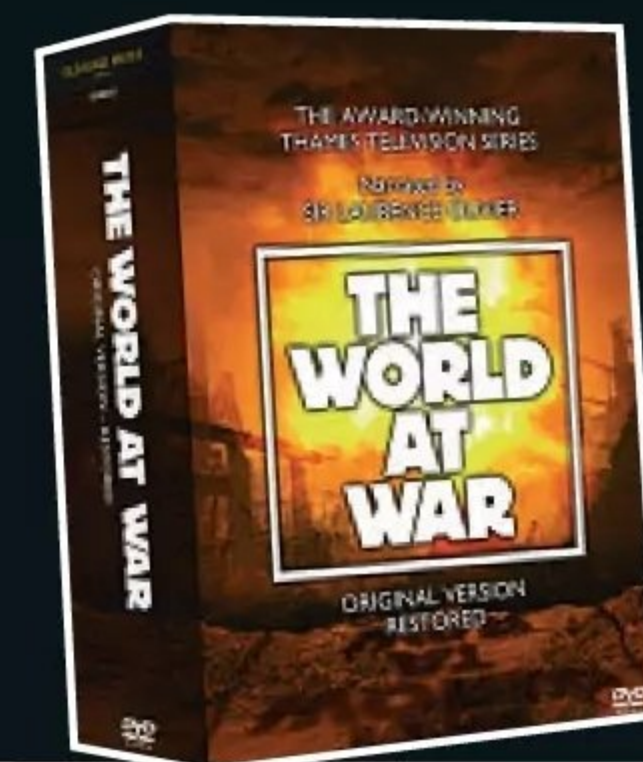


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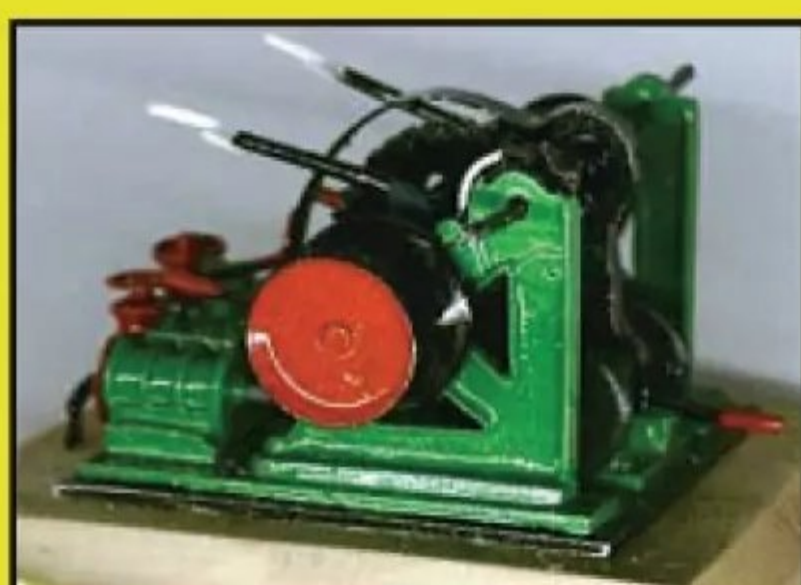


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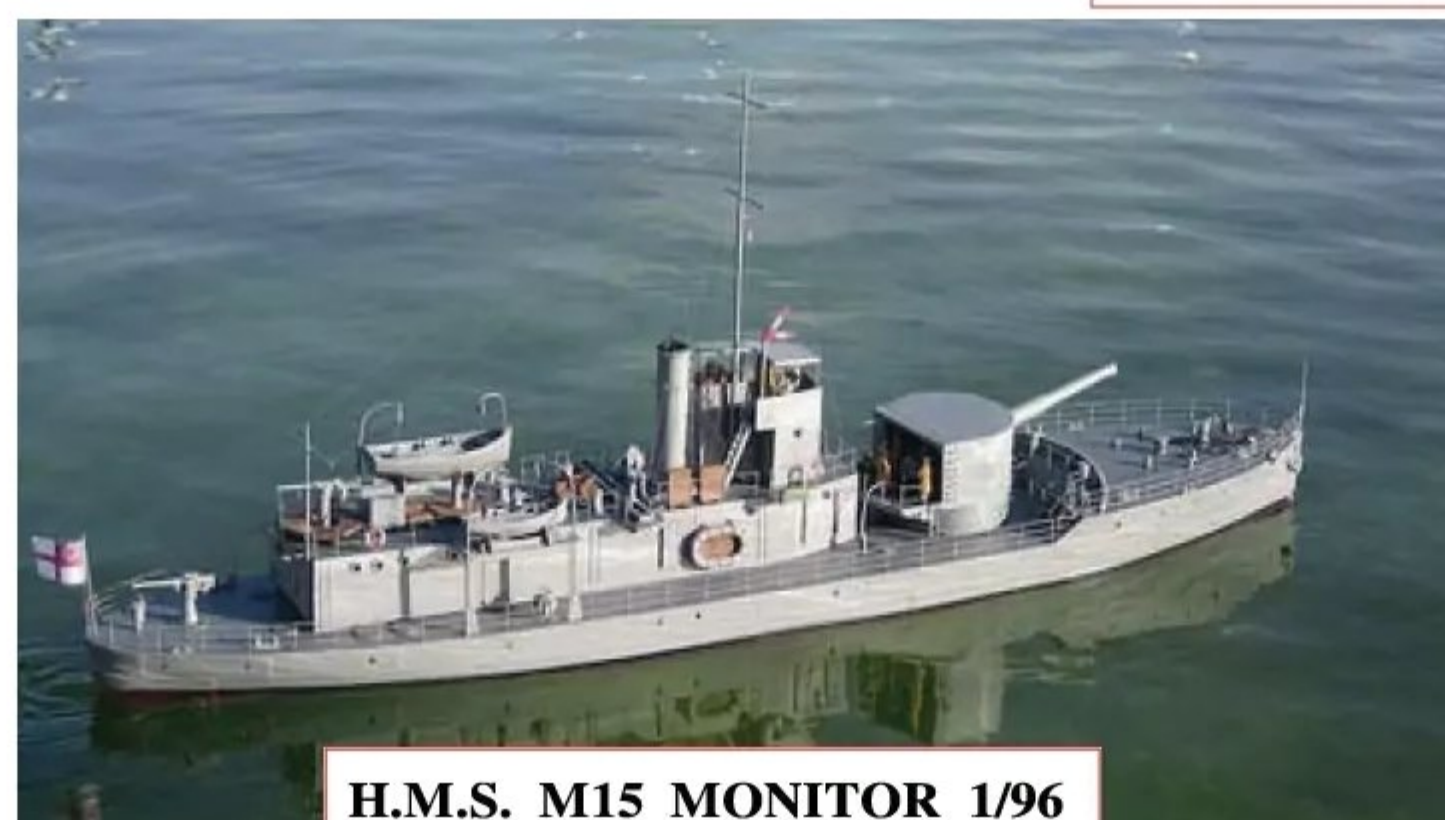
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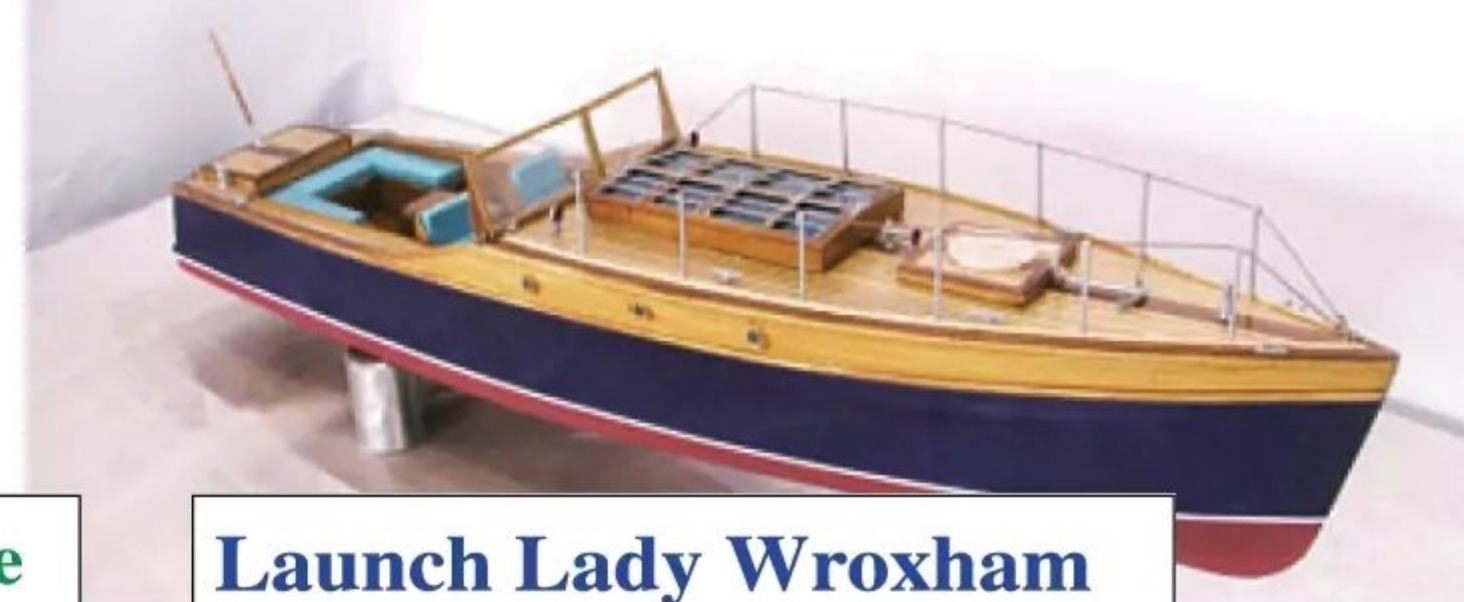
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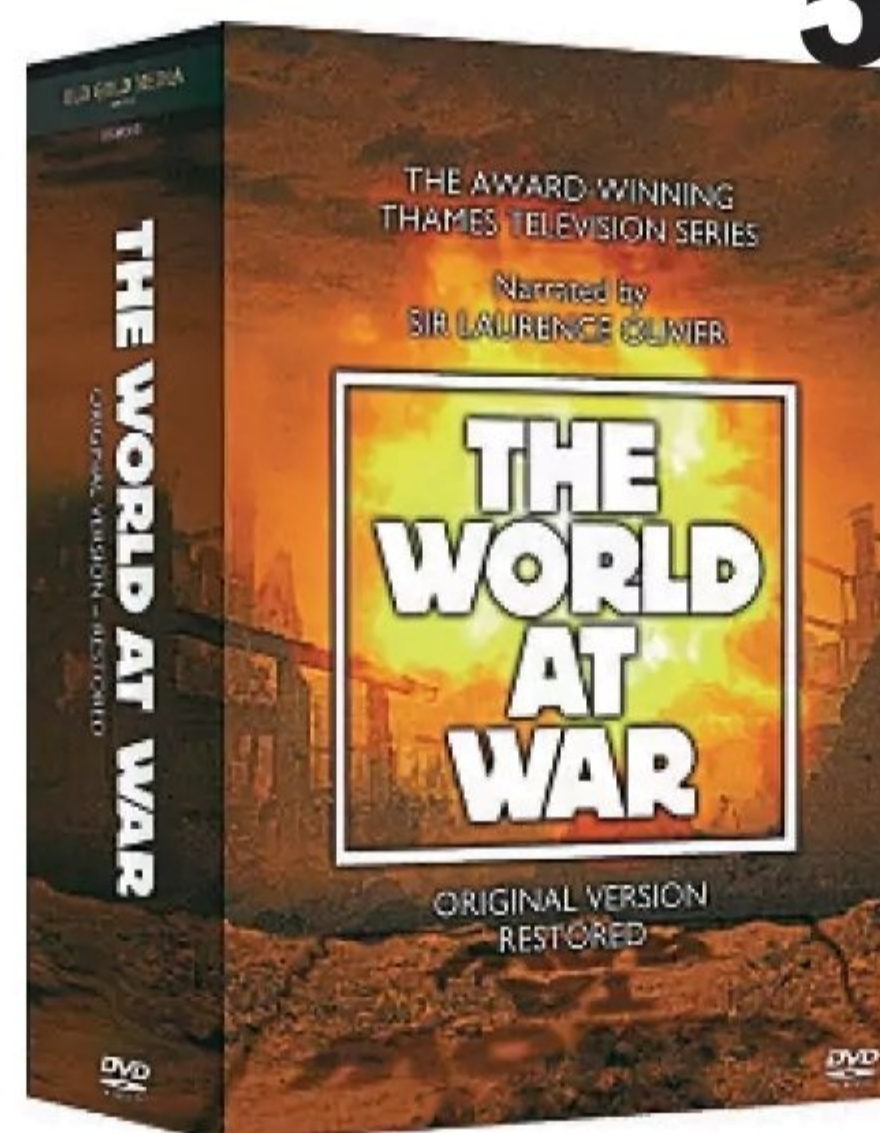
Open forum for all matters model boat related

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Just three of the reasons you won't want to miss the June 2025 issue of Model Boats



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Big news this month is that Model Boats is now under new ownership. You can read more about this in our Compass 360 news section; suffice to say here that, whether you subscribe or purchase your magazine from a local newsagent, everything has been put in place for a seamless transition. An immediate change you will notice, however, is an eight-page issue size increase, allowing us to pack in even more great content.

As flagged up on the front cover, this edition includes a free pull-out plan and build guide. And while there's no doubt the intricate detail seen on some models can be simply breathtaking, the beauty of Ray Wood's Thames Waterman's Launch design lies in its simplicity. Craft this well and you'll have a great fun and truly admirable model to put into action this summer.

There are also two very interesting projects for kit builders to consider. On pages 12-16, Alan Poole explains how Airfix's inexpensive 1:72 scale plastic Shannon class lifeboat can, despite its diminutive size, be kitted out for radio-controlled shouts. Then, on pages 18-27, Nick Brown, reports back on his test-build of Billing Boats' 1:35 scale, designed with R/C installation in mind, kit for the 'New' Zeeland, and reveals just how fantastic the resulting model looks out on the water when that option is taken.

We haven't forgotten those of you who love nothing more than a creative recycling project either, as on pages 52-55 Phil Button tells the tale of *Miss Piggy*, the first pink Pirate ship – well, actually, as you'll discover, she's a cabin cruiser with honorary Pirate status!

Our exclusive prize draw for May comes courtesy of Old Gold Media and Richard Leon PR and offers you the opportunity to win a superb DVD box set. In my opinion, no other documentary series has, or ever will, come close to *The World at War*, and Episode 4, entitled *Alone*, is particularly pertinent to this issue, as it begins with the against all odds evacuation of Dunkirk, an operation in which the *Medway Queen* (see the Compass 360 news section) and John Corah's much-loved little *Hobo* (see pages 28-37) both heroically took part.

Lots to get stuck into then, so enjoy your read!

Lindsey

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Model Boats under new ownership



the purchase having completed on March 27, 2025. Kelsey Media

Breaking news this month is that all of the titles in Mortons Media portfolio, including Model Boats, have been acquired by Kelsey Media,

is one of the leading independently owned media businesses in the UK and currently publishes over 80 brands in 15 markets across digital, print and events.

Commenting on the acquisition, Steve Wright, Executive Chairman of Kelsey Media, says: "This is a significant step in our growth strategy as we look to build market share and skills in specific markets. I look forward to working with the talented Mortons' team in the coming months to further develop our products and services". While Ian Fisher, Executive Chairman of Mortons Media, explains: "In recognising both the opportunities and longer-term challenges presented

by the markets we seek to serve, I am confident Kelsey will be a great home for our brands. With the greater scale afforded by the acquisition and the combined strengths of the respective businesses and staff, I look forward to seeing them continuing to flourish in the future".

Please rest assured that regardless of whether you subscribe or purchase copies of the magazine via your local newsagent, plans have already been put in place to ensure a seamless transition. We will, of course, keep you updated on any minor changes (such as revised contact details) ensuing from the hand-over.

Bournville boating lake & boathouse granted national heritage status



The Bournville Radio Sailing and Model Boat Club's gorgeous and historic boating lake and boathouse have recently been granted Grade II listed status.

The Bournville Radio Sailing and Model Boat Club's boathouse and boating lake in Birmingham have been granted Grade II listed status by the DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) on the advice of Historic England.

Construction of both the boathouse and the boating lake was funded by famed local chocolatiers the Cadbury family back in 1933. Known for their philanthropy, the Cadburys hired 64 men who were ineligible for state benefit due to the length of their unemployment to carry out the work. These men would spend four

days a week working on this project, and then on the remaining day of the working week would attend an occupational class, such as carpentry or gardening, under the supervision of the Bournville Works Education Department; the aim being to provide them with an income while they sought long-term employment.

Legend has it that the irregular shape of the pool was chosen by Edward Cadbury's wife, who disliked the original plans for a rectangular pool, favouring a more abstract shape.

The boathouse was opened on August 19, 1933, and originally also included a

boat repair shop, a model railway, and a flag station. It was designed to act as storage for the model boats, and as a place where members could relax and enjoy refreshments. Clad in tarred rustic elm weatherboarding, it was carefully designed with high ceilings and tall doors to facilitate the movement of fully rigged model yachts.

As part of its Missing Pieces Project, Historic England would now like to invite anyone able to share content, including photos and videos shot at this venue, online at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1491423>.

OUT AND ABOUT

Medway Queen to play role in 85th anniversary of Dunkirk Evacuation



HMS Medway Queen in Ramsgate, 1940. Image courtesy of the PPS Collection.

In 1939, PS *Medway Queen* was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and converted for minesweeping. In May 1940, having been assigned to the 10th Flotilla based in Dover, she played an active role in the Dunkirk Evacuation. The ship and her crew made seven round trips in all, rescuing thousands of men from the beaches, the Mole (a long concrete pier) and Dunkirk Harbour. During this operation she mainly worked out of Ramsgate, landing her evacuees in Margate on just one occasion.

From where she is currently moored at Gillingham Pier, *Medway Queen*, undergoing restoration, the *Medway Queen* was in 2015 towed to Ramsgate to participate in the 75th anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation commemorations. This, it is hoped, will be repeated for the 85th anniversary this year.

The *Medway Queen* will, therefore, be open to visitors at Gillingham Pier until Saturday, May 3, after which preparation for her journey will begin in earnest. The plan is that she will leave Gilling Pier (under tow) for Ramsgate, on May 14. On arrival in Ramsgate on May 15, she will be moored alongside Commercial Quay as the centrepiece of the Dunkirk anniversary event being

organised by the Royal Temple Yacht Club. She will remain in Ramsgate for about 12 days, hosting formal receptions on board and welcoming members of the public as and when the tides allow safe access. Following a parade from the harbour on May 18, there will be a service at St George's Church. There will also be a service for dignitaries in the harbour's Sailors' Chapel on Tuesday, May 20. Sadly, unable to make the Channel crossing herself, *Medway Queen* will watch the 'Little Ships' depart for Dunkirk on May 21, but will still be there to greet them when they return a few days later. While the 'Little Ships' are in Dunkirk, the *Medway Queen* will continue to be open to visitors' as permitted by the tides.



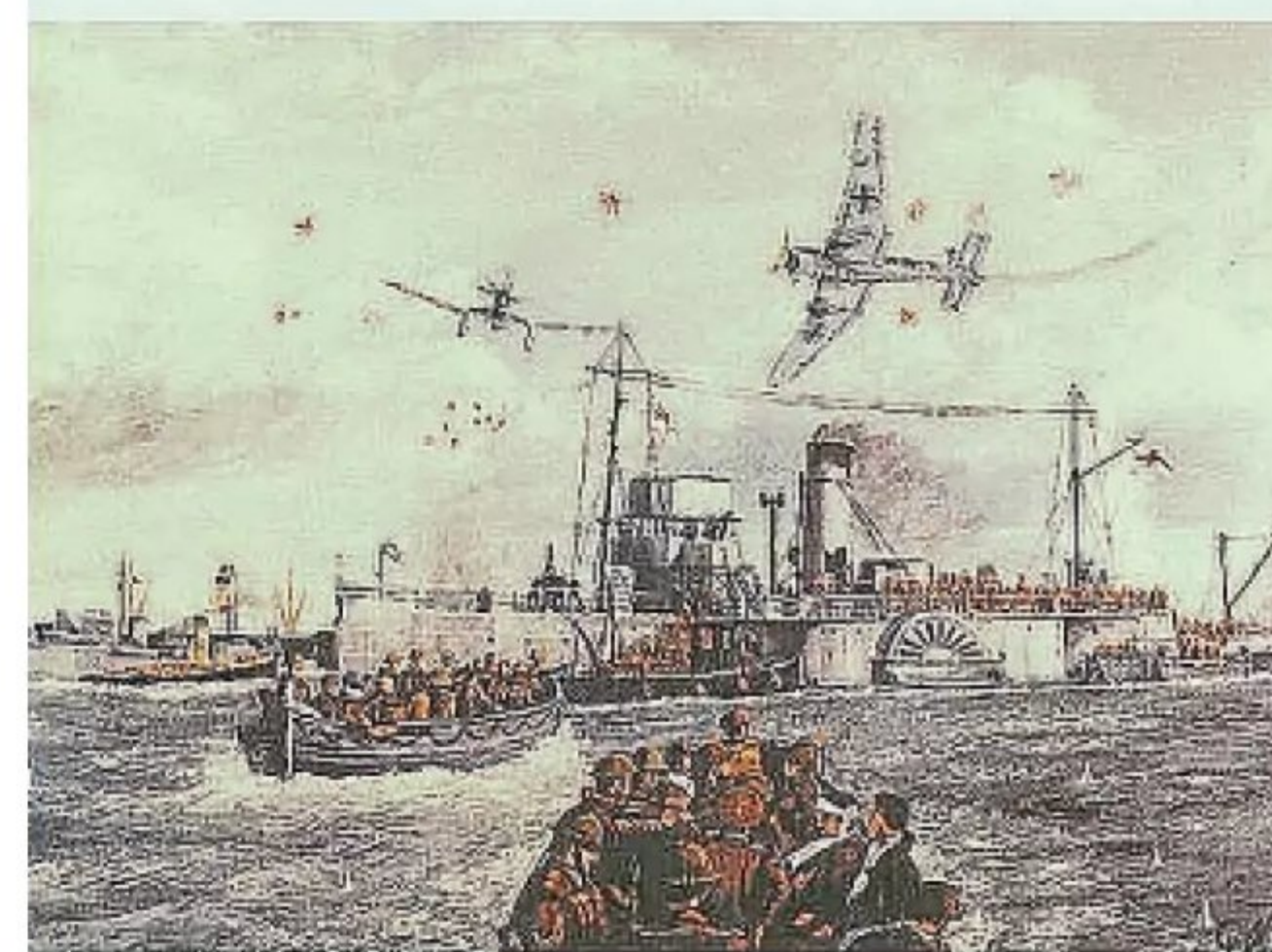
The Medway Queen participating in the 75th anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation back in May 2015. Image courtesy of Brian Simmons.

The *Medway Queen* will return to Gillingham Pier at the end of the month and re-open to visitors there on June 7.

The *Medway Queen* Preservation Society is still looking for sponsors to contribute towards the cost of moving the ship, as while some support has already been pledged more is always needed. Likewise, additional volunteers to assist with the anticipated increase in visitor numbers will also be welcome, but please note that volunteers working on the ship are expected to join the *Medway Queen* Preservation Society for administrative and insurance purposes. So, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Pam Bathurst at the Society's base via info@medwayqueen.co.uk or 01634 559832.

The *Medway Queen* Preservation Society's popular book *HMS Medway Queen – Memories of Dunkirk* was reprinted last year, in cooperation with Mainline and Maritime publishers, and will, naturally, be on sale in Ramsgate. The book is packed with first-hand accounts of the Dunkirk operation, as recalled by *HMS Medway Queen*'s officers and crew and, of course, from the grateful troops picked up by the ship.

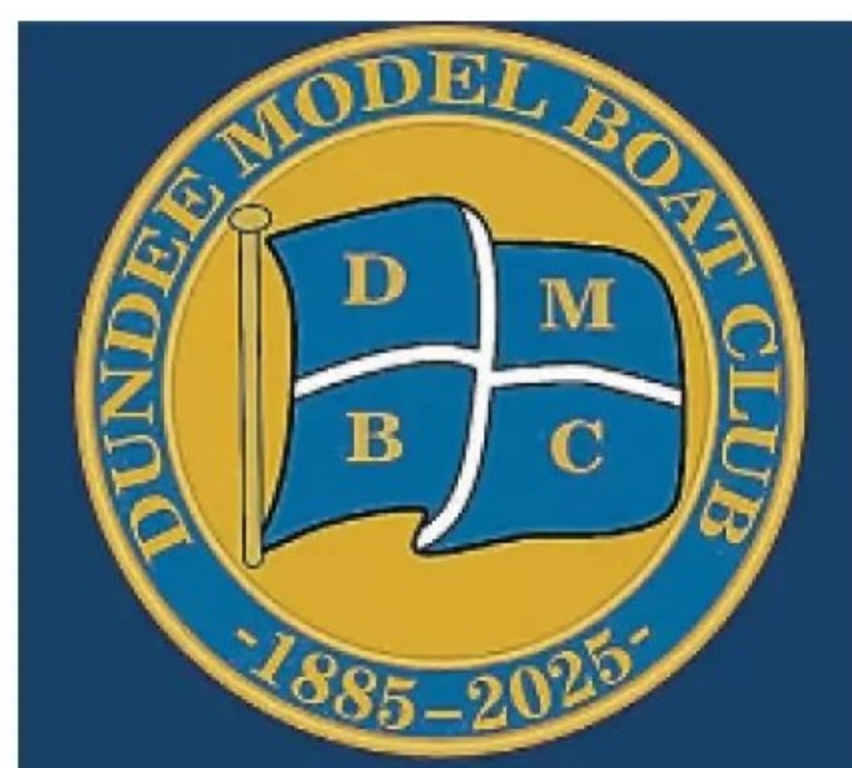
HMS MEDWAY QUEEN *Memories of Dunkirk*



Richard Halton

Packed with first-hand accounts from officers, crew and the troops rescued from Dunkirk back in 1940, the *Medway Queen* Preservation Society's book *HMS Medway Queen – Memories of Dunkirk* can be purchased by those visiting the ship while she is moored in Ramsgate during this year's 85th anniversary commemorations.

Dundee MBC 140th Anniversary celebrations



From 11am to 3pm on May 4, 2025, the Dundee Model Boat Club will be holding an Open

over the weekend of August 2/3 (where models will be sailed in the pond alongside the *Discovery*. Also proposed is a 14-hour sponsored sail around the pond for charity, a date for which has yet to be confirmed.

We will, of course, bring you more information on these events as it becomes available.

Day at Stobsmuir Pond (also known as Swannie Ponds), Pitkerro Road, Dundee DD4 8DJ. (If you use the app What Three Words, you can simply key in mostly.social.enter for this location).

As this will be the first of the club's 140th anniversary celebrations this year, members are working towards getting 140 boats – their own and those of visiting clubs – out on the water to mark the occasion.

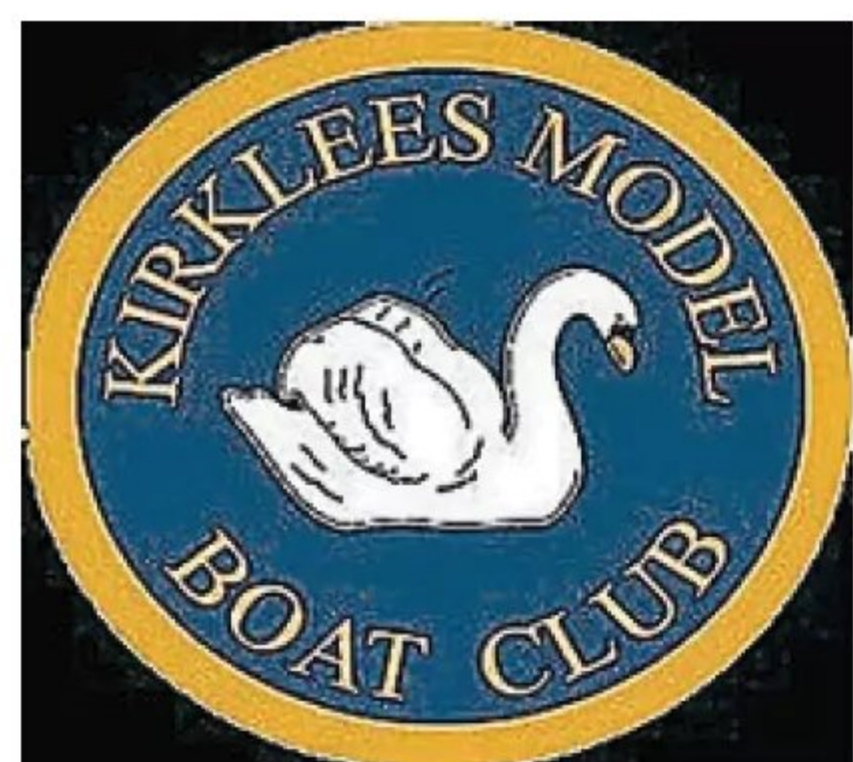
Admission will be free of charge, although a small donation to one of the charity collection boxes (which for this event will be supporting Maggie's – the cancer care charity, and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People) will most welcome.

Plenty of on street parking will be available and onsite facilities will include public and disabled toilets and tea and coffee to purchase for a small charge.

Later in the year, over the weekend of July 5/6, there will be a sail across the River Tay. The club has also been invited to display at the Dundee Museum of Transport as part of the museum's Military Day on July 27, and at Discovery Point



Kirklees MBC Steam Open Day



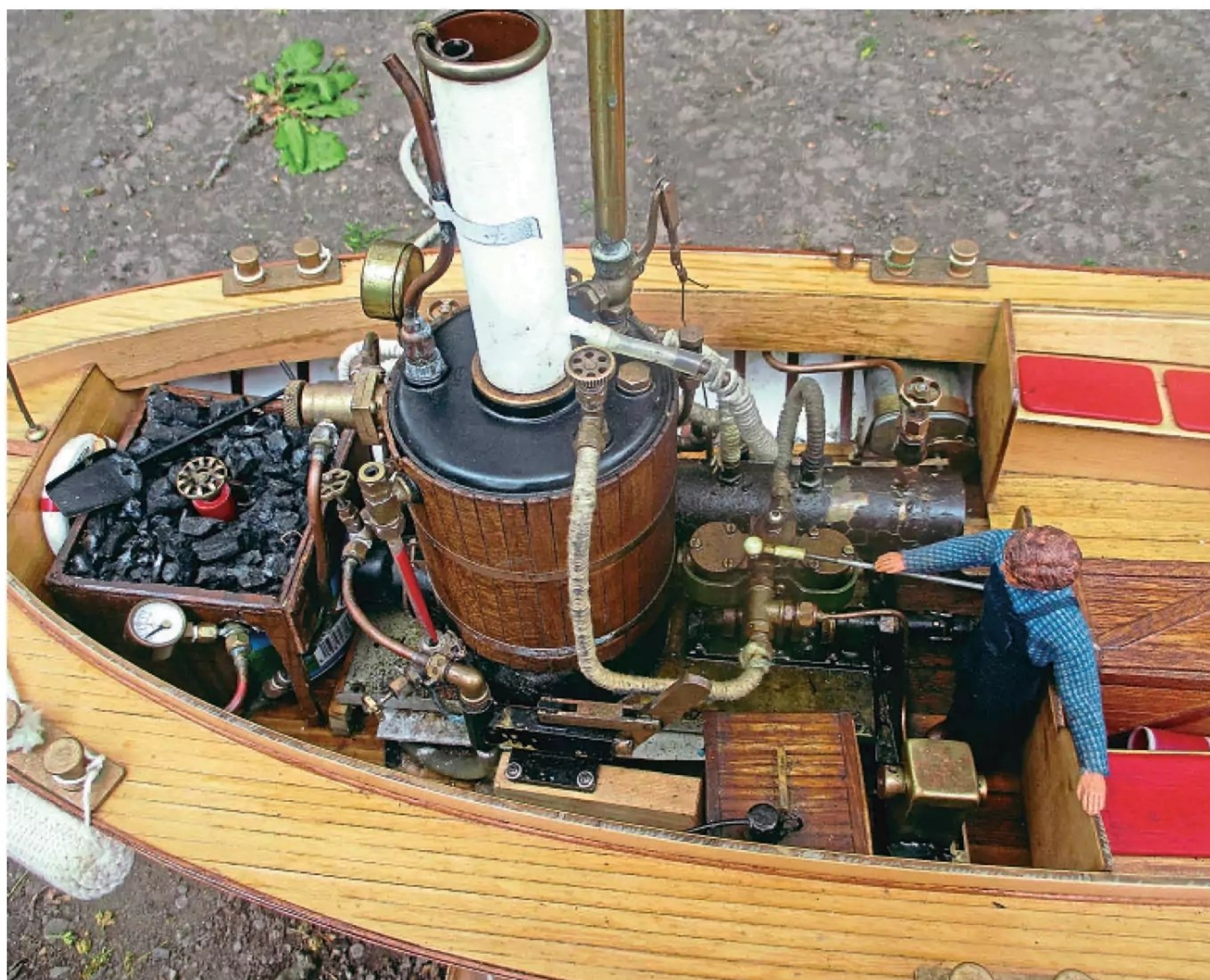
Kirklees Model Boat Club be holding its first open day of 2025 on Sunday, May 18, 2025, from 10

am to 4 pm at Wilton Park, Bradford Road, Birstall, Batley WF17 8JH. The theme on this occasion will be steam-powered models and vessels built from Mount Fleet Models kits, and, aside from model boats, there will also be a display of model military vehicles.

Visitors will be very welcome to bring along models of any type (with the exception of IC and high-performance fast electrics) to sail, although please note that steam models will need a valid test certificate.

There will be ample free car parking and Wilton Park's onsite café will be serving refreshments throughout the day.

For further details call Stan Reffin (after 6pm please) on 0113 2675790.



Bury Metro Marine Modelling Society Open Day



The Bury Metro Marine Modelling Society will be holding its annual Open Day on Sunday, June 8, starting at 10am, at The Lido, Clarence Park, Milner Ave, Bury, Lancs BL9 6NG (where free parking will be available).

Visitors will be welcome to sail their own model boats alongside those belonging to members on the club's lake (please note steam powered models will need an up-

to-date certificate and I.C. models will be NOT be permitted).

Side stalls will include H.A.Kits, a local branch of the RNLI and a 'bring & buy table'. There will also be a raffle, and refreshments will be available to purchase.

For more information contact the club Secretary Ken Mears via the Bury Model Boats Facebook page or Messenger.



Black Park MBC Open Day

The Black Park Model Boat Club will be holding an Open Day on Sunday, June 8, 2025, at the Black Park Country Park, Black Park Road, Wexham SL3 6DS. Visitors will be welcome to bring along their own boats (with the exception of fast electric or petrol engine models) to sail on the venue's splendid lake. Some 'have-a-go' radio-controlled boats (which the club has refurbished thanks to the support of Council Community Board funding) will also be available for anyone (adult or child) wishing to try their hand at operating one under the friendly guidance of a Black Park MBC member.

There will be various stands

to browse, while the park itself has cafes, toilets and a 'pay and display' car park a short walk from the lakeside.

If, however, you're unable to get along on this occasion but are local and interested in joining a non-competitive club, where members sail just for fun and camaraderie, meets usually take place on Thursday afternoons and Sunday mornings. For further information email: secretary@blackparkmodelboatclub.org.uk or visit the club's Facebook page (key Blackpark Model Club into FB's search engine or use the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/432091460728248>)



Amongst the many stands to browse at the Black Park MBC Open Day will be a RNLI gift stall.



Club members enjoying sailing their models on the lovely lake at Black Park.



May and June J Class events

Two J Class model yacht events have been announced for this spring/early summer. The first will be hosted by the Westbury Sailing Club, which forms part of the West Wilts Youth Sailing Association (visit <https://wwysa.org.uk/model-yachting/>), at The Lake, Station Approach, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4HP, on May 18, 2025. The second will be hosted by Whitefriars Sailing Club (visit

<https://www.whitefriarssc.org/>), located in Whitefriars Lane, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 6FW, on June 14, 2025.

These admission free events will be open to both J Class model owners/enthusiasts and the general public, with the clubhouses at both venues providing all the usual facilities. Further details can be found on the clubs' respective websites.



Charles Chambers' Nottingham 48, Endeavour, on the water at the Whitefriars' last year.

Folkboat fundraiser

June 21, 2025, is the date that's been earmarked for a sponsored minifolkboat race being organised by the Largs Model Boat Club to raise funds for MacMillan Cancer Support and the Ocean Youth Trust, Scotland (all donations via the 'Just Giving' app will be gratefully received).

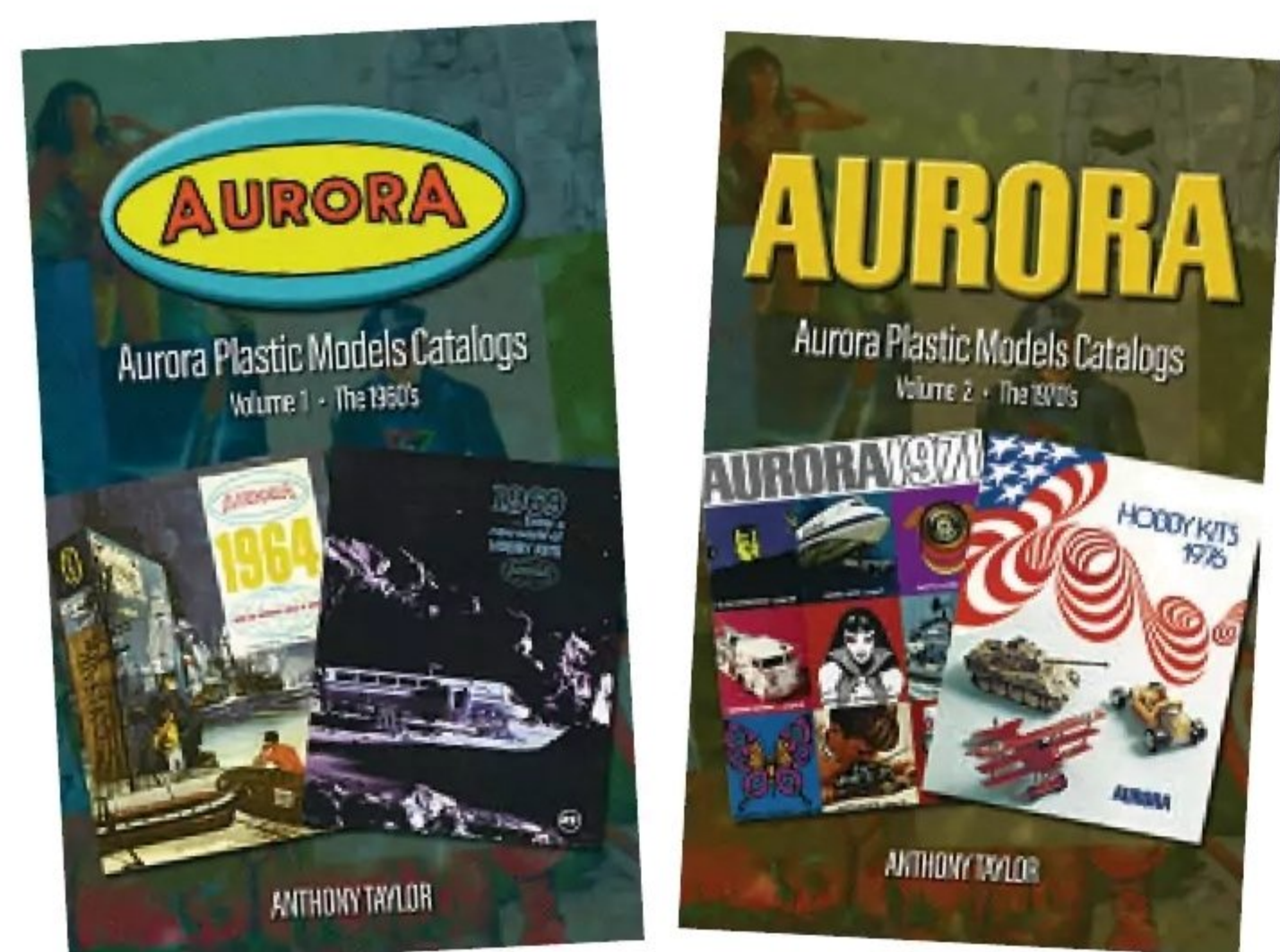
The open water course set for the three minifolkboats (custom built by *Charles Chambers) competing against each and the accompanying chase boat (a full size 36ft Jeannaeu called *Breagh* owned by one of the Largs club members) is an eleven mile stretch of the Clyde (although, with tacking, the models are more likely to cover around 16 miles). As many of you will be aware, open water model sailing is very challenging and rarely undertaken. The tides, therefore, have been checked and noted to be favourable for that day, but, far less predictable, of course, is the weather. So, should, closer to the time, adverse conditions be forecast, a change of date will be necessary. Updates will be posted on the Largs Model Boat Club Facebook page.

*Charles Chambers can be contacted via email at minifolkboat@gmail.com about his bespoke model building service.



Work in progress on the three little folkboats shortly to take part in a big challenge for the purpose of helping other folks!

BLAST FROM THE PAST



Covering all of the models made and marketed by during the heyday of the Aurora Plastics Company of West Hempstead, New York, USA, and illustrated with two decades worth of the brand's catalogues compiled by author Anthony Taylor, the *Aurora Plastic Models Catalogs Volumes 1 & 2*, now available to purchase via Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.com in a choice of hardcover, paperback or e-book format, provide a fascinating snapshot of American popular culture during the 1960s and '70s.



One of Charles Chambers' beautifully crafted custom-built minifolkboats in action.

PRIZE DRAW ANNOUNCEMENT

Lucky Luca! GALAXY KIT WINNER



Thanks to the generosity of the kind folks at Cornwall Model Boats, in the March 2025 we were able to offer you the chance to win Mantua Models' 1:25 scale kit for the luxury motor yacht *Galaxy*. We are now delighted to announce the lucky entrant drawn as Luca Healey of Hyde, Cheshire. Congratulations, Luca!



Preparing the Airfix Shannon for launch

Alan Poole explains how he kitted out his diminutive Dungeness lifeboat build for radio-controlled shouts

When I discovered that Airfix was bringing out a 1:72 scale kit for the Shannon class lifeboat, I pre-ordered one to complement my Severn Class model, also built from an Airfix kit to the same scale.

The kit, which I think is a valuable addition to the Airfix range, and well worth the cost, at around £20, also includes glue, paint and brushes. While, personally, I prefer to work with my own favoured products, this is, no doubt, a bonus for the novice modeller (the Shannon is marketed as a starter kit).

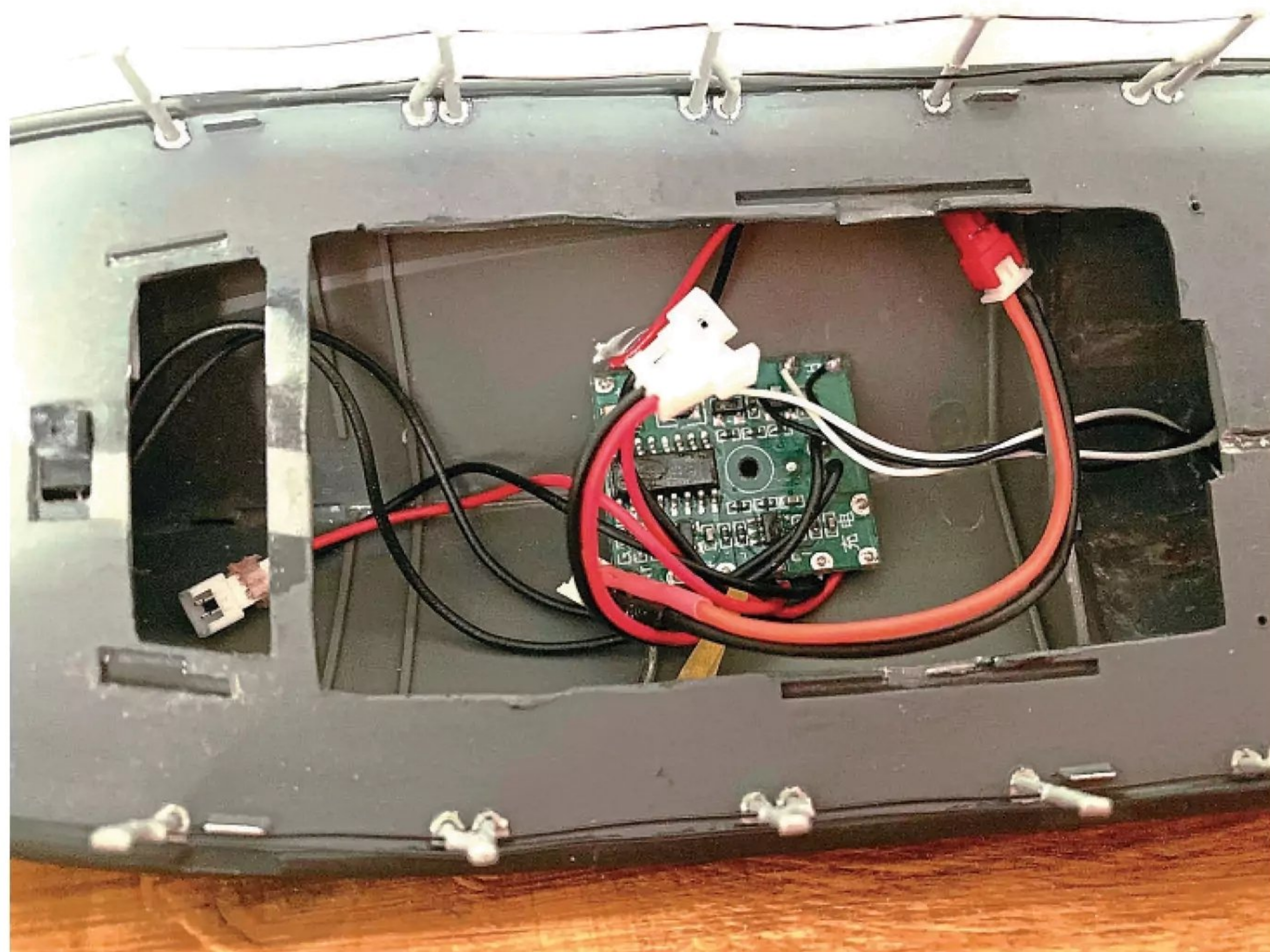
The build results in model with an overall length of just 190 mm. Despite its diminutive size, though, I decided to try and install radio control and so started to search for some suitable miniature equipment. I had already fitted lightweight indoor flight radio-control to the Airfix Severn class



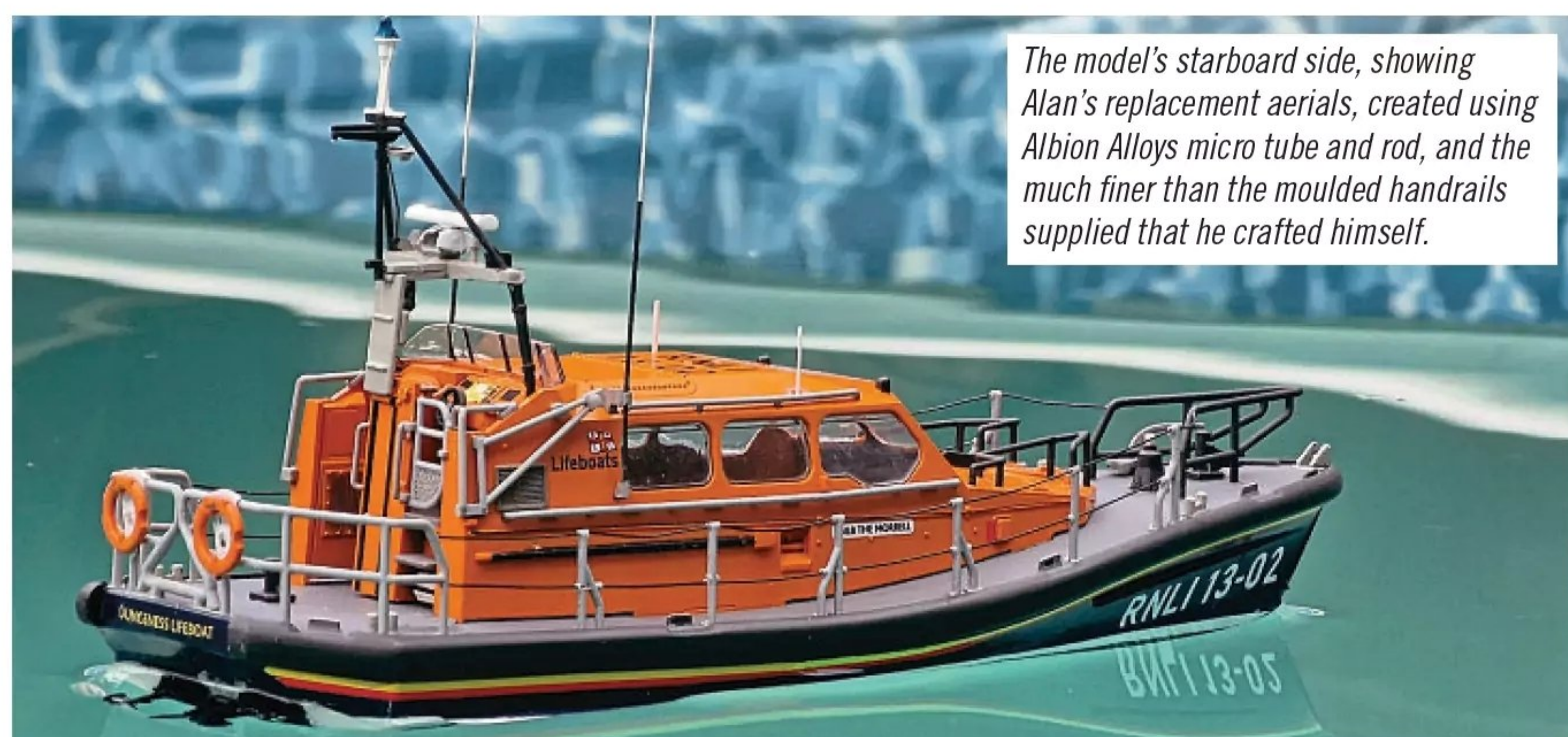
The R/C equipment donor model order from Ali Express, China.



In this overhead shot, note the extended propellers from the transom.



The power board fitted to the interior of the hull. The extra switch can be seen on the left, and the black/white motor wiring observed to the right.



The model's starboard side, showing Alan's replacement aerials, created using Albion Alloys micro tube and rod, and the much finer than the moulded handrails supplied that he crafted himself.



The main mast with the blue flashing light Alan wired in.

lifeboat; this used a receiver board to control the motors and miniature servos for the rudders. But, as the Shannon has no rudders, I was going to need a different kind of R/C system here.

"I was going to need a different kind of R/C system here"

The real Shannon is powered by water jets, which steer the boat and reversing buckets that allow it to go astern. I did, therefore, consider trying to make scaled down water jets, but eventually shelved the idea (note I say shelved rather than dismissed, as it's something I may well explore further at some point in the future).

Power source

Fortunately, while trawling through listings on a Chinese electronics website I spotted a small R/C model tug with promising donor potential. I noted that the model is steered by stopping either one or the other of its two motors to change direction – which interestingly is similar, albeit way more basic, in concept to how waterjets control the Shannon. So, I ordered one of these inexpensive little tugs and tested it on our local pond. It came complete with its own little controller, operated on 2.4 Ghz, and actually performed quite well. If cannibalised, its propulsion equipment should, I decided, be more than adequate to power the Shannon.

So, on returning home I took the little tug apart to see what was inside it and whether its stripped-out installation could perhaps be fitted straight into the Shannon. I found a board with various outputs for lighting and the two motors. The board was only 25 x 25mm square and very lightweight. The motors were the miniature coreless type and directly coupled to the propellers, which were moulded to a short shaft press fitted to the motor output shafts.

Turning my attention to the now assembled Shannon hull, I decided that if I cut off the output moulding for the jet drive unit, I could bush the openings to accept the short prop shafts. This was done with a brass bearing reamed out to accept the 2.5mm shafts. The motors were fitted as close as possible to the model's transom, in line with the bushes and the propeller shafts that were fitted back to the motor output shafts. As there was very little room to fit the motors, I decided to use silicon to mount them, this offering a degree of



The hull painted in the Shannon's early colour scheme, with white undersides.

flexibility and time before it started to set to accurately align the shafts. I knew the slightest misalignment of the power train would stop the motors, so a small amount of lubricant was used to help the bearings do their job. Initially concerned about water ingress through the shafts, this proved to be minimal, with the added reassurance that the motors were silicon sealed inside the transom. The prop shafts were left as long as possible, extending from the bearings, which meant the props were in clear water and not masked by the model's transom.

The little power board was mounted centrally in the hull and fitted by drilling two holes for the probes, which are the water activated connectors that switch the power for the model on and off. These probes exit either side of the keel, which protects them. I also wired up another miniature switch from these

probe positions on the board so that the model and lighting circuits could be operated without water activation. The battery I installed is a 3.7 Lipo type, of only 100mAh capacity, and affords plenty of running time before it needs recharging. At this point, all the systems were tested and found to work well.

"The little power board was mounted centrally in the hull and fitted by drilling two holes for the probes, which are the water activated connectors that switch the power for the model on and off"

Returning to the construction of the model itself, the deck was dry fitted and the cabin section offered up to

see where the deck needed cutting away to allow access (for battery changes, general maintenance, etc). The cabin has small lugs to locate it in the correct place on the deck, and when cutting away the deck for access the corresponding indentations for the cabin are retained; this allows the cabin to clip to the deck securely yet still remain removeable.

Other model mods

The rest of the model was built as per the Airfix instructions, apart from some small modifications which I will describe later. I can say that Airfix has done a really good job on this kit. All parts, with the exception of the window moulding, fit well. The windows are supplied a single clear plastic unit that clips into the cabin, but I felt a better fit, and more convincing look, would be achieved by installing the windows as three separate sections, so I duly cut and fitted them as such.

Another modification made was the replacement of the aerials with Albion Alloys micro tube and rod; the offerings from Airfix I found to be much too thick – no doubt due to moulding limitations at this scale. The handrails along the sides were also too chunky, so I also decided to replace these with 0.3mm black covered copper wire (which can be sourced from jewellery suppliers). The rails were cut off square with the stanchions, then a 0.3 drill used to drill through the stanchions; this was a laborious job, which took many hours, but the results were well worth the effort. I did, however, lose quite a few drill bits during this exercise.



Alan, preparing to demonstrate that, despite the diminutive size of the model that results from the 1:72 scale Airfix kit, radio-control is possible.



Out of Alan Poole's hands and into a pool, the model is about to be put through her paces.



And away she goes... A neat little example of the power of plastic magic!

Let there be light

As previously mentioned, the little power board had outputs for lighting. I connected one of these outputs to a miniature blue flashing LED (marketed mainly for model railway use). Having fitted the LED to the masthead, I then ran the wiring (which for these LEDs is extremely fine) down each side of the support struts and into the cabin top near the windscreen, before connecting it to the supply. As I had fitted a separate switch alongside the water activated one, the light can be operated without the need to have the boat in the water.

Shannon scheme

The painting of these small plastic vessels can make or break a model, so it's especially important to achieve the best possible finish. I decided to finish this particular Shannon as the Dungeness lifeboat, which in the past I had visited many times and taken numerous photos of while gathering information for my 1:12 scale version. At that time, however, she carried a different livery; her lower hull being white with grey panels. As these boats recover right up on the beach at speed, naturally their paintwork suffers. Consequently, most of the Shannon boats now in service have black lower hulls, which is more serviceable.

The upper hull I painted using Humbrol's No. 15 Midnight Blue. I use this on most of my lifeboats, and it looks very acceptable, particularly on a model of this scale. The cabin/wheelhouse was painted in Tamiya X6 Gloss Orange, as I find this to be more realistic than the Airfix orange included in the kit, but the choice, of course, is up to the builder. The decals supplied I found to be very good, and they fitted well, especially the red/yellow stripes at the deck edge.

