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Vol. 75 No. 892

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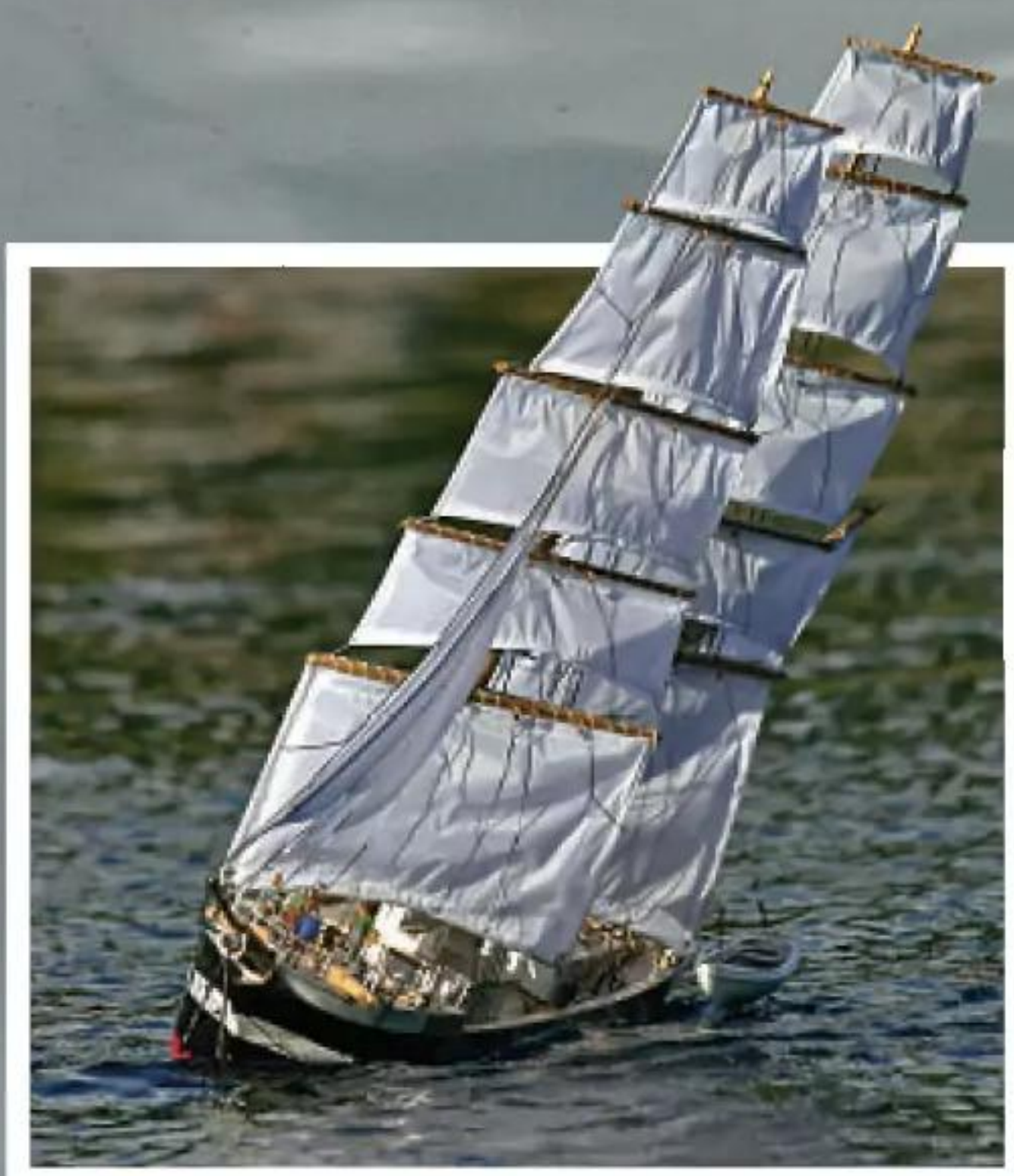
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236 CARLI
Poly hull 1:60
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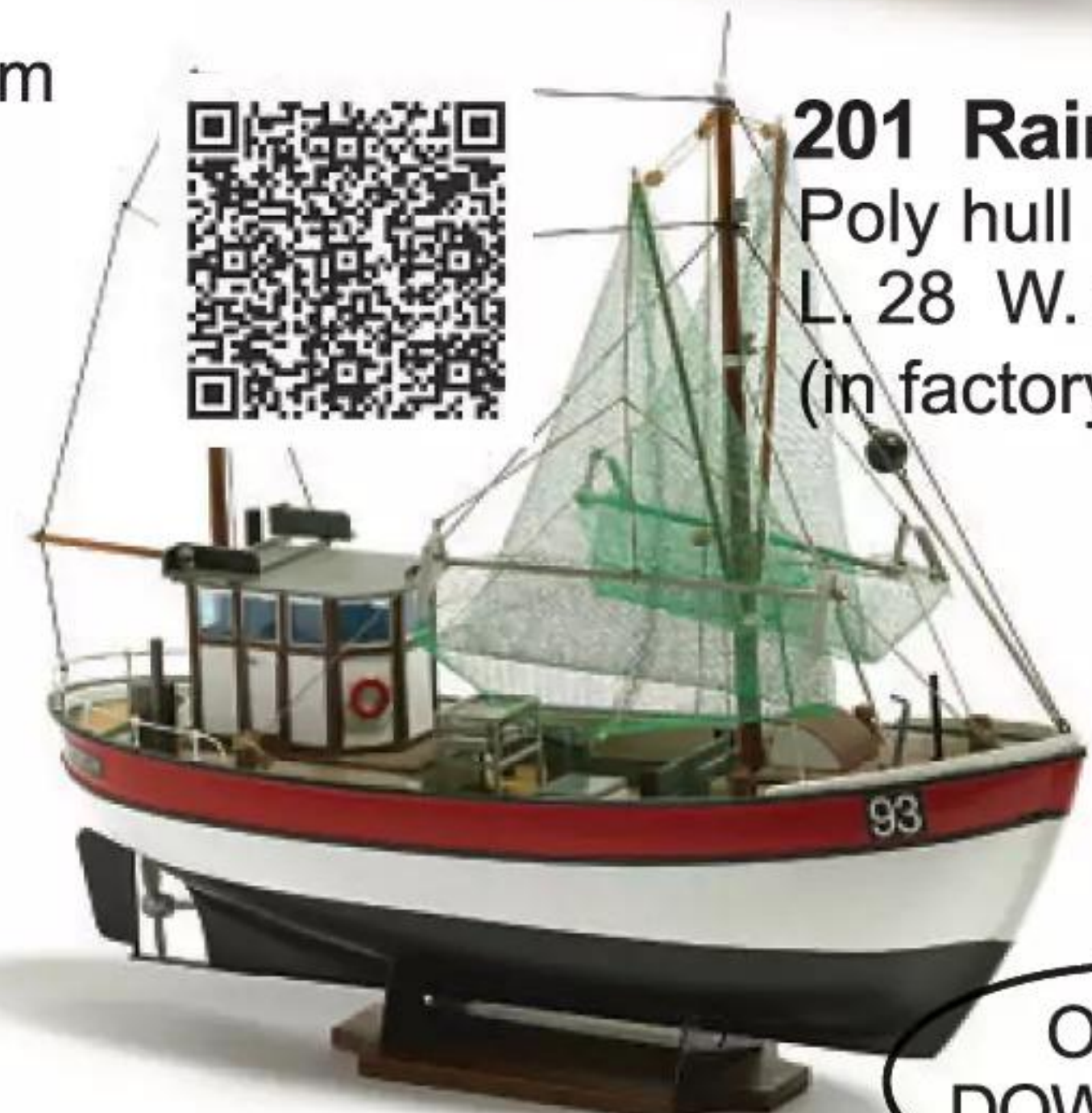
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If any of you have hung a 'Do not disturb' sign on your workshop/shed door, you may want to think of replacing it with a 'Gone fishing!' one after this month's issue, as the pages that follow include not just one but two exciting potential fishing boat builds. These are the rugged-looking Shetland-based trawler *Venture* (a free plan designed by Jim Pottinger, which is stapled into the centrespread) and Peter Binns' charming little St Ives' Treeve Boats' 25-footer *Tegen Mor*; the former being aimed squarely at the more experienced modeller and the latter being somewhat, shall we say, less formidable. And, if fishing boats are your thing, then you may be interested to learn that next month's issue will serve up the recipe for a 1:48 static display model of a historic steam drifter actually named *Formidable* – although she was often more affectionately referred to as *Fidget* by the East Anglian herring fishermen and locals in her day.

Getting back to the mag in hand, though, there are also a couple of fascinating features on historic Royal Navy vessels: see *Royal Sovereign* – Ashley Needham's latest crowning glory for the GP hull, and Brian Eaton's article on the restoration of, and research into, an old Basset-Lowke beauty, entitled Mr Gardam's boat (if you're wondering why not 'Mr Eaton's boat', all will be revealed). Plus, we've got a really informative beginner's guide to square riggers courtesy of Nev Wade, while John Parker delves into the story of the US Skipjack class nuclear subs and the options open to any of you wishing to take the plunge, so to speak.

And finally, as well as all your favourite regular pages (check out the noteworthy forthcoming events on our Compass 360 news pages, and an absolutely cracking selection of correspondence in the Your Models/Your Letters section), an exclusive prize draw, courtesy of the kind folk at Cornwall Model Boats, offers you the chance to win Mantua Models' quick to build, laser cut, 1:25 scale kit for *Galaxy*. Imagine being able to tell your family you've won a luxury yacht! OK, maybe not such a smart idea, scratch that, but this super prize is, at least, bound to make the lucky recipient's day.

We've already got lots more hot stuff lined up for the April edition (on sale from Friday, March 21), including a fabulous, fully functional (think maxed out water squirting fun!) London fireboat, so, if you don't want miss out, perhaps ask your local newsagent to reserve a copy for you now.

In the meantime, enjoy your read,

Lindsey

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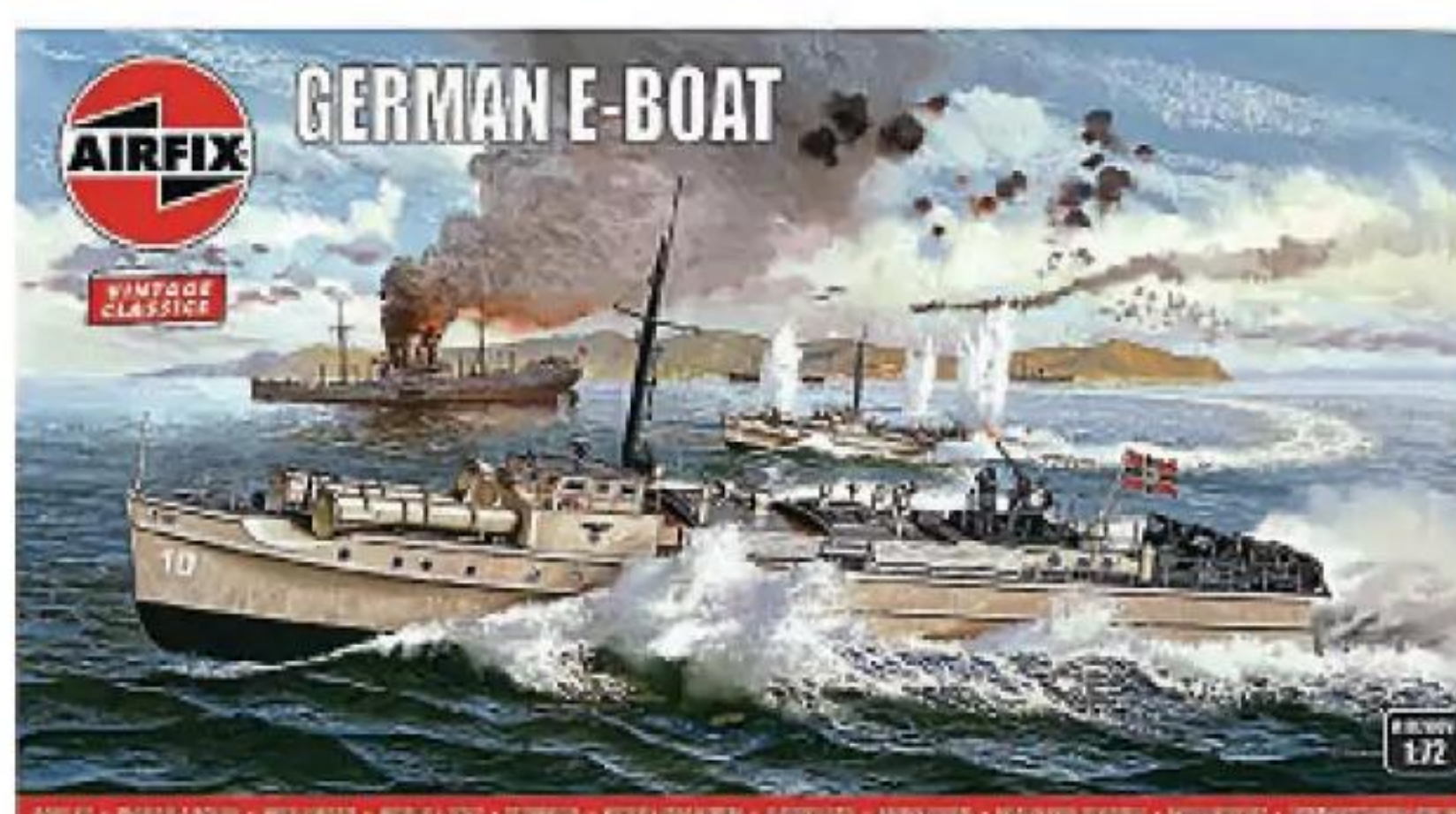
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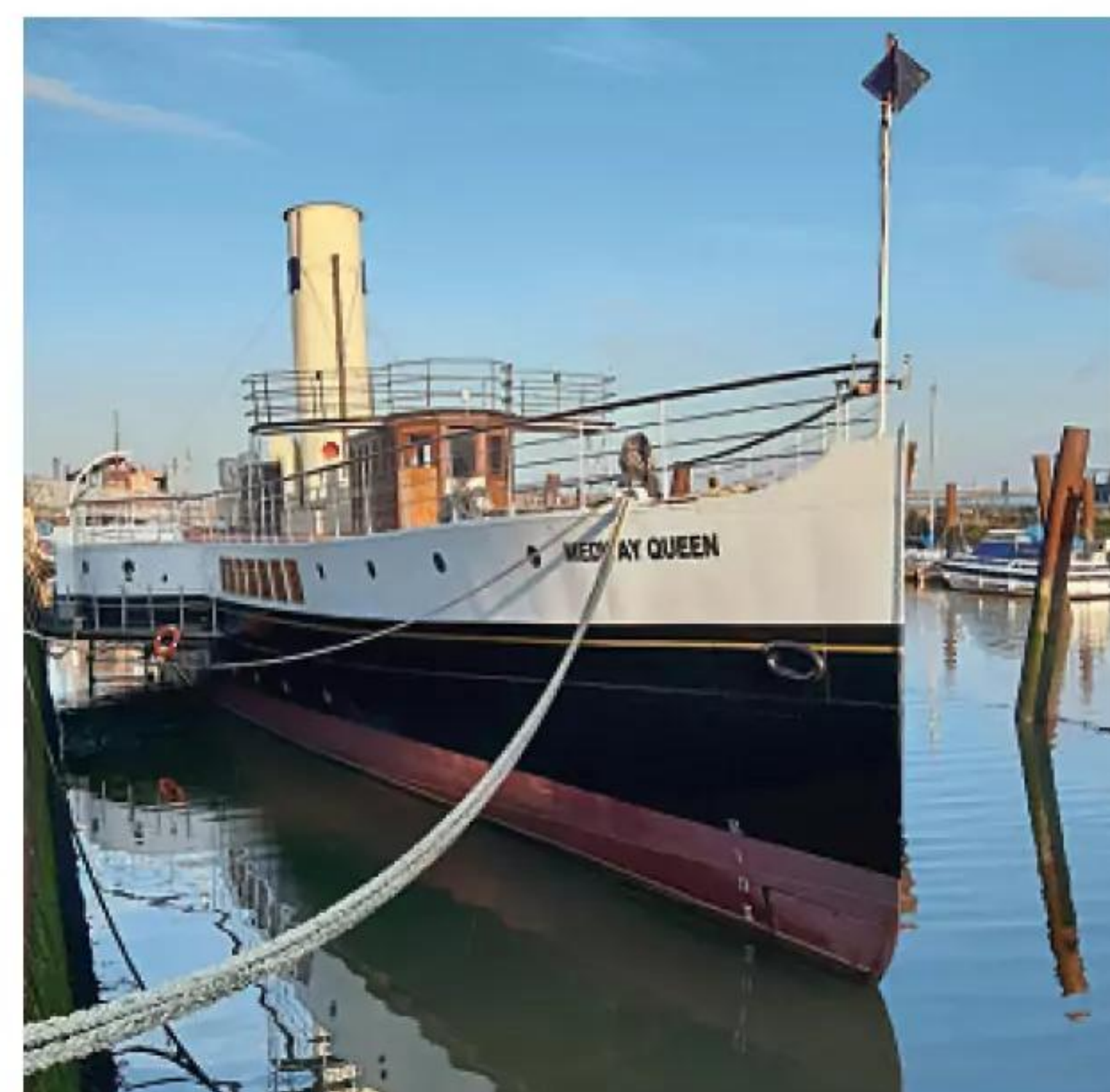
To reserve a seller's table, please contact our Events Secretary: £10.00 per table
Kevan Winward 07803 975 089 or Colin Travis 07905 028 295
We also have a website at: www.mutualmodelboatsociety.co.uk

From 9.30am to 1pm on **April 5, 2025**, the Mutual Model Boat Society will be holding a bring & buy sale at the Crimble Croft Community Centre in Aspinal Street, Heywood, Manchester OL10 4HL.

Admission will be charged at £1.50 and the whole site is wheelchair friendly, with full facilities and sensibly priced snacks and drinks available throughout the morning.

Sellers' tables (at a cost of £10) are still currently available to reserve. For further details, contact either Kevan Winward on 07803 975089 or Colin Travis on 07905 028295. Alternatively, visit the website www.mutualmodelboatsociety.co.uk

Medway Queen now more accessible



Visitors with mobility issues will now be able to see much more of the Medway Queen, thanks to the fitting of a new stairlift offering access to the main deck where the principal saloons and engine room are situated.

Thanks to a grant from the Jessel Baronetcy Fund, arranged through the Kent Community Foundation, a stairlift has now been fitted to

the *Medway Queen*. Previously, visitors with mobility issues had been restricted to the promenade deck, accessible via ramp from Gillingham Pier. This new stairlift, however, will also offer access to the ship's main deck, where the principal saloons and engine room are situated.

The *Medway Queen* is open to the public at Gillingham Pier (ME7 1RX) on Saturdays from 11am to 4pm (last admissions 3pm). The cost of an annual ticket (permitting unlimited repeat visits/guided tours over a 12-month period) is priced at £10 for adults. Accompanied children under 16 are admitted free of charge. For further details, www.medwayqueen.co.uk

Yeovil Model Show



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From 10am to 4pm on **April 6, 2025**, visitors to this year's show, held at the Westfield Academy, Stiby Road, Yeovil BA21 3EP, will be able to enjoy a broad-spectrum display of static and radio-controlled models (including marine). There will also be live modelling/painting demonstrations and trade stands aplenty.

Admission will be charged at £6 for adults and £3 for accompanied children under the age of 15 (the under 5s will be admitted free of charge), while a £15 family ticket will admit two adults and two children.

The venue offers free on-site parking, easy access for the disabled, and outlets from which hot and cold snacks and refreshments can be purchased throughout the day.

For more details, email yeovilmodelshow@gmail.com or phone/text Ken on 07759 137000.

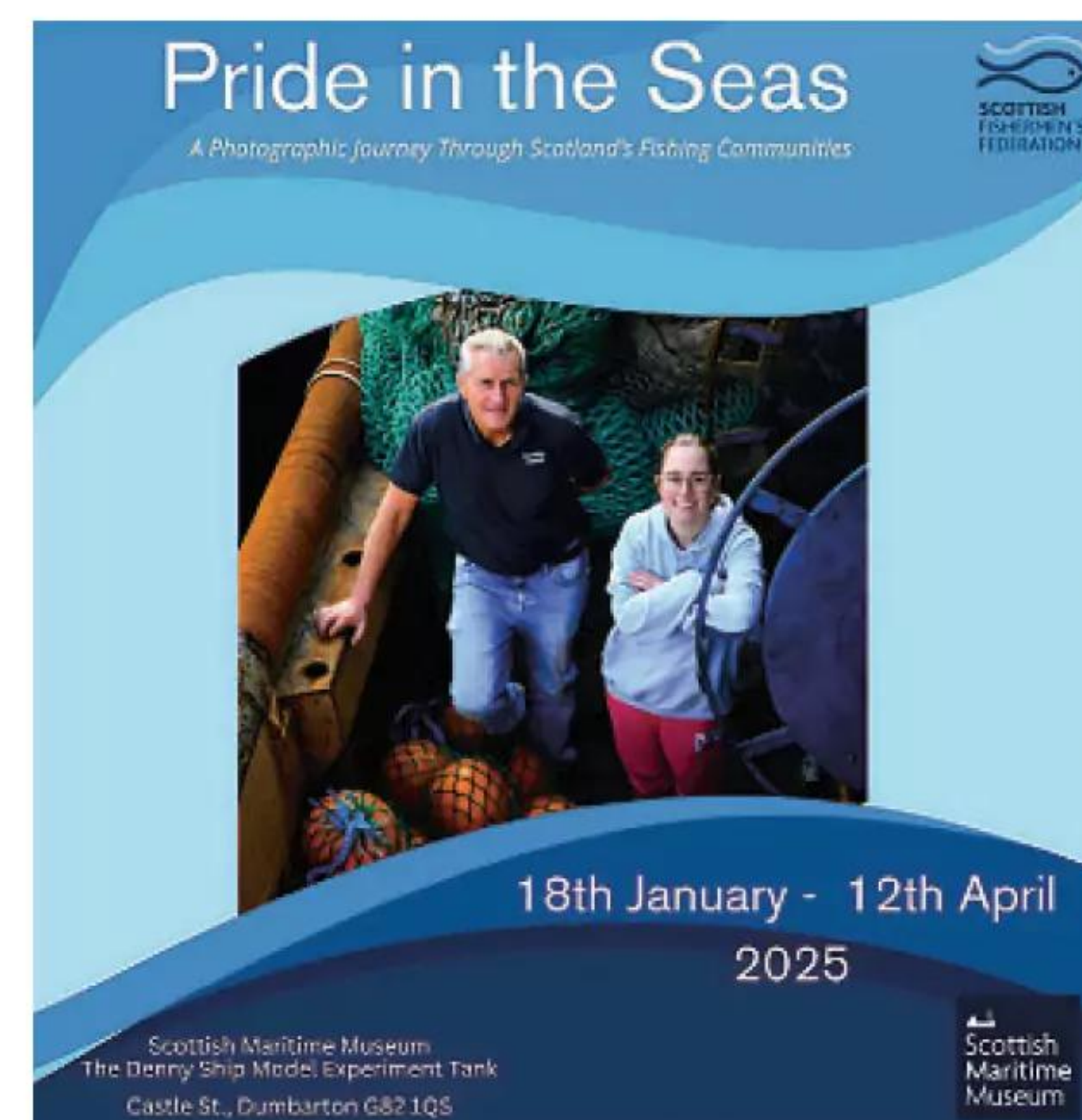
Pride in the Seas

Pride in the Seas, a new exhibition which invites visitors to learn all about the Scottish fishing industry and the crucial role it plays in Scotland's coastal communities, has now opened at the Scottish Maritime Museum on Castle Street, Dumbarton, and will run through until Saturday, April 12, 2025.

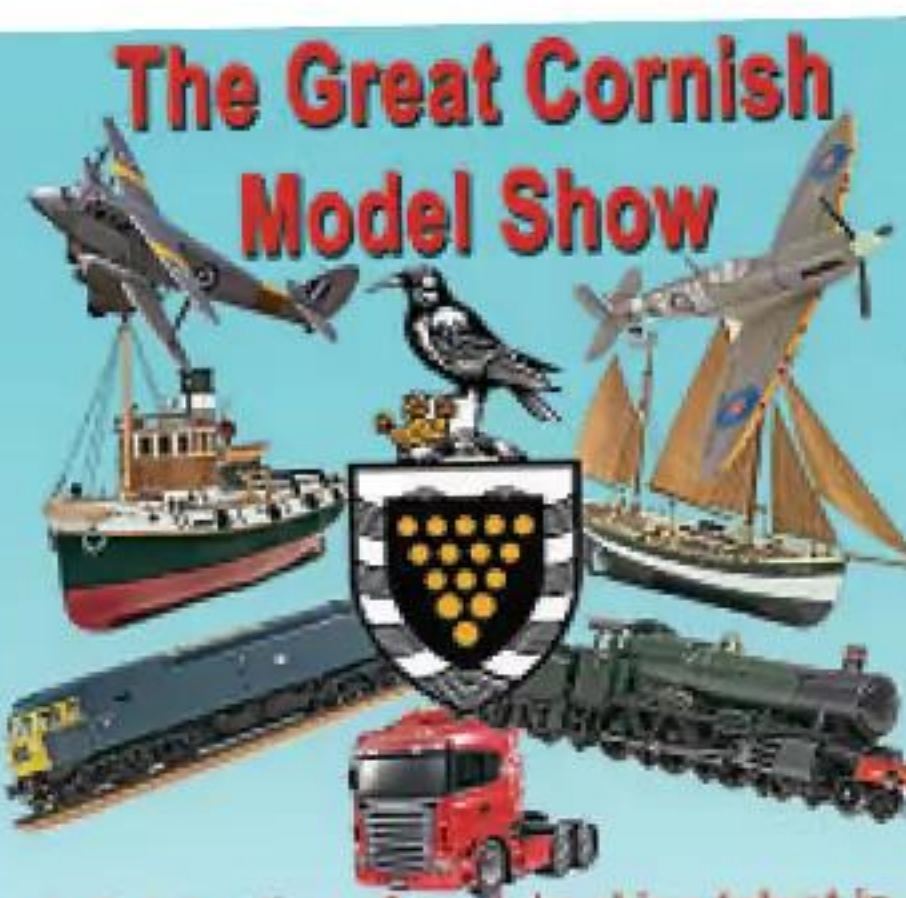
This exhibition, resulting from a collaboration between the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and renowned photographer Ian Georgeson, focuses on the life and work of twelve remarkable individuals who have dedicated their lives to fishing our seas, following generations of their families before them.

Admission is included in the cost of a day ticket to the museum itself (£5 for adults, £4 for concessions – up to three children will be admitted FREE of charge

with each adult/concession ticket), which is open six days a week, from Monday to Saturday, between 10am and 4pm. For more information, visit www.scottishmaritimemuseum.org.



The Great Cornish Model Show



The Great Cornish Model Show

A Celebration of modelmaking talent in Cornwall

Pool Academy, Church Road, Pool TR15 3PZ
Sat. & Sun. April 12 & 13 2025

Adults £8.00 U-16s £5.00 Family (2+2) £15.00 U-5s Free
Free parking, easy access, refreshments & hot food
15 model railways plus displays of boats, aircraft, model trucks, buildings & modelling demonstrations

Presented by Helston & Falmouth Model Railway Club

www.hfmrcl.co.uk

Scheduled for the weekend of **April 12/13** at the Pool Academy, Church Road, Pool TR15 3PZ, the Great Cornish Model Show will offer visitors a large

multi-discipline display of models, modelling technique demonstrations and trade stands to browse.

Doors will open from 10am to 5pm on the Saturday and from 10am to 4pm on the Sunday, with admission charged at £8 for adults and £5 for those under the age of 16 (children under the age of 5 will be admitted free of charge). Alternatively, family tickets, admitting two adults and two children, will be offered at £15.

The organisers have also advised that there will be free on-site parking, easy access to the venue and hot and cold food and refreshments available to purchase through the day.

For further details, visit the Helston & Falmouth Model Railway Club's website at <https://www.hfmrcl.co.uk>

PRIZE DRAW ANNOUNCEMENT

BOATS BOOK WINNER



In the January 2025 issue of *Model Boats*, we were able to offer you the chance to win a copy of Jan van der Veken's beautifully illustrated, hardback format, book *Boats – Steamers, Icebreakers and Ghost Ships* in an exclusive prize draw courtesy of Prestel Publishing Ltd (www.prestel.com). We are now delighted to announce the lucky winner as Mr. I.G. Jones of Formby, Liverpool. Congratulations, Mr Jones, on this fabulous addition to your bookshelf.



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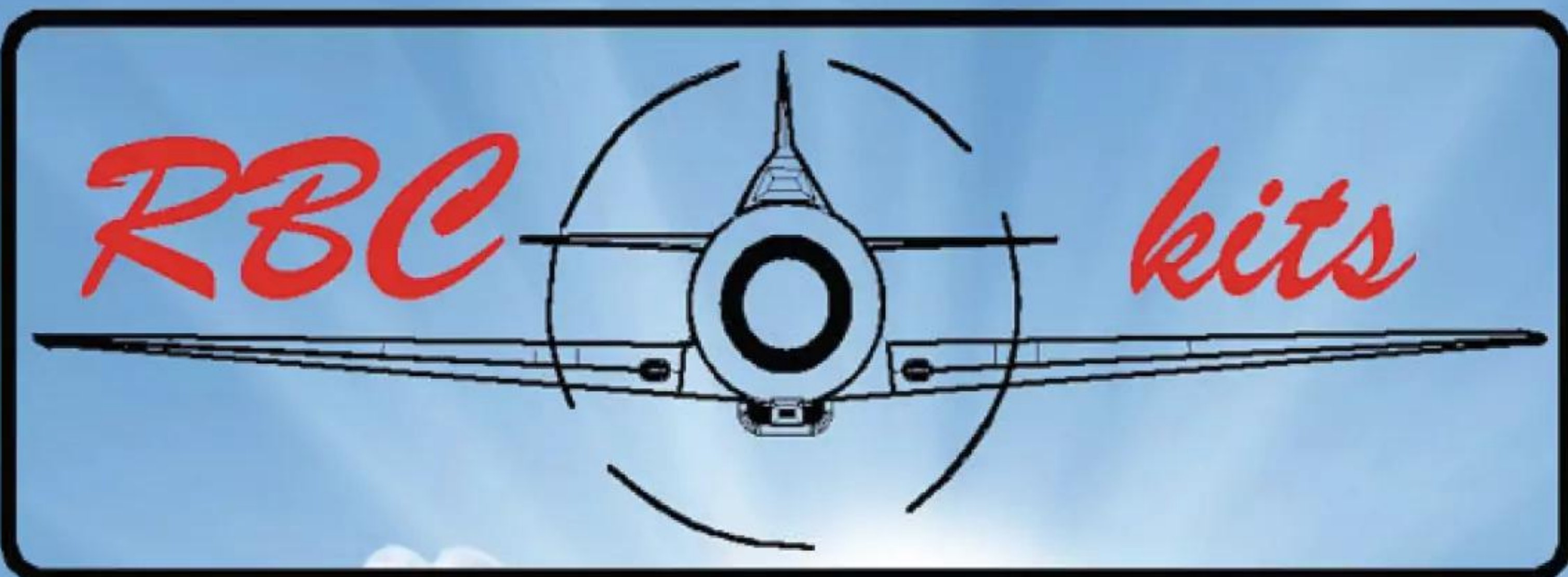
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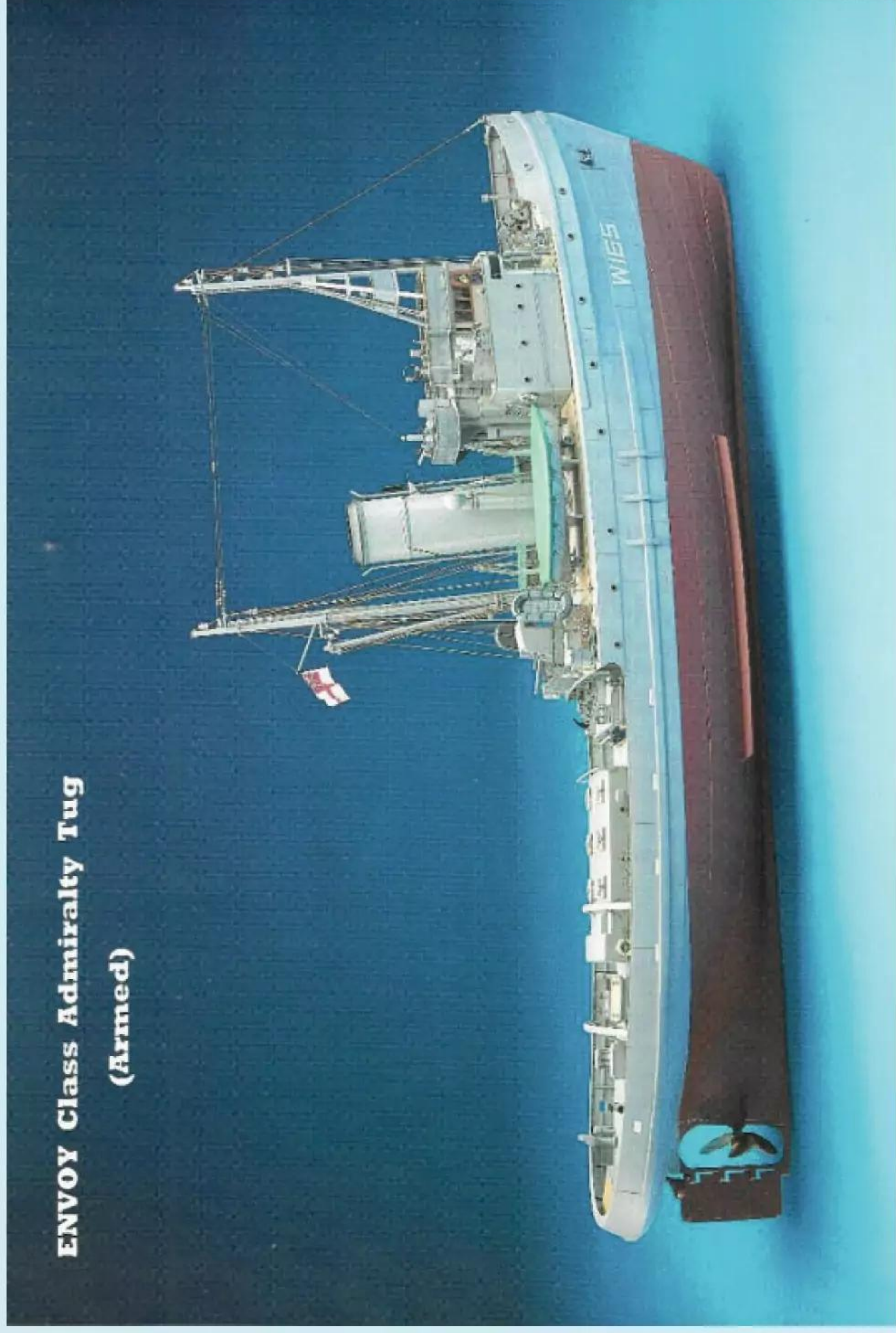
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(Armed)

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This vessel was completed In 1944 for the Admiralty by Cochrane & Sons of Selby.

The vessel was used as fleet tugs during WWII and fitted with a 12-pounder deck gun, two Oerlikon guns and two Colt machine guns for defence when on escort or rescue duty.



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, 800 etched brass and white metal fittings.



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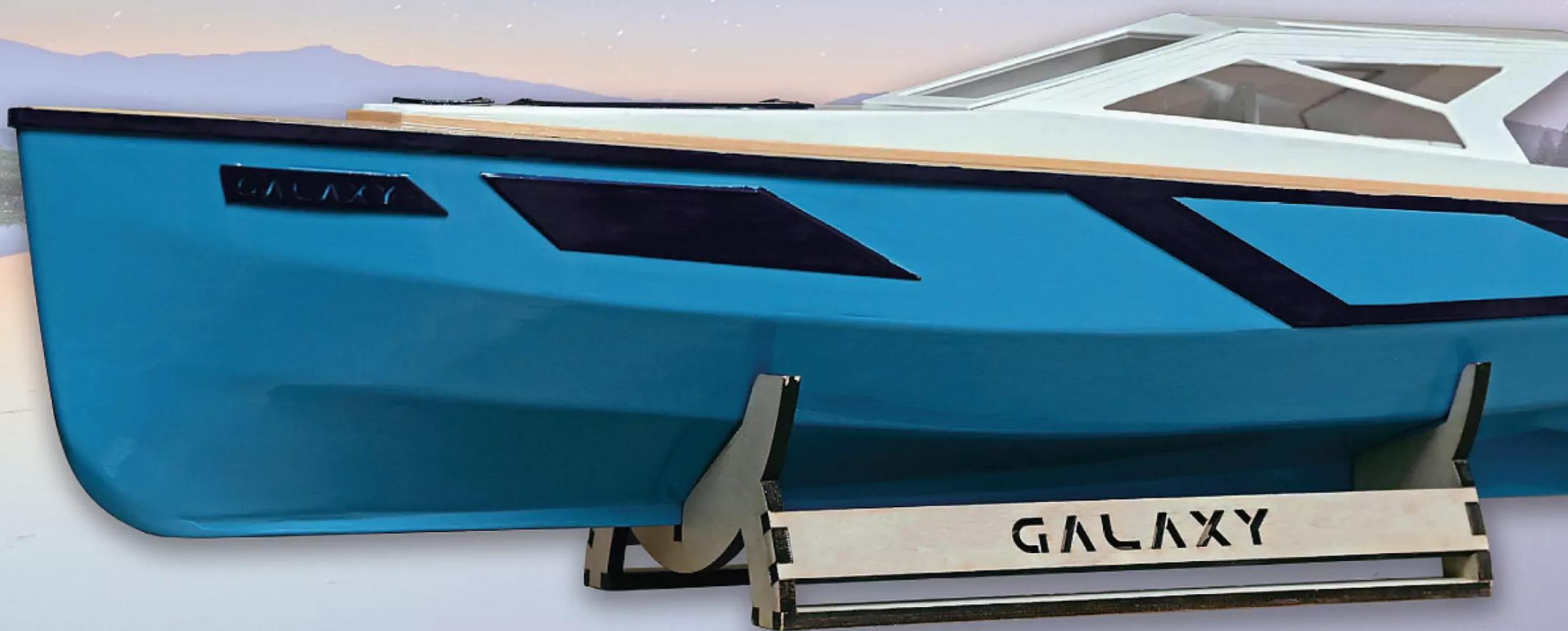
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This month, thanks to the generosity of the kind folks at Cornwall Model Boats, we're able to offer you the chance to win Mantua Models' fabulous 1:25 scale wooden kit from which to build Galaxy, a sleek and stylish luxury motor yacht.

Based on sheet hull construction, with the plywood parts laser cut for accuracy, the kit also provides the necessary metal fittings, *i.e.*, the propellers and shafts, a set of

plans from which to work, and full, easy to follow, instructions.

With the novice in mind, construction methods have been kept super simple, but, of course, there's also plenty of scope for the more experienced modeller to super detail to his/her own specifications.

What's more, the kit can be built either as a very attractive static display model or one to show off on the water, as it's been designed to

accommodate twin motors (Motor Set 604 is available to purchase separately from Cornwall Model Boats at www.cornwallmodelboats.co.uk) and 2-channel radio-control, using either a 2s LiPo or 7.2v NiMH battery (again, available to purchase separately).

Alongside the kit, Cornwall Model Boats will also be throwing in a glue set for this build (although please note paints will not be included).



For further information on the wide range of brands and products stocked by Cornwall Model Boats, please visit www.cornwallmodelboats.co.uk



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 accepted from those of you not wishing to deface your magazine) and mail it back to us at:

Galaxy Prize Draw
Model Boats
Mortons Media Group,
Media Centre, Morton Way,
Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR

Please note, the **closing date for entry submissions** will be **Friday, March 28, 2025.**

Good luck, everyone!

TERMS & CONDITIONS

N.B. For this prize draw we can only accept entries from those residing in the UK. The closing date for receipt of entry forms will be Friday, March 28, 2025. No cash alternatives to the prize are available. Terms and conditions apply. To view the privacy policy of MMG Ltd (publisher of Model Boats) please visit www.mortons.co.uk/

GALAXY PRIZE DRAW

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SS88 *Tegen Mor*

Peter Binns describes how an unwanted GRP hull was transformed into a 1:10 scale working model of this iconic St Ives fishing boat

I generally don't build boats from ready-made hulls, preferring plank on frame or plate construction, but when one of our retiring model boat club members from Redruth insisted I accept one he'd had for years as a gift for helping him re-home his extensive model collection, I made an exception. Although a bit scuffed and full of mouse droppings, the heavy and well-made 31-inch GRP fishing boat hull was already fitted with propshaft and propeller, and mahogany gunwales. The donor assured me it was based on one of a range of fishing vessels built locally by Robb Lello, founder of Treeve Boats in Connor Downs, Cornwall.

I did nothing to the hull for some months, still concentrating on finishing my steam-powered 1:18 scale *Princess Victoria* (see the February 2024 issue



The starting point – the Treeve GRP hull.

of Model Boats). However, one day I was going near to Connor Downs so decided to drop in to Treeve Boats with the hull to verify its pedigree. Mr Lello confirmed it was 'one of theirs'; he even thought they might have made it themselves. The question of

whether it was based on a 16-, 20- or 25-foot boat was debated. Because it measured 78 centimetres and a 25ft boat equals 780 centimetres, we concluded that it was a 1:10 scale hull for a 25ft vessel. I had also hoped he might be able to point me to the



SS88 Tegen Mor, previously a familiar sight in St Ives Harbour.

owners of some of his 25ft boats in Cornwall so that I could base my model on a particular local vessel, but, in the end, I did my own research.

A quick search on Google for 25ft Treeve fishing boats yielded several



Nathan de Rosario, former owner and skipper of Tegen Mor.

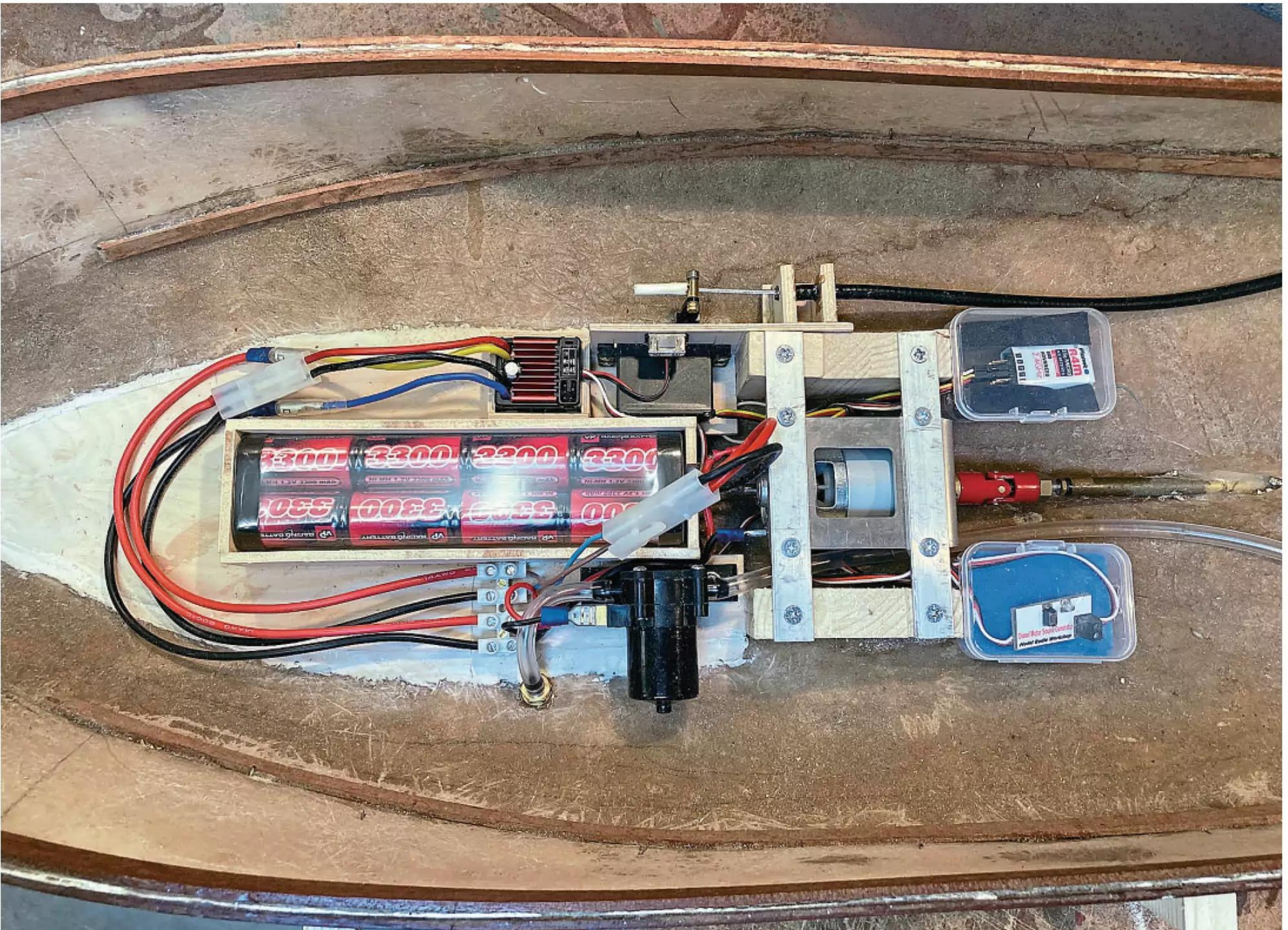
local examples, but one in particular, which was advertised for sale on *Find A Fishing Boat*, appealed to me immediately.

Tegen Mor (Cornish for *Jewel of the Sea*), registration SS88, was a well-known inshore fishing boat owned and operated by St Ives fisherman Nathan de Rosario. Her jaunty lines and colourful colouring shouted, "Model me!". With the aid of the 30 or so photos of the boat in the *FAFB* advertisement and information from Nathan I was therefore able to draw up some proper plans and get started on the build.

Starting work on the hull

The first job was to clean the hull, inside and out, and mark out the sizes and positions of the side strakes and timber on the stern. I cut these from mahogany and African walnut strip and sheet, steam-bent as required, and fixed them in position with epoxy adhesive.

The second was to establish the correct level for the deck. This



Everything had to be fitted below the main deck.

was pretty clearly indicated on my reference pictures, but I also needed to ensure that all the hardware, motor, electronics, steering servo and battery, etc could be accommodated beneath it. Luckily, with a bit of ingenuity, everything could be positioned below deck in the hull void.

Fitting out the components below deck

The bulkiest of these was the 540 motor and its mounting bracket, which had to be suspended upside

down mounted on two epoxy-glued timber bearers to achieve alignment with the propshaft. With this in place, I was then able to lay out and install all the other elements: firstly, a tray, centrally forward of midships, to retain the 9.6v NiMh 8-cell battery; then a bracket to hold the steering servo (more of that later); a tray to retain the Hobbywings' 60A speed controller; and over to the port side, a water pump to simulate the ejection of engine cooling at the stern in sync with motor revs. I also had to find

room to position the Planet receiver in a waterproof container, and similarly, a very basic diesel engine sound generator. Later, I attached a junction box for the lighting.

Steering control solution

Tegen Mor has a traditional transom-mounted timber rudder, which I replicated by laminating two sheets of ply, making a pair of pintles and gudgeons out of brass strip and rod, and piercing the transom to accept the tiller arm.

The tiller is controlled via Bowden cables connected to the wheelhouse and consequently there is no accommodation onboard at the stern of the model to mount and hide a servo and linkage. Therefore, as in the actual boat, I decided on also using a cable to control the small tiller, which allowed me to replicate the actual boat's design inboard at the stern, while using the flexibility of the light gauge pram/buggy brake cable to connect to the servo below the deck at midships. After some trial-and-error adjustment, this arrangement worked perfectly.

"After some trial-and-error adjustment, this arrangement worked perfectly"

Creating the forecastle and gunwales

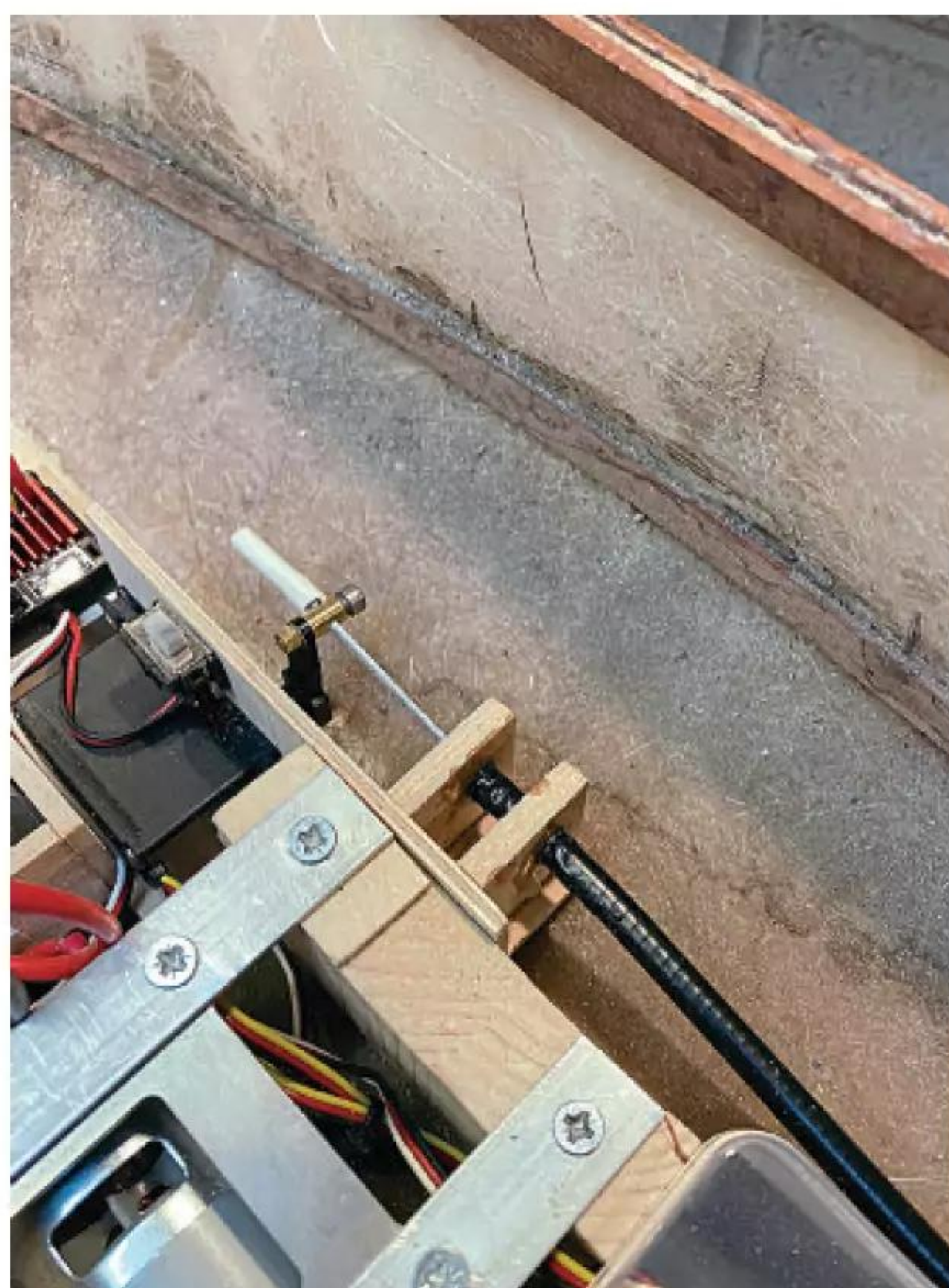
Using 2mm birch ply I cut out the forecastle decking to shape, having first made a cardboard template to ensure a smooth and accurate joint with the gunwales and the aperture for the wheelhouse superstructure. At a later stage I then used the same thickness ply to create the generously wide gunwales along each side of the boat aft of the wheelhouse.

