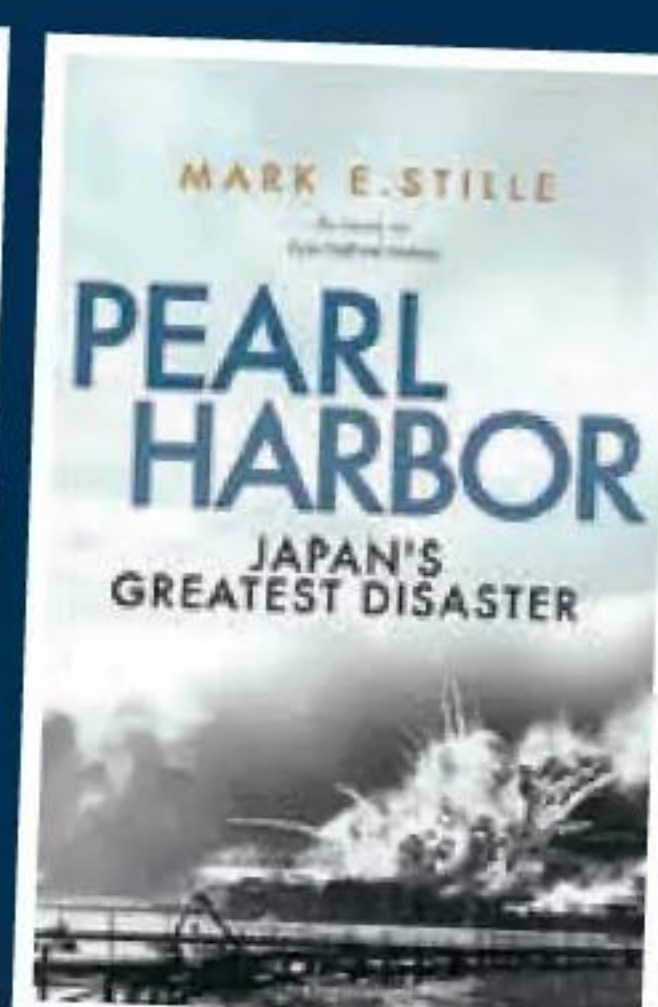
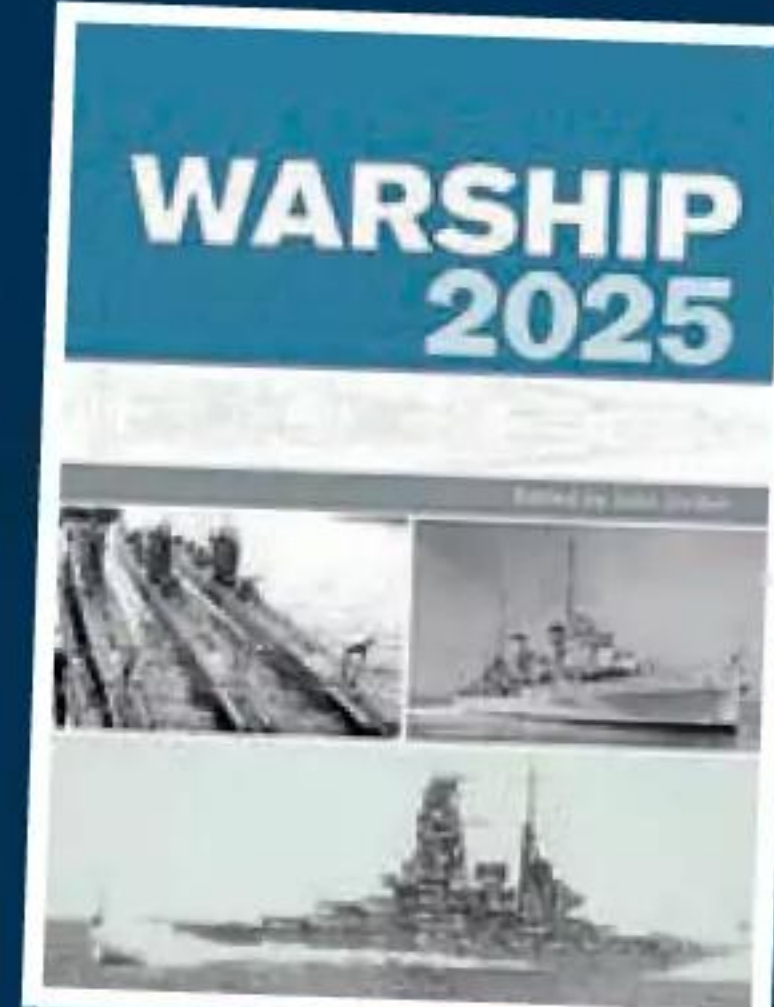