"I also purchased an aftermarket decal sheet that is available from Airfix, for around £10, as this provides the names and numbers of 60 plus RNLI lifeboats, including the Dungeness boat"

I also purchased an aftermarket decal sheet that is available from Airfix, for around £10, as this provides the names and numbers of 60 plus RNLI lifeboats, including the Dungeness boat.

On the water

When I first put my adapted for R/C 1:72 scale Airfix Shannon through her paces in a friend's pool, she ran well. It took me a little while to get my head around the corrections that needed to be made on the rather primitive radio transmitter, but after a while I got the hang of things and am now very pleased with how well this neat little model operates. ●

The 'New' Zeeland

Nick Brown test builds Billing Boats' newly improved and updated kit and, taking things one step further, gets this designed with R/C installation in mind model out on the water



The 'real' Zeeland, as owned by Willem Muller in 1964. The model is incredibly close in detail to the original.

Originally named *Winston Churchill*, the steam tug *Zeeland* was constructed during World War II. It holds the distinction of being the last steam-powered tug built for the Dutch company Goedkoop in Amsterdam. In 1964, it was sold to the Willem Muller company based in Terneuzen, where it was retrofitted with a diesel engine and renamed *Zeeland*. The vessel was eventually broken up in Dordrecht, Holland, in 1997.

Zeeland has appeared in Billing Boats' catalogue in the past, but Jens and his team in Denmark have now completely revamped the kit, and I was fortunate enough to be asked by our editor and Jens to build and review a prototype of the new version. This arrived in a Zwarte Zee box, as at the time of building the new *Zeeland* had yet to enter production.

Kit inspection

The kit consists of an ABS hull with newly designed laser cut plywood superstructure decks, nicely turned brass fittings with wood, plastic and resin parts, ramin masts, rigging cord in various thicknesses, a prop shaft, rudder shaft and brass propeller. A set of beautiful full-size plans are also provided, with a

picture style instruction booklet that also includes the laser cut plywood sheet layouts and parts listing identifier.

Kit specifications give a scale of 1:35, equating to a model measuring 820mm (32 inches) in length, with a beam of 210mm (8.3 inches) and a height of 550mm (21.6 inches).

Making a stand

Unusually, the build starts not with the hull but with the stand. This was quickly identified on the laser cut plywood sheets and removed, before being assembled with two lengths of dowel, resulting in a very rigid and useful build stand I used throughout the construction phase.

Making a start on the hull

The hull is moulded from ABS sheet and represents the shape of the tug perfectly. You will need to cut off the excess material. The feedback I gave Billing Boats here was that modellers could, potentially, fail to correctly identify the upper deck line, as the most obvious moulded line is that for the lower deck line, and removing the plastic to this would cause issues. Hopefully, therefore, things will be made clearer in the production kit for *Zeeland*. I removed the excess with scissors and then smoothed over with a sanding file. Fine tuning can be made after the deck is fitted.

Designed with R/C operation in mind

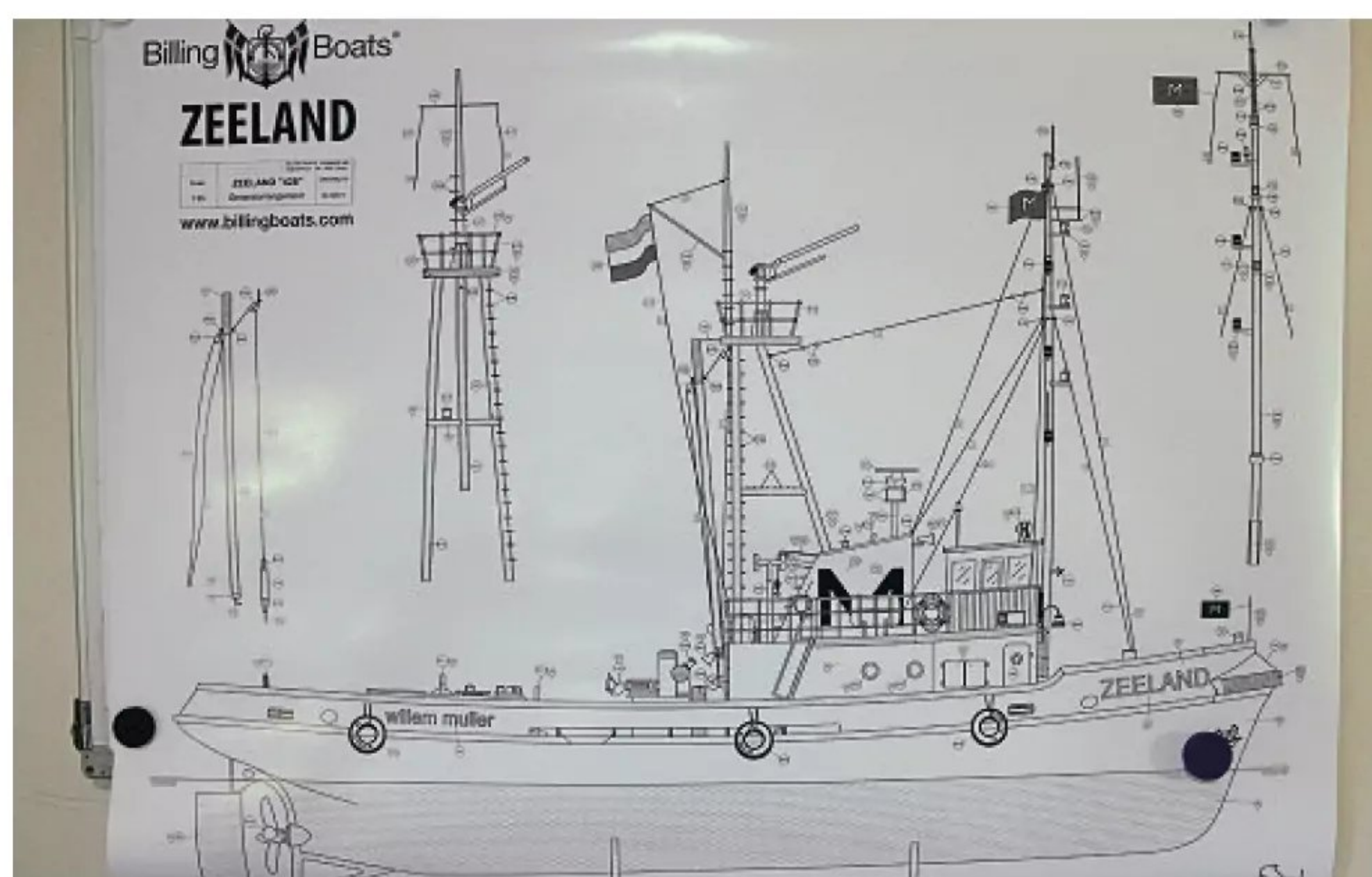
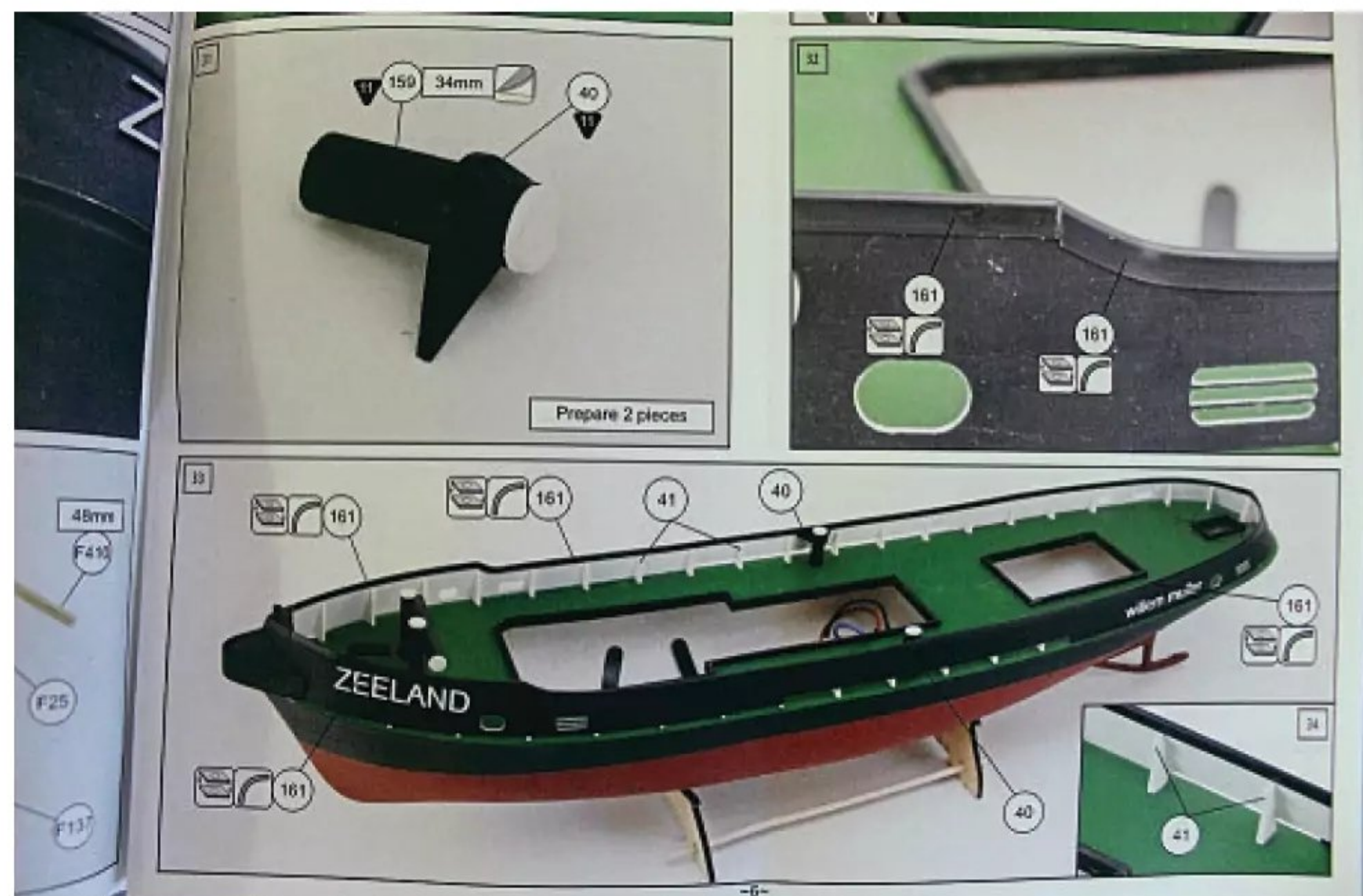
This model has an internal support structure for the motor, battery tray and servo box, which can be built as a single item that sits perfectly in the keel. I found the rudder support



The contents of the Zwarte Zee box, which arrived safe and sound from Denmark just prior to the 2024 Christmas holidays.

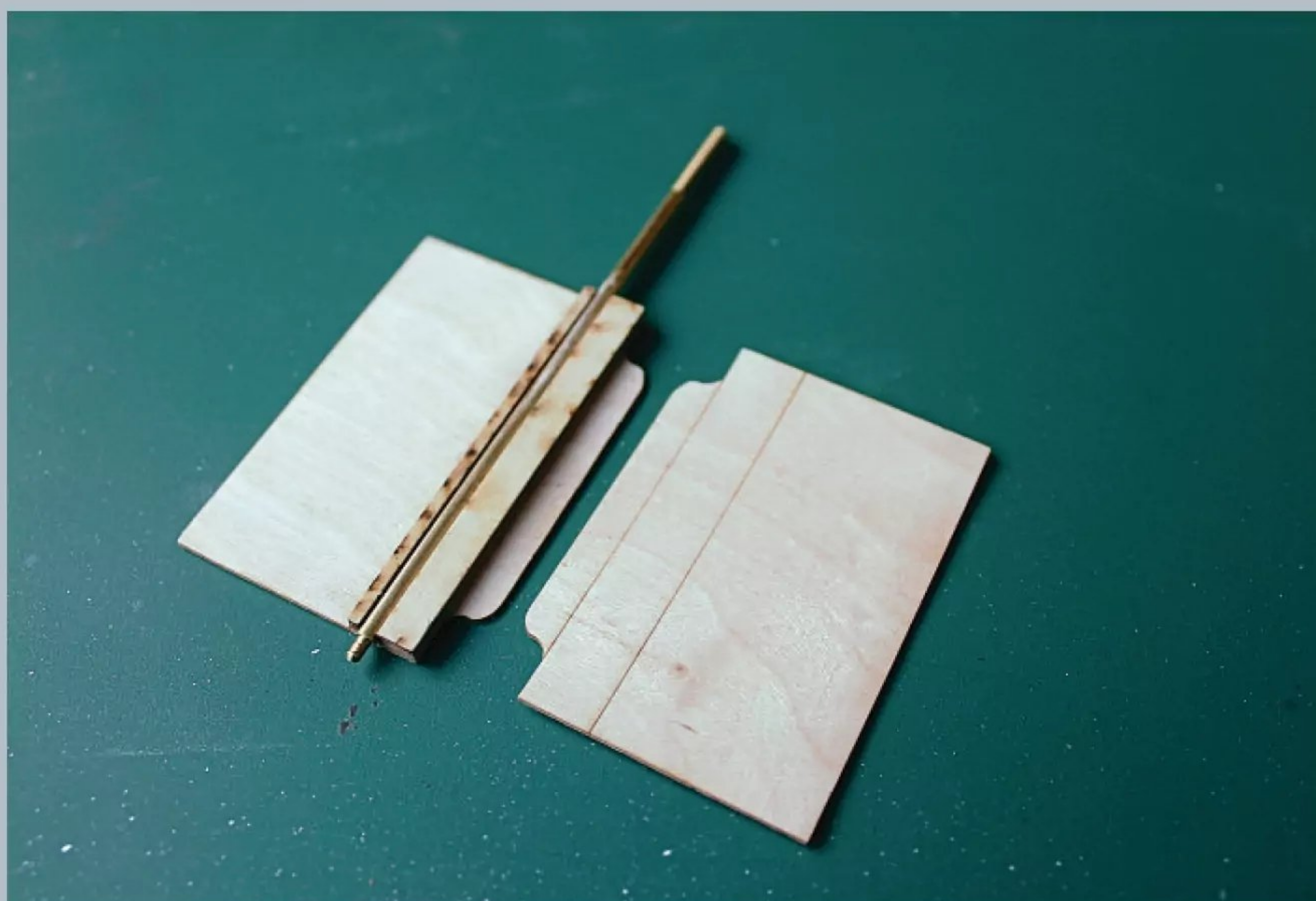
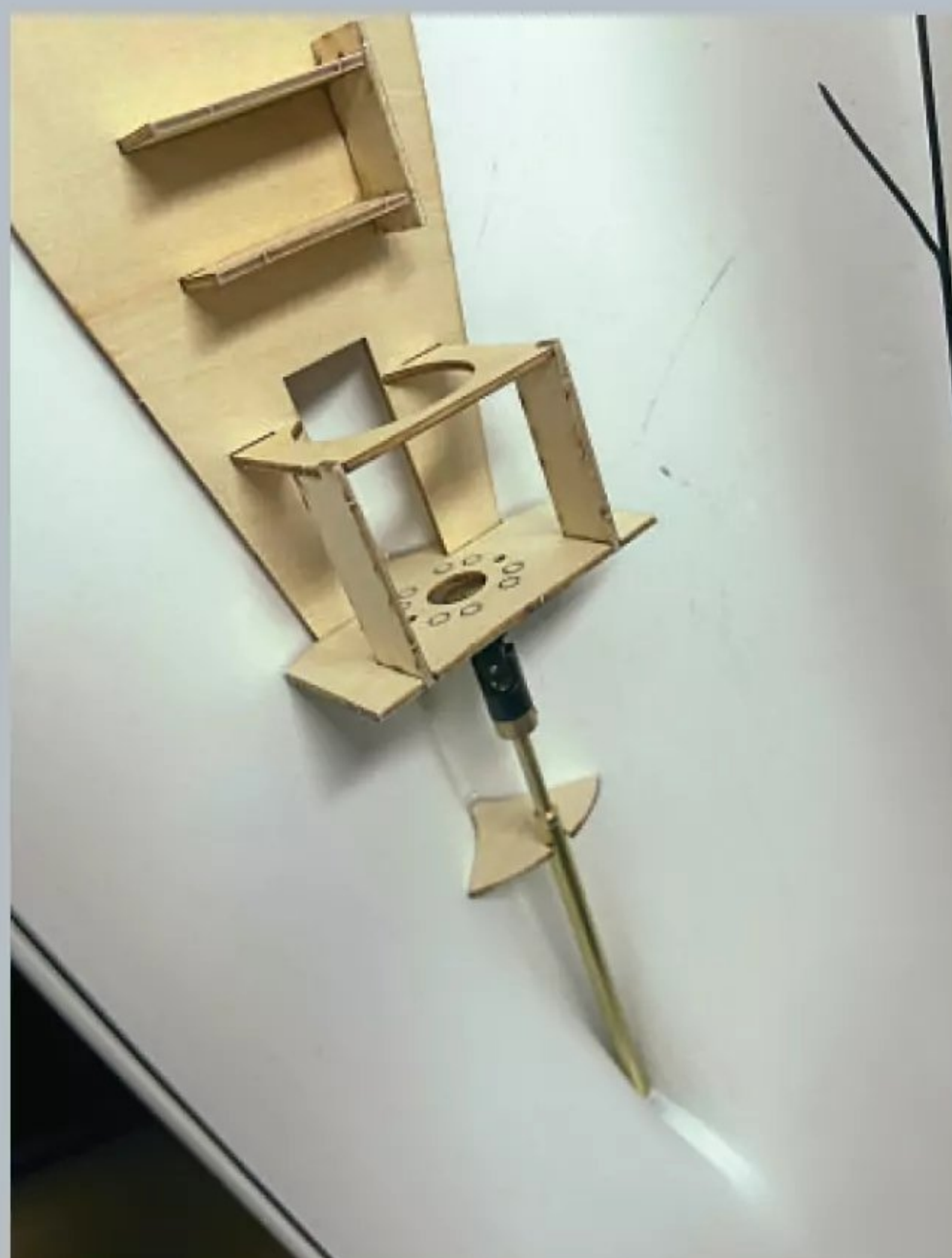


The updated and fully illustrated instruction booklet, and one of the plans.



Nick marked the upper line with a Sharpie Pen to identify the correct line to cut to. NB failure to do so will result in the deck sitting proud of the hull.





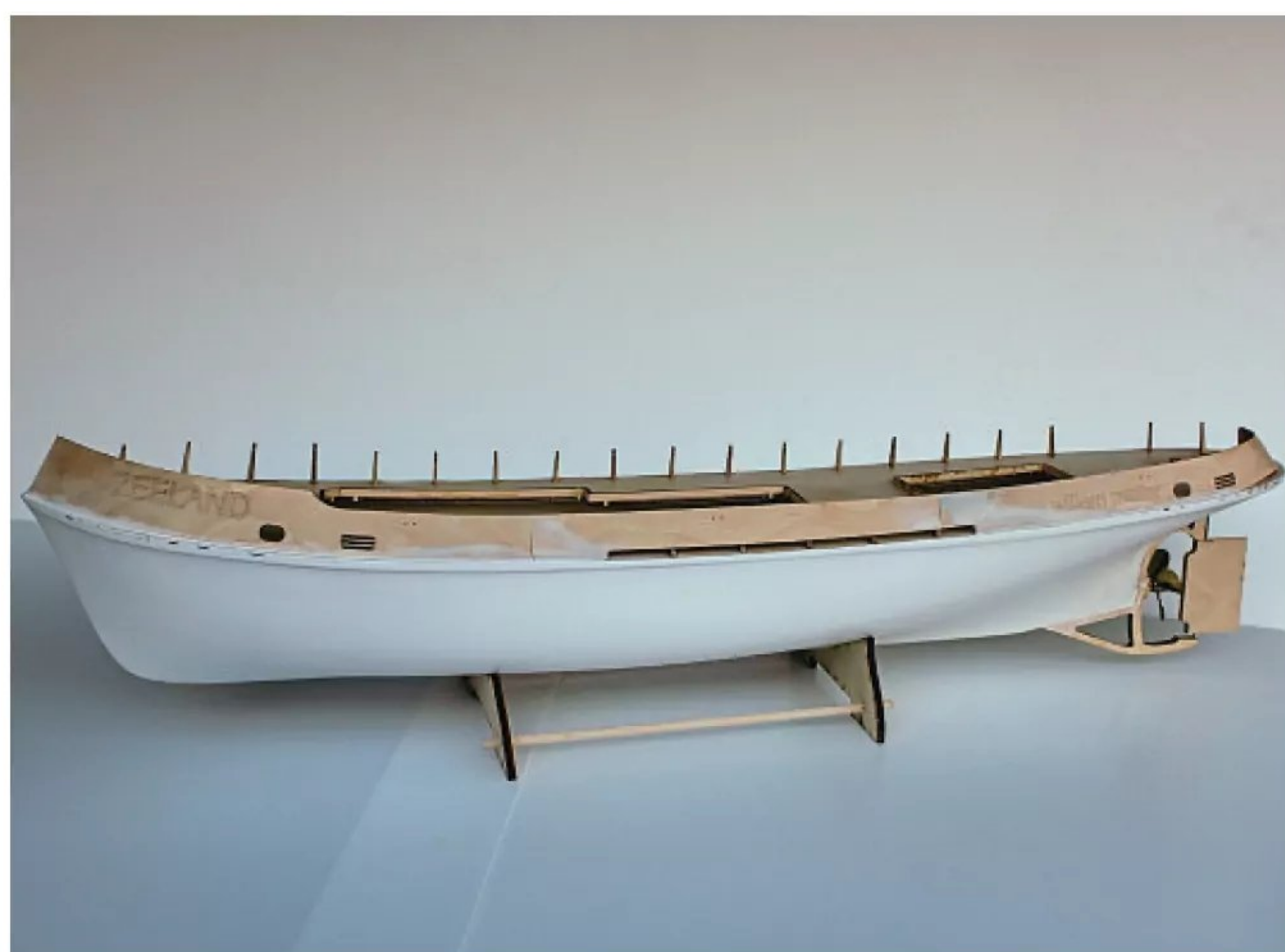
Parts for the internal structure and rudder supports are laser-cut and fit extremely well together, allowing the motor, prop shaft, and rudder to lock positively into the hull.

to be exceptionally good in fitment, this just needing the prop shaft tube hole drilling out to finish it off. I suggest firmly attaching the rudder support to the hull then drilling out the prop shaft, as this will ensure easy alignment with the motor.

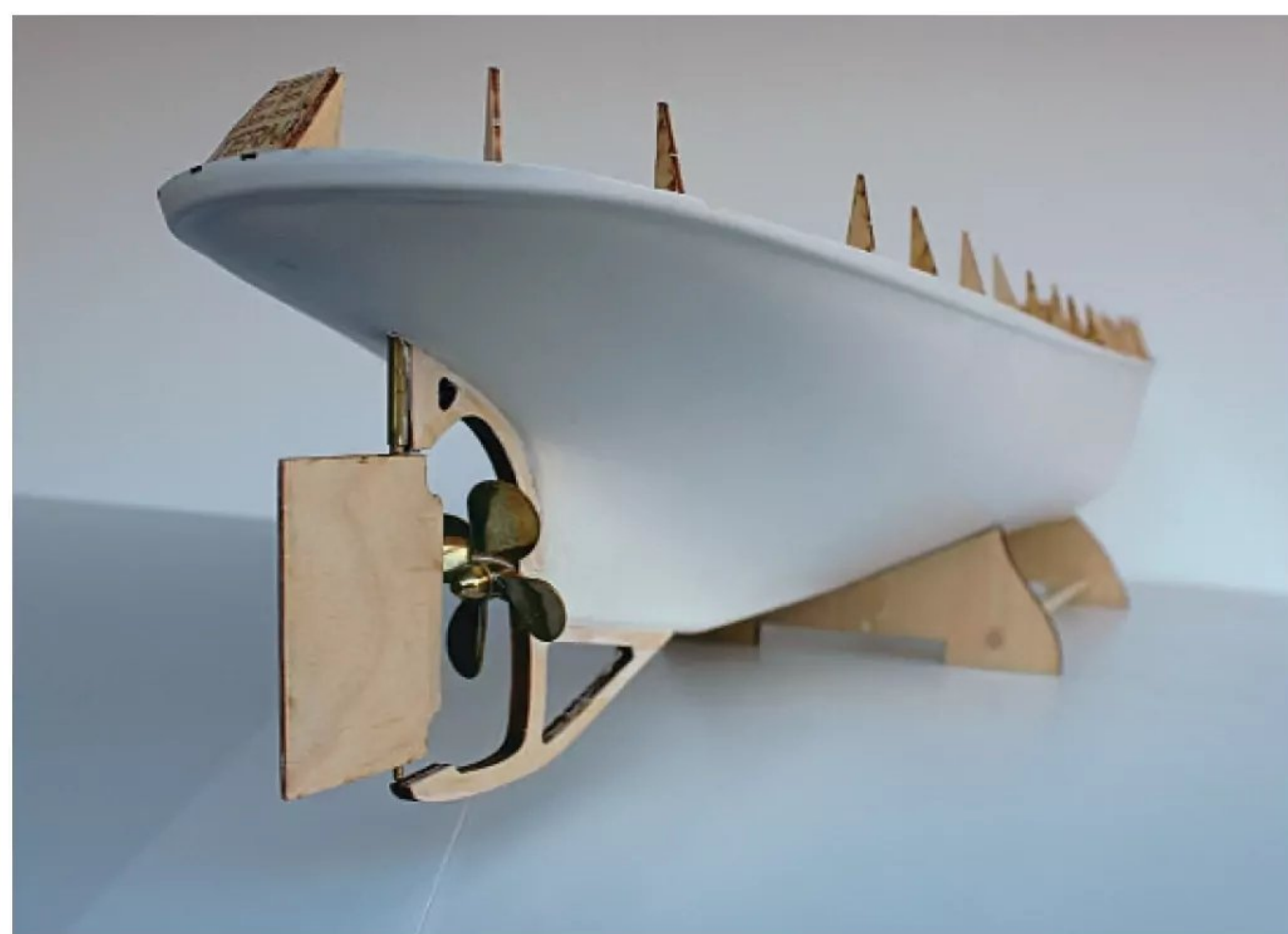
I chose an MFA Torpedo 500 electric motor and a Dean's Marine (MTronik) 20amp ESC with Built-in Eliminator Circuit (BEC) for my running gear and trusty Turnigy 2.4GHz radio gear. These all fit comfortably inside the hull on the battery tray.

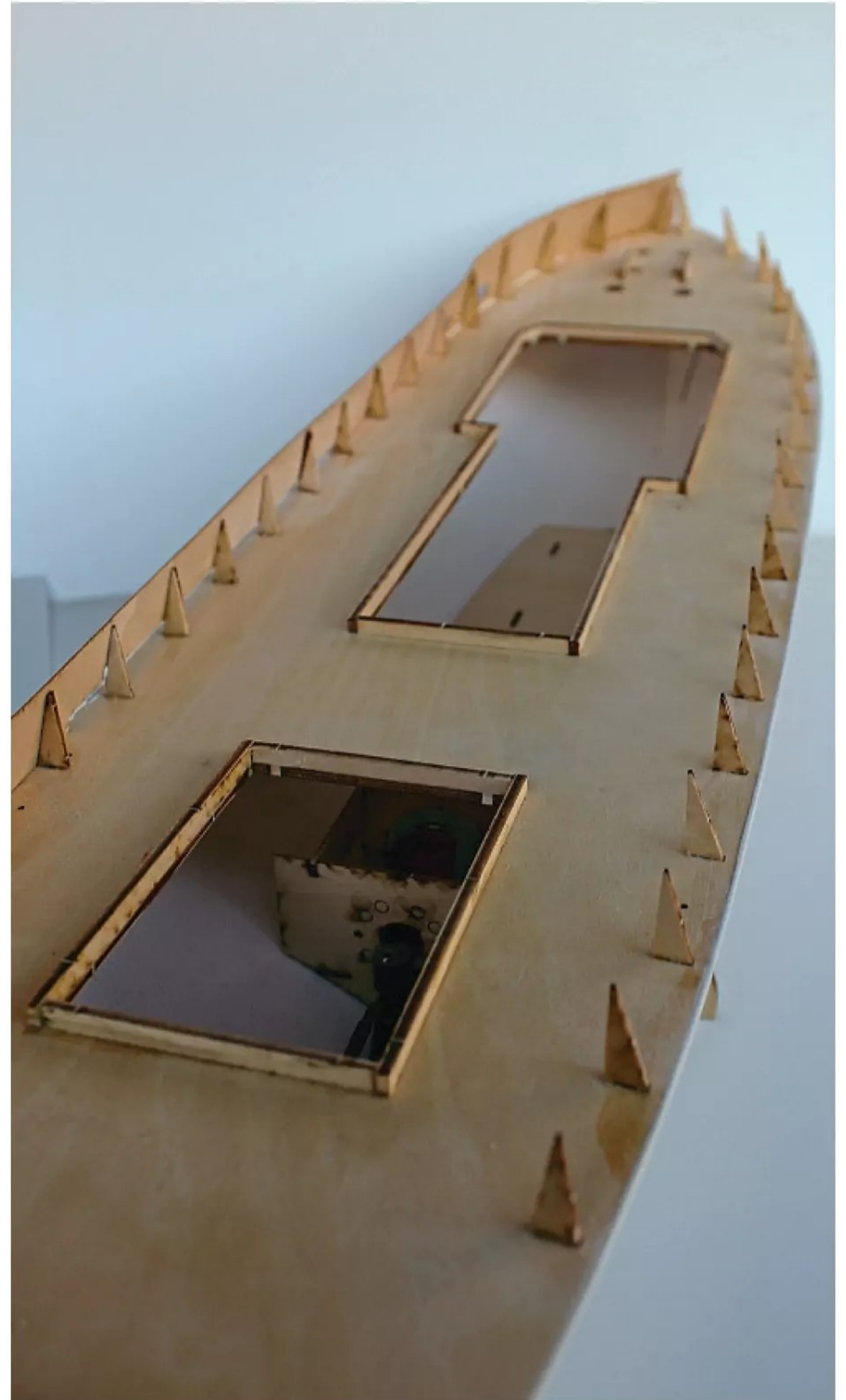
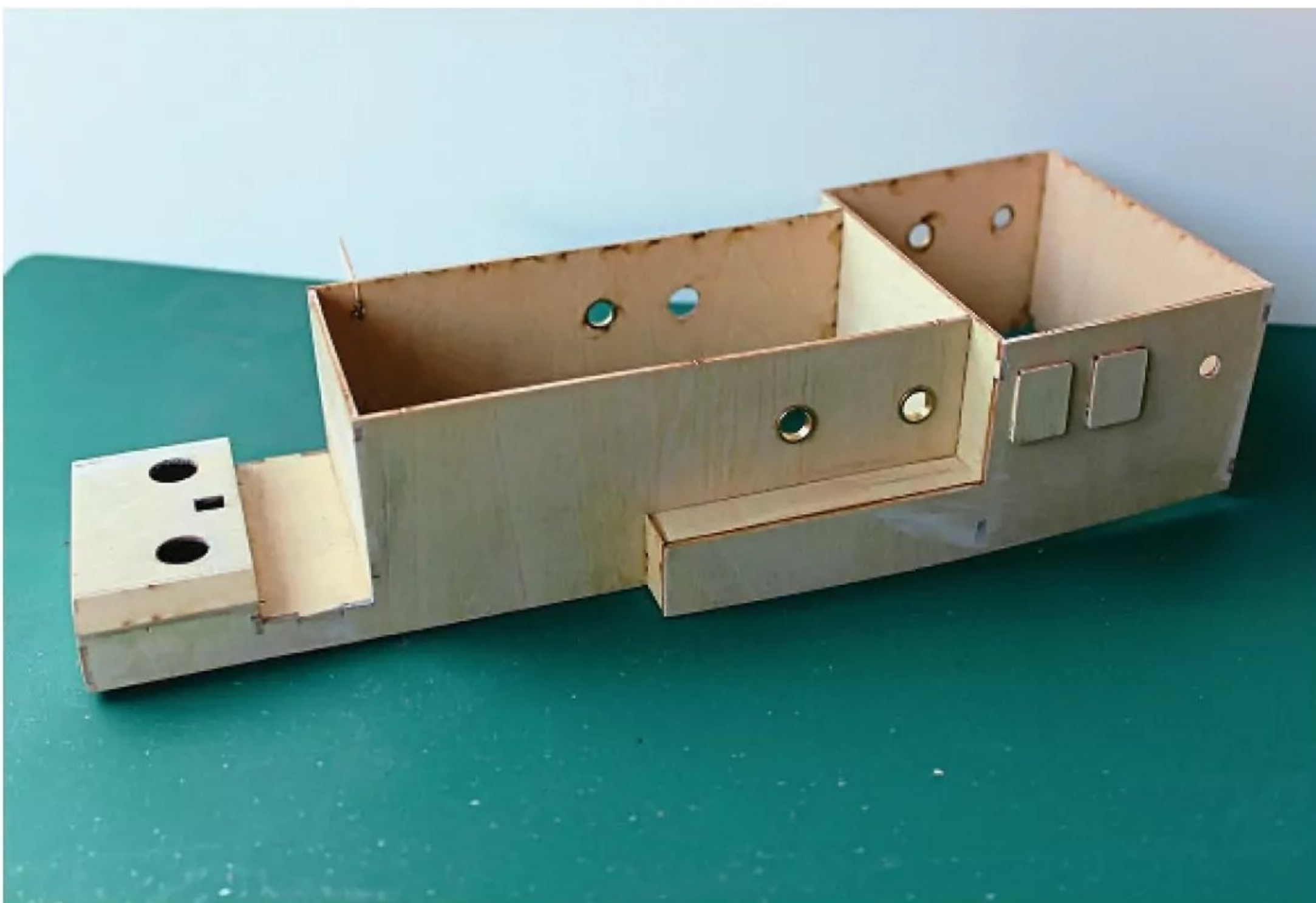
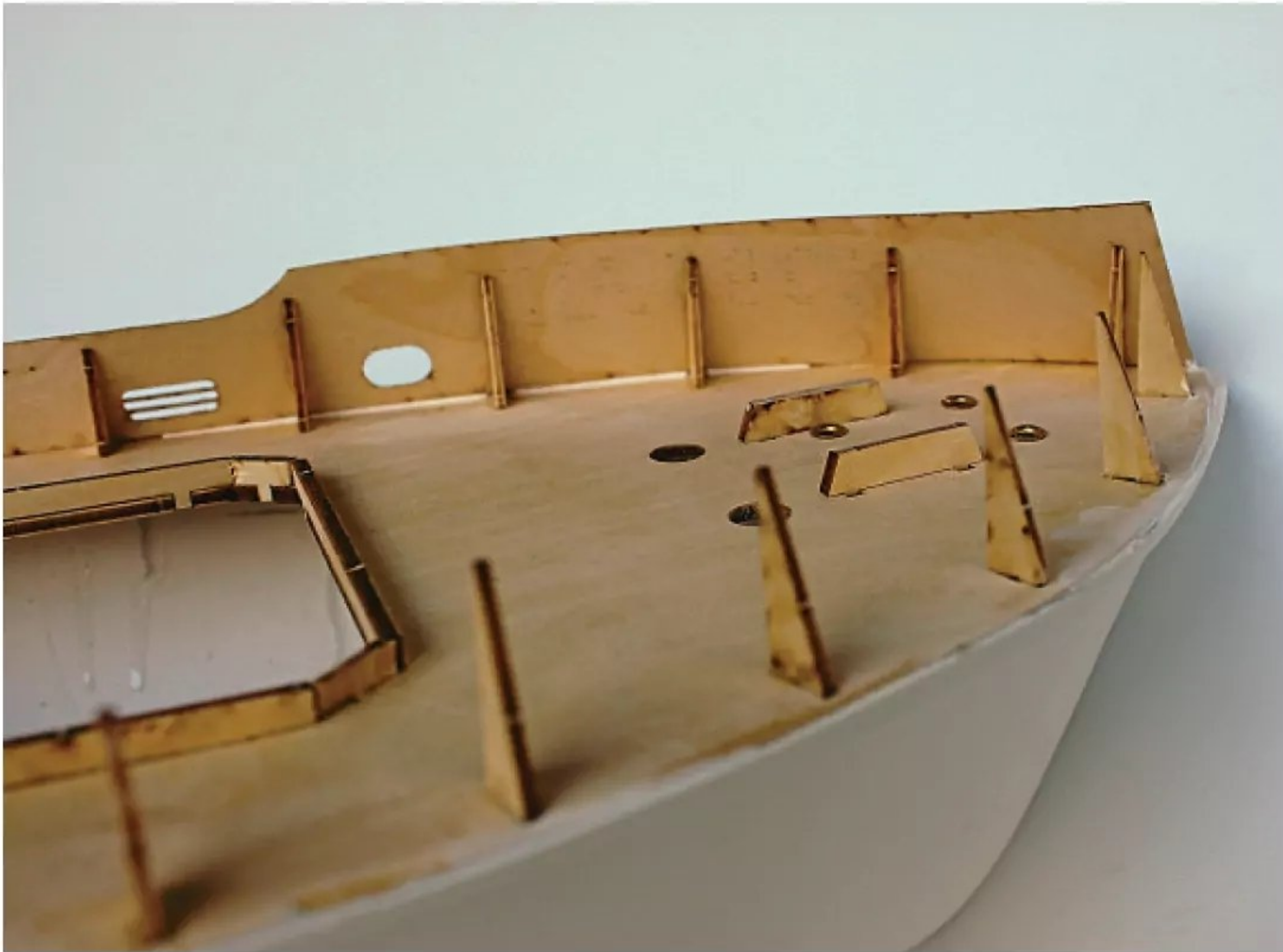
The main deck

The main deck was removed from its plywood sheet and test fitted, requiring only minor adjustment with a file to the sharpness off the bow area. I opted for a heavy-duty thick superglue to attach the deck to the hull, using a thinner type of superglue as filling around the edges. Masking tape was



The basis of the hull work done. Nick test fitted the port bulwark in preparation for his feedback to Billing Boats.





The laser cut plywood is a dream to work with; it's easily removed from its backing sheet and locks together allowing the rapid build of basic structures.



Some of the structures starting to be trial fitted into their final positions.

then used to hold everything together while the glues cured.

Once I was certain that the glue had indeed cured, I removed the tape and set about filing down the excess ABS above the deck line. A standard flat file was all that was needed to get

the majority of the plastic off, with a sanding stick used just to polish things up during the final stages.

Bulwarks

It's at this point you need to decide whether you apply the paint or

wait until the construction phase is completed. Billing Boats suggest painting the hull and deck before adding the bulwarks. I, unfortunately, didn't have that choice, as my brief was to test fit the laser-cut wood before the kit entered production, just in case



The intricate yet surprisingly easy to use laser-cut names on the plywood sheet work fantastically well and look terrific on the completed model.

any adjustments needed to be made. After fitting the port side bulwarks as my test side, however, I was happily able to report very little needed to be modified. Next, I glued all the supports to the deck, paying careful attention to the three different sizes and where they fitted. I let the glue cure for a full 24 hours just to be sure I had a solid

structure to which the plywood sheet bulwarks could be attached – no one wants wobbly supports! Following this, with my entire clamp collection lined up in readiness, I worked from the bows towards the stern, applying glue in small areas for two or three supports at a time and fitting clamps as I moved along. I did find that I needed to apply

a small amount of filler to blend the bulwark into the hull, but no serious work was required here.

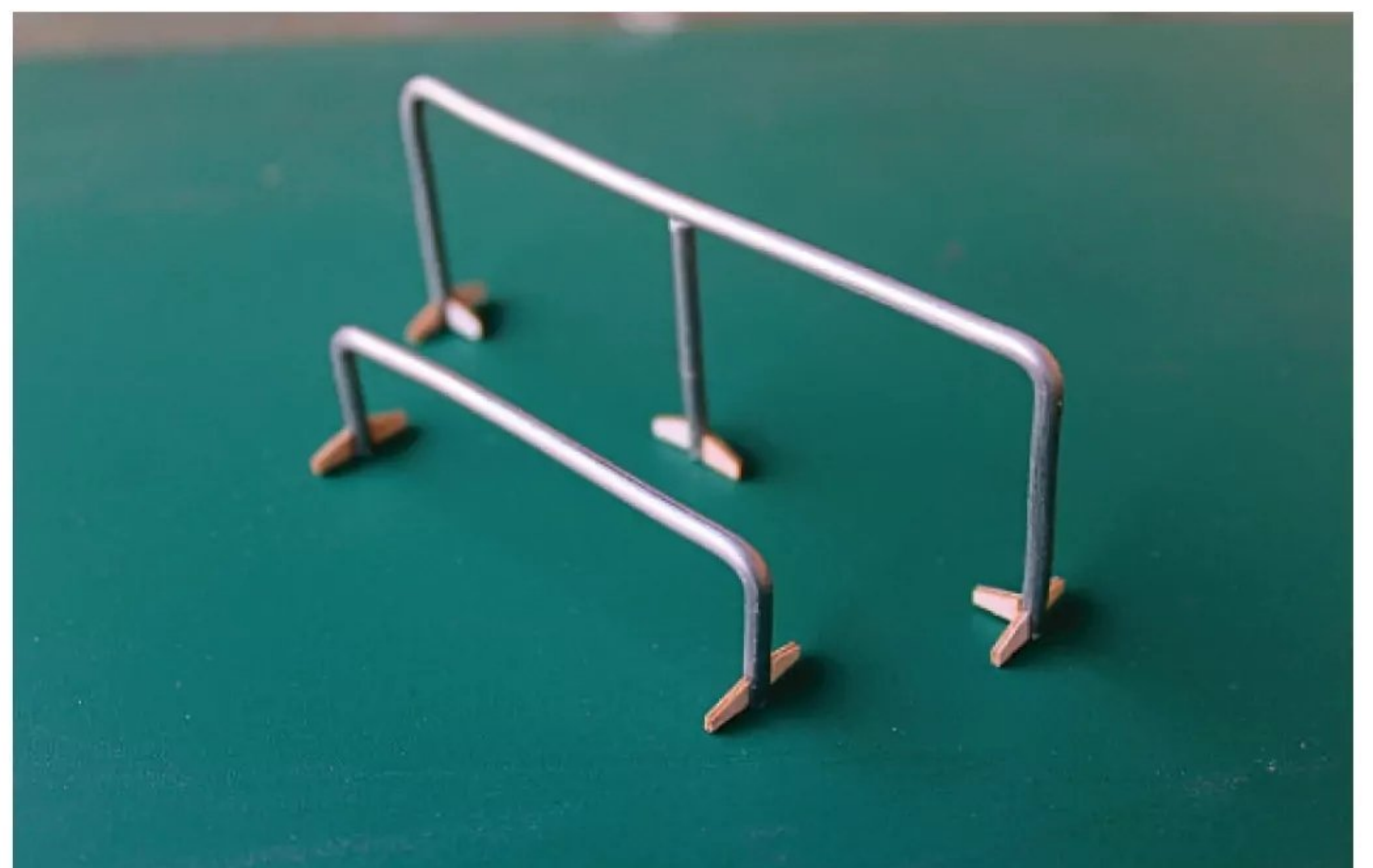
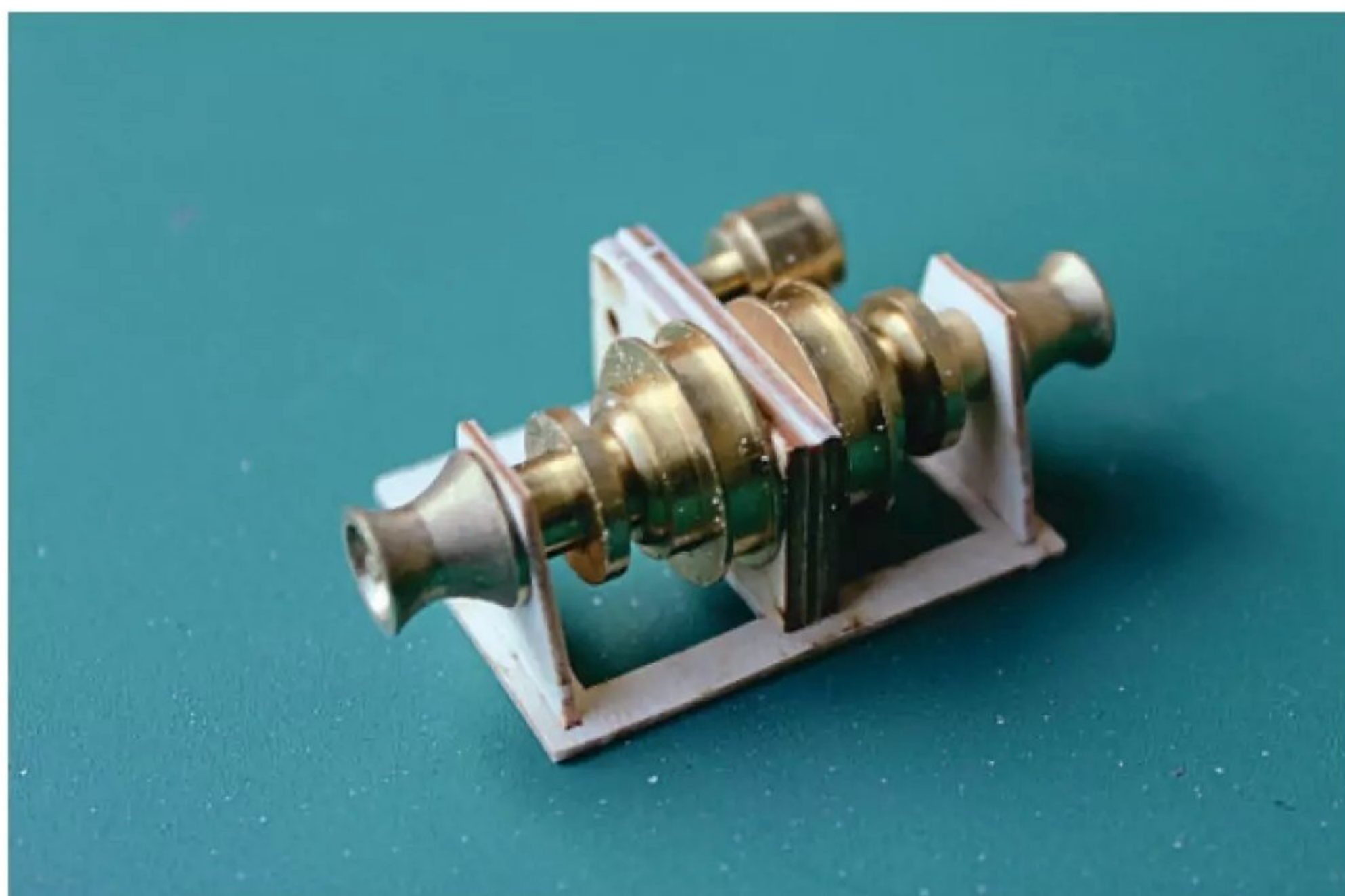
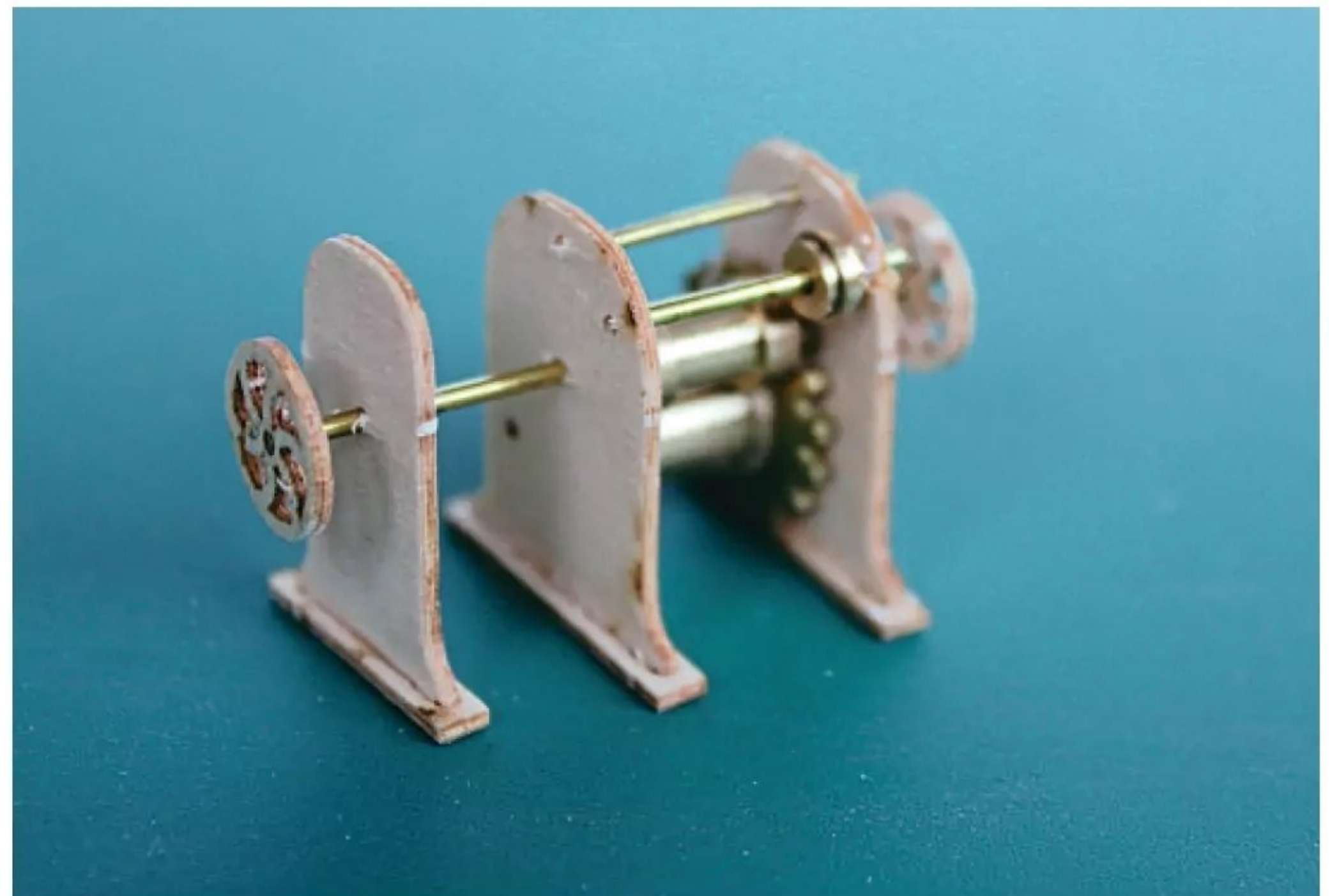
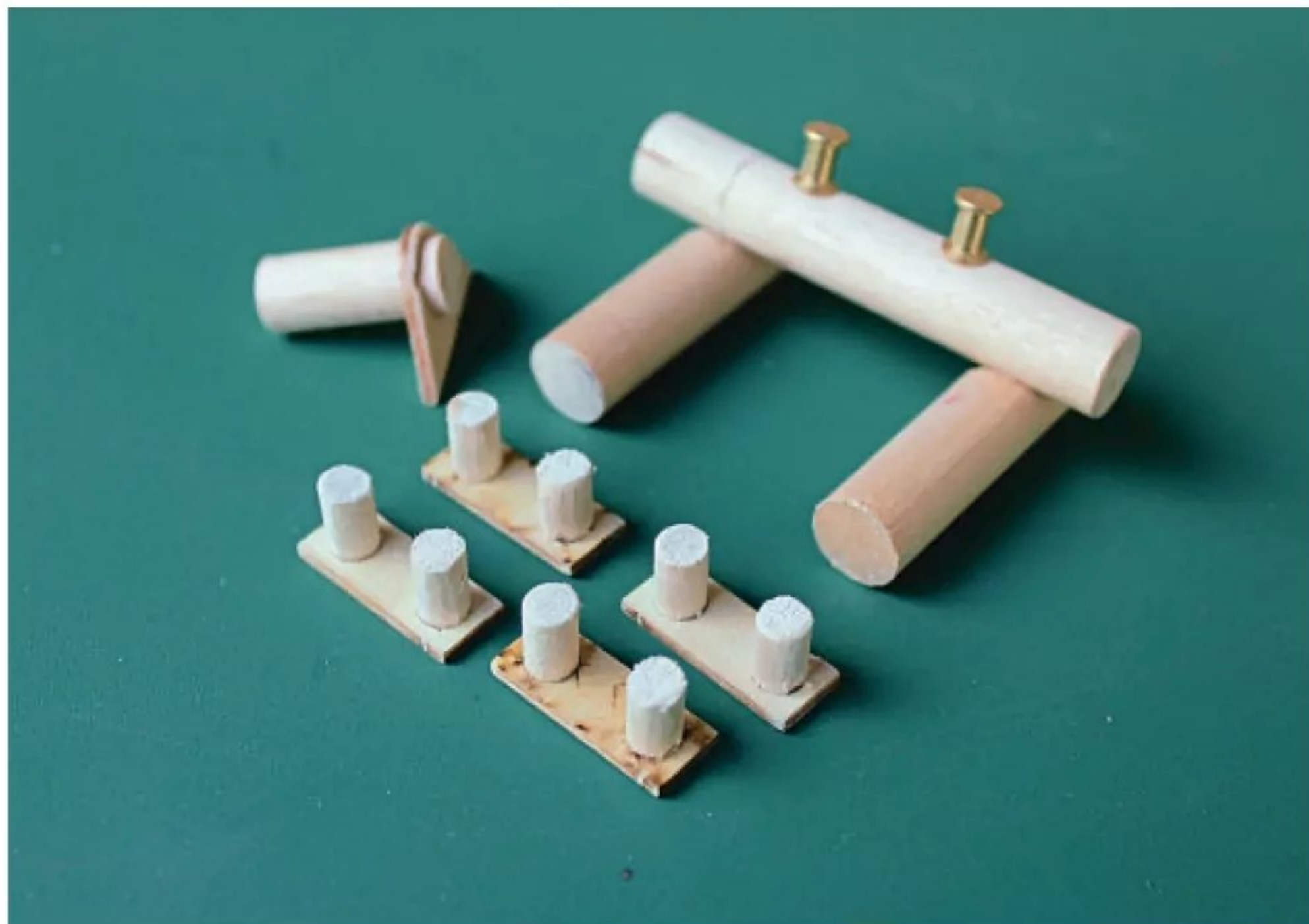
Painting the deck

Out of sequence, I then painted the deck a bright vibrant green from the Humbrol range (Gloss No. 2) and sprayed the inside of the bulwarks white with a rattle can. Brush painting the deck took longer on the side where I had pre-fitted the bulwark as I had to try to preserve the white paint already applied, this requiring a relatively steady hand.

The superstructure

The uprights that locate the superstructure were sealed in place prior to the painting and all fitted superbly, with no fuss, just as one would expect from a laser-cut designed kit. The capping of the bulwark was made from the U-shaped plastic strip supplied, which finished the hull off very smartly; I should, perhaps, point out though that this is extremely tough to cut.