Fitting the deck

With everything below deck installed, wired up and tested, I could shape, fit and fix the deck in position. First, I glued timber bearers the full length of the inside of the hull at the correct height on both sides. Based on careful measurement and a lot of dead reckoning I then made a cardboard template for the deck, which I could easily adjust when test-fitting. Once I was satisfied with the fit, I worked out the size and position of the aperture needed to provide access for maintaining the hardware and electronics for operating the model.



The transom-hung traditional rudder arrangement.



Flexible brake cable enables connection to servo mounted midships.



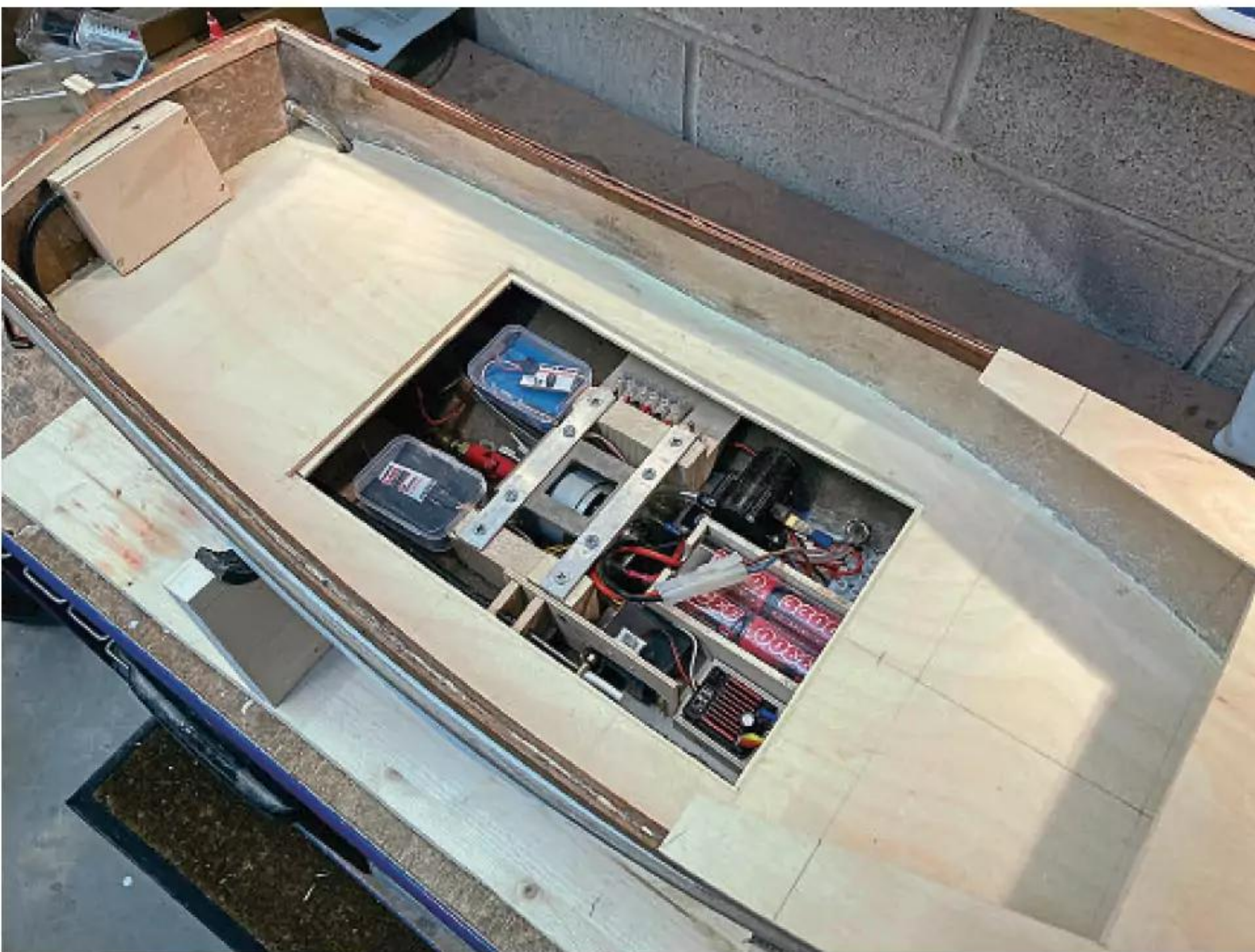
Inner cable attached to the tiller arm in enclosed cabinet.



The forecastle deck in place.



Fitting the wide gunwales.



The main deck in place, with aperture to permit access to all parts.



Timber frame uprights between deck and gunwales.



Tegan Mor's bold dark burgundy and bright blue paint job.

Using the finalised template, I cut the deck to shape in 3mm birch plywood and glued it to the timber bearers, remembering to chamfer the edges first to ensure good adhesion to the inside of the GRP hull with epoxy adhesive.

Although all Treeve boats are based on GRP hulls, a particular feature of their construction is that they also have a solid timber frame to give added strength and seaworthiness. The ribs of this frame are visible between the deck and the gunwales, and I simulated them by applying lengths of spruce strip at given intervals.

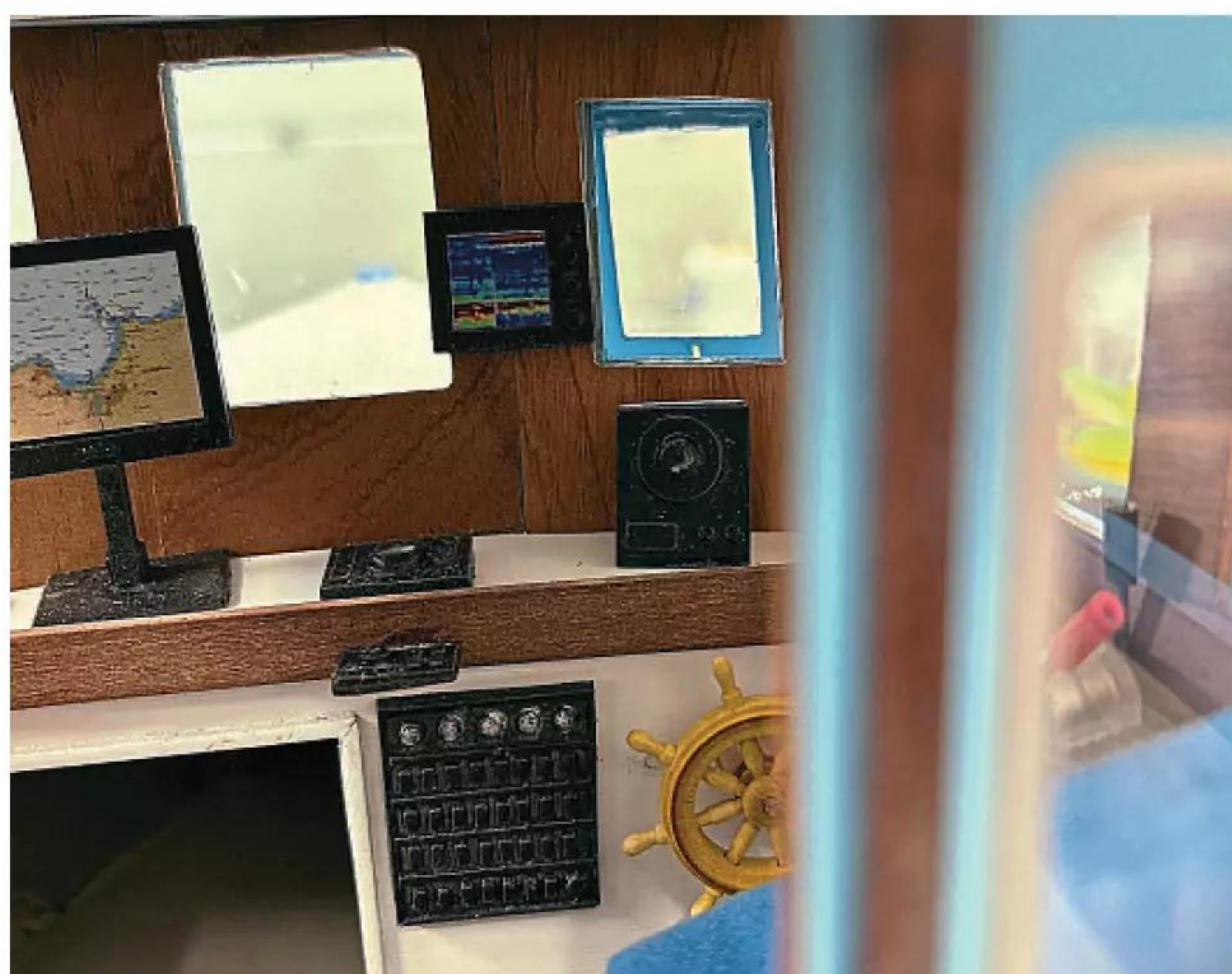
“Although all Treeve boats are based on GRP hulls, a particular feature of their construction is that they also have a solid timber frame to give added strength and seaworthiness”



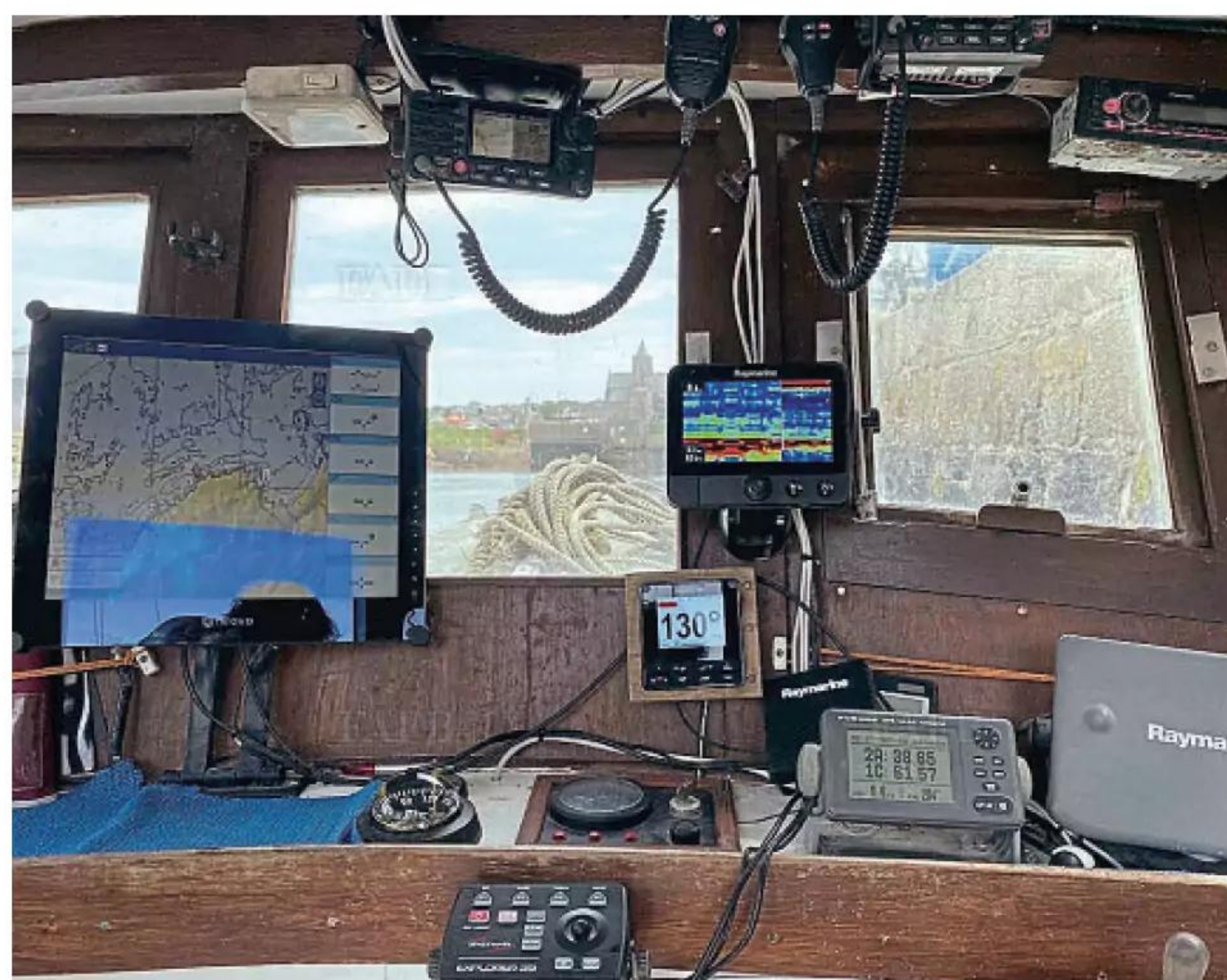
Angled front and side wheelhouse sections before attachment.



Glueing in the internal mahogany paneling before glazing.



Peter's attempt to recreate the inside of the wheelhouse.



The real thing.

Adding some colour

Another distinctive feature which drew me to *Tegan Mor* was her bold paint job, consisting of a dark burgundy and contrasting bright blue hull and a pale turquoise wheelhouse. After careful matching I found auto-spray cans of almost exactly the right colours and shades, although my wheelhouse came out a bit stronger than some of the photographs suggest.

So, on to the wheelhouse

Likewise, I found *Tegan Mor*'s jaunty wheelhouse, with its angled 3-panelled front section, very appealing, but replicating it accurately at scale proved a tricky task. Using mainly 2mm birch ply, each of the angled front panels had to be measured carefully from my plans and the edges chamfered to achieve a neat joint between them – something of a trial-and-error process. Eventually, I managed to get

it right, with front and sides glued firmly in place to fit the aperture I made in the forecandle deck.

“I found Tegan Mor’s jaunty wheelhouse, with its angled 3-panelled front section, very appealing, but replicating it accurately at scale proved a tricky task”

Wanting to achieve neat and accurate glazing of the windows, and as my reference photos indicated that the inside of the wheelhouse was paneled in mahogany or similar, I then cut said panels from thin mahogany sheet and glued them to the outer ‘skin’. The window apertures were made slightly larger than those in the outside panels to create a rebate in which to glue the cast acrylic sheet

glazing from the inside to give the exterior a neat appearance.

At this point I paused to create the interior of the wheelhouse, making and fitting radar and fish-finder screens, switch panel, ship’s wheel, skipper’s swivel seat and engine controls while I had good access.

I was then able to make and fit the rear wall of the wheelhouse, including two glazed windows, a working part-glazed sliding mahogany door, and fire-extinguisher. All parts were pre-painted, as masking off and spraying them in position would have tried my patience too much, though some touching up at the joints of panels was necessary.

Last to go on was the slightly curved wheelhouse roof. This was fabricated using 2mm lite ply bent over a birch ply frame, pre-painted, and fixed in position in a way that would permit future removal if necessary. In the process I also wired in the navigation lights and the three rear-facing



Basic wheelhouse completed.

halogen floodlights mounted on the wheelhouse roof, terminating in a single pair of cables running inside some conduit down to below deck for connection to the boat's lighting junction box.

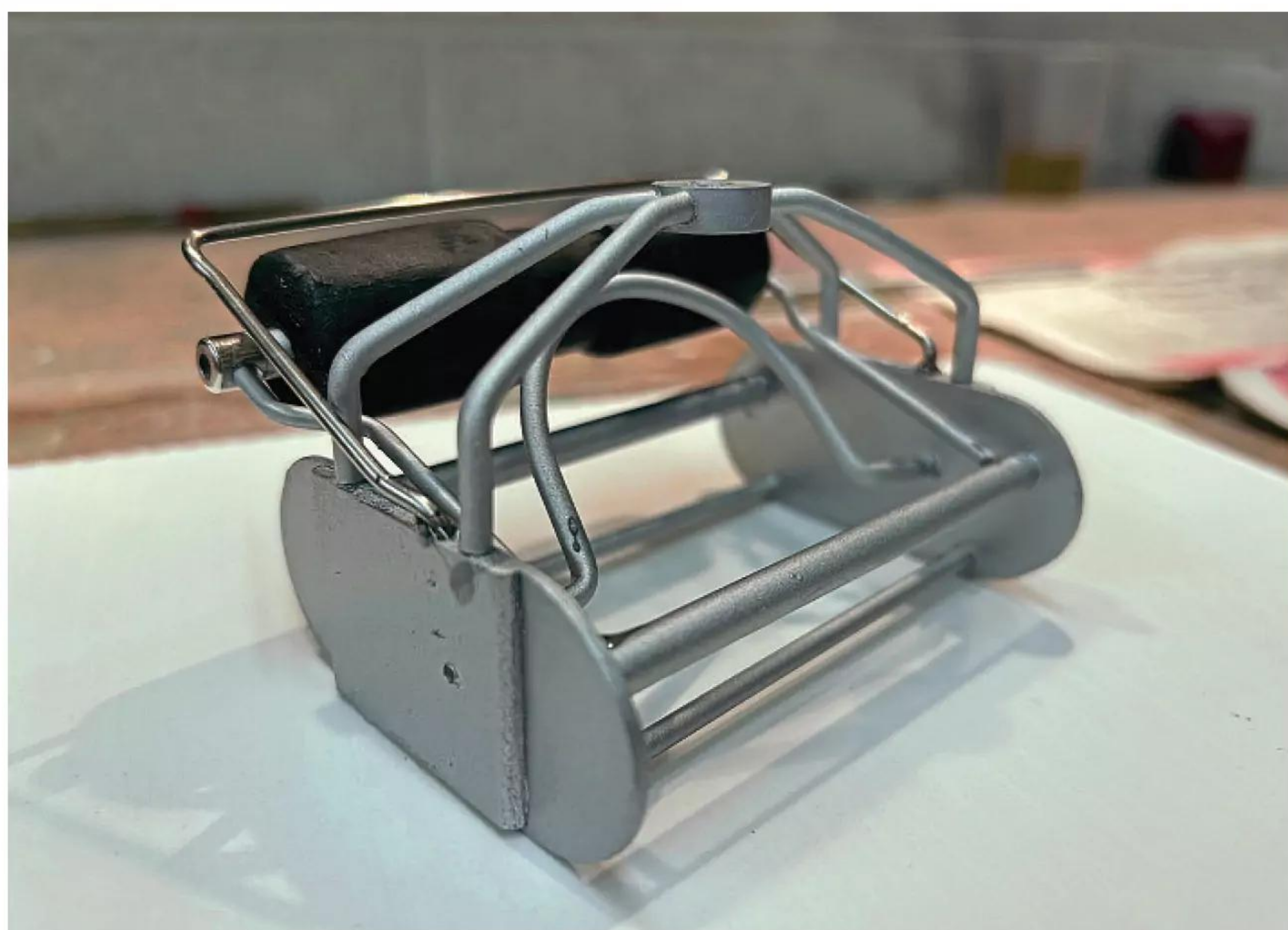
To complete the wheelhouse roof, I made and fitted the two timber grab-rails, fixed two lifebelts and the life raft canister and cradle. *Tegen Mor's* wheelhouse also sports a short, raked mast carrying more navigation lights and emergency maroon tube. This I fabricated using aluminum tube.

Detail, detail, detail...

Like most inshore fishing boats, *Tegen Mor* has a gantry at the stern from which one of its two hydraulically powered net haulers is suspended, and it also supports the mizzen mast, as well as more forward-facing halogen floodlights. From photographs it appeared that this was constructed from rectangular section galvanized steel. I therefore fabricated the basic



The finished wheelhouse with mast and life raft canister in place.



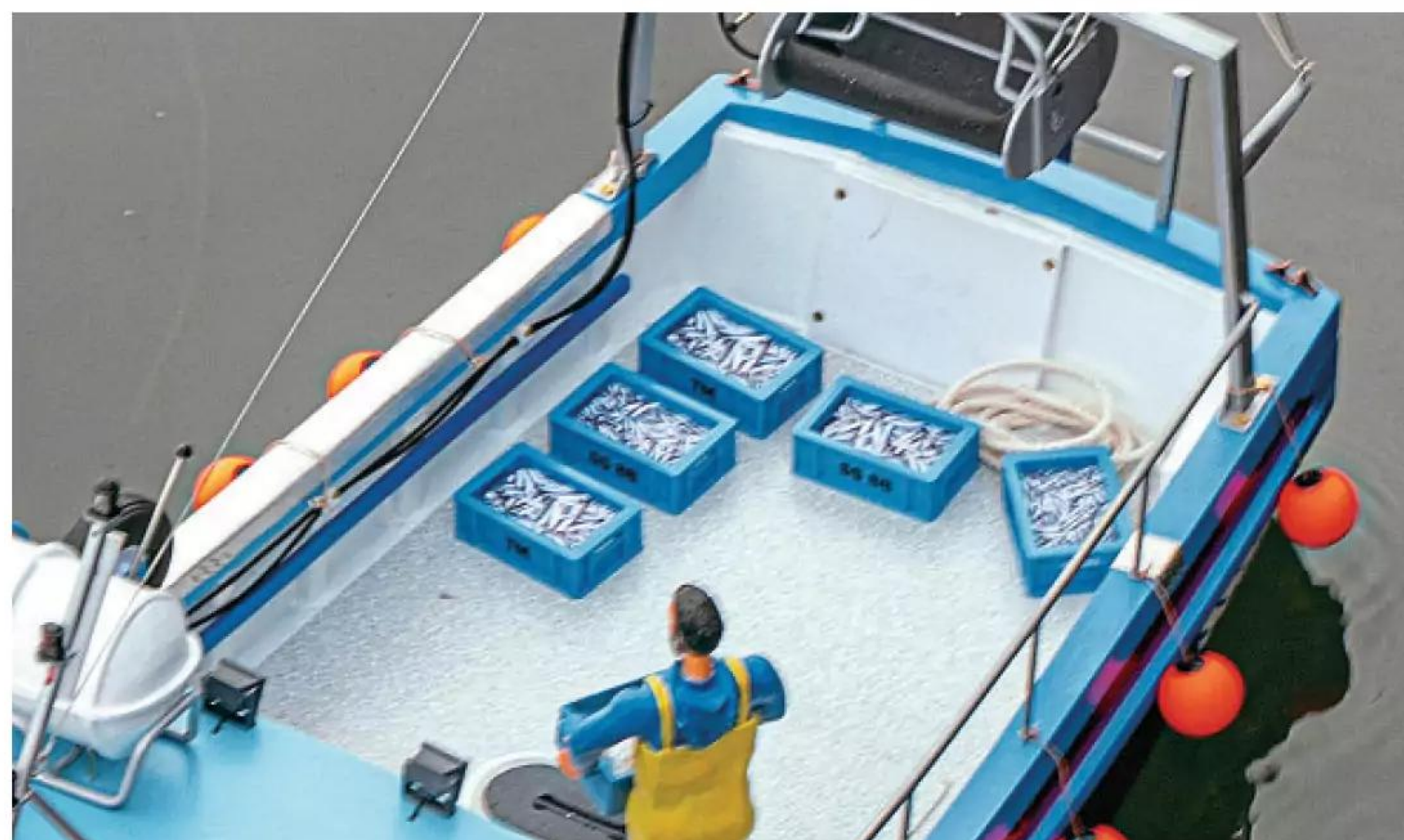
The suspended net hauler - fabricated from bits and pieces in Peter's scrap box.



The aft gantry with mizzen mast, sail and net hauler in place.



Another scrap box production, the deck-mounted Spencer-Carter net hauler.



Fishy business!



Mac's Mouldings' 'Eric', ready for some rejuvenating!

metalwork using brass rectangular section, this being easier to work, which I cut, bent and soldered into shape before painting matt silver. Being hollow, I was able to mount the floodlights and pass the wires down inside one leg of the gantry and below deck for connection to the lighting junction box. The gantry was then mounted on the gunwales just forward of the transom, using aluminum brackets and small nuts and bolts.

The mizzen mast, made with aluminum tube, was then mounted on top of the gantry using a threaded insert and long machine screw to secure it firmly from beneath through a locating hole through the top rail of the assembly. Booms were then added, and the mizzen sail, cut from lightweight sail canvas and stitched, was attached

and rigged using hemp cord and scale pulleys.

Meanwhile, the suspended Danish-made net hauler was concocted from scrap materials lying around the workshop: plasticard, aluminum tube, stainless steel rod, and a scrap of roller blind material. This was then attached to the underside of the gantry with the same screw and threaded insert used for the mast.

This just left the other deck-mounted Spencer-Carter net hauler to fabricate and fix in position. Again, my scrap box provided most of what was needed, except for the tired wheel, for which I bought a model aircraft wheel. What proved particularly helpful was being able to pop into the manufacturer's factory in Falmouth to see one of these close up and personal, this providing a better understanding of which part does what. Mr Carter could



On the water at last!



Fluorescent fenders/floats and decals added, and Eric looking decades younger.

not have been more helpful. Lastly, I used 1.5mm diameter black neoprene sealing strip to simulate the hydraulic lines running from both net haulers to the wheelhouse.

“What proved particularly helpful was being able to pop into the manufacturer’s factory in Falmouth to see one of these close up and personal, this providing a better understanding of which part does what”

Net haulers are no good without fish, so I bought, sprayed and numbered six plastic fish crates to leave on deck. I had intended to fill these crates with 3D-printed fish, but in the face of technical difficulties I resorted to using photoprints of landed fish. However, these don’t look bad at all.

Amongst the last bits of detail to be added were the fluorescent round fenders/crab and lobster pot markers. These were anglers’ polystyrene fishing floats, to which I added black tops before stringing them with hemp cord. They were then attached to railings, etc, along both port and starboard sides.

I also applied decals as appropriate. The larger SS88 self-adhesive vinyl lettering was sourced courtesy of Mr Google in both white and blue, one laid on top of the other to create the shadow effect on the actual vessel. The smaller decals were also self-adhesive vinyl but pre-printed in two colours to achieve a similar effect.

With painting done, well-dried, and decals applied, I used a textured surface patterned self-adhesive vinyl to simulate the anti-slip surface on the forecabin and main decks.

Although 2D, the pattern looks 3D from a distance.

Life on board

No model boats leave my workshop without crew or passengers, as appropriate. *Tegen Mor*’s skipper, Nathan de Rosarieux, usually works his boats solo, so in this case I just needed a single 1:10 scale figure. Mac’s Mouldings came up trumps with its large-scale fishing boat crew figures. I chose one that I felt bore a very slight resemblance to Nathan, although I had to make this character look a whole lot younger!

And so, to launch

Although thoroughly tested in my test tank for leaks, correct prop direction and ballast, I knew there would be no substitute for getting the *Tegen Mor* out on the water at the Camborne Pond Hoppers’ adopted lake in Coronation Park, Helston. So, on a calm but rather damp day in December, she was launched properly and ‘sea trials’ were conducted. She passed every test, her performance and maneuverability proving better than expected. ●

Acknowledgements

The author of this feature, Peter Binns, would like to thank the many people who helped and contributed towards the successful completion of the *Tegen Mor*, especially:

- Malcolm Williams of Camborne, who gave Peter the hull in the first place
- Robb Lello, owner of Treeve Boats, who verified the hull’s pedigree
- Nathan de Rosarieux, previous owner and skipper of the *Tegen Mor*, for ‘approving’ the plans Peter drew up, and for his provision of information.
- Terry Swainsbury of Constantine, Falmouth, for photographing Peter’s model specially for this feature.



1857 *Royal Sovereign*

Ashley Needham treats us to another of his top ideas for the GP hull, this time in the form of a unique Victorian naval vessel...

A short, fat, black hull not only makes a perfect candidate for a Victorian 'Black Fleet' warship (so-called as the hulls were all black, at odds with the previous black/white striped look) model but also perfectly fitted the brief when considering various different top ideas for my

General-Purpose hull No.1 (see the July 2024 issue of *Model Boats*).

Always intrigued by the subjects that are quirky/unusual, my research led me to a vessel that was certainly a bit of an oddity in the Royal Navy of the time, being the only armoured battleship made with a wooden hull – a one off,

as all the major armoured vessels were either built in iron (*Warrior*, for instance, in 1860) or in some cases in a mixed wood and iron construction. HMS *Royal Sovereign* was laid down in 1849 as a 121-gun first-rate ship of the line. With the rise of steam and screw propulsion, she was ordered to be

converted on the stocks to a 131-gun screw ship, with conversion beginning in 1855, although when completed she went straight into 'ordinary' (reserve) in 1857.

At around the time of the Crimea war, two people, independently, were looking at means of giving heavy guns a traversing armoured protection in a cupola, or turret as we call them now. After several years of inactivity, *Royal Sovereign* was selected for conversion into an experimental turret ship. This was instigated by Captain Cowper Coles, who believed that a mastless ship armed with cupola mounted guns was the best possible design for a coast-defence vessel. So, in 1862 she was razed down to a single deck, leaving her with approximately 8ft (2.4 m) of freeboard, while her decks and hull sides were strengthened to carry the planned armament of five heavy guns in four Coles turrets, mounting either one or two 10 1/2-inch smoothbore guns, firing 150lb round shot. On the completion of this conversion in August 1864, she and the purpose designed iron hulled *Prince Albert* (completed a year later) became the first British turret-armed ships – the *Sovereign*, however, was the only one with a wooden hull.

The cupola

Workable designs for an armoured cupola (there is a difference between a cupola and a turret, but I won't go into that here, I will just call them turrets from now on as that is the common term nowadays!) were independently arrived at by two people, the Swedish inventor Ericsson and the British Captain Coles. These differed in that the Ericsson design had the circular box pivoted on a central spindle which took all the weight (the box did not touch the top deck). The Coles' design rested on a circular roller track, and only half the structure was above deck, the rest below – unlike the Ericsson one where the entire affair was exposed above deck. Ericsson designed the famous American civil war Union ship *Monitor*, which was built in 1861 and used his turret design. The disadvantage of the Ericsson turret is that when not in action, the turret was lowered so the weight of it rested on deck, and raising it up an inch to allow it to rotate took perhaps five minutes, meaning it was not always ready for action, and it was perceived that a small boarding party could put the turret out of action using wooden

wedges and sledgehammers. In addition, the entire weight of the thing rested entirely on one point low in the boat, so considerable local reinforcing had to be carried out to bear this weight, unlike a Coles' turret where the bearing surface was much more spread out.

“There were several reasons I was drawn to this particular ship. I knew she would be a great fit for my GP hull, of course, but she also featured a number of historical firsts”

Why the *Royal Sovereign*?

There were several reasons I was drawn to this particular ship. I knew she would be a great fit for my GP hull, of course, but she also featured a number of historical firsts, not least when it came to her cupolas (I will call them turrets from this point on). Also, she was an armoured Razee (a cut down, or 'razed', ship), thus wooden hulled, and the first major warship in the Royal Navy not to have sails – instead, she was equipped with three stump masts to carry what were essentially steadying sails. The iron hulled *Albert* had only two masts, with fore-and-aft steadying sails. So, while the *Albert* looks more like later turret ships, the *Sovereign* looks distinctly different. The main deck was on one level, with no steps up or down; it simply included a flying bridge with an armoured conning position, a long walkway over the turrets on which the ship's boats rested, and a very odd square tube sort of affair at the bow, which was a cover for the galley stove pipe (why I don't know!). At the sides, there was no bulwark in the traditional sense, but the entire perimeter of the deck had thin panels that could be folded down to allow the guns to fire over them.

Design

As the hull has already been made, then the design work here purely involved creating a *Royal Sovereign* top that could be fitted to the fixed deck dimension and outline. I have a hull with a fairly wide, rounded bow and a round stern, which is broadly in keeping with the *RS* hull; luckily, the stern was neither pointed nor square.

Obviously, I had a few alterations to make along the way, but I was confident the likeness would be

very fair, and, after all, this was to be a representation rather than a replica. Once again, the SPAR design package was used and, working with pictures from the internet (there was absolutely nothing to be gained in using a proper plan due to the modifications I would have to make to accommodate the hull dimensions) a drawing was made.

Construction

It's always odd building a boat without having to make a hull, but that is, after all, the beauty of the GP hull concept. As per the previous boat tops, a deck was required, but in this instance it would sit on top of the bulwarks, not inside them – as you read on, the reason for this will become clear. So, drawing around the upturned hull onto a bit of 4mm ply and cutting this out on my bandsaw soon saw me achieve a blank deck, which was then sanded to match the hull sides nicely.

“As per the previous boat tops, a deck was required, but in this instance it would sit on top of the bulwarks, not inside them – as you read on, the reason for this will become clear”

Main armament

Originally fitted with 10 1/2-inch smooth bore muzzle loading cannon, the ship had a change of guns to 9-inch RML (Rifled Muzzle Loading) cannons in 1867. While on the face of it, these were smaller weapons, the rifling allowed the use of elongated shells rather than spherical shot, with an increase in shell weight from 150lb to 250lb for the common (armour piercing) round at comparable velocities, a hefty increase in hitting power. These early Coles' turrets were, unusually, open at the top; this was to allow smoke from the gun to vent upwards and out of the way. Information as to exactly how open the turrets were is notable by its absence, but there is a builder's model of the fore twin-gun turret, and this has a thin divided cover with whacking great air vents on top. After pondering the issue, I came to the conclusion that being called 'open' probably means that the tops were unarmoured, with access patches on top rather than literally 'open', and in any case you would want to keep the weather out. A drawing of the inside



of one of the turrets that was used as a target to gauge the effectiveness of the armour shows beams of some sort on the ceiling. Engagements at this time were conducted at very close range, perhaps just a few thousand yards, so that plunging fire, where the shell is fired upwards to obtain a better range and thus comes down on the target at an angle rather than sort of parallel to the water was not a consideration, and shells would only be hitting the turret face.

Upper works continued

As previously mentioned, unlike the other GP hull tops, the deck sits on top of the hull as the model not only has a sticky-up bulwark section on the deck but a folded down section of bulwark as well. These sections needed to fold flat, as blast from the guns would have ripped off anything in front of them, and in tests the guns were able to train some 75-degrees

fore and aft from a broadside position, hence the need to have the bulwark fold out of the way. In practice the guns wouldn't have been fired at these extreme angles, but, even so, most of the side would need to be folded down. If I had the deck inset with regards the main hull side, then I wouldn't be able to simulate these flaps. Risers were cut and glued under the deck for support and to stop the deck bowing and twisting, then a centreline was drawn on, and turret positions marked out. Using a hole saw, four openings (one large one at the front to accommodate the larger twin turret and three slightly smaller ones for the single turrets) were bored through the deck (see **Photo 1**), and underneath the holes 10mm thick battens were glued in place around the edges. Finally, ply 'turret floors' were glued in place (see **Photo 2**). This may all seem a bit ad hoc, but tucked away in the

interior none of it would be seen and it was the perfect opportunity to put some of the scraps of ply I had stashed away to good use.

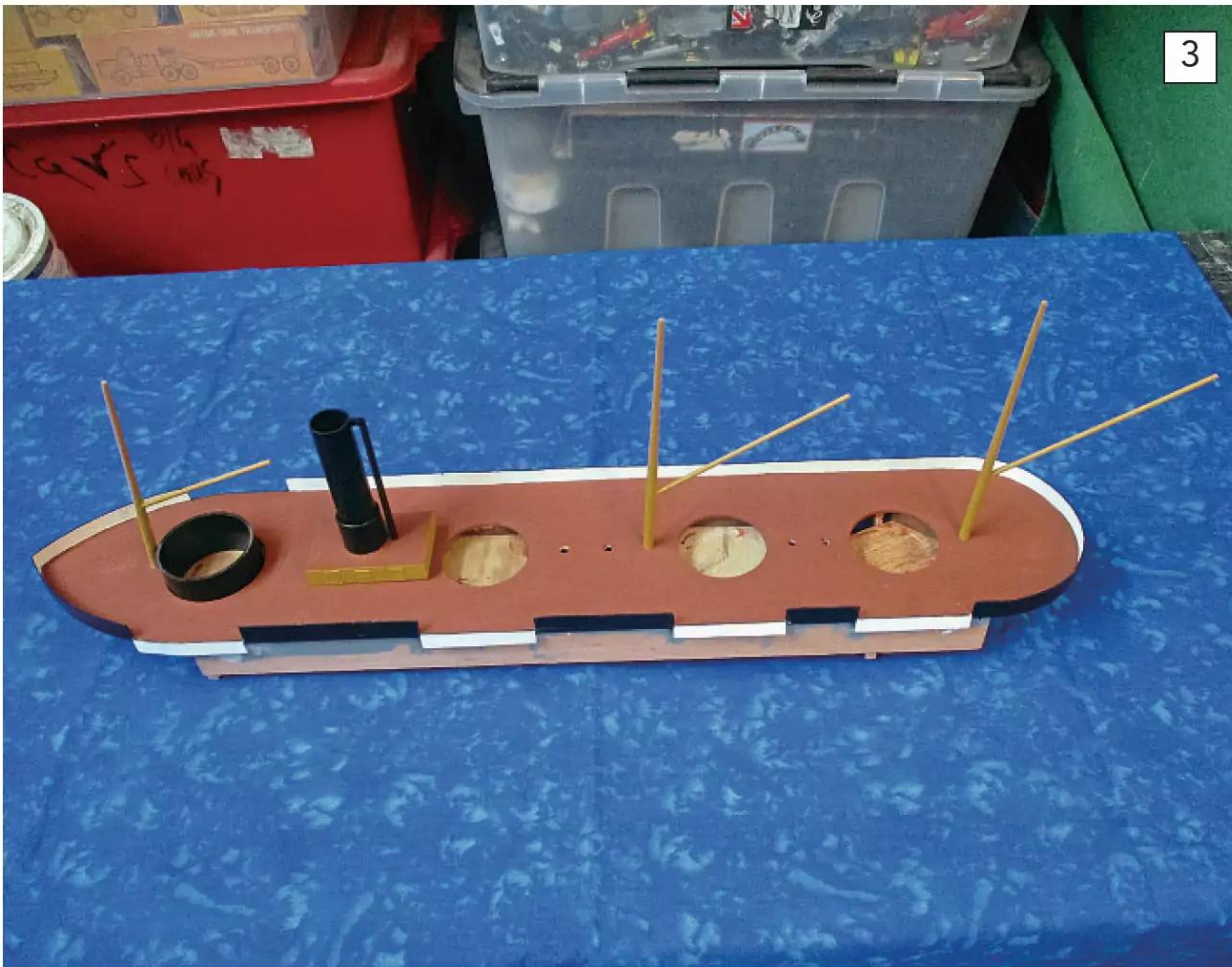
Small blocks of wood were then positioned underneath the mast stations, and using my pillar drill at an angle, holes for short masts to be plugged into were drilled. Work on the turrets was carried out on the side, as it were, while the next stage was to cut a number of 1.5mm ply strips from which the folding bulwarks at the deck edge could be constructed. Having fully sealed and sanded the deck, next the bulwark flaps were artistically glued in place, with those on the port side opposite their respective turrets being glued in the 'folded down' position. This can be seen in **Photo 3**, which in essence shows the top in its completed state, the only items of note missing being the boat walkways. In action all the flaps would be folded flat, but in peacetime at the pond, having just a few folded looks quite good, especially as I have painted the insides of my flaps white. This may be artistic licence, as although, for instance, the Warrior's bulwark inners are painted white, the RS bulwarks are really a sort of folding safety rail and should not be compared to other armoured broadside ships, for which the bulwarks served as protection for the deck gunners and seamen manning the various sail control ropes and thus were more likely just black.

"Information online here is contradictory and very confusing!"

The flying bridge and walkways

Information online here is contradictory and very confusing! There's a cast resin model available which has a raised deck fore and aft. I can understand this depiction, as it looks 'right' and what you'd expect, but it is questionable. Likewise, the central walkway is divided, with the ship's boats on top of the turrets, and while Victorian photos of the ship are too grainy to be able to unequivocally prove this wrong, the general consensus among fellow enthusiasts I've spoken with suggests this to be very unlikely. Why would you park the ship's boats on top of the turrets? They'd be a hazard for the turret in action, especially if hit.





Plus, with the boats likely to have been longer than the turret was round, traversing the turret awkward would have been awkward. Having them on a raised walkway, clear of gun muzzle blast when firing, makes more sense, and, of course, they stay in that position regardless of turret training! When in action, the boats would probably have been tied together and towed behind the ship, a common practice that kept them relatively safe from damage, and already in the water if the worst came to the worst! Similarly, the davits to work the boats – on my

model, 1.5mm garden steel wire bent around a former and painted black (see **Photo 4**) – were on the main deck as opposed to the walkway, as they would have insufficient reach to lower them over the side if so located; de-mounting the boats from the walkway onto the davits would almost certainly have been by booms off the stubby masts.

There was a 'flying bridge', or walkway, going across the ship, supported from the superstructure that the funnel is on and also by the bottom half of the armoured conning position. This is an oval edifice, armoured, and by anecdotal evidence almost useless in action due to the poor view from the slots or portholes. Warrior was provided with a similar armoured position and that, too, was considered to be useless in action. On the model, ply and shaped dowel took care of these items, and a square section of MDF was cut for the odd galley stove pipe shroud, another item which would have been folded down in action. Perhaps the vent pipe was shrouded to prevent smoke being blown back down into the ship?

The ship's boats I added were commercial lifeboats, and a few cowl vents were also purchased, being difficult items to make, especially at this small size.

At the bow, the very large Admiralty pattern anchors simply hang off the deck. For the *Sovereign* Coles had designed a chain handling system, which was located below decks – very handy, as this saved me from



having to construct a windlass. A small section of the bow bulwark was cut away and a small shelf support was glued to the side before the anchor was fixed in place. Providing a scupper for the chain was tricky, as I couldn't put one through the actual hull side. The solution here was a flattened brass eyelet fixed to the bottom of the bulwark, with the anchor chain glued inside this. This eyelet is actually at deck level but is hidden by the bulwark itself.

For the masts – well, stump masts really – 6mm bamboo BBQ skewers provide the uprights, these having been tapered by putting them in a drill and using sandpaper in a (gloved) hand while the drill was on. Small 'notches' were drilled to plug the 3mm bamboo BBQ skewer booms into, which, once superglued, were painted in artist's yellow ochre acrylic paint. In reality, these masts were to simply satisfy the 'must have a mast' diehards and offered only the ability to mount some staysails and provide a means of moving the ship's boats off the centreline via booms.

Turrets

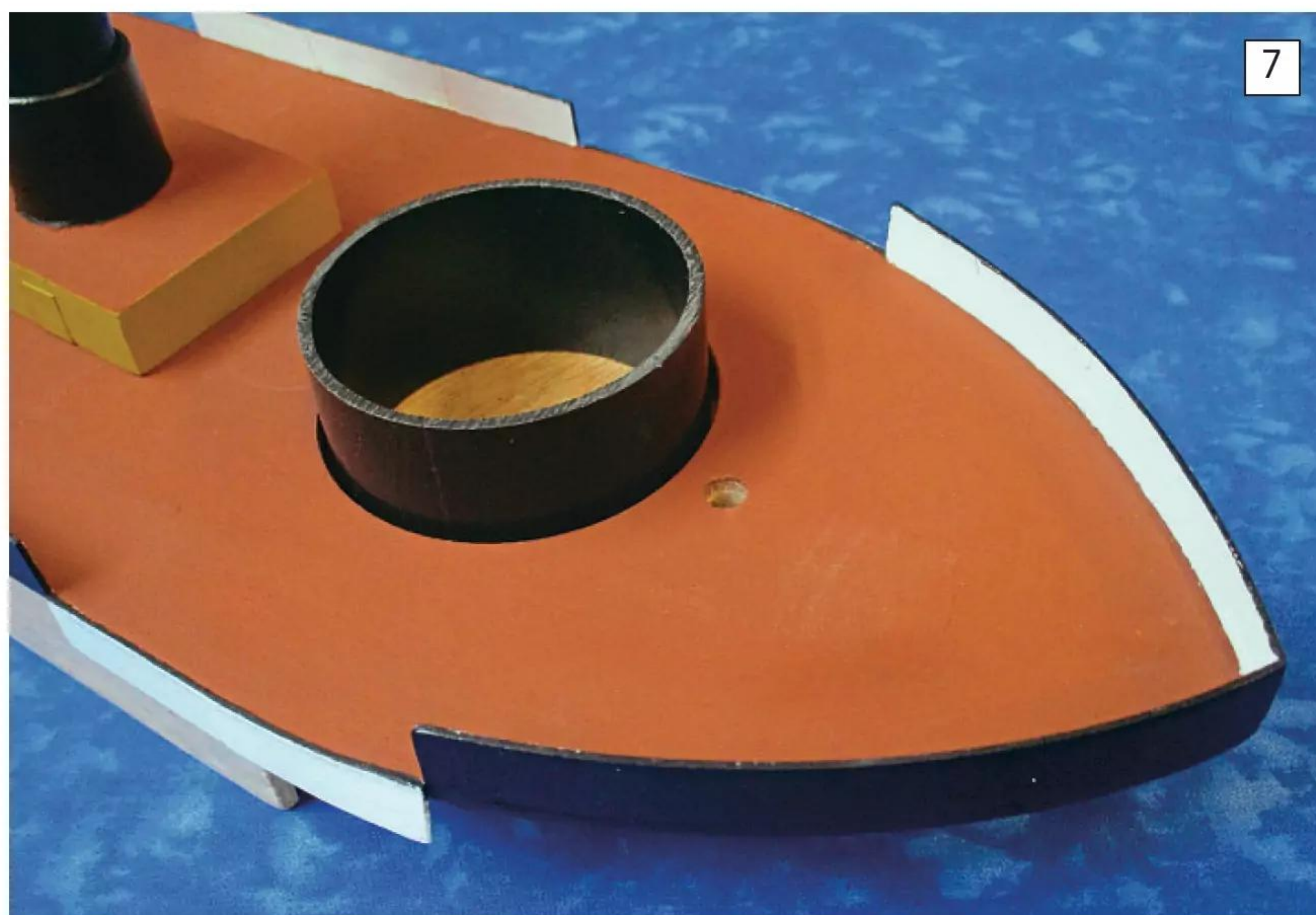
Black 56mm 'solvent weldable' drainpipe tube (see **Photo 5**), some sort of glue able plastic, and one 50mm clear acrylic tube were purchased, and slices of both were used to make the turrets, which were drilled at the front to accommodate either the twin or single cannons. These holes were elongated a bit with a file and then the turrets were based with thin clear styrene sheet. I did think, as the turret tops were nominally open, that I would make some carriage and cannon representations, then gave that up when the reality of the sizes became clear. But, when the barrels (5mm copper/nickel brake pipe tube) needed to be held in some fashion and small blocks of mdf were used





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to support them, lo and behold, they look like small slide carriages – well, blow me down, In **Photo 6** the twin front turret has had one half cover removed, and one of the rear turrets is similarly de-roofed, just so you can get a glimpse of the guns inside (there as a talking point rather than any attempt at strict historical accuracy). My hole saw cuts just marginally larger than either of these dimensions, but that's OK as it simulates the small gap between deck and turret that the Coles design had! Although the design of the turret was generally sound, this small weakness was necessary to allow for



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movement in the wooden hull and provide clearance so the turret could rotate – by hand unbelievably, geared obviously, with a full rotation taking something like two-to-three minutes. Leakage through the gap could be mitigated by using canvas awnings or something when making passage, but in action a certain amount of water

could get in (see **Photo 7**). This isn't a major issue, just an inconvenience, but having the small gap around the turrets on the model makes it an interesting conversation piece.

Finishing off

Once all the small pieces had been made and painted, it all started to



The Royal Sovereign giving a top performance on the pond at Bushy Park.

come together. First the turrets, once fully armed and painted, were stuck into their positions with acrylic glue, then the central walkway (with ship's boats on top) was added and the masts mounted with PVA to hold them secure. Although the mast positions were drilled on the pillar drill, there was a bit of movement in the fit, so time was taken to make sure they all lined up properly. The funnel went on its block next, with the conning tower and bridge wings glued in place before finally the front square shroud was added. Only when this lot was fully dry did I fit the davits, the positions of which had been drilled a while ago. I used superglue here, but I had to be careful to get the pairs upright and not protruding too far into the 4mm deck ply, or the top wouldn't have sat on the hull.

“What to do? There was only one answer...”

Rigging came last. Using black linen thread, tweezers and superglue, 'sufficient' rigging was added to achieve the right sort of look. Due to the model's small scale, I didn't even attempt to make fittings with which to secure the various halyards and standing rigging to the deck. Instead, I compromised by drilling very small holes into the deck (or wherever) and poking the thread through, then pulling tight and supergluing from underneath – and, actually, I think it looks busy enough.

Plain Jane (with apologies to any Janes out there!)

Once finished, the model looked a bit, well, underwhelming. While the rather dull mix of beiges, browns and black that make up its finish were just as they should be, there was simply wasn't much worth looking at on deck, and what little detail there was made up of brown wood and black iron. Deck planking even remotely to scale would have needed to be so fine it would barely be noticeable, and fittings on the real vessel had been kept to a bare minimum as they'd so easily have been swept away by the muzzle blast when the guns fired. Lifeboats would be OK, as they were stowed centrally and high upon a walkway, but the davits and all the side panels would've been lowered or stowed when in action. What to do? There was only one answer: I needed some crew to bring the vessel to life! This was risky, as the model isn't strictly to scale and when figures are placed next to items of, er, incompatible scale, there can be problems. However, some 1:150 scale railway people were purchased, and thankfully they looked about the right size (figures at the next available smaller scale, 1:200, were visibly much too small). Once painted up, using navy blue and white for uniforms and a little flesh colour for face and hands, despite little in the way of detail, considering their 13mm height, they sufficed as crew. Stuck on deck with superglue, they add instant interest. Job done!

On the water

As with all the GP series of hull/top combinations, there is nothing much to talk about here. The *Royal Sovereign* moves just like all the other options, and is very stable, manoeuvrable, etc. Apart from adjusting the ballast a bit, this top was simply put on the hull and off she went, success assured. It would be fair to say she looks a bit odd compared to the low freeboard Victorian ships we're used to seeing. The deck and walkway colours may not be strictly accurate, having been chosen for contrast, but the black, white and yellow ochre bits are more than likely correct, and the model displays the main features of the design well enough. The lack of anything resembling a superstructure on deck (other than the engine block under the funnel) harks back to the three masted sailing ships she was based on, but then the turrets look distinctly modern.