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619 Admiral

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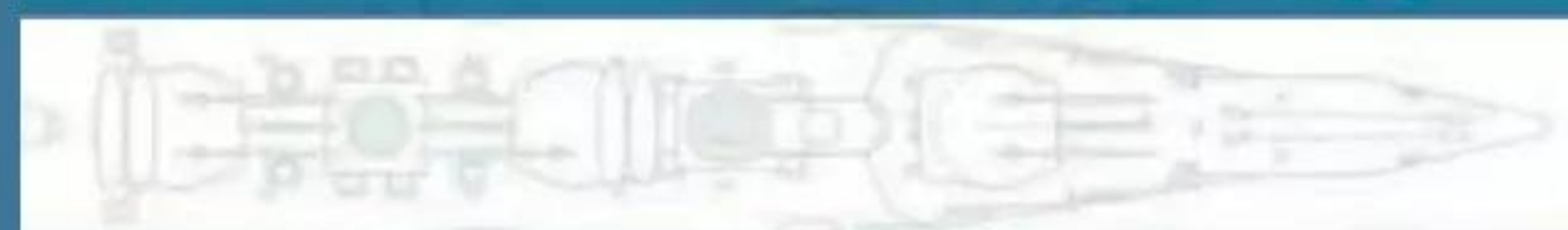
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Edited by John Jordan



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PEARL HARBOR

JAPAN'S
GREATEST DISASTER



WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE OF MODEL BOATS

Firstly, for those of you who prefer to buy your magazine at newsstand rather than subscribe, I'd just like to remind you that despite this issue being cover dated December 2025 it won't be the last edition to go on sale before the holidays, so be sure not to miss the January 2026 mag which will be available to pick up in store from Friday, December 19.

That said, this is probably my last chance to wish those of you who live in parts of the world the magazine takes that little bit longer to reach a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and, also, to thank for your continued support and all your marvellous contributions over the course of 2025.

So, now I've got a bit ahead of myself, let's get back to the right here, right now... Hopefully, you'll find the superb builds featured this month (both in the construction-focused articles and those showcased in the Your Models section) inspirational, and that likewise you'll find Eric Belshaw's explanation of when, why and how to fit a Genoa fore sail to your yacht, Glynn Guest's practical advice for getting the best possible test results when using a multimeter in Ammeter mode, and Richard Simpson's hands-on Boiler Room review of an innovative new multi-purpose oil, beneficial.

We're also running another exclusive prize draw, this time courtesy of Osprey Publishing, which offers you the opportunity to win two fantastic new titles (*Warship 2025* and Mark E. Stille's *Pearl Harbor, Japan's Great Disaster*) for your bookshelf. With a combined value of £70, we've got two of these superb prize packages up for grabs, doubling your odds of getting lucky, so be sure to get your entries in before the closing date of January 2, 2026.

Next month, as well as all the other great content we've got lined up for you, there will be a free pull-out plan and accompanying build guide for a simple little R/C oar-propelled model boat. In the meantime, though, enjoy your read!

Lindsey



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OBITUARY Russell Potts

We are sad to report that on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, after a notable and accomplished life spanning 91 years, Russell Potts, one of the leading lights in model yachting, passed away.

After rekindling his childhood passion for model yachts in the 1970s, Russell joined the Danson Club. He soon began competing nationally and then representing the UK in international events too, notably in the Marblehead and 10 Rater Classes.

In 1979/80, during the early years of radio control, Russell played a pivotal role influencing the Home Office to grant exclusivity of specific radio frequencies for model yachting use. He was appointed Radio Control Secretary of the MYA (Model Yachting Association) in 1983 and later, from 1985, served four years as the MYA Council General Secretary, acting as Secretary for the 1986 World Championships and the 1990 Marblehead Worlds. He was subsequently made a Vice President of the MYA.