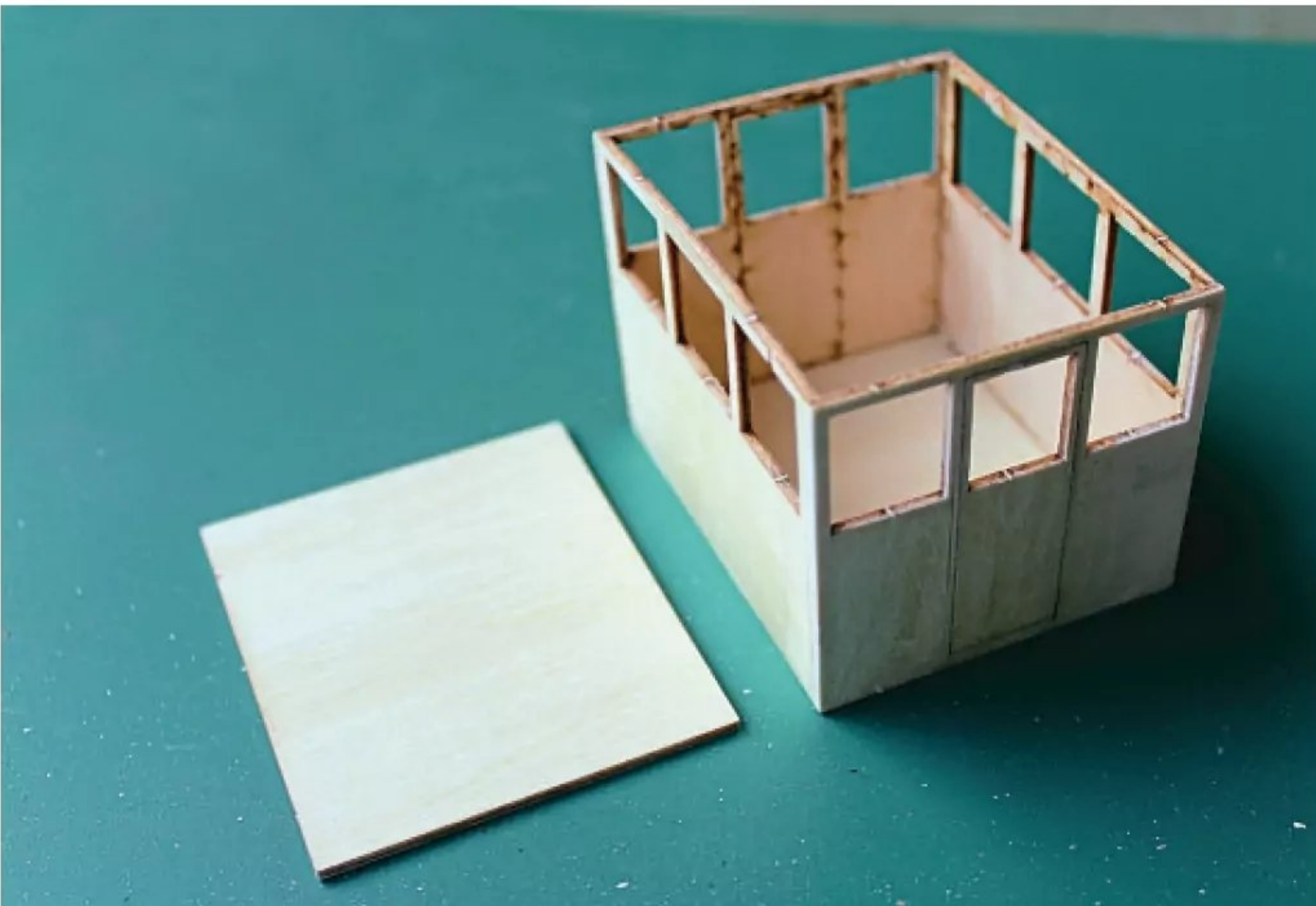
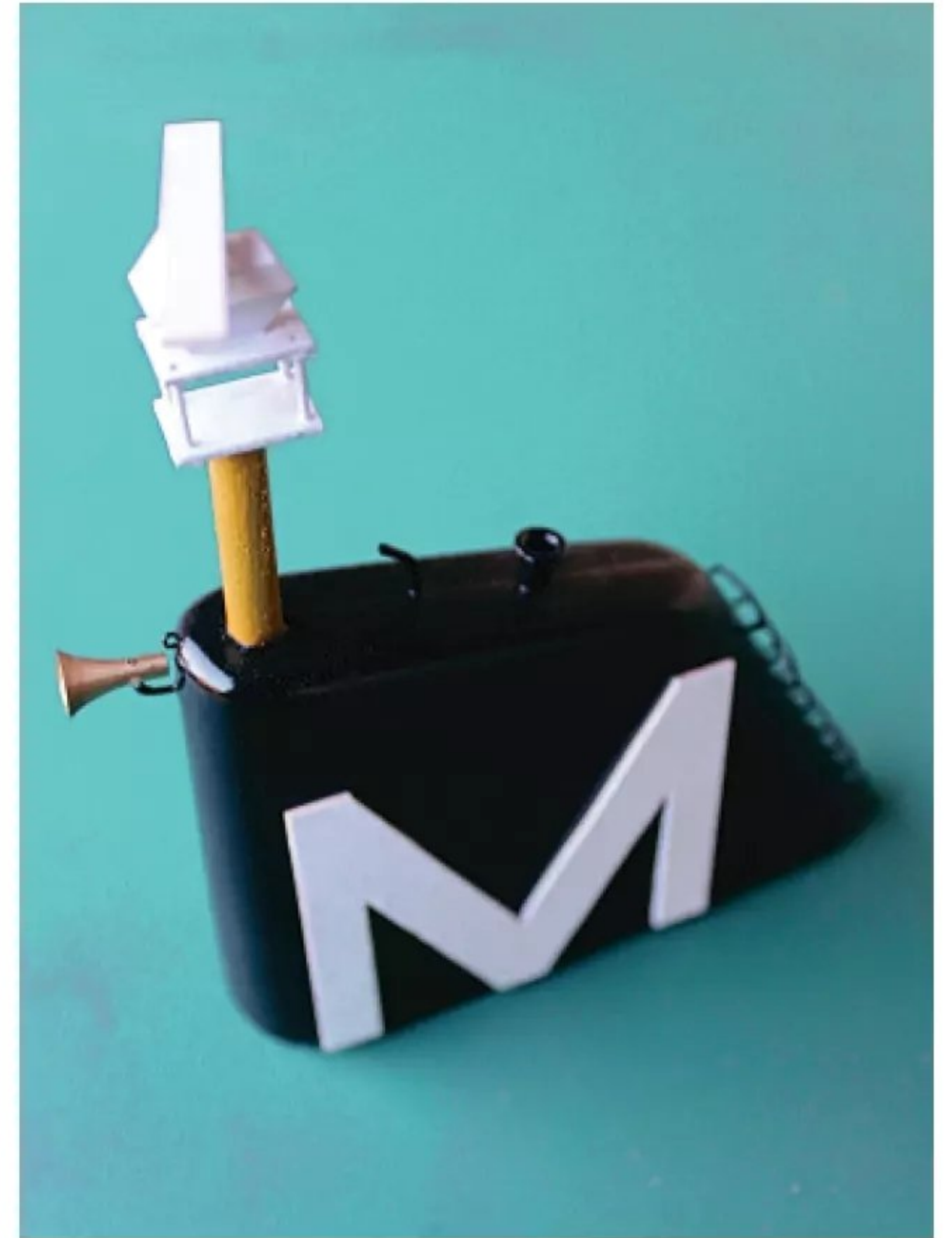
The assembly of the superstructure sections proceeded smoothly, fitting



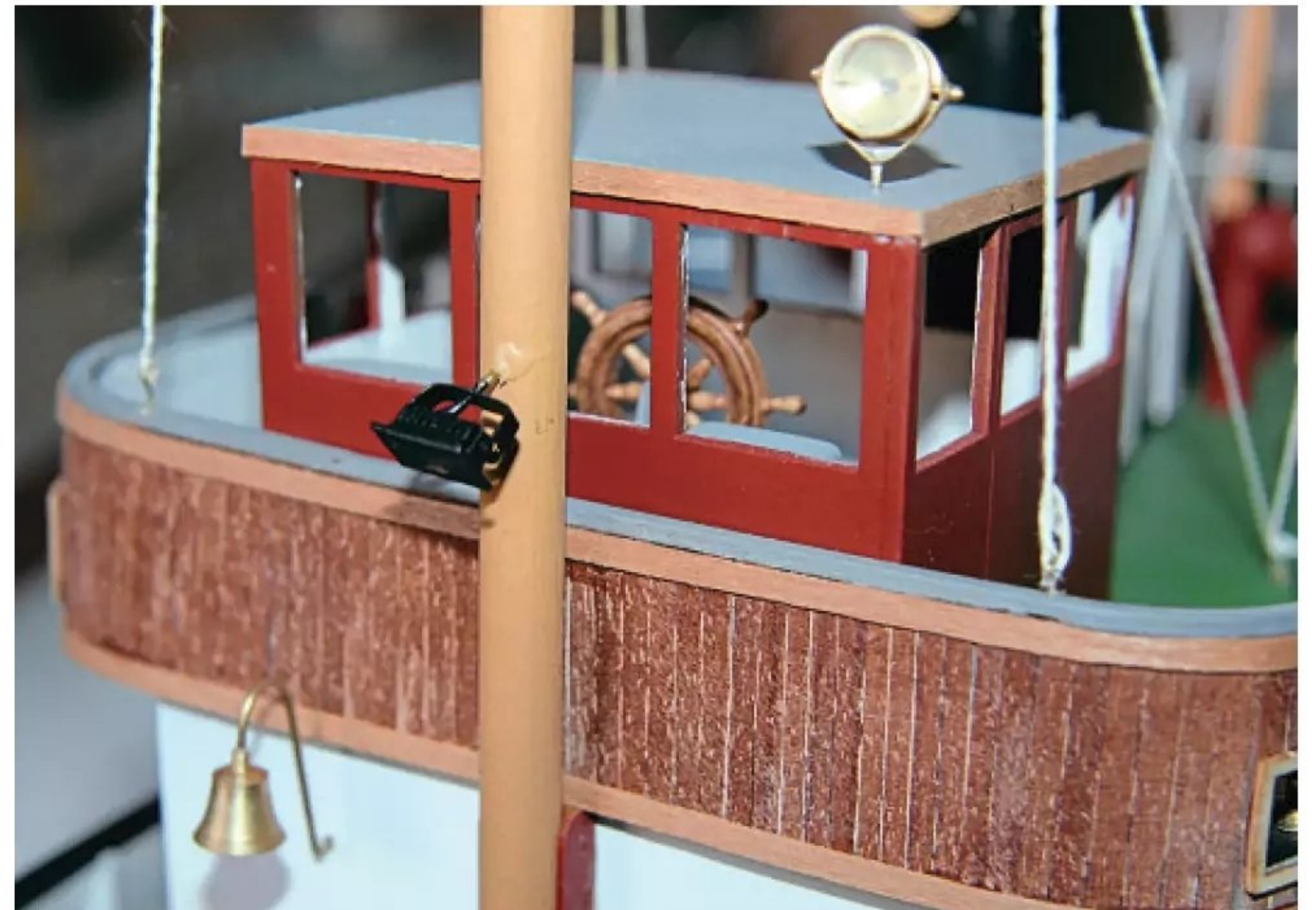
The deck fittings come supplied as a mix of wood dowel, turned brass and aluminium rod; by using the templates in the kit instructions, these build up quickly and very credibly represent their real-life counterparts.



The funnel is a two-piece vacform item, which features some interesting detail, including the use of staples to recreate the rung ladder on its sloping rear face.



The bridge and bridge wings on the Zeeland. The interior lends itself to being further detailed if desired, and the wood panelling to the bridge wings can be customised to your own individual taste.

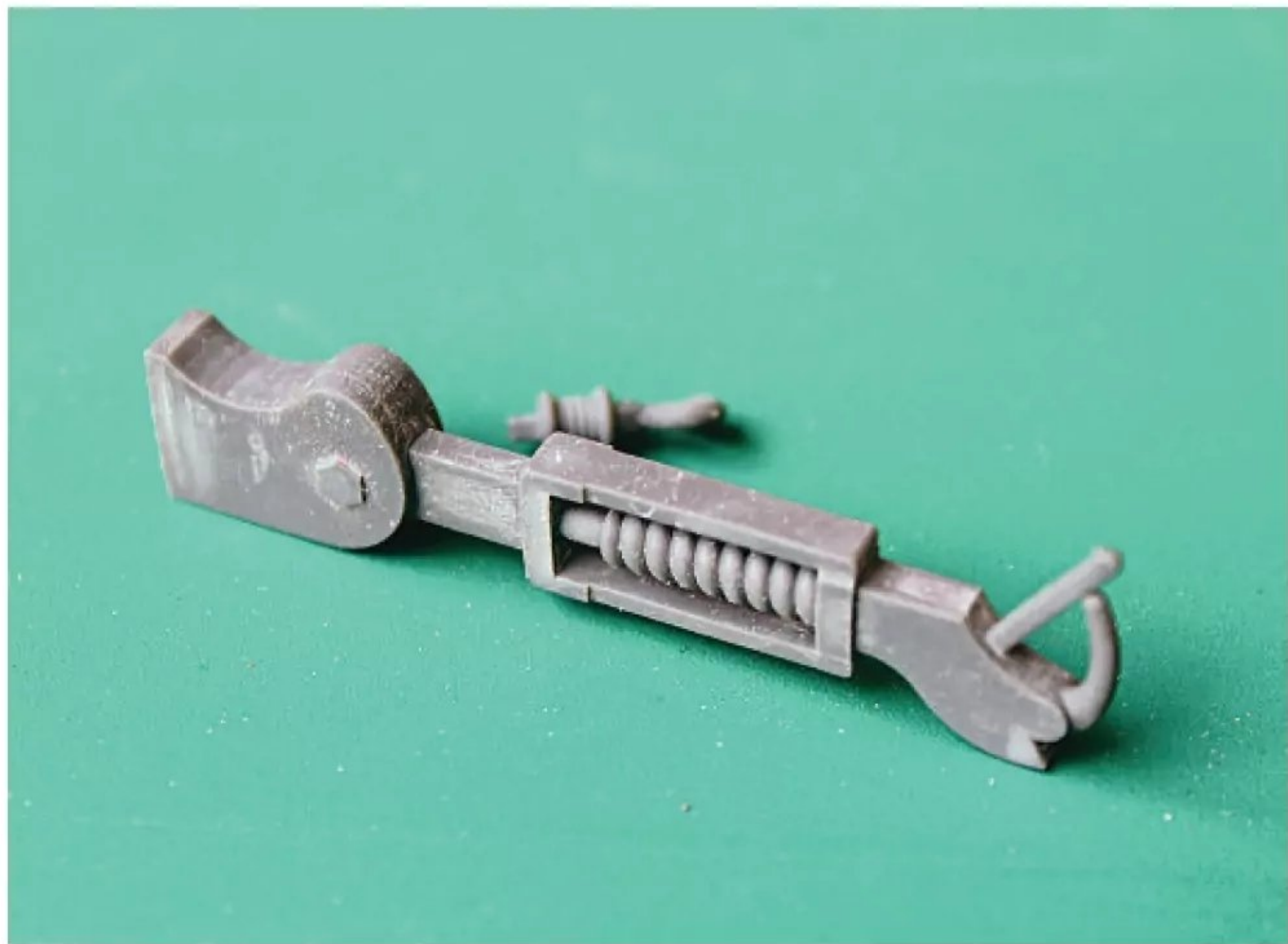


The brass stanchions are limited to the upper deck and are easily fitted thanks to the assistance of pre-cut holes in the deck. It's almost a shame to paint them!

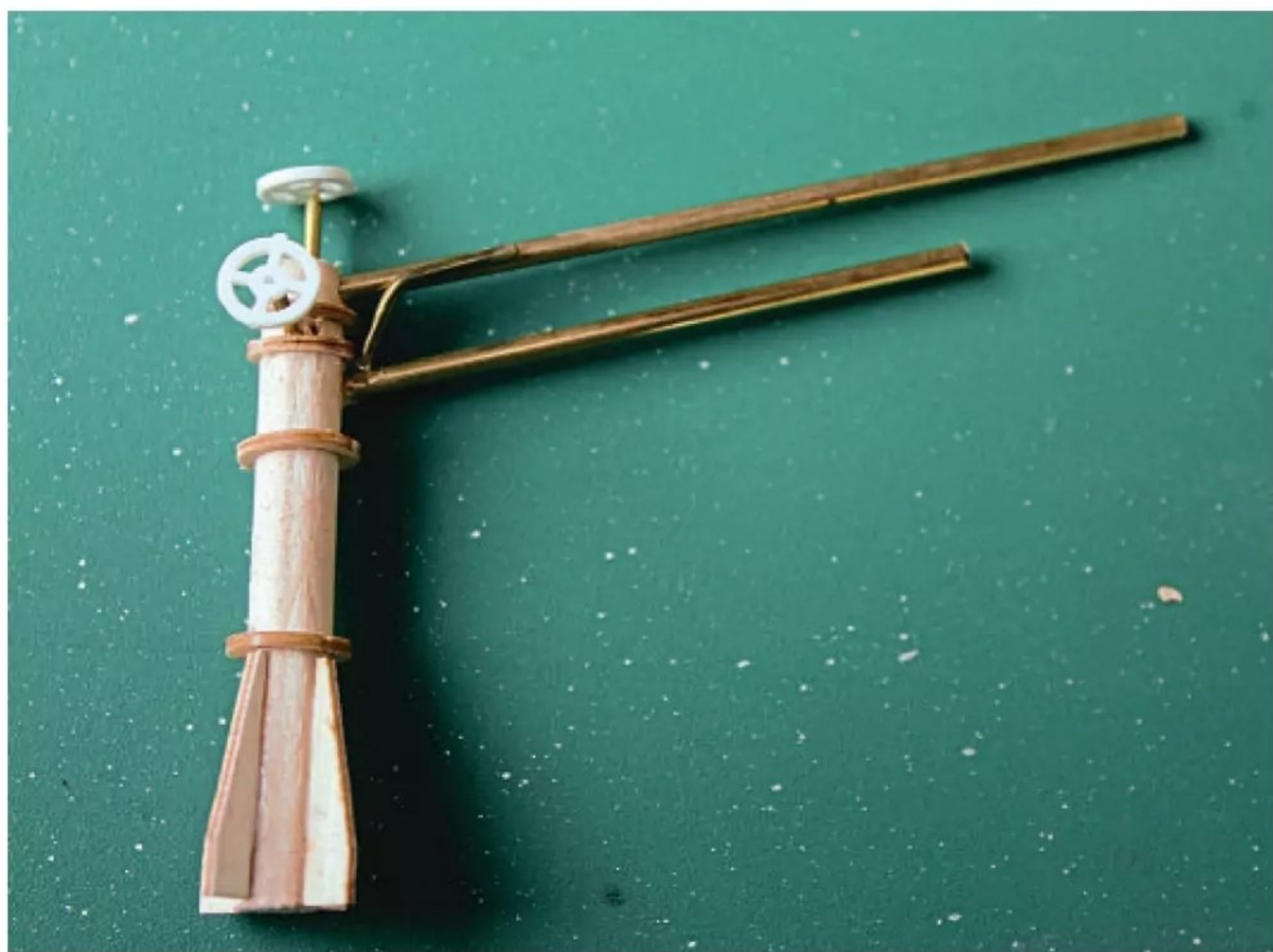
together seamlessly like a well-crafted jigsaw puzzle and requiring no special modifications. The superstructure constructs rapidly, but I made the decision to leave the upper deck off until painting had been completed. This approach was chosen due to its paint scheme being more intricate than that of the hull. I also decided to deviate from the instructions by delaying the fitting of the doors, as I determined it would be more prudent to avoid adding raised details given the existing masking issues along a straight line.

My superstructure was first primed (using a rattle can grey car primer from the Halfords range) to create a solid base. This preparation ensured that the subsequent white spray coating effectively concealed the wood grain, mimicking the actual vessel's metal plates. I masked the white areas off using Tamiya tape to achieve a fine straight line, while some

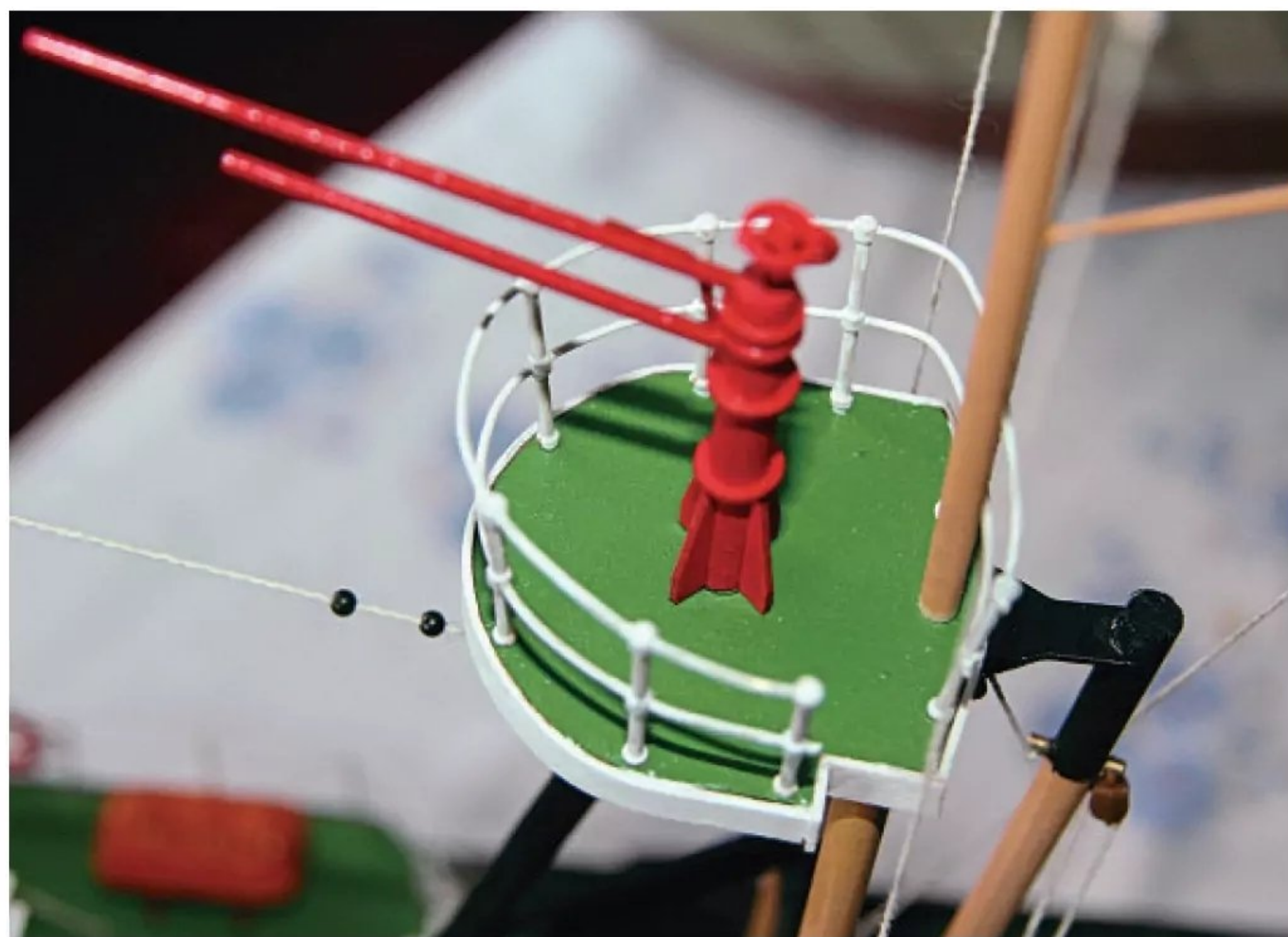
A hands-on ahead of relaunch kit review



The main feature of any tug is the iconic towing hook. Billing Boats provides a beautifully cast resin miniature that paints up into a very realistic looking fitting.



The firefighting monitor is another distinctive feature of this tug. On the model, the base of the monitor is made up from dowel and brass rod, but the inclusion of plastic wheels adds some finesse.



industrial type masking tape served to fill in the bigger gaps. The remaining area was sprayed with Halfords' red primer, which kind of looked right for the reddish-brown colour suggested by Billing Boats. Once I was happy with the look, I applied a lacquer to seal the paintwork in preparation for the next phase.

As well as the main access area created by the superstructure, the *Zeeland* model features two additional hatches. Although not the same size, these are both made up in the same way and painted using a similar method as that employed for the superstructure. Each hatch, however, differs in detail: the smaller 'tiller' access hatch features two circular manholes, while the larger one has a multitude of access panels on top, with some extra lumps and bumps to be added later. These fit snugly over the uprights and create an effective seal.

Painting the hull

It was at this stage I decided the hull needed painting before adding

anything prone to damage. So, firstly I masked up the inside of the bulwarks, as there are a few drainage and access holes that would spoil the deck if over sprayed with black paint. The entire hull was then sprayed with black primer, followed by the application of a semi-gloss black from Halfords – this being left to dry before attempting the application of any more masking tape. Referring to the drawings in the kit, I measured down from the rubbing strip just below the bulwark to mark the waterline. It took several attempts to get both sides looking the same, and without any dips that would mar a straight line. To represent the anti-fouling red under the hull, I then sprayed on a colour called Red Wine from Humbrol (Satin No. 73), and once I was sure this was completely dry, I carefully removed the masking tape to find virtually no bleed – hooray! So, once again, the entire hull was sealed with a lacquer coat ready for the trepidatious application of the names on the bulwarks!

Sticking to the script

The tug's name (*Zeeland*), owner name (Willem Muller), and home port (Terneuzen) are all recreated in laser-cut plywood, and to be honest I was rather dubious about how effectively, or even whether, this method of application would work. But I sprayed them all white first and left them to dry overnight. The next day, using a scalpel I carefully cut each letter from its backing, working on one name at a time. Thoughtfully, Billing Boats has etched the names onto the bulwark sides, thereby making the alignment of the letters so much easier. For this task, I used a pair of tweezers, and some superglue dabbed on to small areas of each individual letter, in order to permanently attach them. Despite my initial worries, this proved a breeze, resulting in the names looking very clean and sharp against the black sides.

Deck fittings

Deck fittings were tackled next. The towing posts were constructed using the templates provided in the

instruction manual, noting that dowels come in different sizes. They were measured and cut to size before using a rat-tail file to create the notches required for the bar to fit as specified in the drawings. The bollards were constructed by using laser-cut bases and the provided dowels to create four identical pieces using the templates. These are all easily made using the same basic system and look most realistic once painted up in their traditional colours. The anchor windless is one of Billing Boats' traditional style fittings with turned brass drums and once assembled looks just like a working miniature of the real thing. Following the pictorial instructions, I constructed the windless very quickly. This was then painted in the reddish-brown primer mentioned previously, before putting aside for the final bringing together of everything later in the build. The remaining large fittings on the deck to tackle were the towing

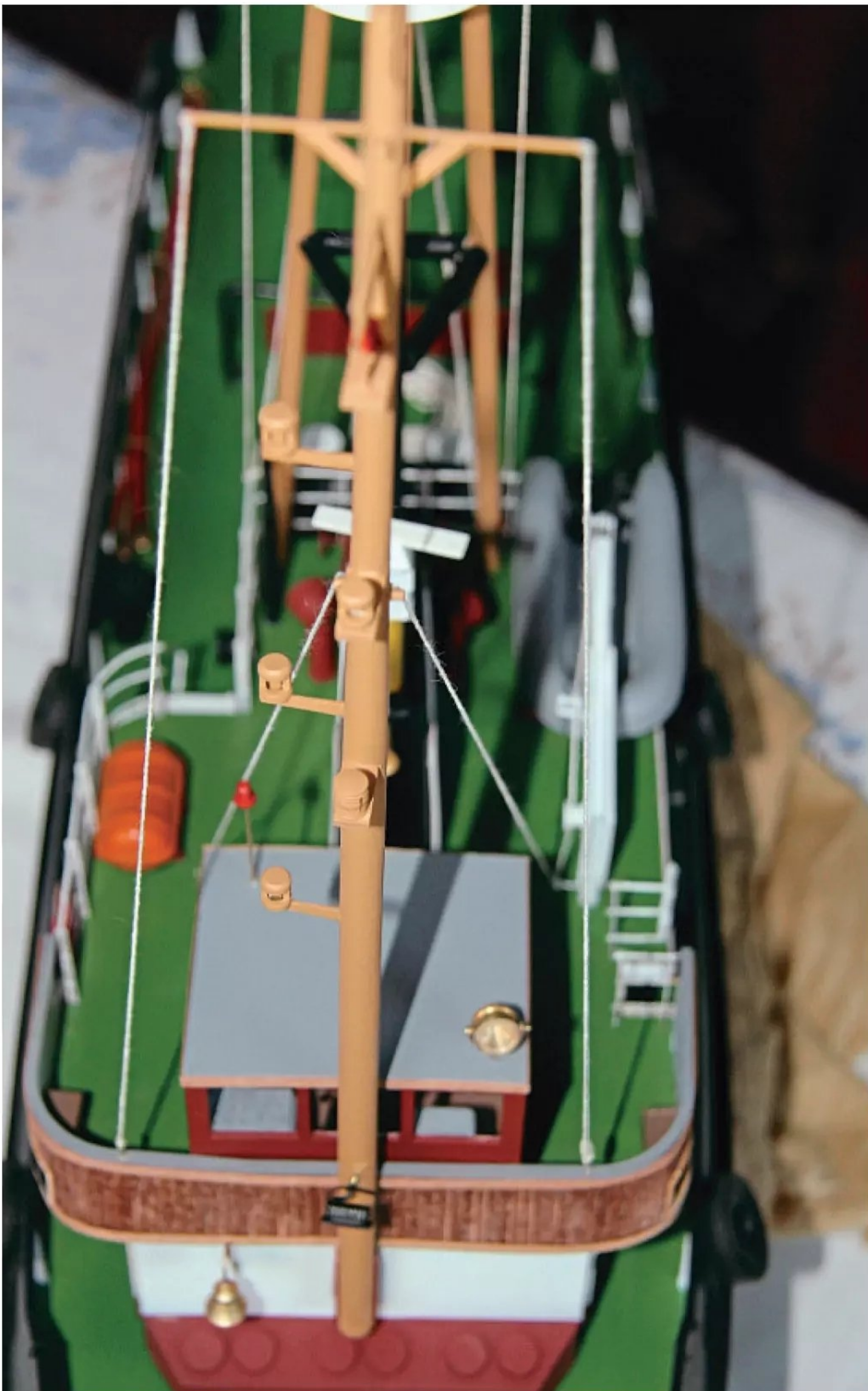
loops, which once again were built using templates, although this time from mandible aluminium rod, which made the job very amenable. Each foot has plywood toes and after a dab of superglue these were ready to paint.

On the upper deck, the large and very noticeable funnel takes pride of place, with its large letter 'M'. This is of vac-form construction, with a mix of turned brass, brass rod and laser cut plywood detail. The most complex area features the rung steps that perch on the rear slope; these are made from staples, which, after a bit of practice, I found fit well and stay attached. The radar scanner sits upon the funnel top and is a cast resin item; the structure on which it sits, which needs to be made up from brass rod and plywood, is a bit complicated, but a bit of careful work with a pair of tweezers soon saw it completed. You may notice in my photos that many of the fittings were not permanently attached to the model at

this point, the reason for this being the amount of painting each item required and the number of other items, such as masts, still to be attached to them.

The bridge

The bridge was constructed next, and, like its lower superstructure cousin, this proved a rapid build due to the laser-cut plywood. Worth noting is that the doors can be posed open, but I decided to model both of mine closed. The bridge interior features a ship's wheel, instrument panel and a cupboard; this area is an excellent canvas for further detailing but, since I was test building, I left things as per the kit's design. The bridge wings were something I suggested Billing Boats should consider modifying slightly, so that the direction of the grain better assists the modeller with moulding their curved shape. Mine split and, even in water, snapped a few times. Hopefully, therefore, in the full



The fore and main mast are real 'highlights' on the Zeeland, but they require some careful checking before committing to glue.



The internals fitted with an MFA Torpedo 500 motor, 20amp ESC, and Nick's 7.2v NiCad battery pack, a combination that proved to be more than adequate to propel the model.

production kits these will have been corrected. Once held in place, my wings were panelled with mahogany effect strip wood, as per the original vessel. Extra lighter coloured strip

wood is included in the kit and can be used to make your version look unique and break up the single wood type effect. I stuck with the 'mahogany' but used the lighter coloured wood for topping and tailing the darker wood, which I think will set my model apart from others. The navigation lights are simple box-like structures which fit inside the bridge wings; I added the 'light' and painted the inside black.

Railings, RIB and crane

The railings are a simple affair. The brass stanchions feature pre-drilled holes, while there are pre-cut square holes in the upper deck to match the base of the stanchion uprights. Brass rod is supplied; this will need to be pre-bent to shape, but I had no issues using this method. Once painted white, the railings are complete, ready for any crewman to stand against. Other items to be made include the RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) and its crane. Both can be constructed from the parts supplied in the kit and, although I think the RIB will benefit from some extra detailing to make it more realistic, its outboard motor is a nicely cast resin fitting. The crane, a mix of plywood, dowel and some turned brass fittings,

builds into a neat little replica, and the resin hook is a welcome detail.

Location, location, location

I had now reached the point where some items, like the towing uprights and windless, could be placed in their final positions. Once in situ, the aft towing upright had the towing hook and its rail fitted to the superstructure; the hook is another cast resin fitting and once painted black with silver highlights looks very eye-catching. After fitting the towing loops, the model was really starting to look like a tug. The main mast, which supports the firefighting appliance, perhaps looks a more daunting task than it actually is; here I suggest you do as I did and leave everything loose until you're a 100% happy the way things fit together and that you've got the overall look right. The firefighting top consists of two layers of plywood with pre-cut holes for the relevant mast parts. I pre-painted my mast legs; the forward leg being finished in black and the two aft supporting legs in a sandy yellow. Referring to the kit drawings, these were cut to length and pushed into the upper deck ready for the firefighting top to lock them in place.





While the kit builds into a very attractive display model, with a bit of extra effort she really comes into her own out on the water!

The forward leg was tacked into place and the funnel was slid into its position, so the leg touches the top of the funnel to avoid a floating leg. Before the glue was completely dry, the legs were continuously checked for correct angles until I was completely satisfied that they looked right.

Some of the final items to be made were the firefighting appliance, or monitor. The body of this monitor is made from wood dowel, detailed with plywood rings; a nice touch is the inclusion of injection moulded plastic wheels. The gun section consists of pieces of brass rod bent to shape and painted a bright red to finish. The final item to make is the foremast, which needs to be tapered to match the drawings. Once achieved, I followed the second sheet of drawings to identify the locations of the numerous navigation lights, yard arms and aerials. These were all made up from various pieces of brass or plywood, and once painted in the sandy yellow matched the main mast beautifully. The masts were rigged following the kit drawings and using the supplied cord. Some attachments are a bit vague, and I

guessed at couple of locations on the upper deck, but everything looks fine to my eyes. All remaining fittings were made and attached as per the instructions and drawings, creating a bright and stunning looking model of the Dutch tug.

Zeeland on the water

Recently, on a surprisingly sunny March day, I took the model out for a test float and her maiden voyage at my local lake in Wicksteed Park. She only needed around 2kg of extra ballast to bring her to her waterline; this achieved using one of my 7.2V NiMH battery packs and a piece of conveniently shaped lead. The motor was more enough to propel her through the water at a decent pace. I now need to get something for her to tow, as I'm sure she has the extra capacity for this.

I cannot finish this article without expressing my thanks to Jens of Billing Boats for allowing me the honour of test building this newly revamped, and highly recommended kit. I thoroughly enjoyed the build and now look forward to sailing *Zeeland*, a very welcome addition to my civilian fleet, on a regular basis. ●



A homage to *Hobo*

John Corah revisits the heady days of his youth with this self-designed scratch build...

For several years now I've been building radio-controlled model boats from kits with comprehensive plans and instructions and have enjoyed sailing them at Canonteign Falls Lake, home of the Exeter and District Model Boat Club. This, however, is the story of my first venture into scratch building, inspired not just by any old boat but one with a fascinating history that I once owned!

Those were the days!

During the mid 1960s, when I was an art student at the Plymouth School of Art and Architecture, I formed a friendship with fellow student Mike Lasbury. Mike and I shared interest, in that we both ran and fettled classic motor cars. Before long, however, we also began discussing the appeal of classic boats and, as a result, started to search for one. When *Hobo* cropped up, we were both very excited. She was at the time being lived on by her owner, George Hanson, and was moored in an area known as 'The Bag', up the creek from Salcombe, towards Kingsbridge, on the south coast of Devon. The posh second homeowners in Salcombe, the DFLs (Down from London), like to think they are on an estuary – sorry, there's no river at Salcombe, so 'up the creek' it is! Unfortunately for George, his age and failing health meant it was time for him to go ashore, so *Hobo* was up for sale.

Hobo started life in 1931 as a ship's lifeboat on the SS *Corfu*, a banana carrier that plied the Atlantic until the late 1930s when George acquired her and converted her into a motorboat with cabins and accommodation. He then lived aboard by Hammersmith Bridge on the Thames before sailing her at some time after World War II to Salcombe, so it must have been a considerable wrench to part with her. He only agreed to sell her to us on

the strict proviso that we would never replace the broken pane of glass in the wheelhouse window – a war wound, he explained, from Dunkirk. Yes, she went to Dunkirk! Naturally, when Mike and I rebuilt the wheelhouse at a boatyard in Noss Mayo a year or two later, we kept our promise, and *Hobo* kept that badge of honour windowpane.

With a deal struck, we had become the proud new owners of a converted

ship's lifeboat, constructed of double diagonal mahogany on oak and Lloyds' registered at ten tons. From memory, she measured 28ft long, with an 8ft beam, 2ft 6in draught and 2ft freeboard – a four berth, with a galley, a marine toilet, a chart table and a

"Yes, she went to Dunkirk!"



Hobo, out of the water, and as she looked when John and Mike first bought her. Although impossible to tell from this old black and white photo, at that point, before being repainted by the boys, she was 'battleship grey'.



Hobo following a repaint and a new wheelhouse.



A rear shot, showing the wheelhouse and John and Mike's method of securing Hobo when left on a mooring; closing off the view from the wheelhouse served as a simple but effective theft deterrent, as a thief would not be able to get at the controls or see where they were going.

pot belly coal fire! Her one relatively modern feature was a fairly new three-cylinder Lister diesel engine.

We had by then secured a mooring on the River Teign, so the next task was to motor her around the coast from Salcombe to Teignmouth. What could possibly go wrong! Well, we very quickly learnt what a good sea boat she was, as we got caught up in a sudden force eight off Start Point. Force four to six had been predicted but we weren't too worried as we had an experienced boater with us – until, that is, we came frighteningly close to things ending very badly! It was quite an experience, and the lesson learnt was to stay in harbour

“We came frighteningly close to things ending very badly!”

if there was any white water about.

There then followed several years of adventures aboard *Hobo*, including a trip to the Isle of Wight, where we visited the paddle steamer *Ryde*. *Ryde* is now, sadly, a beyond redemption wreck, but back then she was moored upriver from Cowes and being used as a night club. After an enjoyable few days, which included a visit to Christchurch, we thought it would



When the boys came alongside a posh cruiser in Cowes (moored on trots) the owner was not amused by those tyres! So, to keep him happy they went off to a chandler and bought some proper fenders. After that they even got invited aboard to drink his booze!



A very old picture (apologies for quality) showing how the propeller arrangement was achieved on what was originally an engineless ship's lifeboat.

A very personal project



July 1969 was the occasion of the Western Fleet being inspected by Queen Elizabeth, and the Royal yacht was moored in Torbay along with 40 Royal Navy vessels. Hobo was allowed to sail around them and come alongside HMS Eagle, where John's passengers (a family friend, his parents and Squibbie the dog) were allowed to disembark and have a look around the ship.



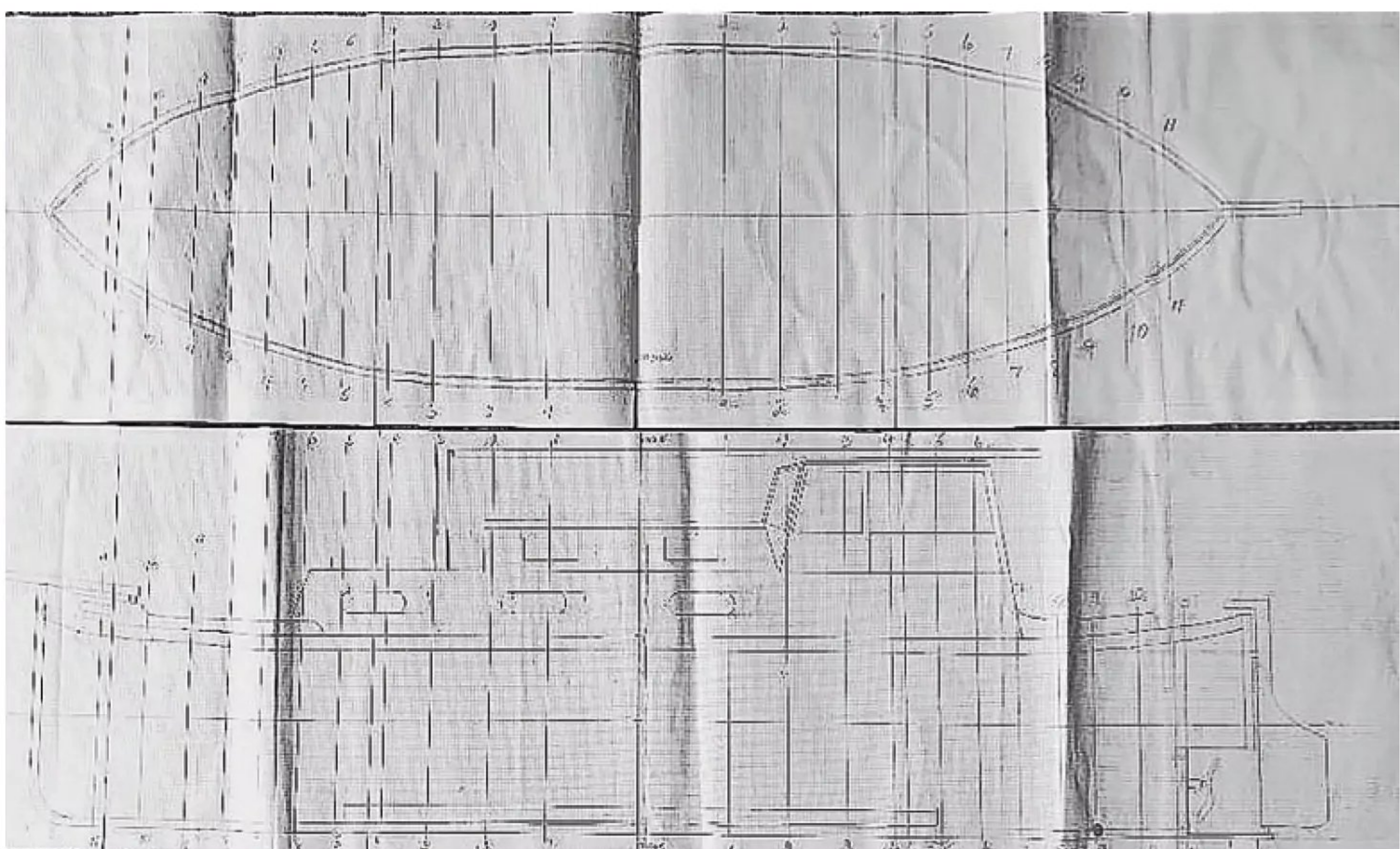
John can't remember where this shot was snapped, but that's him in my prime! There is another boat moored behind Hobo which gives the impression she was a ketch – but no, she only had one mast and was a sloop.



The view of HMS Eagle while looking over the top of Hobo's wheelhouse.



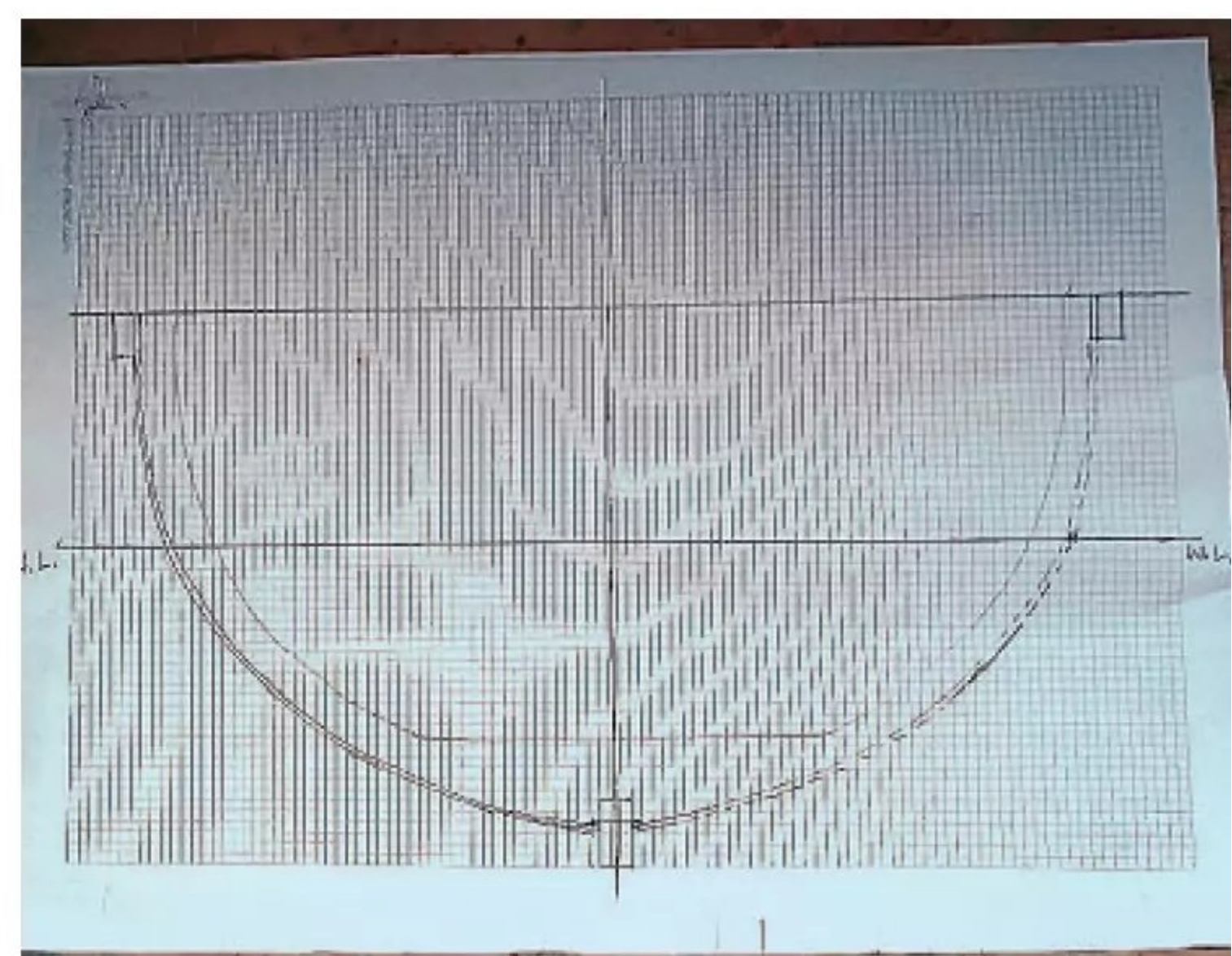
John, suited, booted and ready to go ashore and party in the nightclubs of Torbay.



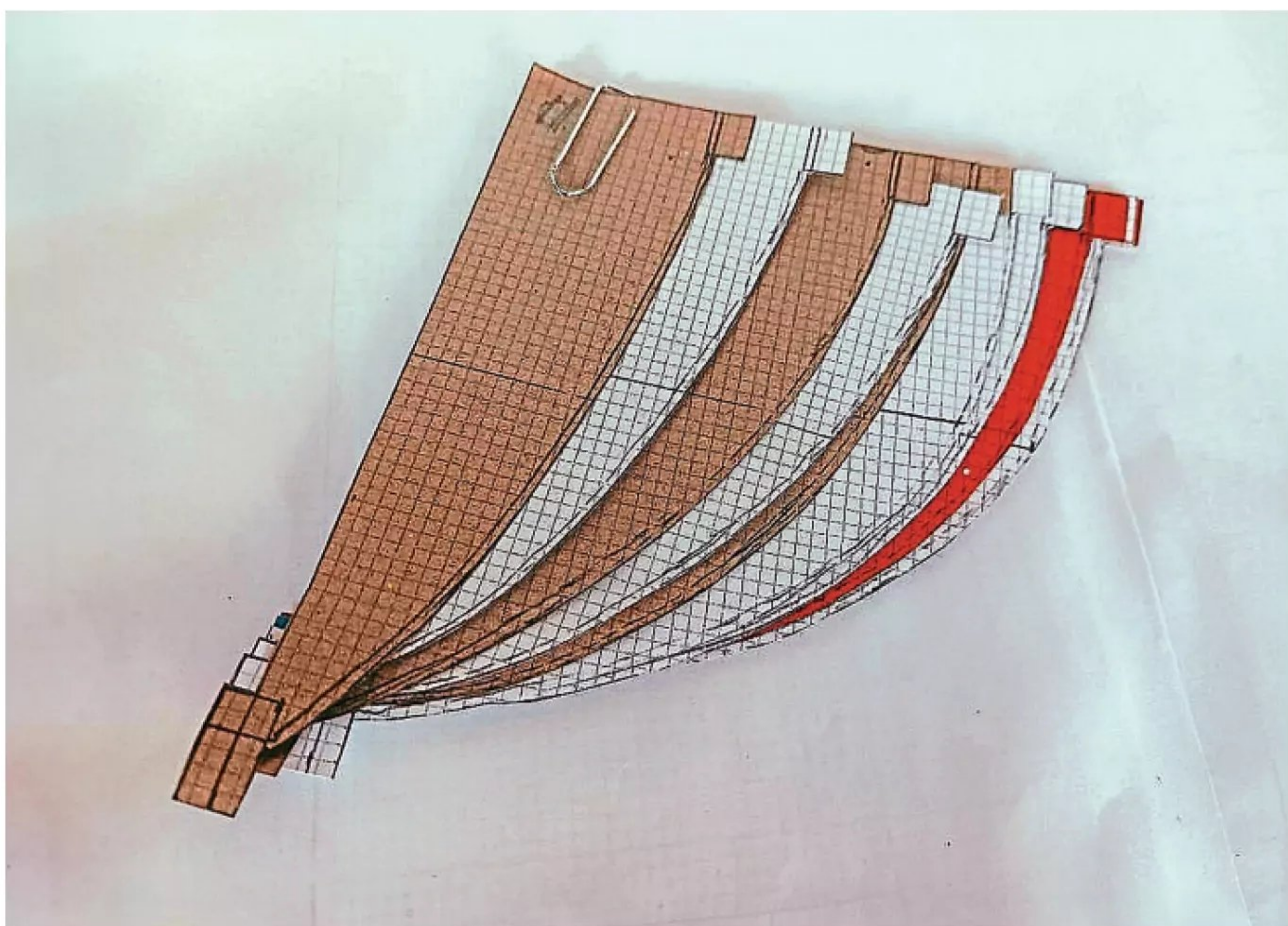
John drew each frame elevation from midships to stem, but only had to do half of them as Hobo is a double-end.



John's father (right) assuming the role of captain.



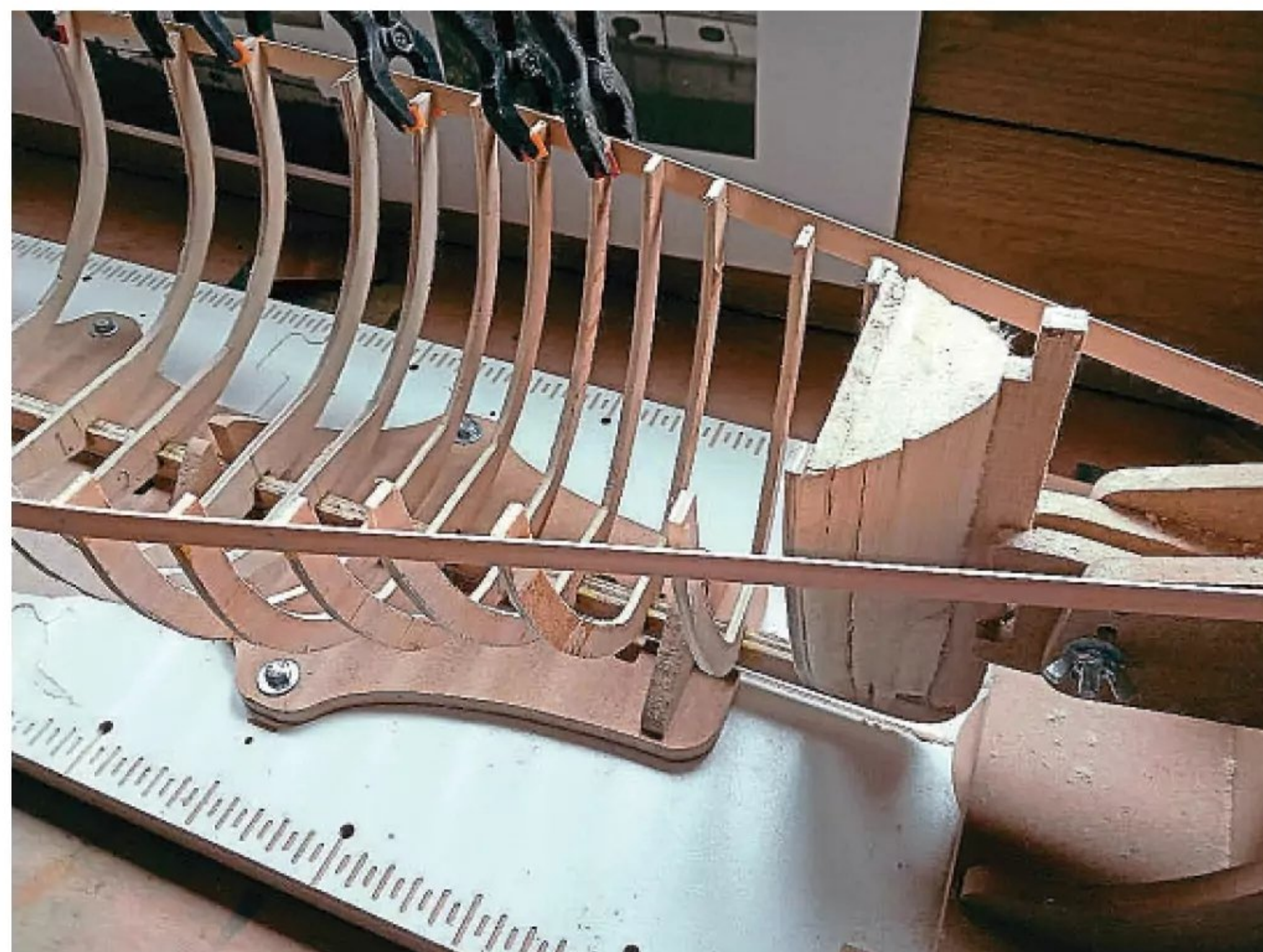
Working from these sketches, and on the principal that if things looked right, they'd probably be alright, John drew each frame elevation from midships to stem. He only needed to do half of them as Hobo was a double ender.