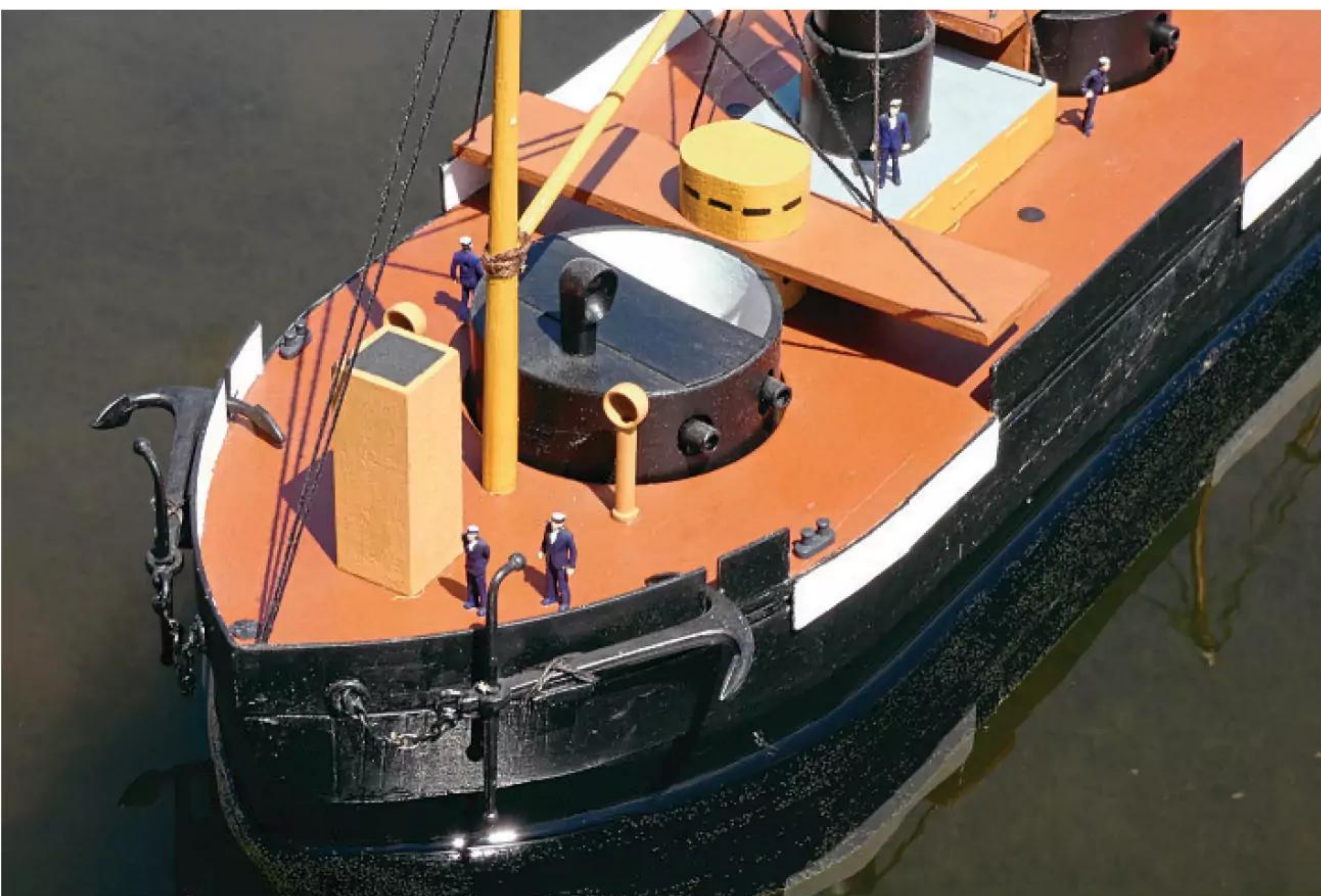
The Sovereign as a subject

Interestingly, the *Royal Sovereign* doesn't feature in any of the British battleship books I own, perhaps because she was an experimental ship or maybe because she was 'only' a coastal-defence type. She is, however, undoubtedly of historical significance, if for nothing else but successfully demonstrating the efficiency of Coles' turret. The guns proved capable of being fired three times within five minutes by a well-trained crew – which was most impressive back then – with her upper deck remaining largely unscathed by this (as opposed, for example, to the damage caused to HMS *Rodney*'s deck during an engagement with *Bismarck* in World War II – this requiring some serious dockyard repairs).

Also notable is that the *Sovereign*, as a razee, featured the lowest length-to-width ratio of any British ironclad, at just under 4:1. Oh dear, perhaps I shouldn't be drawing your attention that, as it will only lead to my guilty secret being exposed. For those of you already smiling knowingly though, I make no apologies, because this doesn't stop the *Royal Sovereign* from being yet another great top for the versatile GP hull.

Postscript...

Having said the crew were OK, I am undecided. They do look a teeny bit big, but smaller figures definitely look too small. In reality, no-one will know how big the real vessel was, so I will probably leave them as they are.... ●



Ashley has struggled to decide whether or not he is happy with the scale of Royal Sovereign's crew, but we think he is being a little too self-critical!



One of the prides of her generation, the four masted full rigger Peter Rickmers.

SQUARE DEAL INTRO OFFER

Always fancied trying your hand at building and sailing a square-rigger?
Nev Wade provides a useful and encouraging beginner's guide

I am not going to try to tell you how to build a model ship, many of you will be far better than I at doing that. Neither am I going to tell you how to sail one. However, while making a working model of a sailing ship may not have been one of your priorities, if it ever becomes so, you'll need some confidence before attempting to tackle such a project. What follows, then, is a way of acquiring some of that rare commodity.

First, make a mock-up...

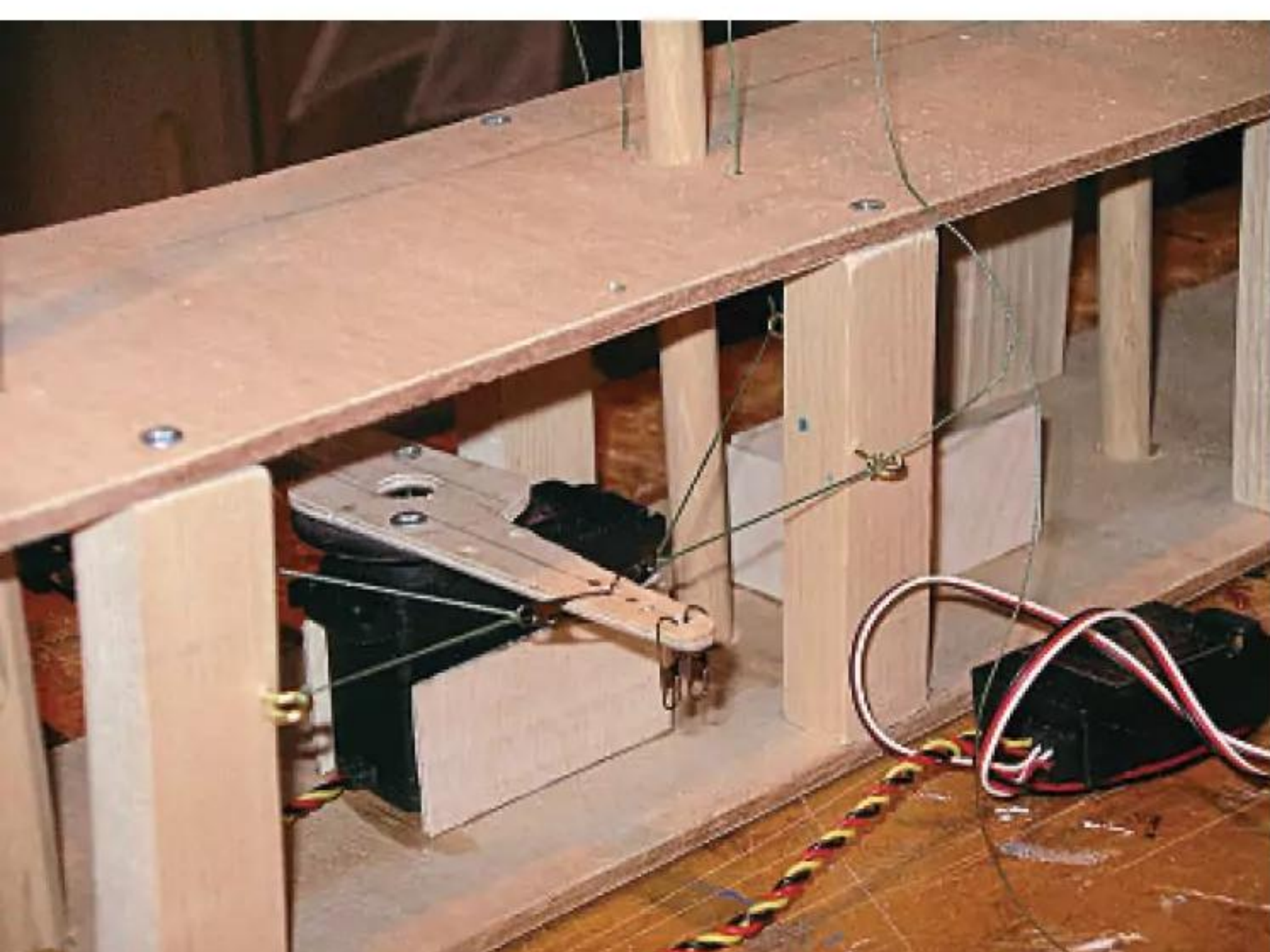
Making the yards brace round to get the wind where you need it is crucial.

How this is done isn't obvious, but it isn't difficult either. If you make a mock-up, you can try your hand at this quickly and easily. Here's one way to do it (see pictures)... Cut two boards to represent the bottom of a hull and the deck, and locate them about 120mm apart, one above the other. Then, fit three masts (fore, main and mizzen), cut from simple dowel, into the deck/bottom. Next, cut a yard per mast, again from dowel, and attach one to the fore side of each mast by a screw eye and hook, so that they can pivot (brace) horizontally. Following this, make small holes in the deck at each side of the main and mizzen masts. Finally, fit two servos,

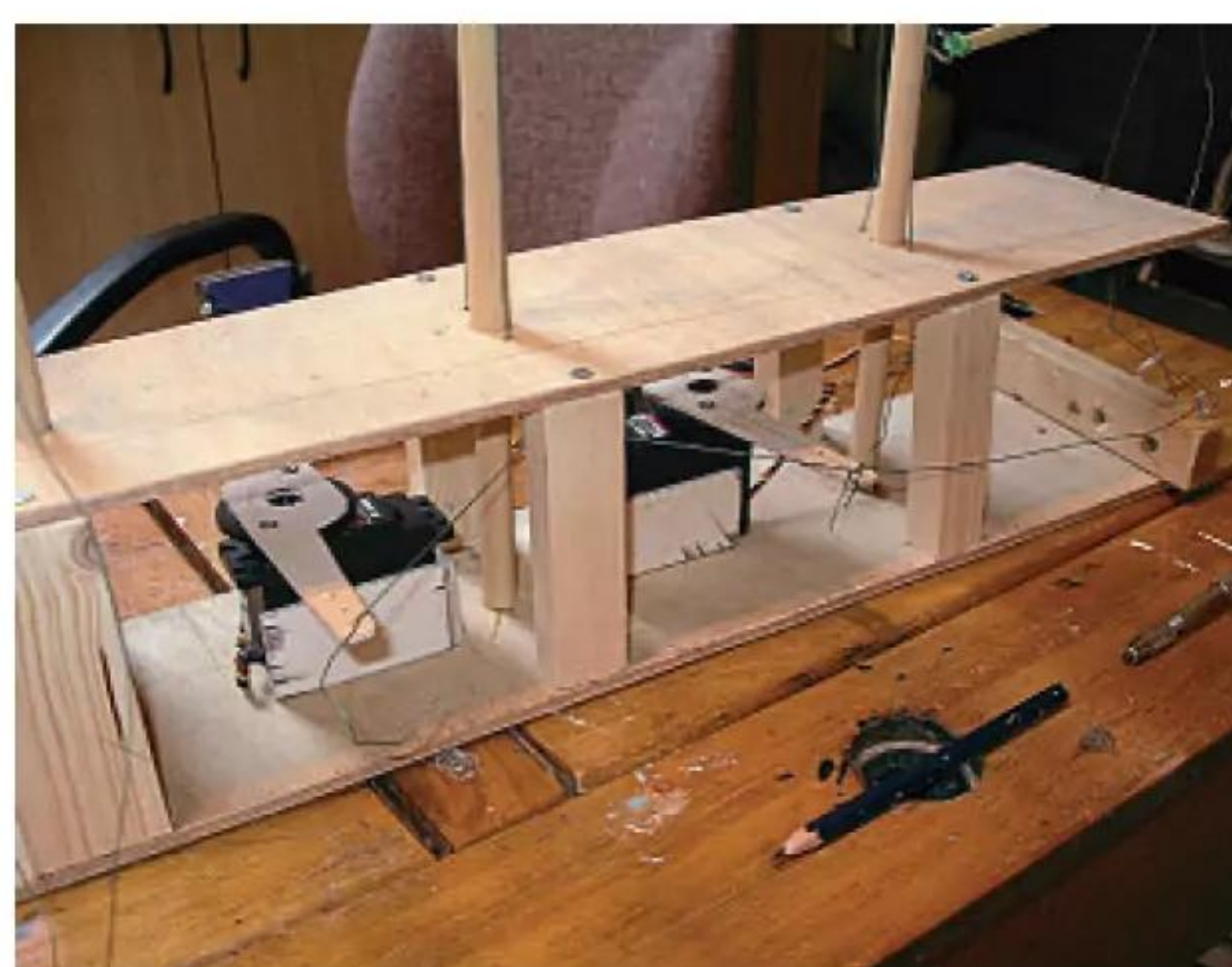
with centrally pivoted, extended, arms, one either side of the mainmast. Now you're ready for trials!

"Making the yards brace round to get the wind where you need it is crucial. How this is done isn't obvious, but it isn't difficult either"

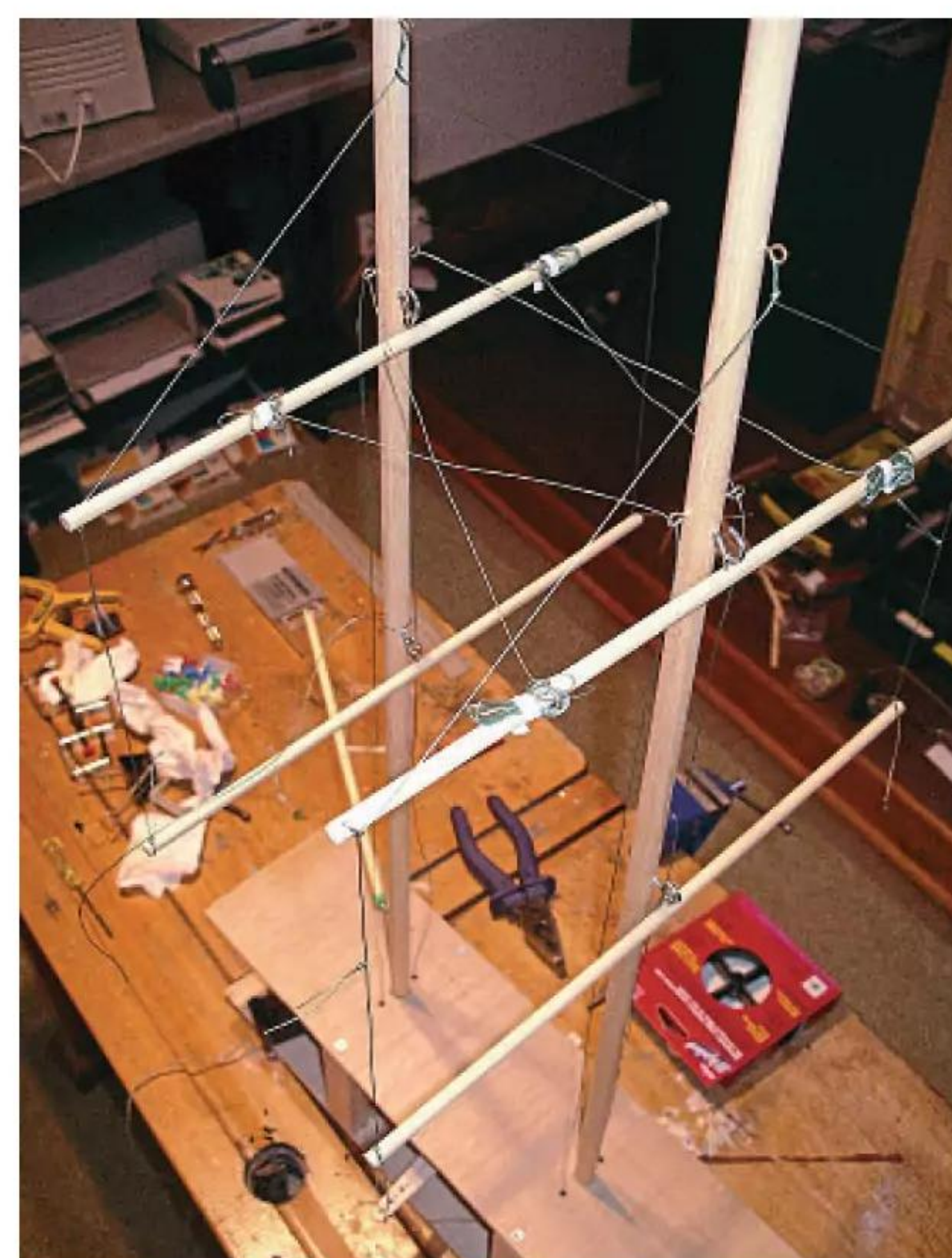
Attach a line to the starboard end of the servo arm on the servo between the fore and main masts (you choose which is fore, main, port and starboard) and run it aft, up through the hole in the deck by the starboard



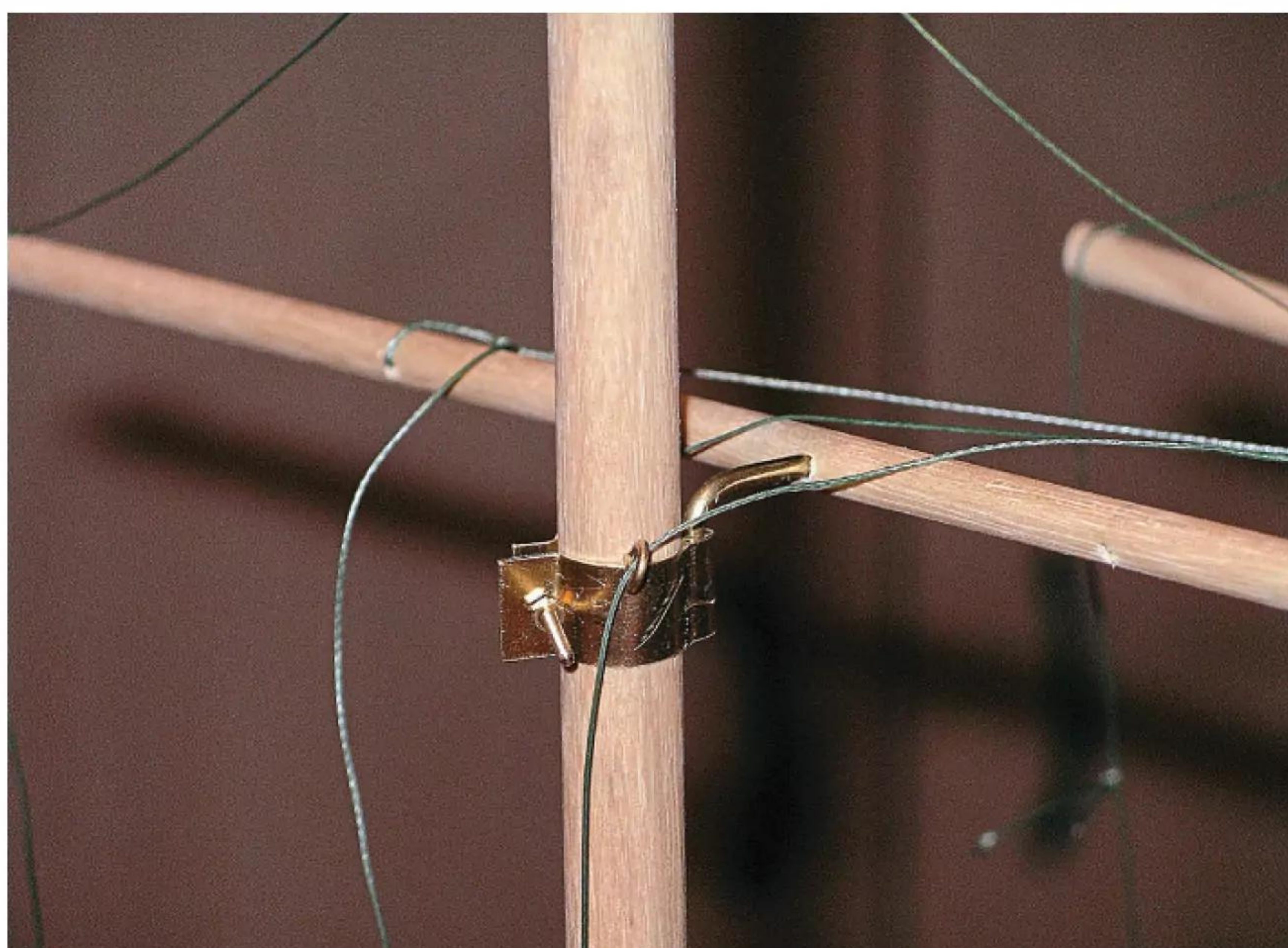
One of the servos in the mock-up. The lines are attached to fixed points and then run to pulleys at the end of the servo arm, before going up, through the deck, en route to their yards, one forward, one aft of the servo.



The whole length of the mock-up, this time with the lines attached direct to the servo arms. This set-up gives less movement of the yards for a given servo movement. Ignore the line running aft at the right of the picture; this was for an experiment which linked fore and aft sail control with that for the yards.



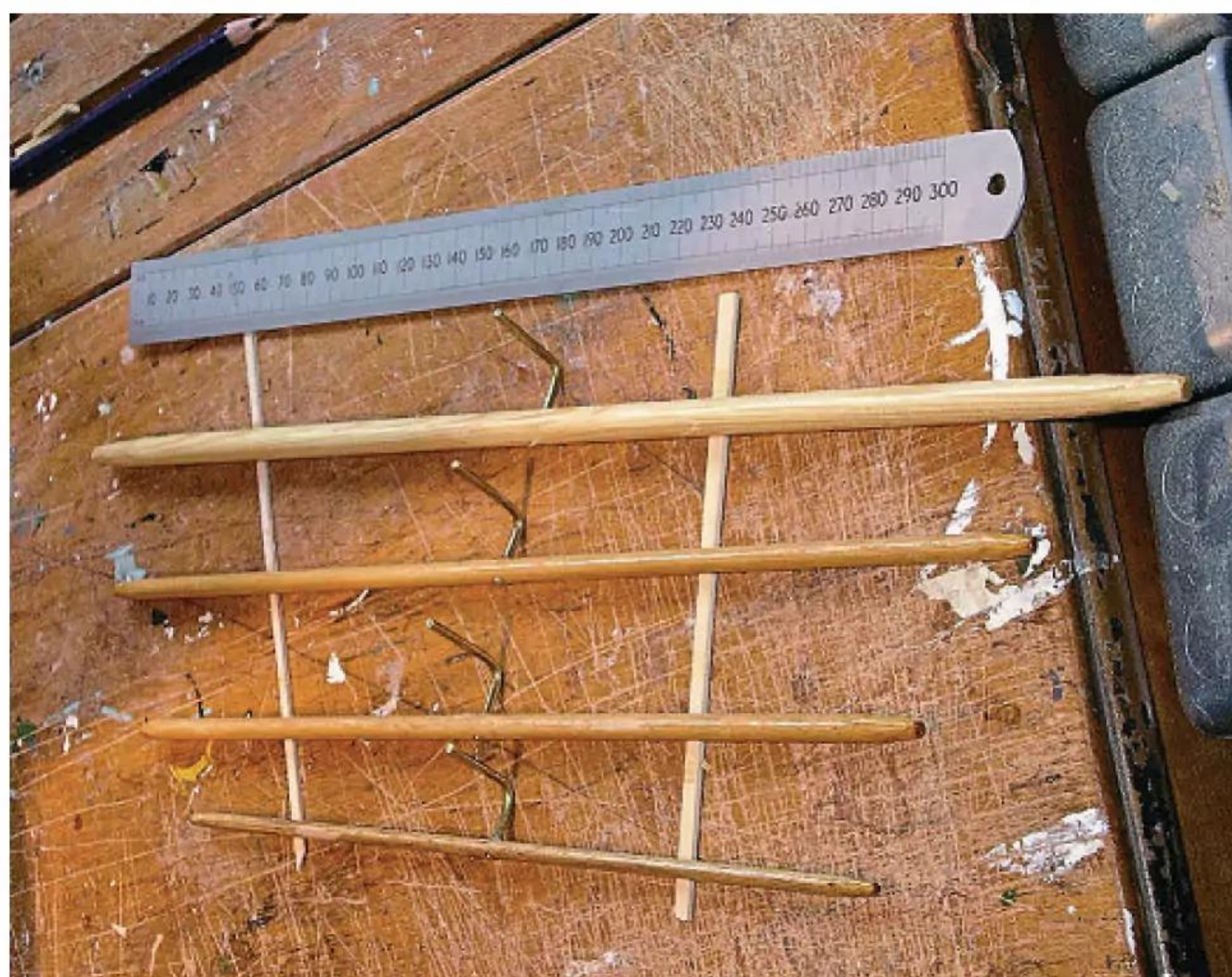
Looking down on the mock-up, you will see lines going out to yards from adjacent masts, both fore and aft. Attaching them in from the ends of the yardarms gives more movement to the yards when bracing. Lots of experimenting was going on here, so try to ignore lines suspending yards from above and vertical lines between yardarms, unnecessary complications in the end.



Nev's method of yard attachment, which sets the yard about 15mm forward of its mast. Also visible is the screw eye, through which the brace is led on the way to its yard arm situated on the next mast forward.

side of the mainmast. Now fit a screw eye into the starboard side of the mainmast just above the level of the yard you've fitted to that mast. Run the line up to the screw eye, send it through it and then across to the yard you've fitted to the foremast, and tie it on. You now have your first 'brace'. Do the same on the port side and, when you operate the servo, you should see the foremast yard 'brace' round, from one 'tack' to the other, as the servo arm pulls in the line at one side, while letting out that at the other.

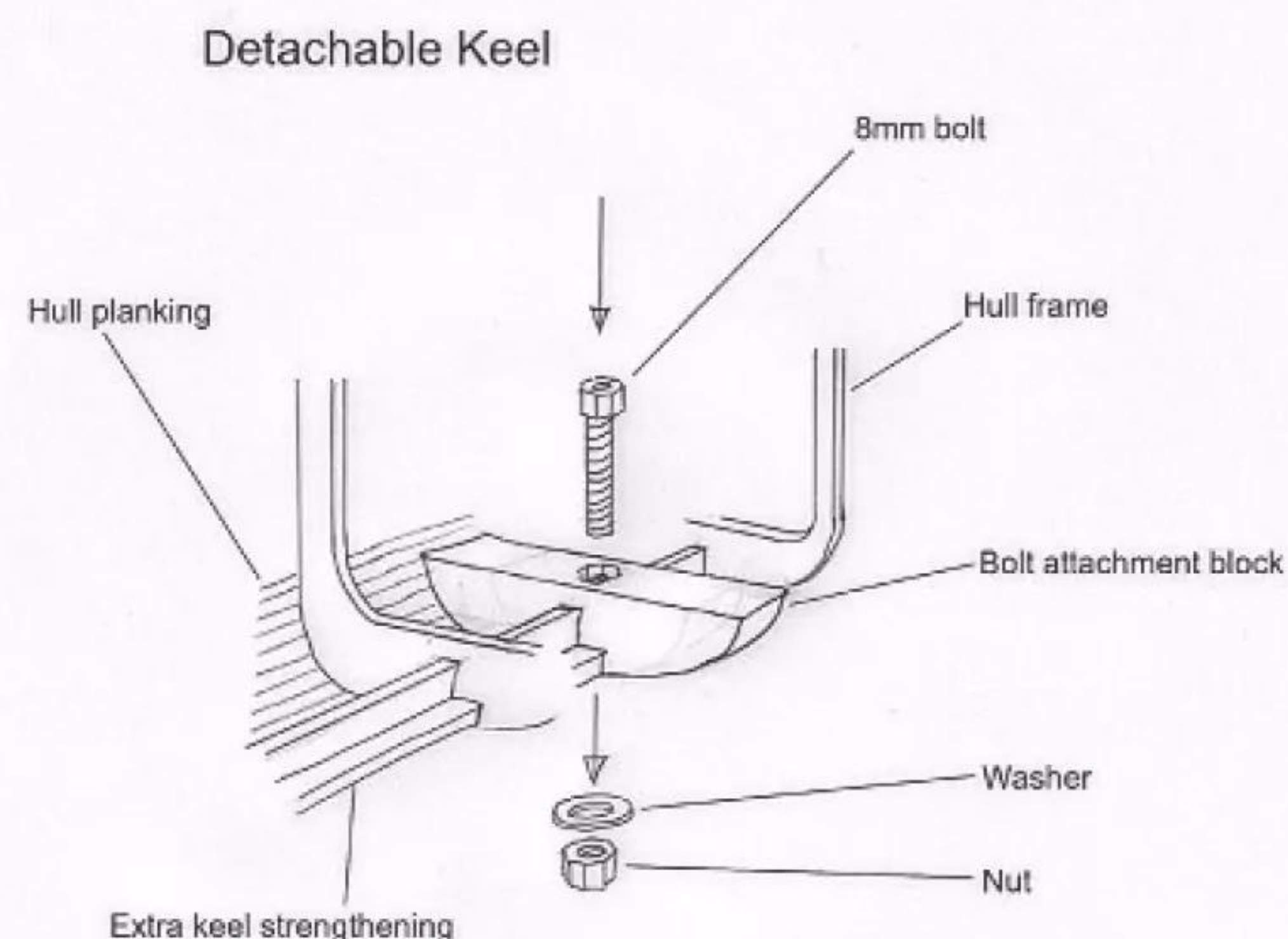
Square-riggers' yards were braced via the mast aft of the one to be braced, as you have set up above, but



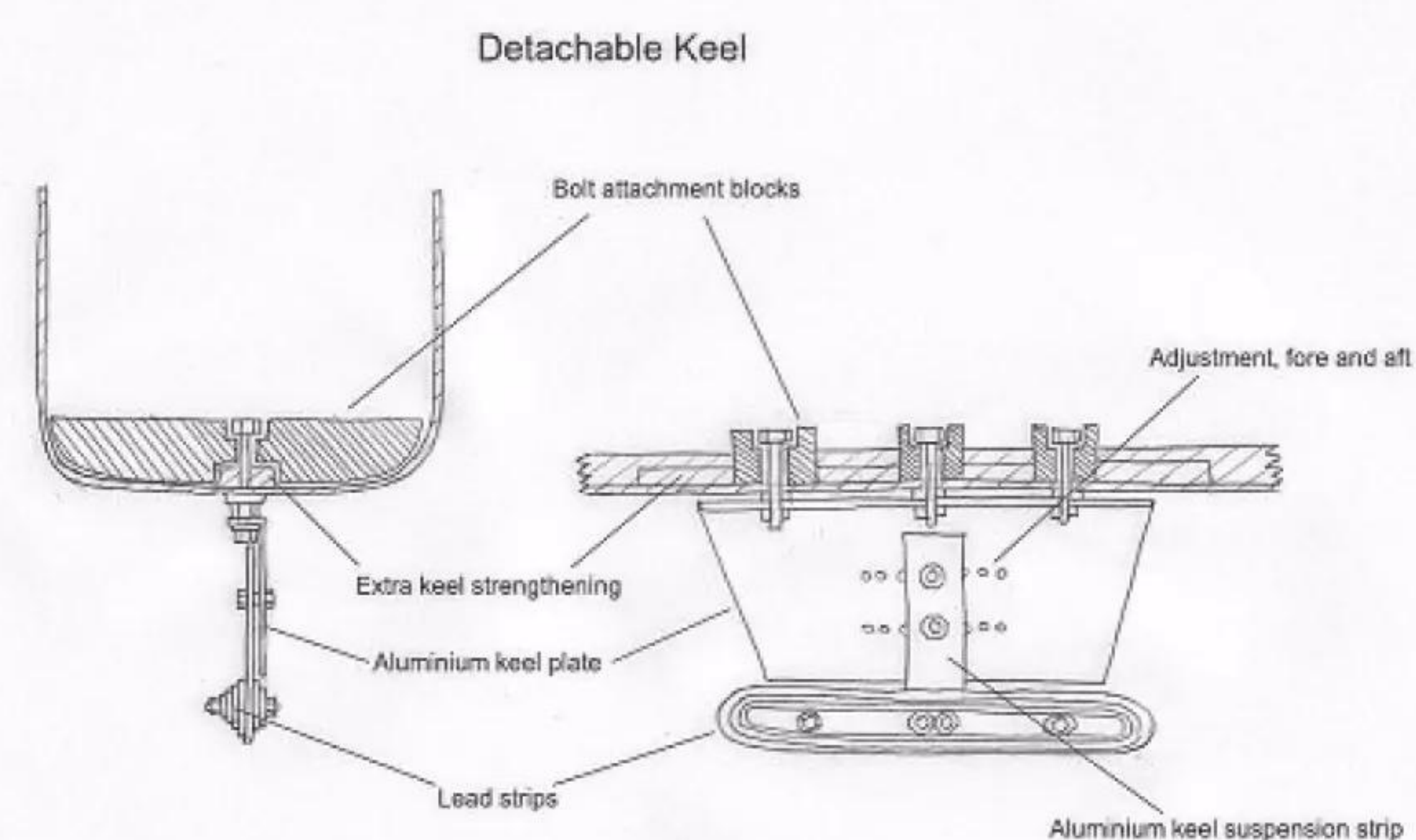
Yards ready to fit.



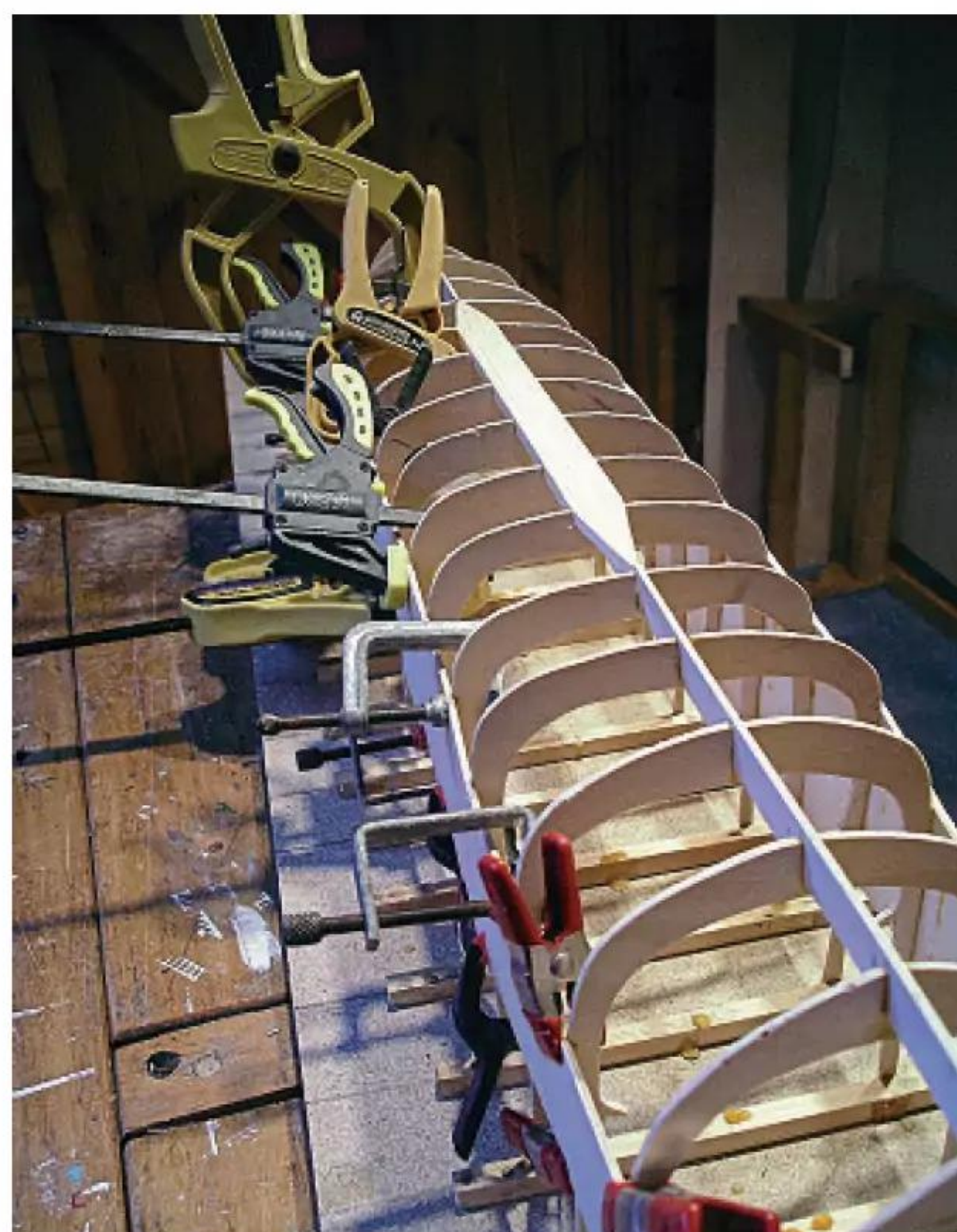
Yard attachment, using brass band and tube.



Keel strengthening for a detachable keel.



Detachable keel.



Keel strengthening.



Sailing keels.

'full riggers', with square sails also on the aftermost mast, had those braces run forward, to the mast **forward** of it (there being no mast aft of the aftermost one!). You too can set this up on your mock-up, if you take a look at the pictures and note the servo with lines running both fore and aft. That servo braces the yards both fore and aft of it, as if it was a full rigger. If you've followed me this far, you can try the next step, which is to attach the lines for one mast to fixed points at each side, rather than to the ends of the servo arm. From these fixed points, run the lines round pulleys at the ends of the servo arm and then send them up the mast, as above. Operate the servos and you should see the yard brace round more that it did earlier. You've just built a 'multiplying pulley system'.

Finally, rather than simply hang a yard via a hook, make some arrangement whereby the yard is held about 15mm forward of its mast pivot (see picture of the way I do it). When

you brace this arrangement, you'll see that the yard can be braced round further than when you simply hang it; we'll return to this again later.

If you get fed up during the above, you can simply throw the lot in a skip and go on to some other building project. If you've made it this far, then you'll have grasped sail control on a model square-rigger. This pulling of braces as above is exactly how it was done on real ships, though with manpower, not servos! Read on if you'd like some tips, do's and don'ts, etc, on all the other aspects of the build of such a model.

Caution!

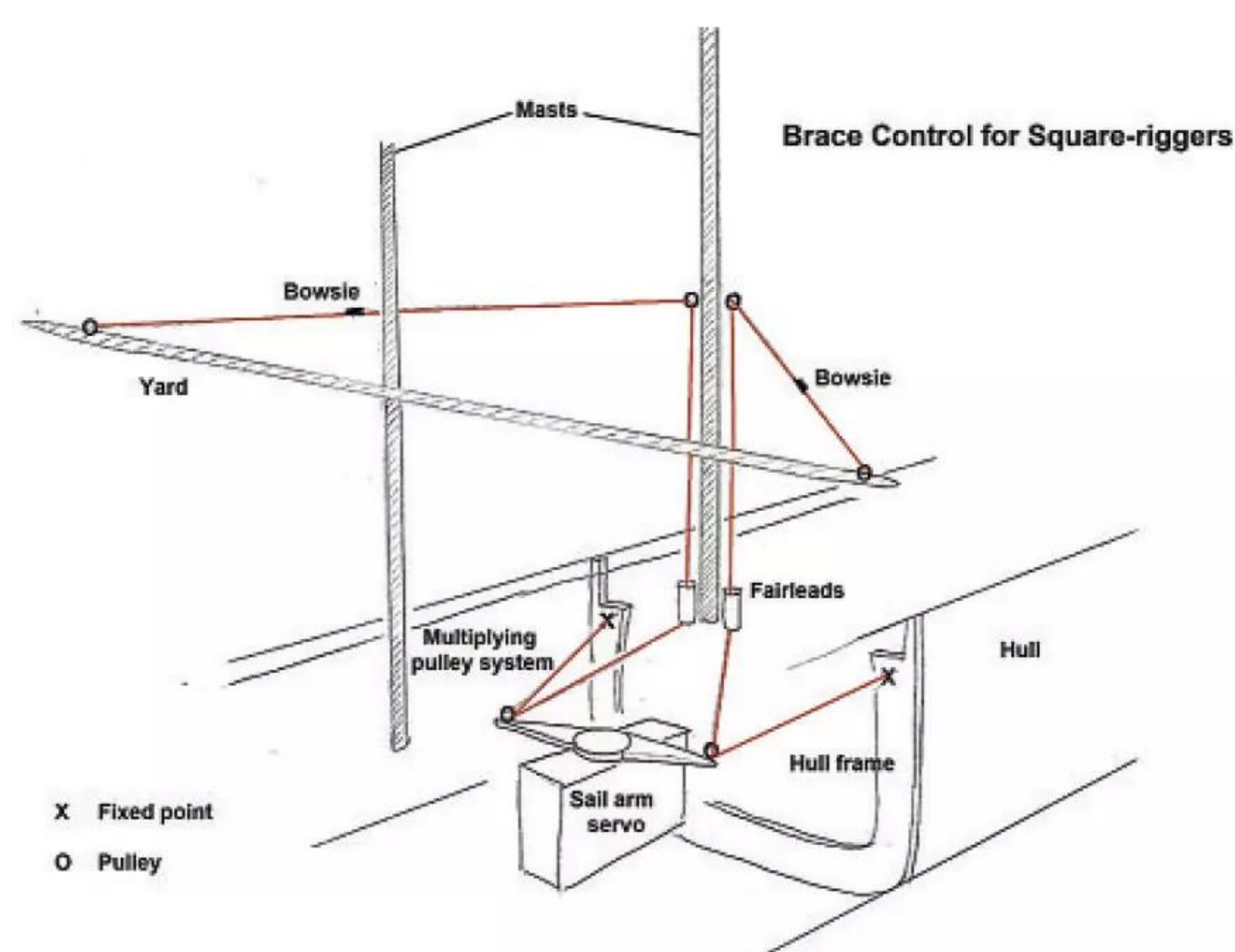
There are lots of ways of doing anything in our hobby, and I certainly haven't cornered the market on all of them. What follows are some things that are **non-negotiable** and others which are just how I've done things. If you proceed, I hope you find them all useful. Refer to the pictures to help with my descriptions and good luck!

Hulls

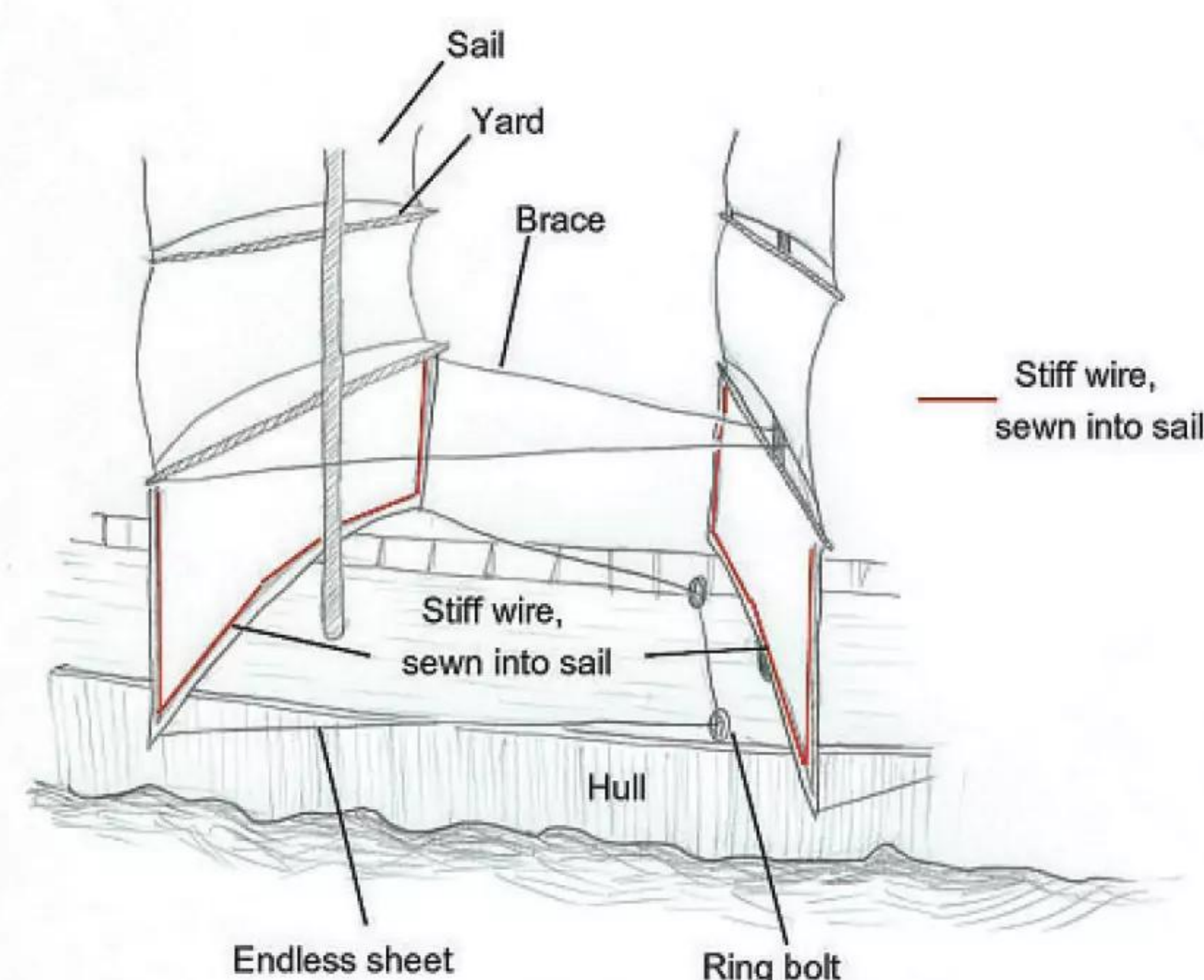
My advice here would be, build your own. Commercially made 'schooner' hulls are not like those of real square-riggers, so if you use one to make



An oversized rudder.



A bracing arrangement, including the multiplying pulley system.



Wire stiffened course, an endless sheet and a pair of braces.

a four masted barque you'll end up, after a lot of effort, with a dog's dinner. You might as well do the extra work and achieve some authenticity.

“Commercially made ‘schooner’ hulls are not like those of real square-riggers, so if you use one to make a four masted barque you’ll end up, after a lot of effort, with a dog’s dinner”

Brown, Son & Ferguson can sell you a catalogue of Underhill ship plans to choose from. You may only make one model, so make it of a worthwhile ship.

For the full experience, I'd say make a brig (two masts, both square-rigged), a barque (three, four or five masts, after mast fore and aft rigged) or a full rigged ship (three, four or five masts, all square-rigged).

The generally recognised ultimate development of the commercial sailing ship was the four masted barque and there are some real beauties to make. I've never built a galleon, so I don't know, but I do expect such a model to be more difficult to 'beat' to windward than any more modern, finer lined vessel, so a model of the later ships will sail better. I'd also say avoid a schooner, they sail like a yacht, so you won't get the full experience of square-rigger sailing, and you'll put in almost as much time to build one of them as you would a real square-rigger.

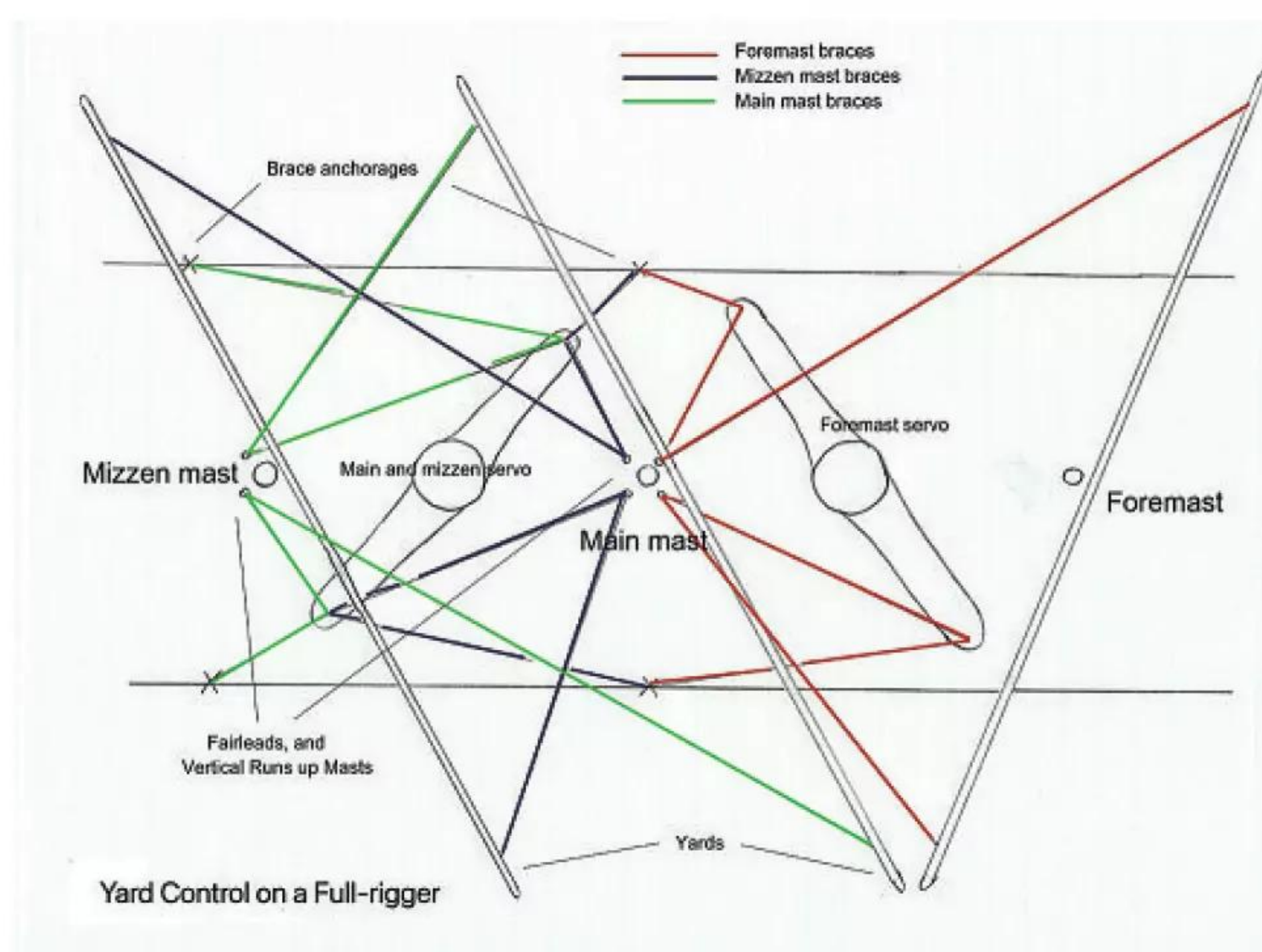
As to size, remember the car in which you'll transport it. All my models are between 1.0 and 1.3 metres long. The ships on which they are based were between 100 ft and 440 ft long, so the scales are 1:40, 1:75 (approximately) and 1:116. 1:40 for a 100ft ship and in the region of 1:75 for a four masted barque of

about 330 ft long will produce models that can deal with winds of up to 20 mph and give lots of great sailing.