Russell was also a great and prolific writer, from 1985 to 1992 submitting articles published under the Curved Air banner to this magazine. It was these articles, which brought people together at a pond side with their old models, that later, in 1987, led to the formation of The Vintage Model Yacht Group, affiliated to the MYA, and later



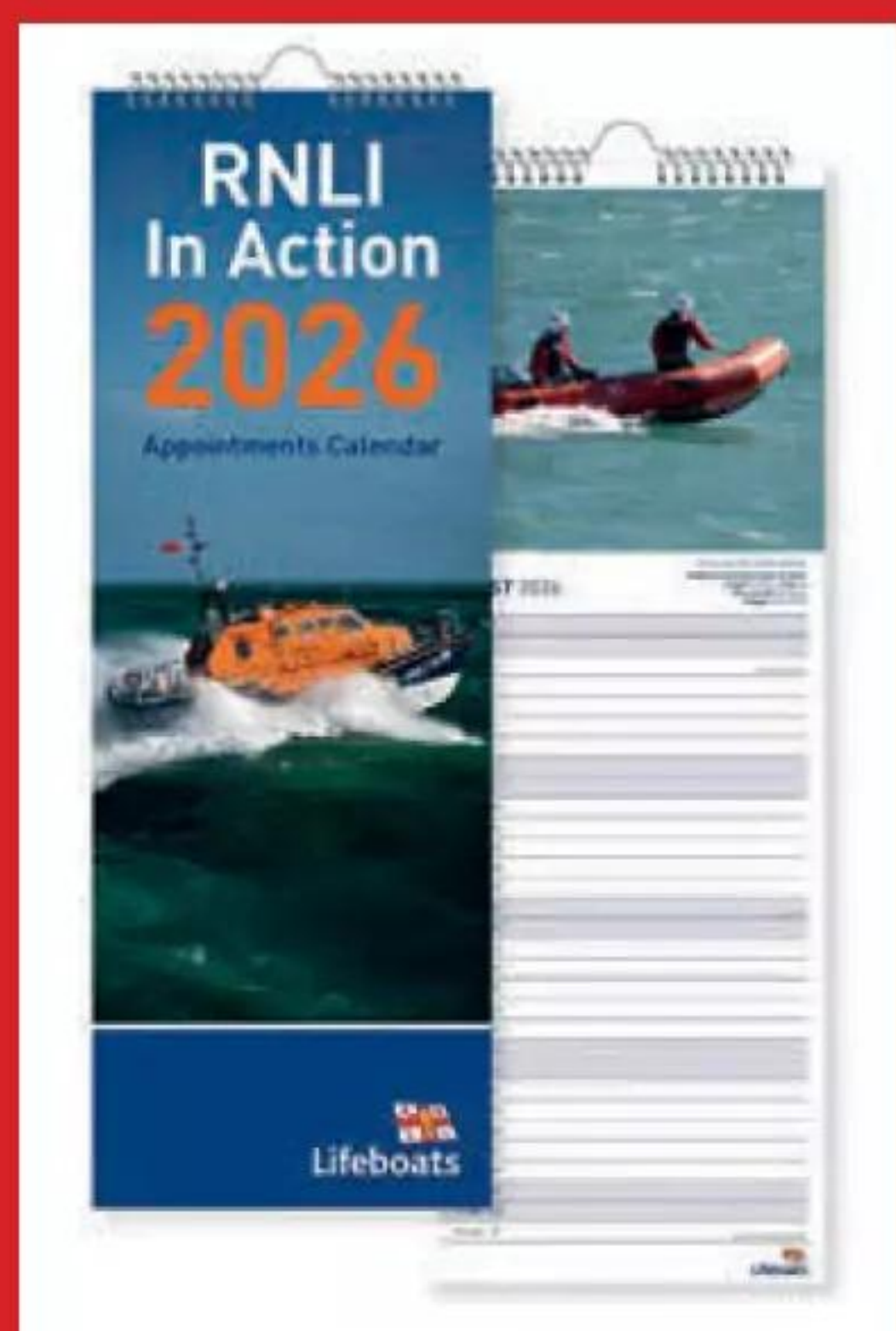
under his guidance, the formation of the US VMYG. Russell was instrumental in setting up what became known as the US-UK Challenge, where teams from both nations would vie for victory racing 36 Restricted Class yachts. He wrote many booklets, the *Bibliography of Model Yachting* undoubtedly being one of his most important contributions to the history of model yachting and engaged in endless correspondence to help anyone seeking advice about vintage model yachts.