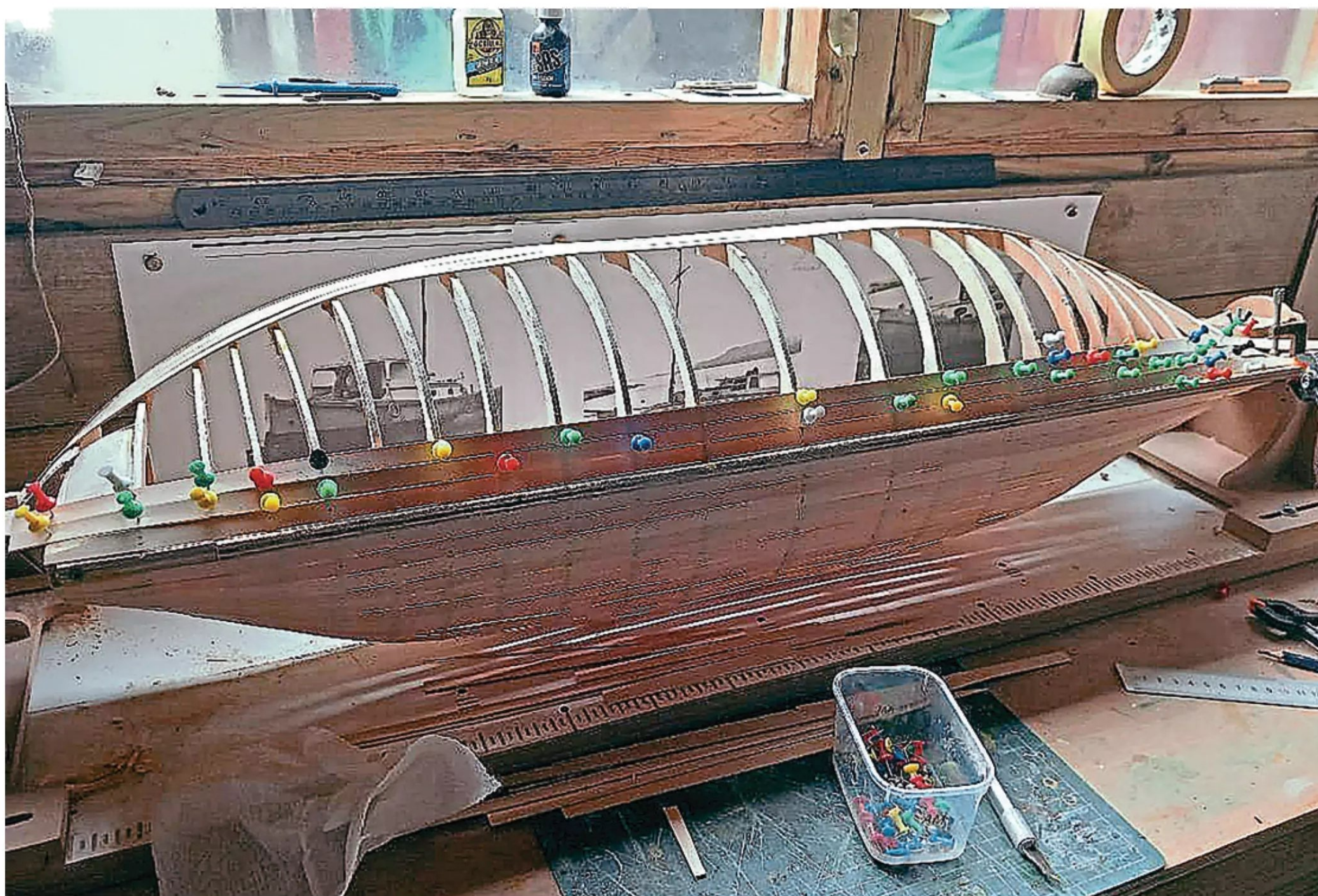
John then copied the frame drawings onto card, cut them out and used each one as the pattern.



The building dock John purchased proved invaluable when constructing the keel. With everything held firmly in place, all of the frames cut out using his Dremel jigsaw could be glued into position.



The stem and stern were shaped using thick sections of balsa. The stern took a little thought as John had to accommodate the prop. The only picture of Hobo out of the water John has is so old that any detail is impossible to see.



The hull seen being planked with Obechi strip wood from Cornwall Model Boats.

be wise to wait until the wind had died down (no more white water!) before heading home. As a result, we ended up leaving the island at night and nearly got run down by an enormous tanker in the Solent; terrifyingly, the tanker got so close we could see the prop! Then it was back around the Portland Race,

where we'd got thrown about on the upward journey as we were too close in; in this tricky tidal passage, we should have been either several miles out or less than 100 yards off. There were three of us on that trip and it took all our collective strength to retrieve the flooded dinghy we had in tow! The other consideration,

after spending several hours crossing Lyme Bay, was judging the tide at Teignmouth. At the river mouth it can run at anything up to eight knots, and that was about the maximum speed of *Hobo*, so progress could be nil if we were against the tide. All these exploits had to be managed with very limited navigational equipment.



After spending many hours on the planking (including bending it shape and closing all the gaps), John then applied fibreglass matting and resin. He'd never attempted this before, but he got there!



After the resin and matting had been covered with Isopon fibreglass filler, much sanding and filling ensued until John was happy with the final shape.

“I wasn’t working to proper plans, I was basically making it up as I went along, but, fortunately, the method I adopted worked for me!”

We had no radio, no ship to shore communication, etc – just a compass on davits in the wheelhouse, Reeds Nautical Almanac and a few charts. Mobile phones were still a thing of the future, so we were very much on our own out there.

Eventually, however, when our respective careers took Mike and I

in different directions, *Hobo* had to be sold. Unfortunately, under new ownership she came down on a stake and sank. Although recovered, after having spent the winter out of the water, this was to happen again shortly after she was put back out to sea, and this time round the damage sustained proved terminal.

Embarking on a new adventure

Half a century later, after the idea of building a 1:10 scale model of *Hobo* had been fermenting in my mind for several months, I decided to go for it. Now finished, I am extremely pleased with the result, so let me tell you a little bit about the build...

Up until this point, my previous

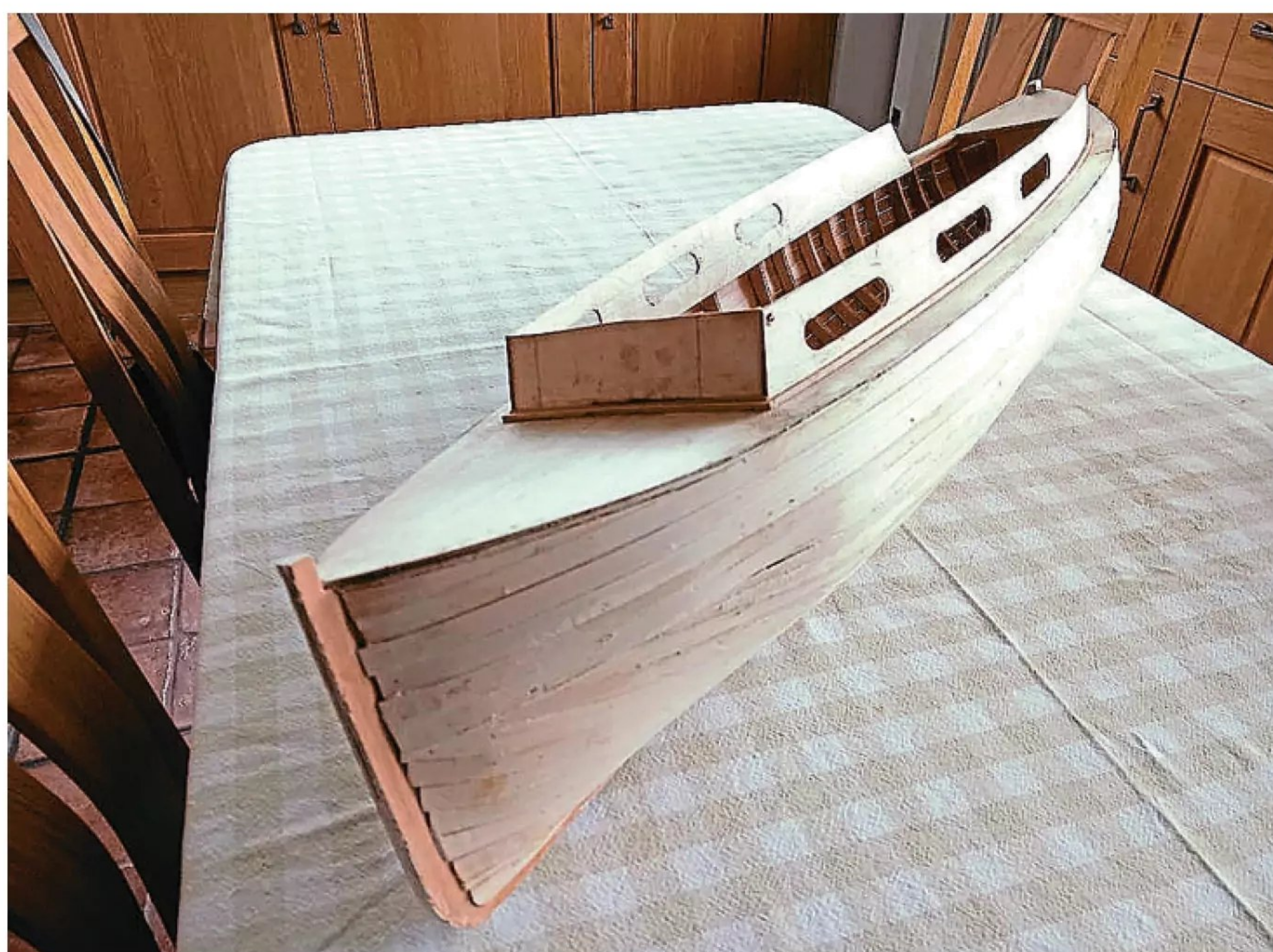
experience of building radio-controlled model boats had involved kits featuring pre-formed hulls. Here I was looking at a whole new challenge.

The hull

Before getting started, I treated myself to a model boat building slip, which, I have to say, proved invaluable. Then, using external 6mm ply I formed the keel on this slip.

The next task was to make the frames. From my rough drawing I took measurements and drew each frame onto graph paper. These were then transferred to card and individually cut out to serve as templates. I only needed to create templates for one side, as the other side would be identical, and for half the length, as being a double-ender, I could use the templates twice, from midships to the bow and from midships to the stern. These templates were then pencilled around on 4mm ply so actual frames could be cut out on my jigsaw. I wasn’t working to proper plans, I was basically making it up as I went along, but, fortunately, the method I adopted worked for me!

Once all the frames had been glued into place, I formed the bow and stern from balsa block. Originally, when the boat had been a ship’s lifeboat, there had been no engine, so stem and stern would have been identical. Following conversion to a motorboat, however, provision had to be made for the propeller. As the only photograph I have of *Hobo* out of the water is an old black and white one that shows very little of how this was achieved, I found myself once again winging it. Finally, though, after a couple of attempts at getting the shape how I thought it should look, I was ready to start planking.



Building the superstructure, using 2mm and 4mm ply sheet, underway.



Hobo starting to take shape; John did, however, initially get the position of the window apertures in the cabin wrong, as you can see if you look closely here. Thought also had to be given on how to construct the cabin roof, which needed to be removable to provide access to all the equipment that would make John's model a sailable proposition!



A plastic prop (later replaced by a brass one served as a guide for how everything could be brought together. During this build John had enlargements of his old black and white photos pinned around his workbench, as with no instruction these were his only reference points!

The original boat was double diagonal but being a complete novice I did jib at this method. It was more important to me to get the shape right and have a model that floated and was watertight, so I opted for straightforward planking.

This was followed by a layer of fibreglass matting coated in resin and then covered in glass fibre paste. After sanding this down, I was ready to start painting, using Halfords rattle cans. Firstly, everything got a coat of grey primer. The gloss finish I didn't apply

until after I had built the superstructure (more on this below). And, of course, finally everything was finished with a couple of coats of rattle can varnish.

Interior installation and superstructure

The cabin and wheelhouse were constructed from 2mm and 4mm ply parts, cut out on my small table-mounted Dremel fret saw. My very limited drawing was nothing more than a rough guide, so memory and old photos played a large part in how it was all going to shape up.

I had by now decided that detailing the inside of the cabin wasn't going to happen as I needed this space for the motor, battery and all the electrics required to make *Hobo* an R/C model. But I still had to put my mind to this side of things.

I decided on a simple brushed motor and battery pack and a servo to operate the tiller; this I could conveniently fit into the engine compartment at the back of the wheelhouse. Now, here, in hindsight, I could have done things differently, as my means of connecting the servo to the tiller is by brass rod from the engine box and over the stern of the boat. It works well and looks neat, but had I thought of how to do this earlier on then maybe it could all have been concealed. Too late now, maybe next time! Such are the vagrancies of making it up as you go along and not really knowing beforehand how to do things properly like seasoned modellers would.

Naturally, when making the cabin and wheelhouse, consideration had to be given to keeping their tops removable to afford access to what lies beneath. The wheelhouse roof is kept in place with magnets, while fortunately the cabin roof sits in place without moving.

The prop

A 40mm brass prop was chosen and a 300mm prop shaft brought the end of it conveniently into the cabin area, attaching it, via a flexible coupling, to the brushed motor.

Ballasting

To get the waterline marked on the hull I used an engineers' scribing tool



The model was painted using Halfords rattle cans. The waterline (as John recalls, 2ft 6 inches draft on the real vessel) was achieved by using an engineer's scribing block.

A very personal project



John hand-painted all the cabins and deck. The curved roof shape was achieved by steaming 2mm ply strips over a kettle to bend them to shape and then securing them with masking tape until dry – as technique shared with John by one of his always helpful fellow Exeter and District Model Boat Club members.



An in the bath flotation test for Hobo. John used lead shot in little plastic containers for ballast, and it took ten of these, each containing 200 grams of lead shot, to get her down to her waterline. By this time John had fitted a brushed motor and battery pack and was very pleased with the result. He could now complete fitting her out, rigging her, and getting her on the boating lake.





The completed model. The white davits across the stern are where the dinghy would have been carried.



A full view of the mast and rigging. The boom can be easily lifted out of the way so that John can remove the cabin roof. You can see the divide where the roof joins the part that is fixed. The front section had to remain in place, as this supports the mast.

and chinagraph pencil at three inches up from the keel, which represents a scale of 1:10. Then, using fine line tape, I masked off and painted the bottom section first, then the blue hull sides, finally finishing off with a white line between the two. This is where my decades spent as a self-employed signwriter came in handy.

With the paint dry, it was time put her in the bath and see, firstly, if she floated with no leaks, and, secondly, how much ballast was going to be needed to get her level and down to her waterline. With previous builds, I have successfully used lead shot in plastic containers for ballast, so I did the same for *Hobo*. Small containers each filled with 200 grams were dotted about in the bottom of the hull – ten in all, so she's quite a heavy boat. The original boat had two tons of pig iron in the bilges!

Rigging

The penultimate task was rigging her with mast, bowsprit and boom – all largely cosmetic as she was primarily a motorboat. We did have sails and occasionally used them, but only in conjunction with the engine to help us on our way.

Signs of life

The last little touches included a toolbox and other onboard essentials – booze and cigarettes. In regards the latter, a miniature pack of Woodbines was all I could find; I would have preferred Embassy, as these were the smokes of choice back in the 60s, simply because they came with coupons you could redeem for gifts

A very personal project



John's method for steering the model: a servo in the engine box which is coupled to the rudder with brass rod. In hindsight, he feels this could have been hidden by running the connection from servo to rudder through the hull.



Cabin and wheelhouse exposed. Note the pump (the grey thing on the portside of the wheelhouse), which John and Mike had to rely on more than one occasion. First, however, it had to be primed, which meant adding more water to the boat before they could get any out!



The front inner workings exposed, showing some of the ballast.



The engine cover removed, showing the servo for the steering and John's method of coupling it up to the rudder.



A look into the wheelhouse, represented as John remembers it from all those years ago. Through the door were three steps down into the cabin, with the galley on the right and marine toilet on the left. Further on was the chart table, coal fire (yes, really!) and two berths either side.



A view showing the cabin and wheelhouse exposed. The cabin roof is shown removed to give a better idea of its complicated structure.



Courtesy of Mike Pike is this photo of *Hobo* set against the very impressive miniature harbour built by members of the Exeter & District Model Boat Club.



Launch day, March 23, 2025, on the Lake at Canonteign Falls, which was also the first sailing day of the 2025 season for the Exeter & District Model Boat Club. Image courtesy of Mike Pike, the Club's Chairman.

– so the more packs you purchased, the more gifts you could get!

With a little help from my friends....

I now have a model I'm truly proud of and which has brought back a lot of great memories from the late 60s and early 70s. I can't take all the credit, though. A lot of problem-solving solutions (such as how to get the domed cabin roof the correct shape – steam the plywood, of course!) came from my fellow Exeter and District Model Boat Club members, so thanks to them. I'm also very grateful to Cornwall Model Boats and Model Boat Bits, who were able to offer some great advice on the bits and pieces I needed. Then, of course, there's eBay and Amazon; how did we ever manage without them? ●



Invicta

Ray Wood provides an easy to follow, picture-led, guide to building your very own Thames Waterman's Launch from this month's free plan

The popularity of building models of tugs is huge – well, it is at my club in North Kent, situated a mile from Greenhithe on the River Thames. The Chantry Model Boat Club has a very active group of guys who build and run tugs, sometimes with barges or ships in tow. Some of our members worked on the river back in the day, so being able to tap into their knowledge of, and former hands-on experience with, these vessels is invaluable.

Surprisingly, though, as a modelling subject, the humble work launch, which played a key role in the operation of tugs, ferrying crews and lightermen out to their deep-water moorings, seems to have been largely overlooked. So, when recently considering my next project, and looking for something that would be relatively simple to tackle, I decided a Thames waterman's launch would tick more than box!

Consequently, I dug out a freelance drawing of one of these launches I'd drafted back in 1993, following one of my many visits to the river in the days when there seemed to be much more shipping traffic going on than there is today.

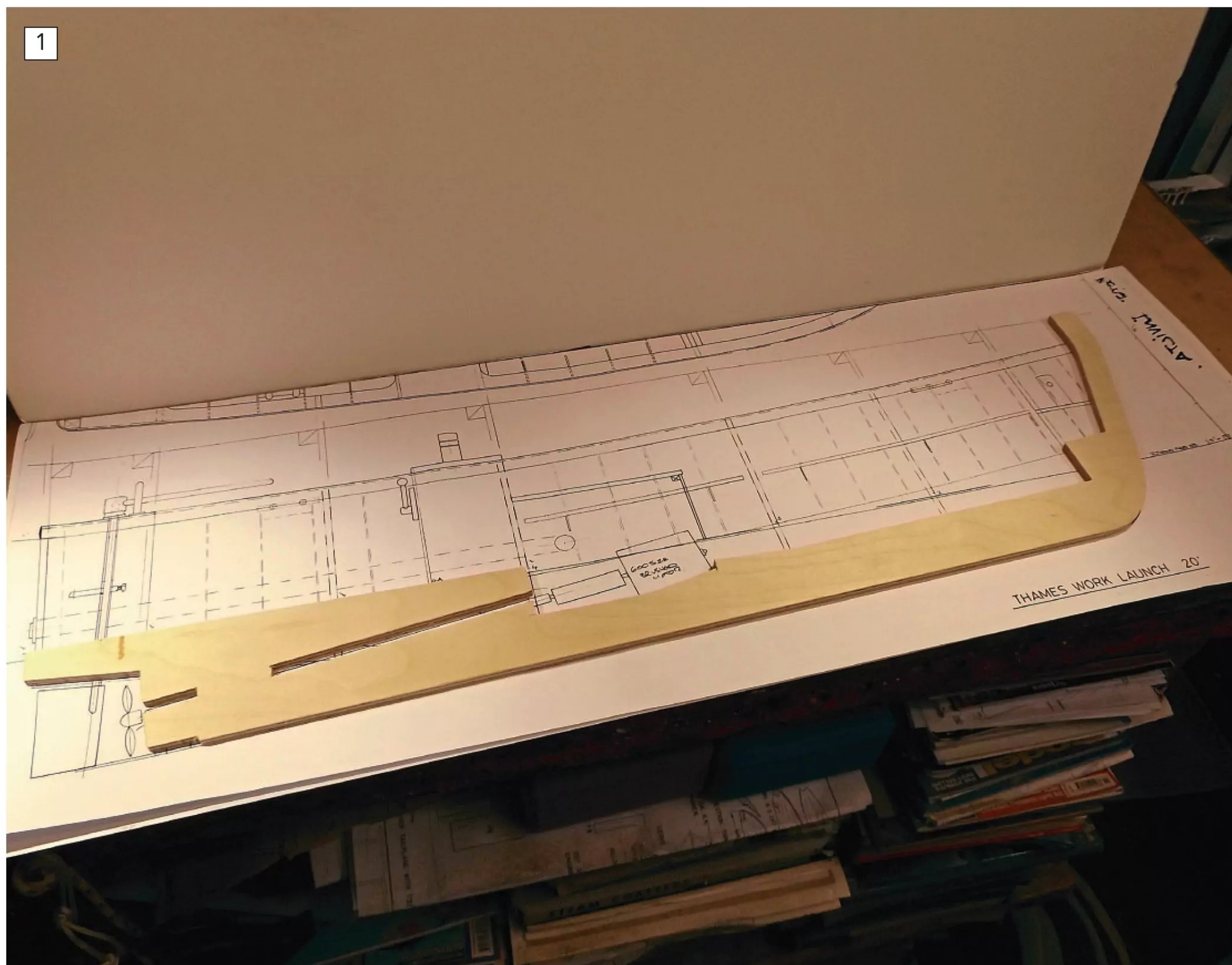
The plans I drew up from this drawing are for a model of 29 inches long by 9½ inches beam. This can mainly be constructed from plywood but should be finished to represent the steel construction of the original launches, which had to withstand the rough and tumble of life on the river in all weathers. The scale is 1½ inches to the foot.

I found the size of this model suited a slightly smaller Action Man I happen to have in my collection (built up from charity shop finds over the years: in my opinion, an open boat always needs a crew to complete the bigger picture.

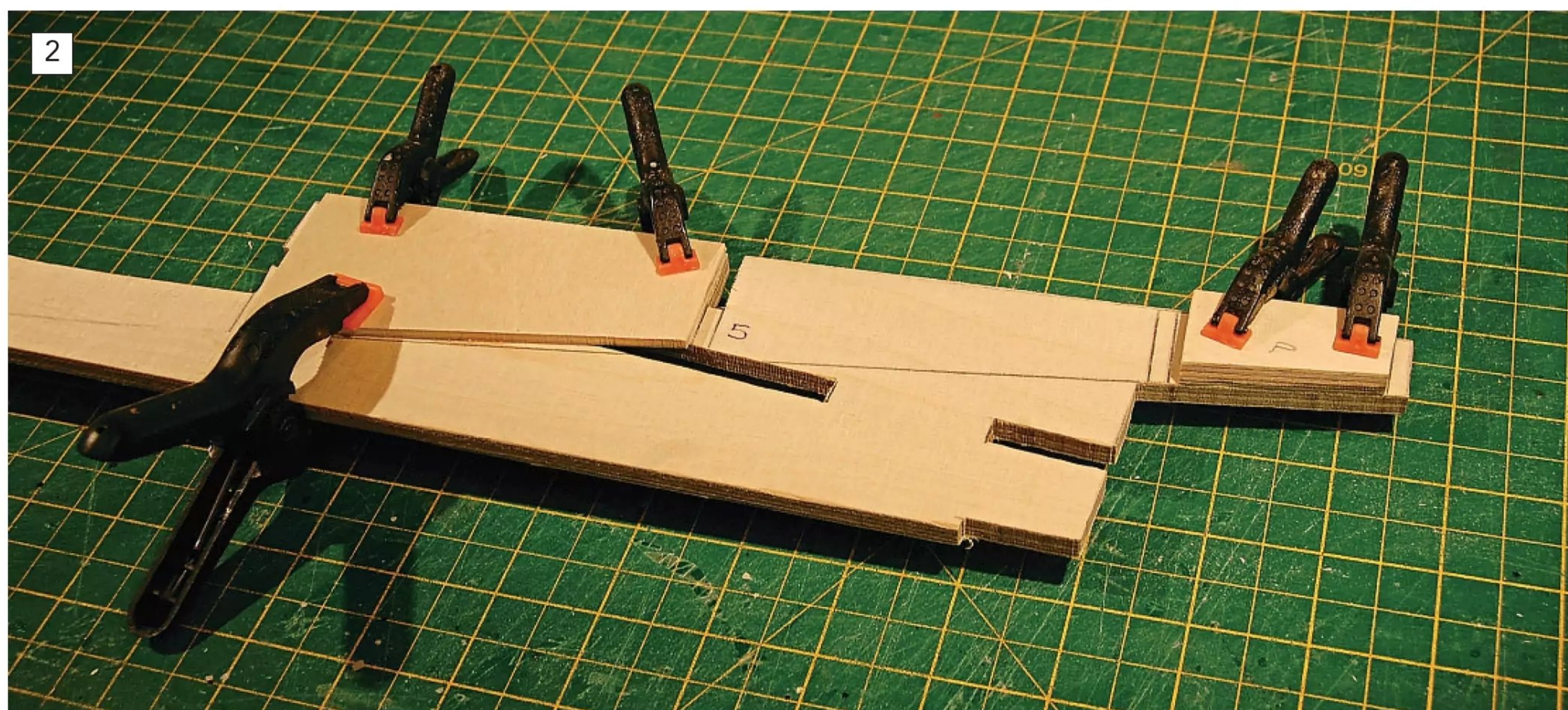
“This can mainly be constructed from plywood, but should be finished to represent the steel construction of the original launches, which had to withstand the rough and tumble of life on the river in all weathers”

For ease of construction, the hull was built inverted on base board, as is my usual *modus operandi*.

In the following picture-led guide, the captions to the photos provide brief descriptions that cover the basics, while the photos themselves serve as visual points of reference. The level of detail you decide to incorporate, however, remains, as always, a personal choice. ●



The $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch plywood keel needs to be traced and cut to shape, with a part of the stern tube slot remaining in situ until the doublers have been glued in place. Here's mine, laid upon my draft drawing from 1993.



The $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch ply stern tube doublers are glued in place, leaving room for a standard 6mm tube and 4mm shaft to be installed when the glue has set and the tab is cut out. The rudder doubler is $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch ply. My rudder is bespoke, but a commercial unit could easily be cut to size.



The bulkheads are extended to a common datum, as shown on the drawing, with crossbeams glued across to allow the hull to be built straight and true. The obeche strips at the chines and gunwhales are $2 \times \frac{1}{8}$ -inch $\times \frac{1}{4}$ -inch laminated, which makes bending much easier. These must be glued to the breast hooks B1 & 2, as shown on the plan.



My bottom skins are $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch ply, but you use $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch if you prefer. I recommend cutting card templates for all the shapes before cutting your plywood, as it's quite expensive these days. Pins and clamps need to be used to hold the skin in position until your woodworking glue (I used Gorilla) has set. The pin holes will be filled at a later stage with a lightweight filler.



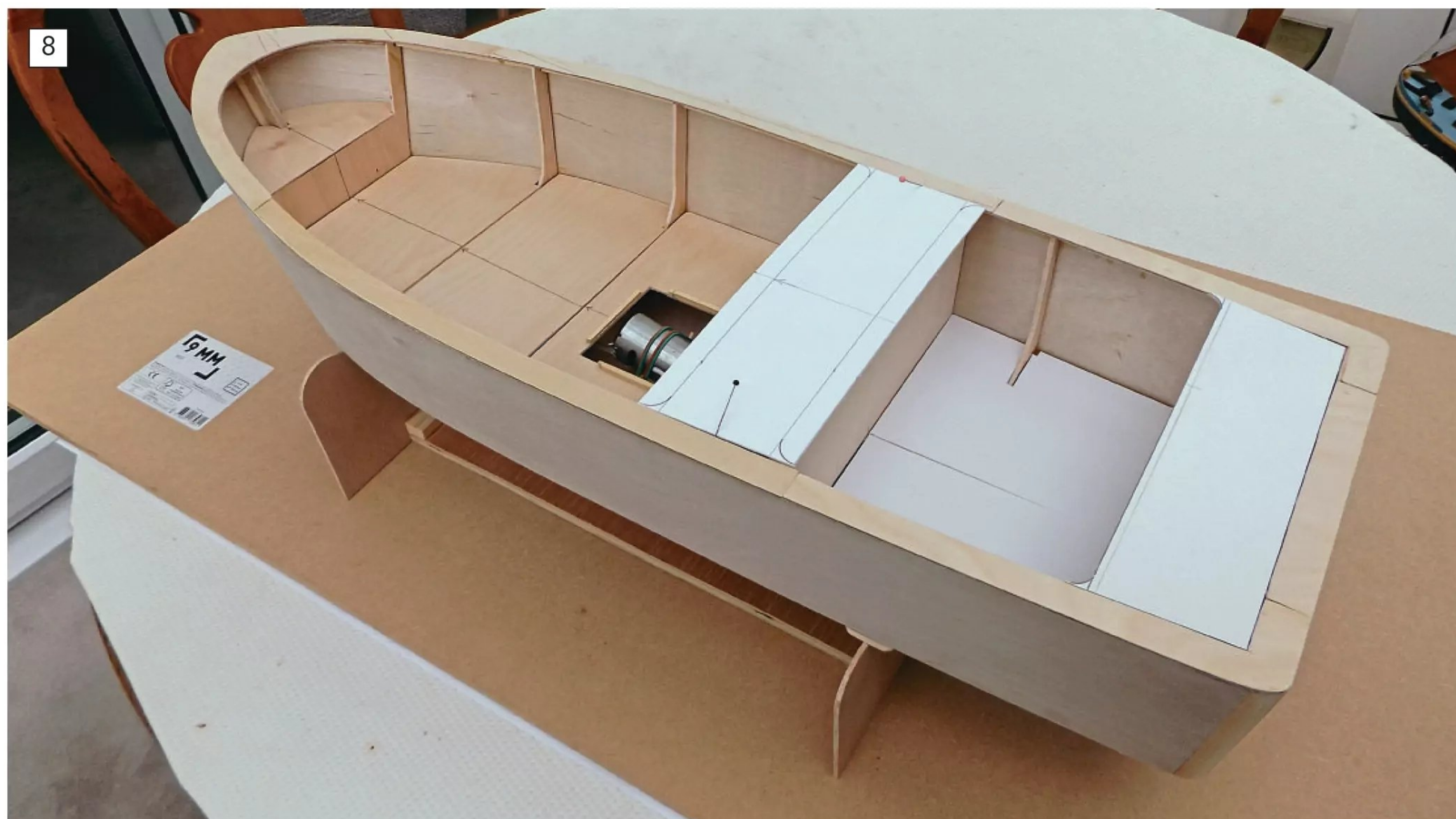
I used $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch ply for the side skins, which I would recommend as it's easier to bend at the bow. The bow blocks can be laminated and then carved and sanded to shape from $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch balsa or Styrofoam which will need sealing before painting. The transom has $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch x $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch balsa posts at the corners to simulate round corners; these would be steel tubing on a full-size welded steel launch.



It makes life a lot easier if a substantial stand is made to sit the hull on while constructing the decks and cockpit flooring. Here my hull sees daylight in the garden for the first time! The extra bulkhead to form the radio and battery compartment has yet to be fitted; this shape is best established with a card template.



The $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch ply floor panels rest on the internal chine rails. A point of access for a brushed 600 size motor, which you will find is ample to push Invicta along at a good speed, is required. The opening can be edged with $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch strip balsa or obeche. The motor rests on a balsa cradle, which you will need to secure with rubber bands over dowel pegs.



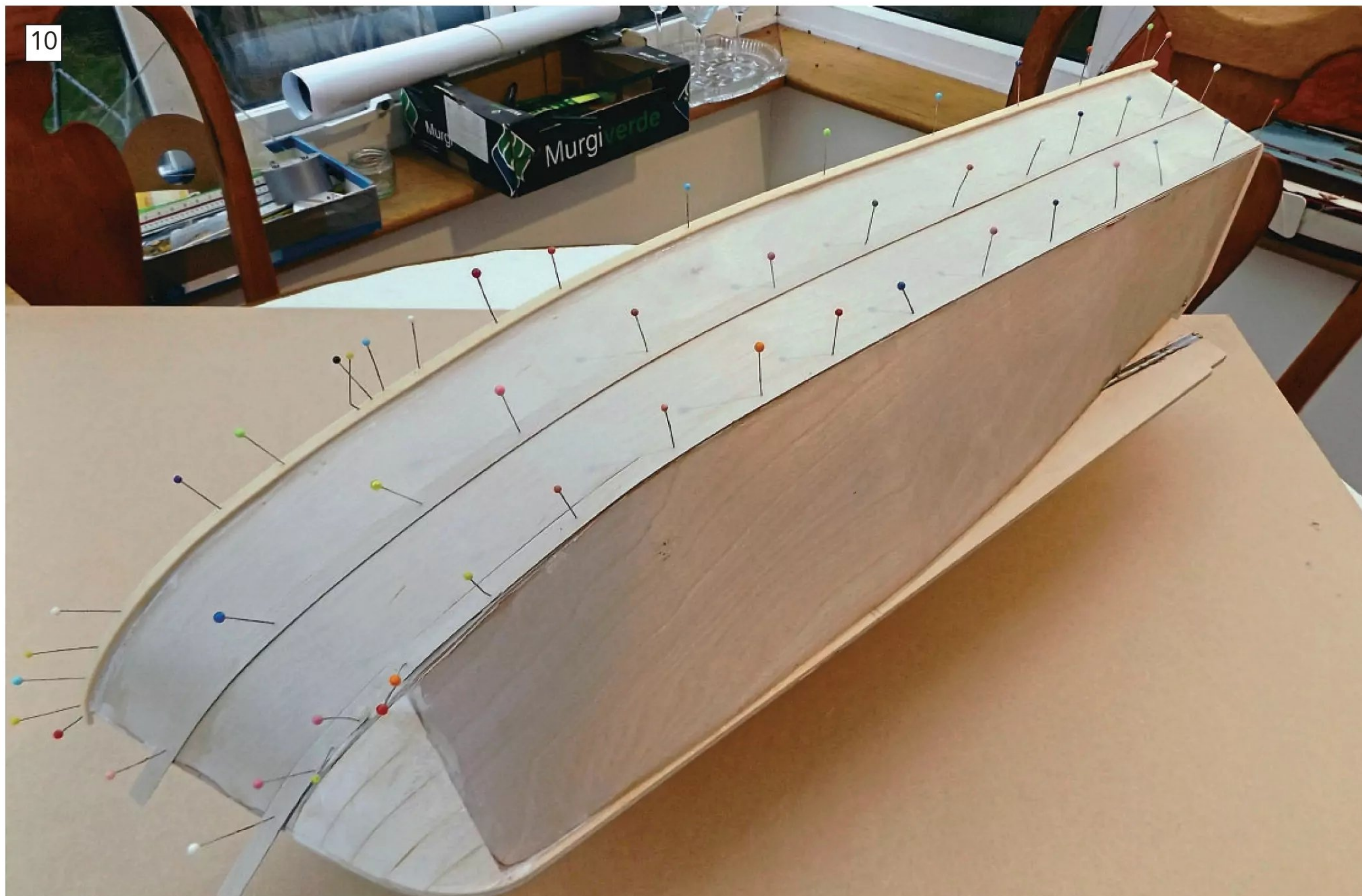
The $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch ply gunwhale cappings will need to be cut to suit, as every boat will, inevitably, end up being a slightly different shape. Strengthening blocks for the cleats can be fashioned from brass rod soldered together. I made a simple jig to achieve four that were all the same. My middle and rear deck card templates are shown in position in this shot, as is the rear cockpit floor.

9



Back out into the sunshine with the woodwork complete and the motor/engine box in position. Some airholes will need to be cut in the front of your box to let the motor breathe. This is a good point at which to give all the plywood a coat of sanding sealer before painting.

10



The rubbing strakes welded to the side of a workboat give extra strength and are quite a feature. Many launches are completely surrounded with old car tyres as fenders; unfortunately, I didn't have any suitably scaled down ones, but this is something you could consider adding to your model. The strakes are formed from $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch ply cut into $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch strips and need to be added halfway up the topsides and along the chine line. The gunwhale strip is made up from $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch obeche strip.

11



The middle deck locker houses the radio gear receiver, ESC and 7.2-volt buggy battery pack. The removable deck can be secured with small turnbuckles for ease of access. My engine cover has chequer plate plasticard on the top, with a gear shift stick and dummy exhaust from the diesel engine. These details just help to bring the model to life.

12



Here, my slightly smaller than standard Action Man tries the helm of his new launch. The material used to create the fender I unstitched from a cheap woven basket purchased from a well-known retailer with Max in the name. The external hull I finished with auto spray paint from Halfords, while the inside and lockers painted with Humbrol enamel.

13



With the boat's name, *Invicta*, having been applied using Becc white lettering, my model was almost ready to make her on water debut, the only remaining task being to make a buoyancy aid for my helmsman. Note, though, the control console with throttle lever, rev counter and temperature gauge, and the bow line – all little touches that add to a touch of realism, I think.







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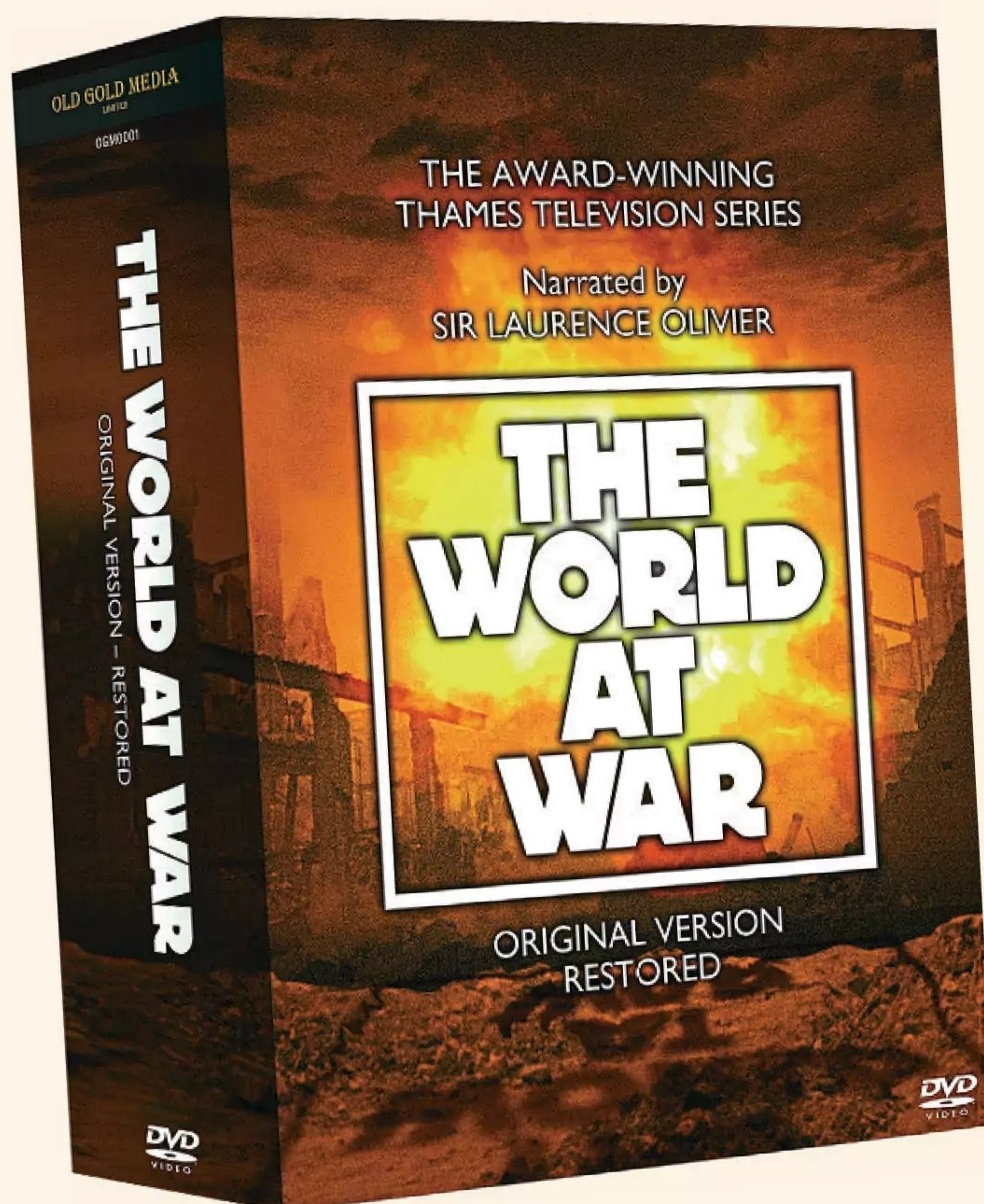
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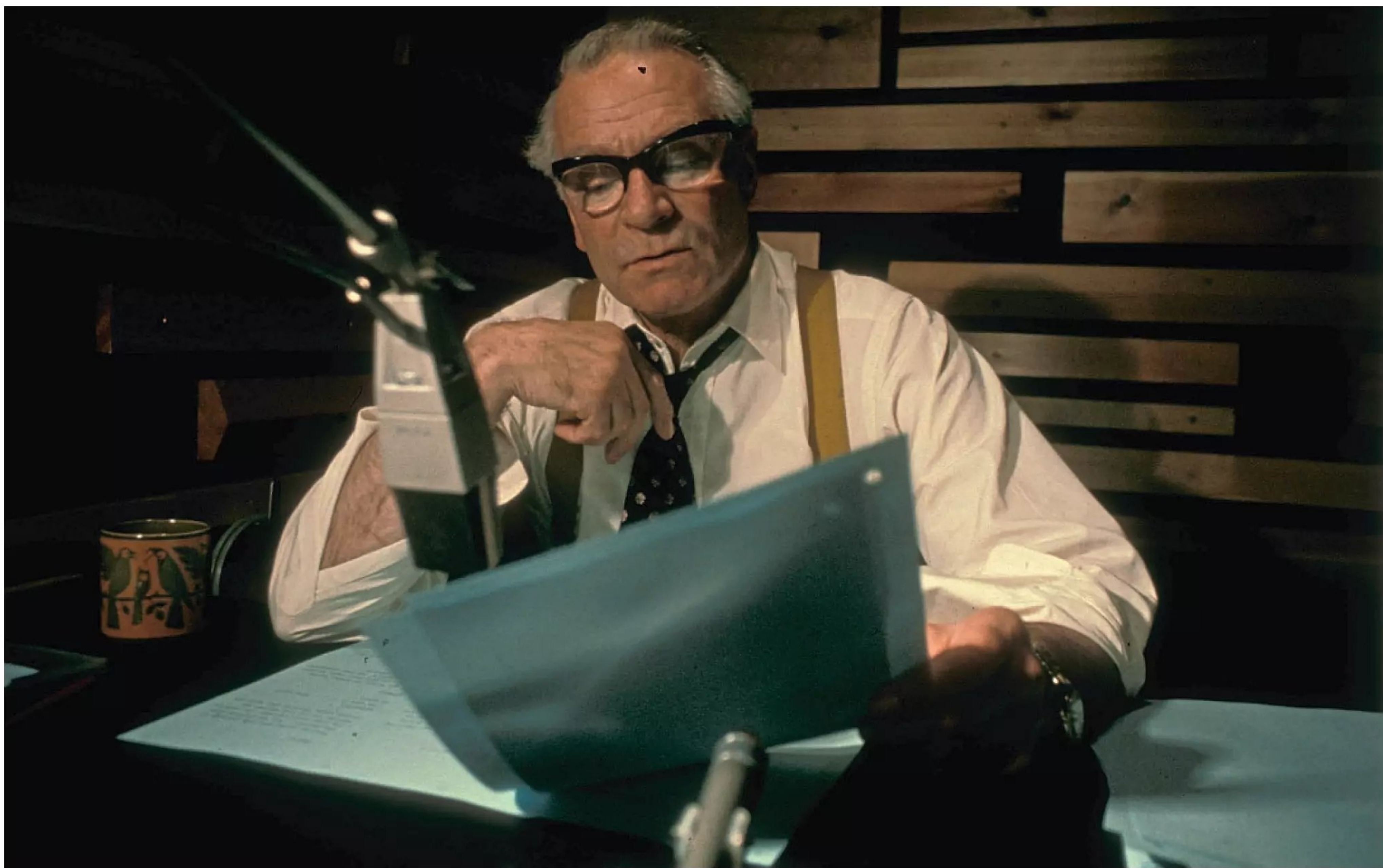
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Narrator, Sir Laurence Olivier, recording his voice over for one of The World at War episodes.

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Model Boats
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Please note, the **closing date for entry submissions** will be **Friday, May 30, 2025.**

Good luck, everyone!

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THE WORLD AT WAR PRIZE DRAW

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Miss Piggy



Phil Button tells the tale of the first pink Pirate boat!

My granddaughter, Gina, who lives in Derby, had long expressed an interest in model boats, and had been with friends and/or her mum to Alvaston Park lake on a number of occasions to visit the Alvaston Pirates Model Boat Club. (I am a member of the Pirates, even though I live in Norfolk, and inflict myself on them whenever I'm in the area – in fact, several of my model boating 'exploits' have taken place on the club's lake). The Pirates encouraged Gina by allowing her to use one of their 'fun boats', which are kept especially for letting youngsters experience the joys of model boating. However, she really wanted a boat of her own.

As luck would have it, I had been given a rather battered model of a small cabin cruiser (**Photos 1 & 2** show the boat as received). This boat was 430mm long (around 17-inches in old money). It had a rudder fitted to brackets on the transom (almost in the middle!), with a ratchet quadrant to hold the tiller arm in position, and a small brushed electric motor in the cabin to drive the tiny two-bladed propeller. It looked as if it could have been built from a kit as there were printed numbers on some of the parts, but I have no idea who might have produced it. I decided this could, with very little effort, be revamped to provide an ideal first radio-controlled boat for my (at that time) 14-year-old granddaughter, so I set to work.

Refurbishment

The hull had been well built using plywood formers, deck and skin, with hardwood rubbing strakes at deck level. However, not only did it look like it had been painted with a yard broom, but it had a broken cabin side (see **Photo 3**). So, after stripping the paint from the hull and the varnish from the cabin and decks and removing the old glazing from the cabin windows, the first step was to repair the cabin side by gluing in a new piece of ply (see **Photo 4**).

To help with refurbishment, I built a boat stand from scrap wood to support the hull during 'surgery'; this would also come in handy for



"I had been given a rather battered model of a small cabin cruiser... I decided this could, with very little effort, be revamped to provide an ideal first radio-controlled boat for my (at that time) 14-year-old granddaughter"

transporting the model to and from the boating lake on completion.

Photo 5 shows the stand in my workshop after painting; the green felt is there to protect the hull's paintwork from damage. As to the colour, because the boat was intended for a young girl, and we had already decided on *Miss Piggy* (from



the Muppet Show) for the name, what else could it be but pink?

The original rudder was removed from the transom, modified and installed in a new rudder tube inside the hull. **Photo 6** shows the modified rudder from underneath the hull, while

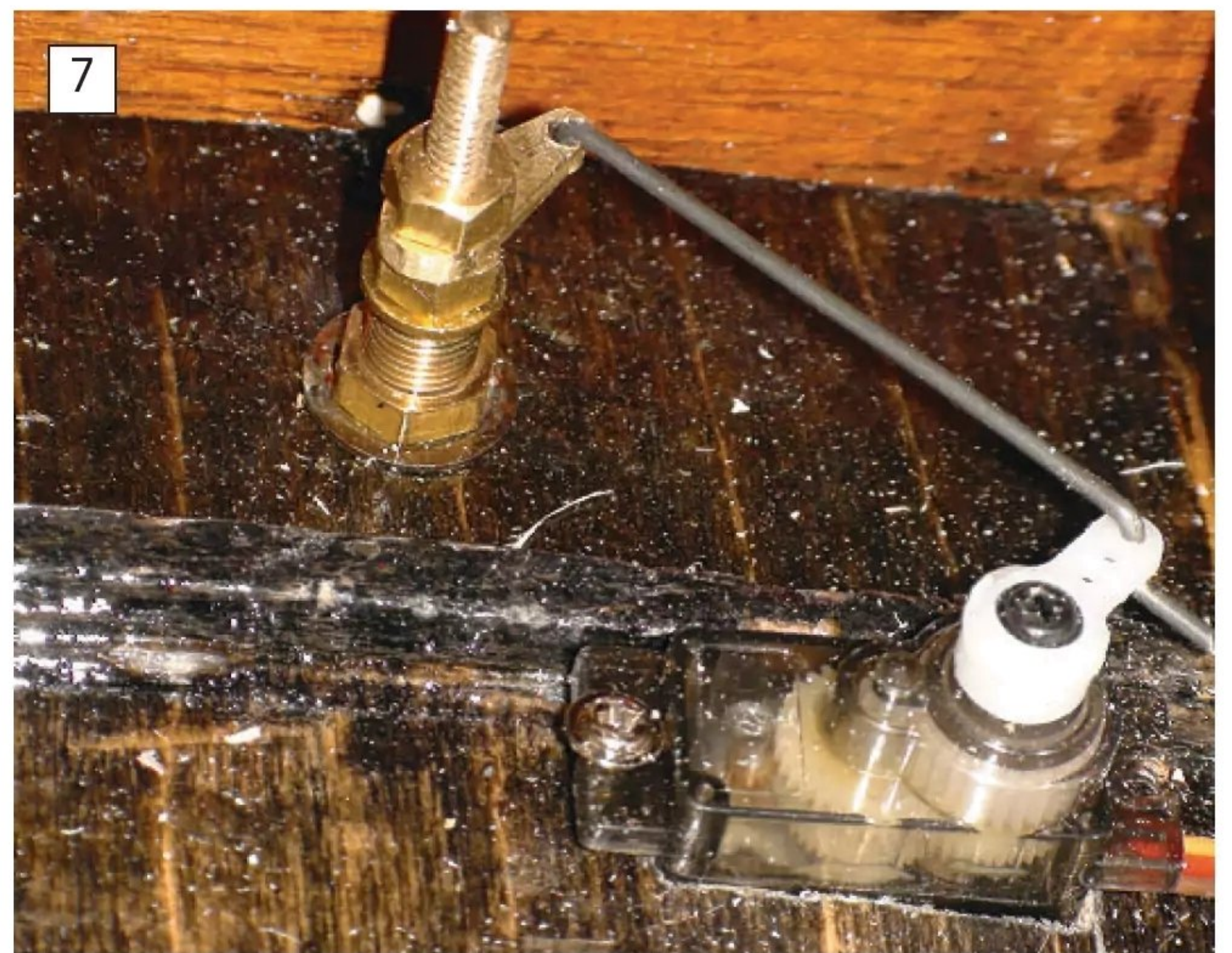
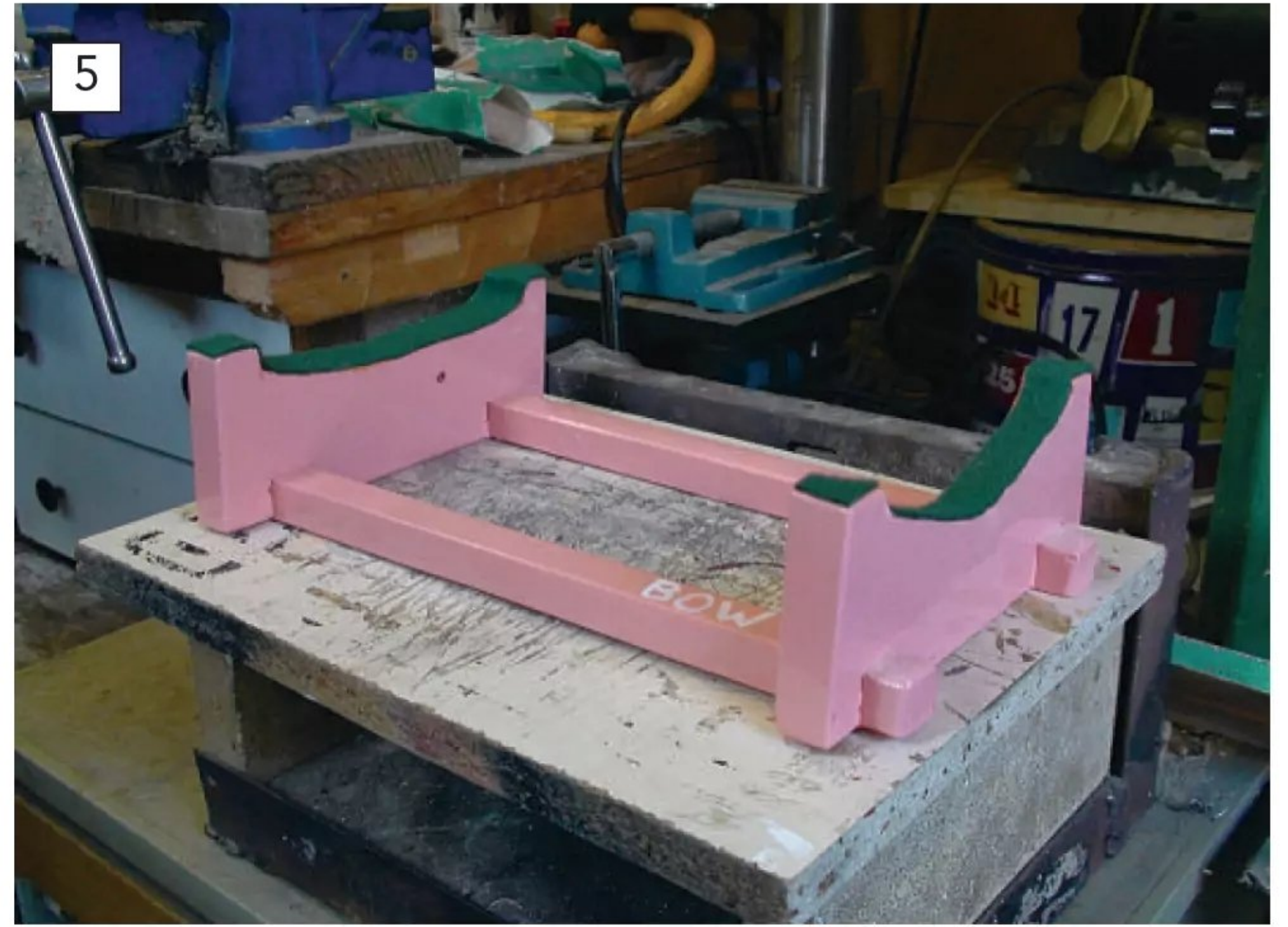


Photo 7 shows the inside of the hull with the new rudder linkage and its micro servo inset into the cockpit floor.

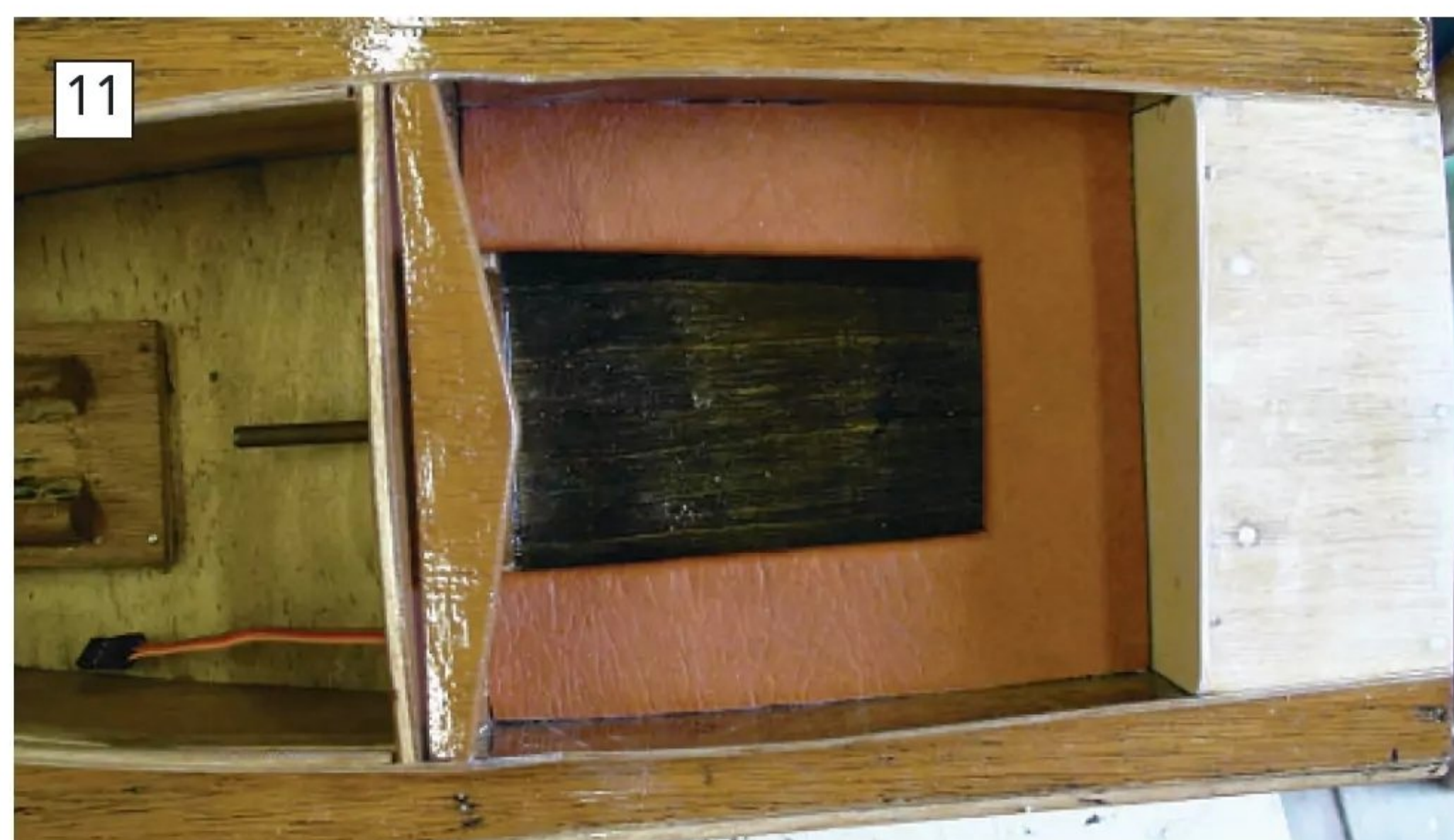
At this point, I waterproofed the hull with a couple of coats of cellulose dope and took it to the 'domestic test tank' (a.k.a. the bath) for ballasting trials. With the electric motor that came with the boat and some small lead weights to simulate the battery packs, radio receiver and electronic speed controller, she floated at around the right place

and with no leaks (see **Photo 8**), so it was back to the workshop.