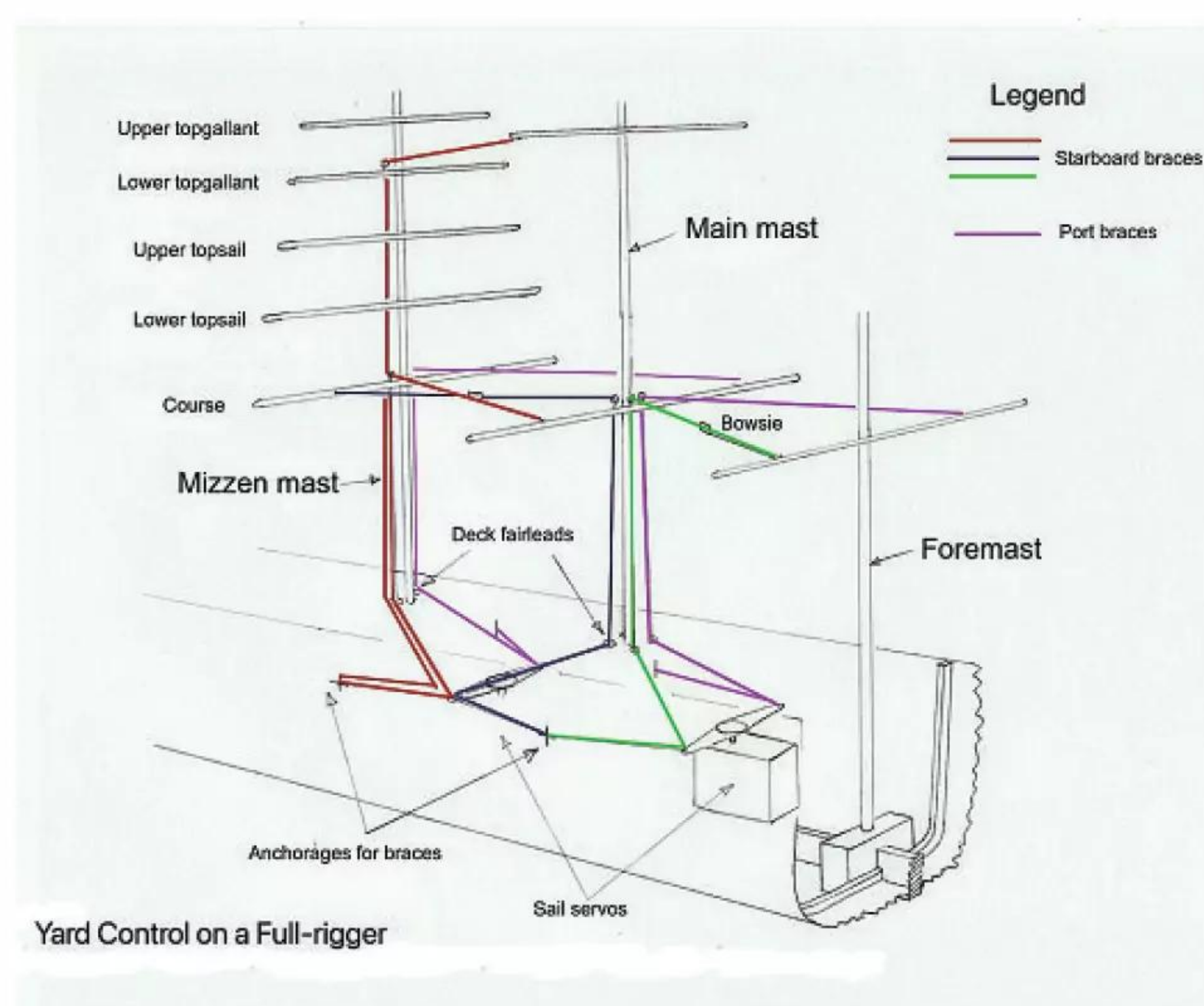
“For the full experience, I'd say make a brig (two masts, both square-rigged), a barque (three, four or five masts, after mast fore and aft rigged) or a full rigged ship (three, four or five masts, all square-rigged)”

Keel

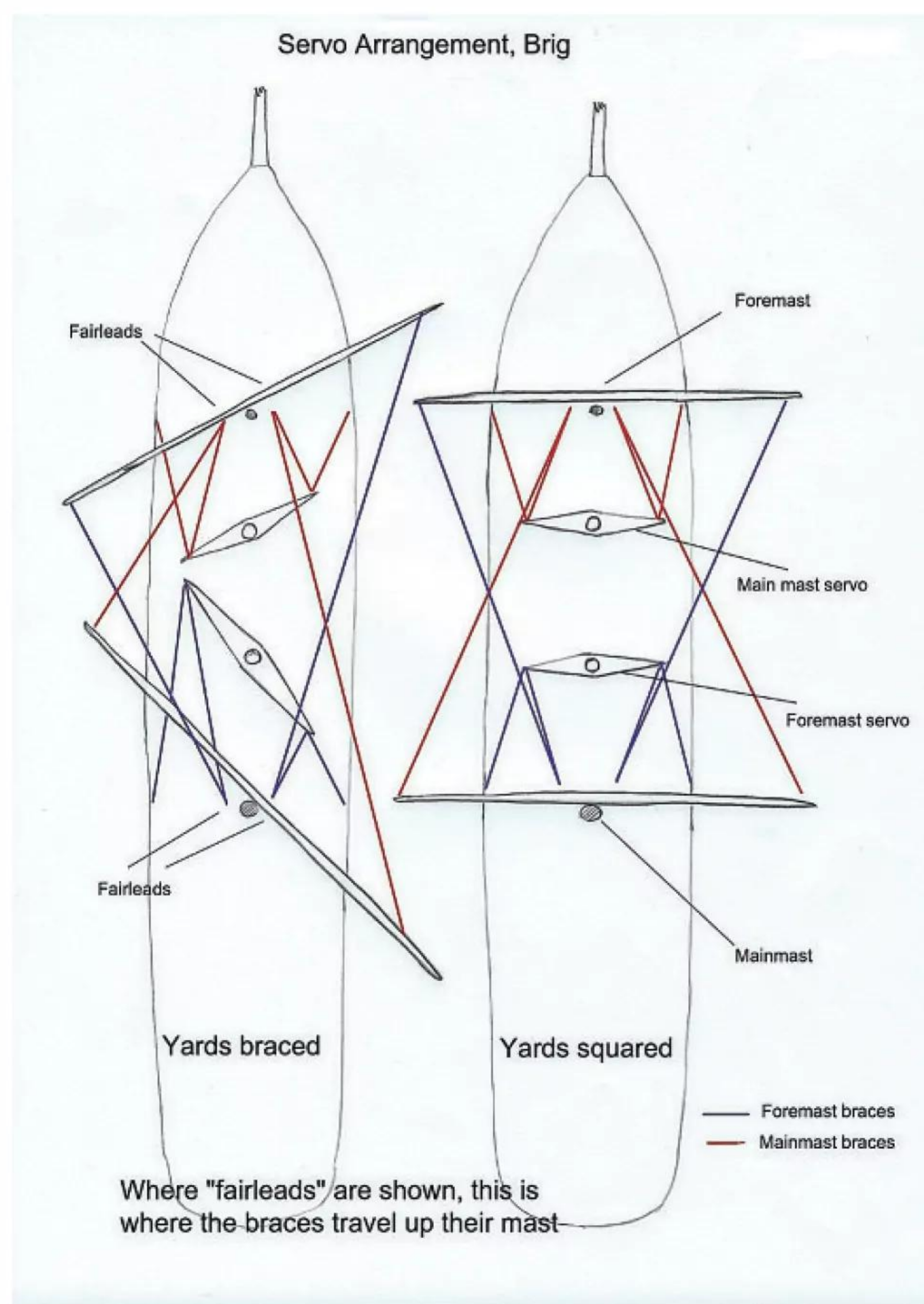
Models like these will require a sailing keel of between 2 and 8 kgs, depending on hull size. Needless to say, making the keel removable helps a great deal with transporting the model. Make the hull robust enough to carry this kind of keel weight. Some people build exquisite bulb keels, with elegant



The sail arm on the right braces one set of yards on the foremast of a full rigger. The sail arm on the left braces the yards on the main and mizzen masts, fore, and aft, of it. It may look incomprehensible, but persevere and you'll get there!



This is the same full rigger.



The arrangement for a brig.

fins, but I'm not one of them. My keels are of the plate variety, the idea being to help the boat 'grip' the water and stop it making leeway when beating to windward. They are remarkably ugly, but you can't see them when sailing, and they come off if you want to display your boat on a table.

Remember that sailing ships were cargo carriers, so they floated to

“Real sailing ship masters often set the trim like this to make the ship more responsive to the helm, and it works in the same way for a model”

different levels, depending on whether they were fully loaded or not. Nothing looks better than a ship deep loaded, not much hull and lots of sail, but, like that, just as with the real thing, they are less handy and ship more water across

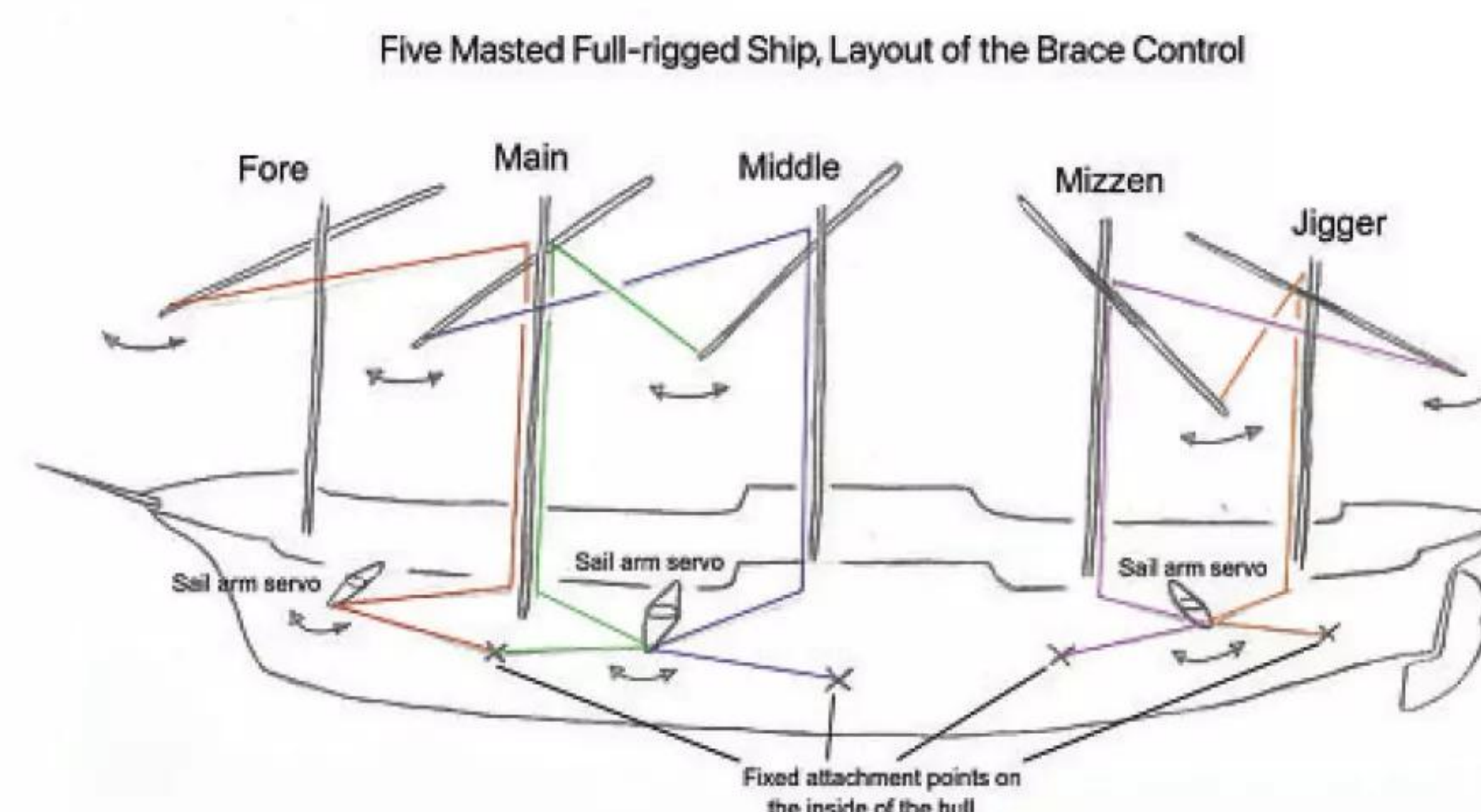
the deck. For your model, think 90% loaded, and trim the boat a little down by the stern. Real sailing ship masters often set the trim like this to make the ship more responsive to the helm, and it works in the same way for a model.



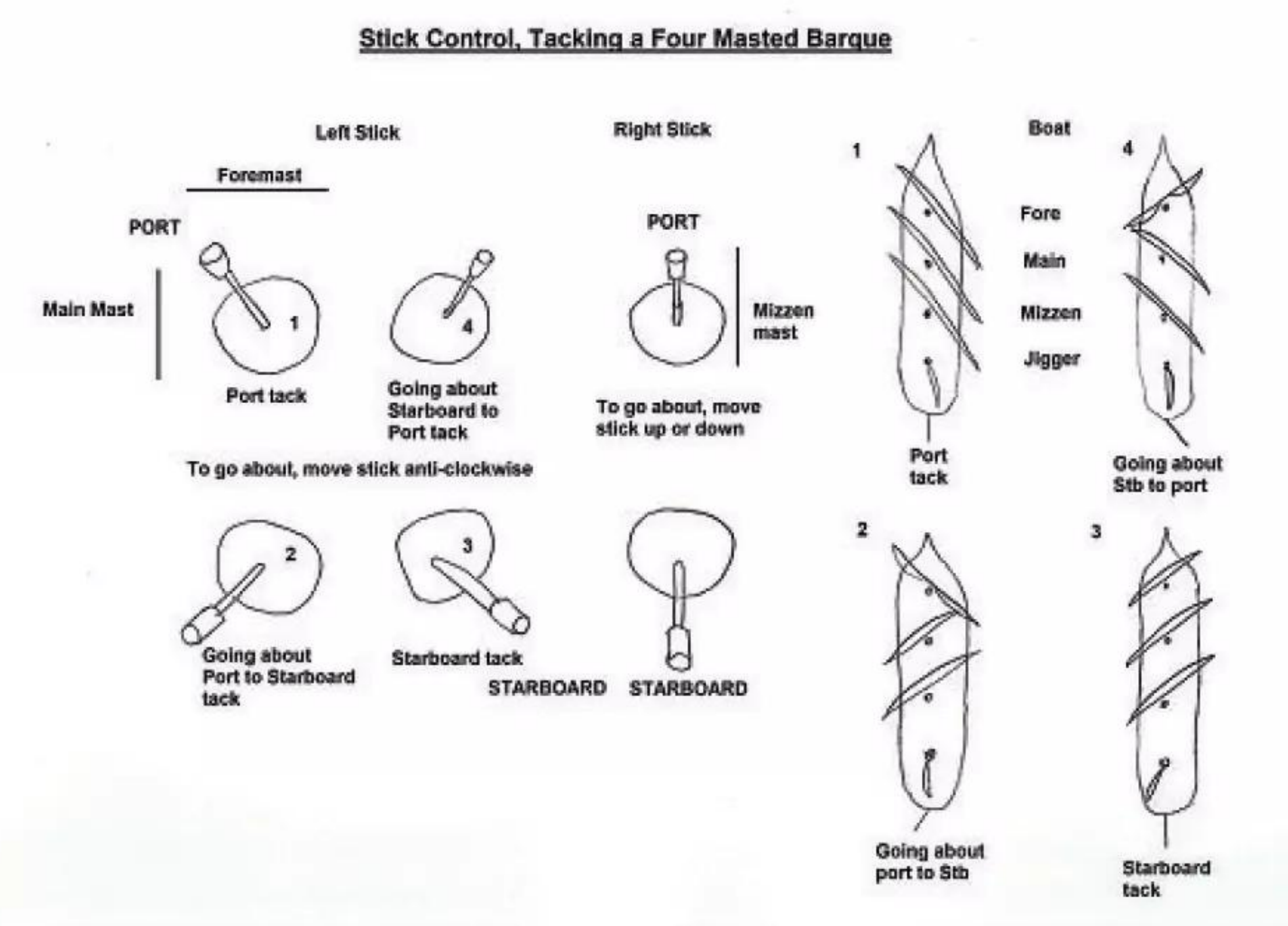
To save having to 'go below', here we see an on/off switch and the charging points above deck. Note the tops of the fairleads up, above deck level, out of reach (mostly) of water across the deck.



An actual brig, showing sail arms and the corresponding yard positions. Note that the sail arms are at different heights to prevent interference.



Just to show what can be done, here are three sail arms controlling five masts worth of yards. This model was built to 1:116 scale, so not much room!



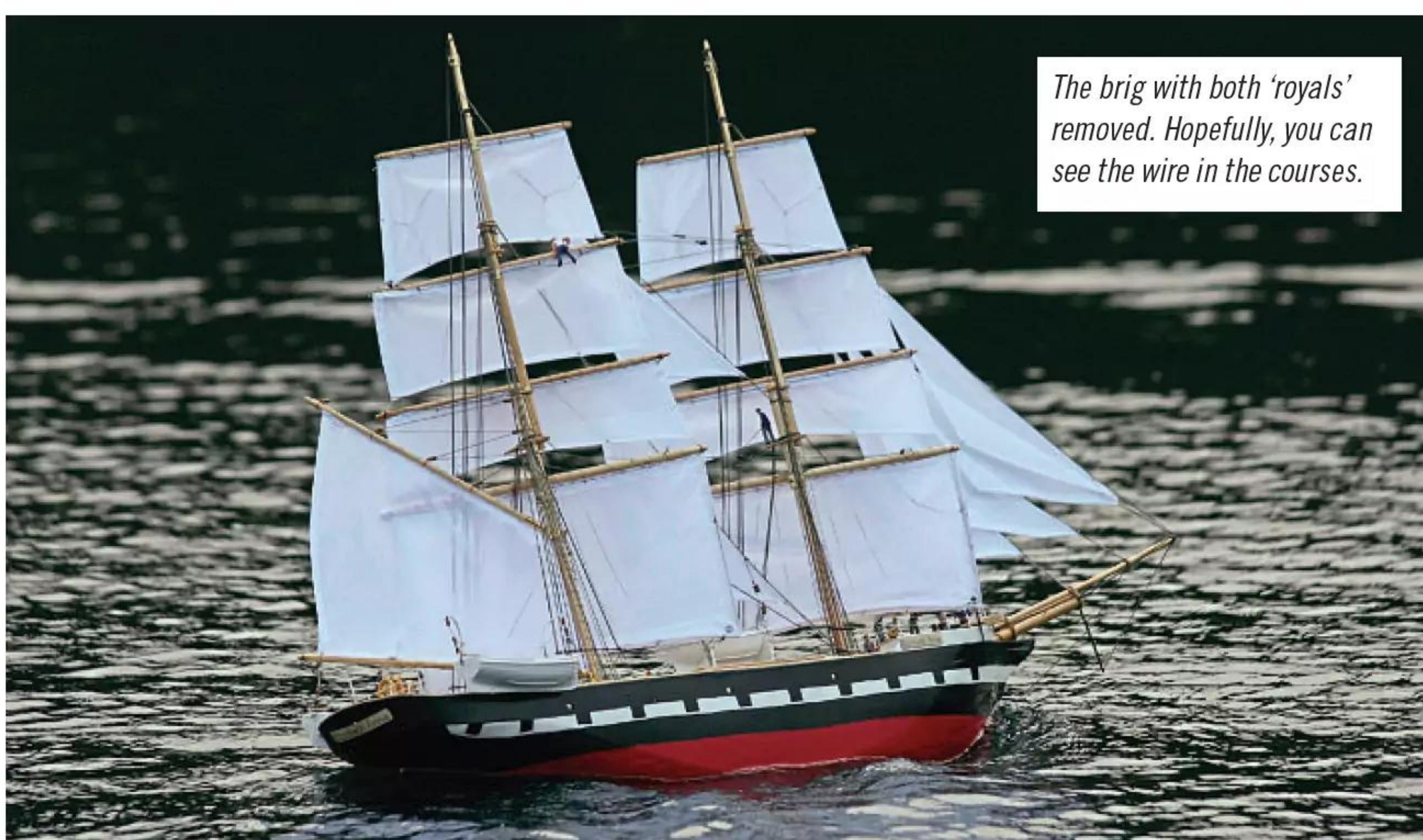
Another 'keep taking a look' challenge. Hopefully, you'll see the sequence of events, the intention being to make tacking intuitive.



The Hooghly River Pilot Brig Fame in 25mph of wind on a small pond in Sheffield. No chance for large waves to build here, so, with five sails removed, she can really fly. Shortly after this, she hit the side of the pond and broke the jibboom!



Under full sail, the brig sailing 'close hauled'.



The brig with both 'royals' removed. Hopefully, you can see the wire in the courses.

Rudder

The rudder on a real sailing ship was operated manually, with no power assistance, therefore, it was ridiculously small. Don't do that on your model, make it at least ten times scale size; you'll need that to manoeuvre quickly on a model boat lake, and you can hide the extra surface beneath the water.

"The rudder on a real sailing ship was operated manually, with no power assistance, therefore, it was ridiculously small. Don't do that on your model, make it at least ten times scale size"

Seaworthiness

The real ships took lots of water over the side and so will you when the sailing is really good. Therefore, make sure your hull/deck/hatches/etc are as near watertight as possible. I use false decks, sealed with decorators' caulk, then a planked deck with resin drizzled round it, finished off with several coats of varnish. Where the braces come up through the deck, I have the top of the fairleads about 20mm above deck level so that water swirls past, rather than going down. Unless you love un-taping hatch covers to regularly go below to the electrics, you might like to consider having some charging points in the deck and use crocodile clips to fasten charging leads to them, and also to have an on/off switch above deck level. You'll need a fairlead at the extreme stern of the model to allow a sheet to run to the end of the 'spanker boom' (the spar of the yacht-like sail on the aftermost mast). Engineer this in such a way that you can use it to drain out any water that does come aboard (no pumping with a syringe!).

Aloft

I use Ripstop Nylon for my sails, because I like it. There are models with better looking sails however, so your choice is as good as mine.

The billowing sails of a chocolate box sailing ship are not the sails of a latter-day windjammer. All windjammers' were sheeted much more flat. Think of a mast full of sails as a giant, vertical wing, like an aircraft, and you'll have the idea. For all the square sails with a yard above and below attachment is simple: lace to the yard above and tie the bottom



The four masted barque Herzogin Cecilie nearing the limit, with nine sails removed. You'll not get bored and let your attention wander when you're sailing like this.



With strong wind, big waves and the North Sea in the background, Herzogin Cecilie putting her lee rail under and just holding her own.



Peaceful sailing now.

corners to the ends of the yard below. The bottom sail on any mast, the 'course', is different, as there is no yard beneath it, so here things become more complicated. It may surprise you to learn that sometimes you have to be able to use the wind from in front of the sails in order to perform certain manoeuvres. Again, that's easy where sails are supported from above and below, but, for the 'course', additional help is needed.

"The bottom sail on any mast, the 'course', is different, as there is no yard beneath it, so here things become more complicated..."

To hold the course back, into the wind from astern, I run a line, which I call an 'endless sheet', from one bottom corner of the sail to the other, via ring screws set into the deck just in front of the next mast astern. This arrangement holds back the sail, even when the yards are being braced round. To do the same job when using the wind from in front, I sew 2.5 mm diameter brass wire into the seams of the course, down one side, across the bottom and up the third side, all in one piece. This keeps the sail flat, like a solid sheet, which also helps when the yards are braced right round by not allowing the wind to easily get around onto the fore side of the sail and cause it to be caught aback.

At this point we are dealing with something that is **non-negotiable**. You must ensure that the yards brace round to within 30 degrees of the centreline of the model. At this angle you can sail the boat to about 65 degrees to the wind, and with that make progress to windward. If your yards don't go round that far you will end up going, frustratingly, to leeward, and all your time and effort will have been in vain. Also involved here are the flat sails and, especially, the flat courses. On a real ship the bottom corners of the courses were held tightly in place by lines that ran forward and aft. When the sails were braced right round, the bottom corners on the windward side were held very far forward so that the wind did not easily get round in front of them. The only way we can achieve this amount of control is by use of the stiff wire we've sewn in. Don't be tempted by solutions like draughting film or other stiffish materials, they will not meet the case.



*The Grain Race barque Penang
'beating' on the starboard tack.*



*Penang 'running', with the
wind from right aft.*



*Penang with the wind
getting up.*

Mounting the yards 15mm forward of their pivots on the masts is also vital for this. If you don't pivot like this, the masts will get in the way of the yards, and they will not brace round far enough. Also, the multiplying pulley system, and attaching the braces in from the ends of the yards, will play their part. Every little does help, and it is all vital!

On a real ship the courses were braced round more than any other sail on the same mast. Each sail was braced slightly less than the one below it, and the effect was a kind of 'corkscrew' of sails. The purpose was to ensure that if any sail was to start to be caught aback, it would be the highest and smallest of those set. When sailing by the wind, the helmsman would watch the highest sail on the aftermost mast; if it started to 'lift', he knew he was too close to the wind. I have not been able to reproduce this on my models as I don't have individual control of every yard. Maybe you can go one better and show the 'screw of the sails' as it was called (see picture of *Mount Stewart*). I use two pairs of braces per mast, one pair attached to the course and the other attached to the lower topgallant, the fourth sail up. The idea is to spread the bracing effort across most of the mast.

Sailing ships coped with heavier weather by taking sails off. As far as we're concerned, this should be done from the top down, although it wasn't as simple as that in the real world. You can arrange this by having some of your uppermost sails made removable, achieved by sewing hooks into their bottom corners which engage in 'goalposts' on the yard beneath.

If you want a definitive guide to sailing ship rigging, you can do no better than *Masting and Rigging, the Clipper Ship and Ocean Carrier* by Harold Underhill. My taste is to minimise the amount of non-essential rigging (no ratlines, for instance); you may choose to go another way.

Control

It is not the aim of this article to cover all aspects of how to sail one of these models, I've written about that elsewhere. Here I'm just going to touch on some tips, to try and make your experience easier.

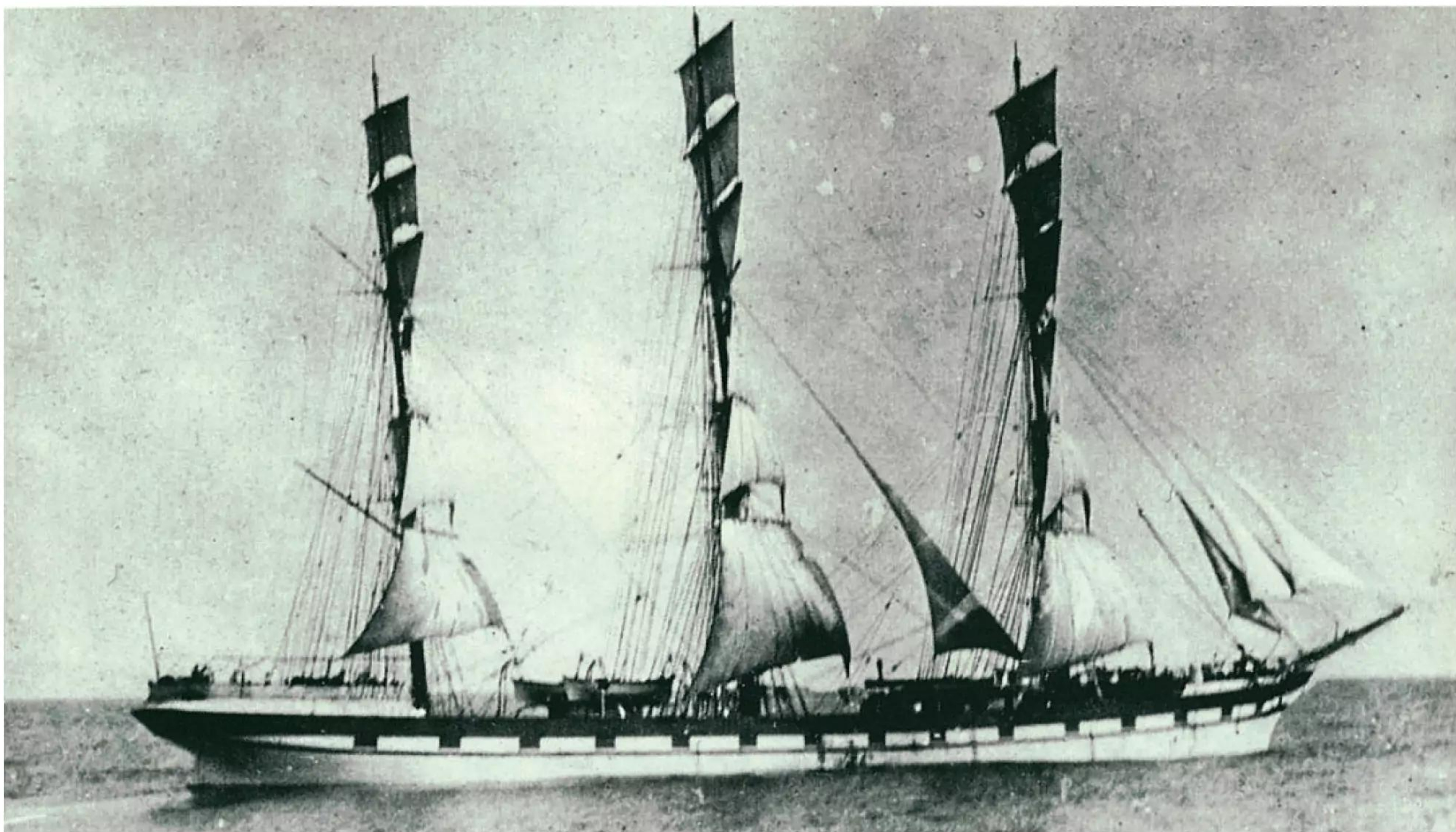
Some people use sail winches to brace their yards, and I know of one expert builder who uses motors, line shafts and worm gears to operate his. I use HiTec HS765 sail arm servos to



The little full rigger Joseph Conrad romping along.



The four masted barque Archibald Russell beating in a good breeze.



The 'screw of the sails': Mount Stewart, last of the wool clippers, showing how it was done. Note how far forward the corners of the courses on the port, windward side, are.

operate mine, with centrally pivoted arms as long as the beam of the model will allow. Due to the way in which a square-rigger was tacked, it is very useful if you have separate control of the foremast yards. With my method, you can brace round the yards much more quickly than was possible in reality, which will help you sail. If you want to reproduce the real experience, you can operate the sail arms slowly.

“With my method, you can brace round the yards much more quickly than was possible in reality, which will help you sail. If you want to reproduce the real experience, you can operate the sail arms slowly”

The type of vessel you build will determine where, and how, the servos will operate. For a four masted barque it's simple, one per square-rigged mast, each behind the mast to be braced. For a brig you'll need to have both servos between the masts, set at different heights, to avoid interference. For a full rigged ship (all the masts square rigged) the two aftermost masts can be controlled by one servo between the

masts, with braces running fore and aft, if you choose. If you can, two servos are better, as with the brig, but space makes this harder, though not impossible – it depends how large your hull is. The diagrams here should give you an idea of what's involved. I know they look a bit daunting but, hopefully, they will help you to understand.

I use 6-channel radio gear. The only channel left with spring loading on the stick is that for the rudder. If you rely on your fingers holding the other sticks in place to keep the yards where they need to be you are doomed to failure; your fingers will relax, the yards will move, the wind will get on the wrong side of the sails and you will not go where you want to. So, on the other three channels, my sticks have their spring loading removed, so that they stay where they are put. Consequently, I can forget holding the sticks and concentrate on sailing. You'll see my set-up in various pictures and, if you follow the lines, you'll see where the braces go in different situations. The one thing I've tried to do is to make the use of the sticks as intuitive as possible.

Depending on the mast involved, left, or up, on the stick is port on the model; right, or down, is starboard. Without going into all the details, when tacking, the yards on all the masts except the fore are put onto

the new tack as the boat's head goes across the wind. Once the outcome is assured, then the yards on the fore are also put on to the new tack. So, on my boats, going about is simply a matter of taking the left-hand stick anti-clockwise 'round' its travel, while moving the right-hand stick up and down. I can also place the yards in any position from one tack to the other and simply leave them where they are put in order to sail 'with' the wind. It's all just a way of doing what is required, with the minimum of thought. I can simply concentrate on the model in the water. Your mind may take you in different directions.

Over to you...

That's it. Of course, at this stage you may simply be scratching your head. But, if I have given you food for thought and you go on to make something then I'll be delighted to have opened the door to a forgotten world, that of the large, late model, merchant sailing ship. ●

YouTube viewing

You'll find quite a few videos Nev has posted on his YouTube channel. Keying 'Nev Wade' into the search engine should instantly call up two videos on building and plenty more on sailing.

1A



MV *Venture*, LK641

Jim Pottinger presents a challenge for the more experienced scratchbuild modellers amongst you...

I should perhaps begin by pointing out that the construction of this model is aimed at the more experienced craftsmen amongst you. Please also be aware that some metal working tools, such as a small lathe, will be required for making the numerous deck fittings, such as the winches, power blocks, etc.

“Some metal working tools, such as a small lathe, will be required for making the numerous deck fittings, such as the winches, power blocks, etc”

My plans have been drawn to a scale of 1:30, which will result in a model of manageable (823mm in length overall) size while still affording plenty of internal volume for a power plant.

A bit of background

The *Venture*, LK641, a 24.7 metre fishing trawler, was built by James N. Miller of St Monans in Fifeshire in 1991 as yard number 1044. The Miller family of St Monans operated from 1779 until 1976 and thus could justly lay claim to being the longest serving boatbuilders in the East Fife area, and as such had a wide and renowned reputation. So, when in 1976 the

family sold out to McTay Marine Ltd (part of the Mowlem Group), based in Bromborough on the Mersey, the business continued to trade as James Miller & Sons Ltd until closure in 1993. The building shed was demolished in late 2009 and McTay Marine went into liquidation in 2015, when the shipyard was taken over by Carmet Marine Ltd.

The vessel had originally been named *Victoria May*, PD293, when built in 1991, before then being renamed the *Lynne May*, PD267, in 1994. It was under the latter name that she was bought by Shetland owners from Peterhead in 1999 and renamed *Venture*, LK641.



She now trawls all round Shetland, the North Sea, Atlantic, and also Faeroese grounds when quota allows, landing the catch at the Lerwick or Scalloway fish markets, depending on which is most convenient and certain other factors, such as current market prices, distance to steam, and weather conditions prevailing at the time. Some of the illustrations here will give you a sense of the weather conditions often experienced when fishing in these northern waters. Shetland is surrounded by some of the most prolific fishing grounds in the world, and as such has often attracted some unwanted vessels from other nationalities.

Owned by a local partnership, which includes my nephew Jerry and Ivor Moffat as co-skippers, usually working on ten-day spells each, the boat is more or less continuously fishing unless ashore for repairs, regular repaints, etc. She was originally designed to operate a trawler or seine netter but was wholly converted for trawling shortly after moving to Shetland. Amongst various modifications carried out were the removal of the seine net warp reels, shooting hatches in the shelter deck and various warp coilers. The cod end bag hatch was moved further forward on the starboard side to facilitate the length of the fish conveying and handling installation on the main deck under the shelter deck top. The former single pole derrick for lifting the cod end aboard was replaced by an enclosed frame gantry, which ensures greater control of the laden cod end bag when hoisting on board and emptying the fish through the

hinged hatch. The single derrick previously rigged on the foremast that had been used to unload the catch was removed and replaced by an articulated hydraulic crane deck mounted derrick, which is more efficient for this duty.

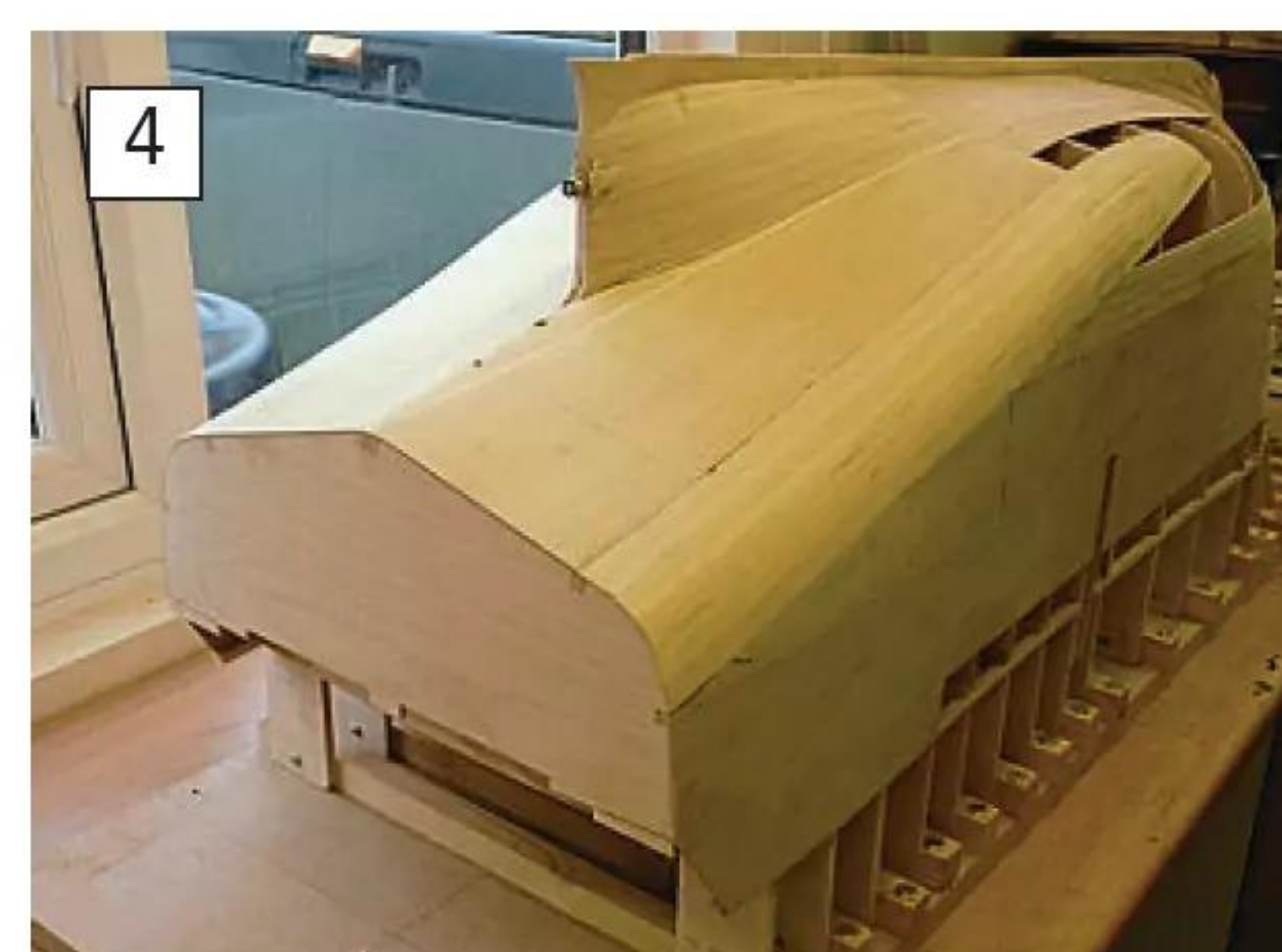
Subsequently, significant alterations by Parkol Marine at Whitby included a new gearbox, a larger 2,200mm diameter propellor and bigger diameter Kort nozzle to suit (this necessitated moving the rudder stock one frame length further aft), all of which gave a considerable reduction in fuel costs and better bollard pull at lower revolutions when towing.

Recent additions include an ice making machine for catch preservation in the hold and a conversion plant to distill seawater to fresh water for ice making, a measure which obviates the need for carrying additional sea water for this purpose. The original Deutz 372kW/500 bhp diesel was replaced by a Caterpillar 3508B93kW/795 bhp diesel, before this in turn was replaced by the current Cummins diesel engine.

The model

While having full lines and relatively heavy displacement, *Venture* still retains some of the more traditional aspects of a fishing boat's shape (see **Photo 1A, 1B and 1C**), contrasting with some recently commissioned boats which have a large beam and a depth consistent with very large internal volume and displacement.

I am not a model builder and acknowledge the fact that many of you will have your own tried and tested methods of construction. So,



rather than providing a step-by-step constructional guide, the following notes, and photographs, are merely intended as pointers.

The three model hull construction images shown (see **Photos 2, 3 and 4**) were in fact produced for a different model (*Shemariah II*) built to plans I drew some years ago for *Model Boats* magazine but nevertheless serve as a starting point. The resulting model



(see **Photo 5**) is testimony to the model maker's skill.

Unfortunately, I have lost my record of his name, so I can only ask his indulgence and express my gratitude for the numerous photos of the construction process he sent me.

My suggestion would be to make a profile backbone with the solid frames notched to this backbone keel member and extending right up to the top of the shelter deck, fitting no main deck at the lower level. With hull inverted, these frames can be attached by temporary screws to a series of cross pieces, which in turn can be attached by screws to a building board. Ensure that these cross pieces extend out with the beam of the model so that the fixing screws can be reached for removal after planking (again, see **Photo 2**). **Photo 3** shows how a propeller shaft can be passed through holes in the frames to the motor.

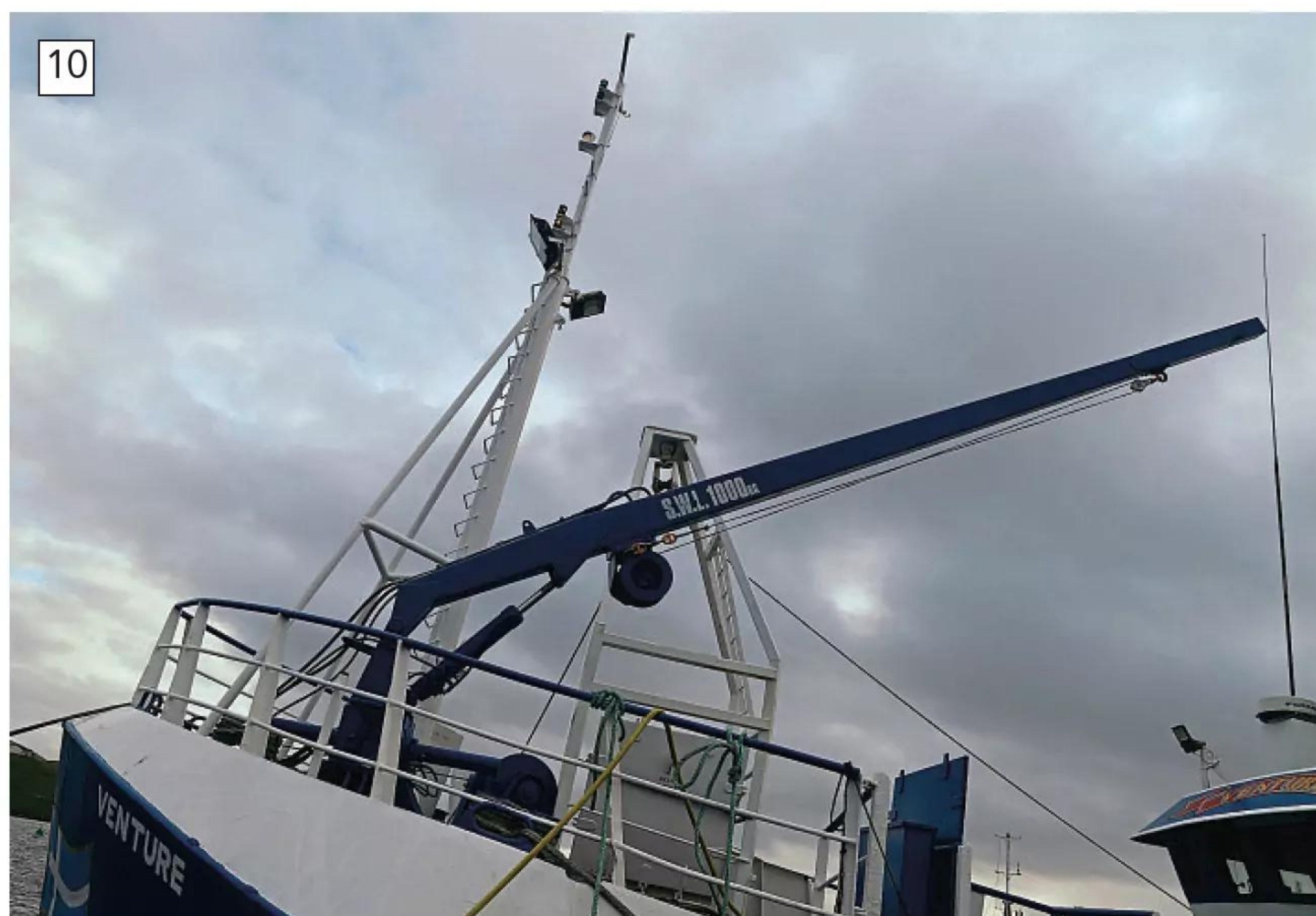
Obviously, if a power unit is going to be fitted, cut outs in the frame for hatches that allow access to the motor, batteries, controls, propeller shaft, etc, will be necessary. Of course, even greater access can be obtained making the wheelhouse removable.

As a more experienced modellers, you will have your own preferences when it comes to hull planking. However, with the many curves that need to be factored in, thin narrow planks are the obvious choice, possibly with multiple layers, and perhaps a final cover of fiberglass gel, well rubbed down after the resin has set. The bulbous aft could either be carved from solid, or alternatively roughly shaped from foam fitted on the after lower hull to give support before being planked over, covered with GRP mat and sanded to a finish. **Photo 4** shows the bulb covered with narrow planks. The shape of the frames in the region of the bulb for this model can be studied in line drawings on **Sheet 2 of the Plan**.

Show and tell

I have long felt that having at least some general knowledge/basic





understanding of the purpose and operation of the various fittings, deck equipment, etc, on a vessel such as this is of great help when trying to replicate it in a smaller scale. So, hopefully the brief, picture-led, explanations below will further assist your build...

“Having at least some general knowledge/basic understanding of the various fittings, deck equipment, etc, on a vessel such as this is of great help when trying to replicate it in a smaller scale”

● Photo 6

Let's start by taking a look at the bow, where we see the prominent badge featuring the initials of the three owners on the white outer ring, with

the Shetland flag added to each side of the circle.

● Photo 7

Here we see the tapered angle bar guardrail posts and round rails, and also the base of the hydraulic landing crane.

● Photo 8

Although similar to Photo 7, in this view the foot of the foremast and now redundant derrick mounting bracket on the aft side of the mast are evident. Note also the tripod foremast and ladder rungs on forward side of the mast.

● Photo 9

A closer look at base mounting of the new landing crane, with elevating hydraulic rams of forward and aft sides for rotating the crane as required, the crane elevating ram being prominent. The reason for this

crane being mounted on the port side of the shelter deck top is that the vessel normally berths to port when discharging the catch alongside the fish market quay.

● Photo 10

The rigging on the crane, along with the cod end gantry framing. The taut wire leading from the winch and passing up through the gantry top block is used to bring the catch cod end aboard and to drop it down to the main deck below via the cod end hatch set in the side of the shelter deck.

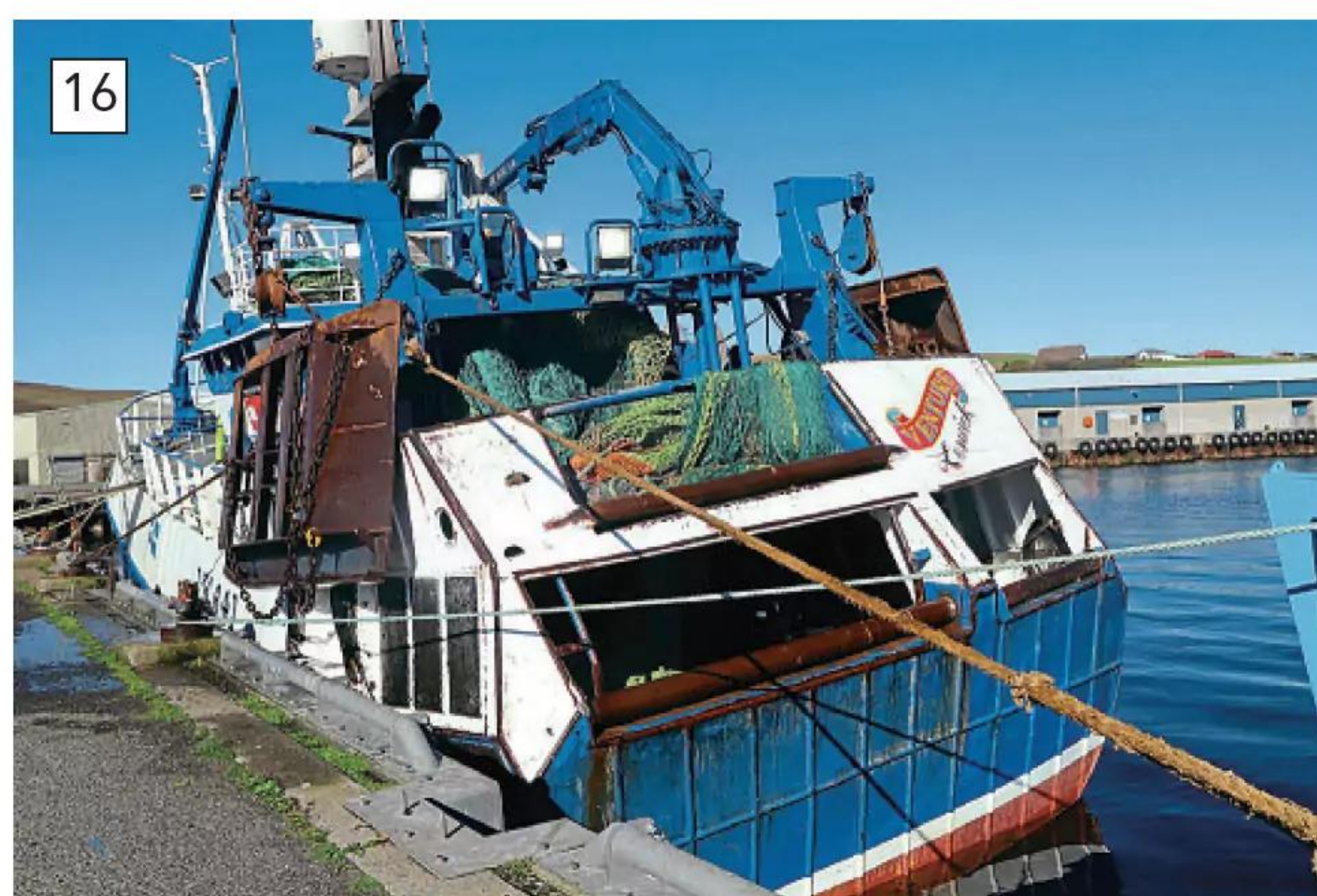
● Photo 11

The cod end winch at the base of the gantry.

