintaining various UK standards for weight, measurement, voltage, etc, but it also had a sub-division called the Ship Hydrodynamics Laboratory (usually called the NPL Ship Division) based at nearby Feltham. The ship tanks at Feltham, where model ship hulls were evaluated against variable/controlled wave conditions,

were well known. Ashley's project also had the ship superstructure so was most probably not used in one of the wave tanks, but there was also I believe a wind tunnel where the superstructure, or more correctly the area of the ship above the waterline, could be evaluated.

DAVID MARKS
EMAIL



David Marks explains why this unusual model, the subject of a restoration article by Ashley Needham featured in last month's issue, could well have been used during the design and development of the real Type 42 destroyer.



Free to a good home: Nick Horne's partially complete Billing Boats' 1:40 scale US Coast Guard vessel.

US Coast Guard boat seeks new home

This is another "Can you help?" question. I have an almost complete US Coast Guard boat, built from Billing Boats' 1:40 scale wooden kit, which I began work on some years ago.

Following a successful maiden voyage, however, it has sat on a shelf ever since. It still needs to be completed; I have the plans and remaining deck fittings, masts, etc, but

it requires a new battery and some TLC. I suspect also that, after this period of time, some of the electronics could be replaced with more modern kit.

I would be very pleased to pass the model on to someone who could give it a good home. I don't want any money for it, except, perhaps, as a gift to the RNLI.

We live in Farnborough, Hants, so the new

owner would have to collect it (I don't drive any more).

NICK HORNE
EMAIL

What a lovely, generous offer, Nick! I am sure there will be lots of interest and I'll be delighted to forward contact details of any interested parties on to you. Ed.

Paddling in the deep end

I enjoyed Mike Payne's Paddling in the deep end article in the October issue of Model Boats for two reasons. Firstly, while build articles are inspirational, articles such as Mike's which do not describe a model build but delve into some of the prototype-to-model challenges are rarer but no less valuable. The second reason is that part way through building a paddler model, I ran into a challenge myself. With the paddles running at full speed, the movement of water looked more like that in a washing machine than a boat. The attached snapshot from a video illustrates the problem, and will no doubt look familiar to Mike.

It is some years since I built a model of the *Forceful*, a Director class tug, with fixed paddles and independent drive. Running paddles independently the model would develop a fixed list, which side could not be predicted. If I aligned the two wheels and coupled them together, no list. In addition, the water thrown up behind the paddles was excessive. I replaced the paddles with feathering wheels and the listing ceased, and water behind the paddles was not 'thrown up' as before.

Moving on to my current model, which has wheels with an outside diameter of 3 ins and a width of 2 ins, after some thought I have decided to go straight to feathering wheels. I scaled down my *Forceful* wheel and am now waiting for my grandson to 3D print the linkage parts. Interestingly, the tip speed of the *Forceful*'s wheels is the same as my current model. It's beyond my capabilities

to assess what effect a change in kinematic viscosity and Reynolds numbers will have, I wish I could, but it would take some fancy computational fluid dynamics analysis to do that. I think the principal effect is that it increases the torque required to drive the paddles. I'm putting my faith in the following simplistic analysis.

I took some measurements from my *Forceful* model. At the point where the bottom edge of a float rises to the waterline a fixed float lies at 20° to the horizontal. As the torque force acts at right angles to the float surface, we can calculate its horizontal and vertical components, which is that 34% is acting horizontally as propulsion, and 94% is going to lifting water.

The same analysis for a feathering float shows that the float lies at 35° to the

horizontal, and the horizontal component going to propulsion is 82% and the vertical proportion is 57%, so a significant reduction. As I said, this is a very simplistic analysis but my experience with fixed and feathering floats on the *Forceful* supports these kinds of numbers.

If you are interested, I can let you know how testing of these feathering wheels turns out.

ROY CHEERS
EMAIL

I know you simply asked me to forward this email on to Mike, Roy, but I am publishing as I am sure your findings will also be of interest to others. Many thanks indeed, and, yes, an update would be much appreciated. Ed.



Next month in **model Boats**

In our January 2024 issue, on sale from Friday, December 15, 2023, be sure not to miss...