In order to gain access for the revised rudder installation, I had already removed the 'seats' and rear bulkhead from the cockpit area, so these needed to be replaced. Firstly, a new (and easily removable) rear bulkhead was made up from 1.5mm ply, cut away to clear the rudder servo and linkage, and fitted loosely in place (see **Photo 9**). The new bulkhead had

a strip of ply glued to it as a support for the new 'seating'; this was fixed at a height such that the underside of the seating cleared the battery boxes, which could then be installed out of sight underneath. **Photo 10** shows the two battery boxes in the front of the cockpit and the vintage on/off switch that came with the boat.

The seating was made up from a simple piece of 3mm ply, cut to shape and then covered in brown imitation

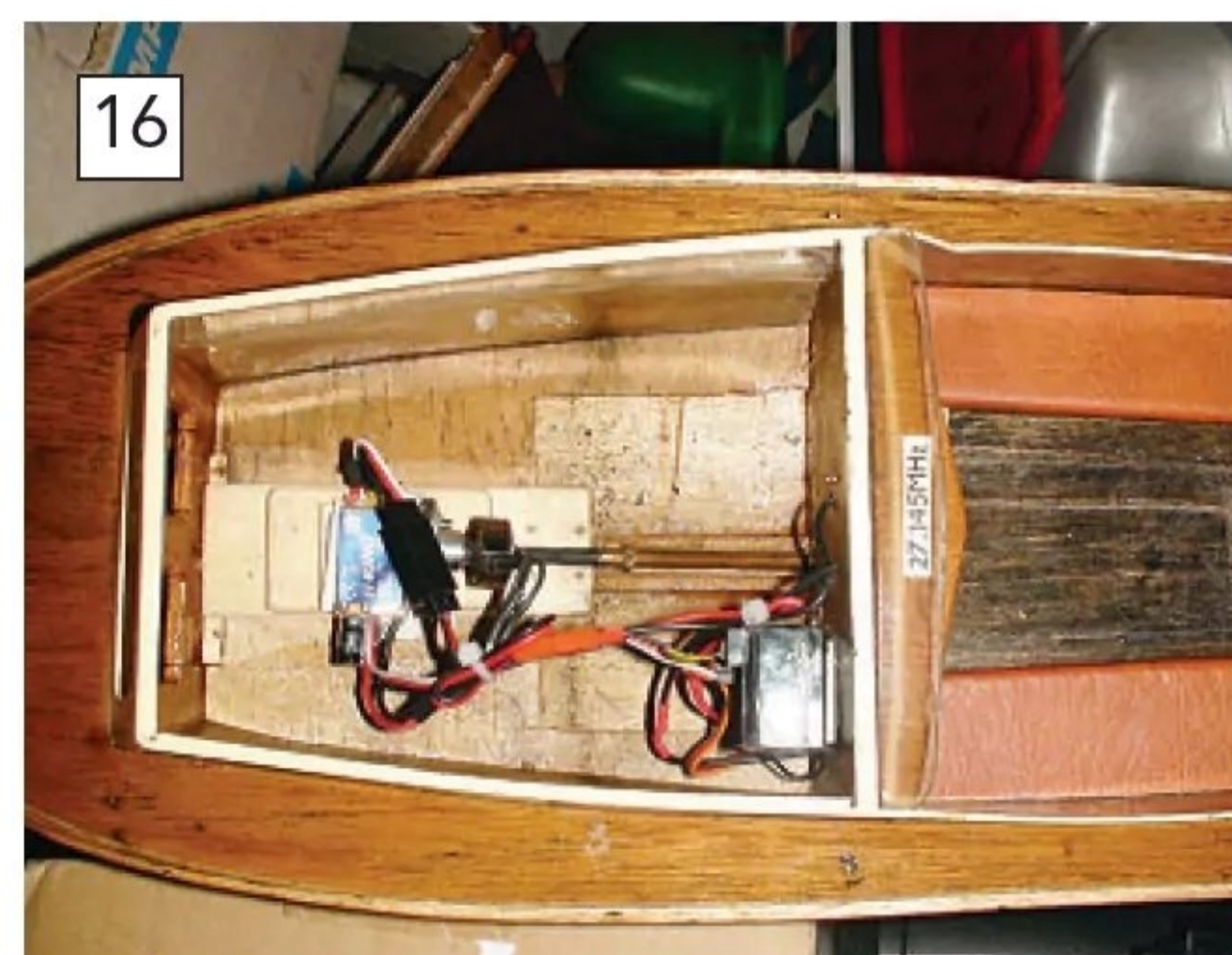
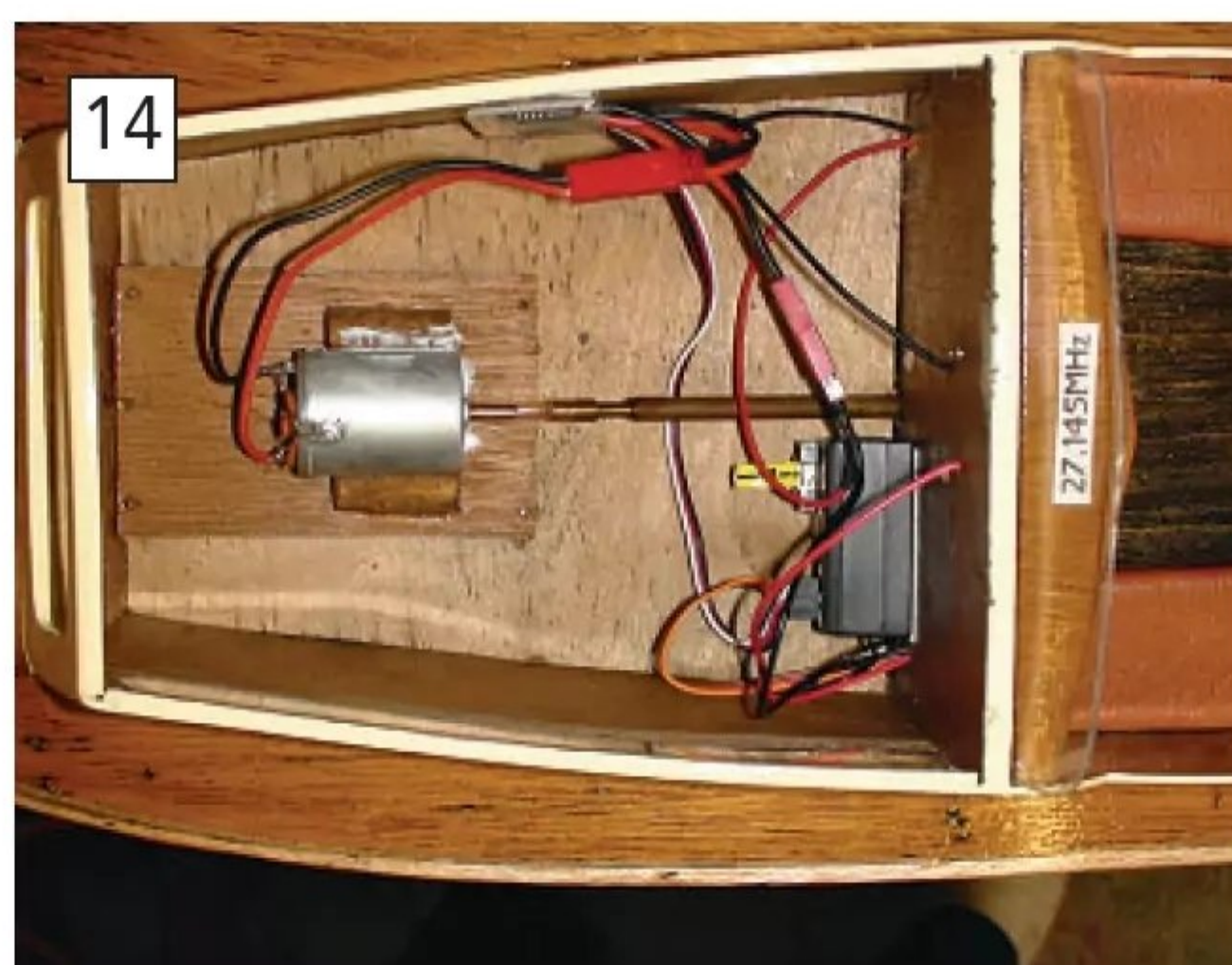


leather (see **Photo 11**). This seating is a loose fit and removable in order to give access to the battery boxes and rudder servo below.

After sanding the whole model, filling any imperfections and/or holes, and fitting a pair of 3mm square spray rails along the chines, the sides of the hull and the transom were given several coats of pink paint. The cabin sides were painted cream and the decks and inside of the cockpit were varnished. Once the pink paint had dried, the hull below the spray rails was masked off and given several coats of red paint (see **Photo 12**).

To complete the model, new clear glazing was fitted to the cabin sides and front, together with a small windscreen at the front of the cockpit. Then came time to fit the original cabin roof, before sprucing it up with a coat of paint. Disaster! The roof was warped and would not fit properly (certainly not well enough to stay in place in any kind of breeze). The warp had to be taken out by 'gently persuading' it into shape using large blocks of lead and a piece of wood as a wedge (see **Photo 13**).

As a final finishing touch, a set of Miss Piggy transfers was made up for fitting on each side of the model. To add names to my boats,



"Disaster!"

I use waterslide transfers. These are designed on my PC and printed out using an inkjet printer onto waterslide transfer paper. After cutting the transfers to finished size, they are soaked in water to free them from their backing paper, slid into place on the model and kitchen towel used to carefully smooth out any air bubbles before being left to dry. The transfers do turn white once dry, but this can easily be fixed by giving them a coat of oil-based varnish – they need to be varnished anyway to stop them coming off in the water (again, see **Photo 12**).

Electrical installation Mk 1

I planned to use two-channel radio control in this boat, as it only needed steering and motor speed control. The initial installation comprised a cheap and cheerful brushed motor with a silicone tube coupling to the propeller shaft (these were already in the boat when I was given it), a 10A forward and reverse electronic speed controller (esc), and an old 27MHz radio control receiver out of my odds and ends bin. All of these can be seen in **Photo 14**. The esc is the postage-stamp sized gizmo fixed to the starboard cabin wall. Battery power was taken from two sets of two AA size cells, connected in series to give 6 volts and fitted under the

15



“As you can imagine, we got a great deal of ‘stick’ about a running a pink boat in Pirate territory”

seats in the cockpit, with the existing on/off switch on the rear bulkhead of the cabin.

The frequency sticker behind the windscreen is to remind Gina to check with other model boaters to avoid frequency clashes at the lake.

On the water

The very first ‘sea trials’ of the new *Miss Piggy* were carried out early in 2015 on a sunny and calm day on the lake at Alvaston Park, Derby. As you can imagine, we got a great deal of ‘stick’ about a running a pink boat in Pirate territory, but Gina and I ignored it!

Following fitting of the batteries, switching on the main power and checking radio control functions for correct operation, the boat was placed in the water for the first time and gently driven away. Response to the throttle seemed very good and steering behaved impeccably, with a very tight turning circle. As usual, going astern gave very poor steering and tended to splash water over the stern owing to the flat transom. Much to Gina’s disappointment (and disgust!), ‘gently driven away’ described the best that the boat would do, and the batteries drained faster than the model moved! **Photo 15** shows *Miss Piggy* at her best speed.

Coming to the rescue, a friendly fellow Pirate gave me a pair of 2-cell (7.4volt) lithium-ion batteries and a matching charger, so I promised Gina that I would take the boat home and improve both its speed and duration before my next visit to Derby.

Electrical installation Mk 2

Since I now had a pair of batteries with a much better energy density than the ones used previously, I thought that it would be good to up-rate the boat by fitting a brushless motor to give it a bit more power.

I already had in stock a Hobbyking 1811, 2000kv (motor gives 2000rpm per applied volt of battery power) outrunner brushless motor and an associated Hobbyking (www.hobbyking.com) 10Amp forwards only electronic speed controller (meant for a model aircraft, of course!) that had been removed from a modified plastic kit when I’d had to reduce its speed to try to keep it afloat! That kit was a Revell 1:108 scale harbour tug called *Lucky XI* and it was doing its best to plane! An article about that model appeared in the March 2014 issue of *Model Boats*.

Using the 7.4volt batteries that I had been given, the chosen motor would be whizzing around at nearly 15,000rpm on no load, which ought to improve the performance of the boat!

A simple motor mounting bracket was made up from scrap sheet steel to carry the motor and screwed to the original wooden motor mounting pad. A short length of silicone rubber tubing was used as a flexible coupling between the motor and propeller shaft, with a dab of superglue on each shaft to keep it in place. The electronic speed controller was fixed to the motor mounting pad with double-sided foam tape and the new batteries placed into the battery boxes which were already in the cockpit. **Photo 16** shows the Mk 2 installation – to give an idea of scale, the motor is all of 18mm in diameter.

On the bench, it all worked brilliantly – unfortunately, this is often no indication that it will work when on the water.

“The modified electrical installation gave a much better performance on the water”

On the water, again!

Once again, the trials were carried out on the lake in Alvaston Park, Derby.

The modified electrical installation gave a much better performance on the water, together with battery duration of over an hour on each battery - much to Gina’s delight. **Photo 17** shows *Miss Piggy* behaving herself on the water.

My granddaughter now had a boat with good performance and battery duration for an expenditure of not a lot, as I already had most of the kit required and the boat itself came at the right price – free!

Now time for a *Miss Piggy* make-over

Some years have passed since this boat was built and my granddaughter is now married and has a two-year-old son of her own. She wants him to ‘inherit’ the boat, just not in its current pink colour scheme! So, at some point *Miss Piggy* will return to the boat yard for a refresh. Watch this space! ●





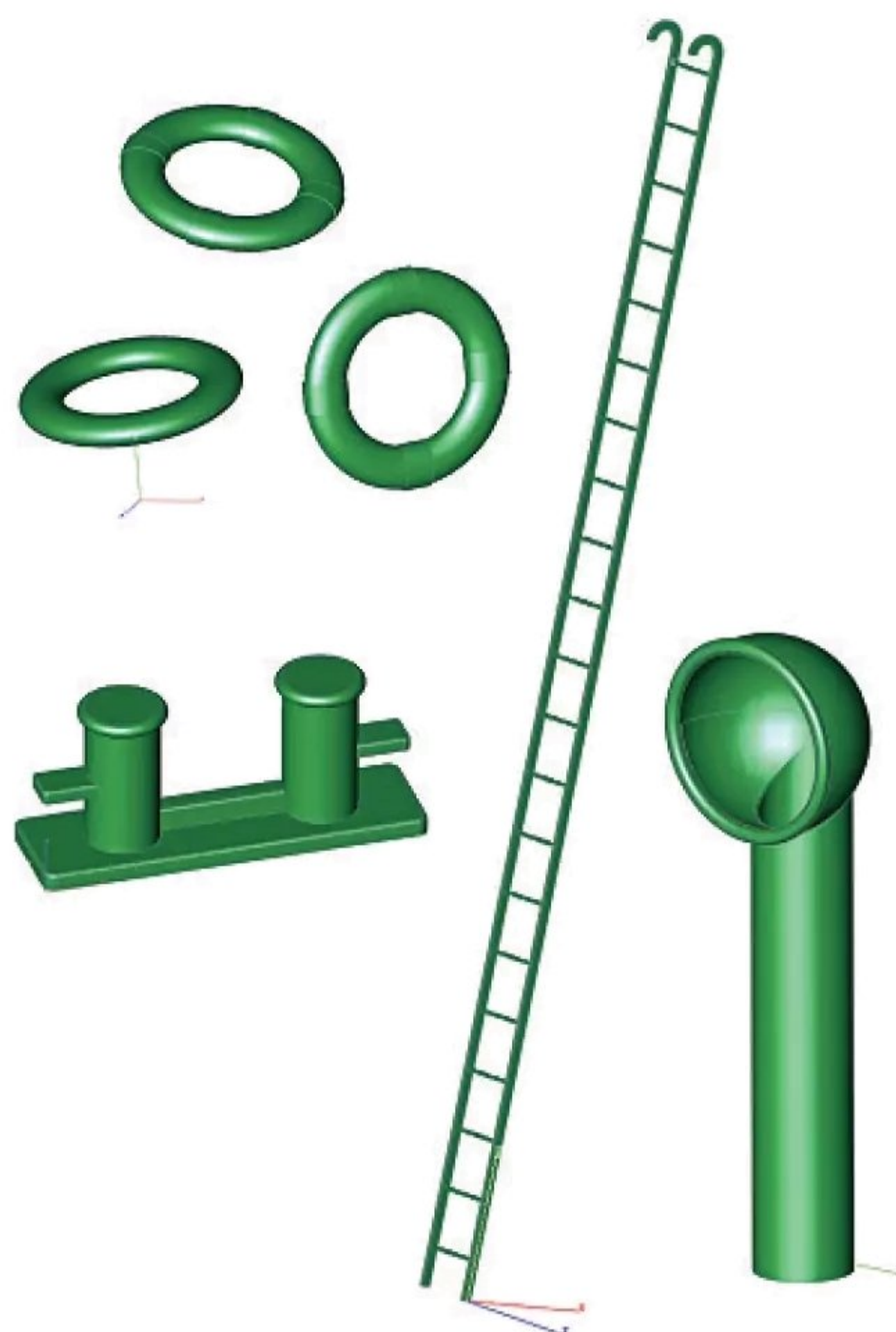
3D printing

John Parker gets hands-on with the tech set to reshape the future of modelling

Having sampled laser cutting through a local library's Makerspace program here in Melbourne (see Flotsam and Jetsam, December 2024 issue), I decided to enrol in its introductory 3D printing course to sample another new technology with wide application to modelmaking. The Makerspace program provides facilities and materials without cost to applicants once they have completed an induction session covering safe operation of the equipment. With the induction out of the way, I set to designing some typical model boat fittings that I could print on my next visit.

Source files

To realise the full potential of 3D printing you need to be able to design your own objects to print, and to do that you need to be conversant with 3D CAD (Computer Aided Drafting). I covered this topic in *3D CAD for Modellers* in the



Typical model boat fittings, designed to test the printer (not to scale).

October 2021 issue; suffice here to say that if you're a serious modeller and can commit to learning 3D CAD then I am sure you will find it pays off. If you can't, then don't despair, for a whole world of 3D objects designed for 3D printing is available on-line. Two well-known sources are Thingiverse (www.thingiverse.com) and Printables (www.printables.com). Here you might find, for example, a complete R/C model boat that can be printed in several pieces, but don't expect anything too specific. When (note: not if...) you feel the need to design something, Tinkercad (www.tinkercad.com) is a good place to start.

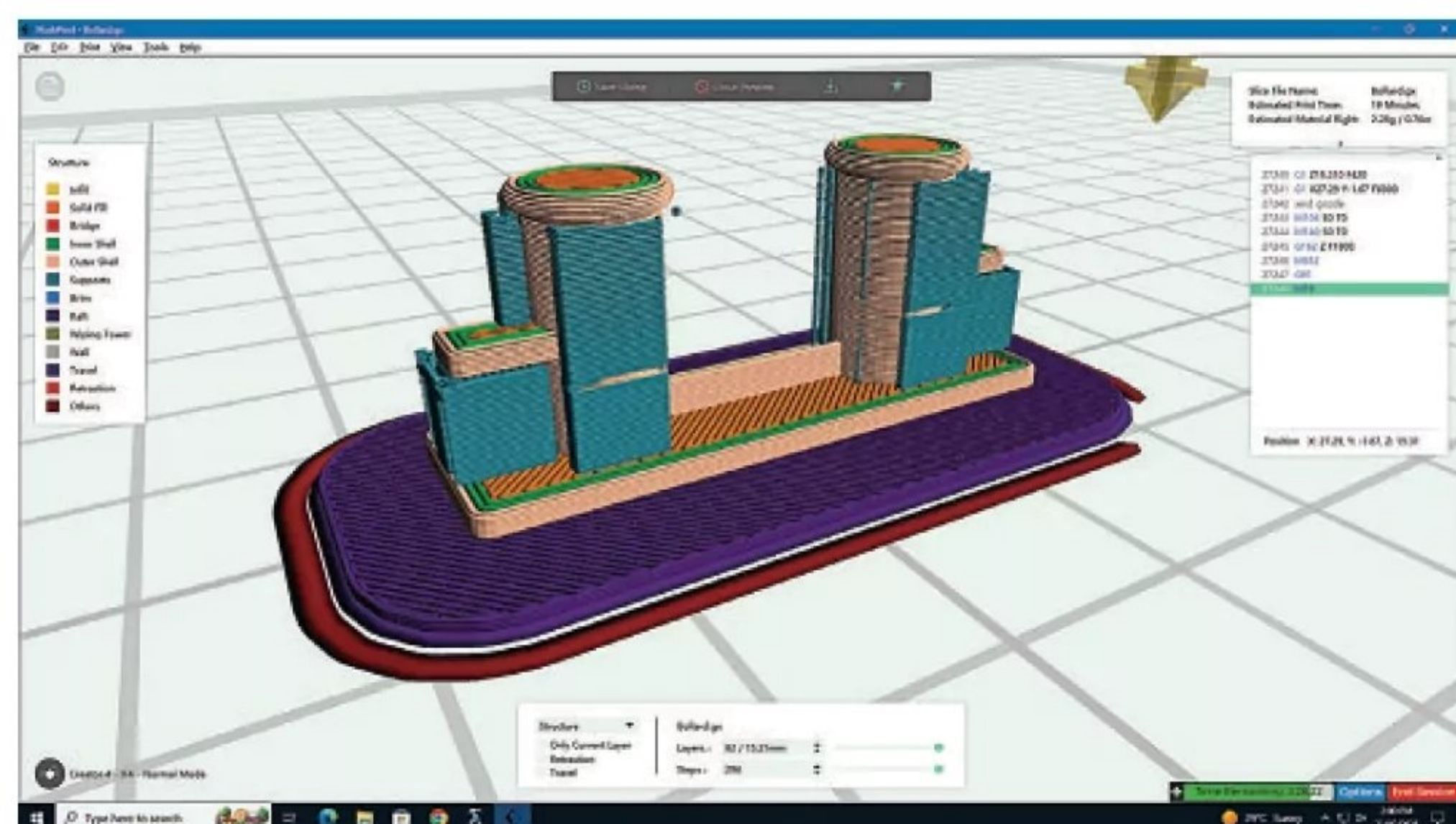
The sample objects I designed are fittings typically found on many types of ship/boat models: a bollard, with a base size 34mm x 10mm, a cowl ventilator, 100mm high, a 214mm long ladder, and some 31mm diameter lifebuoys – all worked up from original drawings. They were also chosen to highlight possible difficulties in 3D printing. They could, of course, could be scaled up or down – the sizes quoted above intended for a model of about 1:24 scale. Once complete, they had to be exported from the CAD program I was using (SharkCAD) in .stl format (stereolithography, or standard triangle language), which is the precursor for all items to be 3D printed.

Slicing

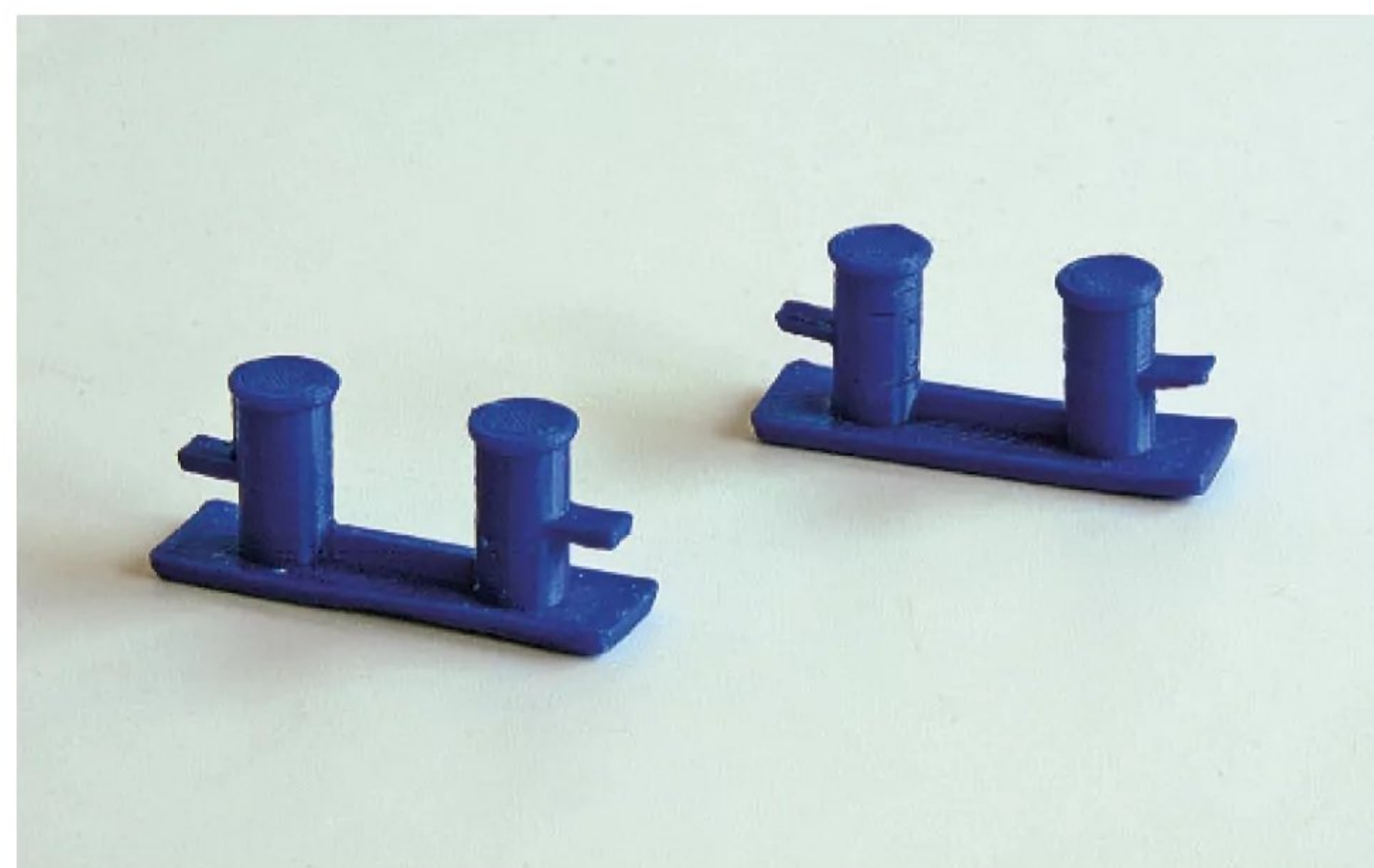
In order to 3D print the .stl file, it must first be broken up into layers, or sliced, before the 3D printer can reproduce the shape. Think of it like multiple series of 2D cross sections that the printer head can follow, in turn extruding hot plastic filaments as it goes, which then become fused together to form the shape. This is known as additive manufacturing. Part of the slicing process involves the provision of a base, or raft, on which the object is printed, and any support structures required for overhanging regions. Solid sections are generally shelled out or hollowed, to save weight, material and printing time.



The Flashforge Adventurer 3D printer.



The bollard, as shown on the slicer software screen. In this sequence of images purple represents the raft, green the supports, and tan the object.



The bollard printed with supports (front) and without (rear).

“Think of it like multiple series of 2D cross sections that the printer head can follow, in turn extruding hot plastic filaments as it goes, which then become fused together to form the shape”

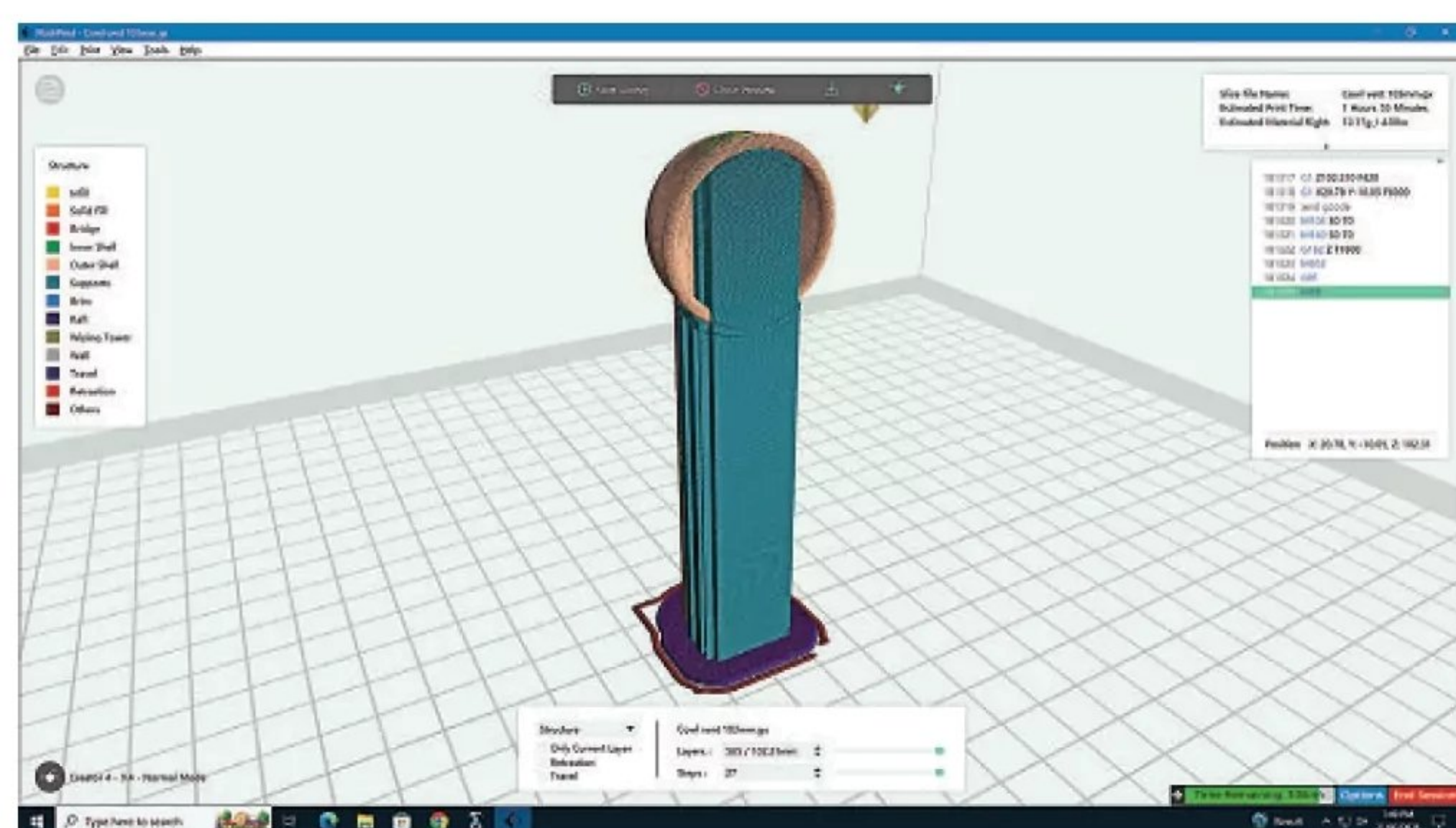
The complicated nature of slicing is fortunately taken care of by slicing software, in an automated process taking just a few seconds, with the default settings not needing manual intervention in most cases. Slicing

software is generally tied to the type of 3D printer to be used, and presents on the computer screen a three-dimensional representation of the printer bed with the object to be printed on it. From here it is possible to change the position of the model on the bed, enable and inspect the supports, rotate it, scale it, duplicate it, and so on. The program will then estimate the amount of material required, its weight and time taken to print, and produce a 3D printer-ready file.

Printing

The printers used in the Makerspace program are supplied by Flashforge, in

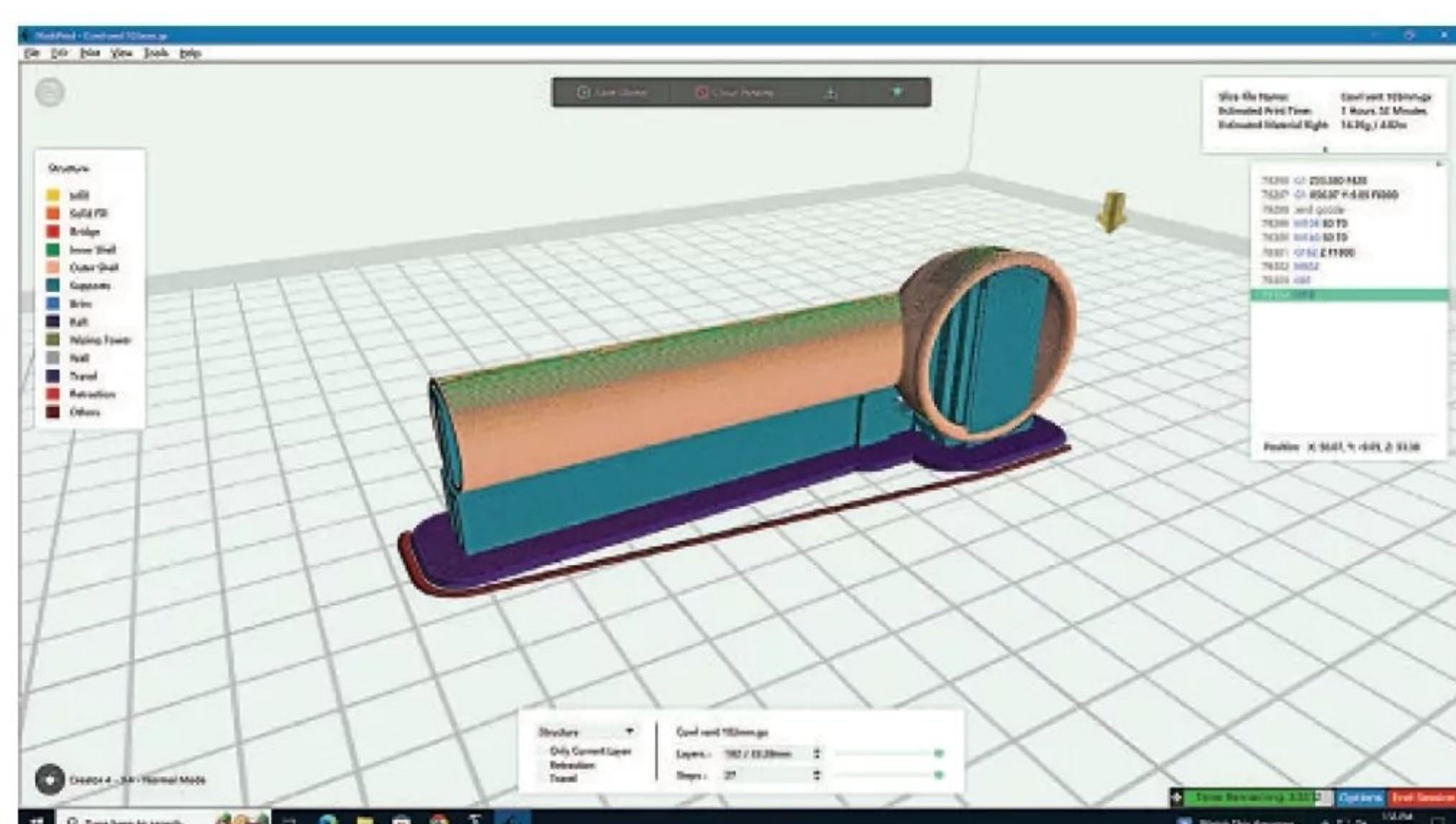
the form of the Creator 3 and larger 2-filament Adventurer 4 models. Both types have an enclosed cabinet design with a hinged glass door, like a large desktop oven. The slicing software used is Flashforge's proprietary FlashPrint program, which produces a file in .gx format. I saved this to a memory stick and transferred it to the printer via its front mounted USB port, then checked the printer bed was clean and applied a thin layer of glue from a glue stick as recommended to improve adhesion. Next it was just a matter of pre-heating the printer bed (under a minute), pressing the print button, and settling back with



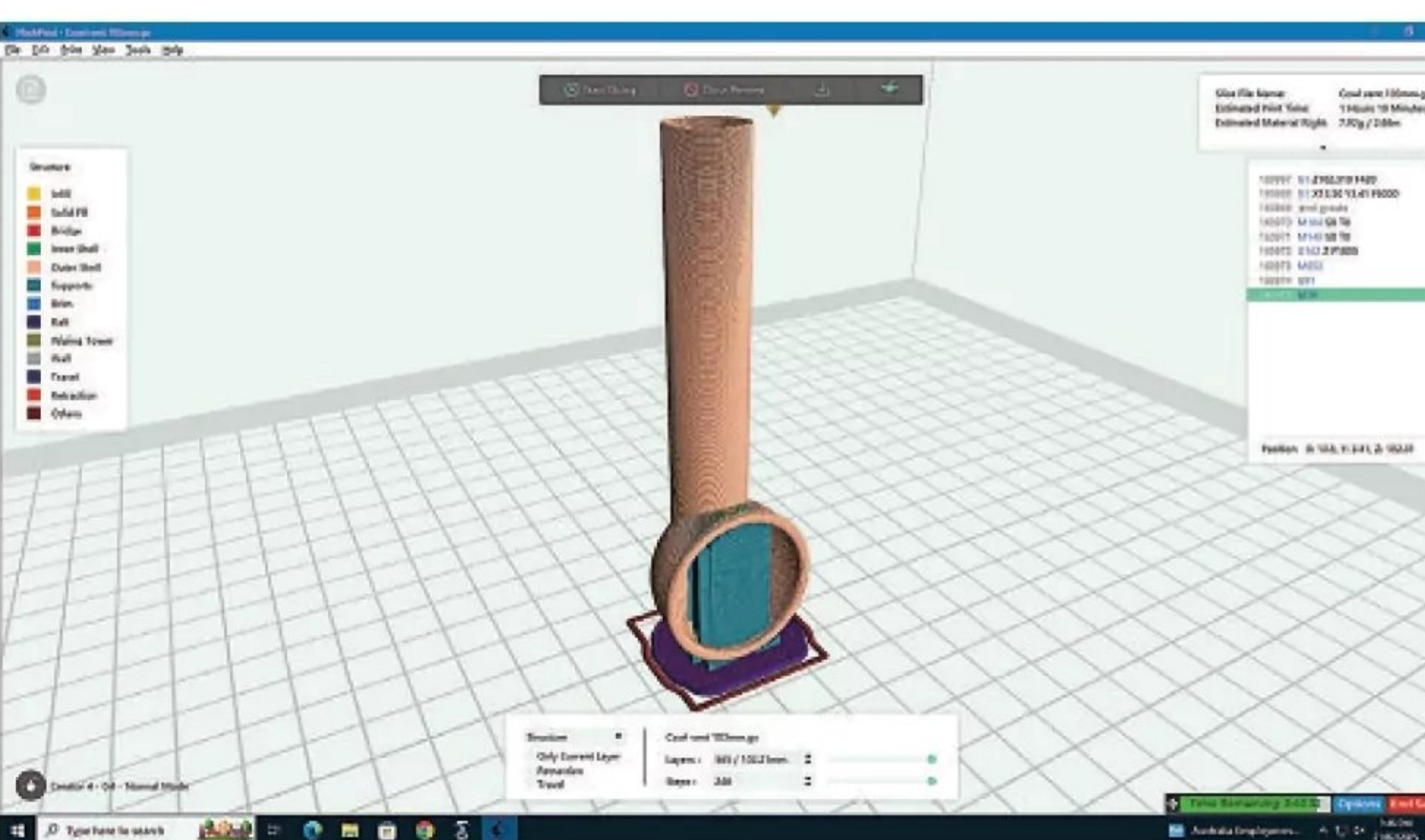
The obvious first orientation tried for the cowl ventilator printing.



Three failed attempts at printing the cowl ventilator.



Alternative orientations tried for the cowl ventilator.





The printed ladder in place on John's tug Wattle.

a good book. 3D printing is not quick – the estimated time to print the ventilator, for example, was up to almost two hours in some orientations. Fortunately, I was in a library and there were plenty of books!

Results

All 3D printed objects come out with a mass of excess plastic filament attached in the form of the raft and supports, which needs to be trimmed off carefully with a knife; fine abrasive paper will also be useful in some cases. The PLA (polylactic acid) filament used was supplied

by Makerspace, and I was limited to the royal blue colour that was already loaded in the machine. It became obvious that, to avoid some of the possible problems, some experience of 3D printing was needed to decide on the best arrangement of supports and orientation for printing.

• Bollard

My bollard took about 19 minutes to print with supports, and the result was quite pleasing. It was amazingly light, just 1.1 grams, due to its hollowness, and had a quite acceptable surface finish. As an experiment, it was printed again without supports; the time taken

was 15 minutes, but the side lugs were not exactly perpendicular.

• Cowl ventilator

My cowl ventilator started off promisingly, but after about an hour and a half, when the printing had risen to the open mouth, it began to wobble on the bed and I had to abort the printing. A second attempt was made with the ventilator lying flat on the bed, but this time the longitudinal printing of the stem resulted in it being less circular, and the lack of an end support caused distortion at the base. A third attempt, printing upright again but with more supports, went well until the support structure in the mouth of the ventilator collapsed and the print had to be aborted once again. Frustratingly, I failed to print a successful ventilator in the three four-hour sessions I had at the library.

• Ladder

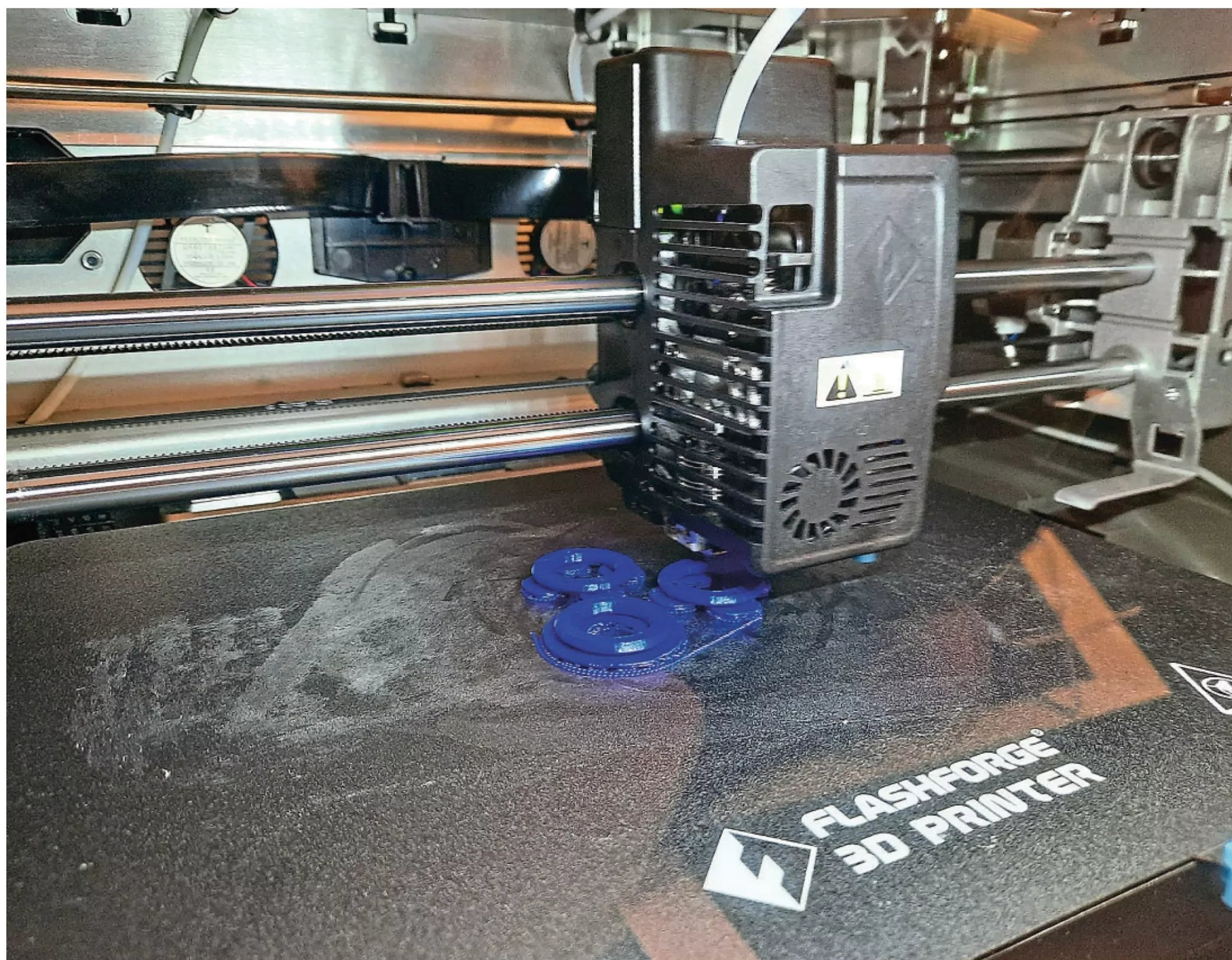
My ladder had to be orientated diagonally on the print bed because of its length. The first attempt with the ladder on its side proved unsuccessful – the filament wasn't able to fuse properly over the long thin sections and the rungs were not recognisable as such. A second attempt with the ladder laid flat turned out well but required very careful removal from the rung supports. Printing time was 28 minutes.

• Lifebuoy variations

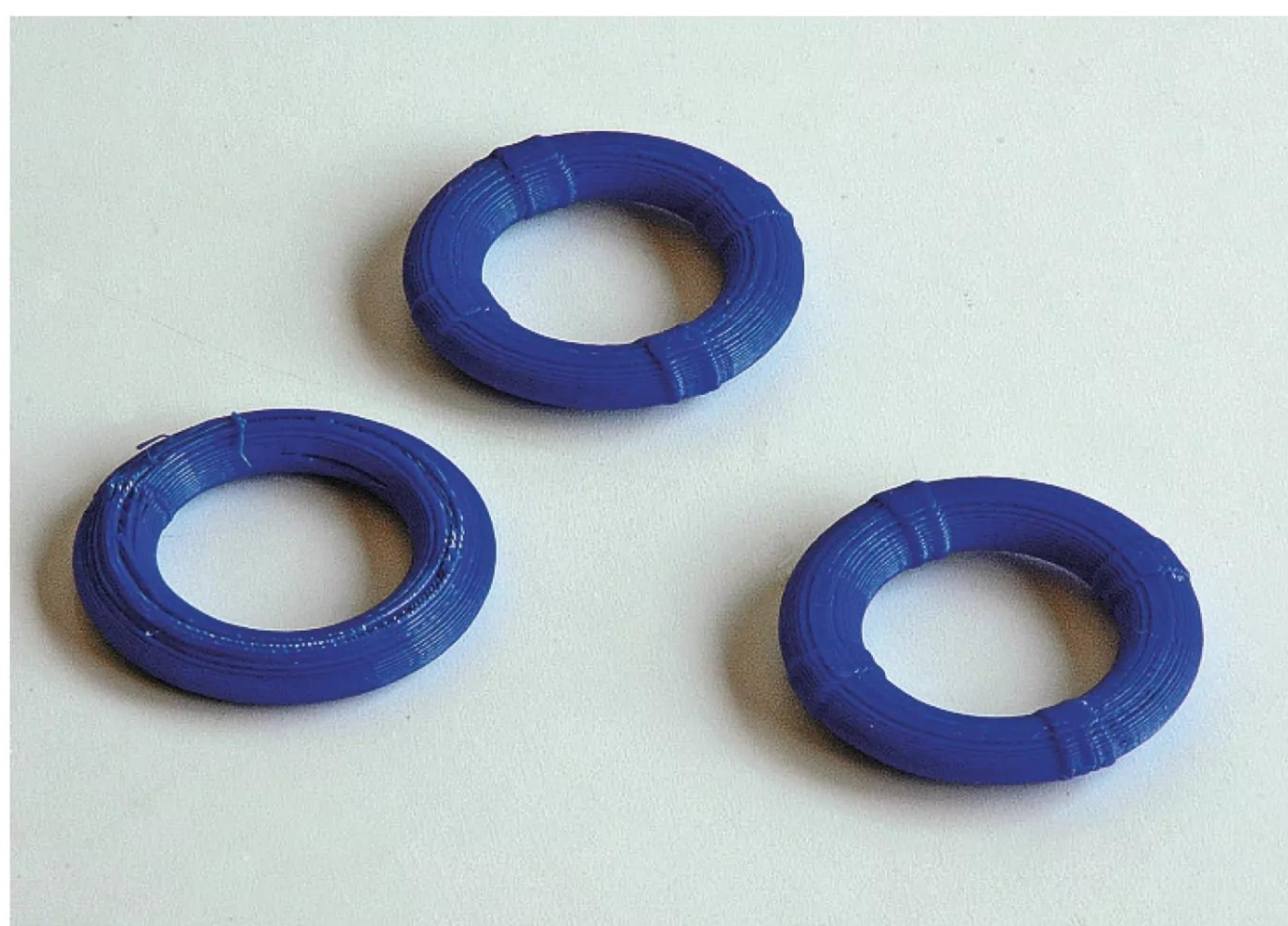
I printed all three of these together on the one print session, oriented flat on the bed. The print time was about 45 minutes and the results reasonable, though some fiddly sanding was needed to remove slight lines on the surface and restore the oval shape where it had been supported on the raft.

The pros and cons of 3D printing

This simple introduction to the world of 3D printing showed that good results were possible but that there were pitfalls and limitations, some of which I suspect could be overcome with more experience. Where 3D printing really comes into its own is when a large number of intricate parts are needed, such as the lifeboats on a liner or the multiple gun emplacements on a warship. The lightweight nature of such parts means they never contribute to excessive top weight and thus instability in a model in the same way cast metal fittings might. Something to bear in mind though is that the commonly used PLA filament is bio-degradable, so it needs to be



The printer at work making lifebuoys.



The three lifebuoy variations

protected from heat and UV light as much as possible. It's certainly not for use in a museum model, as it will return to nature eventually.

“The commonly used PLA filament is bio-degradable, so it needs to be protected from heat and UV light as much as possible”

I think most modellers who have tried 3D printing will regard it as another tool to have in the box for use when most appropriate. I certainly found testing out its potential via the Makerspace program worthwhile, although I have decided to wait for the technology to improve before investing in a printer of my own, preferring in the meantime to send my files to a printing bureau for the far better results obtainable. ●

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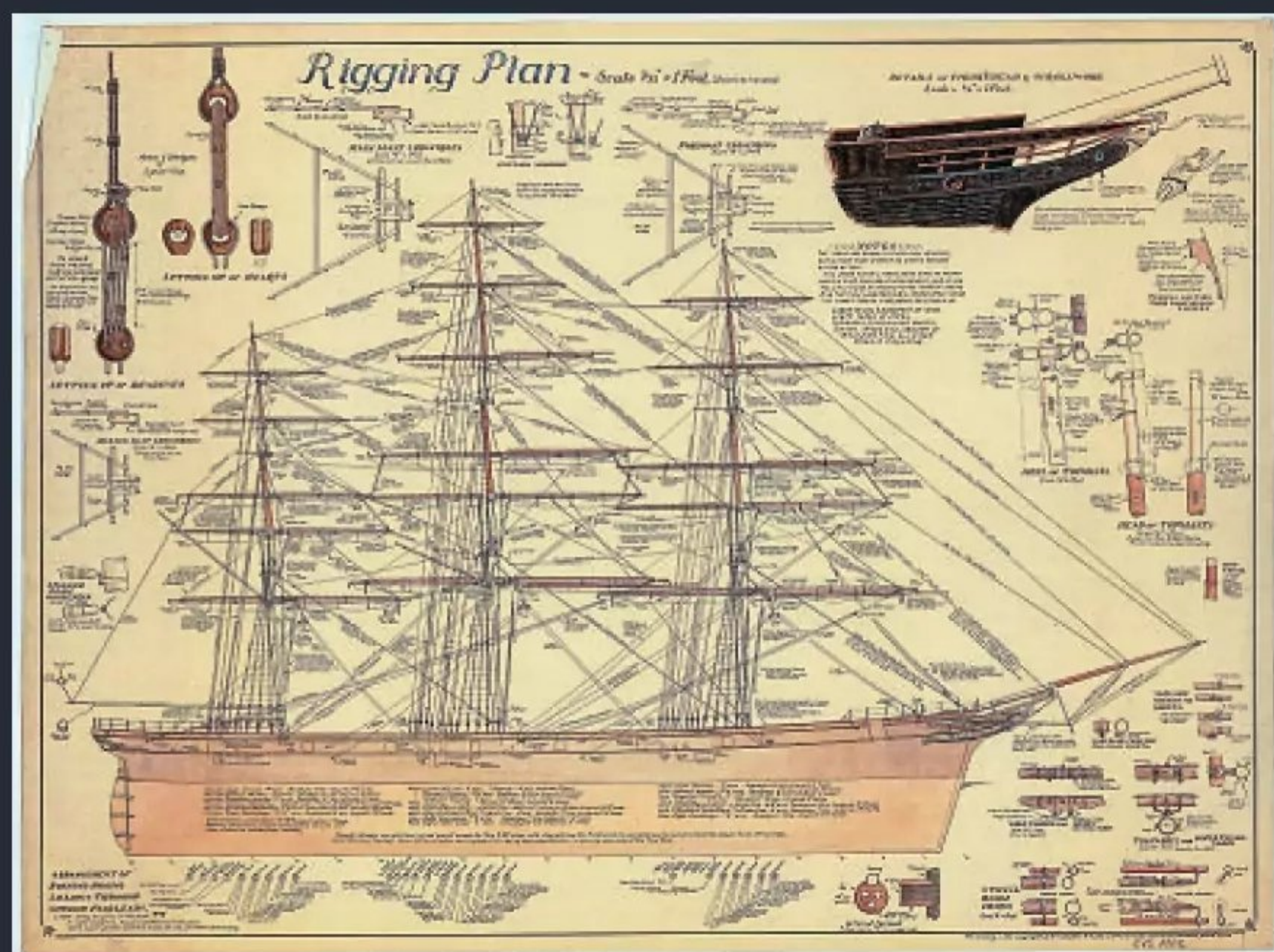
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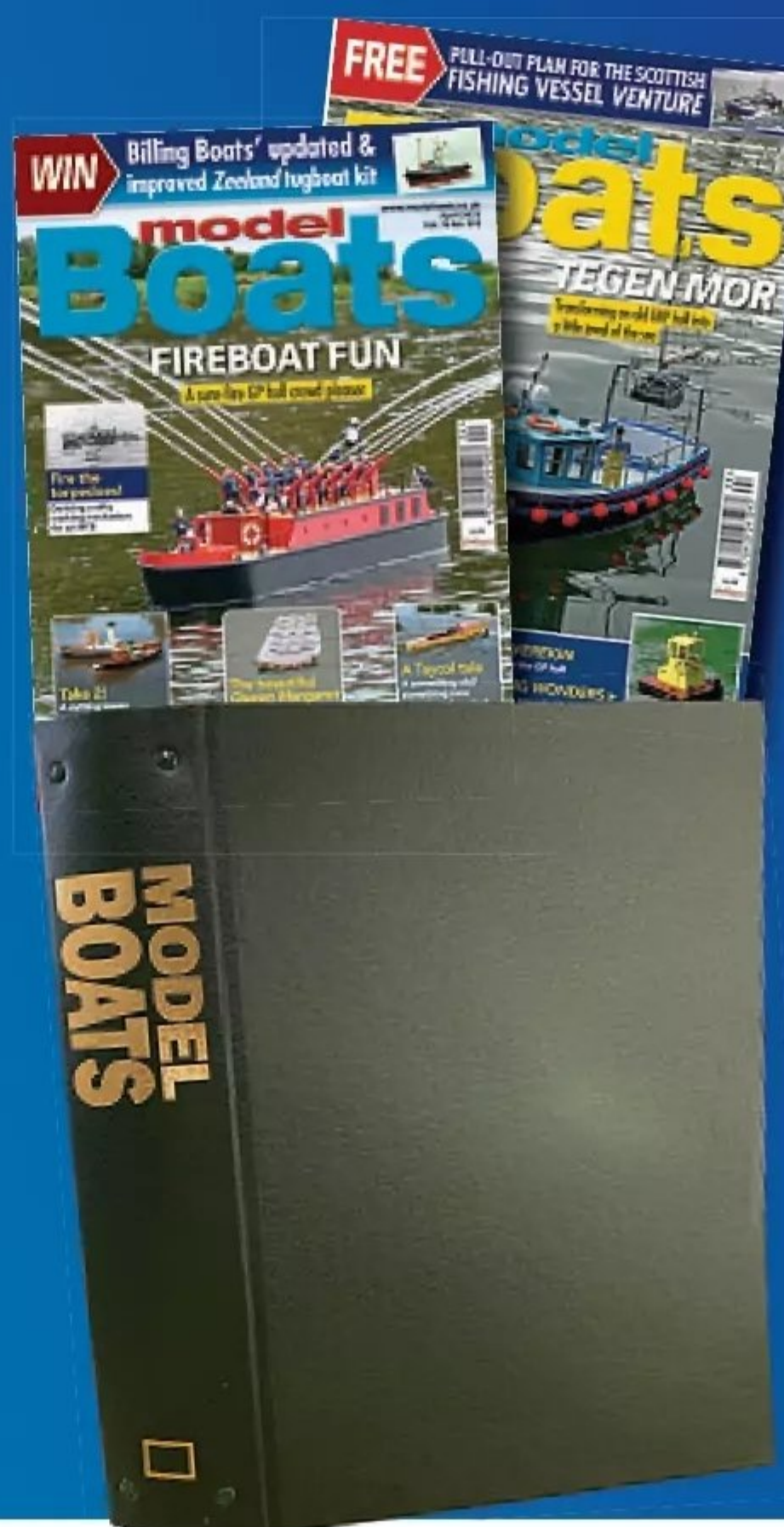
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Rigging plan for Cutty Sark (1869), ID reference. M1860

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BOILER ROOM

Richard Simpson completes his build of a Chiltern Model Steam marine engine

In last month's instalment of Boiler Room, we took a first look at a new marine engine from Chiltern Model Steam. This comes supplied in kit form, ready machined and simply requiring assembly. The instruction sheet recommends an initial dry assembly, just to check that all of your components fit together as they should and that there's nothing missing. Having provided a hands-on review of this first task, we will now move on to the more permanent assembly.