● Photo 12

A starboard side view, showing the gantry, part of the cod end hatch, life raft stowage in front of





the wheelhouse, handrail support stanchions with a thicker diameter top rails and flag. Fortunately, the anchor chain hand winch right forward on starboard side is covered by a metal box, as outlined on the deck plan, thus saving the task of making this fitting.

● **Photo 13**

Note that the boarding ladders amidships are recessed in the shelterdeck hull plating on the port side.

● **Photo 14**

Some of the ever growing navigational and RT gear on top of the wheelhouse.

● **Photo 15**

The port trawl net drum and trawl winch, spare net stowage cage on top of the wheelhouse, red navigation light, and spare anchor stowage.

● **Photo 16**

The transom and various trawling

associated items, such as the trawl wire hanging blocks on each side suspended from the angled gantries, and the trawl doors. The hydraulic power block is fitted on top of the cross gantry.

● **Photo 17**

Another view of the starboard side, with semi-circular foot and hand grab cut outs in the shelter deck side. Protective bars and rubber pads are fitted to offer some protection from the trawl doors



20



• **Photo 18**

A close up of the trawl doors. As can be imagined, these can bang about when shooting and hauling the trawl net, and as each door can weigh somewhere in the region of one and a half tons that is obviously dangerous. In fact, a local large steel

boat sank when one of the doors punched a large hole in the bottom of the vessel aft.

• **Photo 19**

The power block base mounting. Note the protective framing around the floodlight.

21



• **Photo 20**

The starboard towing block gantry, with towing block to guide the trawl wire warp to the trawl winch.

Out on the water

I got a lot closer than I'd intended while maneuvering my boat in order

22





to take **Photos 21 and 22** – trust me, I definitely wasn't trying to play chicken!

Photo acknowledgements

Photos 23, 24 and 25 are reproduced with the kind permission of photographer **Ross David Robertson** and give an idea of the kind of conditions often encountered while fishing. **Photos 26 and 27** come courtesy of Leslie Tulloch, who captured *Venture* in a tide race in Bluemull Sound, the channel between the two most northerly Shetland Islands Yell and Unst. While we have Charley Urquhart to thank for **Photos 28 and 29** of *Venture* in passage with various deck details visible.

I will close with a photograph I took from my own front door, which shows *Venture* heading for home in a gale (see **Photo 30**). Think this build is going to require some bravery? Well, spare a thought... ●

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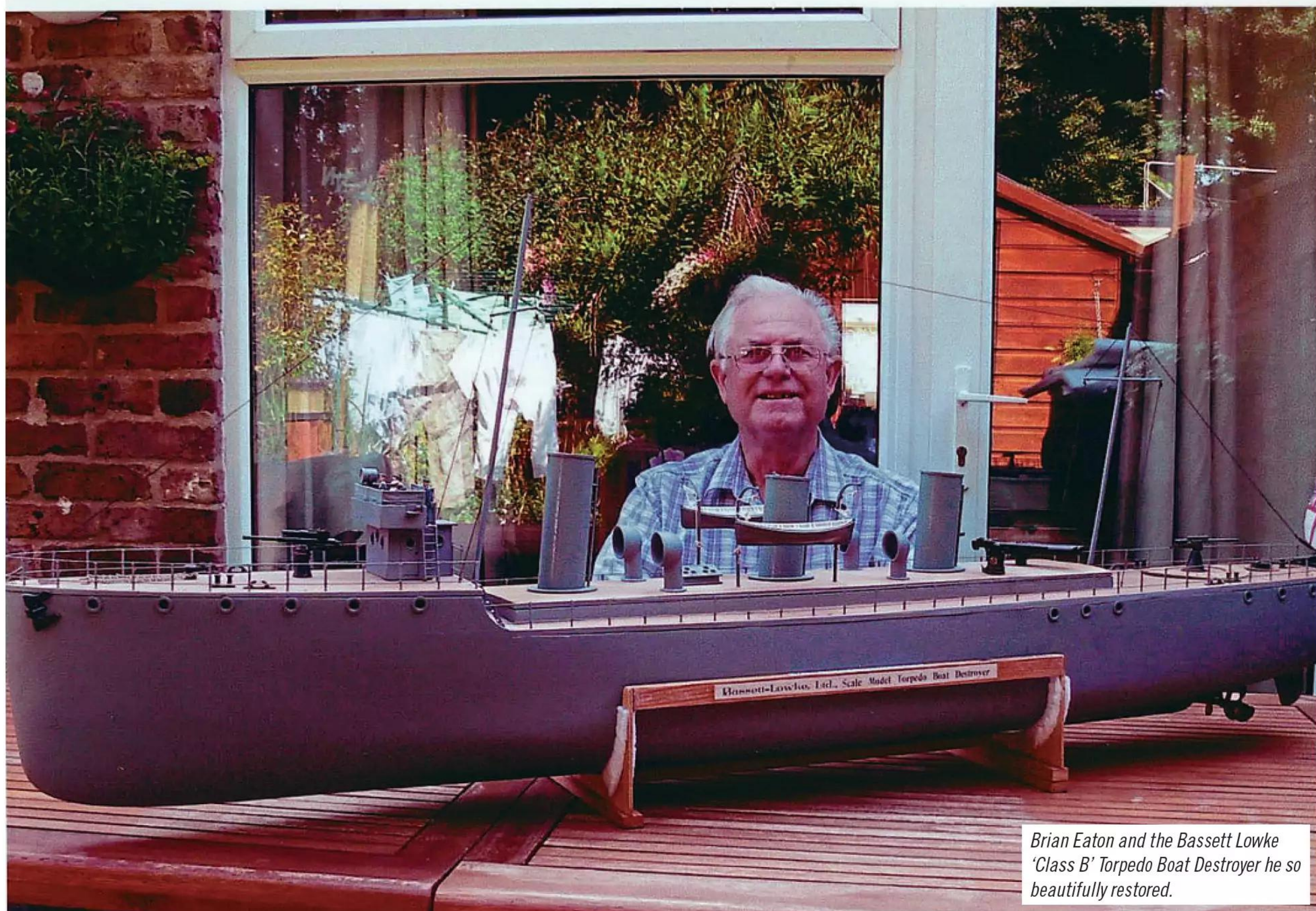
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Brian Eaton and the Bassett Lowke 'Class B' Torpedo Boat Destroyer he so beautifully restored.

Mr Gardam's boat

Brian Eaton tells a fascinating tale of Restoration, Research and Remembrance...

Back in 2000 I went along to an antique toyfair at Sandown Park in search of old model ships fittings, as at that time I was in the process of restoring a Bassett Lowke *Streamlinia* and building a 6ft long working model of *Medway Queen*. It was there, whilst browsing the numerous stands, a 54-inch hulk of a wooden boat with a broken deck and a badly reshaped bow caught my eye. Inside the battleship grey painted hull, a modern Bassett Lowke boiler and engine had clearly been installed. For me, though, it was the note attached to it that singled this model out as a really fascinating 'find'. Following a basic (and as it happened incorrect) description, 'Bassett Lowke steam launch',

this read "One really interesting point is the presence of writing on the underside of the decking in pencil. 'Made June 1915 by W. GA ('undecipherable') AM for Bassett Lowke, Northampton. Today's News G(erman) Submarine (Sun)k by (Brit) ish, Hurrah (3) cheers' (note the words in brackets are assumed)". Picking the model up for closer look, I noticed a hole had been cut into the deck where this message had been pencilled (See **Photo 1**). I was also able to discern another note: "Steam power fitted by H. Slade, March 1916 for Bassett Lowke London".

Intrigued, I purchased the model (see **Photo 2**), knowing from its shape it wasn't a launch and was worthy of some further investigation.

"For me, it was the note attached to it that singled this model out as a really fascinating find..."

Vessel ID and TLC

Sometime later, therefore, in 2002, I wrote to the Bassett Lowke Society, enclosing some photos and asking if they could help in identifying it. I was delighted to receive very enthusiastic responses from Mr John Ingram and Mr Bob Chester-Lamb. Not only did they supply me with a photocopy taken from page 24 of the 1916 Bassett Lowke catalogue, which clearly established my model to be the 4ft 6 inch long 'Class B' Torpedo Boat



The 'seen better days' hulk of a boat as purchased by Brian back in the year 2000, prior to restoration.

Destroyer (see **Photo 3**), but they also provided some helpful suggestions when it came to its restoration.

Armed with this knowledge, I then set about restoring the boat, firstly fitting new decking and reshaping the bow. Trying to capture the Bassett Lowke style with my deck fittings, I made my own guns and torpedo tubes with anchors, railings, funnels, cows and lifeboats either scratchbuilt

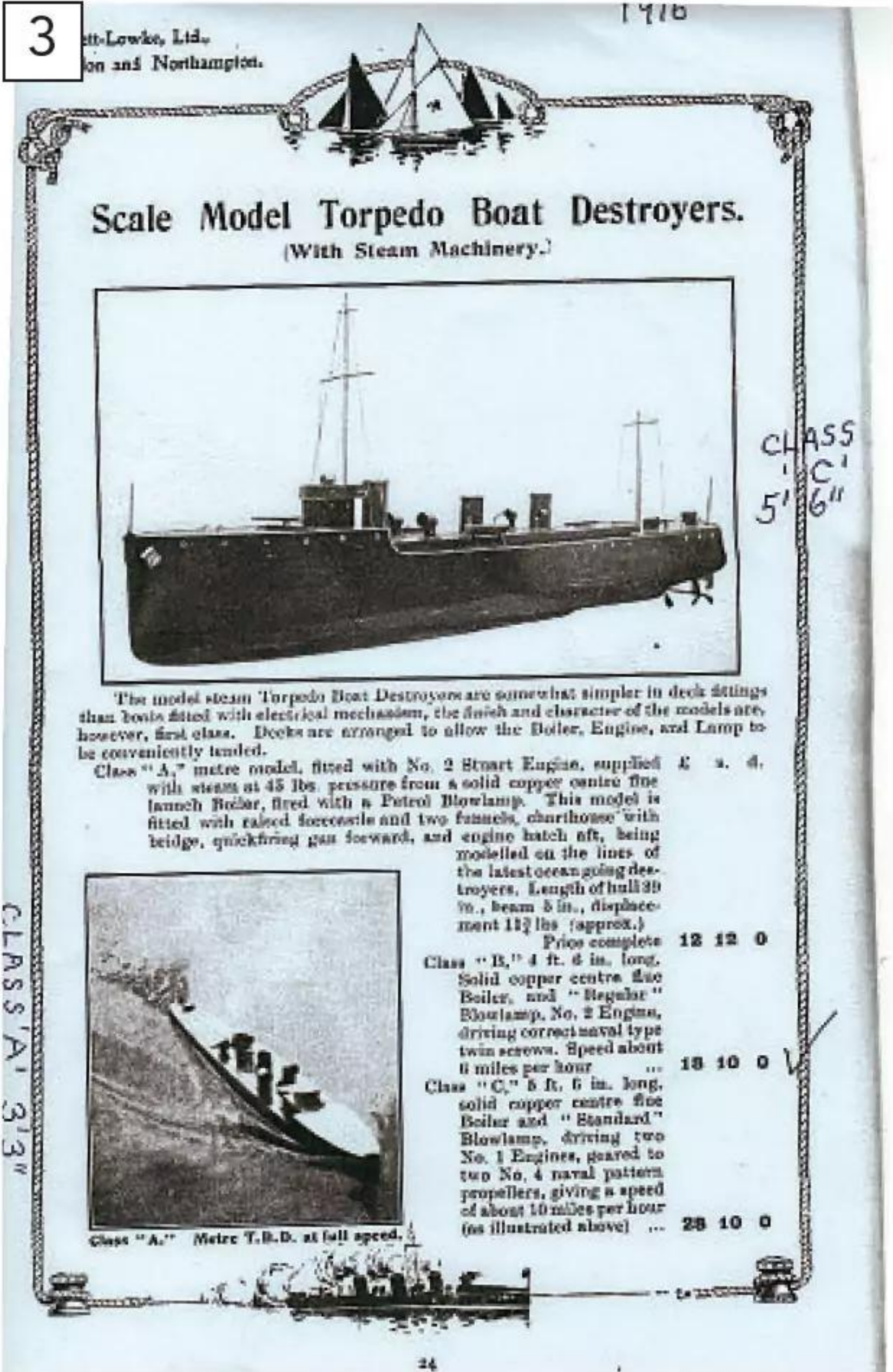
or bought and subsequently modified. Bob Chester-Lamb suggested that as there is no photo of a 'Class B', I should fit three funnels, as he thought the 'Class A' with two funnels would have been the odd one out.

Unfortunately, I was unable to find a suitable steam engine or boiler after

so many years, so eager to get the model in the water, I decided to install two electric motors and radio control, selecting two Model Motors Direct 777 motors and Electronize speed controls (see **Photo 4**). This enabled me to sail my restored Torpedo Boat Destroyer on its 100th anniversary



The decades old messages pencilled on the underside of Brian's Sandown Park toyfair find.



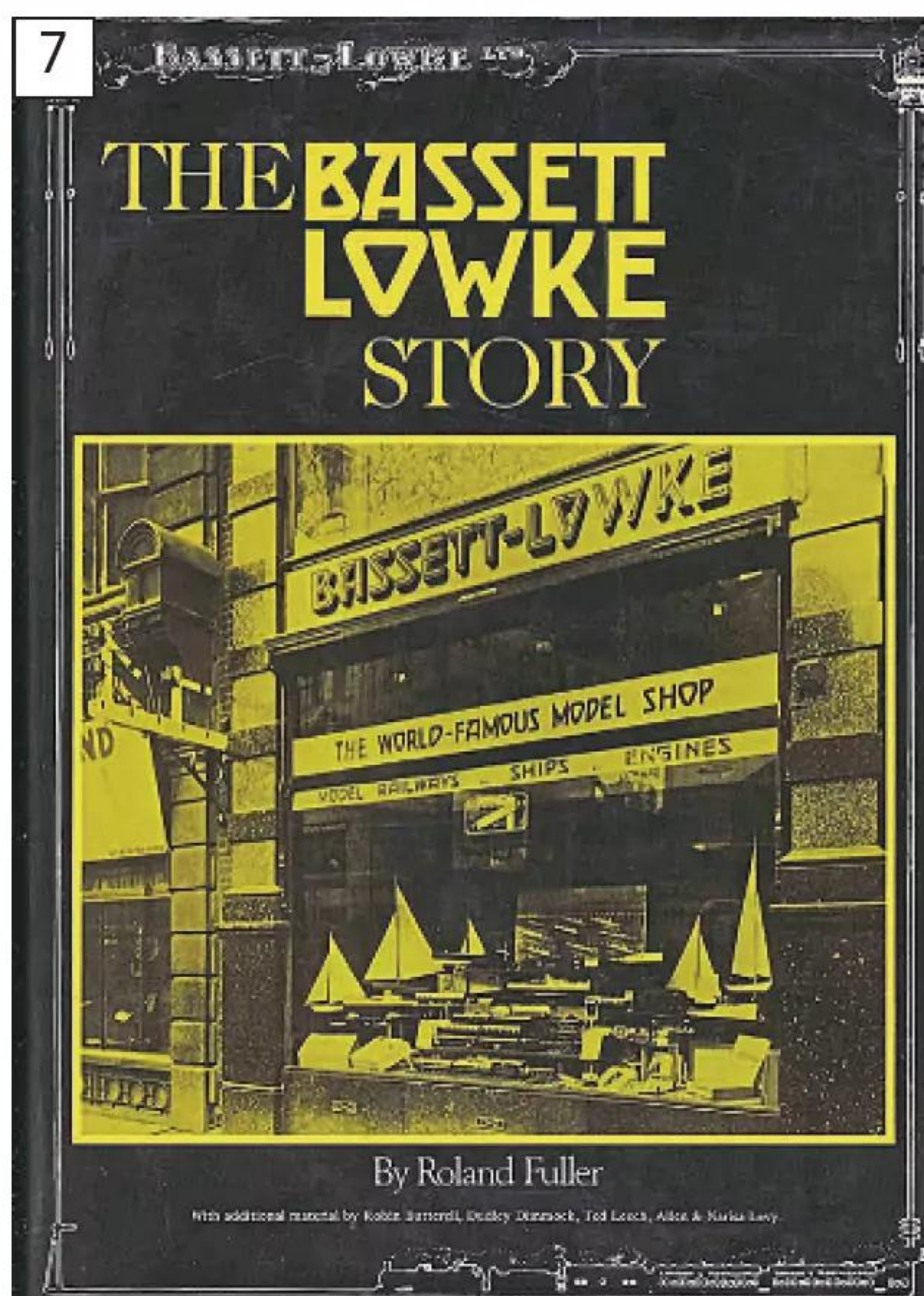
Page 24 of the 2016 Bassett Lowke catalogue, which confirmed to Brian that his model was indeed not a 'steam launch' as described by the vendor, but in fact a 'Class B' Torpedo Boat Destroyer.



Unable to source a suitable vintage steam plant, Brian decided to instead fit electric motors and radio control gear in order to get his restored Torpedo Boat Destroyer on the water in time for its 100th anniversary in March 2016.



Looking superb, the model making its fully restored debut on Basingstoke Model Boat Club's pond.



The Bassett Lowke Story by Roland Fuller.

- March 2016 – on the Basingstoke Model Boat Club's pond (see **Photos 5 and 6**).

Finding Mr Gardam

I was still curious, however, about the model's origins, so I bought myself a copy of The Bassett Lowke Story by Roland Fuller (see **Photo 7**). I was immediately drawn to a photo on page 249, which features a photo that is captioned 'The 1913 Northampton works outing during which they visited The London Shop'. At the bottom of the photo there are a few names and lines pointing out staff (see **Photo 8**).

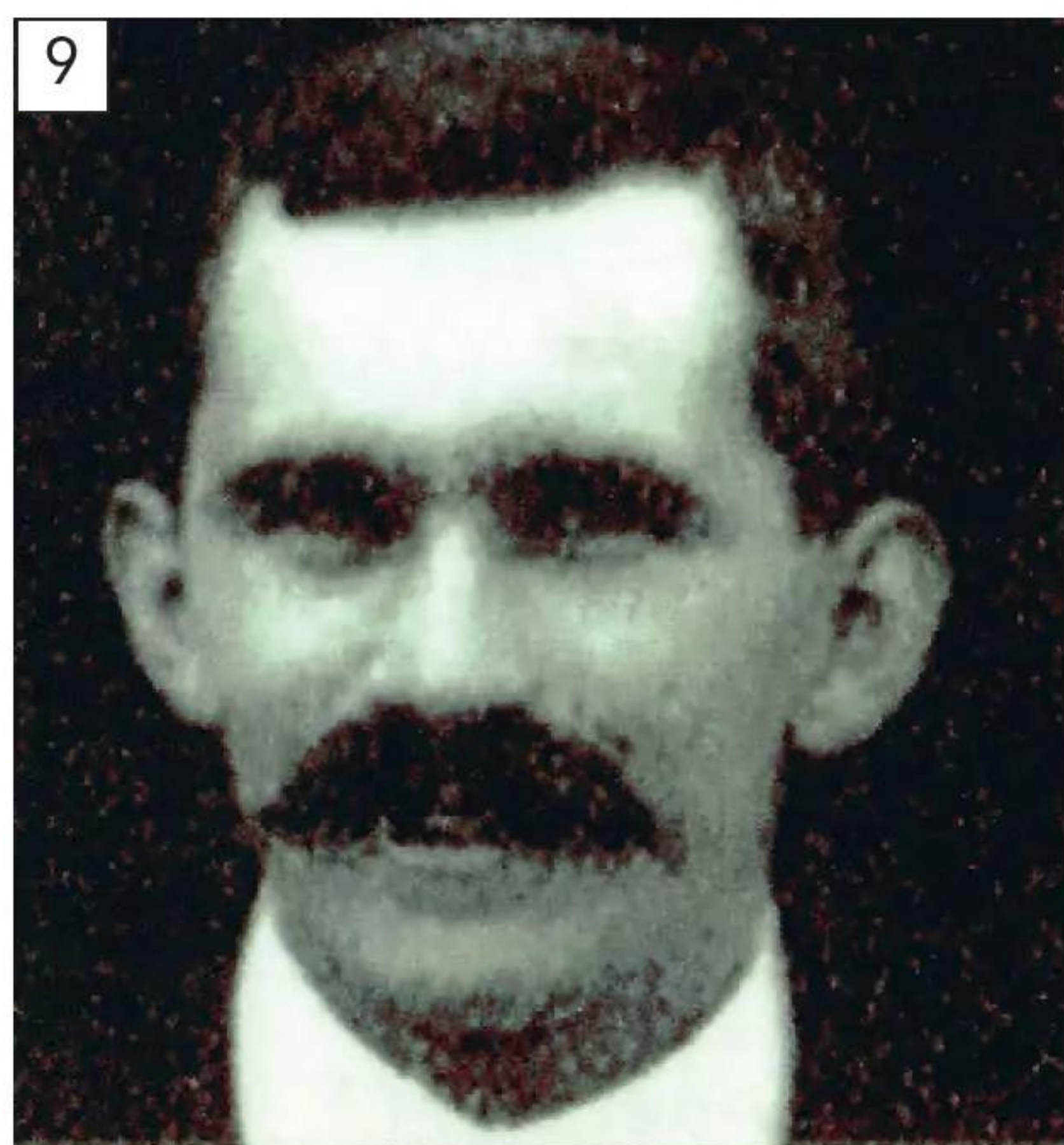
On the right is a man wearing a boater hat. To my amazement, an arrow marked Gardam is pointed at him. W. GA ('undecipherable') AM! Further research online revealed this gentleman's full name to be George William Gardam. Born in Yorkshire in 1879, the 1911 census, taken when he was aged 32, records his occupation as engineers'

pattern maker, while the electoral roll of 1925 documents him as residing at Pratt Road, Rushden; Rushden being only a few miles from Northampton.

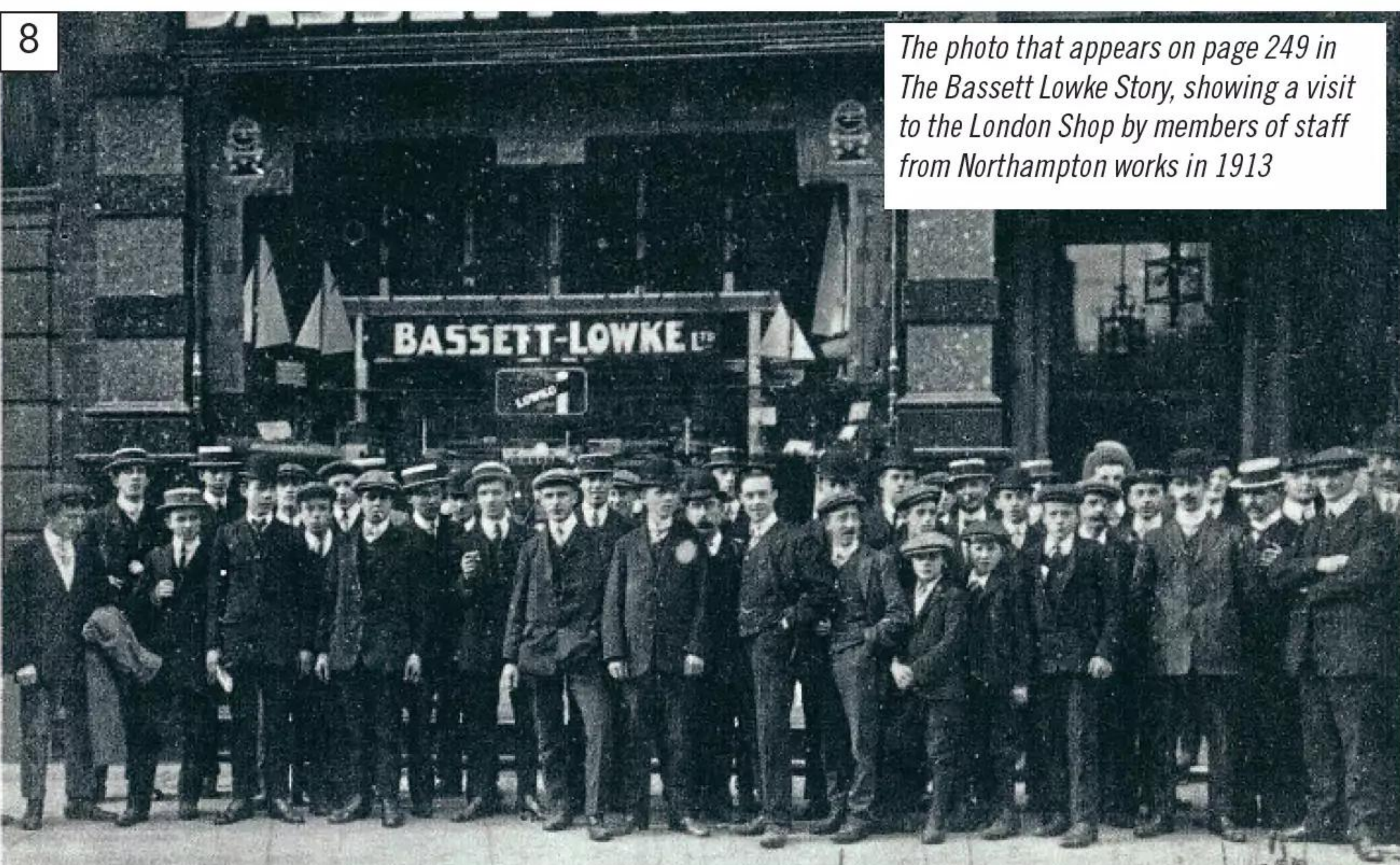
"W. GA ('undecipherable') AM!"

Rushden has a wonderful museum dedicated to local history, and so thanks to the archives there I was able to unearth yet more information about Mr Gardam (see **Photo 9**). After working at Bassett Lowke, he went on to become a woodwork teacher at Rushden Intermediate School and is mentioned in documentation of the school's annual exhibition of work in 1931. He was also involved in the 1934 carnival held at Rushden Hall. He was still at the school during World War II.

It seemed only fitting, then, that I should include a figure of Mr Gardam on the bridge of 'our' model (see **Photo 10**).



One of the staff identified in that photo of the Northampton works staff trip to London was George William Gardam – W. GA ('undecipherable') AM!



10



The unlucky U-Boat

I also wanted to find more information on the German submarine sinking mentioned by Mr Gardam in the notes he'd pencilled on this model. Could I perhaps identify that, too? I learnt from studying World War I U-Boat records that there was in fact only one U-Boat sunk in June 1915. This occurred on June 23, 1915, after a 'Q' ship decoy fishing boat *Taranaki* towed a Royal Navy submarine, C24, submerged into the North Sea. When the U-Boat U-40 surfaced, *Taranaki* informed C24 via underwater cable, whereupon C24, still submerged, fired a single torpedo and sank the enemy sub. The wreck was finally found in March 2009, 40 miles off Berwickshire coast.

"I also wanted to find more information on the German submarine sinking mentioned by Mr Gardam in the notes he'd pencilled on this model. Could I perhaps identify that, too?"

A tribute to the Captain of HMS Shark

I have added a tribute to the captain of a similar Torpedo Boat Destroyer, HMS *Shark*, which was sunk in action at Jutland on May 31, 1916, on my model. The disabled British destroyer HMS *Shark* fought desperately against a group of four German torpedo boats and disabled a German ship, V48, with gunfire, but was eventually torpedoed and sunk by the German destroyer S54. *Shark's* Captain Loftus Jones was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for his heroism in continuing to fight against all odds. A woven silk badge made during World War I by H.M. Ships for HMS *Shark* that I managed to purchase has therefore been placed under the removable hatch in his honour (see **Photo 11**). ●

A figure representing Mr Gardam now appears on the bridge of the model as restored by Brian (see Photo 10).

11



The tribute to Captain Loftus Jones, VC, of HMS *Shark*, incorporated within Brian's Torpedo Boat Destroyer restoration.



The USS Skipjack (SSN585) underway in the 1970s (Wikipedia).

SKIPJACK

John Parker delves into the history of this US nuclear submarine class and the modelling options available to us...

By the 1950s rapid technological progress had led to two major milestones in the design of submarines. First came the USS *Albacore*, launched in August 1953, which showed that a submarine with a short teardrop-shaped hull and a single propeller was the best shape for underwater travel, running rings around conventional designs for speed and manoeuvrability (see *Flotsam and Jetsam*, January 2014 *Model Boats*). In January 1955 the launch of the USS *Nautilus* harnessed the power of atomic energy to create an underwater vessel that was at last no longer tied to the surface by the frequent need to recharge its air or batteries (*Flotsam and Jetsam*, August 2023 issue). The obvious thing to do next was to combine atomic power with a teardrop hull and create a fast



Launch of the Skipjack, May 1958 (US Navy photo).

attack submarine capable of almost unrestricted underwater travel – the Skipjack class.

“The obvious thing to do next was to combine atomic power with a teardrop hull and create a fast attack submarine capable of almost unrestricted underwater travel – the Skipjack class”

Design

Preliminary design of the Skipjack class was completed in March 1956, but there were many challenges. Head of design Rear Admiral Hyman G. Rickover wanted twin screws for the extra safety their redundancy provided, but was

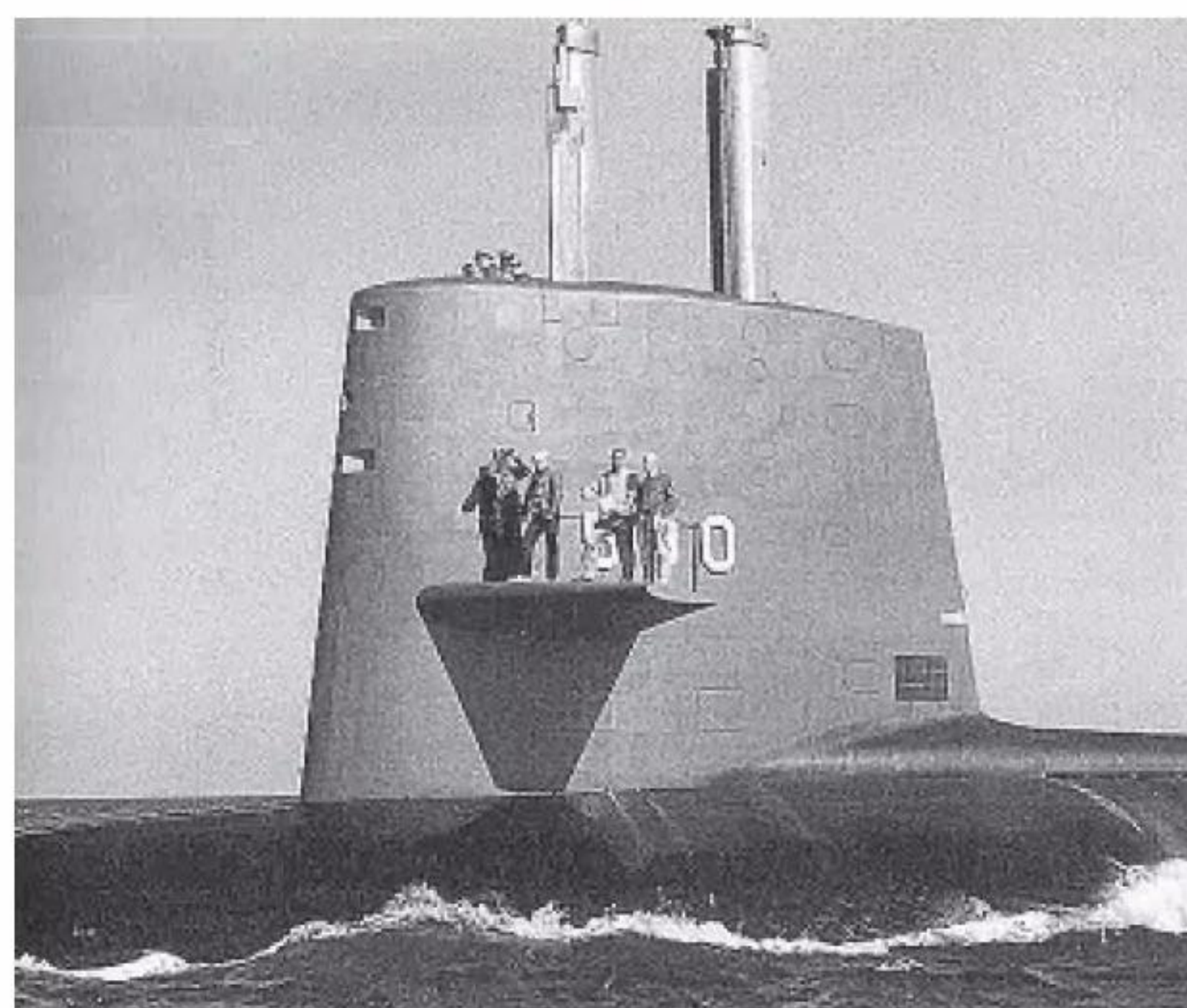
forced to concede, when it was pointed out, that twin screws would have a propulsive efficiency of only 70 percent, against 90 percent for a single screw layout. A single hull design of reduced reserve buoyancy would have to be accepted to achieve the teardrop shape, but on the other hand the increased diameter of the hull eased accommodation requirements, making possible a four-deck layout at the maximum diameter. An X-tail configuration, however, shown to be superior on the *Albacore*, was not something the navy was prepared to accept, and conventional tail surfaces were adopted instead.

A developed version of the *Nautilus* pressurised water reactor would be used, known as the Westinghouse S5W, that offered 15,000 horsepower and was said to be good for 5,500 full-power hours before needing refuelling. Located amidships, its weight of 650 tons dominated the design. The forward hydroplanes the navy insisted on (the *Albacore* found them to be of dubious value) were mounted high up on the sail, a position that incurred many penalties. Being close to the submarine's centre of gravity, they had to be larger to have effect, and the extra weight carried high in the structure reduced stability, but the penalty was considered worth paying because of the reduced flow-induced and mechanical noise caused to the nose mounted sonar.

Lead boat of the class, the *Skipjack* was launched from the shipyard of Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, in May 1958 and commissioned in April 1959. This was only a little more than four years after the *Nautilus*, the first ever nuclear propelled vessel. It was followed by five others of the class from various shipyards over the next two and half years: *Scamp*, *Scorpion*, *Sculpin*, *Shark* and *Snook*. The Skipjack class had a surfaced displacement of 3,124 tons and 3,569 tons submerged, with a length of 76.8m and a beam of 9.75m. The usual crew complement was around 90. 24 torpedoes of several types were carried for the six bow torpedo tubes and the test depth was 215m.

Into service

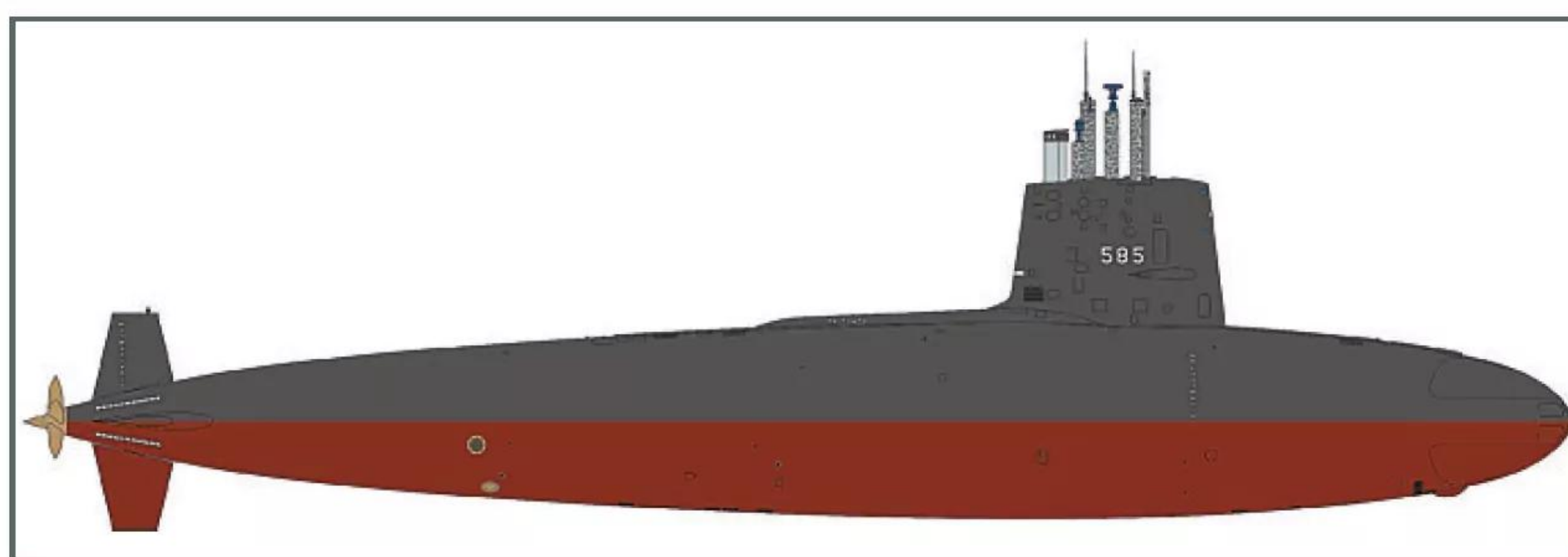
Once it entered service, the Skipjack soon began to show the advantages of its *Albacore* derived hull, clocking a speed of over 32 knots submerged, making it the fastest service submarine in the world at that time. On the surface it was a different story.



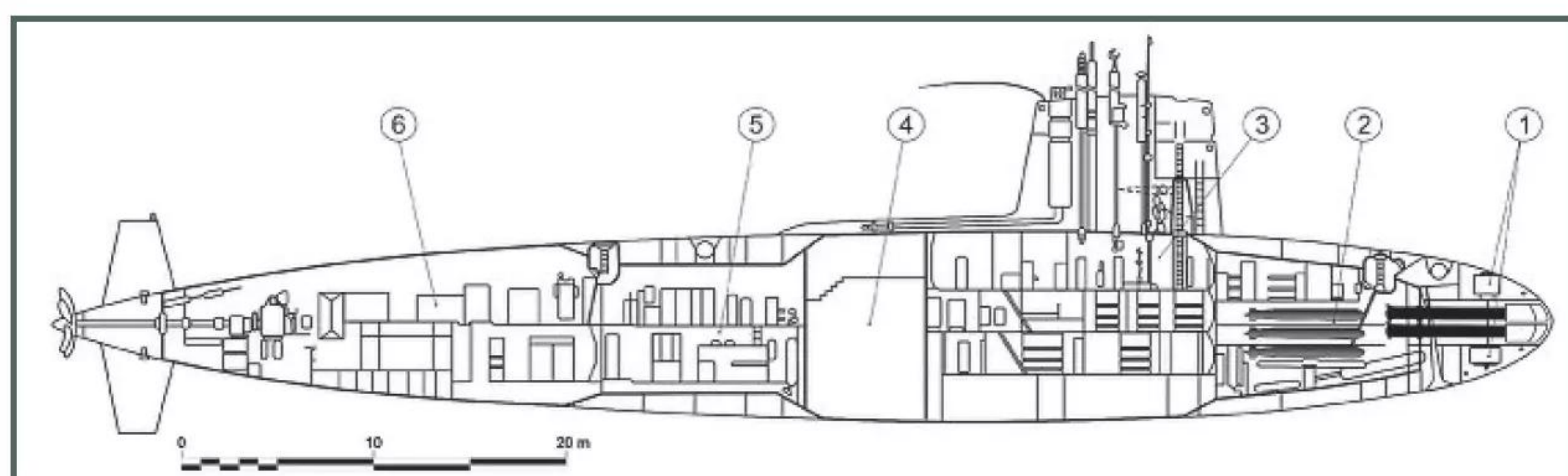
Sculpin (SSN590) with Admiral Rickover on the foreplanes (Wikipedia).



Skipjack patch. The motto translates as "Root of the New Sea Power".



Skipjack class profile (Wikipedia).



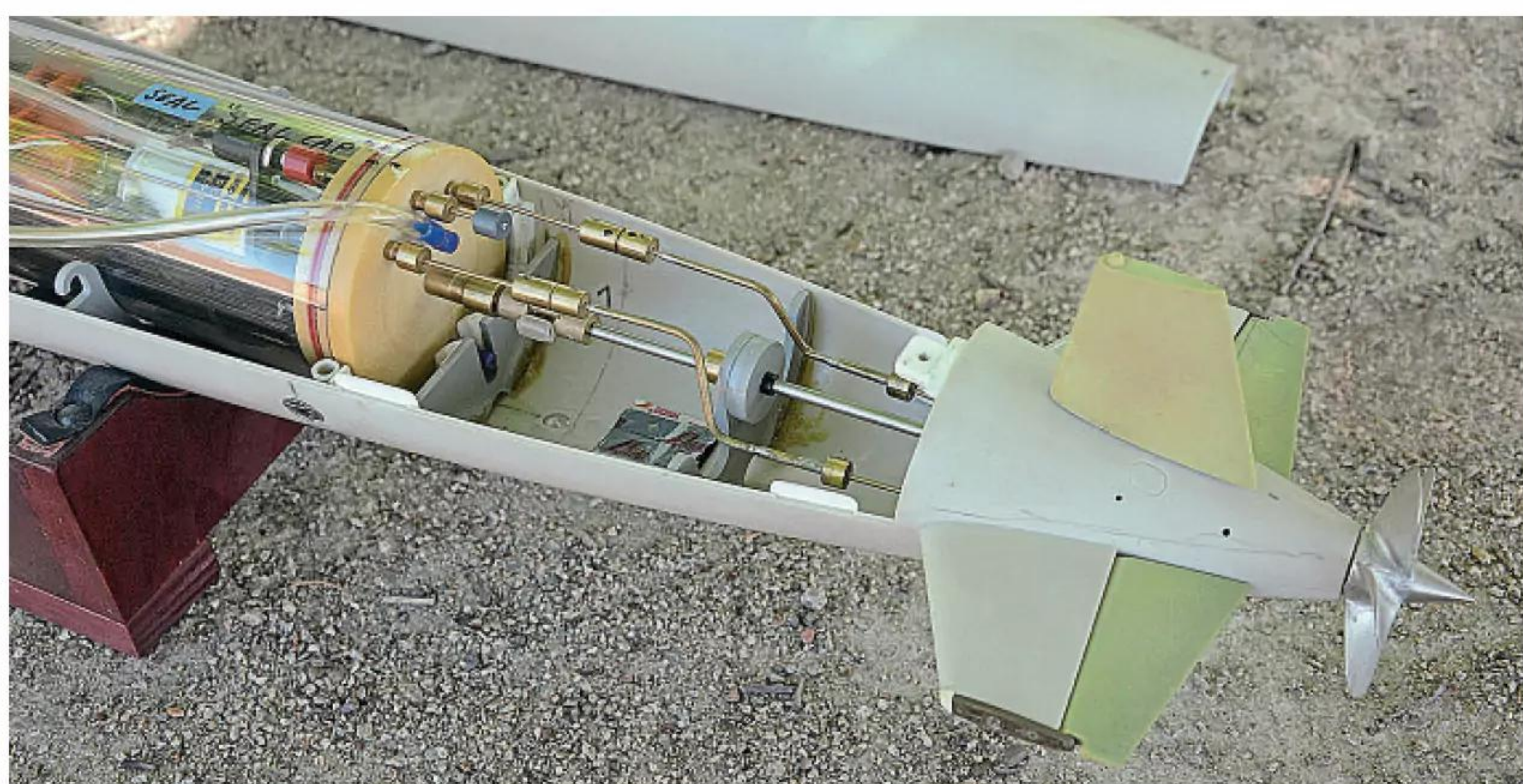
Skipjack compartments: 1- sonar arrays; 2 - torpedo room; 3 - operations room; 4 - reactor; 5 - auxiliary machinery; 6 - engine room (Wikipedia.)



Revell kit of the Skipjack class with (inset) a suitable bayonet hull fitting.



Graham Smithwick's model opened up to show the WTC.



Tail section showing magnetic control couplings and prop shaft drive.



Rear of WTC, with drive motor, ballast pump, control servos and APC.



Forward end of WTC with receiver, ESCs for motor and pump and drive battery (under).

Described as “*sluggish and awkward*”, it could only manage 15 knots, but this was an expected characteristic of the hull shape and hardly mattered to a submarine designed to remain submerged and unseen. Unseen perhaps, but not unheard, for the Skipjack machinery was quite noisy and could be detected easily. For this reason, its original three-bladed propeller was changed for a five-bladed one that was quieter but reduced the maximum speed by a couple of knots.

The success of the Skipjack led to a couple of spin-offs. When the USA agreed to share some secrets of American nuclear technology with Britain, whose own reactor program was facing delays, a Skipjack tail section complete with reactor was supplied to them. This was mated to a larger diameter British forward section via a conical transition to create *Dreadnought*, Britain's first nuclear submarine. In return America gained access to British technology designed to reduce the noise signature of submarines by mounting machinery on ‘rafts’ that were isolated from the hull, but this arrived too late for the Skipjack program.

In another development, two Skipjacks were taken over while in early build phase to have a 40-meter-long centre section inserted for the carriage of 16 ballistic missiles. These, along with the three further examples built, formed the George Washington class, an expedient that enabled the US Navy's early and first deployment of the Polaris missile by 1961. Except for the *Scorpion*, the Skipjack class was retired in 1986-1990 and the five boats went through the Ship and Submarine Recycling Program in 1994-2001.

Loss of *Scorpion*

The 1960s were a time of increasing tensions in the Cold War, and submarines, especially nuclear-powered ones, were playing an important role in the dangerous game of intelligence gathering. When the planned submarine became unavailable, *Scorpion* was called up at short notice to monitor the activity of a Soviet task force operating in the region of the Azores, mid Atlantic, in 1968. She was in need of a major overhaul at the time, including the long overdue SUBSAFE program, aimed at correcting weaknesses that had led to the loss of the submarine *Thresher*. Her captain claimed the hull



The streamlined appearance is emphasised in the unpainted model.



The Mikromir 1:350 scale kit.

was in a very poor state and referred to the boat as the *Scrapiron*, but only a minimum of essential maintenance was performed because the boat was so urgently needed.

Whether or not this was related to the cause is not known, but the *Scorpion* failed to return to station and was presumed lost with all 99 crew on May 22, 1968. There are many theories as to the cause, including Soviet intervention, but it all likelihood it was a technical malfunction of some sort. The wreck, including its reactor and nuclear armed torpedoes, now lies 3,000 metres down on a sandy bed in the North Atlantic, where the US Navy regularly monitors it for any radioactive leakage.

Modelling prospects

The benchmark for Skipjack models was set by Mobius Models when it released its 1:72 scale injection moulded kit in 2012. This beautifully accurate kit makes up into a model 1067mm (almost 40 inches) long, and, best of all, it was developed with R/C conversion in mind, in consultation with sub modeller David Merriman of the USA. The same kit

was re-boxed by Revell a year or so later; both versions are apparently now out of production, but a quick look online suggests they can still be found without much difficulty. The hull comes moulded in four pieces of quite thick plastic. A full set of etched metal parts is available from R/SubsCZ (<https://www.rcsubs.cz/>). R/C conversions may involve either a 'wet hull' with a watertight cylinder (WTC) or a 'dry hull' type with plug-in tail.

"This beautifully accurate kit makes up into a model 1067mm (almost 40 inches) long, and, best of all, it was developed with R/C conversion in mind"

A good Skipjack model will have all the underwater speed and agility of the full-size sub but also exhibit its less desirable 'snap-roll' handling trait. This occurs when the large forward-mounted sail causes the hull to lean into a tight sustained turn at speed, whereupon the deflected rudders start to act in the vertical plane and cause a rapid dive to unsafe depths. This is something to watch out for.

I have been able to photograph a fine example by modeller Graham Smithwick that is just a paint job away from its operational debut. Graham has used a WTC from R&R Model Engineering (<http://www.rcsubs.co.uk>) with a pump-type ballast system, plus other parts from various vendors – there's a good deal of information about the options available online. In

its unpainted state, I think the model really highlights the unfettered streamlined shape of the Skipjack hull. For a dry hull model (no WTC), a bayonet type fixing can be used to provide a convenient means of hull access, and there is enough space to fit a single piston tank of 500-600ml capacity.

In other scales there is a 1:48 hull available from DeBroer Models in the USA. This monster is some 1.6 metres long and could weigh around 28kg, depending on the amount of free flood, so careful thought is required on how to transport and handle it.

Going the other way, Maximus Modelbau of Germany (<https://www.maximus-modellbau.de/>) offers a 1:96 scale kit that is 3D-printed, making up into a 3.5kg, 800mm long, dry-hull model with bayonet hull fixing. The proprietary design of ballast tank apparently uses a peristaltic pump and is of 350ml capacity.

Prior to the advent of the Mobius/Revell kit, D&E Miniatures of the USA did its own 1:96 R/C kit of the Skipjack and offered WTCs and electronics for it; its current range of products is available from the Nautilus Dry Docks (<https://www.rc-submarine.com/>).