Our sincerest condolences go out to his four children, Amanda, Cherry, Roselle and Nick, four grandchildren and five great grandchildren (Russell's much-love wife Gillian having pre-deceased him on December 5, 2022).

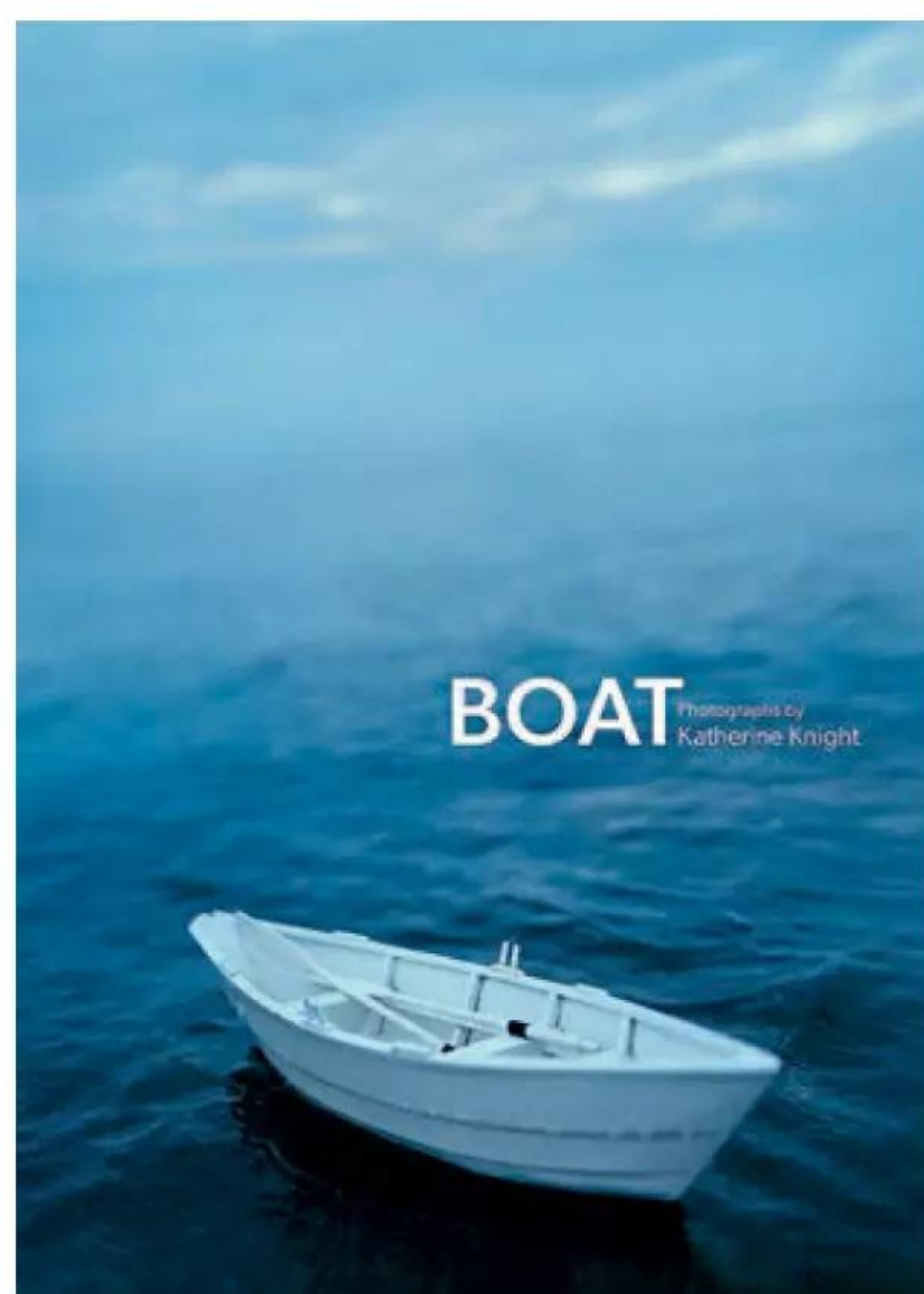
FESTIVE THOUGHTS Give the gift of life this Christmas

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of the modeller's who built them, historians' accounts of the vessels they represent, and museum curators explanations of their importance.