As with any ready machined kit, the choice of finish is as wide as your imagination and, while it is possible to go all out and clad the cylinder with wooden staves and brass banding, I decided to keep mine nice and simple to demonstrate just what can be done to lift the engine out of the ordinary without having to invest an enormous amount of time, effort and resources.

Strip down and paint

The first job then was to simply strip the dry run assembled engine down to its component parts again. Initially I wasn't going to bother stripping down the crankshaft assembly but then changed my mind; probably best to make sure everything was suitably tight, and I also wanted to put a small spot of threadlock on the fastenings. During this process I marked the individual bearing positions with an engineer's automatic centre-punch, thus making it quicker and easier to put them all back in their respective locations.

Once everything was laid out in bits again, the individual components were separated into the parts I wanted to polish, the parts I wanted to paint with a colour, and the base, which I would be painting in satin black.

The loose parts that were to be primed were given a thorough wash in hot soapy water to remove any residue from the surface before all being mounted on a painting board. I've always found that painting things in a

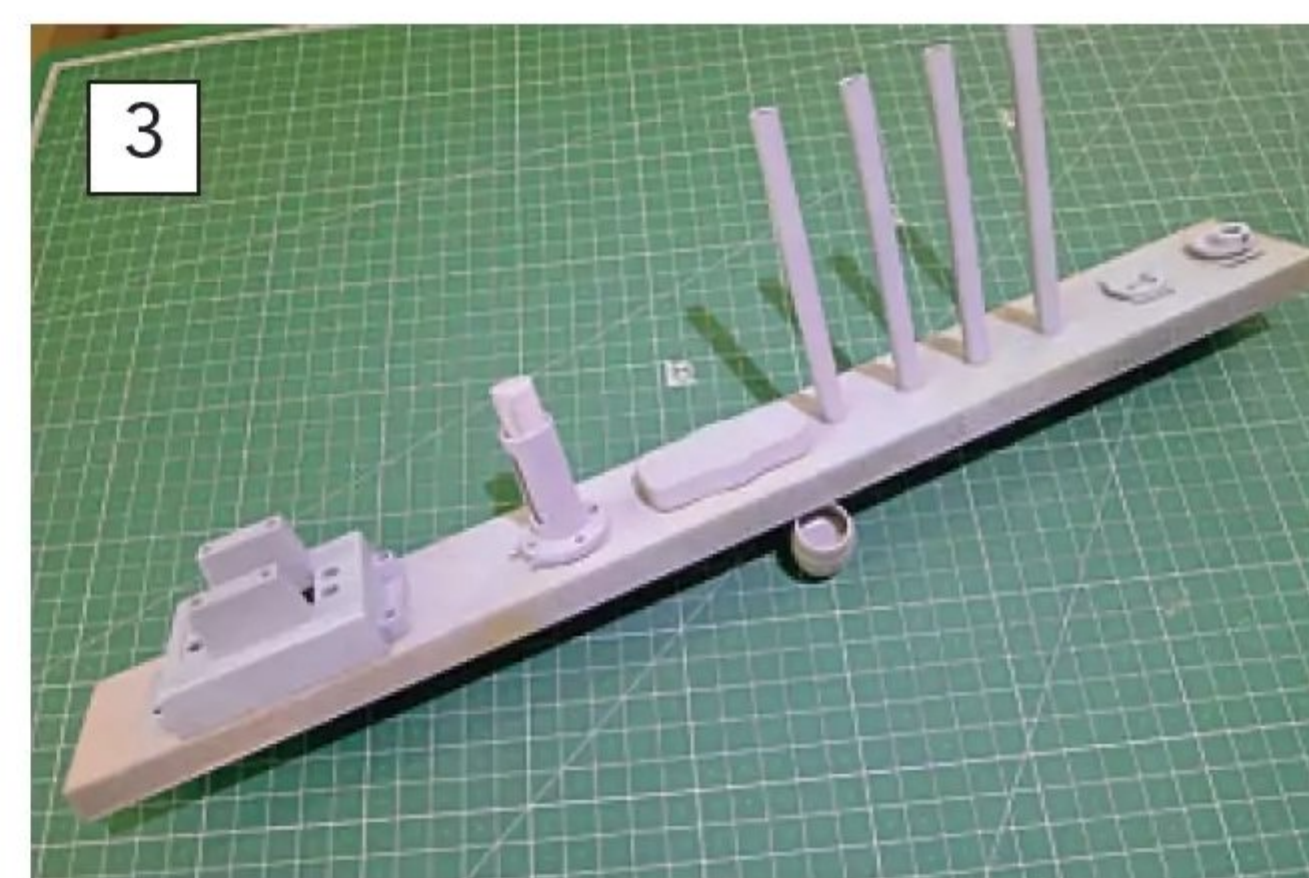


Richard has used Acid #8 primer on metallic surfaces for many years now, with very satisfactory results. It keys to brass well and provides a good surface for further coatings of varying paint types.

batch like this saves a lot of messing around and makes life so much easier. Some modellers hang the bits and pieces on wire, but I like being able to hold the painting board in one hand while I spray with the other. One key consideration is how I position the parts on the board. Access to all sides of the parts must be possible, so they shouldn't be too close together or partially obscure each other in any



Richard's flywheel rim was polished before masking up with Frog Tape. Attaching it to a tapered spindle made handling and rattle can spraying as easy as it gets.



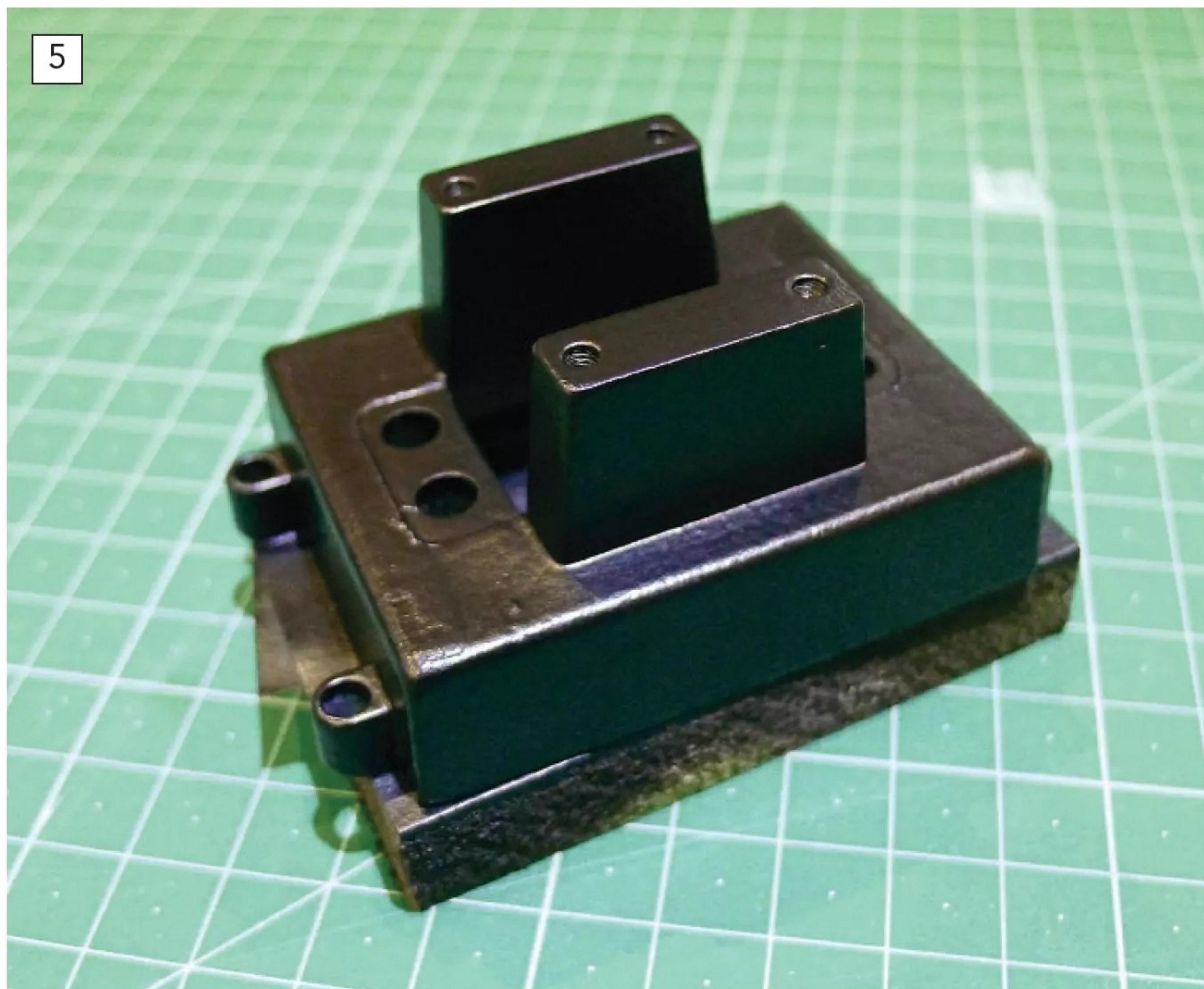
All of the parts to be painted mounted on a single painting board. The columns are screwed onto the board from underneath, but the other parts sit well enough on back-to-back Frog Tape. These are arranged for easy access to all sides of all the parts during the painting process.

way. Some parts, such as the pillars, are screwed through the board, while others are simply held in place with double sided masking tape. A vinyl glove on the hand that's holding the painting board keeps fingers clean, and the board can then be placed into a clean, dry, warm environment for thorough drying. My flywheel was masked around the edge, after it had been given a little polishing, then very carefully trimmed with a fresh bladed scalpel to allow the spokes to be painted. Everything to be painted was first given two coats of acid etching primer to ensure a good key to the metal surface. I used Acid 8 as I've worked with this many times in the past and it keys to surfaces well (see **Photos 1, 2 and 3**).



Richard rarely throws things such as tins of paint away. This can of automotive paint had been on his shelf for many years but, after giving it a very thorough shake and then warming it under a hot tap, results on a test piece confirmed its contents to still be fit for purpose.

The next paint job was the main base, so this was mounted on another scrap of wood and given two coats of a satin finish engine paint (see **Photo 4**). I think I bought this for an old motorcycle crankcase refurbishment around 20 years ago. After applying some to a test piece, I was amazed to find it still dried to a good hard finish. I always shake rattle cans for a lot longer than recommended. I also



Richard's engine base having been treated to a coat of black satin.

warm them up under a hot water tap, as this increases the internal pressure a little, resulting in better atomisation and a quicker drying time (see **Photo 5**). Once my based had been painted, it was then left to harden for a couple of days, after which the bearing surfaces were rubbed clean with fine wet and dry sandpaper on a surface plate.

I then tackled the remaining parts. Another delve into my stock of old, unfinished, rattle cans unearthed a nice gloss red (see **Photo 6**). A little goes a long way and there was more than enough left to give everything two coats (a light dusting then followed by a denser covering). Again, this paint was left to dry for a couple of days (see **Photos 7** and **8**) before any further handling.

To polish or not to polish?

Looking at the remaining pieces it was time to decide what I wanted to do with

them in regards finish. It was tempting to deep polish them with wax-based abrasives on a polishing mop affixed to a Dremel, but, firstly, this takes a lot of work and always makes a big mess and, secondly, a highly polished surface can often end up looking rather unrealistic. Personally, I think a well-used but well looked after appearance makes model engines look far more credible. To achieve something close to this 'simply but frequently rubbed down with an oily rag' effect, I like to polish the surfaces yet not to a particularly high finish and avoid getting into every little nook and cranny. Once surfaces treated in this way get some oil on them, they tend to fit the bill that bit better. I'm sure many will disagree with this approach, but we all have our preferences when it comes to the way we want our plant to look.

So, for this engine I dug out my trusty tin of metal polish. I remember



Richard also used up the remainder of a tin of Rust-Oleum gloss cherry red that had stashed away on his workshop shelves. This stretched to the application of two coats for many of the remaining to be painted parts.



With its base removed, Richard's painting board, was given a light dusting spray followed with a heavier second coat of the gloss red, but not before the top plate had been masked with Frog tape and the crosshead guide masked internally with a roll of paper.



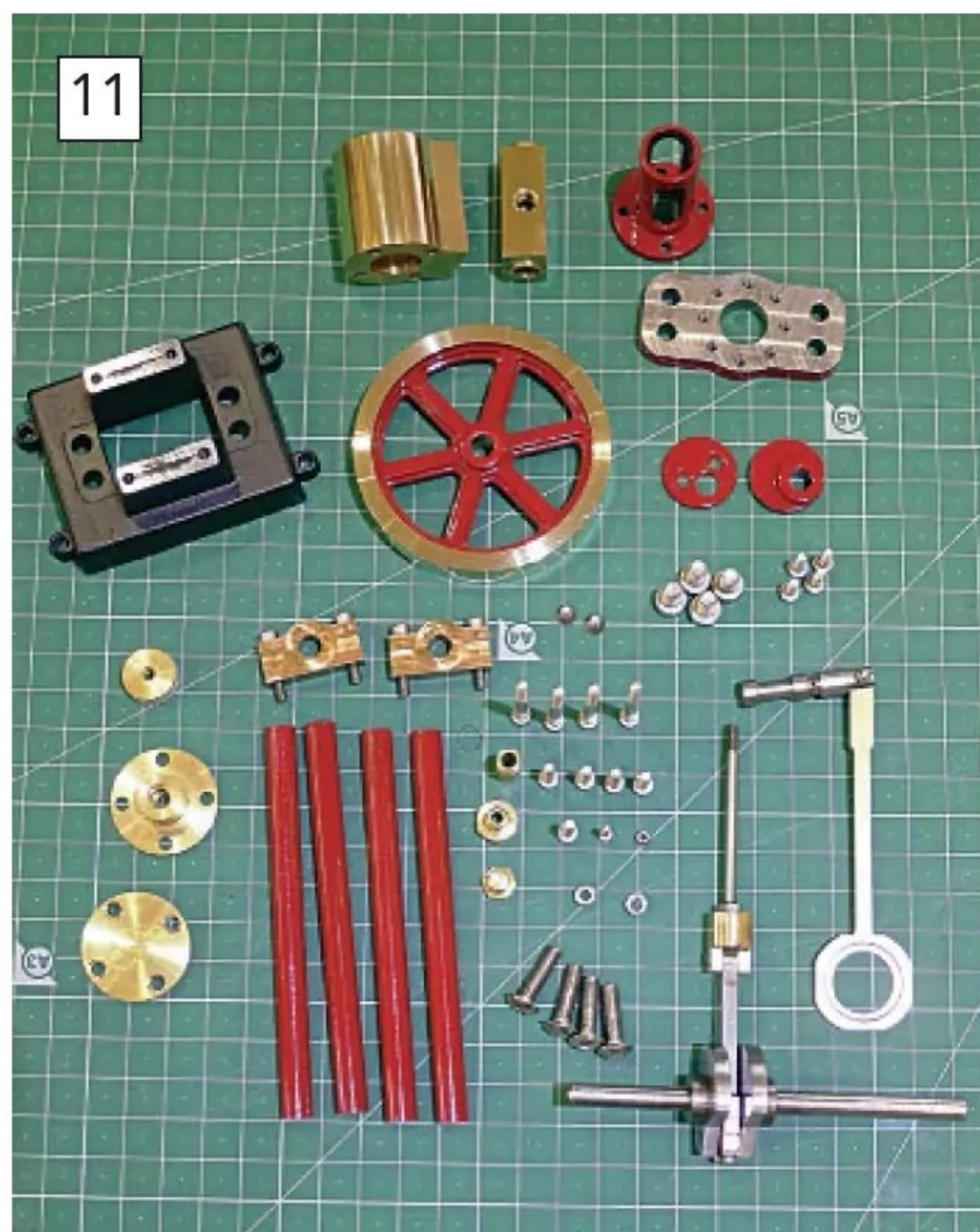
The flywheel was also given a couple of coats of red at the same time. In this close up you can see the kind of surface finish that can be achieved with just two primer coats and two topcoats.

9



An excellent product for hand polishing metal, some of you may remember this polishing wadding when it was sold under its former Duraglit branding. It is now produced and marketed as part of the Brasso range.

11



All of Richard's finished parts ready for reassembly. Using a piece of very fine wet and dry sandpaper, he polished the bearing mounting surfaces on a surface plate to ensure his bearings sat perfectly flat. Most of the running gear remains simply machined.

12



You'll find you get far better control over the application of Thread Lock if you place a spot of it on some scrap and then use a toothpick to apply it to the first couple of threads. That's all you need for a model assembly.

10



Not being a great fan of very highly polished brass, Richard prefers to create a more realistic (i.e., well used but well looked after) finish.

this product, namely a wadding impregnated with metal polish, being around when I was a youngster and sold under the brand name Duraglit, but it now forms part of the Brasso range (see **Photo 9**). Rubbing this wadding onto a brass surface leaves a dry film of polish that simply then needs wiping off with a soft cloth to reveal a nicely polished surface. I polished the cylinder surfaces and the valve chest but left all other metal parts in their original machined finish (see **Photo 10**).

"I'm sure many will disagree with this approach, but we all have our preferences when it comes to the way we want our plant to look"

I now had a set of suitably finished parts ready to assemble again (see **Photo 11**).

Preparation

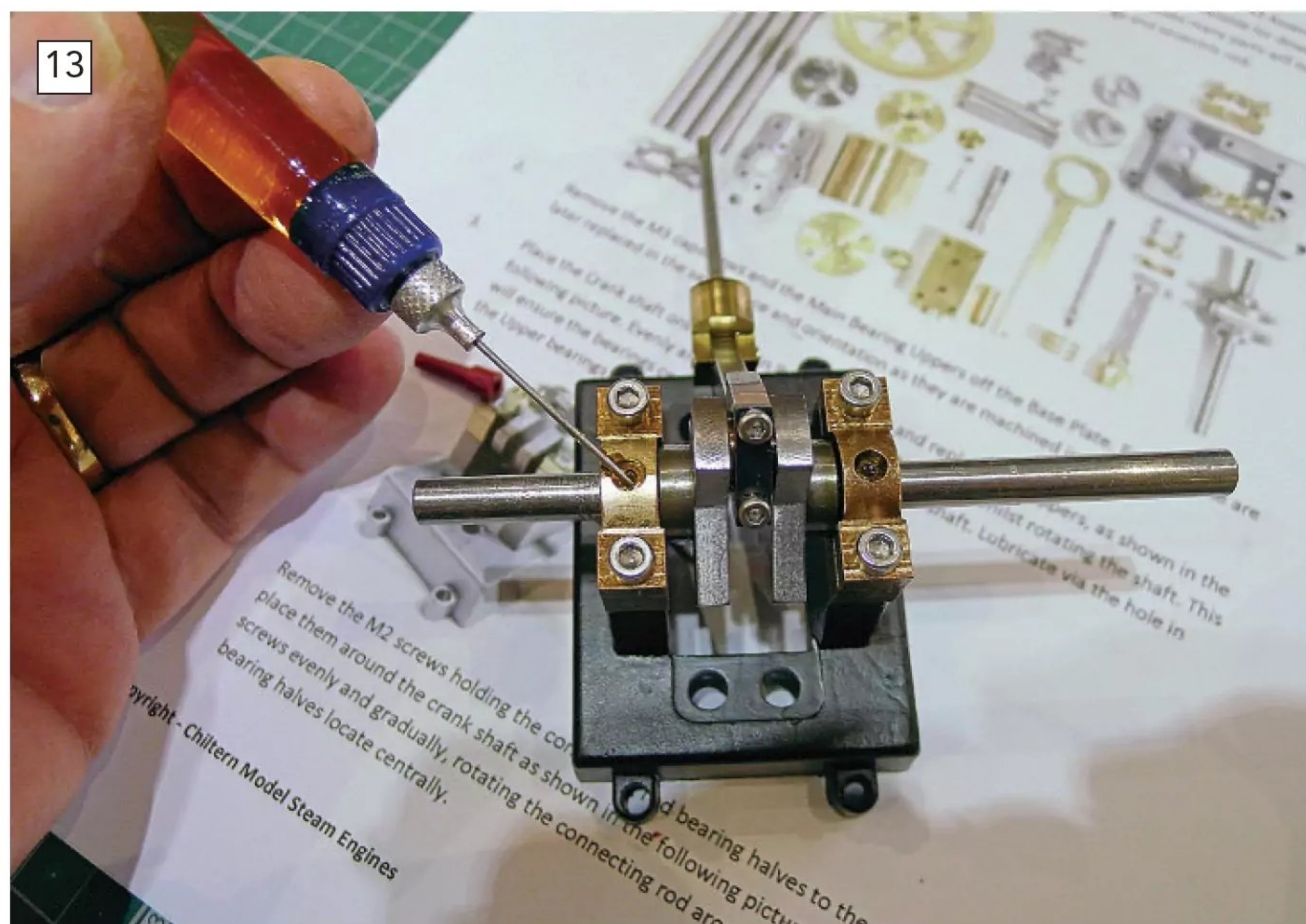
A couple of differences between the assembly this time and the last time was the consideration of the use of a threadlock and a sealant.

Threadlock can prevent fastenings coming loose, a particularly important consideration in a reciprocating machine that can vibrate. A quick caveat here, however... It has to be the right one. There are a very wide range of 'Loctite' products, all with very different purposes

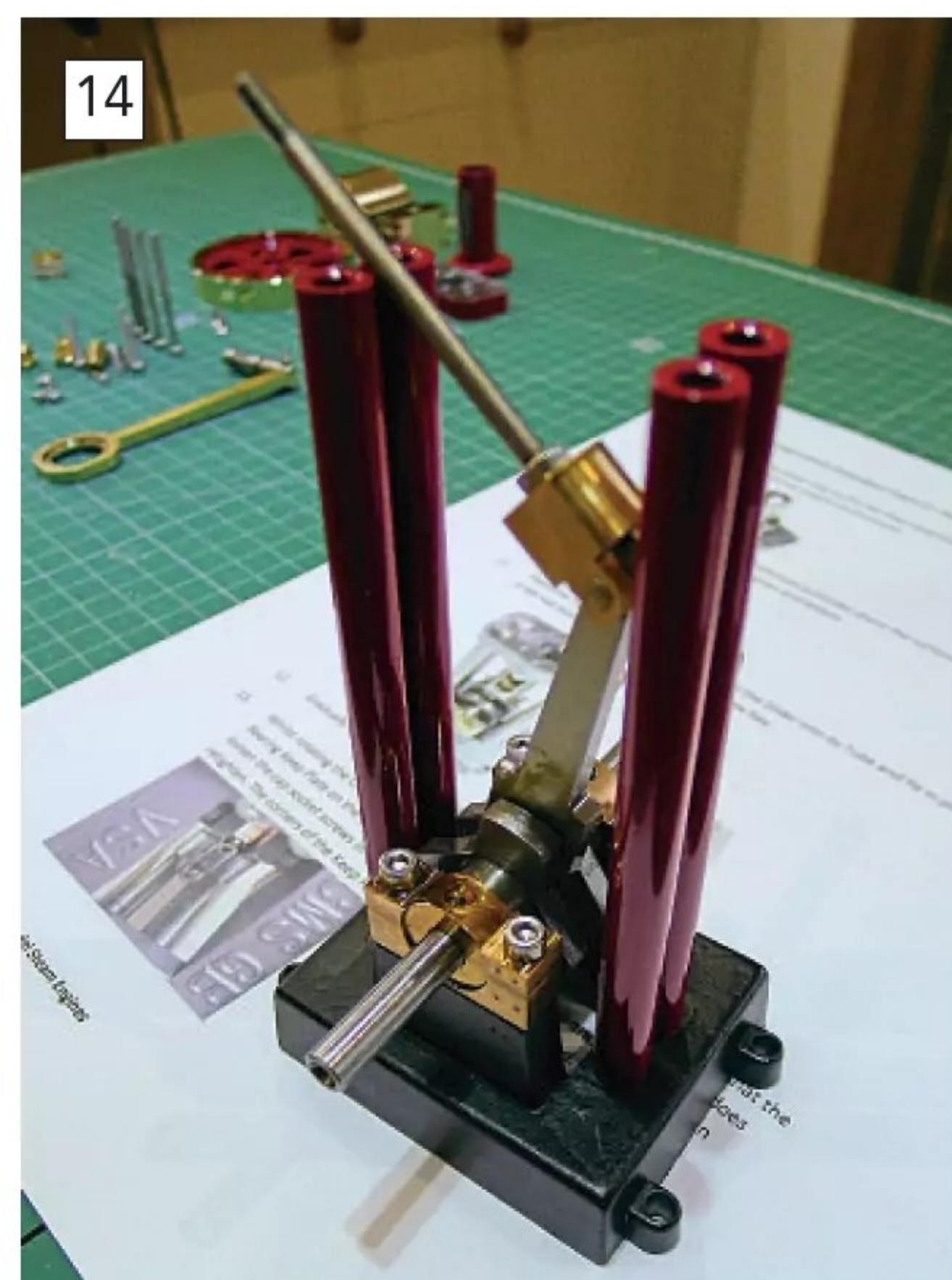
and, consequently, very different characteristics. If you decide, for instance, to use a bearing lock product as a threadlock, there's a very high risk of doing damage should you ever need to disassemble your engine. The bottom line here is use the minimal amount of product possible. I have seen engineers in the past smothering fastenings with a Loctite product before assembly, but this simply isn't necessary. I don't apply directly from the bottle. I simply place a spot on a piece of scrap material and then use a toothpick to transfer a small dot of product to the first couple of threads of the fastener. This will do the job and still allow disassembly in the future.

"Threadlock can prevent fastenings coming loose, a particularly important consideration in a reciprocating machine that can vibrate. A quick caveat here, however..."

As regards sealant, I'd noticed, when assembling the engine for the first time, that the finish of the cylinder's sealing surfaces was on its own good enough to permit a quick soapy water leak test while the engine was running. I didn't get any leaking air at either cylinder top, bottom joints or the valve chest. Consequently, as I still intend running



As this is now the final assembly, the bearing surfaces have been given a liberal application of engine oil, followed by more in the oil cups.



The four columns once again added to the main base; this was done taking care not to scratch the paint surface with the loose crosshead. The column screws are yet to be tightened, although some Thread Lock has been used.

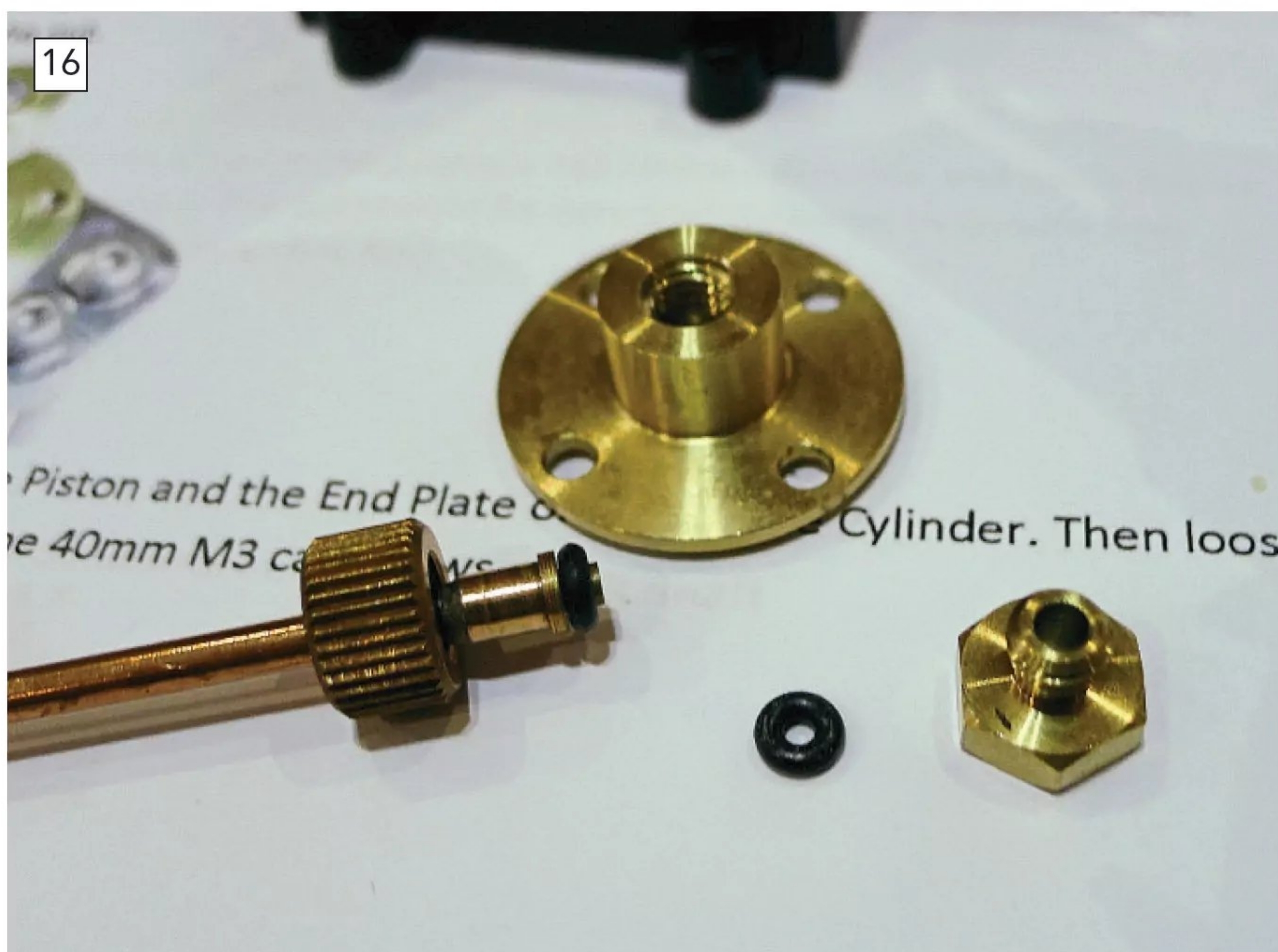


Here the crosshead guide has been screwed to the base of the top plate, then dropped onto the tops of the four columns and the crosshead – again, cautiously, to avoid damaging the paint. The crosshead has been well oiled and the eight screws on the columns all tightened up.

the engine on air for a while, I decided not to use a sealing compound. If I ever run the engine on steam, I will conduct another soapy water leak test and only use sealant if necessary.

Reassembly

From this point on, it was back to simply following the instructions again. The crankshaft was reassembled and then replaced into the main bearings, with a spot of



A number of sources of 'O' rings were tried before a gas pipe seal was found to be a perfect fit. This slid over the piston rod smoothly and pushed into the gland without much effort, thereby compressing the 'O' ring just enough to effect a seal.

threadlock on the fastenings (see **Photo 12**). Engine oil was smeared over the running surfaces before assembly and then added to the oiling recesses in the upper bearing keeps (see **Photo 13**). The bearings were then tightened down, ensuring that everything remained free turning.

The piston rod was fitted with the lock nut – again, treated to a spot of threadlock, and the four columns were loosely fitted to the base (see **Photo 14**). The crosshead guide was fitted to the base of the upper plate, then in turn

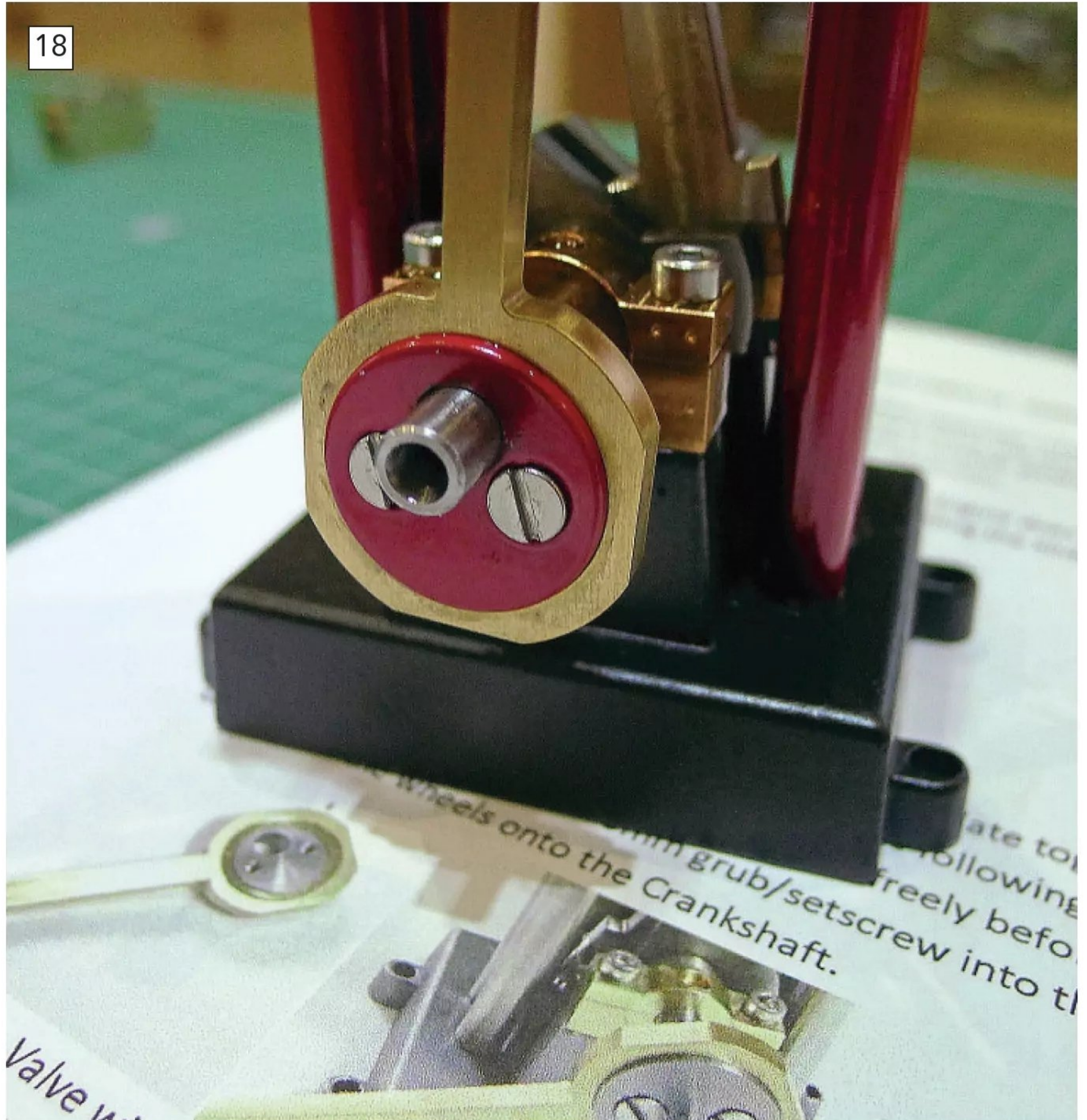
to the top of the four columns, with the crosshead easily slotting into the well-oiled guides. Everything turned freely once the columns had all been tightened (see **Photo 15**). The instructions advise that the piston rod gland should have some PTFE thread tape put into it to act as a seal but, as PTFE doesn't return to its original shape after compression, I was a little concerned it wouldn't provide the best seal. This needed some serious consideration as the gland nut is not accessible after assembly, so cannot be adjusted. Consequently, I had a dig



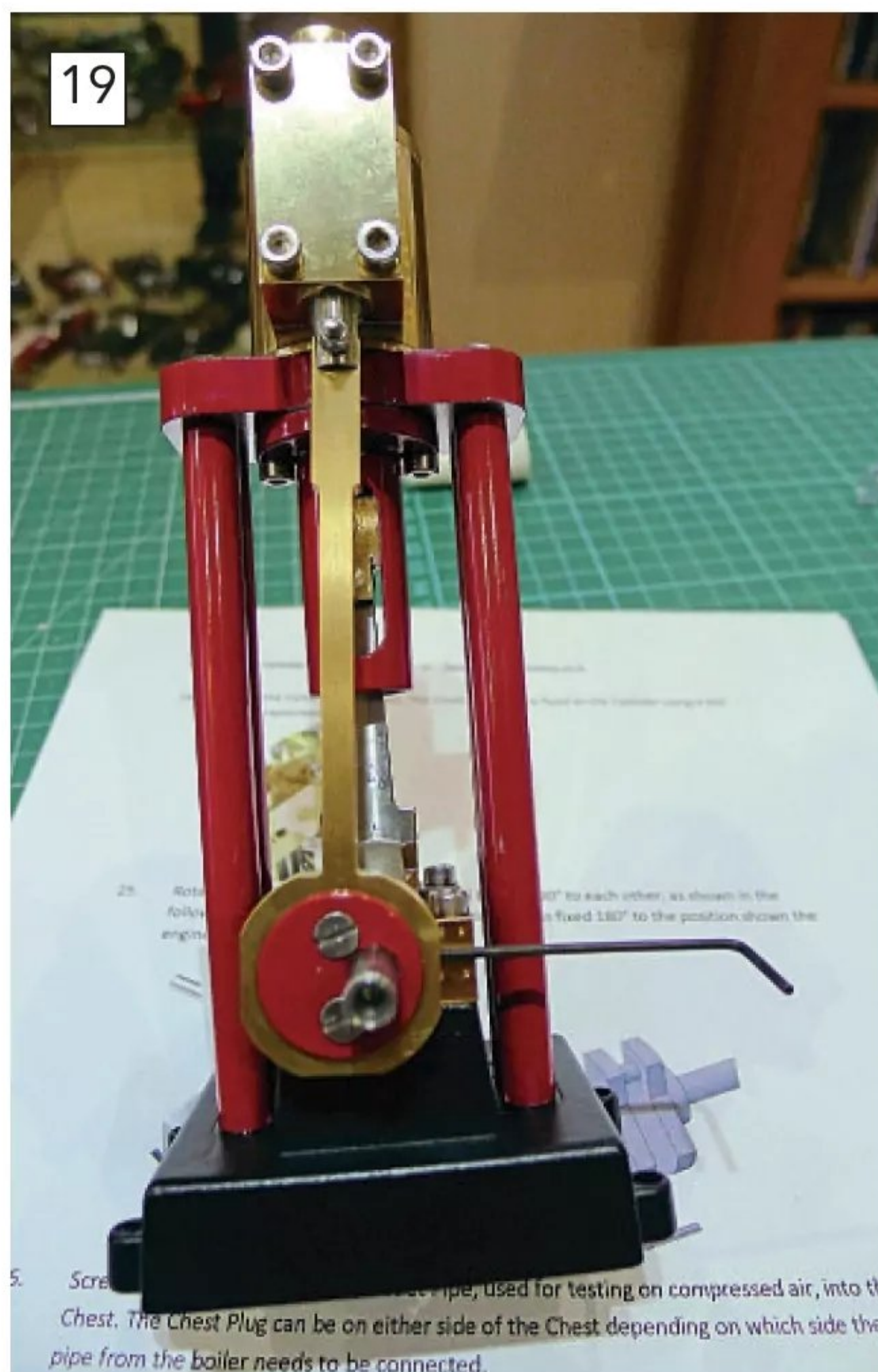
The cylinder base, piston, cylinder and cylinder cover all dropped in place, with some oil on the piston and the main four-cylinder screws fitted. Everything continues to rotate smoothly and easily.

around for some suitable 'O' rings. After trying a number of possibilities, the ones I used in the end of the gas pipe connectors to the disposable tank valves did the job perfectly (see **Photo 16**). Again, I put a spot of threadlock on the gland threads before I pushed the cylinder base over the piston rod and into place. After the piston was then fitted, the cylinder placed over it and the cylinder cover fitted, everything was held down with the four long screws that fit into the baseplate (see **Photo 17**).

The valve was loosely assembled with the two halves of the eccentrics, and some oil applied around the running surfaces before the eccentric was slid onto the crankshaft. The two countersunk screws were then tightened in place, thereby ensuring the best fit on the crankshaft (see **Photo 18**). The valve chest was then oiled and slid over the valve before placing on the mating face of the cylinder and securing with the four screws, while ensuring that the eccentric was perfectly aligned on the crankshaft with the valve position. Rotating proved everything was still running smoothly. The valve timing was set according to the instructions (see **Photo 19**), the flywheel fitted to the crankshaft and the blanking plug fitted to one of the two possible inlet connections on the valve chest. Everything certainly turned smoothly and the engine looked considerably smarter than it did after the dry run. A run on air ascertained everything was working as it should and that the engine was operating smoothly and reliably (see **Photo 20**).



The instructions suggest assembling the eccentric onto the crankshaft before tightening the countersunk screws. Richard's screws were given a spot of threadlock, and the eccentric a liberal coating of oil, before assembly.

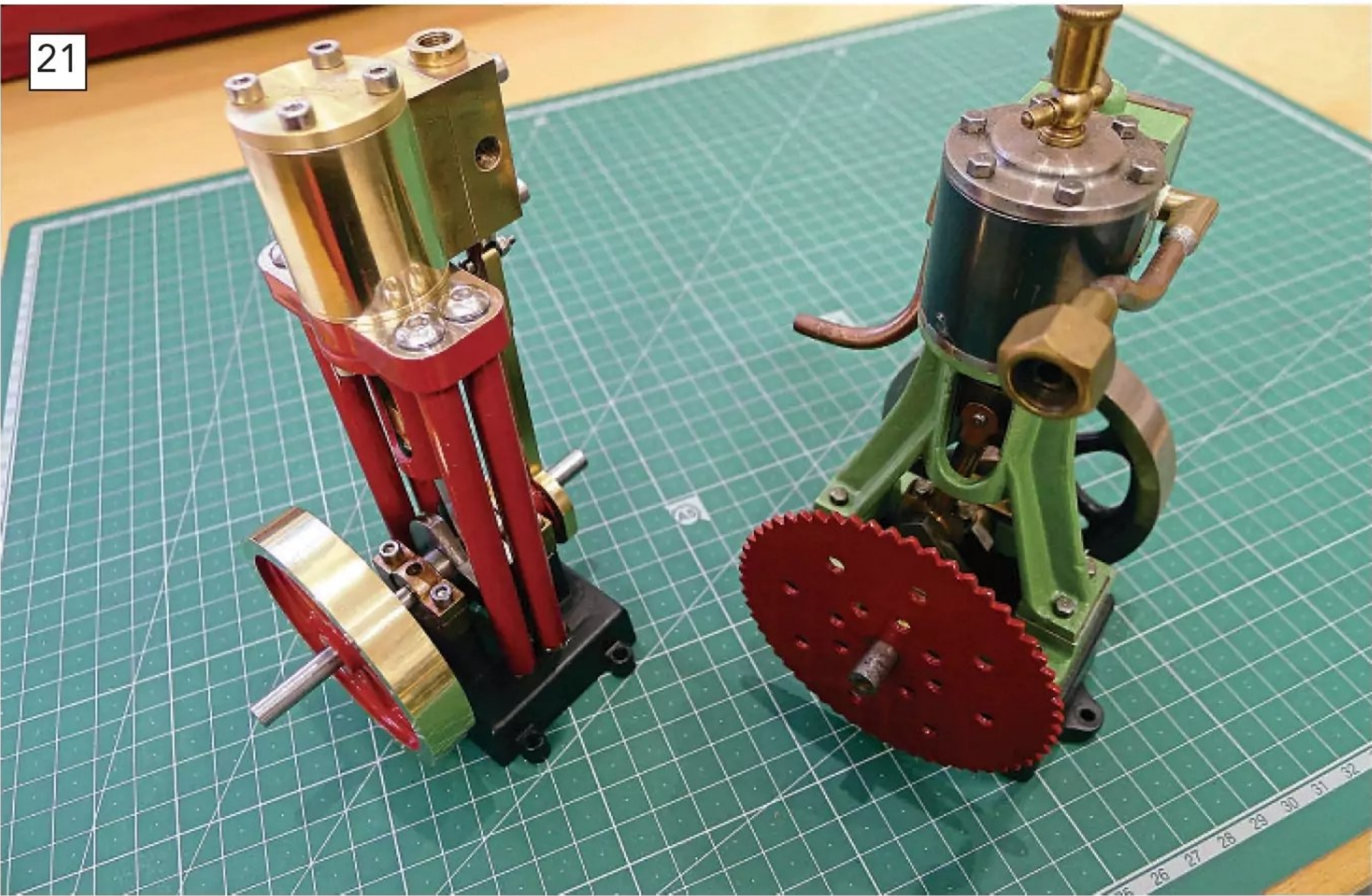


In Richard's opinion, this is one the simplest valve-operated engines in terms of setting the timing. The con rod must be vertical, while the Allen key on the eccentric grub screw needs to be horizontal, at which point it can be tightened. It couldn't, he points out, be easier.



The flywheel was the only remaining part to be added before the engine was given a run on air. A beautifully smooth run on very little air pressure once again confirmed what a superbly designed and machined engine this is.

	Chiltern Vertical Marine Single	Stuart Models 10V Machined Kit
Bore	14mm	19.05mm
Stroke	18mm	19.05mm
Height	160mm	150mm
Weight	1039gm	1045gm
Width, Base	47mm	44mm
Width, Overall	100mm	95mm
Depth, Base	75mm	95mm
Price, Machined Kit	£182	£623



While the Chiltern engine may seem a little on the large side for many model boat applications, it is very close in dimensions to a Stuart 10V, which remains a very popular choice amongst marine modellers.



Interestingly, on only 5psi of compressed air, the Chiltern engine managed a healthy 795 rpm; and while under load the rpm would be significantly less, the boiler is capable of providing a lot more than 5 psi.



At exactly the same air pressure, the Stuart Turner 10V ran at 287 rpm. As the stroke is slightly greater, the torque will also be increased, so the 10V is probably capable of turning a larger propeller easier.

“So, how does this Chiltern engine compare with the Stuart Models’ 10V?”

A brief comparison

So, how does this Chiltern engine compare with Stuart Models’ 10V – traditionally a favourite for so many steam model enthusiasts? They are both single cylinder, double acting vertical valve engines with very similar specifications so, I think it’s worth taking a look at them side by side (see **Photo 21**).

While the 10V is of slightly larger bore and stroke, the overall dimensions are surprisingly close. The 10V, being a slide valve engine has the potential to be a little more efficient, but for modelling use hardly any noticeable difference would be likely. I found the revolutions both engines gave out for an air supply pressure of 5 psi most interesting: the Chiltern engine turned at 795 rpm (see **Photo 22**), while the 10V turned over at 287 rpm (see **Photo 23**).

It should be noted that the 10V engine is actually a very old engine and the slide valve surfaces and port edges are not in the best of condition.

Conclusions

Once painted and polished, the Chiltern engine certainly builds into a handsome engine. It’s very straightforward to assemble, thanks to the excellent instructions and superb quality of the parts. When compared to a traditional cast model such as the 10V, it is surprisingly similar in dimensions, so there are certainly model boat applications that the Chiltern would be suitable for. Also, if headroom is of concern, there’s a version in a slightly lower form.

Performance wise, the Chiltern engine really makes the most of the supplied pressure and will, almost certainly, hold its own pushing a 3ft model around the pond, while not forgetting the limitations of a non-self-starting, and hence non-reversible, engine.

You get a lot of high-quality engineering and a superb and very capable engine for your money from Chiltern, making it a proposition very hard to ignore.

I’m now looking forward to seeing the promised smaller engine from Chiltern, hopefully with reversing and self-starting capabilities, as this will be a very strong contender for any of my future model steamboat projects. ●

MOTOR TUG LOWGARTH

Scale 1:32
Length 950mm
Beam 270mm



The original vessel was built by Richards Shipbuilders at Lowestoft and launched in 1965 as a development of the Plumgarth/Avongarth class. The success of her design led to a further four ships of almost identical design.

She was powered by a 7 cylinder oil engine built by Ruston & Horsby, to a single fixed pitch propeller operating with a Kort steerable nozzle.

Following sale by Cory and a number of years moored on the River Weaver she was purchased by Rigg Shipping and converted for coastal towing.

Latterly Lowgarth was sold to Fendercare and now operates in Nigeria carrying the name Charles Plane.

Kit comes complete with brass propeller and shaft

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BRITISH 'SPARKIES'

Dave Wiggins reflects back on some of the popular in the 1950s petrol engines

Having provided a very brief introduction to the accessories for model petrol (gas) engines once available in the last instalment of Memory Lane, this month we're going to be taking a look at a selection of the once popular British 'Sparkies' (I will be describing for you a brace of each: two aero 2-strokes and two marine 4-strokes) and a few of the accessories that were required to operate one of these internal combustion engines, whether in a vintage model aeroplane or a 1950s' model boat.

In boats

First up is the Jensen 'Channel Islands' 10cc 4-stroke petrol engine that I introduced back in the March issue. At the time Jensen designed this once popular medium sized engine (available both air- and water-cooled if purchased ready to run), petrol more or less still 'ruled the waves' in the model power boat world (alongside steam and electric propulsion for slower scale models), the easier to operate baby diesel not being introduced to the UK from Europe until the mid-1950s.

Builders of large competition models however continued to favour petrol power well into the early/mid-1960s, and this was especially the case in straight running regattas, where the home build

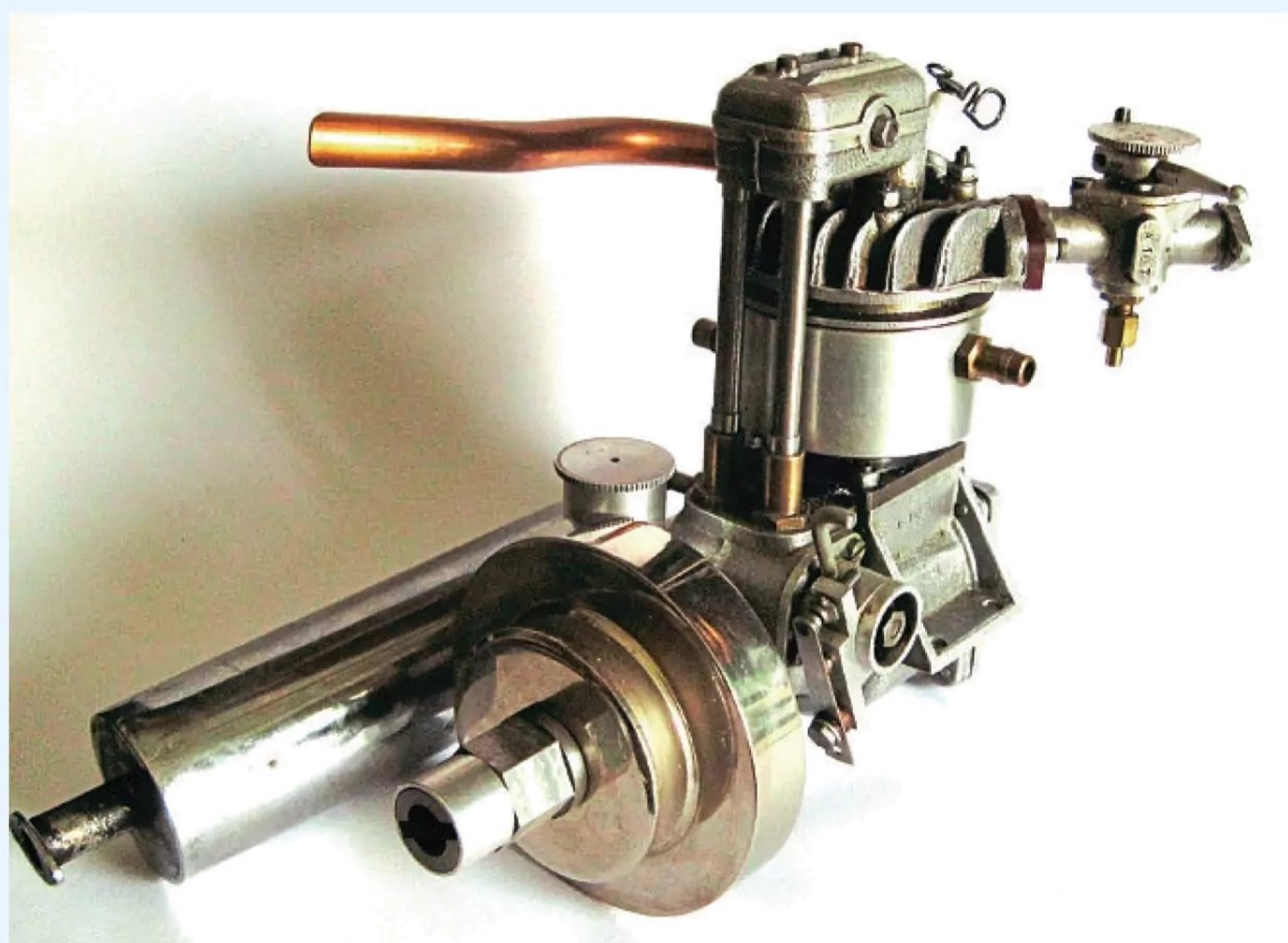
designs of Edgar Westbury were much seen. Looking at my photographs, I think you can see that scale appearance was quite a feature of the 'CI', with the rocker box and guide covers adding to give a 'full size'/motorcycle impression. Even more fascinating detail is revealed by the radiograph, which shows every internal detail of a single cylinder 4-stroke ignition engine, including its valves, tappets and pushrods, as well as the piston and bore. Adding the nice mounting plate and a well-engineered silencer (shown in my March column and in one of this month's trio of CI shots), the entire effect is professional, and, in this respect, the 1950s' appeal of owning and running a 'CI' is easily appreciated. The close-up I include is of the contact breaker (or make and break) – an essential of all model spark-ignition engines. I never ran a 'CI' back then, but I certainly did briefly own and run the next engine...