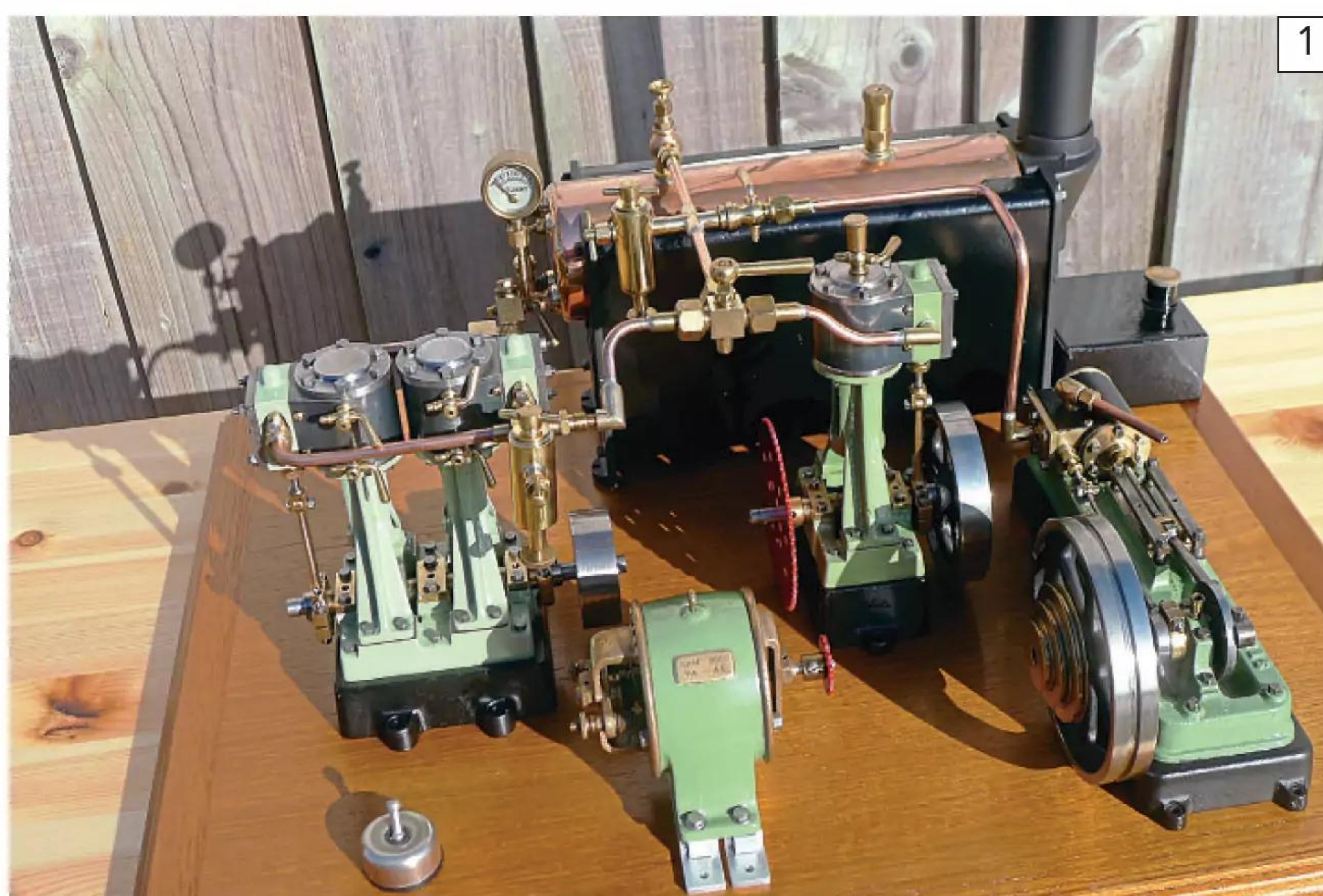
If you're looking for a static display model, there's a Mikromir injection moulded kit to 1:350 scale and an ancient Aurora one that dates from the appearance of the full-size vessel in 1959. The latter is to 1:228 'box' scale and has gone through various re-issues and re-boxes, including a Revell version, but is currently unavailable. ●

BOILER ROOM

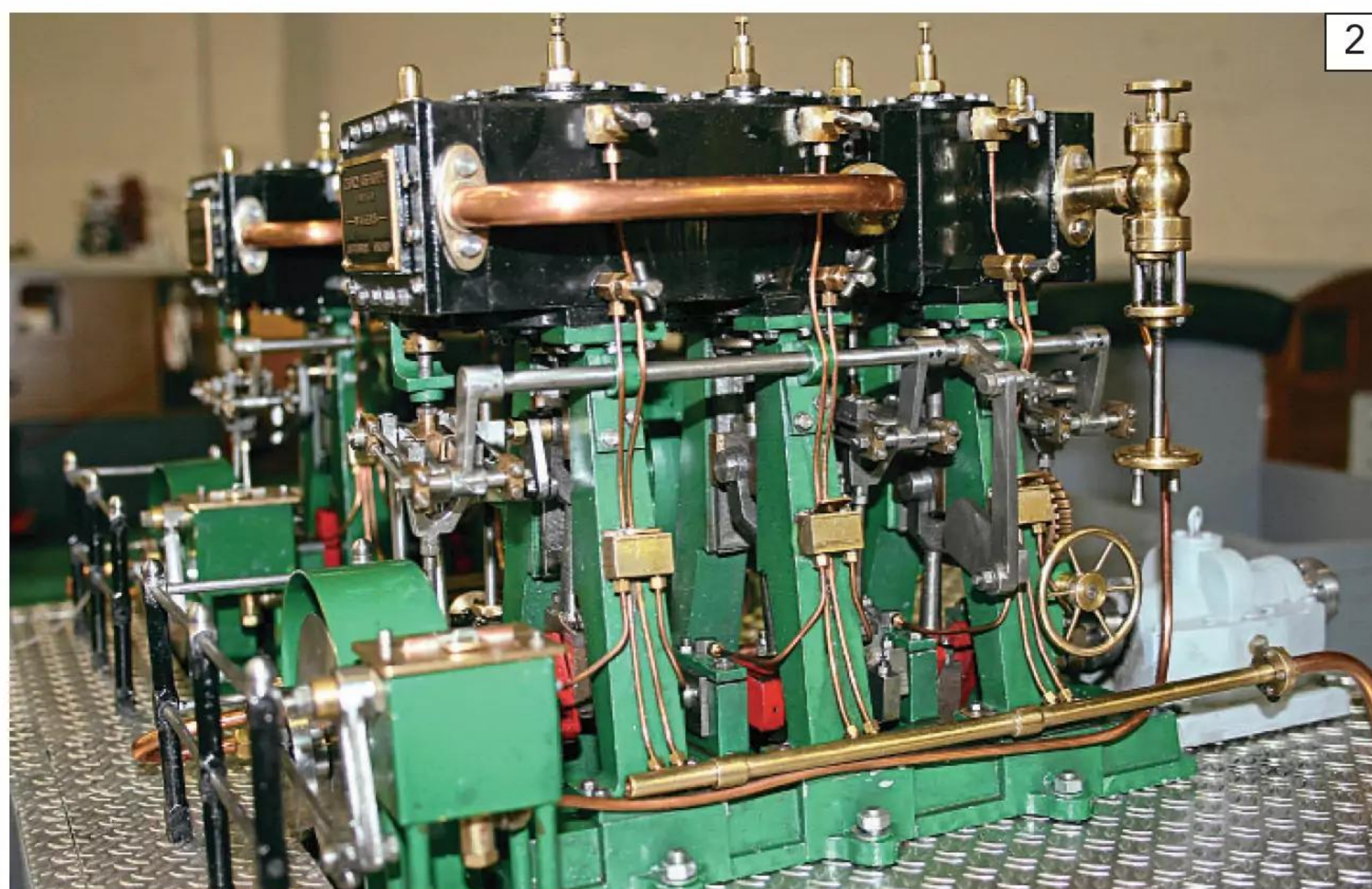
Richard Simpson provides a useful round-up and review of model steam related suppliers...

An interesting aspect of writing for a magazine, particularly a regular column such as Boiler Room, is that it's sometimes easy to forget that the article is frequently written a number of months before the magazine actually hits the shelves. For instance, I am writing this at the beginning of October, bemoaning the passing of an all too brief summer and getting my head around the fact that we will soon find ourselves in the depths of yet another cold, miserable and wet winter. So, what is the relevance? Well, invariably this seems to be a time of year when thoughts turn towards what might realistically be achieved indoors during the long, dark evenings. This thinking led me to review just what suppliers are currently offering in terms of such projects. I wrote an article somewhere in the region of 15 years ago now along very similar lines, where I simply listed the model steam manufacturers and retailers trading at the time, and what I discovered while putting together an updated version was sobering. Sadly, a significant number of those included on my original list are no longer in business.

It's not all doom and gloom, though, so let's take a look at today's model steam related hardware suppliers and just what they specialise in. Some offer complete plant, while others offer individual components. The advantage of a complete plant purchase is that its parts will have been designed to work together in harmony, whereas being able to buy individual parts might be better suited to an unusual model layout with specific needs. I would always recommend a complete plant to a newcomer to the hobby, and especially one that has been specifically tailored to a readily available model boat kit.



Probably three of the more popular Stuart Models engines, the D10 vertical twin, the 10V vertical single and the 10H horizontal single make for an attractive demonstration display with a Stuart Type 500 boiler.



The pinnacle of model engineering excellence in many modellers' minds: the Stuart Models Triple expansion marine engine. This particular twin engine set up, spotted at an engineering show many years ago, was quite stunning.

Stuart Models

Website: www.stuartmodels.com

email: sales@stuartmodels.com

Phone: +44 01308 456 859

Address: Grove Works, West Road, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 5JT

Despite changing ownership and even location a number of times, Stuart Models, which originally traded under the name of Stuart Turner, has been producing model steam items since 1898. Founded by, not surprisingly, Mr. Stuart Turner, the company was based in Henley-on-Thames for many years but is now based in Bridport, Dorset. It sells an extensive range of bare casting kits, ready machined kits, complete ready built models of boilers, engines and accessories, and even complete plant, all to a superb level of quality. Stuart Models main focus tends to be the supply of static plant, although marine engines are also included in the range. Worth noting is that when Cheddar Models ceased production a number of years ago, Stuart Models acquired the engine aspect of business; consequently, it now supplies the Puffin twin oscillating engine, as well as the excellent Cheddar-designed Electronic Gas Valve. Engine configurations come in many shapes and sizes, including horizontal, vertical and multi cylinder engines (see **Photo 1**), as well as what is probably regarded by many as the pinnacle of model engineering excellence, the Stuart Models Triple expansion marine engine (see **Photo 2**).

Stuart Models also sell an extensive range of steam plant related accessories and spare parts for many of the older items.

Steam Fittings

Website: www.steamfittings.co.uk/asp/index.asp

email: sales@steamfittings.co.uk

Phone: 01341-280637

Address: SteamFittings.co.uk, LLanaber Road, Barmouth, Gwynedd, LL42 1YT

Steam Fittings was still a relatively new concern when I last wrote about it but has now been in business for around 17 years. Having moved premises from Daventry to Barmouth, its trade is entirely conducted online these days, and while the current website is still up, running and useable, I am told plans to update this are in the offing. This company manufactures its own range of steam system fittings and accessories in large batches, specifically to make



The old Marten Howes and Baylis Vigilant is no longer produced, but it remains an example of probably the best quality steam powered kit that has ever been available. The current range of the Henry and the Project X are equally as beautifully manufactured.

them cost effective and hence very competitively priced. This also enables all of its products to be available ex-stock and the turnaround from order to receipt is extremely impressive. It now offers a varied range of valves from 3/32-inch pipe up to 1/4-inch pipe, as well as lubricators, which can be supplied assembled or uniquely as a fully machined kit of parts for simple self-assembly.

Steam Fittings is frequently expanding its range and is an excellent source of all accessories required for the model boat steam plant. I've purchased its products on a number of occasions and have been very impressed with the cost, the quality and the speed of delivery every time.

While the current proprietor is of an age whereby at least semi-retirement beckons, he assures me that the business is going to be passed on. So, hopefully, this is a business that will around for many years to come.

Marten and Howes

Website: www.model-steam-boats.co.uk

Email: martens@btinternet.com

Phone: +44 (0) 1304 362648

Marten and Howes, originally Marten, Howes and Baylis, has been producing model kits and steam plant for over 30 years. The kits are, quite rightly, considered the Rolls Royce of model kits, highly regarded for the sheer level of quality they exude.

It's first kit, for the *Opal*, was launched in 1993 and was quickly followed by the *Topaz*, the *Der*

Seekadett and the *Vigilant* (see **Photo 3**). The rest, as they say, is history.

About 25 years ago, the company loaned Cheddar Models the drawings for its PB2 engine, on which Cheddar subsequently based its Gemini engine; this became one of the potential engines for the models.

Nowadays Marten and Howes produce two model kits, the *Henry* and the *Project X*, both of which can be supplied as a bare model or with a bespoke steam plant. These two kits maintain the incredible levels of craftsmanship this company has become so famous for, and both build into beautiful models.

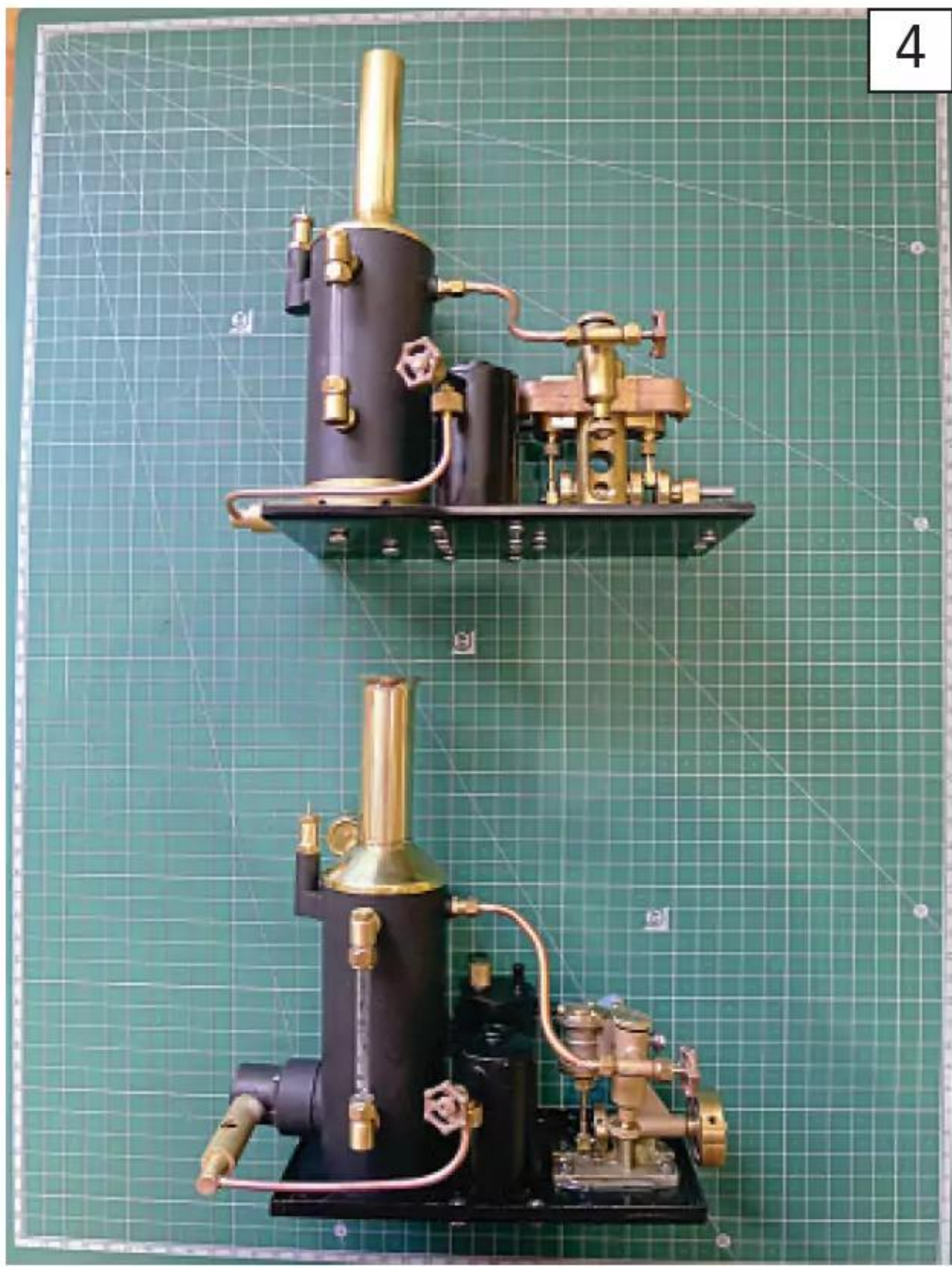
The company also sell a comprehensive set of accessories, spare parts and materials to support its products. Once again, the great advantage is that they can guide you through the entire process of putting together a steam powered model. Of particular interest to some is the fact that Marten and Howes supply steam plant complete with all the required fittings. These are tried and tested and include all pre-formed pipe work, so are, therefore, ready to slot directly into your model boat.

Miniature Steam

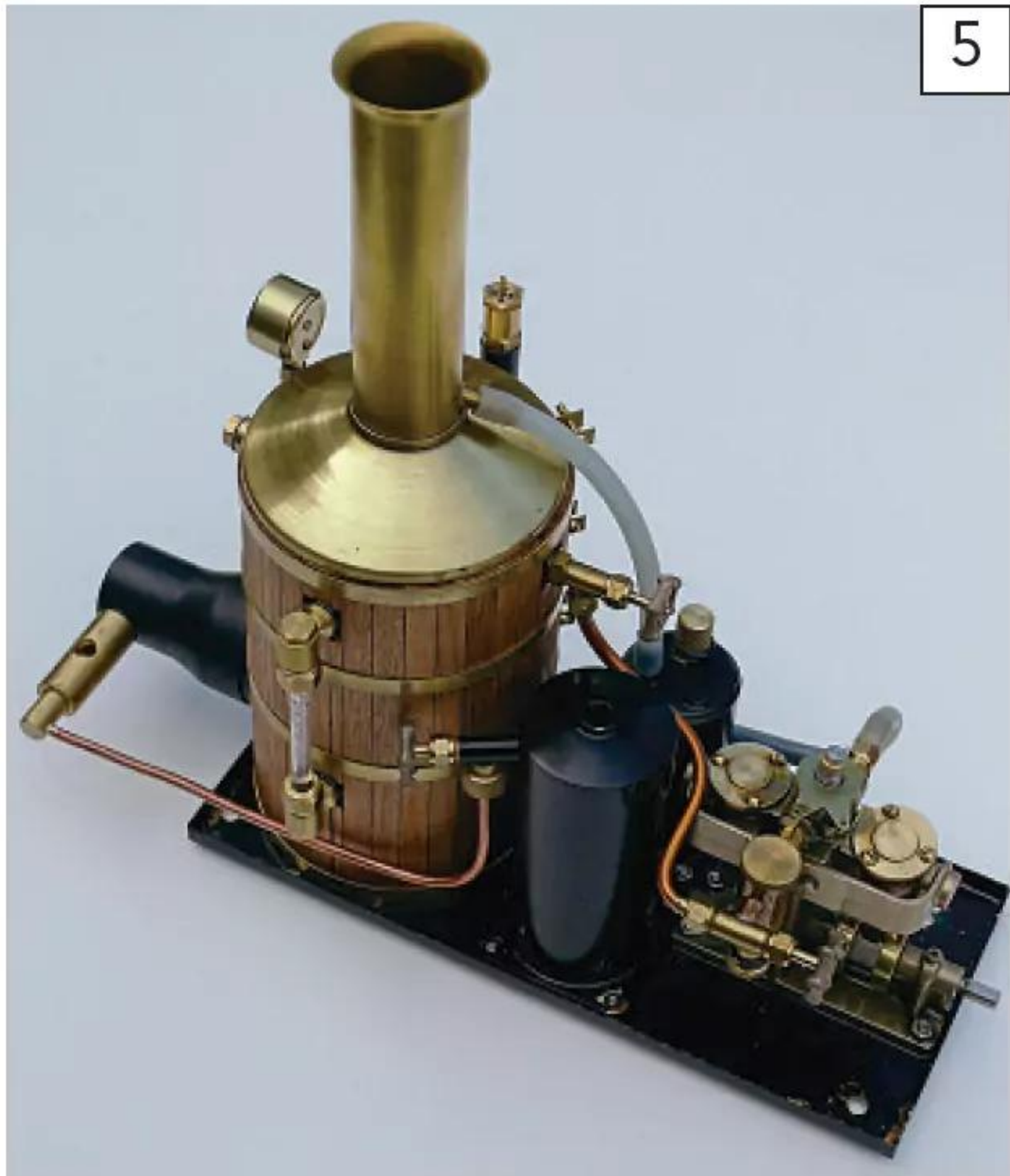
Website: <https://miniaturesteammodels.com/en-gb>
email info@miniaturesteammodels.com

Phone: +61 (03) 9728 2711

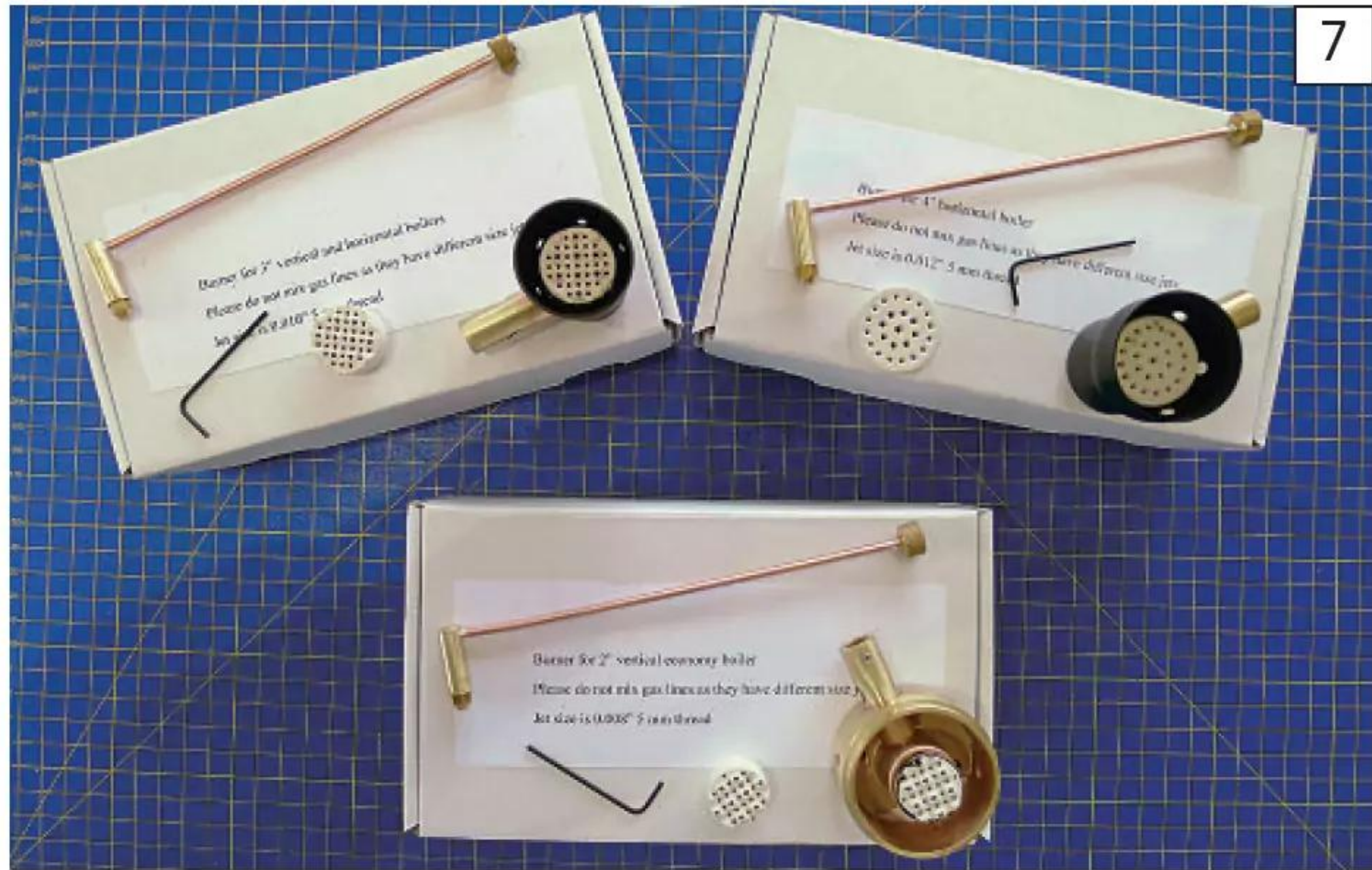
Address: Miniature Steam Pty Ltd, P.O. Box 16, Montrose, Victoria 3765, Australia



Miniature Steam's two 2-inch boiler powered plant with a single or a twin cylinder engine offers cost conscious modellers the opportunity to get a complete steam plant at a very competitive price into their models.



The slightly larger Clyde plant, available in kit form, also utilises the philosophy of an entire plant on a single base plate, including gas tank and separator.



Most ceramic burners use a circular piece of ceramic cut from a larger piece. The MSM burners use a bespoke designed ceramic insert with varying sizes of holes to produce the most efficient flame possible.



Keeping the plant on its common base makes for a very convenient to operate plant that can be removed and refitted into the model in a matter of minutes.

Miniature Steam is one of the very few suppliers of a wide range of model steam related products. From engines in kit form through to complete plant tailored to fit into existing kits, such as the Caldercraft Joffre tug, there really is something for everyone. Miniature Steam is also very aware of the changing demographics of today's hobby market, so has been quick to respond with complete plant units specifically aimed at the budget end of the market. These contain everything needed on a common base and are ready to drop into any suitably sized model, making them an ideal plant for both beginners and more experienced modellers (see **Photo 4**).

A number of Miniature Steam plant have been tested and reviewed in this magazine, and all have been found to be of high build quality while remaining very competitively priced.

I reviewed the Clyde plant in kit form a number of years ago (see **Photo 5**), which then went on to be fitted into an open launch model of mine and has proven to be robust and reliable ever since (see **Photo 6**). The design closely resembles the very popular old Cheddar Puffin plant but uses up to date casting, machining and materials.

At the top end, some of the larger and more complex engines are sophisticated

and extremely capable machines, with slide valve operation and reversing gear, making them suitable for the largest of marine projects.

My reviews of Miniature Steam products have featured in the October 2019, November 2021, December 2021, February 2023 and August 2023 issues of Model Boats.

Miniature Steam also produces a range of individually available ceramic boiler burners (see **Photo 7**), which use a specifically designed ceramic insert that incorporates different hole sizes to ensure the best possible flame distribution (see **Photo 8**).

I can also vouch for the fact that dealing with a company on the other side of the world is surprisingly easy, with fast response to enquiries and impressive delivery times. You even get free delivery on orders over AUD\$500 (which is just over £250 at today's exchange rate).

Tony Green Steam Models

Website: <https://tonygreensteammodels.co.uk/>
Email: sales@tonygreensteammodels.co.uk
Phone: 07510 361726

Tony Green Steam Models has been around since 1988 and has now developed into a substantial sized supplier of all things modelling, not just steam. The company offers kits from a number of the large manufacturers, along with a wide range of steam products for the model railway enthusiasts. When it comes to model boats, there are two specifically notable products that are quite unusual and well worth mentioning. The first is the Unit Steam Engine, or USE (see **Photo 9**). This is a fully functioning, single cylinder oscillating engine, supplied in either kit or built-up form. What's unusual about it



An evenly distributed efficient flame gives the most heat into the boiler, thereby maximizing endurance and minimising gas wastage.

is that it's designed to allow cylinders to be bolted together so as to form a multi-cylinder engine configuration of your own choice. As many cylinders as you want can be bolted in line, horizontally opposed, or even in a 'V' configuration. This obviously makes for an extremely flexible system and, bearing in mind a single cylinder USE engine retails for £38, it's also very cost effective. Tony Green also supplies a range of small oscillating engines suitable for model rail and model boat use (see **Photo 10**).

Another innovation from Tony Green is its small boiler range. A lot of boilers of this size traditionally used either liquid, gel or solid fuel tablets as fuel, which had to be lit outside the boiler and then slid into place beneath it in the model (bearing in mind, of course, that nowadays solid fuel tablets can only be purchased and used if the operator has a license to do so). This can be tricky with a flame in your hand, as you run the risk of either burning yourself or a part of the model or even putting out the flame in the process. Tony Green Steam Models came up with a design of model marine boiler that hinges up vertically to allow the operator to ignite the fuel underneath the boiler. Once the fuel is ignited the boiler is simply hinged back down into the horizontal position. This is a much easier and safer means of igniting a model boiler (see **Photo 11**).

I used a Tony Green Steam Models' boiler in a Krick Anna build project, covered in the May 2017 to Nov 2017 issues (see **Photo 12**). For those feeling a little more creative and adventurous, this boiler can be supplied in kit form (see **Photo 13**).

Forest Classics

Website: www.forest-classics.co.uk/

email info@forest-classics.net

Landline: 01594 368318



The USE engine system has to be the most flexible available. Simply bolt together as many cylinders as you require, in whatever configuration suits the model, to get the engine you need.

Mobile: 07778 950725

Address: Forest Classics, Woodedge Road, Off Ellwood Road, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 7LF

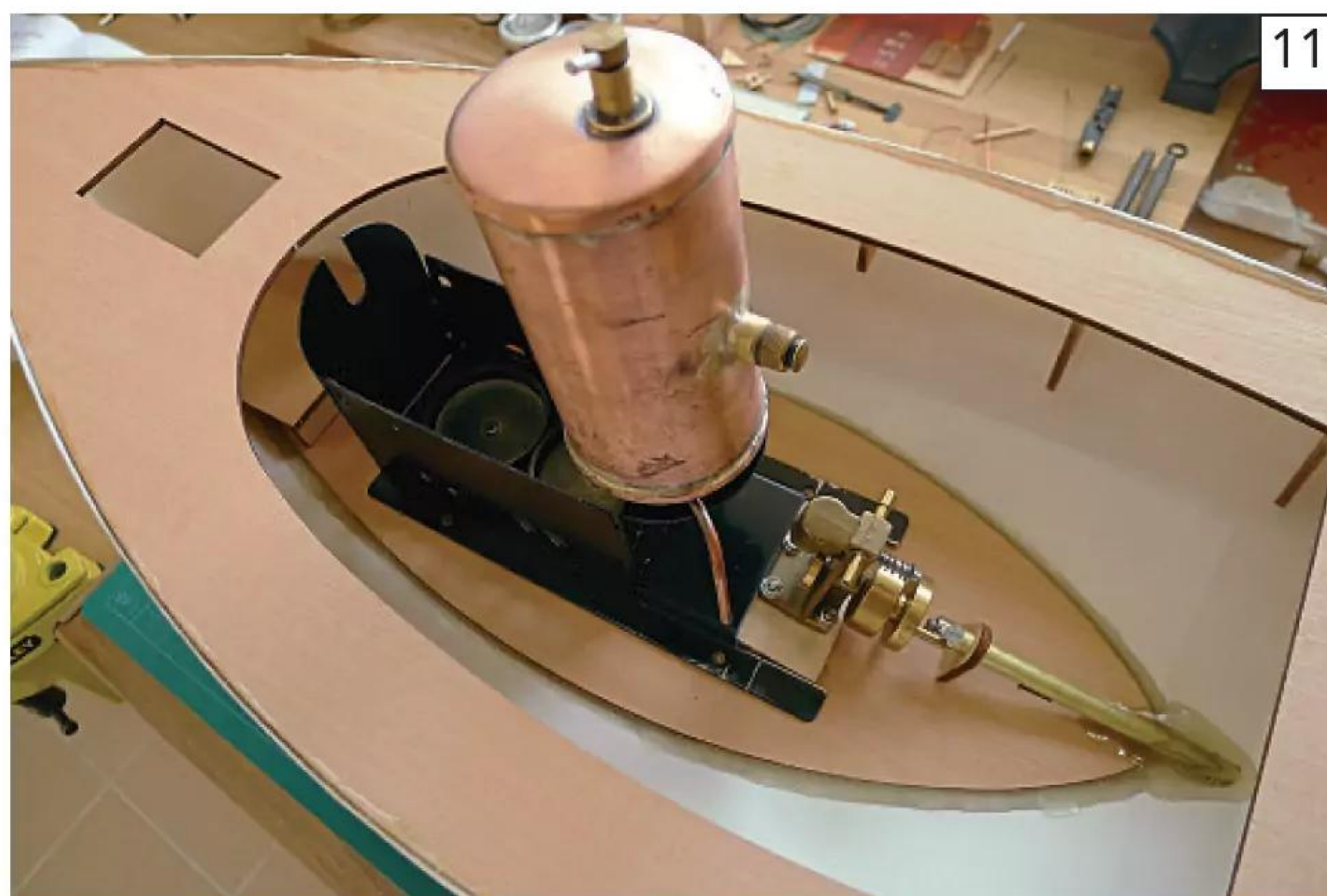
Forest Classics has been supplying model engineering and model steam enthusiasts for 25 years now and it offers a very wide range of products from a large number of manufacturers. While the lion's share of its catalogue tends towards static, railway and road vehicles, the range of boiler accessories and fittings is extensive, as is knowledge and friendly advice the experienced team is able to offer when you give them a ring. Forest Classics is still one of the very few places in the UK where you can purchase a mechanical



There is also a range of small twin cylinder, double acting oscillating engines in configurations to suit both model railway and marine applications. These engines are based on the old Stour Valley Steam, SVS, range of engines.



If you feel a little more adventurous, then have a go at making your own boiler from the Tony Green kit. Bushes are ready fitted, so the only remaining job is to silver solder the end plates on and assemble. It certainly adds to the sense of satisfaction in the finished build.



Having the boiler lift up to enable lighting the fuel in place is such a huge improvement in safety and convenience that it begs the question why no other manufacturer has done it.



The boiler top cover simply lifts off and can be left with either a polished metal finish or, as here, can be clad to resemble an insulated boiler.



14

Never underestimate the value of a good supplier of bushes, plugs and boiler fittings. Blackgates Engineering is mainly railway orientated but its range of boiler fittings is just as valuable to marine plant owners and its safety valves are the best Richard has come across.

gas attenuator valve, which remains one of the first accessories I would recommend to any steam plant user. Many of the products are from slightly more unusual sources such as Maxitrak, Wilescro, Redwing, PM Research and Bix, but Forest Classics also supplies the stunningly beautiful Martin Baylis Static Steam plant with a Kingdon boiler.

Forest Classics also buys and sells secondhand steam models, so its sales page is always worth keeping an eye on, and, likewise, is worth considering when it comes time to trimming down the ever-increasing numbers we hoard – sorry, collect!

Clevedon Steam

Website: www.clevedonsteam.co.uk/

email: Via the web site

Address: 15 Lusart Drive, The Lizard, Helston, Cornwall, TR12 7RS

When Cheddar Models ceased trading at the end of 2005, it was the end of an era. The quality and range of its products was second to none and a huge percentage of model boats were, and still are, powered by its products. One of the team working there back in the day was Jerry Watson, who took the brave step of setting up Clevedon Steam in 2006, based on his extensive knowledge and experience gained from Cheddar. The idea originally was to continue support for Cheddar products in the way of advice and spares, and he still offers a refurbishing service for the Pelican, Plover and Pintail engines. However, he also now supplies a range of engines, boilers (which come pre-painted) and complete plant in kit form, thus enabling you to buy and build your own plant for a specific project. The boiler kits include everything you need to complete the boiler, including sealants, wood

cladding, baseplate, banding and fittings, while the plant kits also include the pipework and a separator.

Jerry frequently works away from home so he may not be able to respond to enquiries immediately, but I can assure you, he does always get back to you. He is incredibly knowledgeable about all things Cheddar related and I have enjoyed many a chat with him about steam related things in general.

Chiltern Model Steam

Website: www.chilternmodelsteam.co.uk/index.php?route=common/home

email: sales@chilternmodelsteam.co.uk

Address: 15 Lusart Drive, The Lizard, Helston, Cornwall, TR12 7RS

Phone: 07941 800103

Chiltern Model Steam is based near Ironbridge in the West Midlands and has historically aimed at the educational and hobby market. As such, it produces and supplies a wide range of beautifully made models of boilers, engines and complete plant, both in ready to run and kit form, either as educational tools for teaching how a steam plant works or for simply the personal pleasure of operating your own steam plant. With the majority of the models being aimed at this market they tend to be of a static variety, with one of the more interesting products being an electric powered boiler that enables youngsters to be introduced to the hobby without the concerns of using naked flames and gas. The range also includes a superb twin cylinder beam engine, with of course two beams as well, for, what has to be said, is a very competitive price, as well as a double compound engine with a total of four cylinders.

That said, Chiltern Model Steam does also include a good number of marine engines in its range, both in vertical and in 'V' configurations, in both twin cylinder and four-cylinder formats, and, again, all at very competitive prices, so is well worth considering when you're looking at the plant for your next project. Unlike many small marine engines, all the Chiltern models are not oscillators but piston valve operated engines, so they should be that bit more frugal on steam. Chiltern also offers a reversing control valve for them, so you can have the operational convenience of an oscillator with the performance of a valve engine, assuming you have a self-starting engine of course.

Boilers are also available in typical model boat sizes, in both horizontal and vertical arrangements, and come complete with all fittings required to run but without lagging or painting, giving you the option for personalisation. All boilers are supplied with hydraulic steam test certificates.

More or less

To provide an honest account, here I have focused solely on the suppliers I've had first-hand experience of over the years. I totally appreciate there will be omissions, so apologies to the suppliers I've not included. Naturally, I'll be absolutely delighted if this article prompts contact, review samples, etc, from any of the suppliers currently not on my radar.

I should also point out that to anyone interested in learning more about what's available, I would thoroughly recommend browsing the trade stands at model engineering shows.

There are, also, of course, a number of suppliers who trade solely online via auction sites, and there are a number of engineering supply vendors who tend to be much more railway orientated, such as Blackgates Engineering and RDG Tools, both of which offer large stocks of general steam and model engineering related spares and accessories. Blackgates, in particular, offers some of the best boiler safety valves I have seen on a model boiler, as well as a very comprehensive range of blanks and fittings in various thread systems (see **Photo 14**).

The fact that so many suppliers have ceased trading over the last 15 years speaks volumes, so I can't close without a gentle reminder of how important it is we support the businesses that serve our hobby – use them or lose them! ●

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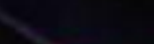
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HI HO SILVER LINING

Dave Wiggins takes a look back at how a not so flying start with model aircraft saw him take plunge into the world of model boats, at a time when radio-control was still all rather basic...

After a festive two-parter on vintage marine steam power, I open this month with something totally different but quite dear to my heart, a high wing vintage model aircraft kit from Mercury Models (Henry J. Nicholls Ltd), c.1960 – yes, I know this is Model Boats, but bear with me...

This simple high wing model aircraft kit, equipped with a second-hand Frog 150D (a small aero diesel) and home constructed single-channel valve radio gear (XFG1 receiver, rubber actuator and a host of miniature high and low voltage batteries), built from circuits found in the old MAP book Simple Radio Control by Hundelby & Ives (illustrated) was my first model (of any sort) back in 1962/63.

Found on a popular auction website during 2023 I just had it buy this part-built example and got it at a very decent price, clearly on account of partially constructed models not being very attractive to buyers. This struck a chord with me as my own Matador never got to fly, because, by the time I'd finished it (at least I did finish it!), a friend at my (then) place of work had persuaded me that R/C aircraft were a complete waste of time and money for hard-up '60s' boys like

us. As a result, I joined his model boat club, moving my very primitive radio gear into an electric Aerokits' Sea Rover. I understand that there are a fair few of these aircraft still flying, but using modern R/C gear and brushless electric power nowadays. Sea Rovers pop up sometimes too!

Typical vintage equipment is pictured here. The engine I've chosen to show is a 'Hornet' 1.46cc 'sports' diesel from ED Ltd – an ideal fit for a Matador, with its lightweight balsa frame and doped on tissue covering. The whole model would be called a floater in a modern aeromodeller's parlance.

"No wonder so many of us back then turned to boats, as the exact same small engine, once fitted with a flywheel and water-cooling jacket, could just as easily be fitted in a small power boat, such as an Aerokit's Sea Nymph or Rover, without further expense"

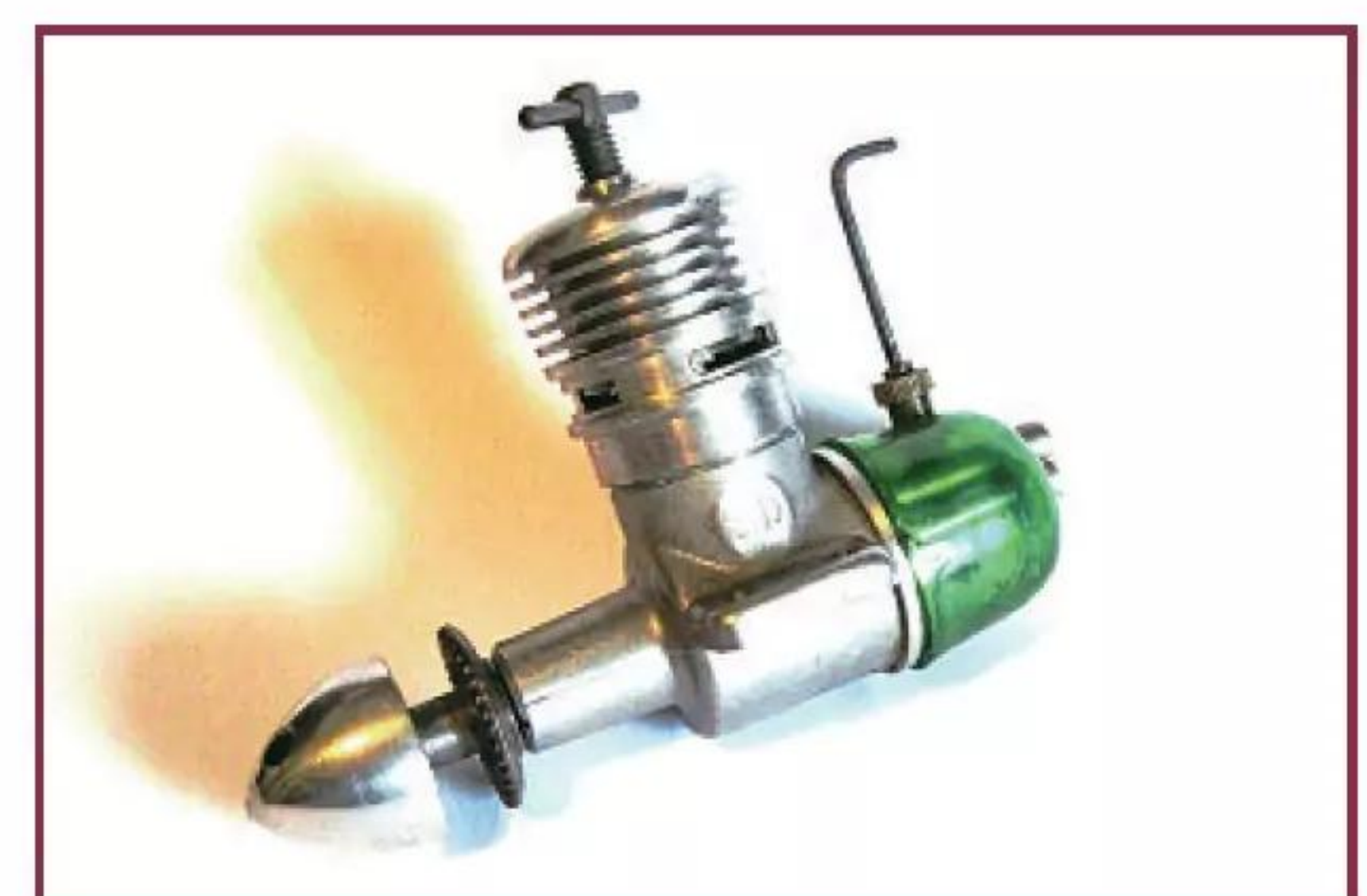
The radio I've chosen for it, and us, this month is a single channel, single

valve, super-regenerative, 27MHz carrier-wave, relay job from ECC Ltd (Electronic Control Components Ltd, owned by Geoff Fairbrass) of London, matched up with an E.D. rubber escapement for control of the aircraft's rudder. It was very primitive control to be sure, but it was all that was possible in the late '50s to early '60s.

Engines like the Hornet (or my Frog-150) were plodders, equipped with very small fuel tanks, and this was a good idea with such crude R/C on board as it ensured your plane couldn't get too far away from you if (or more likely when) the radio set failed to respond to your signals. No wonder so many of us back then turned to boats, as the exact same small engine, once fitted with a flywheel and water-cooling jacket, could just as easily be fitted in a



The Matador kit as listed in a 1960s' Keil Kraft handbook.



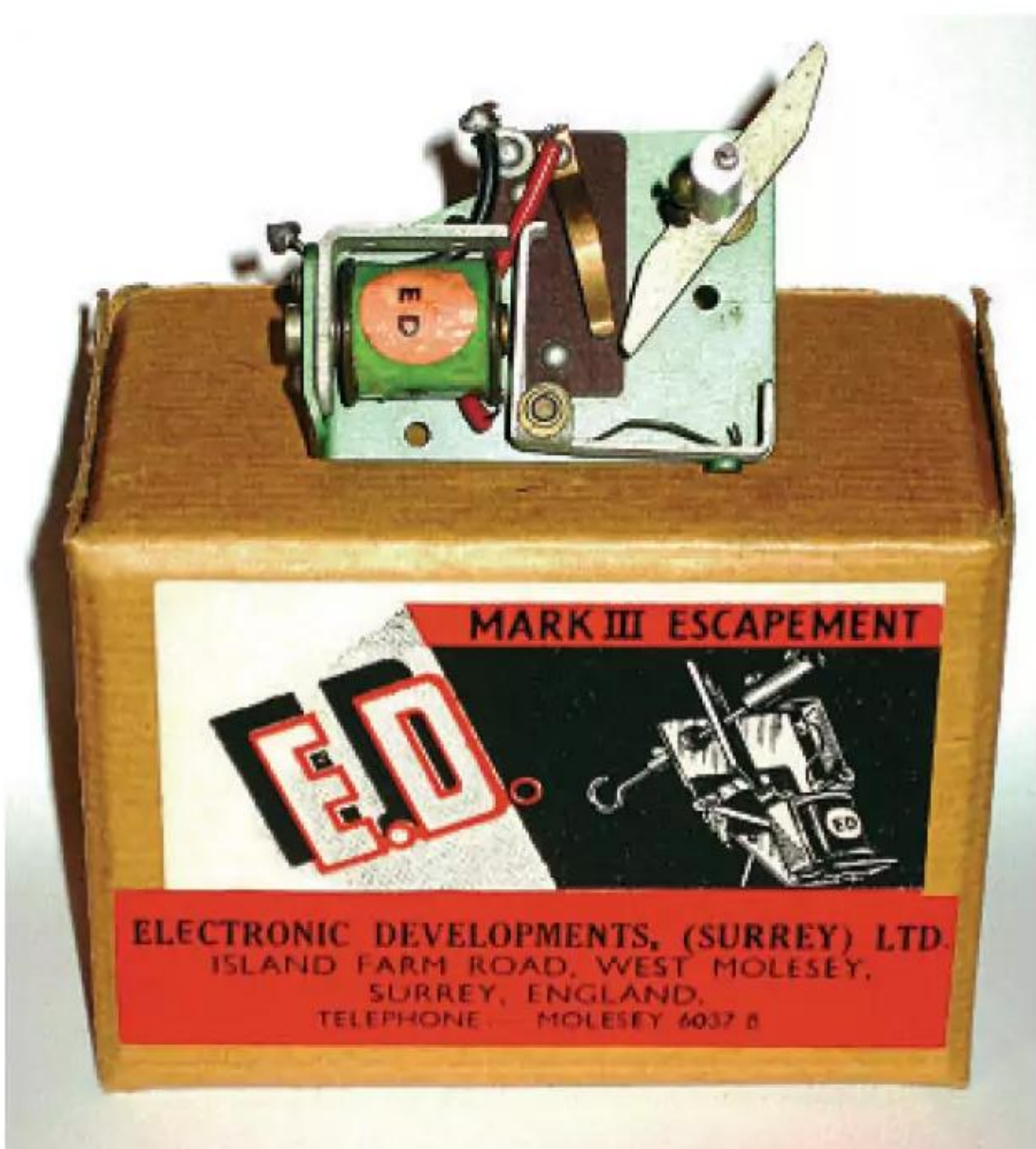
An ideal power choice for this aircraft – a 1.46cc 'Hornet' diesel from ED Ltd.



The Mercury Matador – an early R/C model aircraft kit.



A suitable radio, circa 1960, could have been this valve receiver from ECC Ltd, shown here with a ED escapement.



An almost as new ED Mk III escapement, complete with its original box.



An essential early read on simple R/C from publisher MAP, from which I built examples.



A Channel Islands Special silencer.



A CI Special marine mounting plate

small power boat, such as an Aerokit's Sea Nymph or Rover, without further expense.

Speaking of which, let's move on to something very different model boat wise...

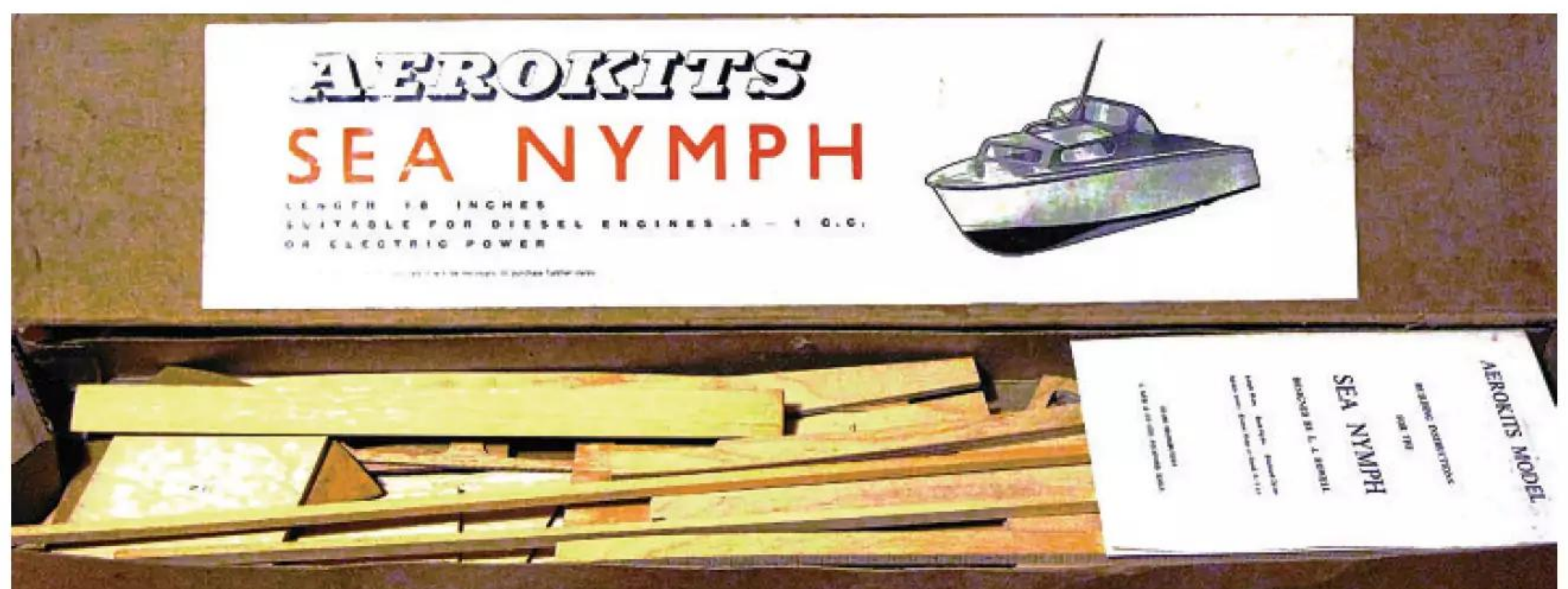
Boating?!