● **OUR FREE LCVP 5 PULL-OUT PLAN**
Plus, the first instalment of a two-part build guide for this 1:16 scale Royal Navy landing craft model

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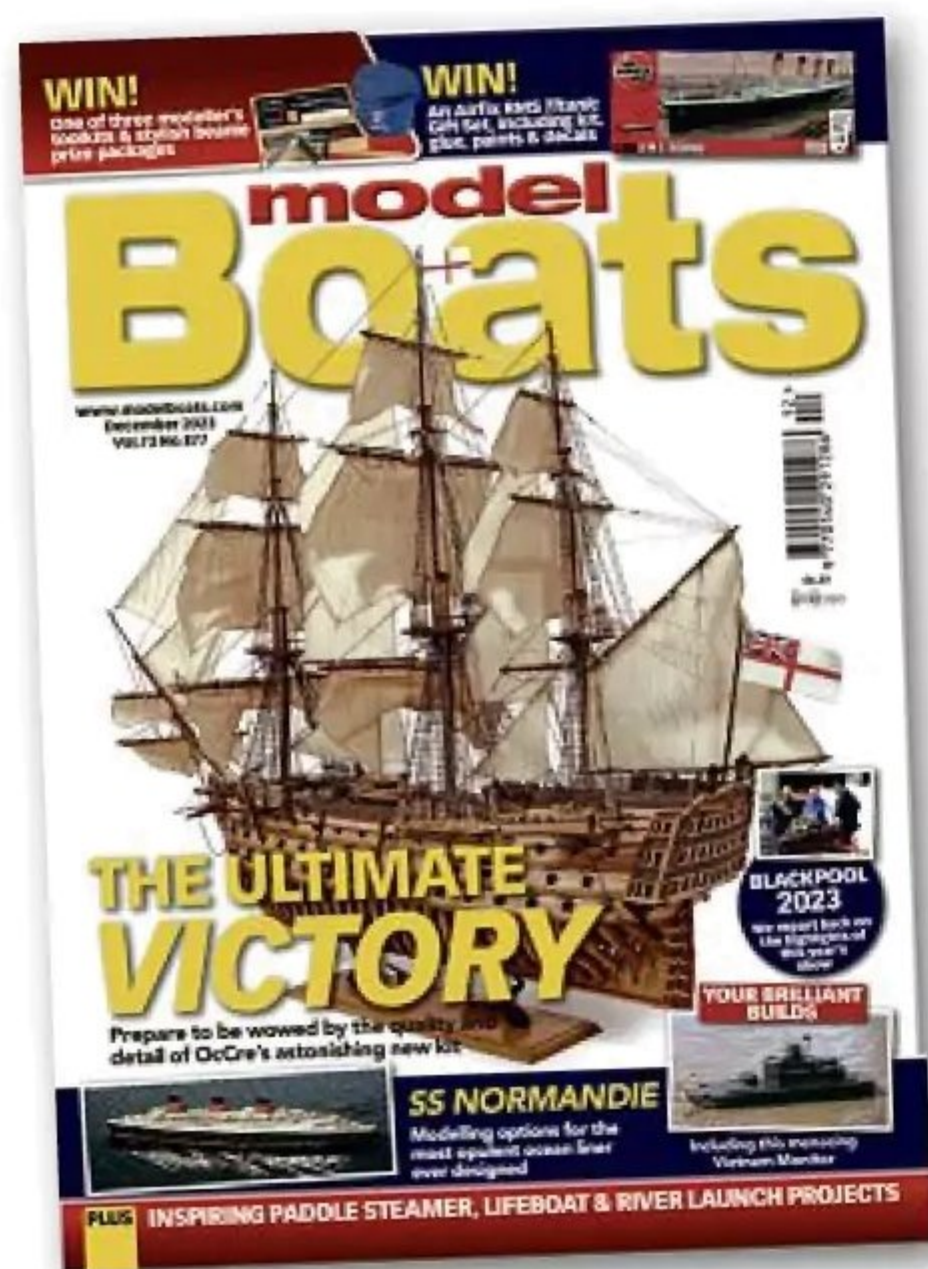
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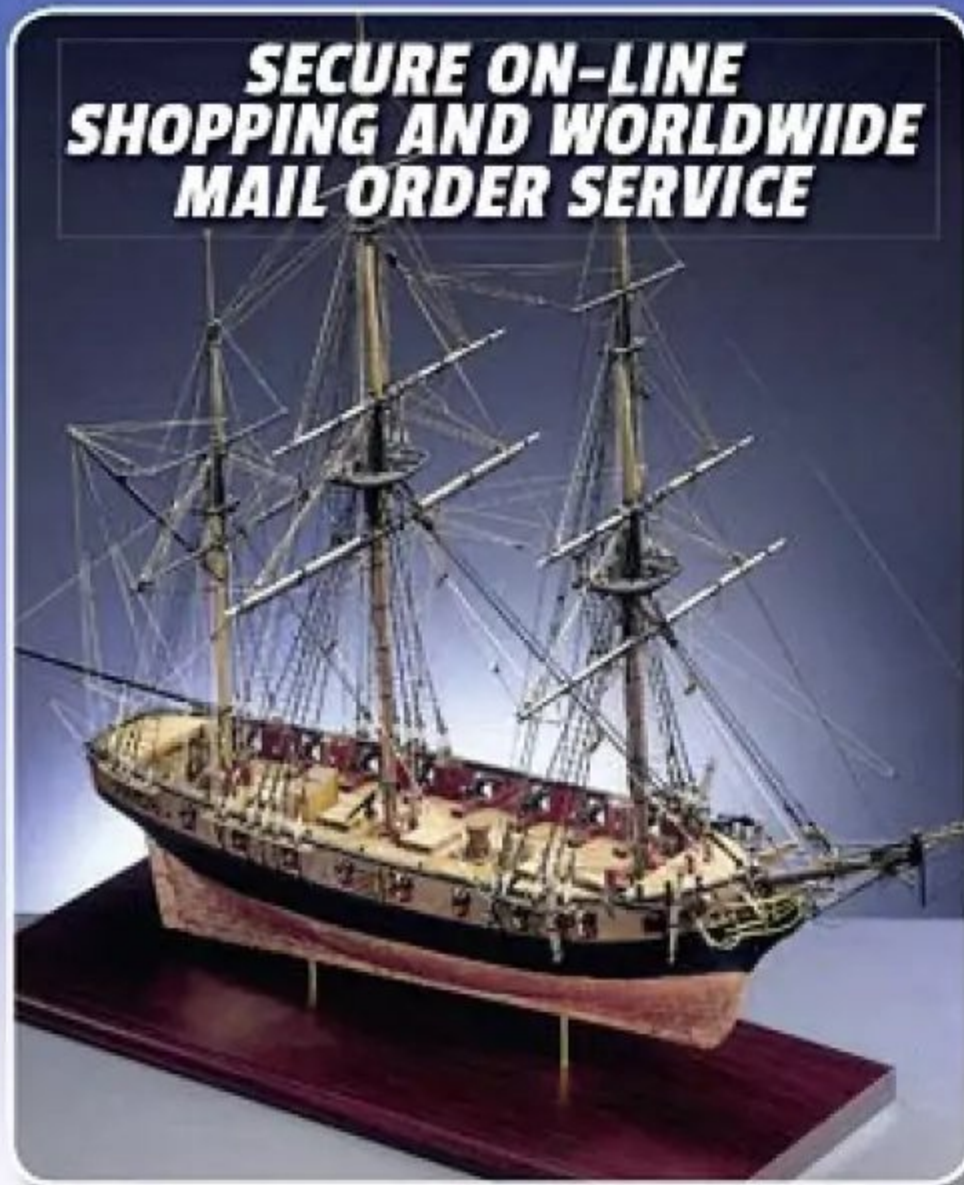
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