"In this respect, the 1950s' appeal of owning and running a 'CI' is easily appreciated"

Like the CI, the ever-popular GANnet 15cc petrol engines now command high prices if still in good order. There's no

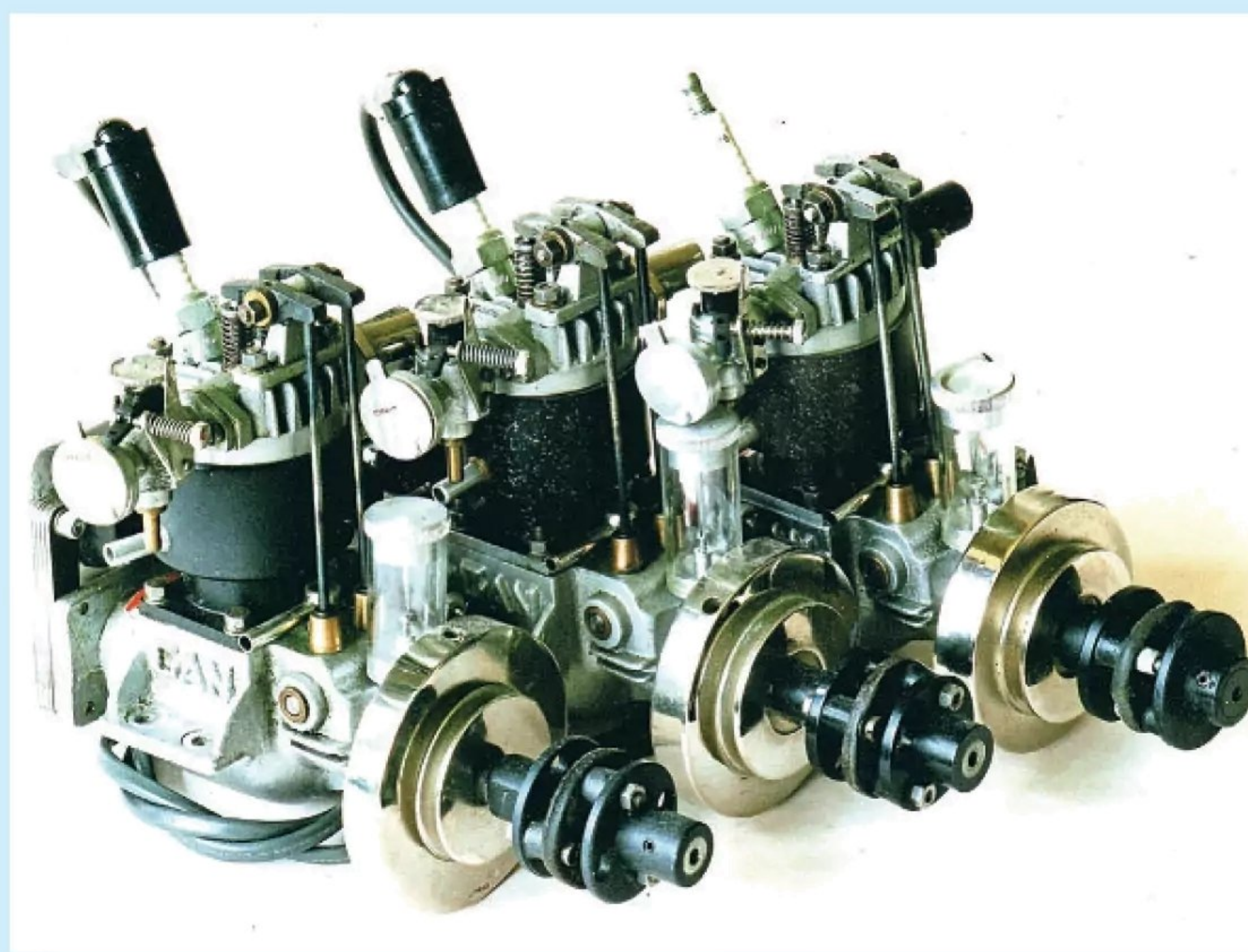


A radiograph (X-ray) image of our 10cc Channel Island Special petrol 4-stroke.

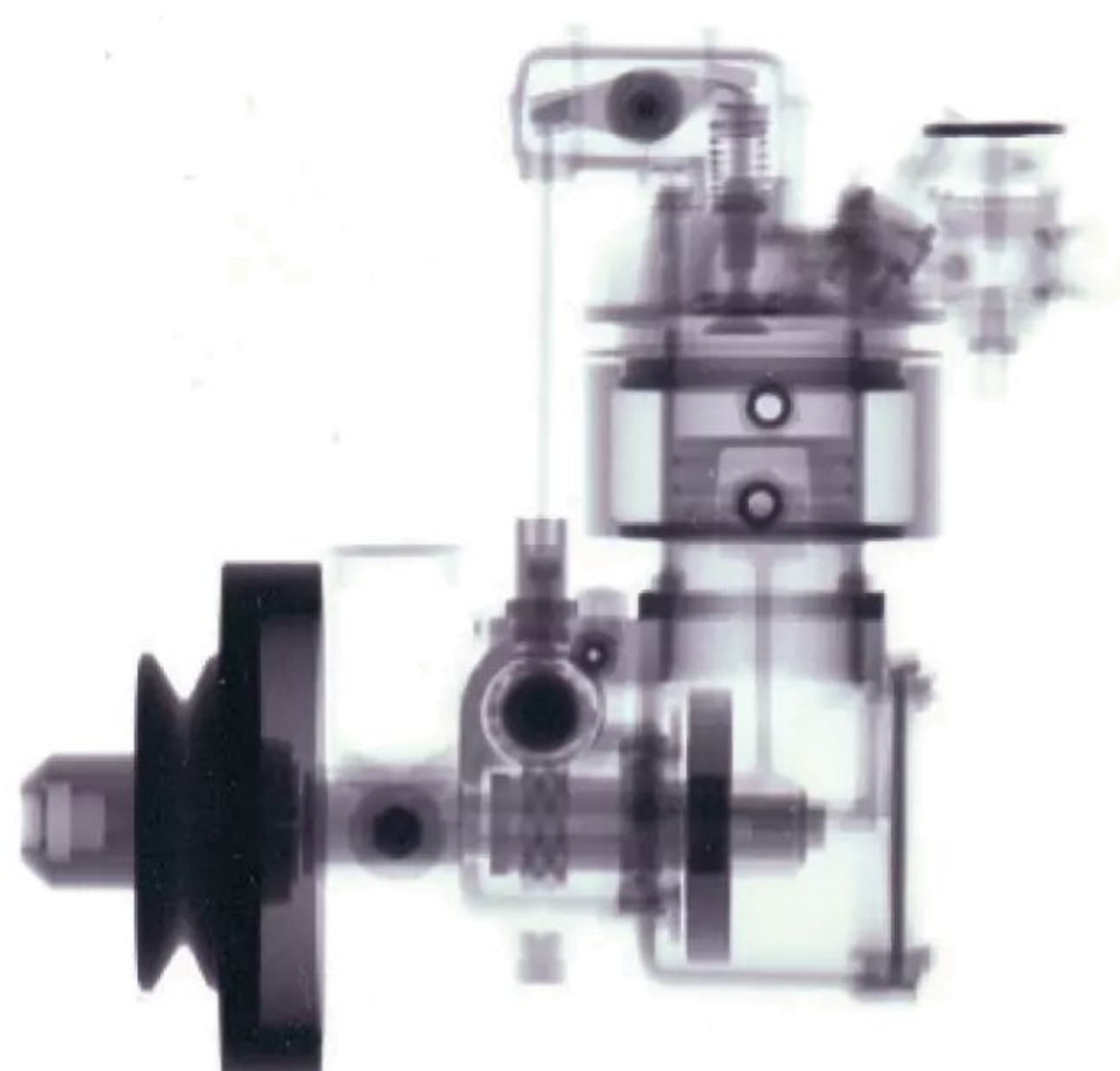


A Channel Islands 10cc marine petrol engine; the points can be clearly seen.





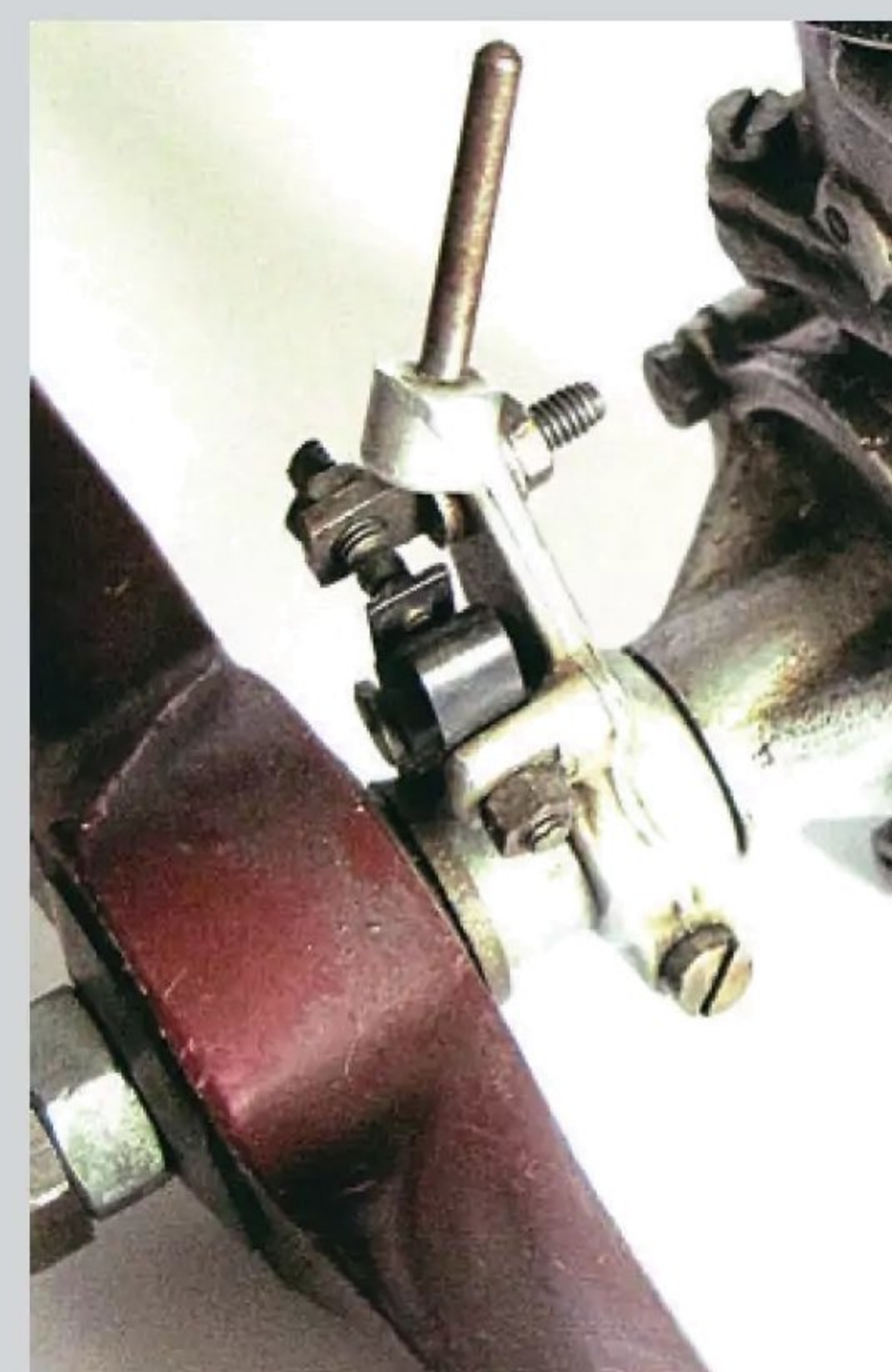
The once very popular GANnet 15cc four stroke marine engine. The trio of engines pictured were restored by Dave and one of friends.



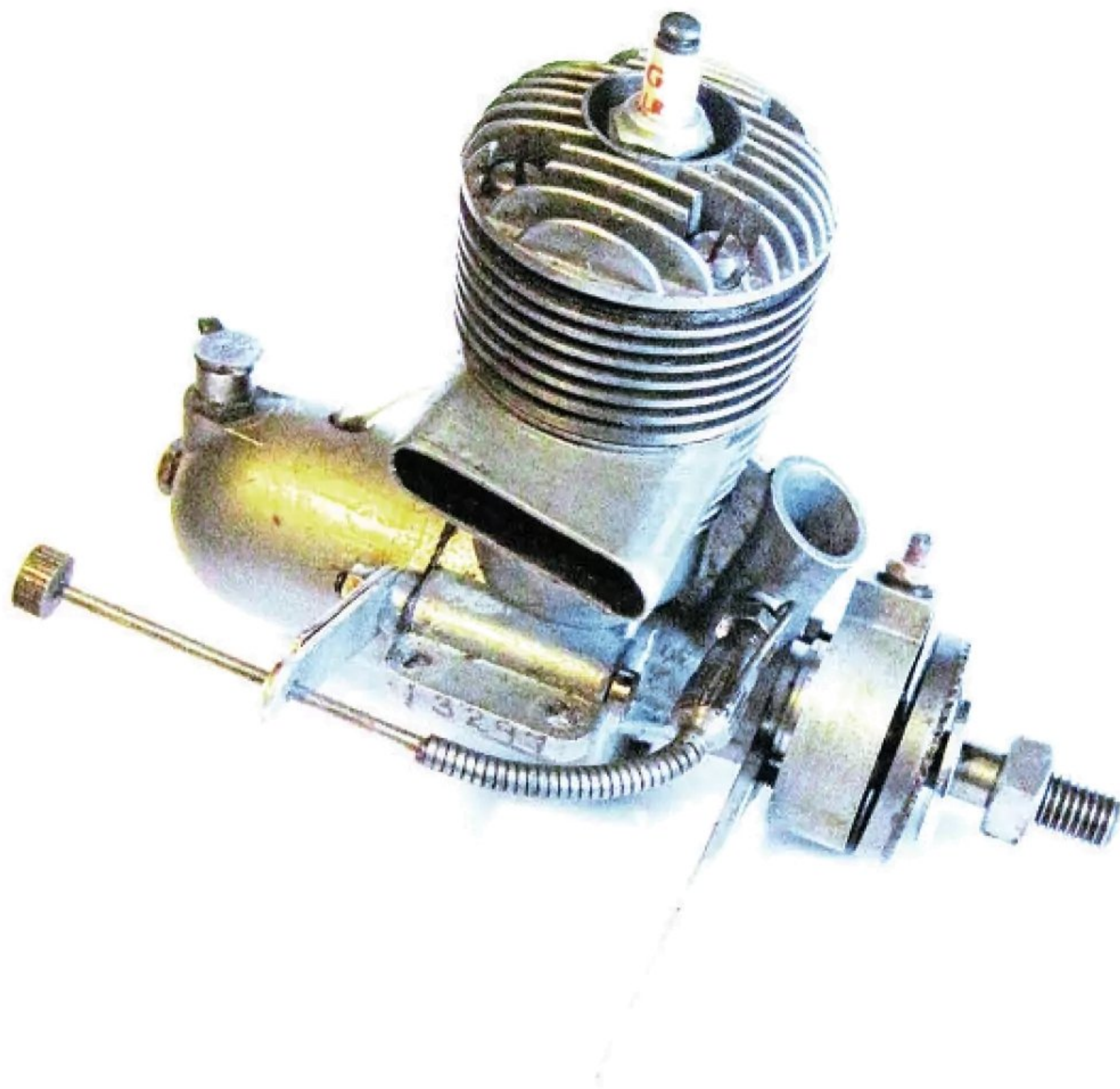
doubt that designer George Nurthen took the earlier engine as an example when designing the bigger and much 'chunkier' GANnet-15 at his Whitstable workshop but, that said, the GANnet does not compare to the Channel Island in terms of scale appearance or finish. Very much in its favour, however, was that the GANnet was less fussy to operate when first introduced (see later) and was big and powerful. As a result, Mr Nurthen's engine dominated 15cc R/C racing and straight running contests for many years and built up a first-class reputation for reliability and ease of use. There were, though, a few downsides. Taking delivery, whether one was ordering direct from the Whitstable workshop or via trade distributors RipMax Ltd, took its time. Mr Nurthen's engines were all

built to order, regardless of whether they were one-off engines ordered directly by individual customers or those included in the small batches produced for RipMax, meaning it could take months for spare parts orders to be fulfilled.

Once the engine had become well-established, the two original partners (Mssrs Nurthen and Muirhead) took in a third partner, a chap named Ivor Morgan. Mr Morgan (who I knew, briefly) designed a small rotary magnet magneto for the engine, this intended to lower the all up weight of operating a GANnet by eliminating a lead-acid battery and ignition coil. While commercially successful at the time, these add-on units have failed in every single example I've handled in recent years, so one can only imagine the magnets used were



The Keil Kraft K6 2-stroke. Image courtesy of the Dell family collection.



Dave's Frog 500 (5cc) 2-stroke 'sparkie' c. late 1950s

of an inferior quality. I've encountered two different magnet types, which may indicate the manufacturer was aware there was a problem even at the time.

"Mr Nurthen's engine dominated 15cc R/C racing and straight running contests for many years and built up a first-class reputation for reliability and ease of use. There were, though, a few downsides..."

Before wrapping up the subject of GANnets, it may be interesting to newer readers to learn that Mr Nurthen also manufactured a few petrol twins, both of side valve and OHV type. These were inevitably one-offs but were seen on the early 1960s' regatta scene; at least one was enthusiastically operated by RipMax boss Max Coote, a keen promoter of the GANnet. There was also an air-cooled version offered for aircraft use (although I cannot imagine this was very popular, owing to weight alone) and, a bit later on, Mr Nurthen tried out an all new 15cc glow-plug marine engine design for which overseas contest wins were claimed. It looks, from period advertising, as if this may have been a 2-stroke but, as I've never seen an actual example, I cannot be sure.

Petrol engines in aircraft

Petrol engines in model aircraft use go right back to the very beginning of powered model flight, of course. Inevitably of simpler and more lightweight 2-stroke/ single-cylinder layout (though there were

certainly a few twin and even flat-four engines as early as the 1930s), and often of American origin, these were all that was available for powered flight until the miniature 'diesel' was invented in Europe.

The two featured here are, I think, quite different.

The Frog-500 5cc 2-stroke sparkie is from my own collection. I have examples of this engine in both glow and petrol versions and they are identical except for the obvious need for ignition points (a contact breaker) on the petrol version. Engine tests made at the time (the late 1950s) suggested that the spark/ petrol version was the more powerful of the pair, which is maybe just a bit surprising if correct. The Frog was much promoted as 'ideal for radio-control use', which is even more surprising, as all early valve radio gear was very susceptible to ignition interference.

"Precious few examples of this type of very early (1946) British aero engine seem to have survived"

The second aero engine, a Keil K6 2-stroke petrol job, isn't mine but owned by friends. Precious few examples of this type of very early (1946) British aero engine seem to have survived, so I am most grateful to them for allowing me to share some photos here. It's thought to have been the result of collaboration between Eddie Keil (founder of the Keil Kraft concern) and a man possibly called Kemp (he of the Kemp diesel maybe?), with a view to challenging the dominance of American power plants. This is all hearsay, gleaned from the internet and

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June	WOLVERHAMPTON — 1st SPEED/1st STEERING.
July	MAIDSTONE — 1st STEERING.
July	BRIGHTON — 1st STEERING.
July	VICTORIA — 1st TOWING.
July	DOVER — 1st SPEED/1st STEERING.
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WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISEMENTS
A 1964 GANnet Christmas ad from Model Maker magazine.

the research of others, and I don't know anything more. Back in summer 2024 however, my friends report they did run this engine and found it satisfactory on petrol-oil mix. Another big surprise (to me) is that I recently found a second example being advertised out in the United States. How it got there is a bit of a mystery. Americans totally dominated aero/petrol power during the time it was in production, so would surely not have imported British petrol engines.

Small model aircraft petrol engines (like the K6 and Frog) ran on a fuel called Petr-Oil (a mixture of petrol and oil), while the bigger 4-strokes shown ran on ordinary unleaded premium petrol plus a dash of Redex, with separate lubrication provided by small oil (SAE30 grade) tanks set over the crankshaft. For prolonged R/C running, larger oil tanks were needed.

Next time around I'll be taking a short break from engines to focus on some more of the accessories aimed at vintage R/C users, so join me for another stroll down Memory Lane then. ●

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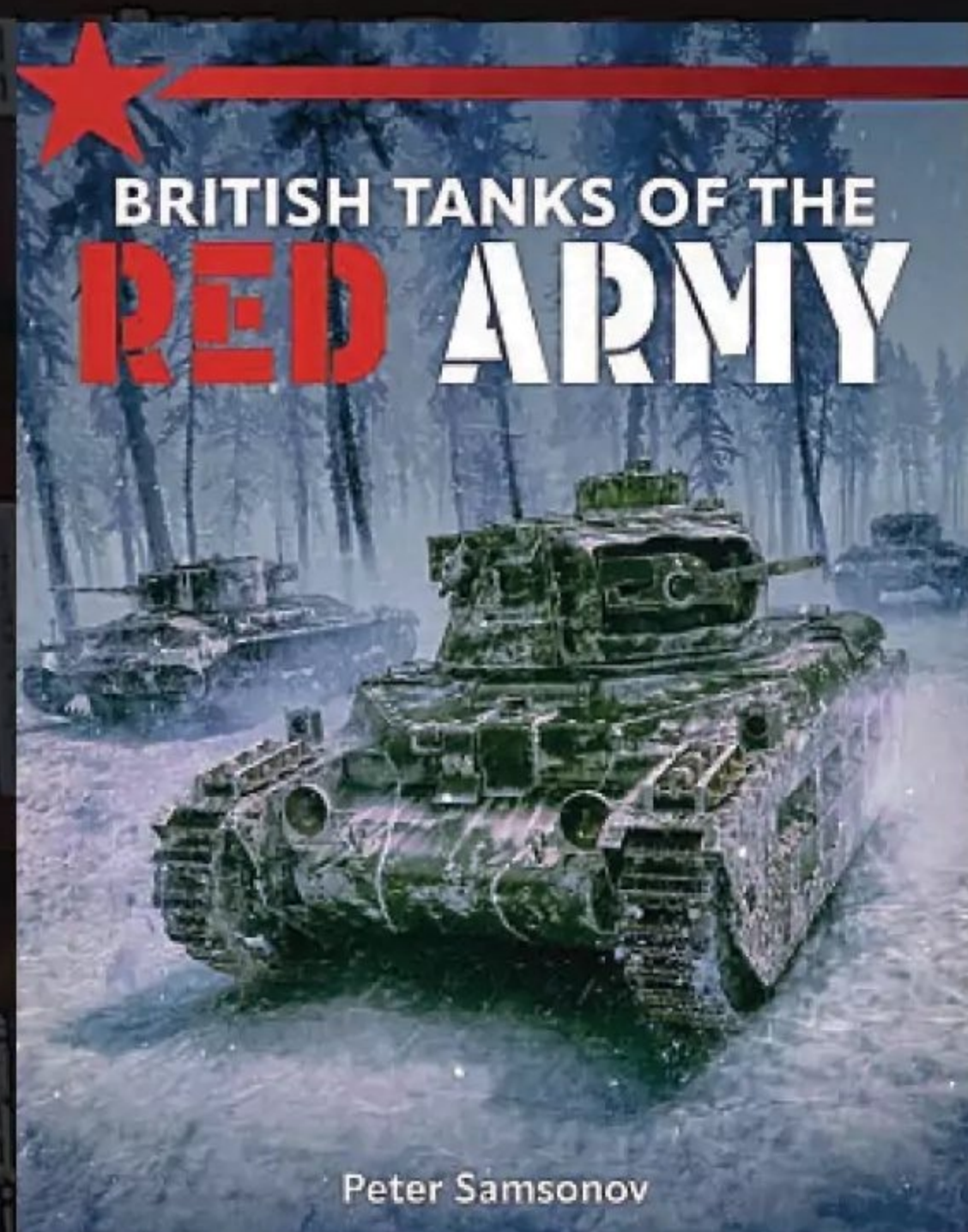
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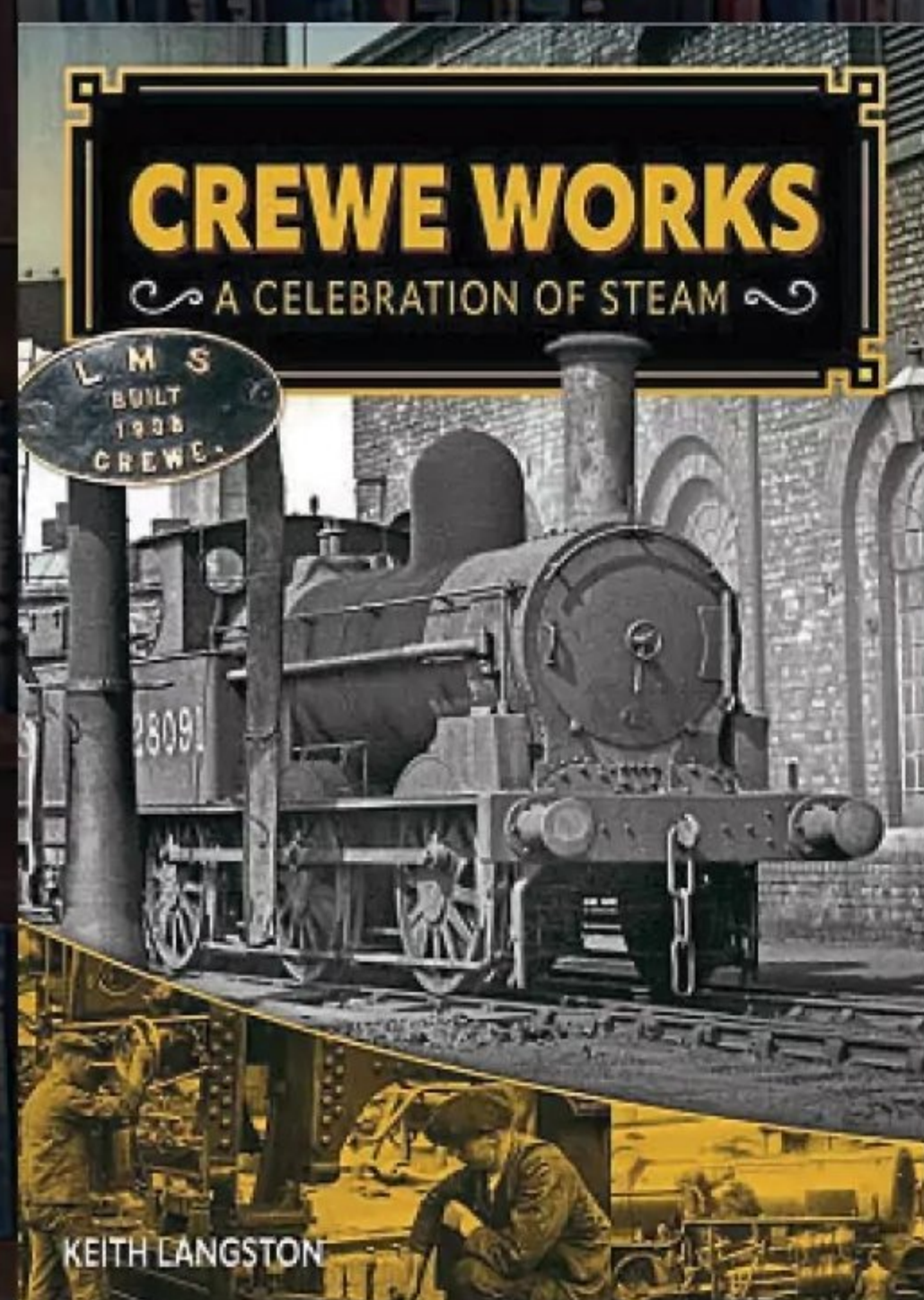
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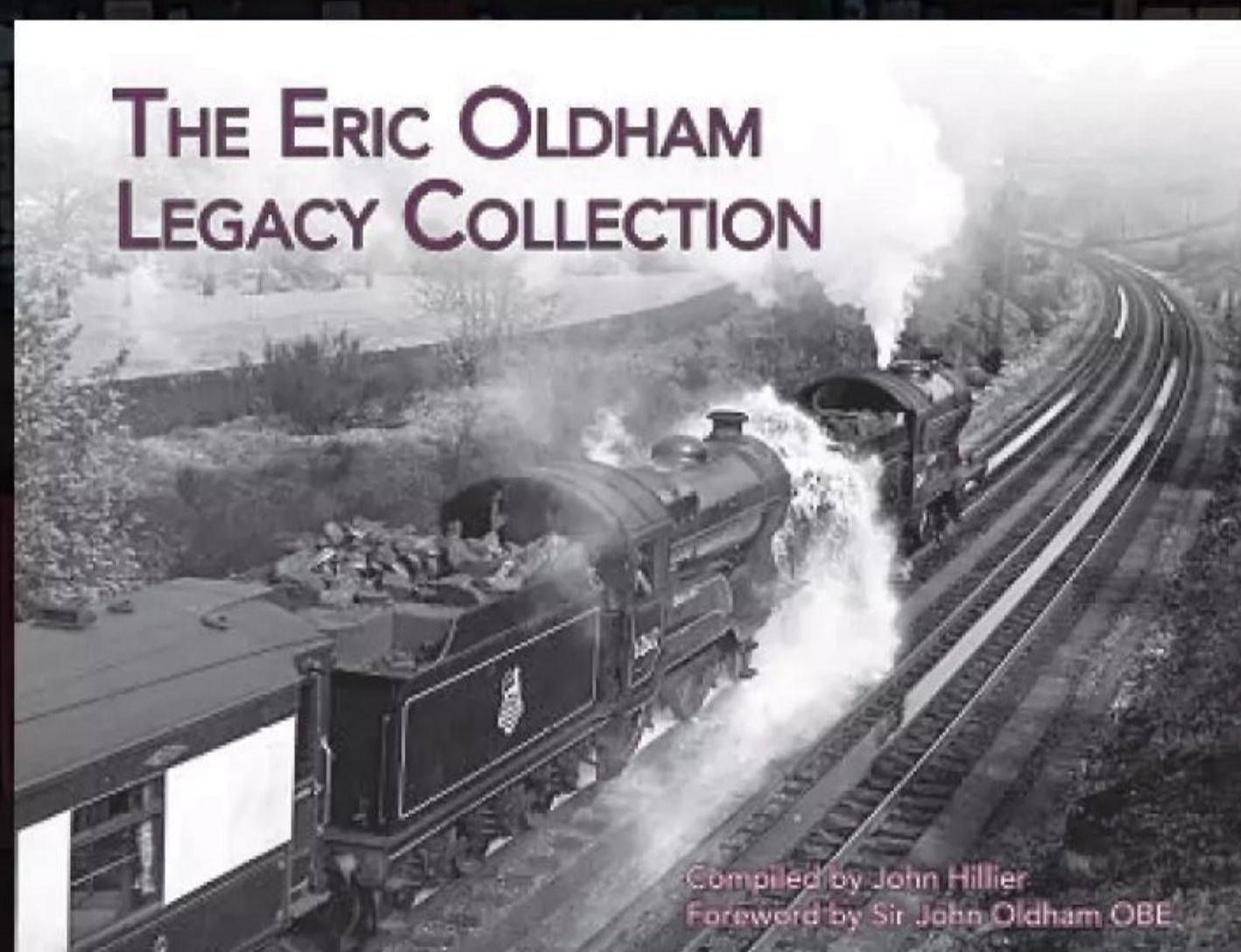


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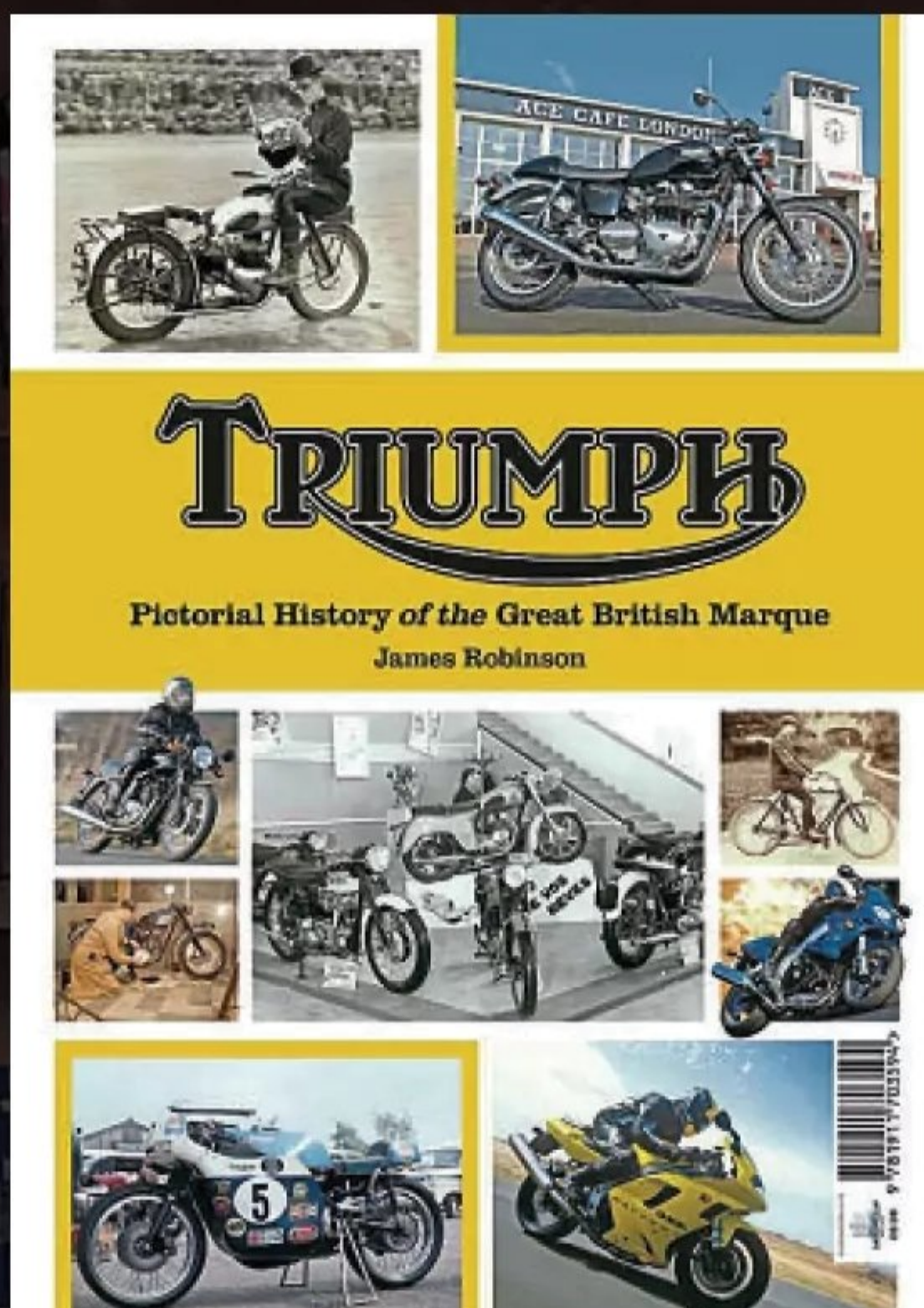
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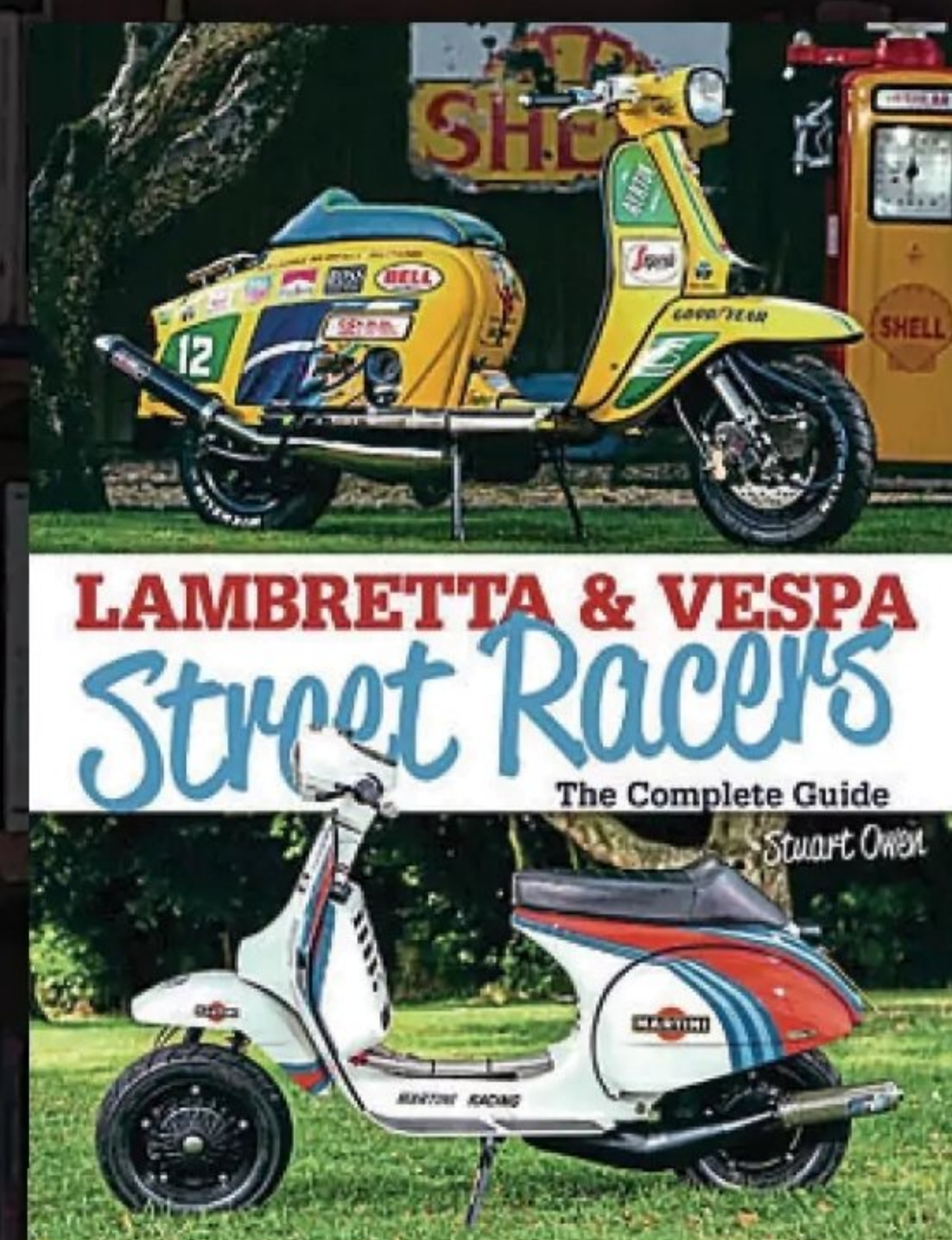
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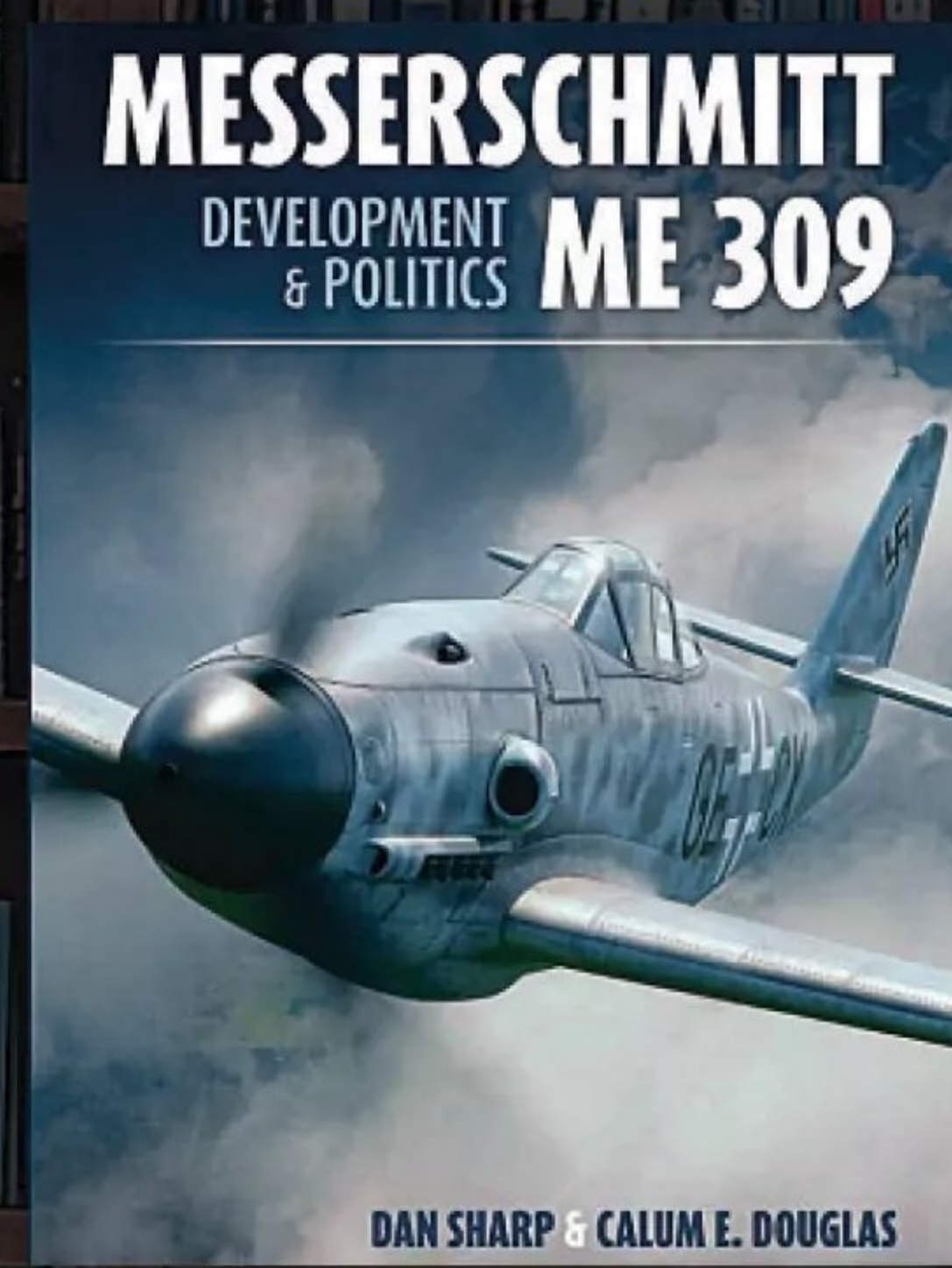
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Past and Present

Gripe Sheet

Glynn Guest shares a handy ‘Aide-memoire’

There can be few modellers who have not returned home, especially after a maiden voyage, with a few items that need adjusting on the model. This is when you suddenly try to remember, did it list to port or starboard, which motor started to turn first, and such like. I have, in the past, been guilty of this myself, and let me tell you that getting it wrong and carrying out the wrong adjustments is likely to make the next sailing session, well, let’s just say, interesting!

The obvious solution is to make a written note of problems as soon as possible. But even then, you can fail to check everything you ought to. So, to avoid this situation, I adopted a practice used in the aviation world, known as the ‘Gripe Sheet’. After every flight, the pilot compiles a list of any/all, hopefully minor, problems encountered. This is then passed on to the maintenance crew, who have to comment on their findings and

any necessary action taken in regards each entry. A suitable checklist was drafted on my computer, a copy of which is no trouble to print out and take along with me on a sailing session. This has saved lots of aggravation when trying to get the best out of a new model. I am sharing my checklist here, but you, of course, can tailor it to include any additional observations/adjustment necessary points you wish to record.

Model	
Date/Location	
Weather	
Static Trim – Longitudinal Transverse	
Stability	
ESC Operation – Neutral Ahead Astern	
Steering – Straight Left Right	
Performance – Speed Turning Circle	

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



The display stand and detachable keel to help with stability; the keel is made of plywood and has strong magnets to easily attach it to the bottom of the ship.

RMS Titanic

I have been following the magazine for many years now and have been a keen model boat builder for a very long time.

About 10 years ago, my father and I converted a Minicraft 1:350 scale RMS *Titanic* to radio control. I gave the model a refurbishment only last year (originally parts from a speedboat had been used, but these have now been replaced with more reliable gear).

I've been sailing her at the Luton Model Boat Club on a regular basis. She attracts a lot of attention from passers-by every time I put her in the water.

I have included a link to a video I took last year: <https://youtu.be/CG1V5SVT7UQ>.

MATTHEW COX
EMAIL

What an excellent example of plastic magic put into practice, Matthew. Many thanks for sharing, as it's really great to see this beautifully detailed Minicraft kit build of *Titanic* out on the water. **Ed.**



The interior workings of Richard's Minicraft kit built model of the Titanic.





Axe Bow Patrol Boat

I thought I would share some photos I took of the Bahamas patrol boat (which looks a lot like the XV *Patrick Blackett* featured in the Feb edition) along with the scaled down version I subsequently modelled. This model won 'Best Small Warship' at the annual regatta held by my model boat club, the Colorado Crew, at Keystone resort in Colorado last August.

Love the magazine, by the way!

**NORMAN DREYFUSS
EDWARDS, COLORADO, USA**

Congratulations on your well-deserved award, Norman. The model looks fantastic, and thanks also for sharing your shots of the



Norman Dreyfuss's in harbour shots of the Bahamas patrol boat, the HMBS Lignum Vitae (P301), on which he based his scaled down Axe Bow (a new style of bow intended to make for easier seakeeping in rough water) patrol boat.



full-sized patrol boat for comparison. (For anyone interested in viewing this vessel on the water themselves, some footage can be found on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et_zljgKBjY).

Finally, I can't close without commenting on what a great name The Colorado Crew is for a Model Boat Club; it conjures up all sorts of images of camaraderie, mischief and mayhem! **Ed.**



A worthy winner of the 'Best Small Warship' award at the Colorado Club's Annual Regatta in Keystone last year.



Norman's model out on patrol in his local marina!



Polar Ice

Hi there - it's Terry here again. Not only have I been busy over the long winter evenings, but this time around I also roped in the wife!

We both came up with the idea of to scratch build this sailing vessel. Working from a plan in an old boat mag, we fashioned the ribs from some foam card we had laying around, and then the hull

and the decking were built from lolly sticks, methodically applied by the wife! The bows and sterns were crafted from Poundshop foam filler, which was easy to use, shape and to fill the hull in with.





To add extra strength and waterproofing to the hull we used sticky back plastic. I cut an old clothing rack into small lengths for ballast and planed some one-inch timber for the masts. The sail was cut from an old bed sheet, and the rigging cleats were made from meat skewers. The lifeboat derricks came courtesy of some metal garden hooks.

All in all, we started in November last year and by March this year we were ready to trial our build in a blow-up swimming pool. To our amazement, the model sailed very well for something thrown together!

We weren't aiming for 'perfect'. This purpose of this project was simply to show just what can be achieved for next to nothing (I say, 'next to nothing', as we had to apply many coats of paint) and just how much fun there is to be had from the hobby however tight your budget may be.

TERRY FARROW
EMAIL

There are so many things I love about this keeping it real build, Terry: the fact that you've worked on it together as a couple, how very resourceful you've been when it comes to materials, and your, as always, inspirational 'can do approach' to the hobby. Bravo to you both! **Ed.**



Torpedo firing MTB

I read the recent article entitled 'Damn the Torpedoes' by Howard Blackledge with great interest as I built a version of the Thornycroft MTB myself back in 1967. Sadly, she no longer exists but I have managed to find a GRP version ripe for restoration! I also noticed what I think may be brass .303 rifle bullet cases being used as exhaust pipes from the old E.D. engine. I, too, used spent cases as exhausts, which came out of the hull amidships just above the water line on both sides. Very effective, wonderful sound! I attach a

picture of the model (apologies for the quality – a digitised 35mm colour slide taken back in the day).

CHARLES CHAMBERS
CAPTAIN, SCALE SECTION,
SOLENT RADIO CONTROL MODEL
BOAT CLUB

There's something about the quality of old photos that reflects the past as we remember it/expect to see it, so please don't apologise for this lovely, of its era, shot of your MTB, Charles. I, for one, sincerely hope you do decide to go for that restoration. If you do, please consider either documenting



Charles Chambers' Thornycroft MTB, circa 1967.

the project for a feature length article or send us some pics of the end result for inclusion in Your Models. **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**

Recovery aid

It was sad to read John Parker's story (April 2025) about his model tug *Craig* sinking last November and being lost in the lake. It made me think about how to find a sunken model, which reminded me of a solution used on full-size boats to mark the position of their anchors – the anchor marker buoy.

If a buoyant object of some sort is located on the deck of a model boat and attached to it with a length of suitable cord, this will float to the surface and indicate where the model has gone down if it sinks. I'm sure this is not a new idea, so apologies if others have talked about it in the past. To maintain a scale look, the buoy could be disguised as an item you might find on deck anyway, like a life raft container, fender or cargo crate.

If the buoy is large enough to contain a battery, flashing LED, bleeper and a magnetic reed switch, a strobe and an alarm could be set off automatically when the buoy separates from the model. A magnet would need to be installed in the model near to the buoy to keep it switched off until it floats away, allowing the reed switch to activate the flashing LED and bleeper. 'Normally closed' reed switches can be found on the internet which switch on when away from a magnet and switch off when close to a magnet. These switches have three wires, so they can be used as 'normally open' or 'normally closed'.

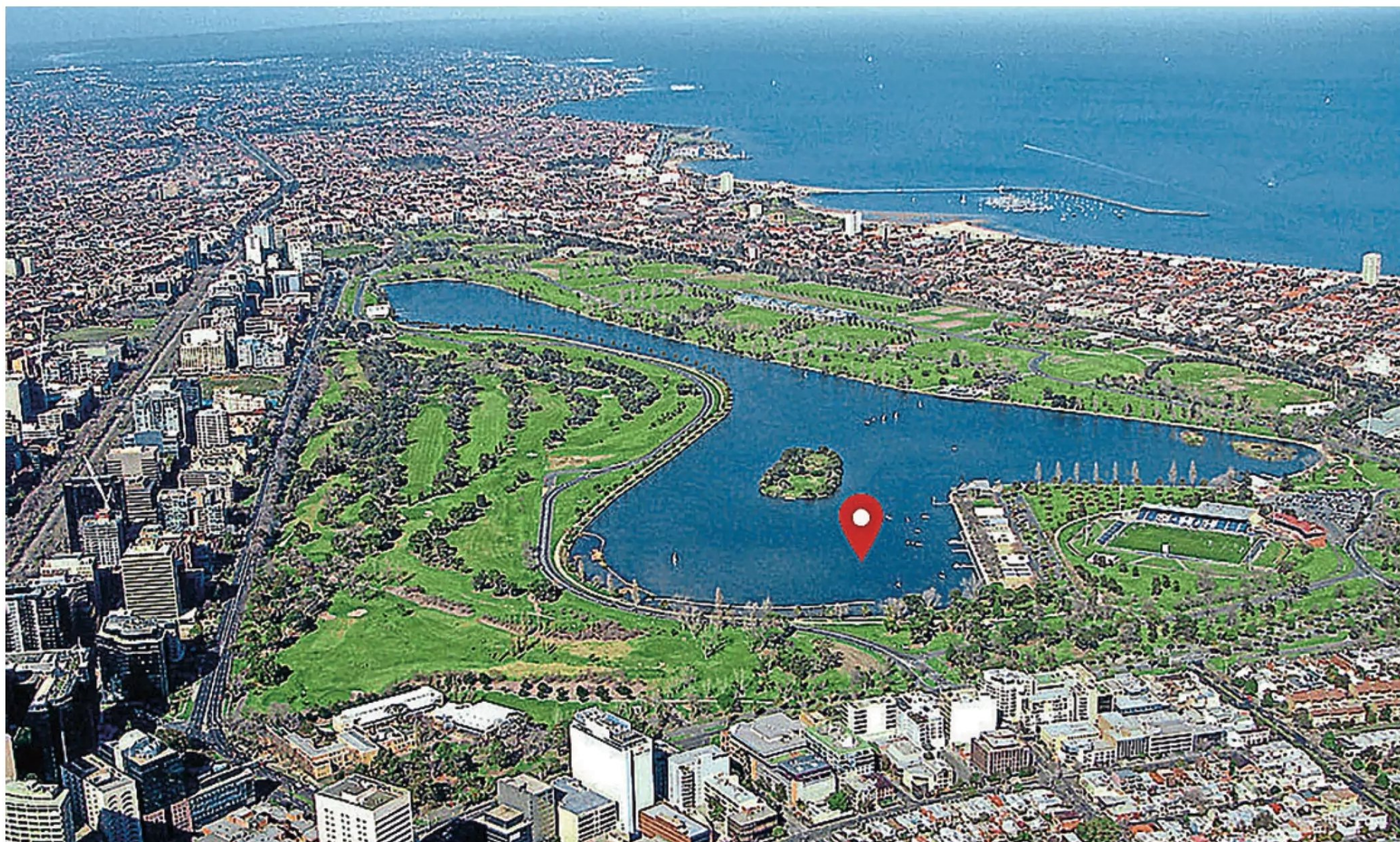
Alternatively, you could try putting an Apple AirTag into a watertight buoy and finding the model with your phone. However, the AirTag

transmission range (Bluetooth) may not be enough for a large lake and is unlikely to be detected if trapped under water.

Having given the matter some thought, I might even make a prototype of the automatic buoy with flashing light and bleep if I get some time. For the sake of a couple of pounds, a buoy like this could help recover very valuable models.

**JIM MARTIN
KENT**

Some great ideas here, Jim. I really enjoyed our exchange of emails, and having persuaded you to write this intended project up as a little feature length article, I am now really looking forward to sharing the results in a future issue of Model Boats. **Ed.**



*A modified, by John Parker, photograph of Albert Park Lake, Victoria, Australia, marked to show roughly where his tug model *Craig* went down, taking the taking the camera, two new batteries and a sound effects system John had installed along with it – an expensive loss!*

Speed control

Further to the February 2025 instalment of Flotsam & Jetsam, in which John Parker took a retrospective look at speed control, back in the 1960s I started with an REP 4-channel reed multi and built several electro-mechanical speed controls of increasing sophistication. The first just gave Forward - Stop - Astern. My most sophisticated gave three forward speeds, stop and two astern speeds. I built it in metalwork at school. It had a 2BA screw, turned through reduction gears by a Mabuchi 45 motor. The screw drove a set of sprung contacts across fixed contacts set in Isopon. The resistances were wires salvaged from a burnt-out electric fire element – the length of these being determined empirically – a fancy way of saying trial and error!

By 1971 I was using an Ariel 6 reed set. The next iteration was a servo turning a variable resistor, powering the motor through a two-stage transistor amplifier. Astern was achieved by a relay energized by a separate reed.

By 1973 I had a fully transistorized drive. This used one reed to charge a capacitor and another to discharge it. With the speed being

proportional to the capacitor voltage, this gave continuously variable speed from full ahead to full astern. It did suffer from the volts drop of two transistors, but that wasn't a problem in a scale ship.

For fast electrics I used three micro-switches. The first position gives power to the motor with the two battery packs in parallel; the next closes the other two micro-switches (which are mechanically connected to switch simultaneously), changing the batteries from parallel to series.