Very many years ago now (how many I forget, but likely 25+) a friend and I set to buying and rebuilding model marine petrol engines – mostly British GANnets (included in a forthcoming column) – with me also writing about them for Model Boats readers. But we did also managed to afford a pair of nicer and even earlier 4-strokes, built during the late 1940s in St Helier, Channel Islands – the aptly named 10cc Jensen 'Channel Islands Special'.

These once famous engines were most often sold as construction casting kits for skilled model engineers to build

at home, but some were factory built, and my own example is one such. I say that the CI is nicer than a GANnet and I justify this statement by pointing out not just its smaller, neater size but its inclusion of scale features such as the rocker box/cover and pushrod cover/guides. It just looks more 'scale' in my opinion. The Channel Island was much used by twin cylinder engine designer Harold Taplin in his earliest (pre the Taplin-Twin) R/C power boats, and these boats can be seen in a relevant Pathé newsreel of the time. My own engine was once the property of a well-known St Albans and MPBA club member, Gerry Colbeck. I forget now how its ownership passed to me. It was a very long time ago!

The only reason I'm revisiting this engine briefly in these pages after so many years is that, by complete luck, during 2023 I was fortunate enough to spot two accessories for it on an online auction site: a flanged silencer and chromed steel marine mounting plate. I have the original factory drawings for the engine, and neither is shown on them. I suspect, therefore, that they might have been made by a fellow 'CI' owner, but I'd welcome any further info/comments. The silencer in particular looks to have been professionally made, it's that good. ●



A suitable small boat for our 1.46cc ED Hornet would be this Aerokits Sea Nymph broads' cruiser

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



San Felipe

I have just finished building OcCre's *San Felipe*. It's a marvellous kit, but, as has become my practice, I, of course, decided to add some customisations.

Firstly, I used pure Sapele wood strips for the hull, instead of the 2nd layer Sapele provided by OcCre.

I also made extensive use of LED lighting. In order to show off the illumination within the interior, the solid metal portholes supplied with the kit were replaced with wooden framed, glazed (the glass being represented with clear plastic) ones. Likewise, I

opted to fashion my own wooden doors (as opposed to using the kit's solid metal ones). The stern lanterns, too, were swapped out for those from another OcCre kit, and these also light up. Plus, I have light coming out through every gun port and from the four cannons I added to the stern.

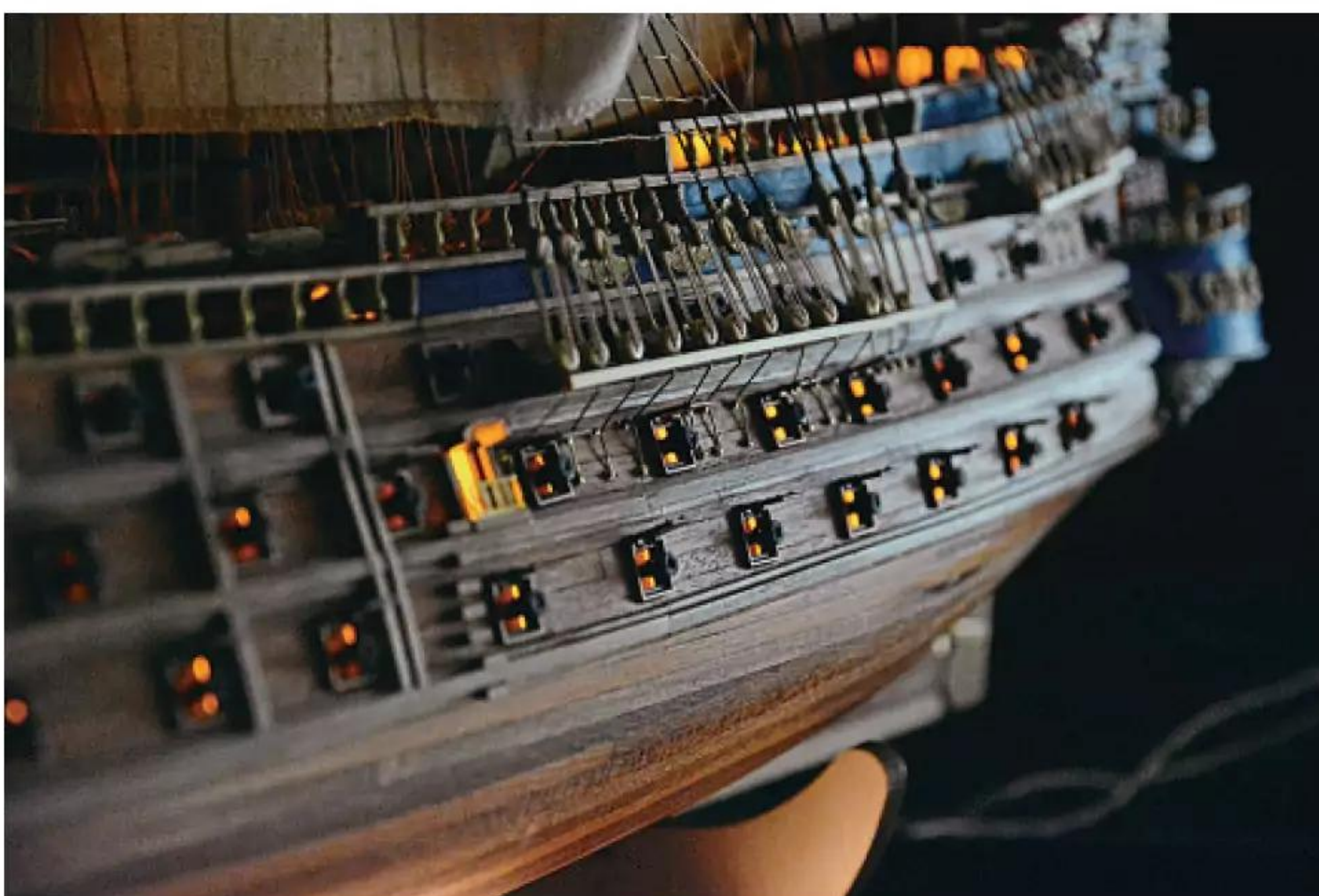
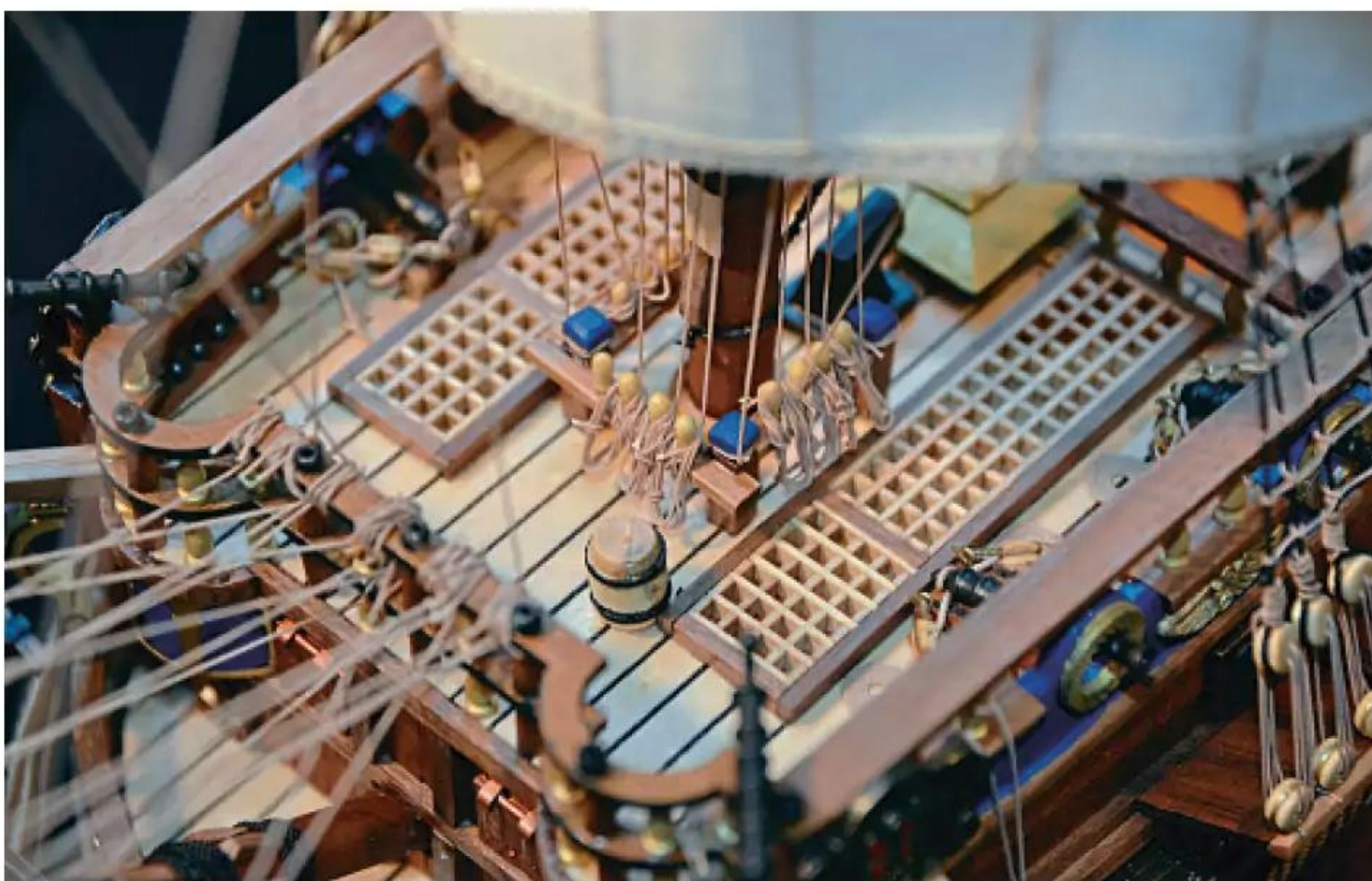
For the unpainted cannons and anchors, I used patination fluid to achieve a natural black.

For the various size ropes (ranging from 0.3mm up to 2.1cm), I used three different colours – black, dark brown and tan.

I am really delighted with finished model, and I hope you will enjoy the photos of her I have sent you. Thank you, OcCre!

JOHN ALIPRANTIS
EMAIL

Another simply superb build, John! It was so hard to choose from all the fantastic images you supplied which to show here, but I will be adding a gallery folder to www.facebook.com/modelboats so that the remainder can also be enjoyed. **Ed.**



Motorflote

This is quite an unusual vessel and was designed to fulfil a specific purpose. During World War II the British Army needed a temporary bridging system capable of carrying up to 70 tons, but at the same time it had to be portable and easily assembled by squaddies. Enter one Donald Bailey, a civil engineer working for the Experimental Bridging Establishment, a government body, who answered the Army's needs. Thomas Storey, an engineering company in Stockport, Greater Manchester, was commissioned to build the bridges to Bailey's design. The Bailing bridging system proved highly successful and so Thomas Storey was allowed to continue manufacturing Bailey Bridges under licence for civilian use in peacetime.

Where a Bailey Bridge needed to be erected over water, Thomas Storey devised a system of interlocking floats (known as Unifloats) capable of carrying the bridge sections. Each Uniflote, being a hollow square tank capable of being ballasted with water, allowed adjustment of the amount the tank sat above the surface of the water, i.e. the freeboard. The individual Uniflotes could be linked together to form a modular unit, depending upon the length of the bridge sections. Next to be devised was a means of shunting these modules into the required position, which was solved by adding a means of propulsion in the form of a diesel engine and steering to a standard Uniflote to form a Motorflote.

The model, at 1:12 scale, is to a David Metcalf design, featured as a free plan in the December 1985 edition of Model Boats. The actual full-size vessels used a Kort Nozzle system to provide good manoeuvrability, and this was reflected in the model. The model is driven by a single 540 motor and powered by two 6V gel-cells connected in parallel. In addition to the normal R/C equipment, it has been fitted with a remote switching device from the Component Shop Action Electronics range, allowing the search/cab lights and the amber flashing beacons to be operated via the R/C transmitter.

The model was very easy and enjoyable to build. Sadly, this is one model plan that's not available from Sarik Hobbies, but examples are



Built to 1:12 scale and based on a David Metcalf design, featured as a free plan in the December 1985 edition of Model Boats, David Mark's Motorflote bears testament to the ingenuity of the Bailey bridging system. It has proved quite the talking point at pondside and also serves as a very handy retrieval hero!

occasionally offered for sale on eBay.

The model certainly attracts some interest when on the water, often prompting the inevitable question: "What is that?". It also proves very useful for retrieving other models which have ceased to function!

**DAVID MARKS
EMAIL**

What an excellently executed talking point build, David, with the added bonus of this little workhorse also being capable of earning its keep as a rescue boat. Top Marks! Ed.



Your Letters

Got views to air or information to share? Then we want to hear from you!

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**

Vintage pond yacht restoration

As a child, I spent many happy an hour sailing a plastic electric - 2 x 'C' cell fishing boat model on the boating lake at Eyra Park, Colwyn Bay, with my grandfather. So, when I first started work, I bought myself a Keil Kraft Sea Commander from Altron(?) Models at Scott Arms in Birmingham, along with an electric motor heavy enough to act as a door stop! This encouraged me, like many others, to start building various plastic kits then on the market, but only for a while, as I quickly found myself just too busy with day-to-day life.

50 yrs on, retirement saw my enthusiasm rekindled. An initial online search, however, quickly made it apparent that not only is there a lot of 'new' kit available but also various new ways of doing things – many of which are far removed from what had been common practice back when I first started out all those decades ago.

Fortunately, the help I've had over the counter at my local shop, Model Maker (formerly known as Mike's Models), has proved invaluable. That's not to say I haven't had help from online sellers, but a newbie doesn't always know the right questions to ask, so being able to have a face-to-face chat makes all the difference.

Knowing I would need water to put my model boats on, I also started looking at a number of clubs within striking distance but noticed many offered limited access. So I was delighted to discover Kingsbury Water Park (<https://www.kwpmbc.club>), where the lake is open to members whenever the park itself is. What a lifeline! I would never have progressed to the point I am at now without the help of my fellow club members.

My primary project, a scratch build 1:12 scale rescue tug, is still very much a work in progress, and one that's proving to be huge learning curve. But currently on the back burner is the reason for this letter.

The model in question is a vintage pond yacht, which I inherited from my father. After visiting Dr Google, I believe this was most likely hails from somewhere between 1913 and the 1920s. Family lore says it was originally a boardroom display centrepiece at Coventry Chain, where my grandfather was Marketing Director, both during and after World War I. It may well be it was my father

who decided to give the hull a coat of paint, before sailing it on the pond in Berkswell (where he grew up). What I do know for sure is that it was the local blacksmith who made the lead keel weight for it, and the shape of that keel/weight is reminiscent of pre-World War I items.

It's been suggested that it may be 36-inch class Pond Yacht. However, while it is 36-inches, it originally had a bowsprit, which I believe the 36-inch class didn't.

As you will see from photos, I have now stripped the paint back to reveal what lies beneath (outdoors, of course, as on a model of this vintage, lead based paint could well have been used), but have decided I should down tools, at least until I've found out a bit more about this yacht. Some of the metal work removed had clearly been silver soldered on. Somewhere in the back of my mind I can hear my father saying the solder simply wouldn't take the strain of



The vintage pond yacht Peter inherited from his father, now very obviously in need of some serious TLC. Before attempting any kind of restoration, however, having newly returned to the hobby after some 50 years, Peter would very much appreciate hearing from anyone able to offer some further info/advice.

the rigging when sailed, perhaps therefore validifying that the boat had indeed originally been built for the boardroom and not for sailing.
I know it's a long shot, but what I am hoping is that someone reading will be able to identify, date, and

confirm the maker of this model (which may not have been my grandfather), and, most importantly, offer me some advice on how it should be rigged.
PETER C. WATTS
GREAT BARR, BIRMINGHAM

Wow – a model that has literally been through the wars! While I'm really looking forward to seeing your scratch-built tug on completion, it will be equally lovely if someone is able to provide the info you're seeking here, Peter. Here's hoping... **Ed.**



Alfred
I'm totally new to boats but have experience with R/C cars and felt like trying something a little bit slower. I recently bought this boat on eBay and have currently replaced all the wiring and got it running. It is 30-inches long and was scratch built by the person I bought it off. The hull appears to be GRP, everything else is balsa wood. Does anybody have any info on what type of boat



Does this model look like it's been based on an actual vessel you're familiar with? If so, some further information on 'Alfred' would be most appreciated.

it is? I'm hoping to renovate it completely and would like to get it looking as good as it should be if in use as a real boat.
bucketp1
via www.modelboats.co.uk
Assuming this tug is based on an actual vessel (it may, of course, be the builder's own freestyle design), does anyone reading recognise it? Over to you, chaps... **Ed.**

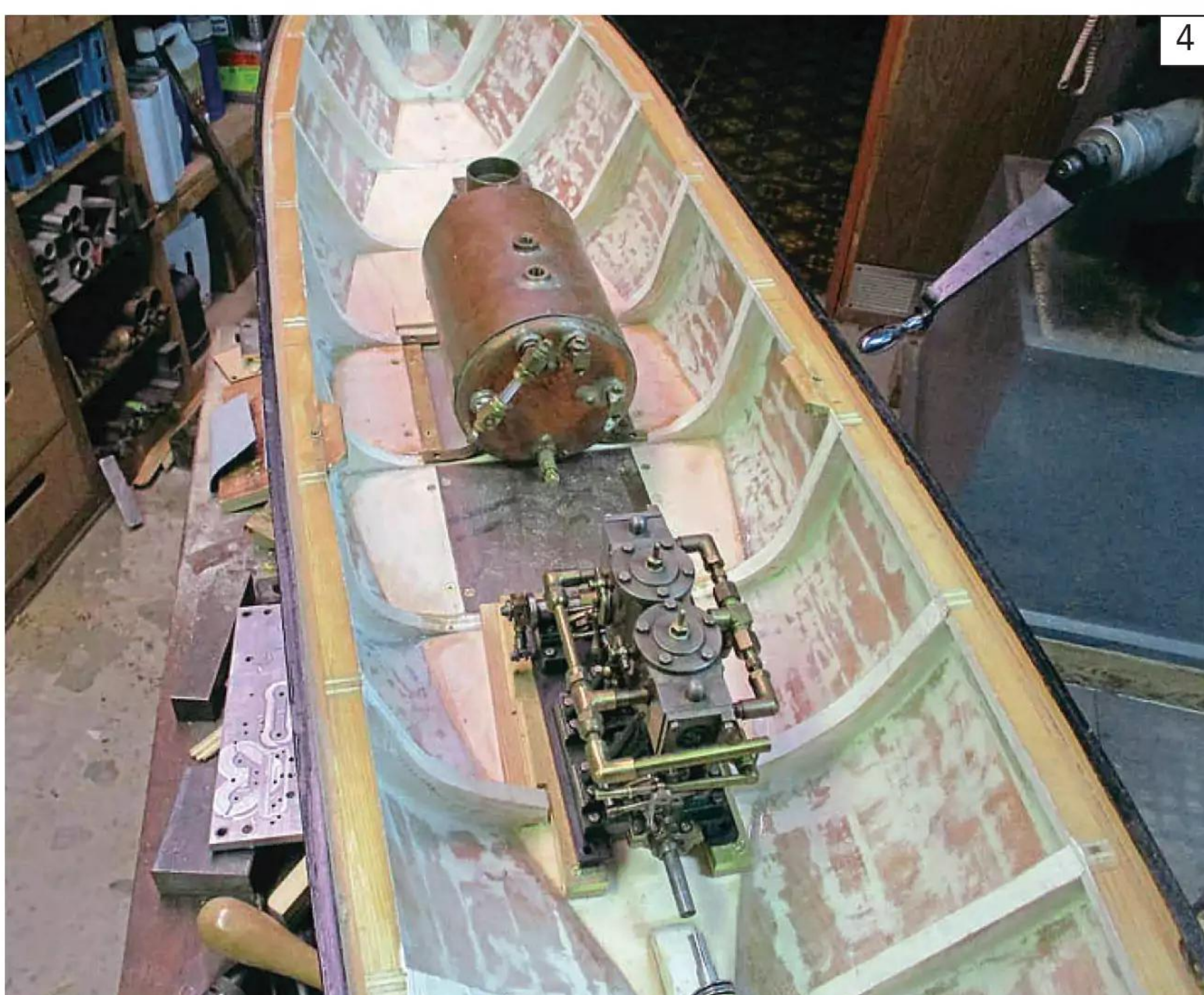
Lady Sarah, a.k.a. Joffre
I've acquired a 52-inch model tug (see **Photo 1**). The funnel sports Caledonian Steam Packet Company colours, the port of registry is Irvine – simply because one of the two builders

was Scottish, and she is called the *Lady Sarah* – again, only because the other builder had a daughter named Sarah. However, many will immediately recognise the tug as the *Joffre*.

The builders obviously intended that the model be sailed, as it came with a very nice double Stuart 10 and boiler installed on a test bed, and with stringers sized to accept the engine



To assist Chris with his restoration of Lady Betty, is there anyone out there who still has her/her copies of the August-September 1950 issues of Model Mechanic magazine and who'd be willing to scan the relevant pages (i.e., the ones featuring the two-part article on this model) for him? Ed



installed inside the hull. But that was basically it. For starters, the rudder was entirely cosmetic and as the stern was a solid block of wood; connecting the rudder to a servo was clearly left as a 'future project'.

I'm now working on getting the boat in the water. Originally the (planked) hull was simply painted on the inside (see central bays in **Photo 2**). I therefore have decided to line the interior with fibreglass cloth

impregnated with epoxy resin (right bay in **Photo 2**) and fill in the bottom of each inter-rib bay (left bay in **Photo 2**).

The filling in is in part to give me a base on which to install things, but it's also to avoid having a lot of unconnected areas in which water can pool. I think the nature of the hull/superstructure joint is such that some water is bound to get in, and I want to have it collect in a single bilge where a pump can take care

of it. **Photo 3** shows where I've got to so far. The wood in a couple of the bays is not yet fastened down, but, basically, I now have a single contiguous 'floor' with a bilge in the middle. The bilge covers two bays, while the aft portion of it is covered with a removable brass plate.

I'm going to start with an electric motor, but I hope to graduate eventually to the steam plant. Everything is being designed to accommodate both possibilities, and in particular I've mounted my electric motor in such a way that the bed to shaft distance is exactly the same as for the steam engine. The brass engine stringers visible towards the stern will therefore work for both engines. **Photo 4** shows the putative steam arrangement.

As a beginner, I'd like to know if I'm off track. And I've a specific question about ballast. As I've been filling in the bays, I've been placing a mixture of epoxy and scrap brass under the floorboards. My best estimate is that in order to float at the proper level, the model is going to have to weigh at least 70 lbs, and as it's nowhere near that at the moment I reckoned that a modest amount of fixed ballast can't hurt (though I certainly can see the advantages of mostly using removable ballast that is dropped in at the dock).

Can anybody tell me what a 1:48 Caldercraft *Joffre* weighs when ready to sail? If I knew this number, I could compute what my model needs to weigh in order to get in to float at the same waterline (just a matter of multiplying by the cube of the scale difference). Or, alternately, does anybody know what a Caldercraft *Resolve* weighs when appropriated ballasted? I'd expect my model to be very close, as it's about the same length and we're dealing with two tugs.

I need a better feel for weight as I'm not sure whether I should cram as much weight as possible in the two bays that are not yet finished or whether I should fill them largely or entirely with wood.

Thanks in advance for any replies.

JOHN BRYANT
VIA www.modelboats.co.uk

I am confident we will get some feedback here, John, and I will, of course, update you on all comments/advice, possibly sharing some of the correspondence on these pages, as it may well also be of help to others. Stick with it, and please send us some photos when you do finally get the *Lady Sarah* on the water. **Ed**.

Lady Betty

I'm writing to you hoping for some help with what I believe is a *Lady Betty* hull, which I bought as the basis for a restoration project.

I Googled, etc, and eventually found an old 2017 thread on the Model Boats forum, in which 'James Baker3' posted about a *Lady Betty* model he had completed using an even older instruction book that had belonged to his father. The thread also referenced partial extracts on the *Lady Betty* from in *Model Maker* magazine but points out the first two articles on the *Lady Betty* were published in the August-September 1950 issues of the *Model Mechanic*

magazine, which I have been unable to source online. Thus, I was hoping to be able to contact 'James Baker 3' and ask if he could assist with copies of the first few pages, or whatever he has available. Or, indeed, reach out to anyone else who may be able to assist.

I also saw an article penned by 'Derek' of Classic Pond Yachts about the restoration of a *Lady Betty* he undertook for a customer. I have emailed him – with no reply yet - but I doubt he has plans, as they are not mentioned in his website article.

Having the plans, especially the hull and mast details, would be so useful as, while I am an experienced

mechanic, I am only an amateur model maker!

**CHRIS SHEAD
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

I have my fingers crossed that either 'James Baker 3' will get in touch or that someone else reading will be able to help here, Chris – as from your photos this promises to be a really beautiful model once you complete her restoration. Ed.

Sir Kay

I have recently purchased the 1:48 scale kit of the armed trawler *Sir Kay* and have been advised to obtain a copy of the article by John Lambert and drawing with further details published in your December 1983 issue. Can you send me a copy or download the article? Any advice would be much appreciated.

**KEN O'BRIEN
EMAIL**

I would love to be able to help here, Ken, but our Back Issues Dept doesn't keep stock from as far back as the 1980s, and unfortunately in those days digital archiving of issues had yet to be introduced. However, with a bit of luck, possibly someone reading may still have this edition and will be kind enough to scan the relevant pages and send these to us via email. In which case, I will be delighted to forward them on to you. Ed.

Super P

I am after ship plans for a Blue Funnel Line (Alfred Holt) Super P class but haven't had much luck sourcing these so far. So, I am hoping that you, or someone reading, will perhaps be able to point me in the right direction.

**ALAN JACKSON
EMAIL**

I turned to contributor Dave Wooley for some advice here, and he points out: "*P class Alfred Holt /Blue Funnel vessel plans may be available from the Merseyside Maritime Museum archive or Wirral Archive. I recall going aboard the Priam many years ago, as Alfred Holt had a berth at Birkenhead West Float, hence the Wirral Archive Hope this helps". However, it may well be that others reading will also be able to offer some suggestions, Alan. Over to you, chaps! Ed.*

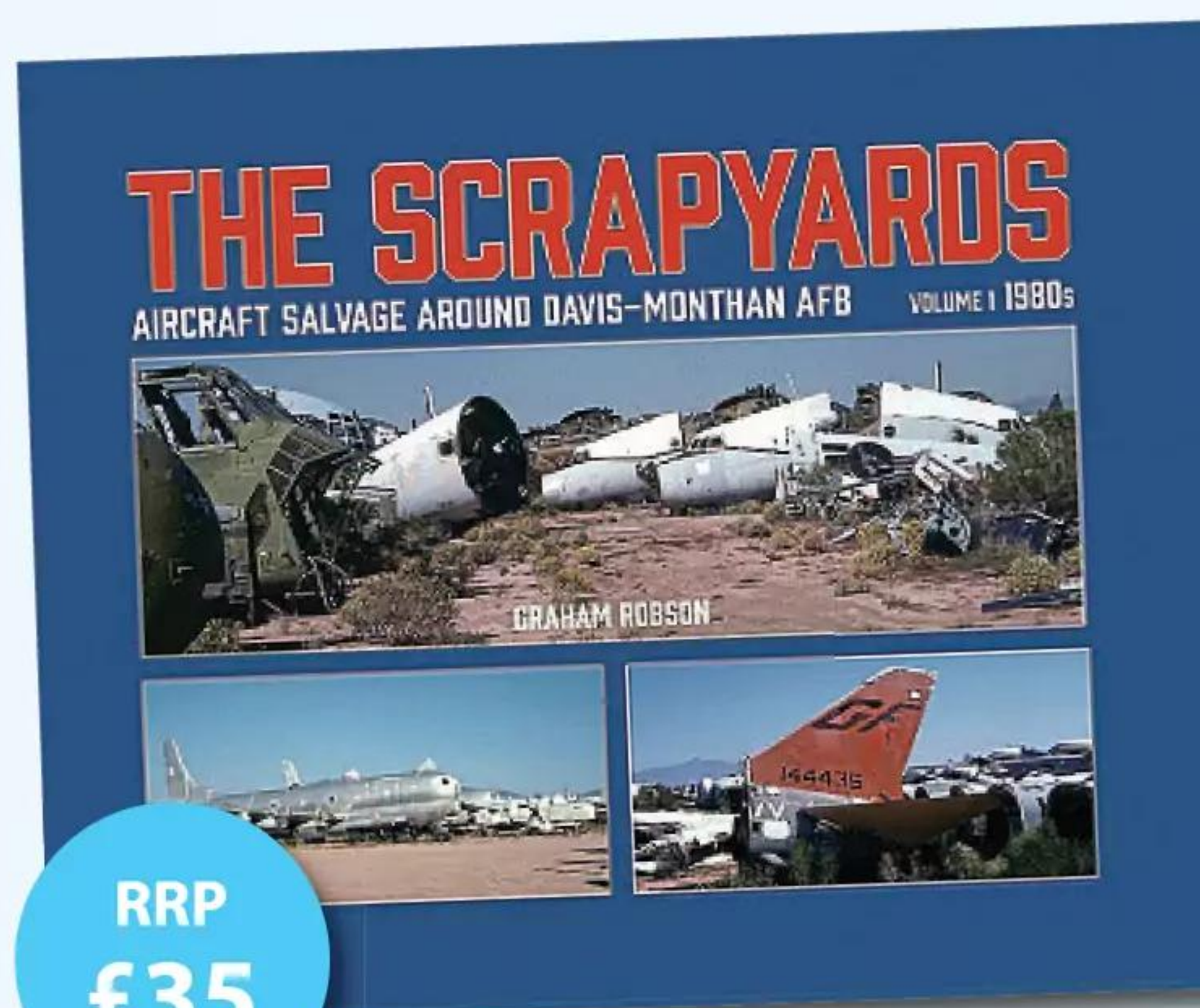


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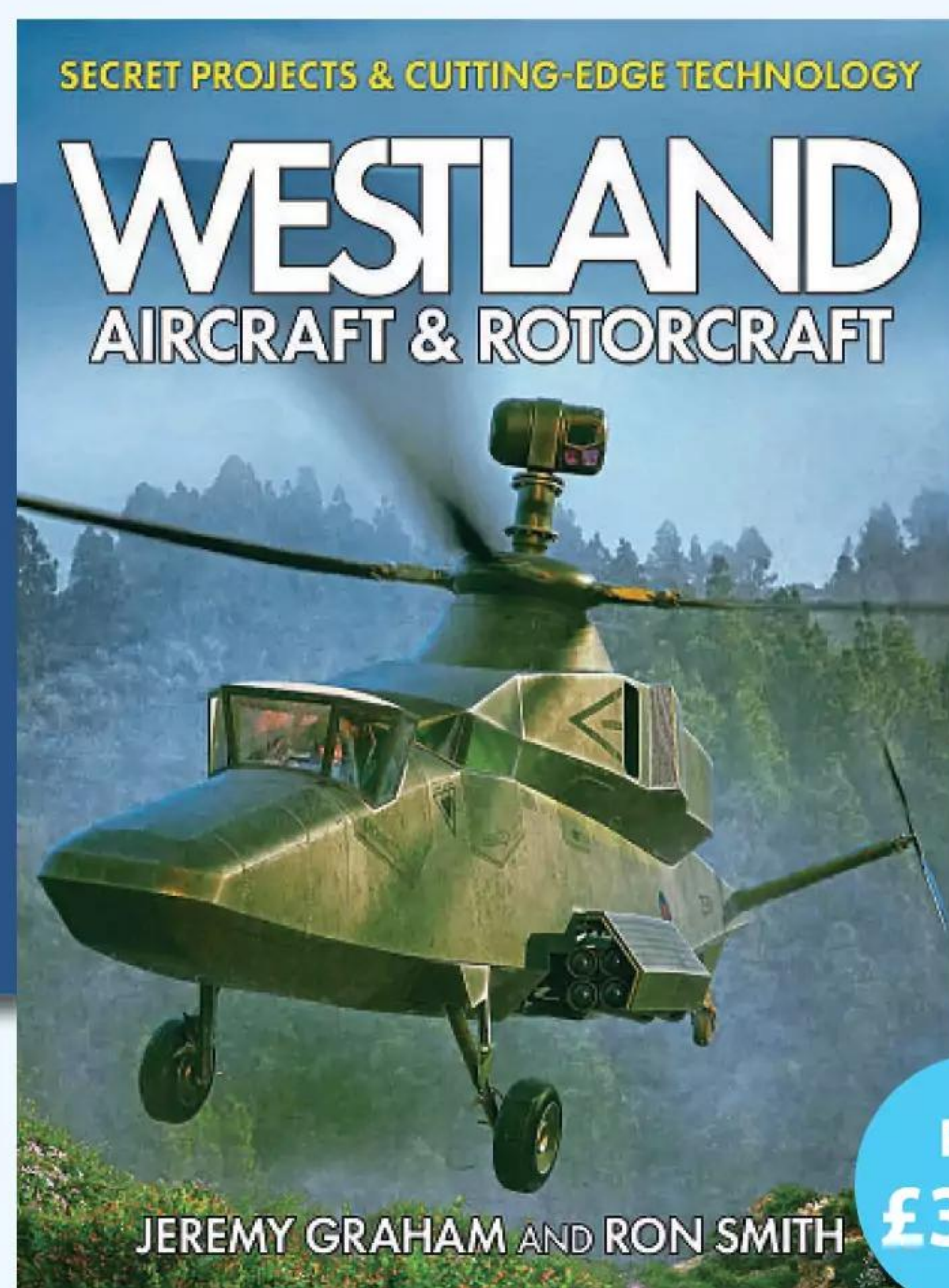
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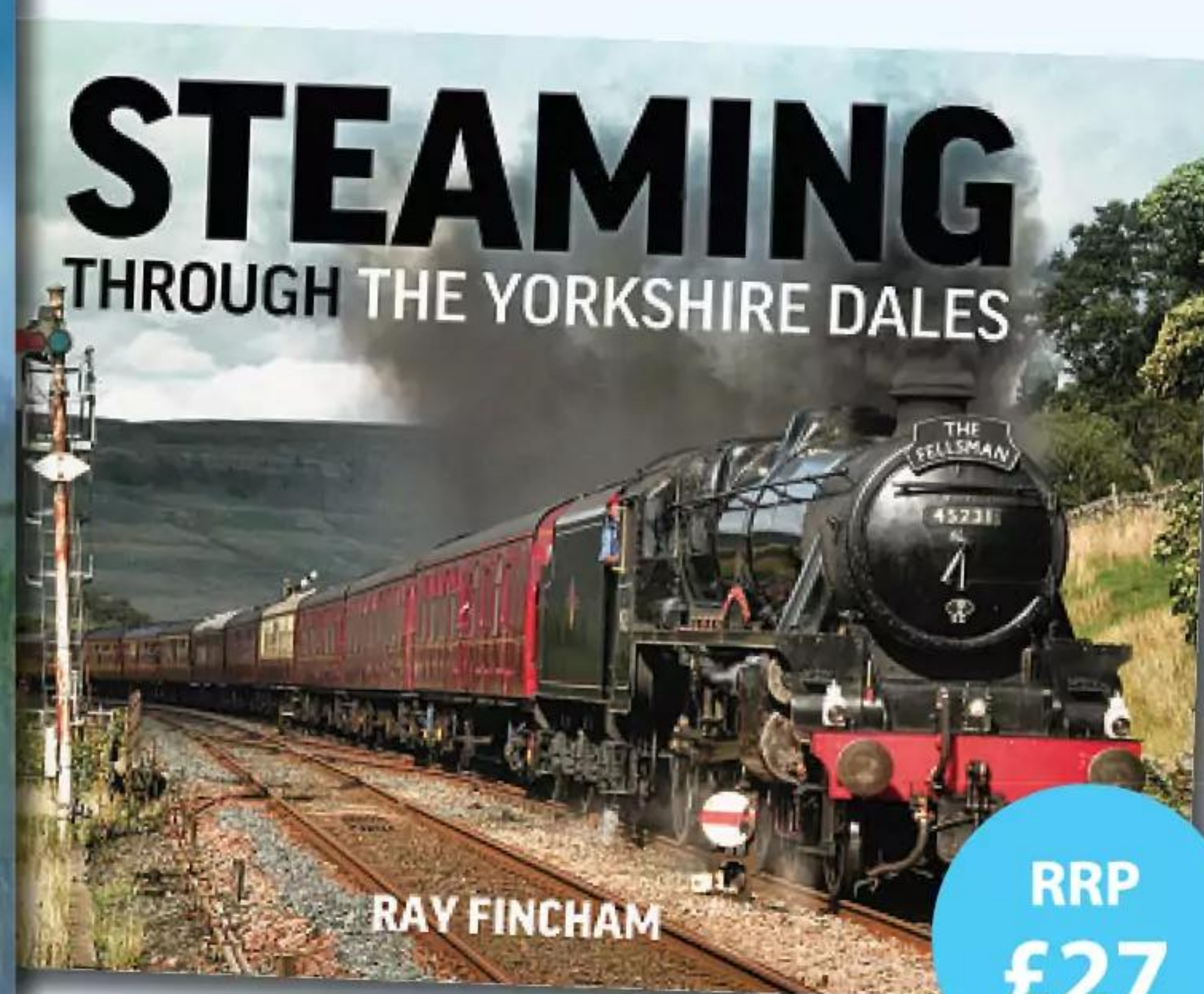
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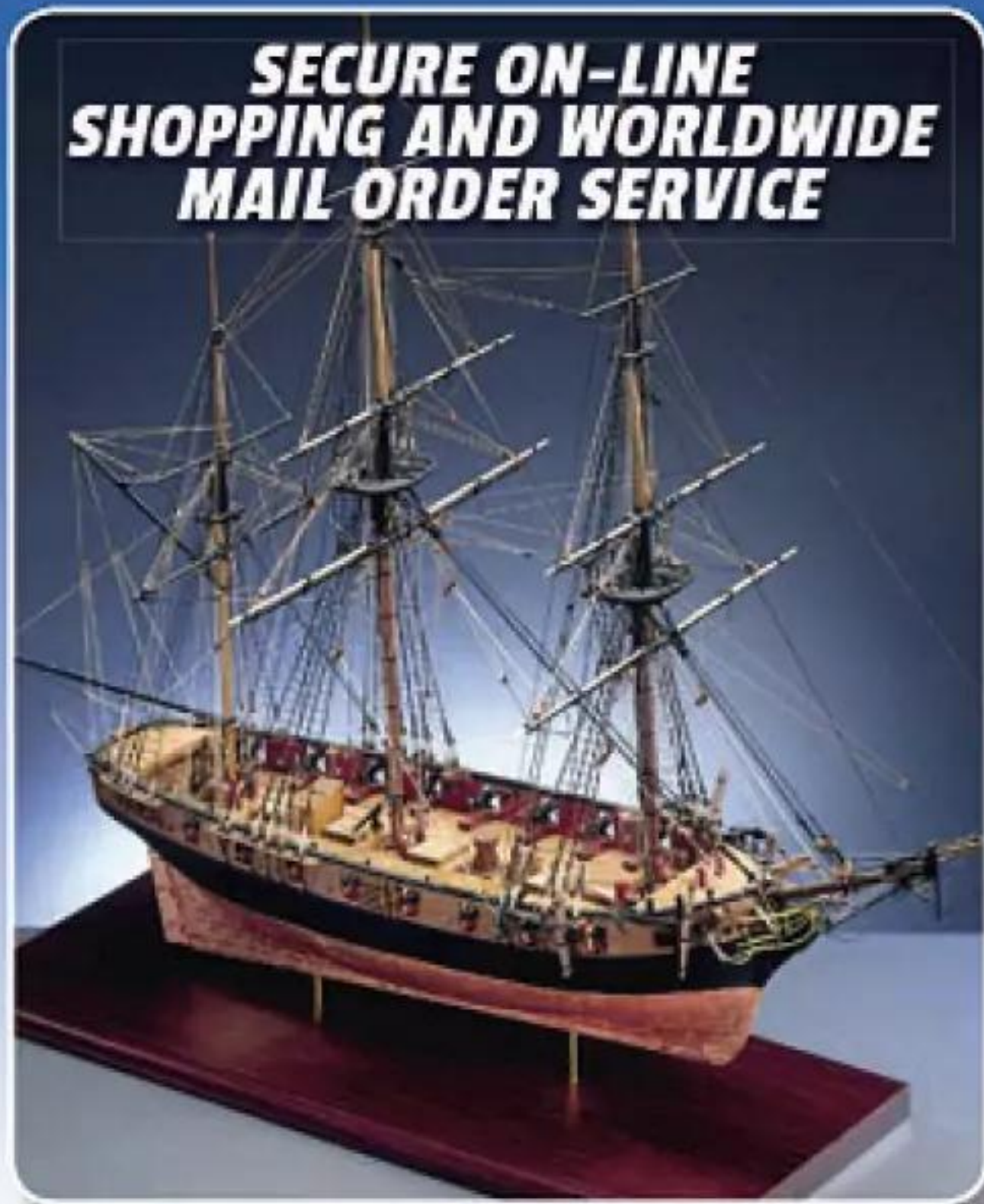
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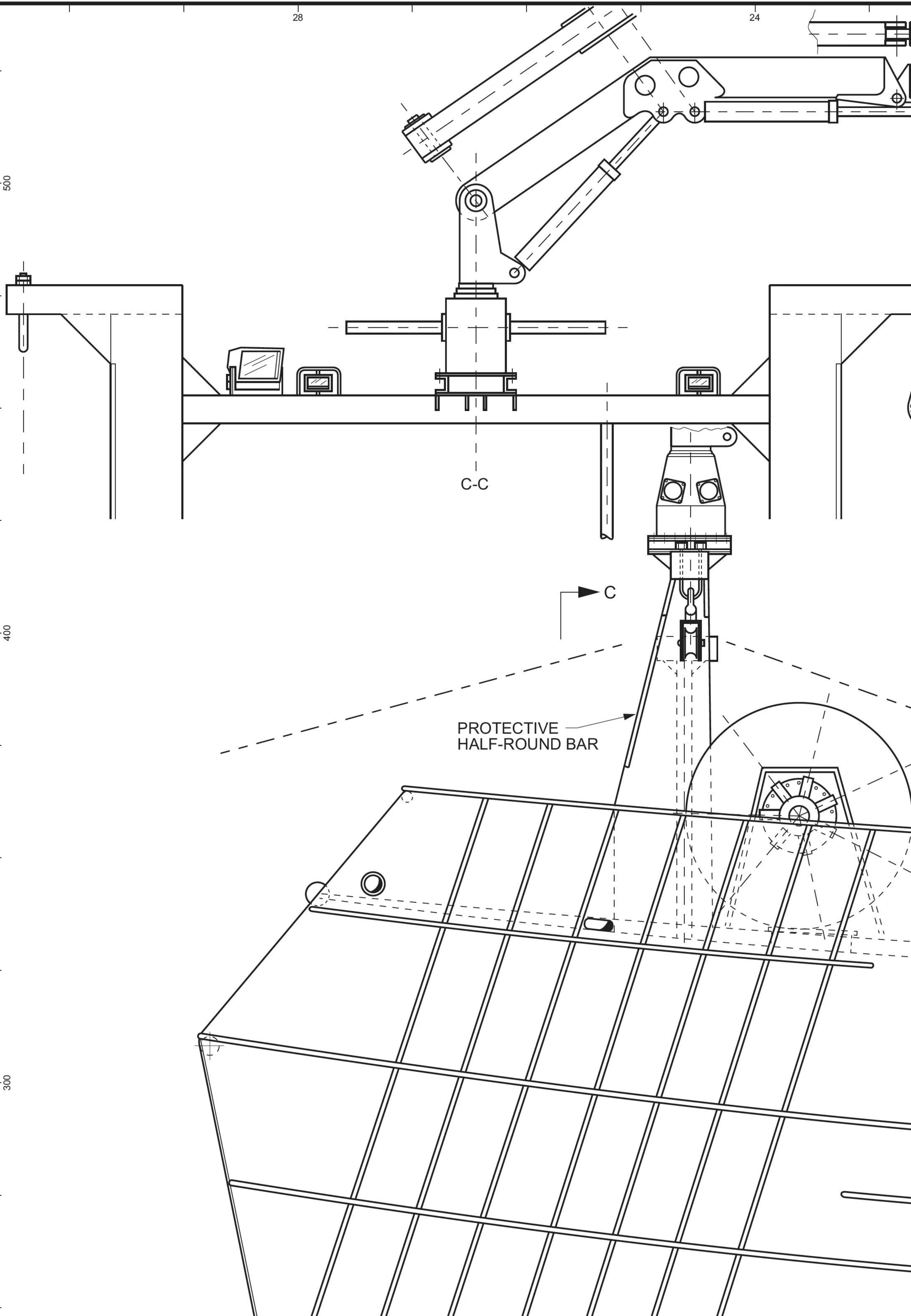
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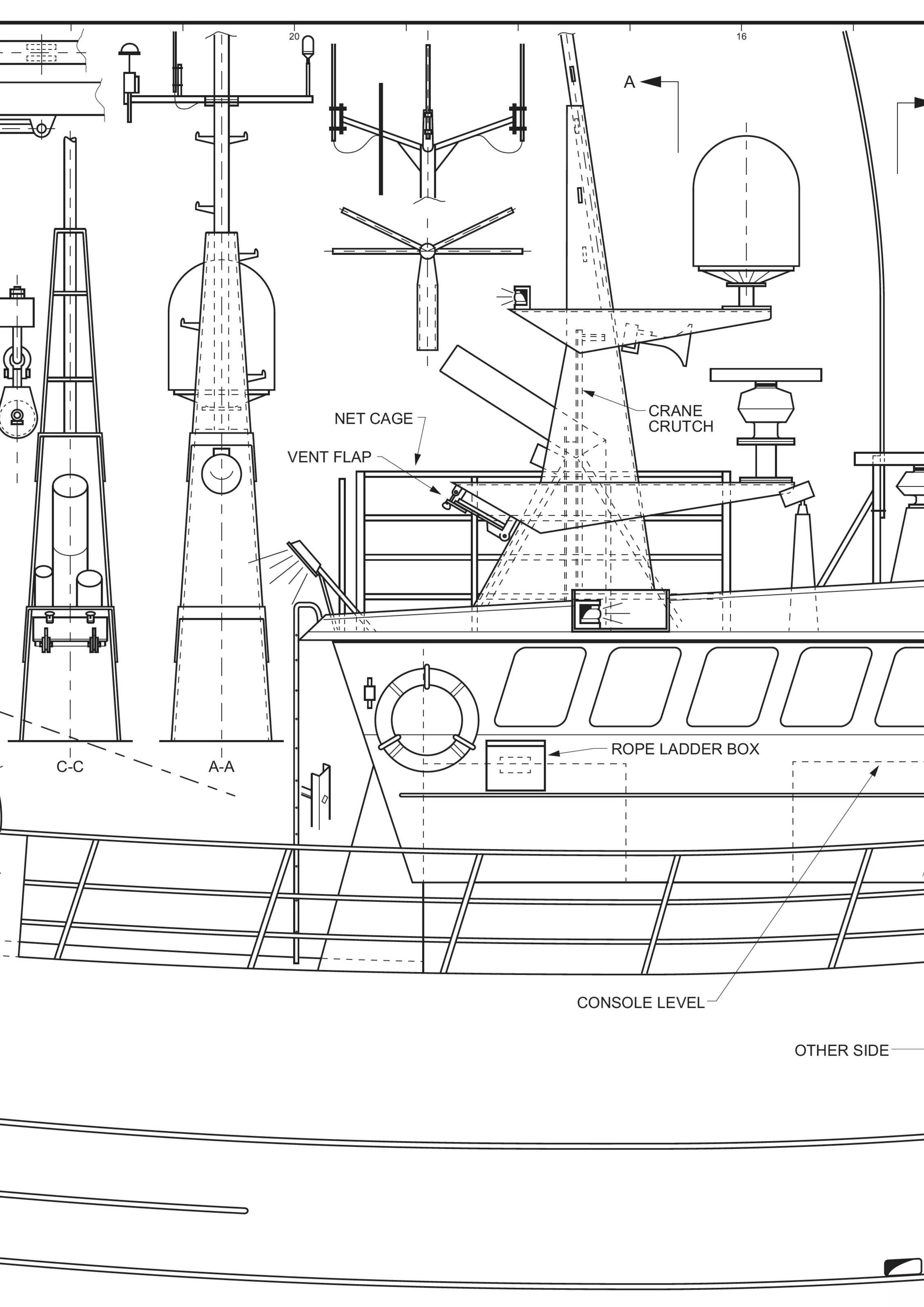
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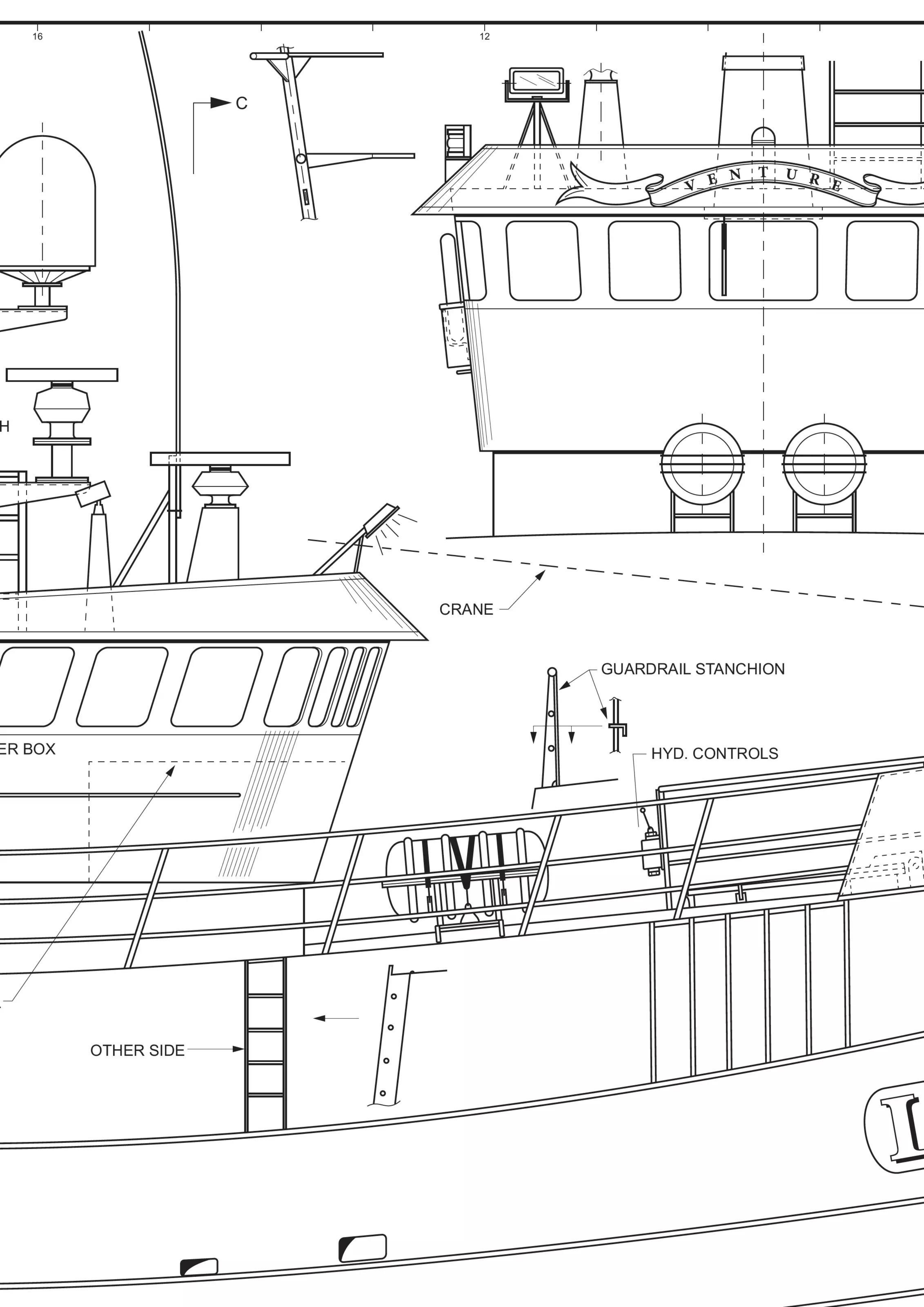
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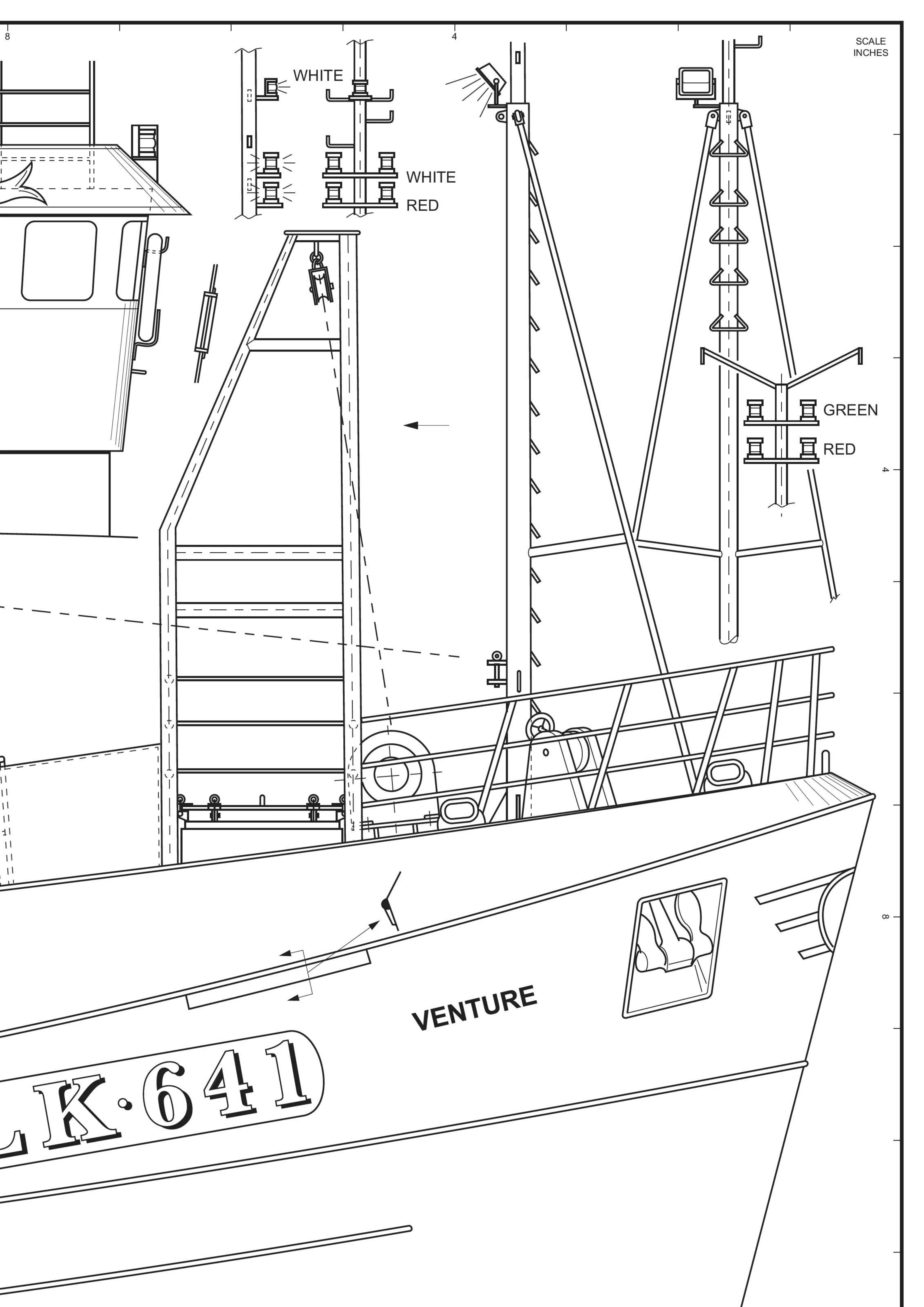
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CONSOLE LEVEL