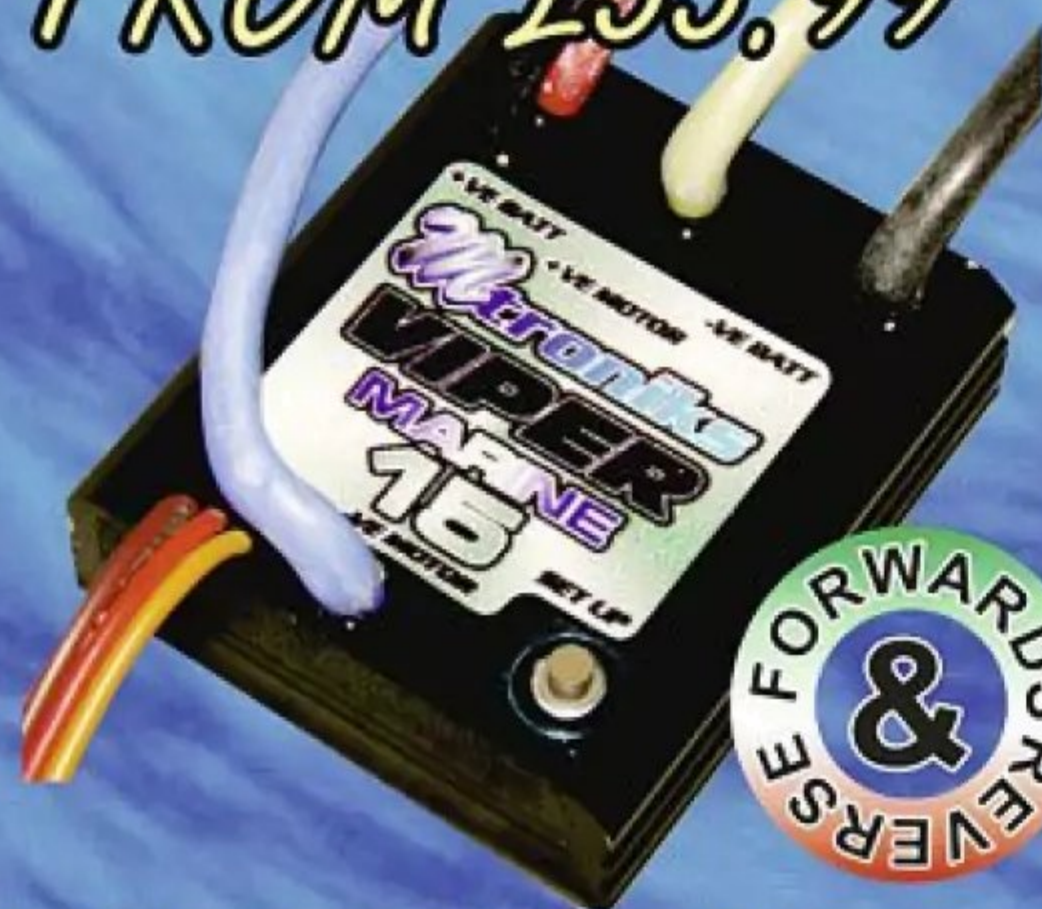
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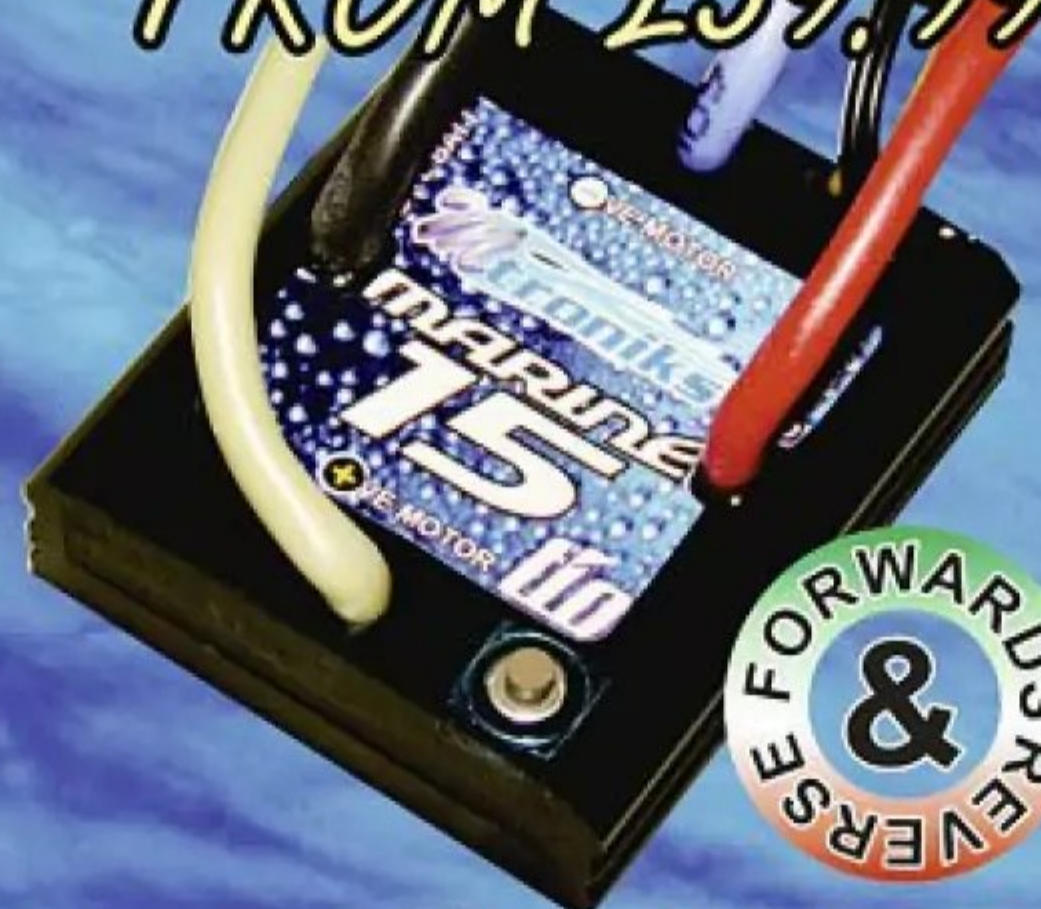
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