I went to Newcastle University from 1971-74 and would sometimes sail at Paddy Freeman's Park. One time there I saw a chap with a very ingenious motor control. This had a disc of printed circuit board spinning at a constant speed. This disc had a section of the copper etched away. A wiper was moved from near the edge to near the centre, this giving a pulse of varying mark-space ratio which went to an amplifier to drive the motor, a mechanically derived pulse width modulating drive.

After university I joined the Merchant Navy as an Engineering Officer and was soon able to buy a Futaba 6. It wasn't long before I started experimenting with solid state drives. Eventually I developed a very

reliable device based on a ZN 409 integrated circuit, with the power end of it customised to the motor current. One of these has been working reliably for over 30 years. It's completely customisable. The stop position can be adjusted to be anywhere on the stick, while the ahead and astern gains can be set independently. This allows me to set the astern power less than the ahead power, prototypical on steam turbine ships.

My cabin cruiser (MAP plans handbook *Fairacre II*, built in 1974) ships water over the stern if powered too fast astern, so the astern speed is limited to prevent that.

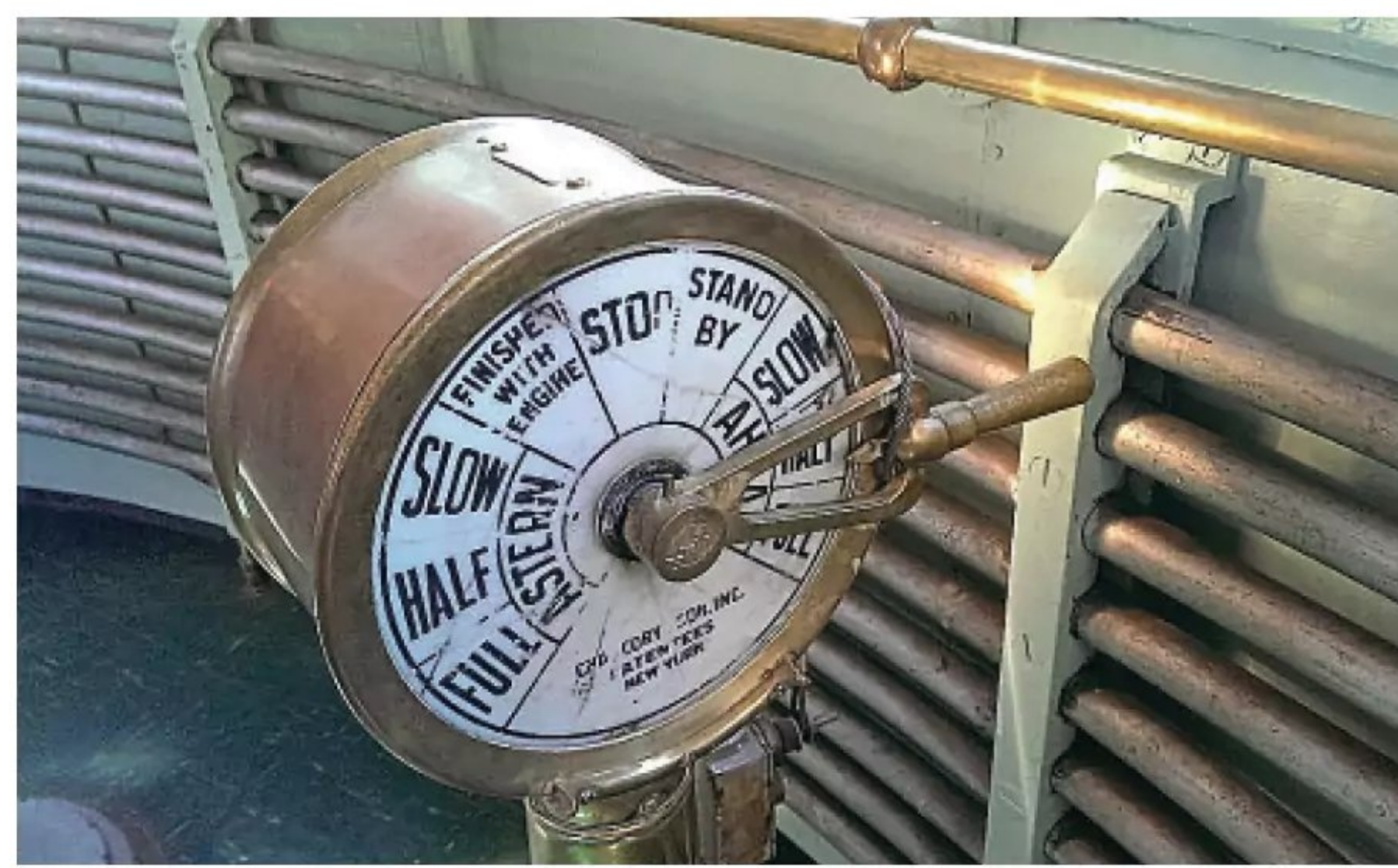
40 years or so ago, I could make a solid state motor controller for about a quarter of the cost of a shop bought one. Now I can only build one for about the same price.

VICTOR CROASDALE
SPRING VALLEY, ILLINOIS, USA

Thanks you so much, Victor, both for expanding on John's article by sharing your own experiences and for scanning and forwarding a PDF of the article on minesweeping sought by fellow reader Ken O'Brian, for which we ran appeal run in the same issue – much appreciated! **Ed.**



Victor's Fairacre II cabin cruiser in action.



Grow your own boating lake!

Having a model boat is the easy bit, the problem is finding a local lake or river you can sail it on. So, here's an idea...

If you have a garden, you may also have a raised vegetable plot that's only in use for around eight to ten months a year. If that's the case, as soon as the last plant is lifted, rake the base and remove any stones and roots. Then, lay a single plastic sheet over the base and up and over timber surrounds. Hey presto! Once filled with water, for the next few months you have your very own boating lake. You could even invite some model boat buddies around to join you for sailing sessions.

I've tried this and it works, but if you want photos you will have to wait until this coming November!

DARRYL FOXWELL
EMAIL

Well, that's certainly food for thought, Darryl! I imagine that during those winter months there's a lot to be said for simply being able to pop back inside to make the odd cup of tea while braving those chilly sailing sessions, too. **Ed.**

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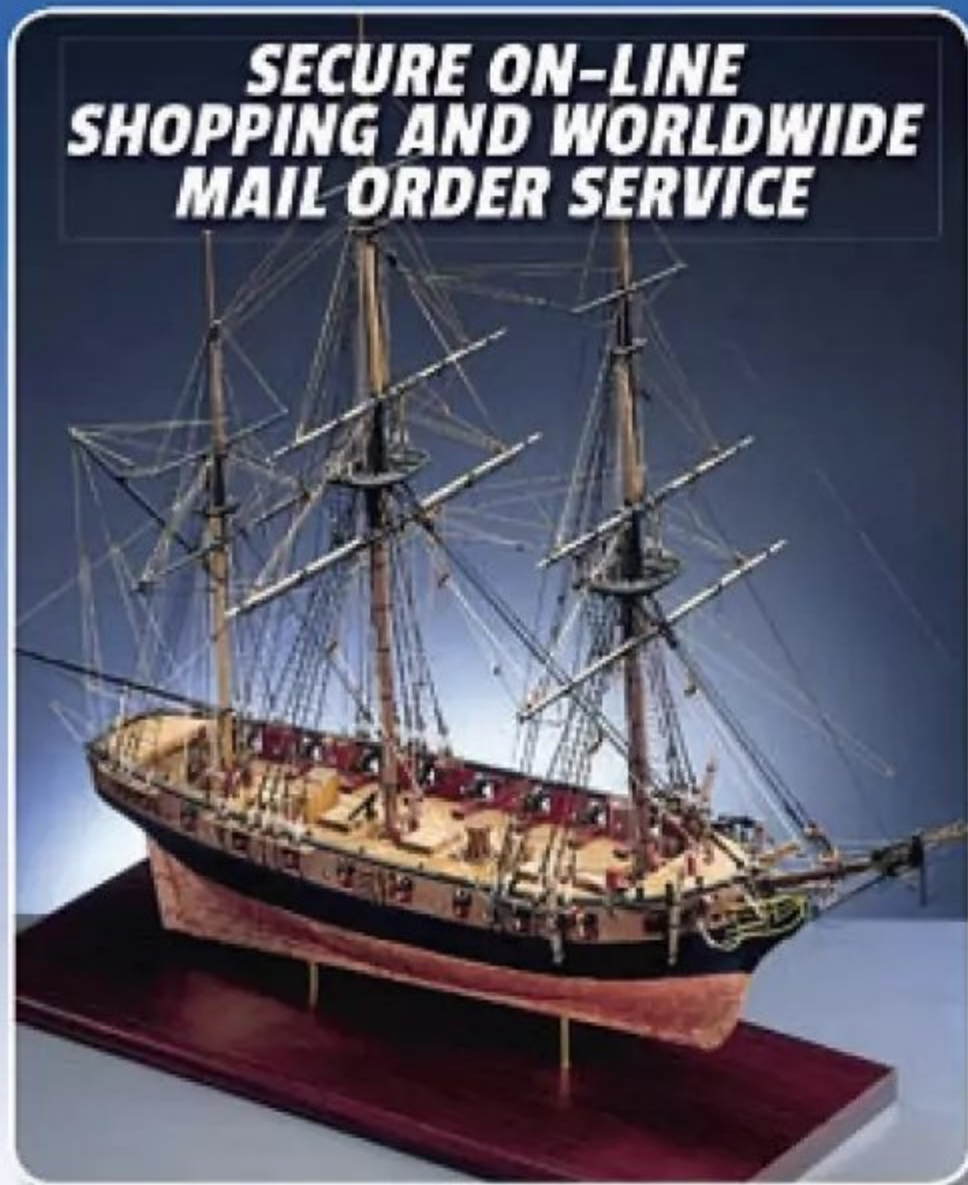
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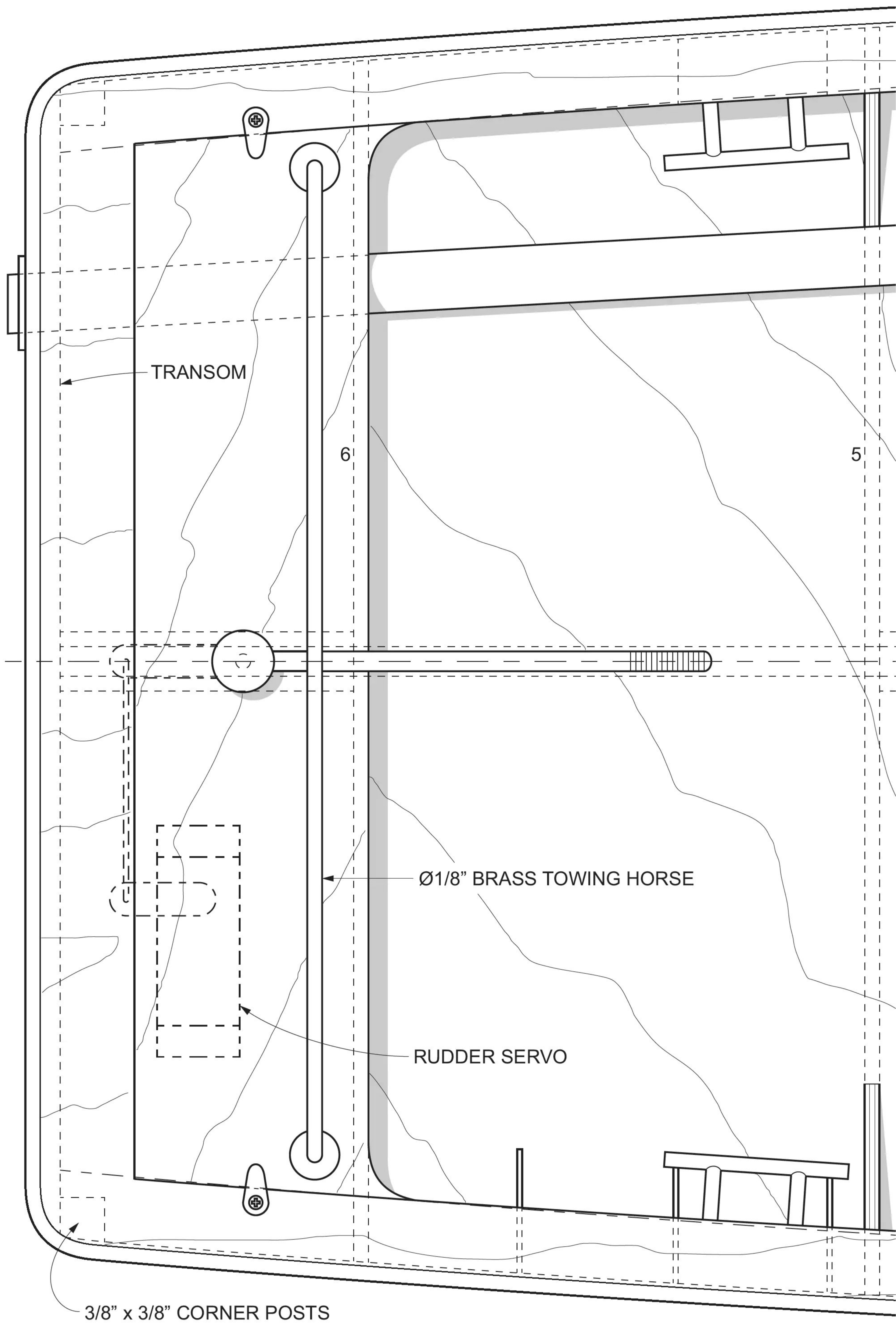


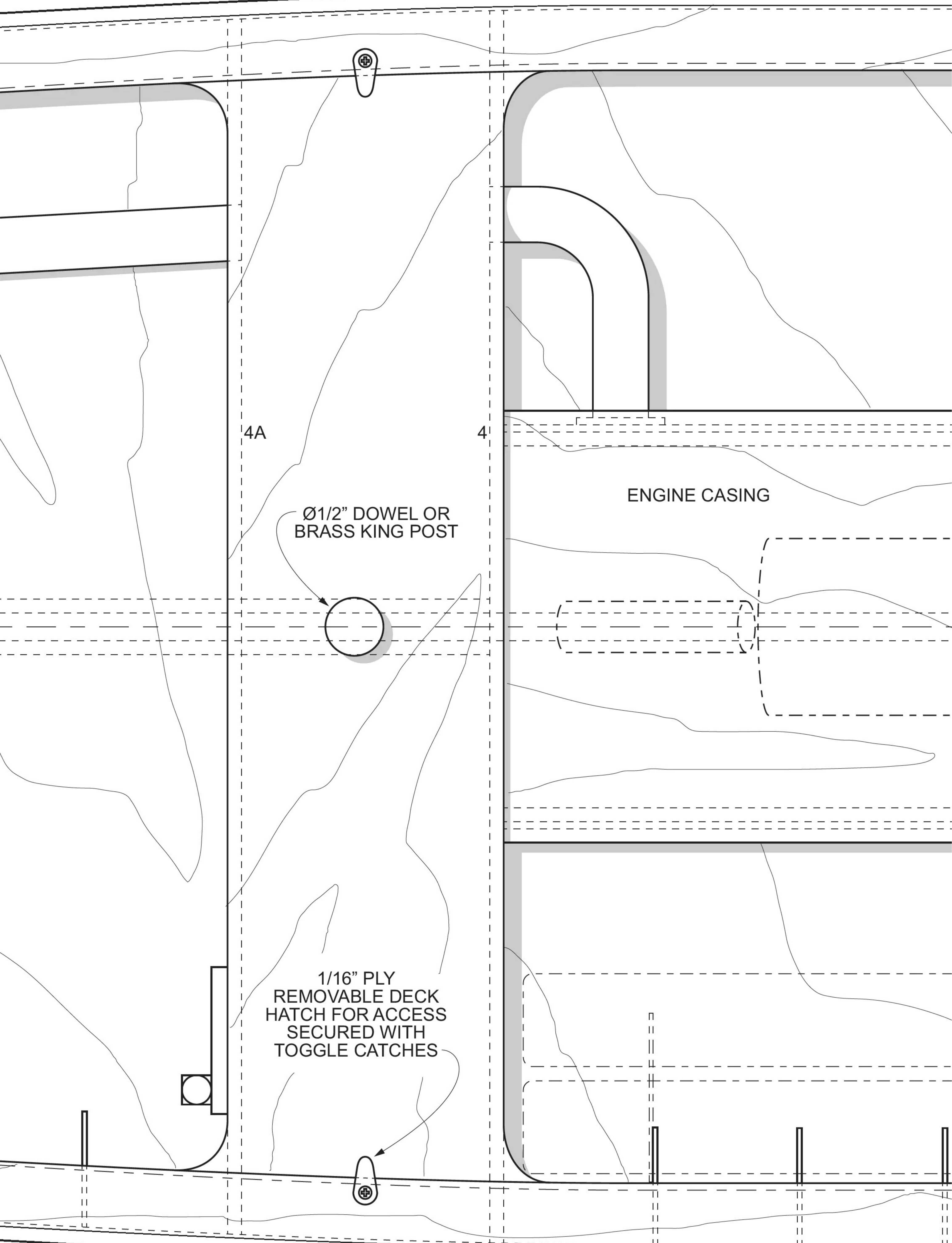
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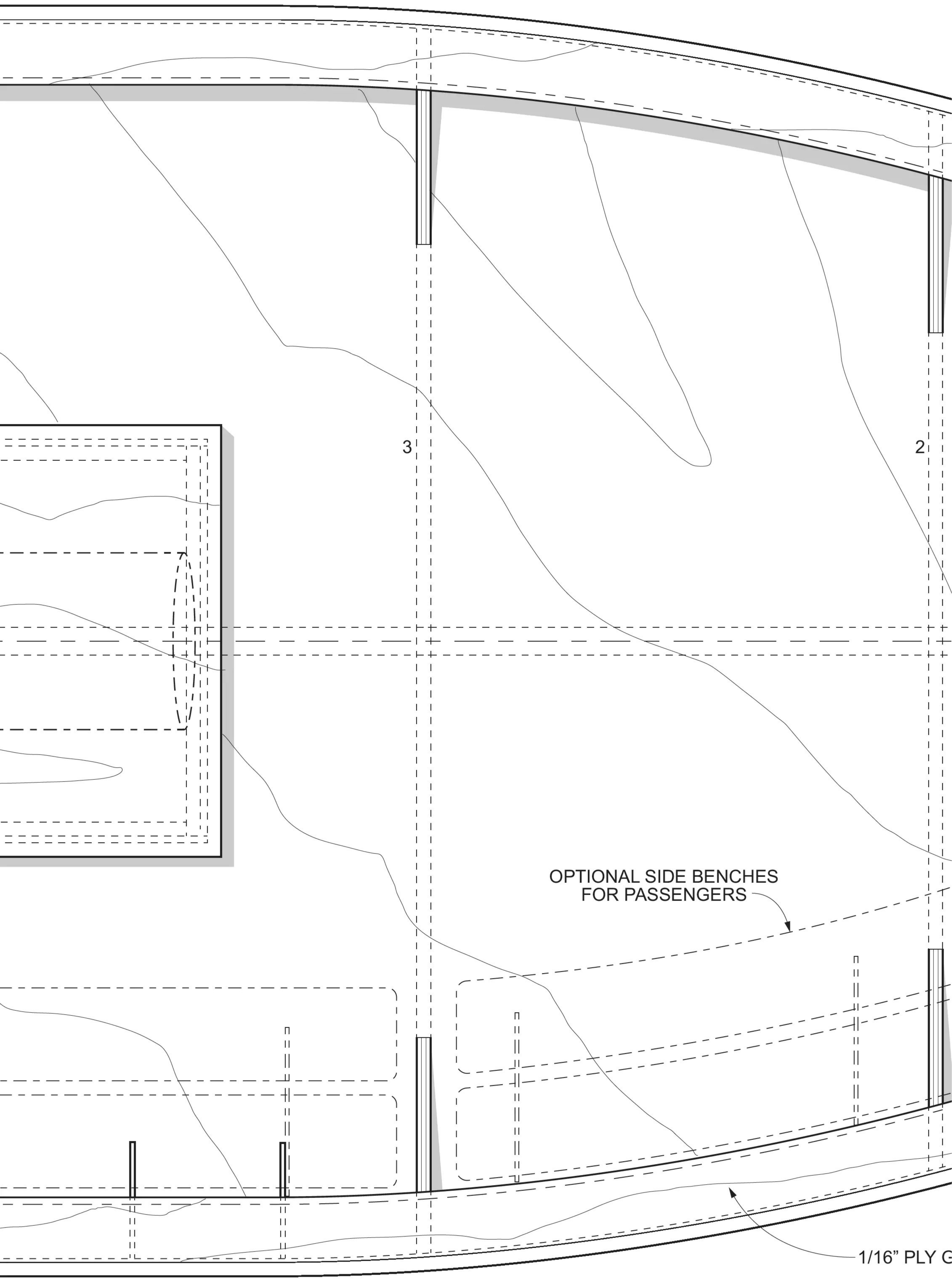
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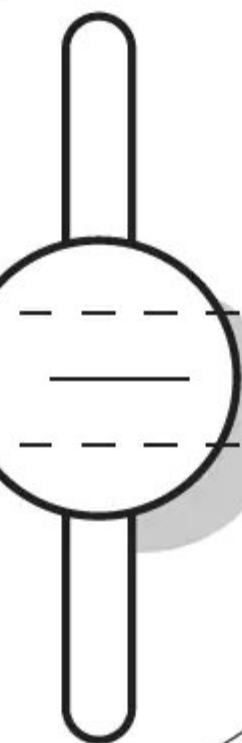
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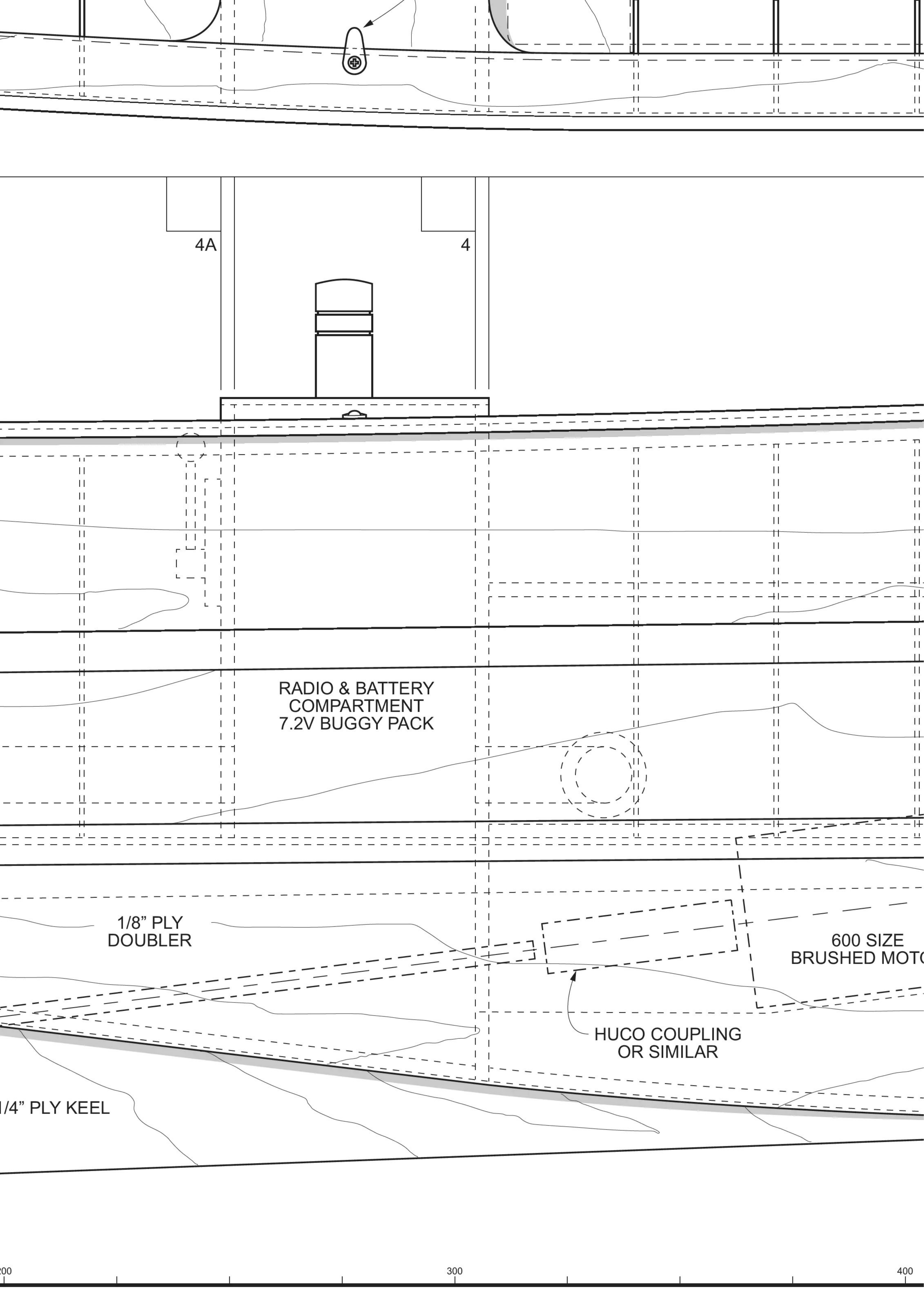
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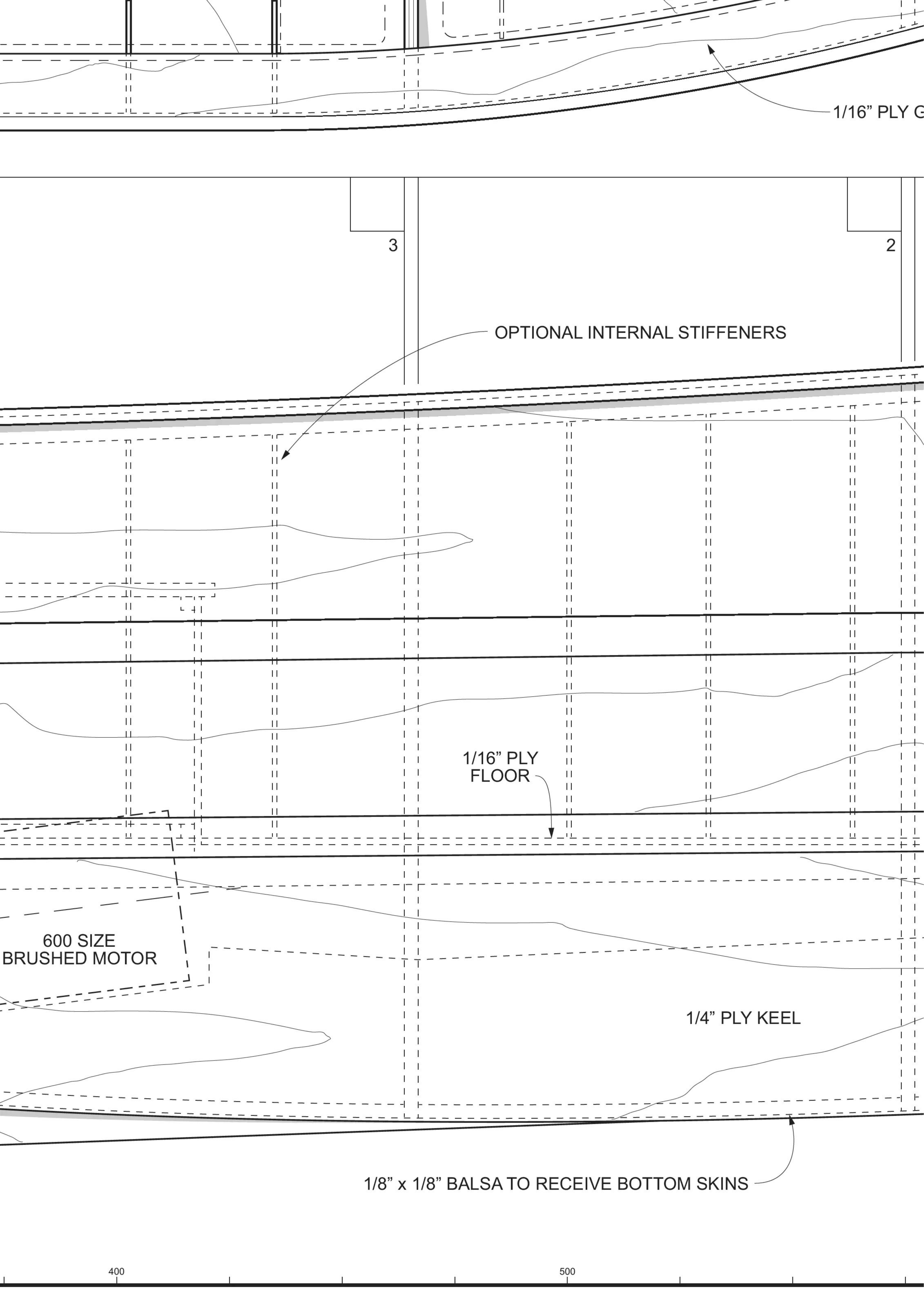
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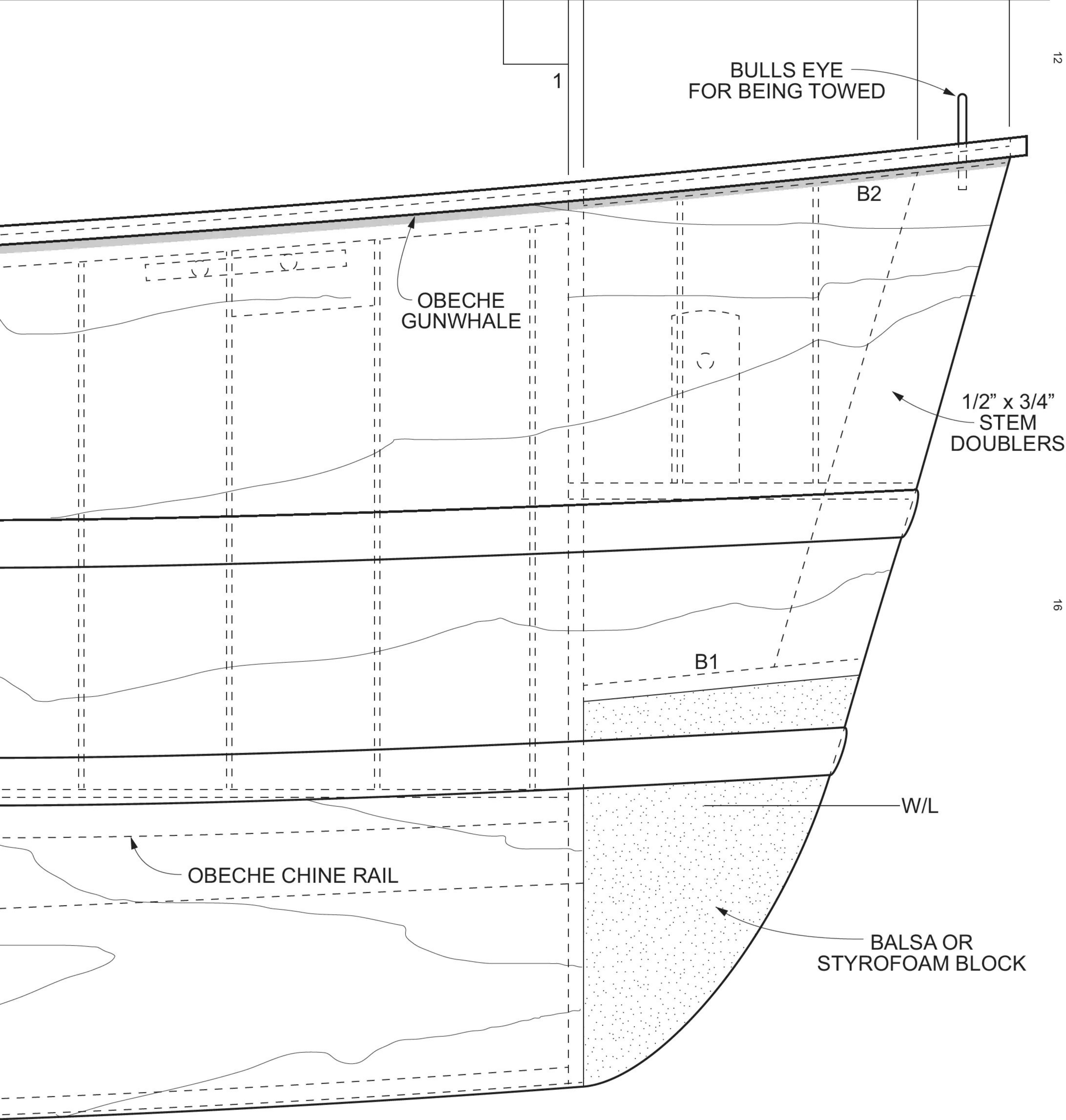
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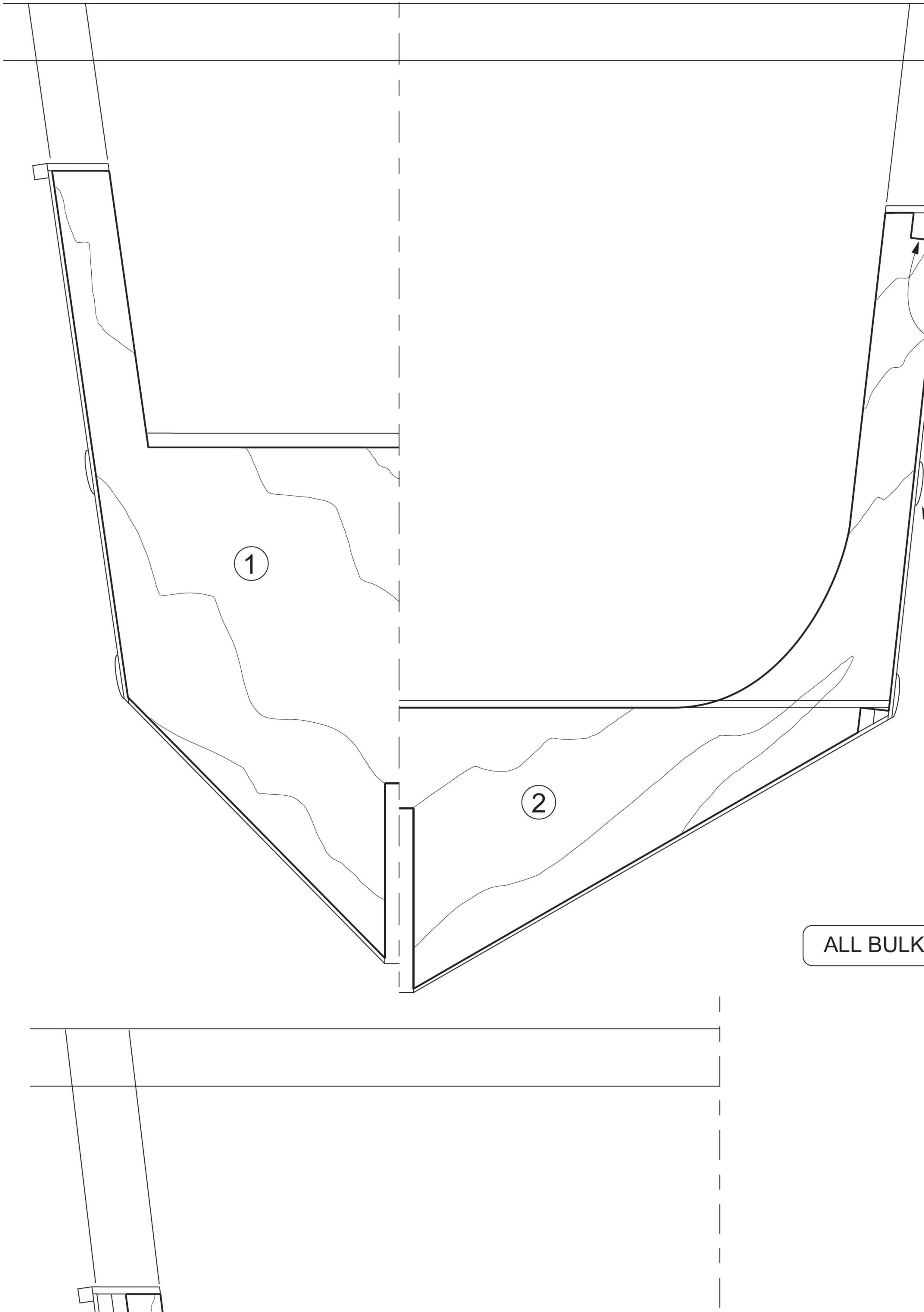
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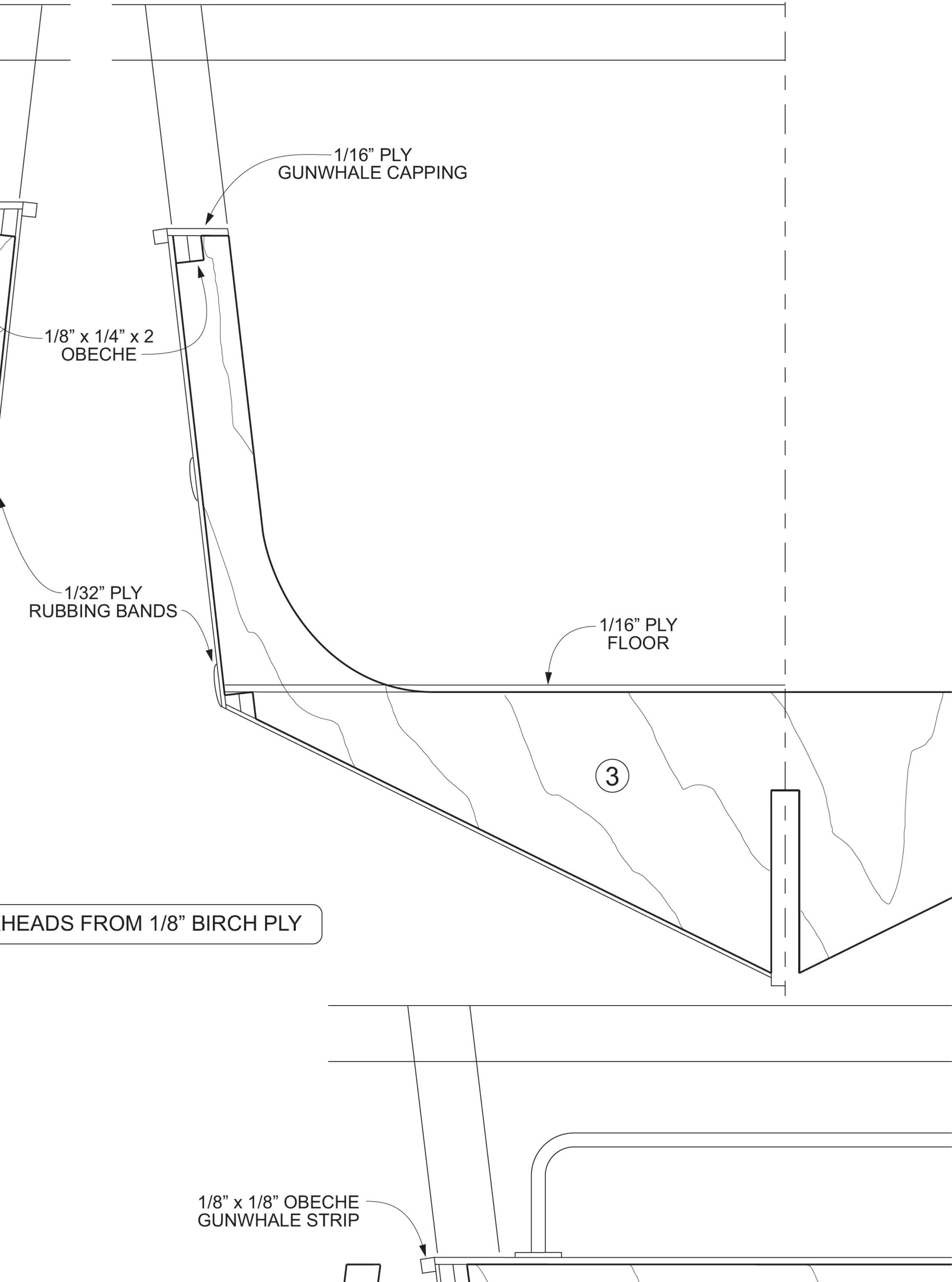
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ALL BULK





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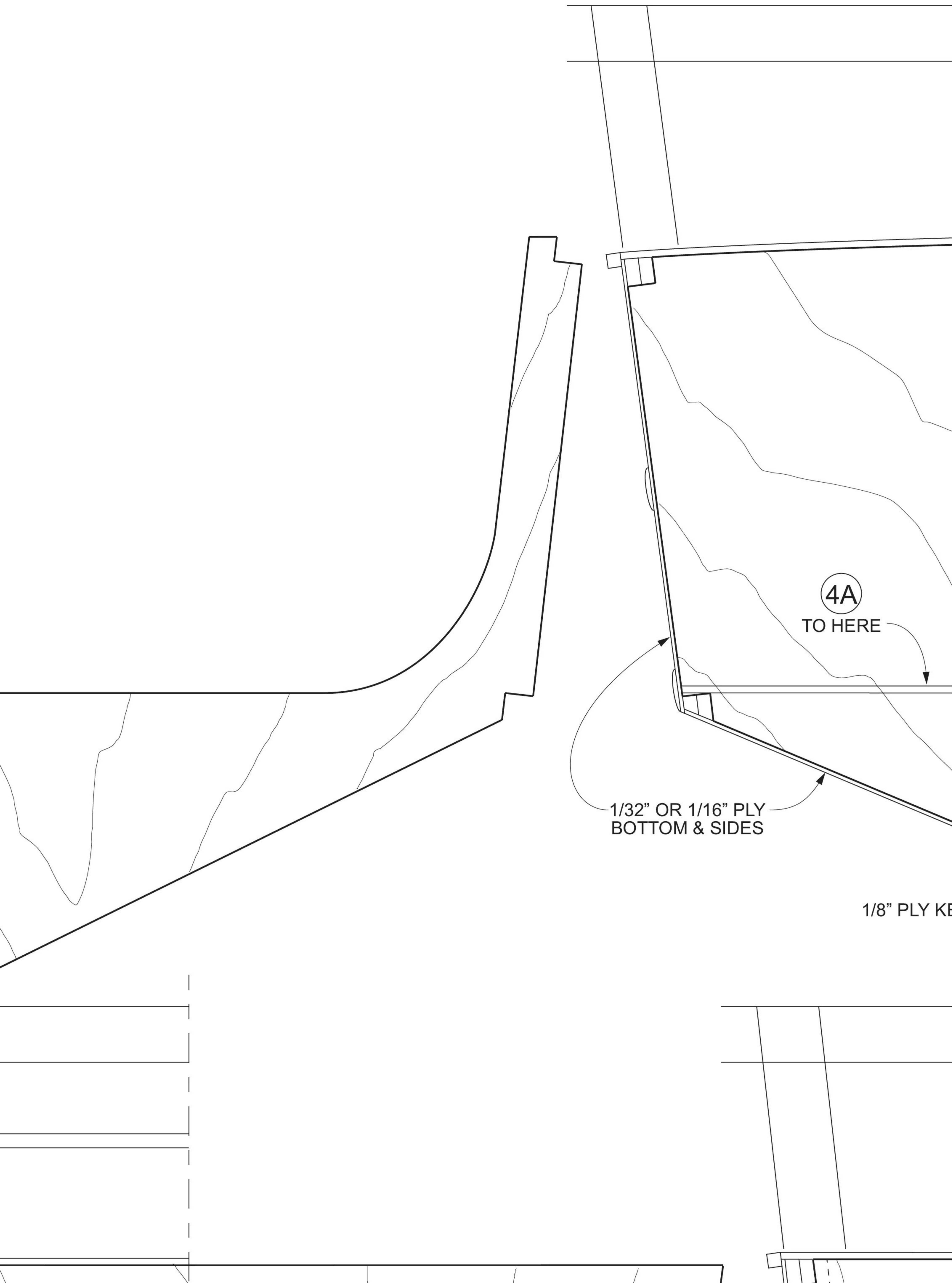
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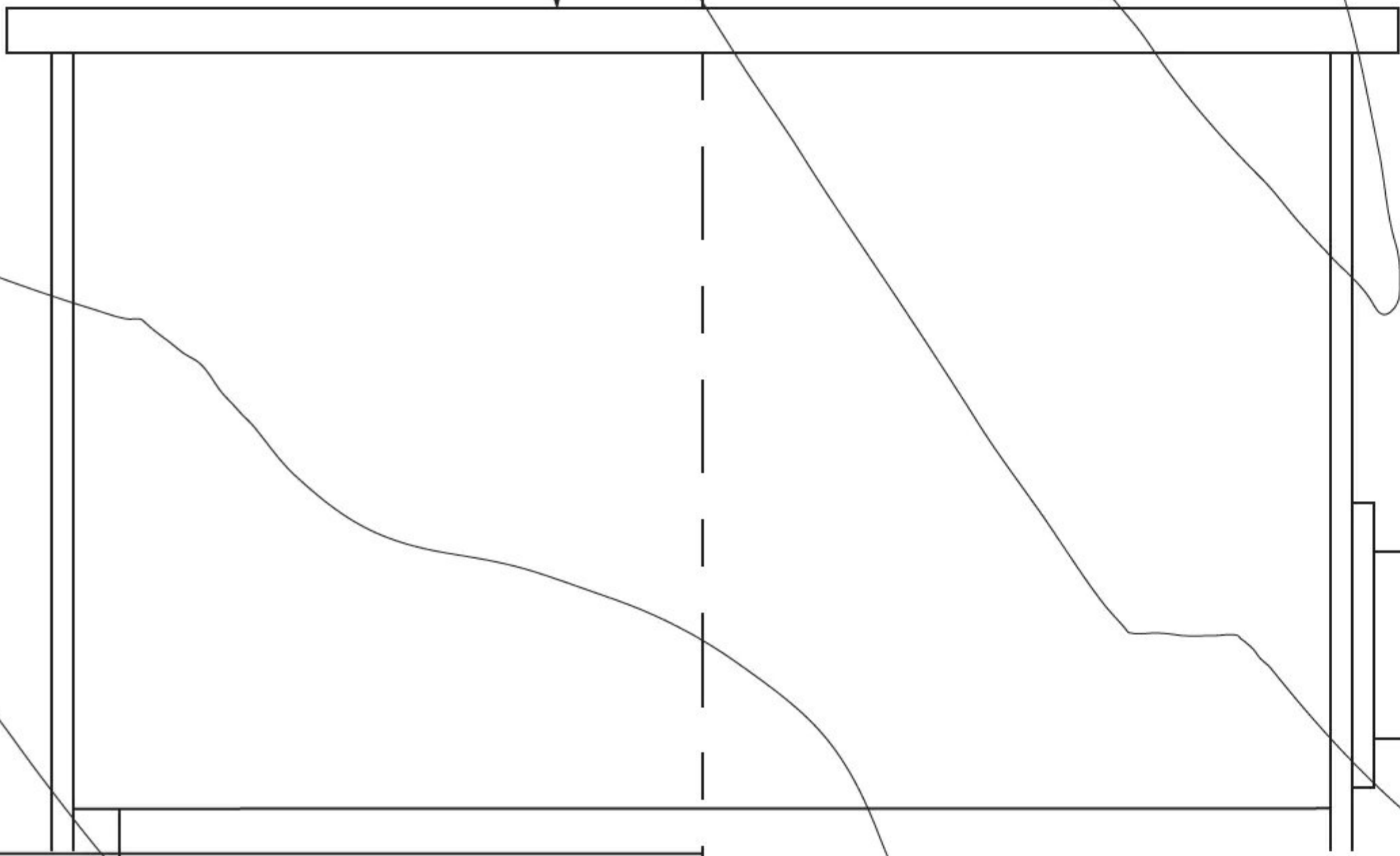
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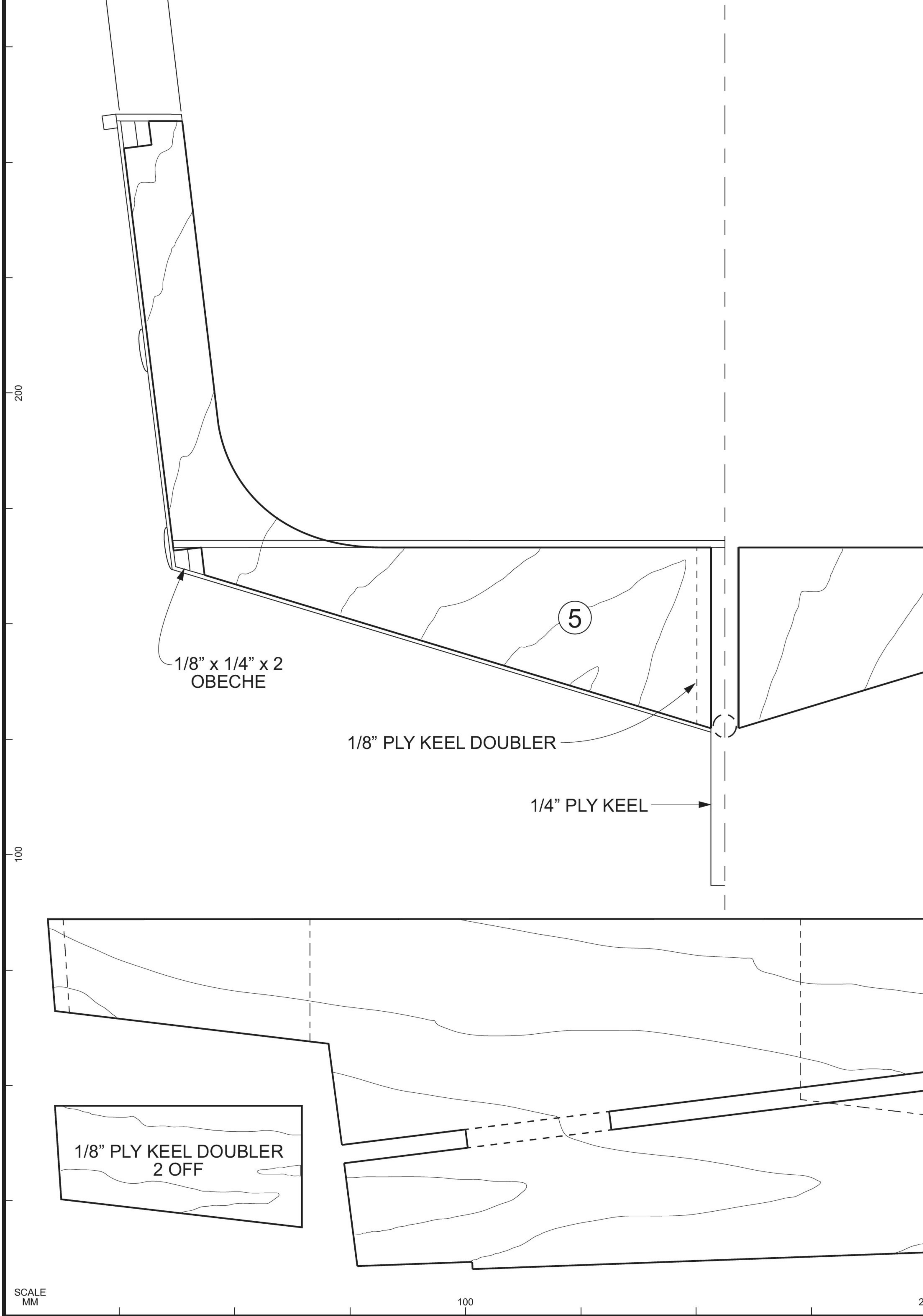
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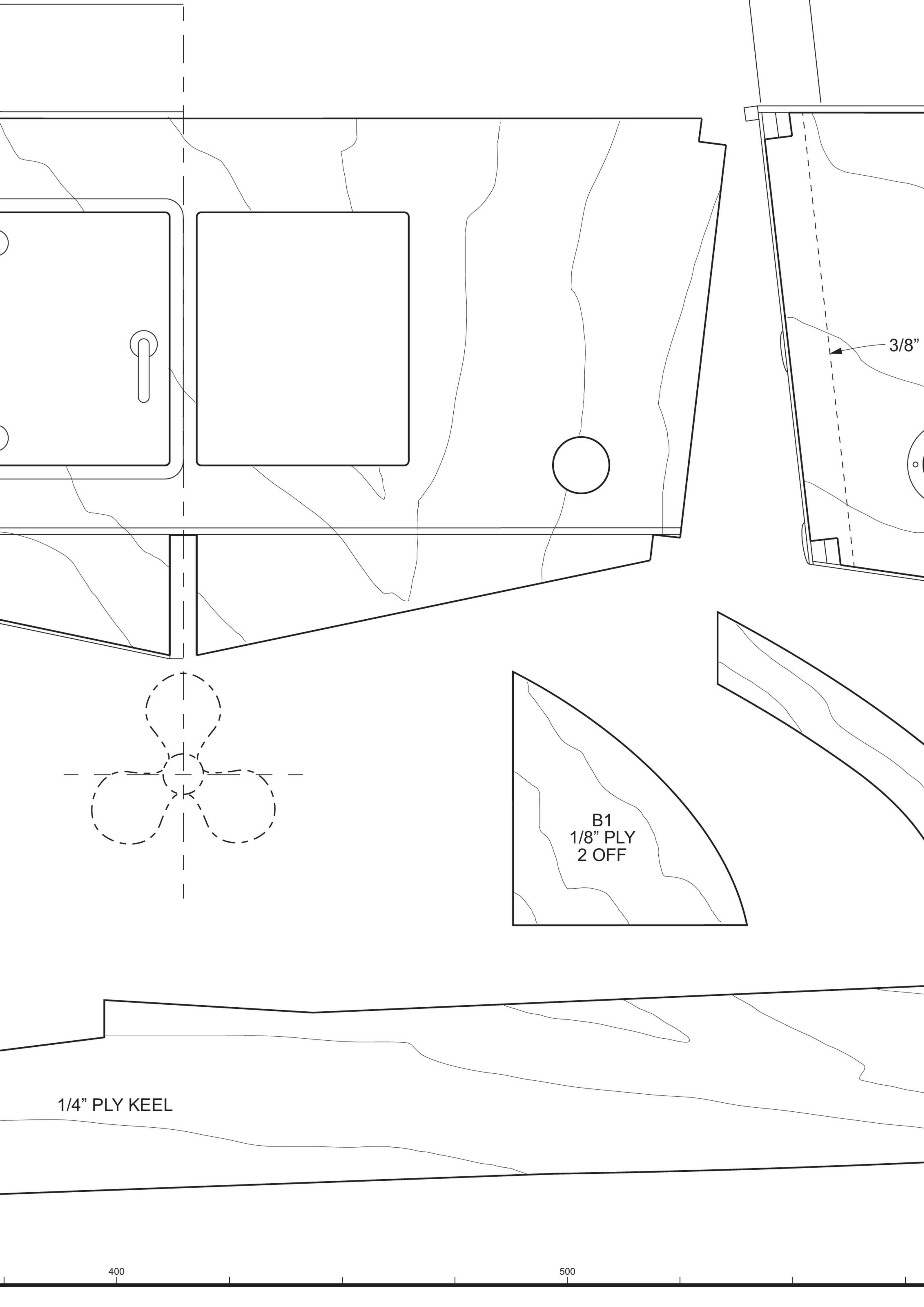


1/8" x 1/8" OBEICHE
GUNWHALE STRIP

6

1/8" PLY KEEL DOUBLER
2 OFF

1/4" PLY K



3/8"

B1
1/8" PLY
2 OFF

1/4" PLY KEEL

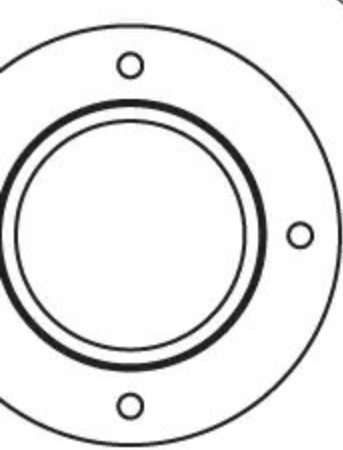
400

500

TRANSOM
(VIEWED FROM REAR)

INVICTA

x 3/8" CORNER POSTS



B2
1/8" PLY
2 OFF

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