OTHER SIDE





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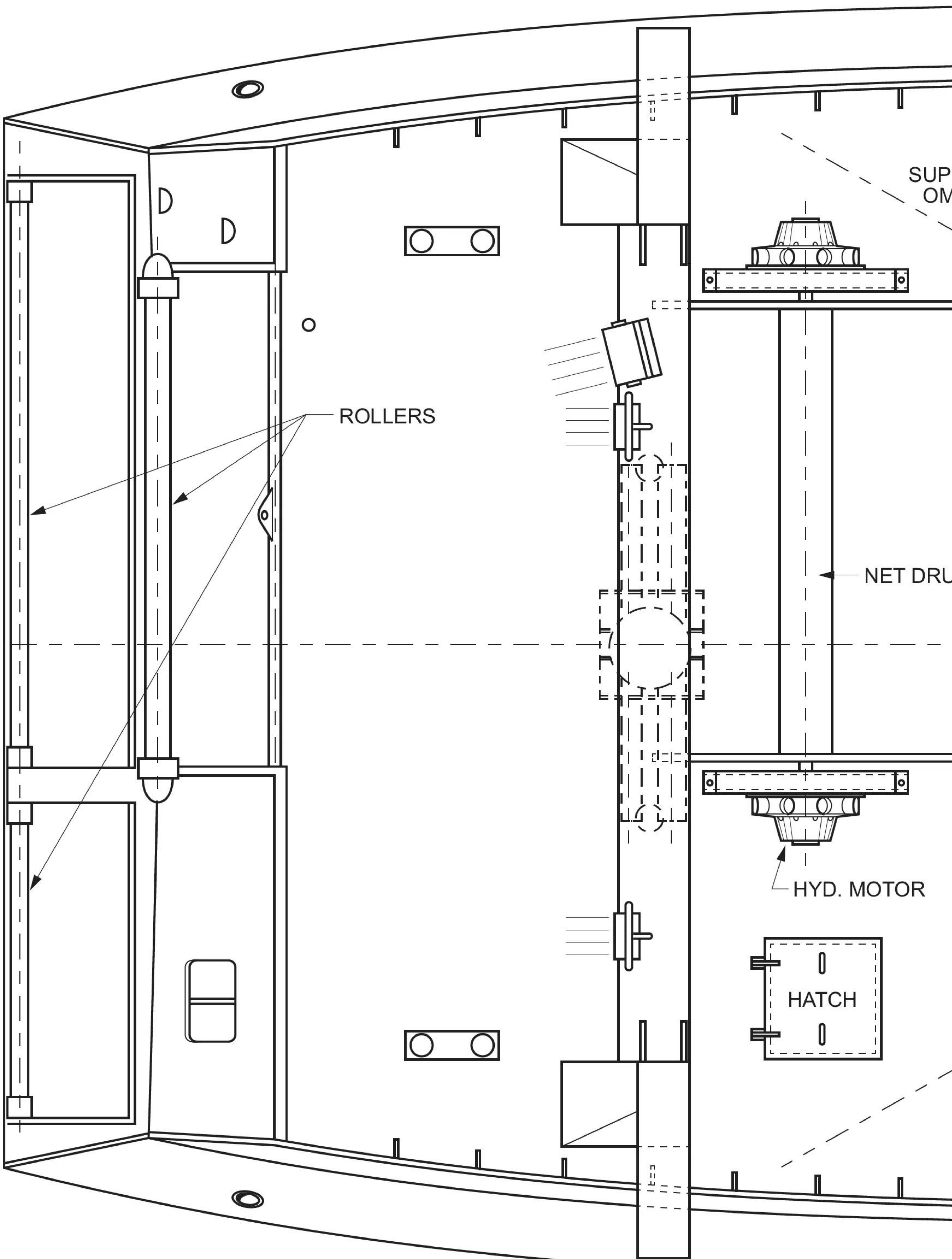
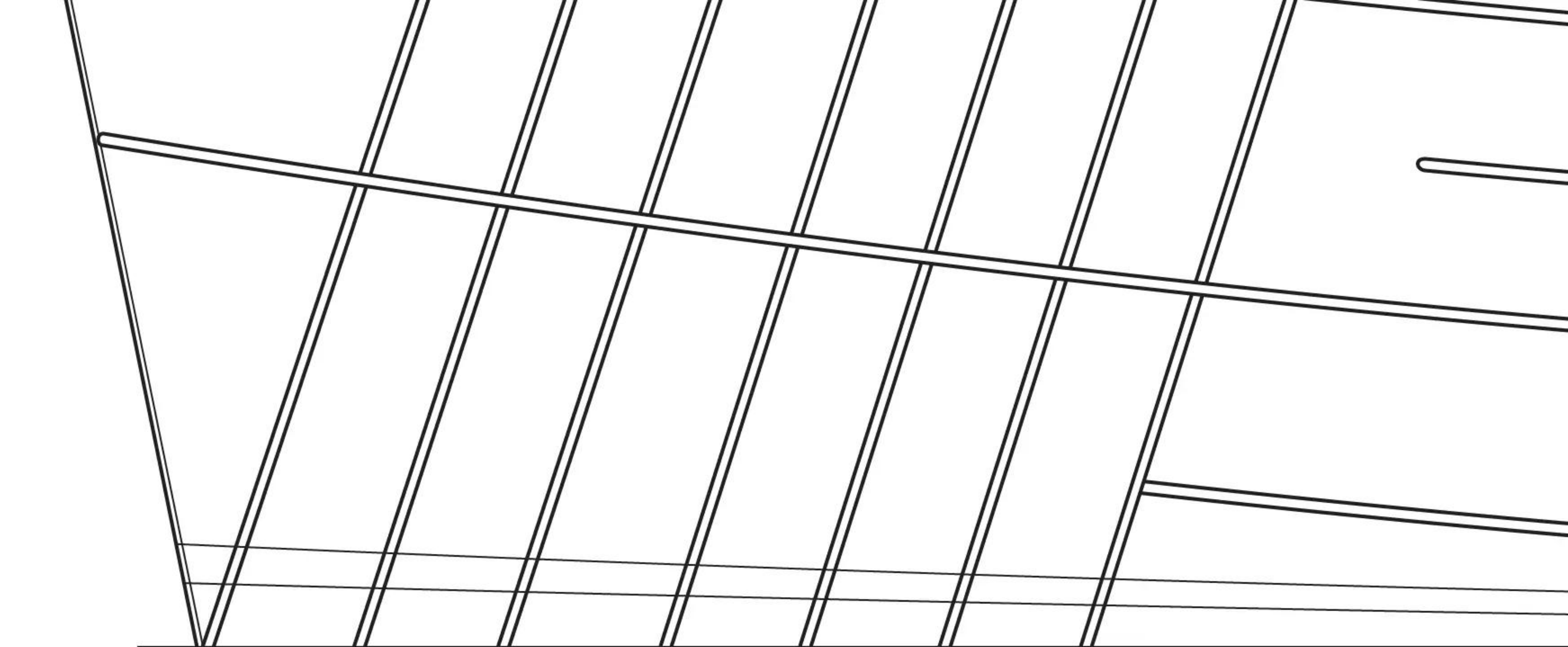
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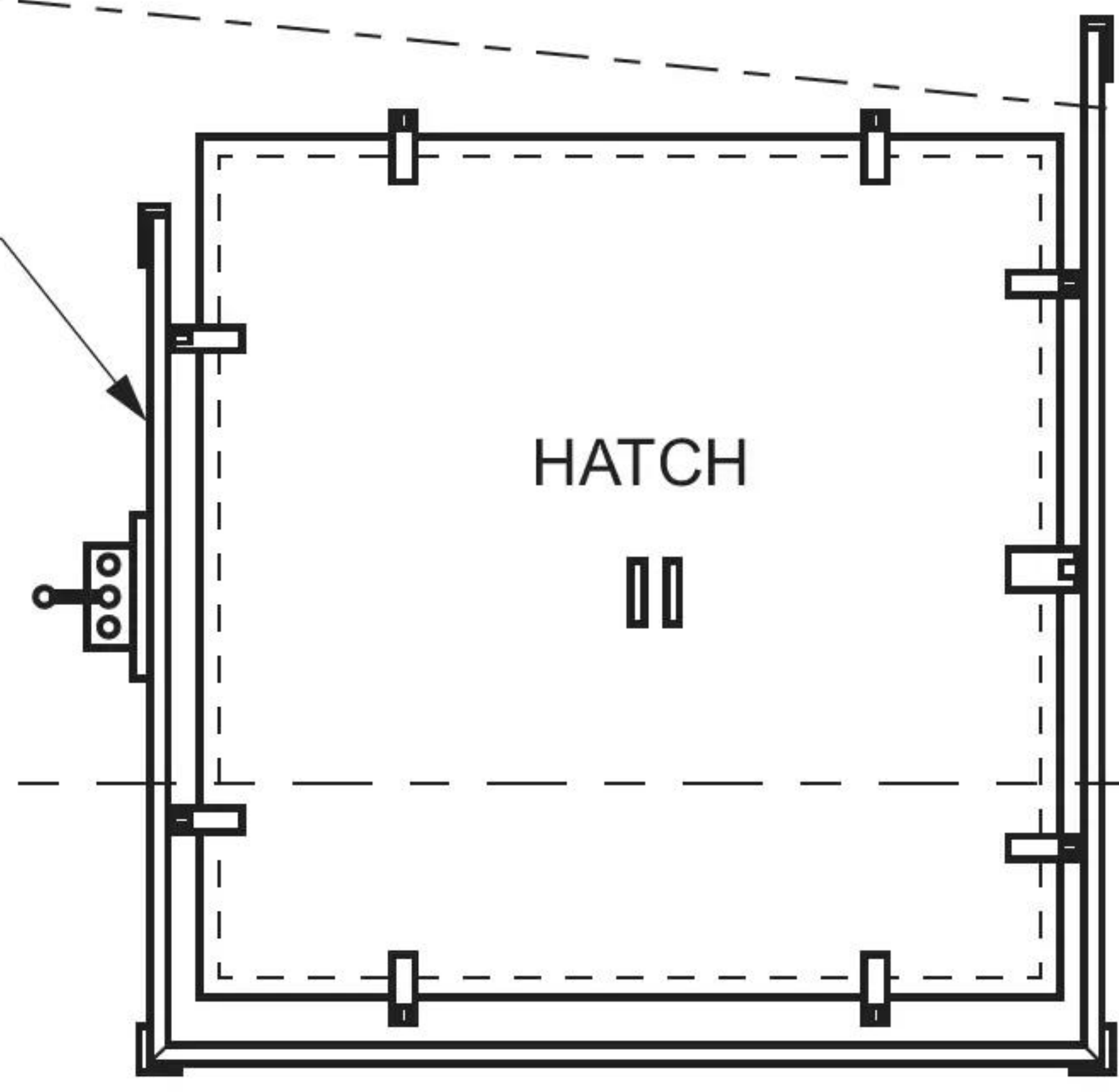
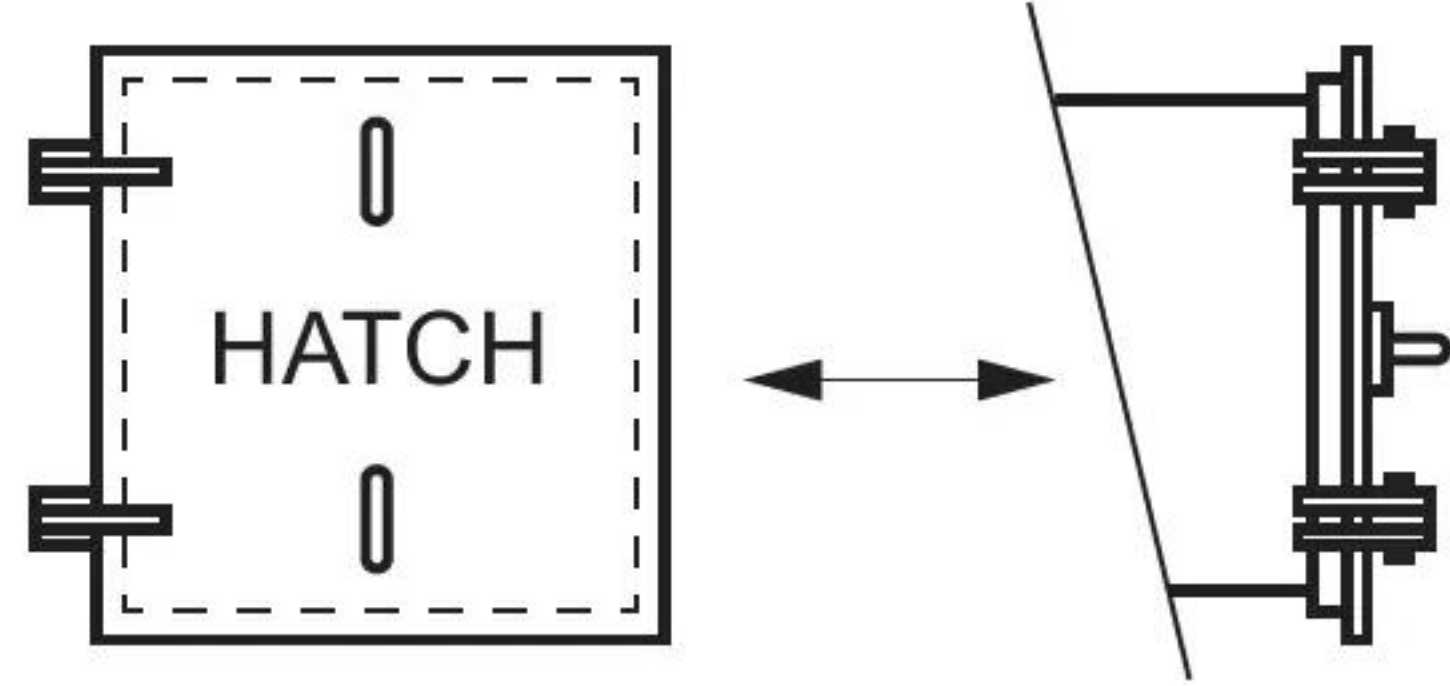
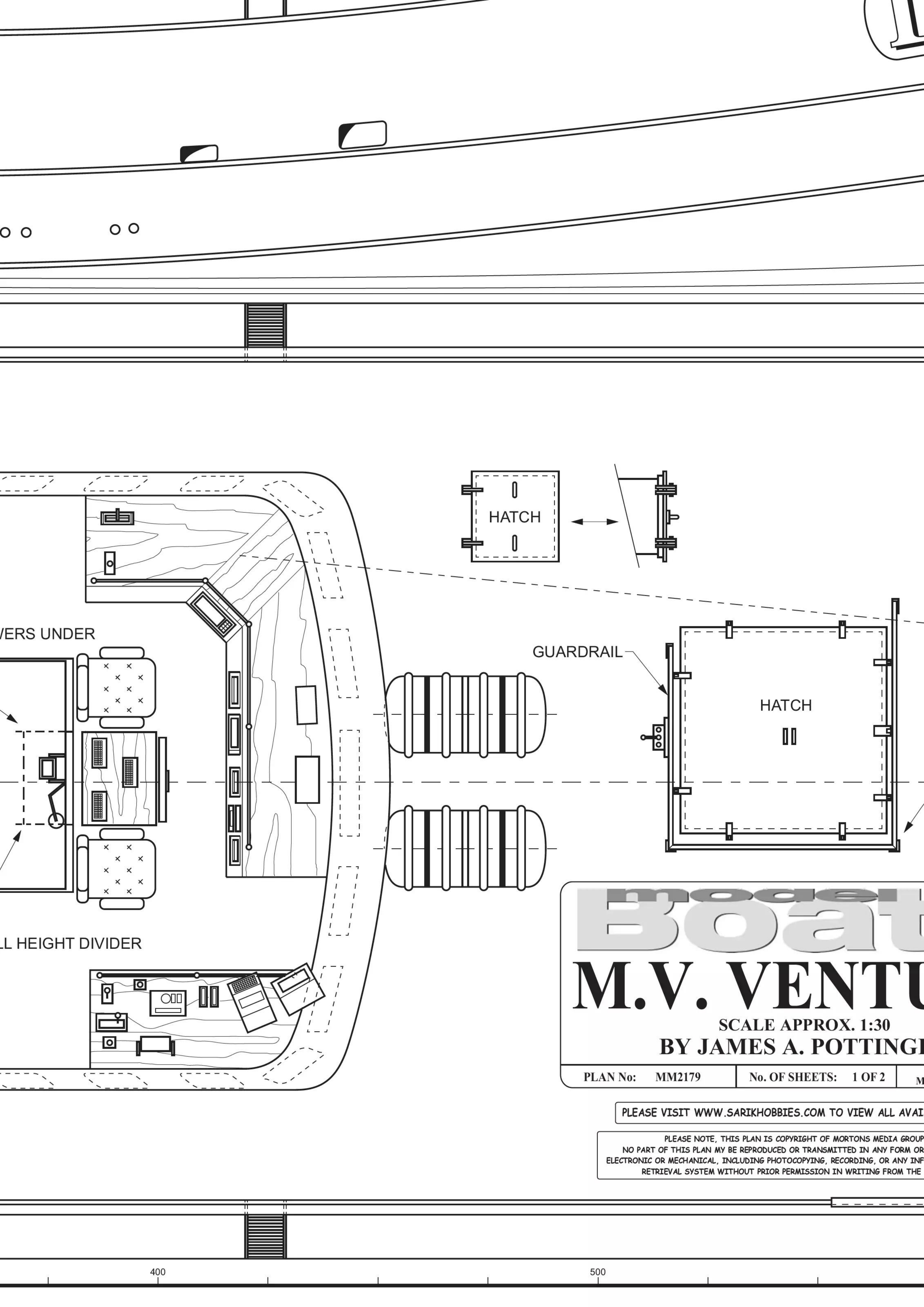
UM

DESK DRAWERS UNDER

EXHAUST
TRUNK

DN

FULL HEIGHT DIVIDER



Model Boat

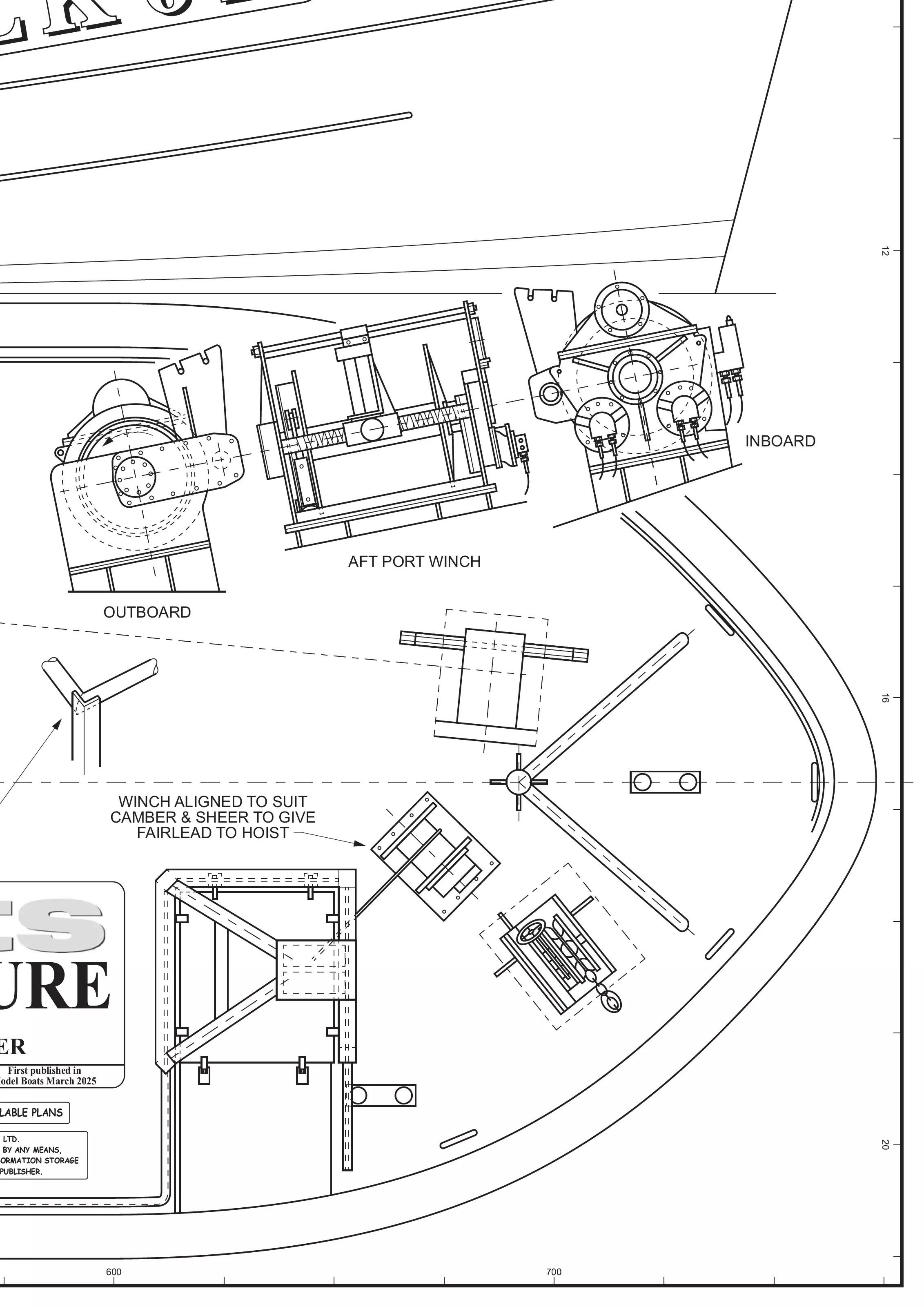
M.V. VENTURE

SCALE APPROX. 1:30
BY JAMES A. POTTING

PLAN No: MM2179	No. OF SHEETS: 1 OF 2	M
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OUTBOARD

AFT PORT WINCH

INBOARD

WINCH ALIGNED TO SUIT
CAMBER & SHEER TO GIVE
FAIRLEAD TO HOIST

IS
URE
ER
First published in
Model Boats March 2025

ABLE PLANS

LTD.
BY ANY MEANS,
FORMATION STORAGE
PUBLISHER.

28

24

500

400

300

WHEELHOUSE TOP

FLOODLIGHT

NET POND

CRANE

CRUTCH FOR CRANE

LINE OF SHELTERDECK TOP

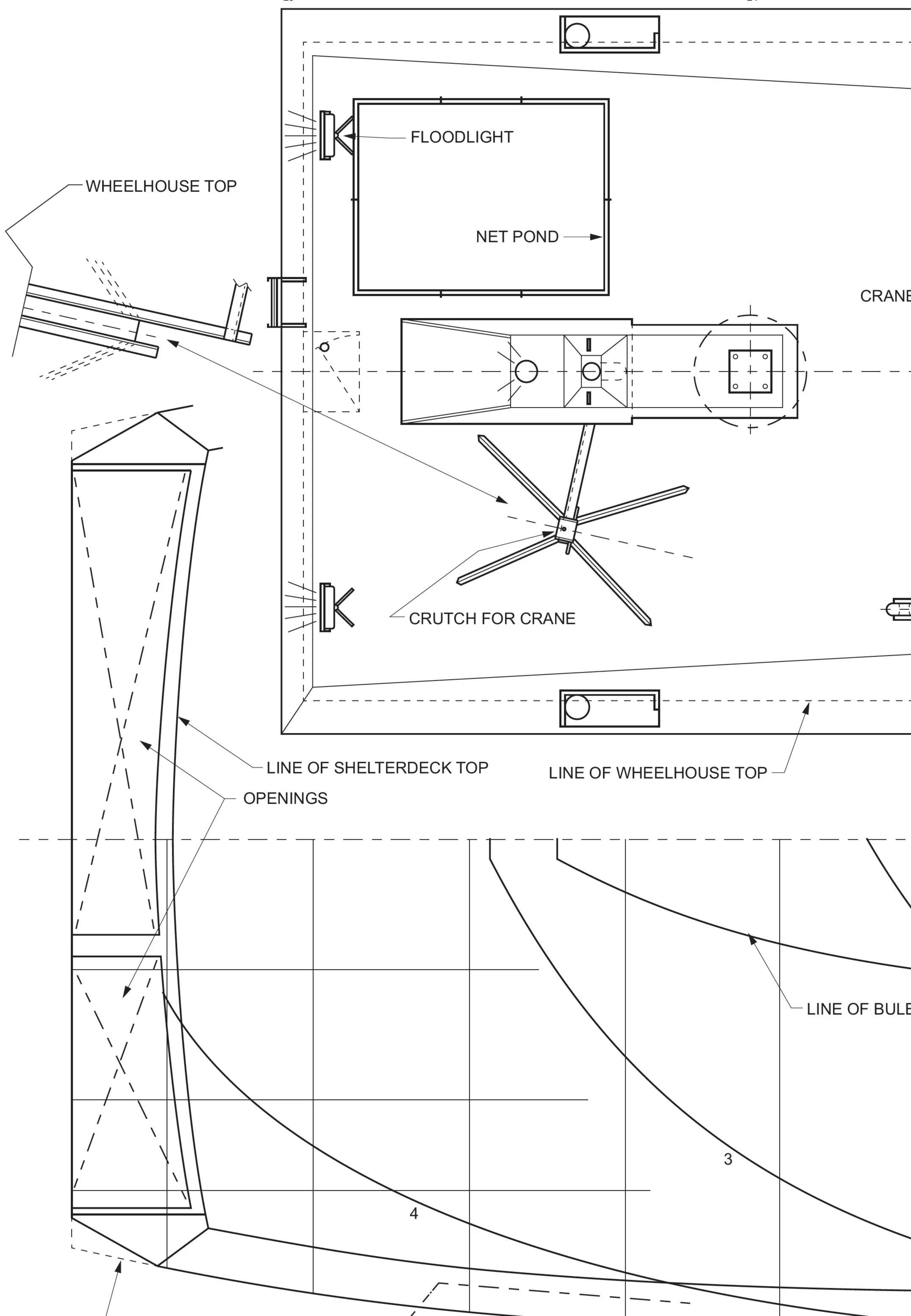
OPENINGS

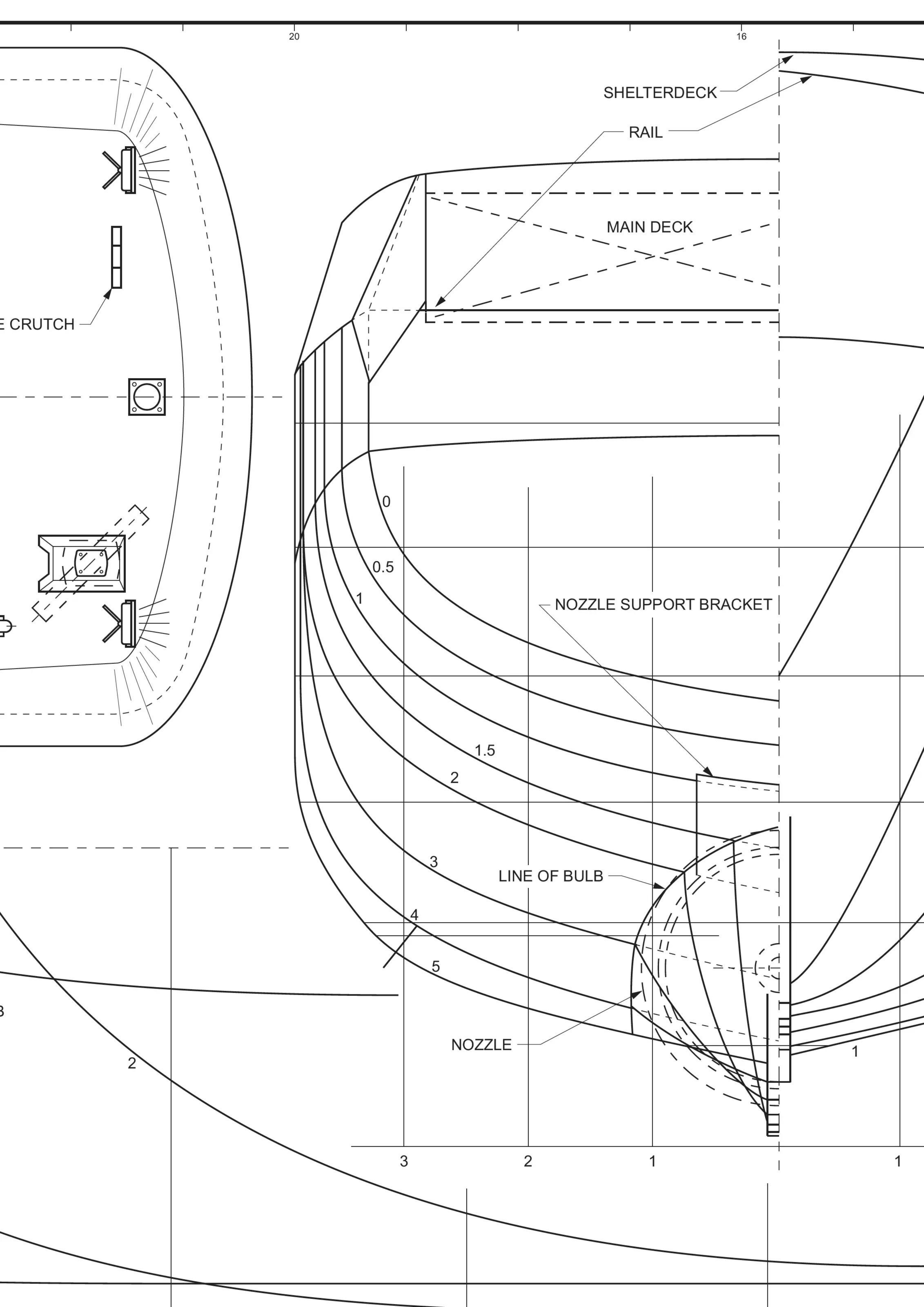
LINE OF WHEELHOUSE TOP

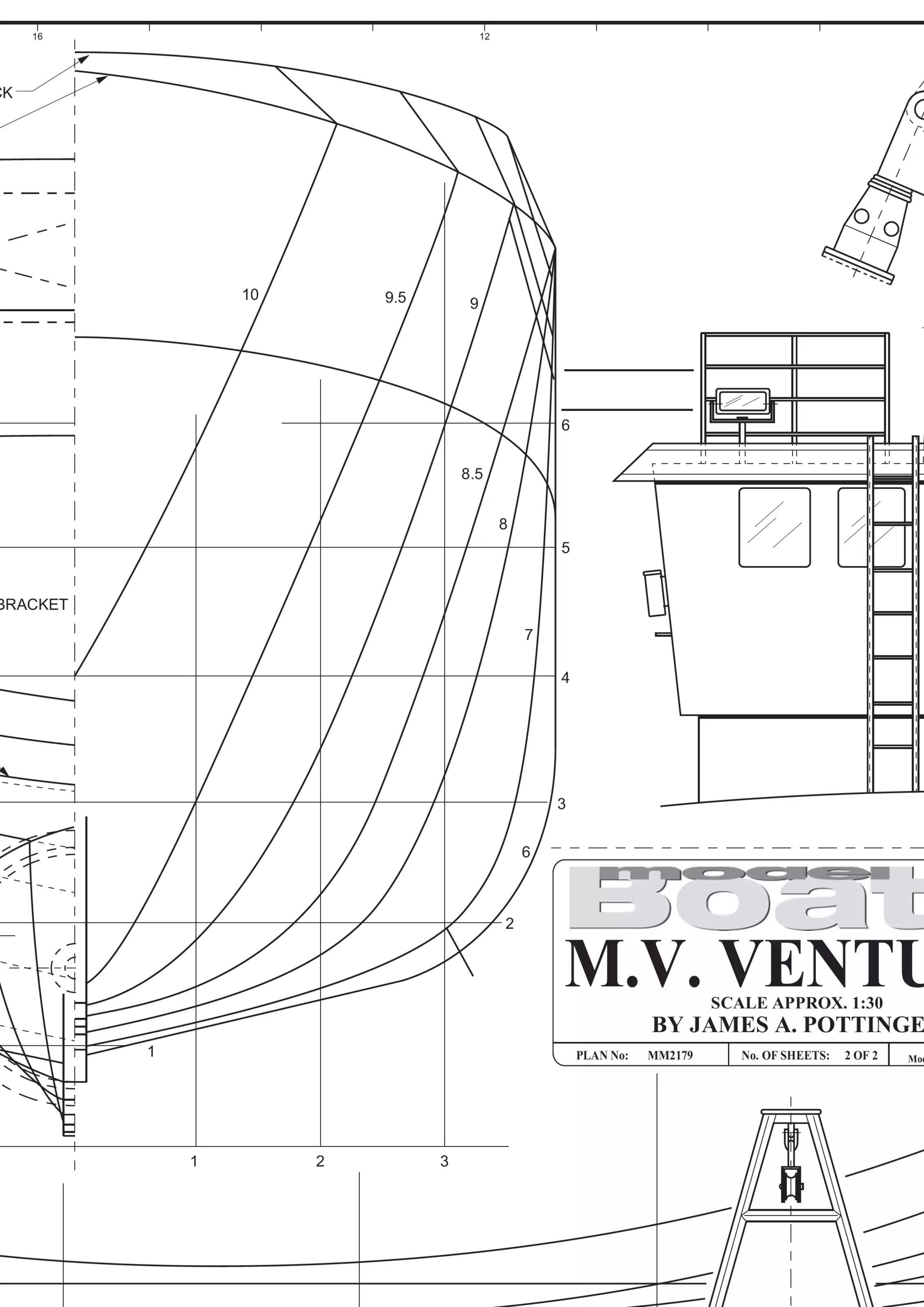
LINE OF BULE

3

4







Model
Boat

M.V. VENTURE

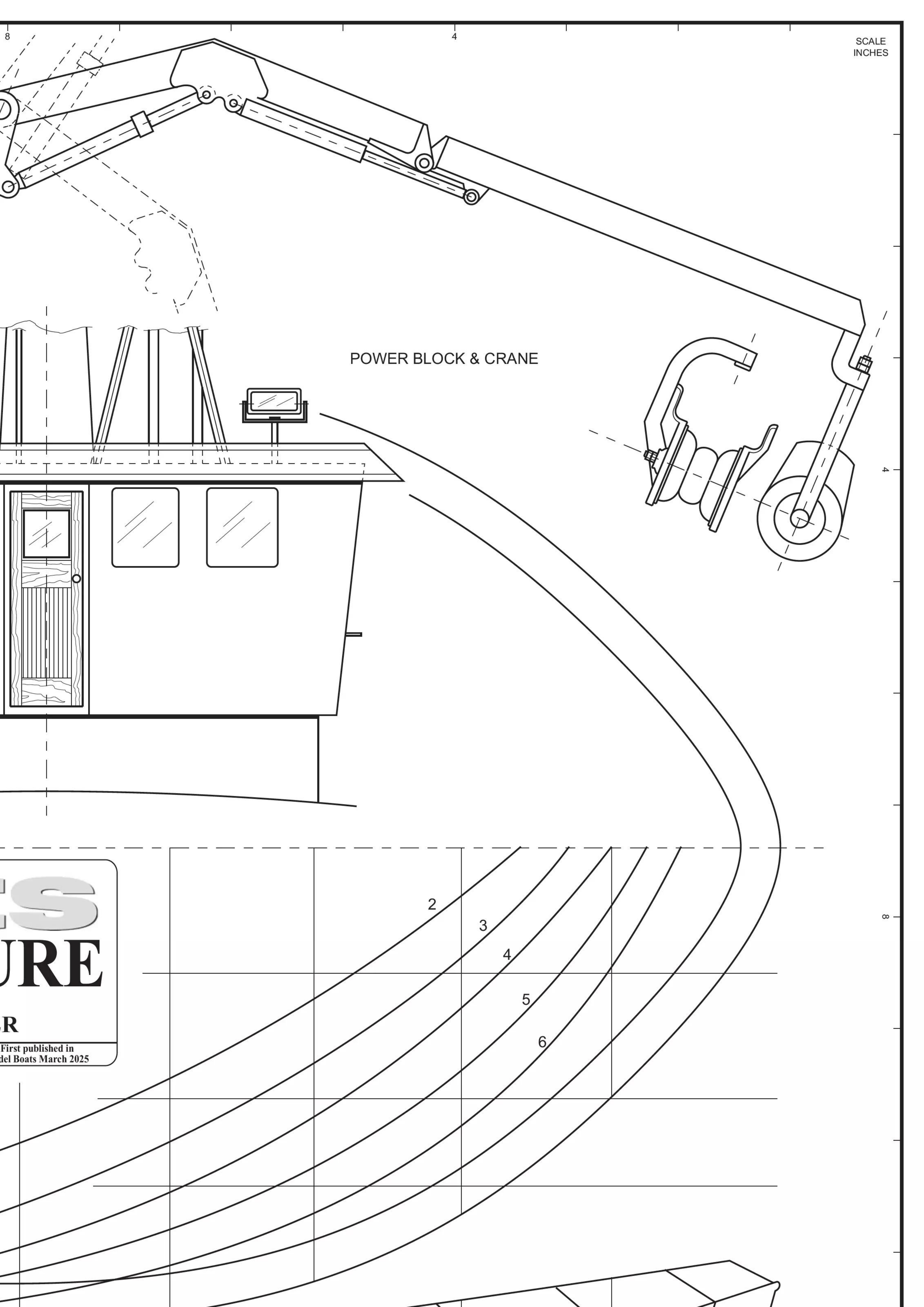
SCALE APPROX. 1:30

BY JAMES A. POTTING

PLAN No: MM2179

No. OF SHEETS: 2 OF 2

Mo



POWER BLOCK & CRANE

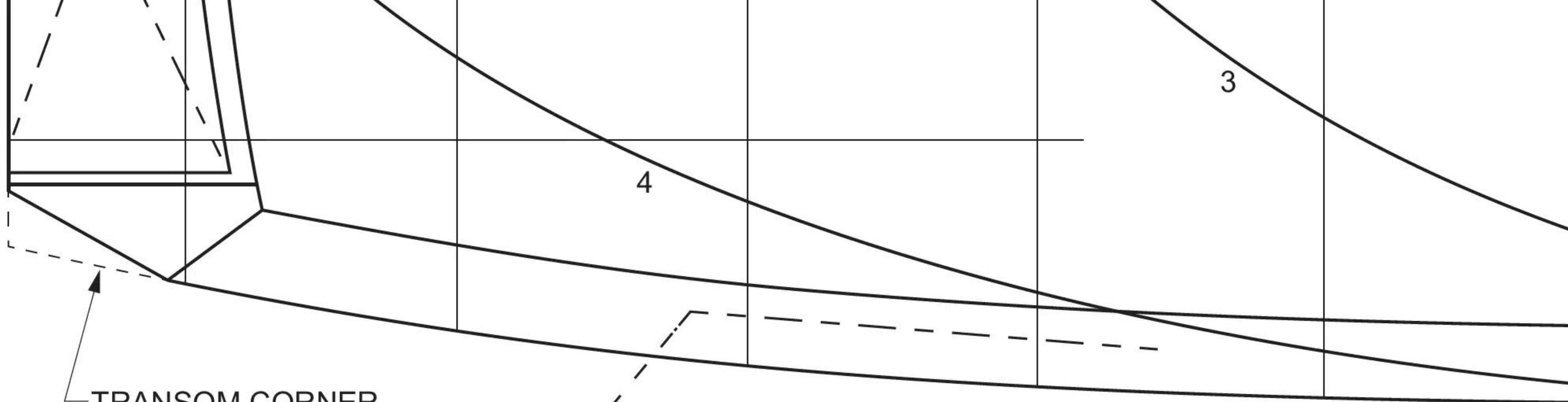
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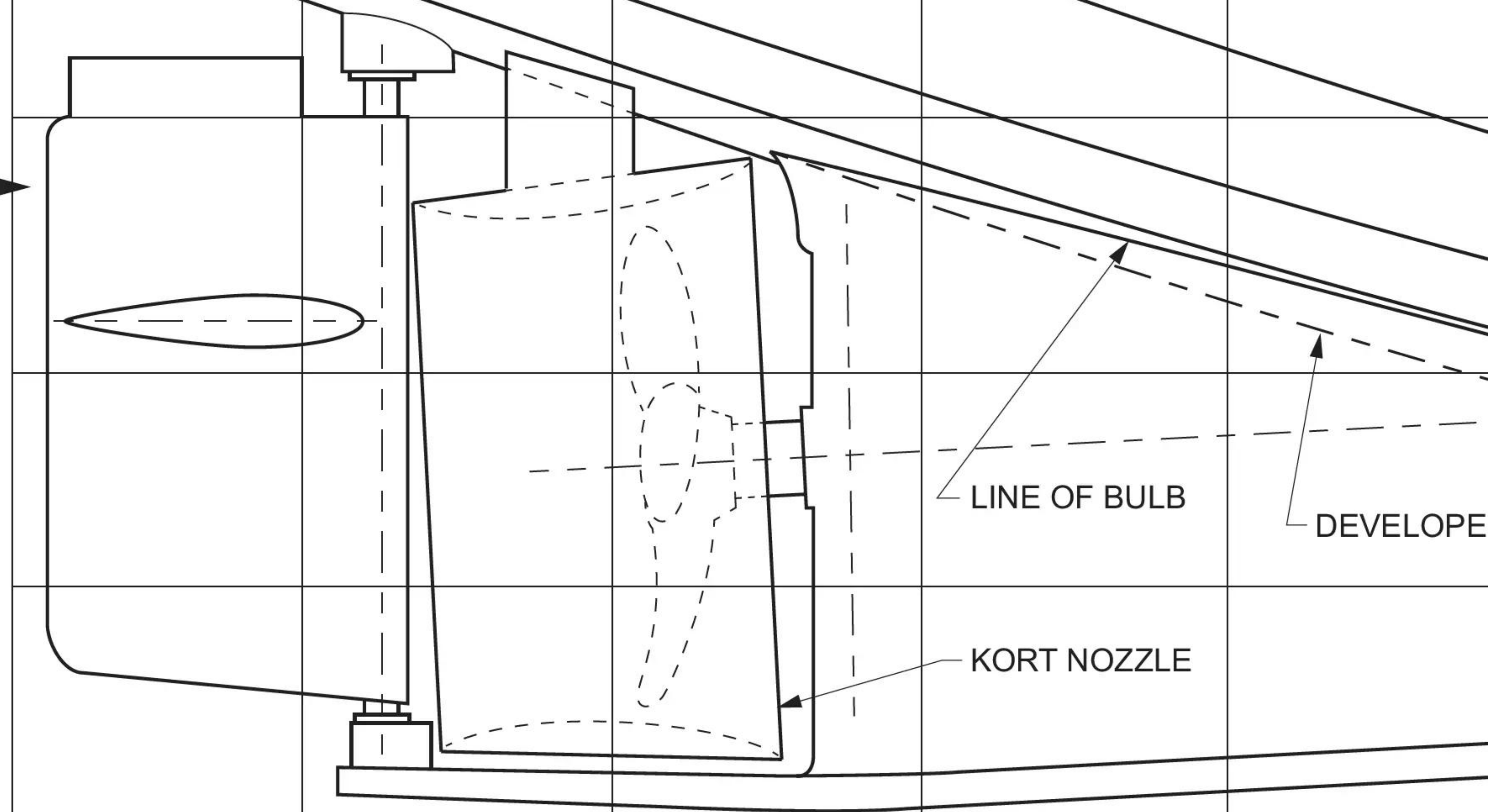
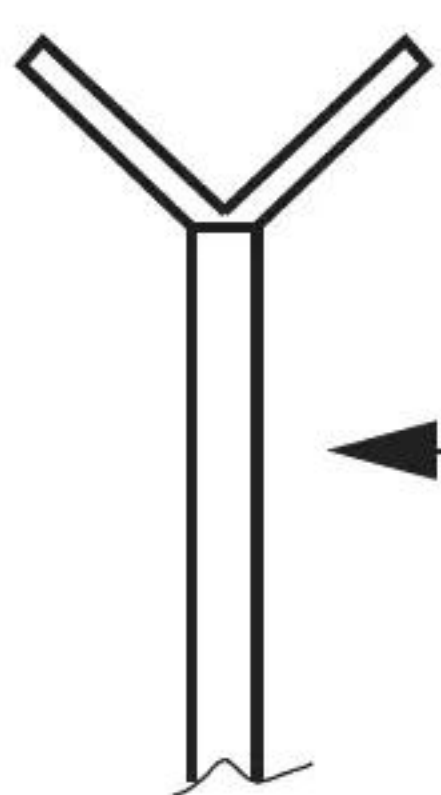
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del Boats March 2025



TRANSOM CORNER
TAKEN OFF & PLATED

LWL



SCALE
MM

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