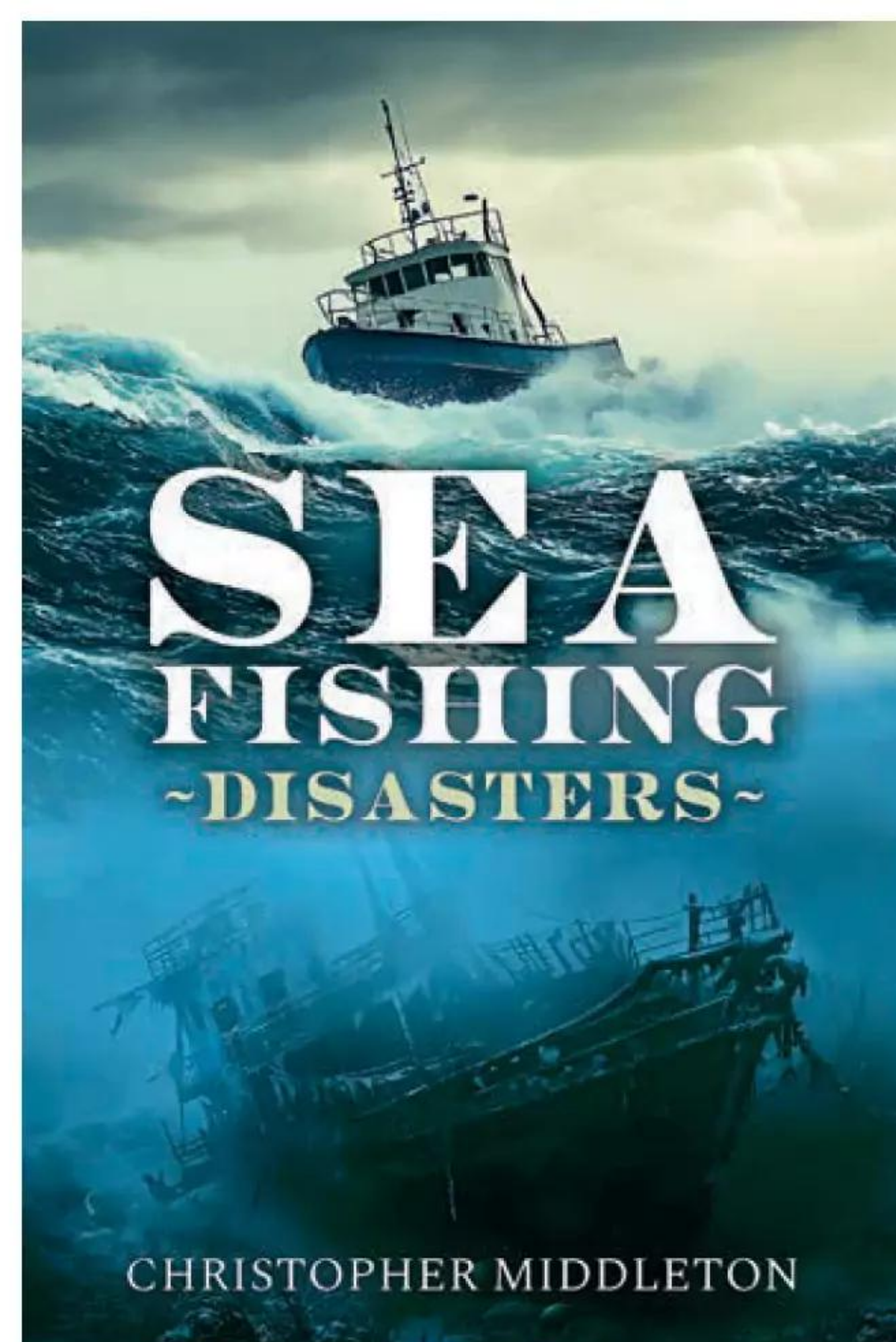
Carrying an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of \$40, the title can be purchased online via Goose Lane Productions website at www.gooselane.com or ordered from your local bookstore quoting ISBN 9781773104805.

BUY THE BOOK - *Sea Fishing Disasters*

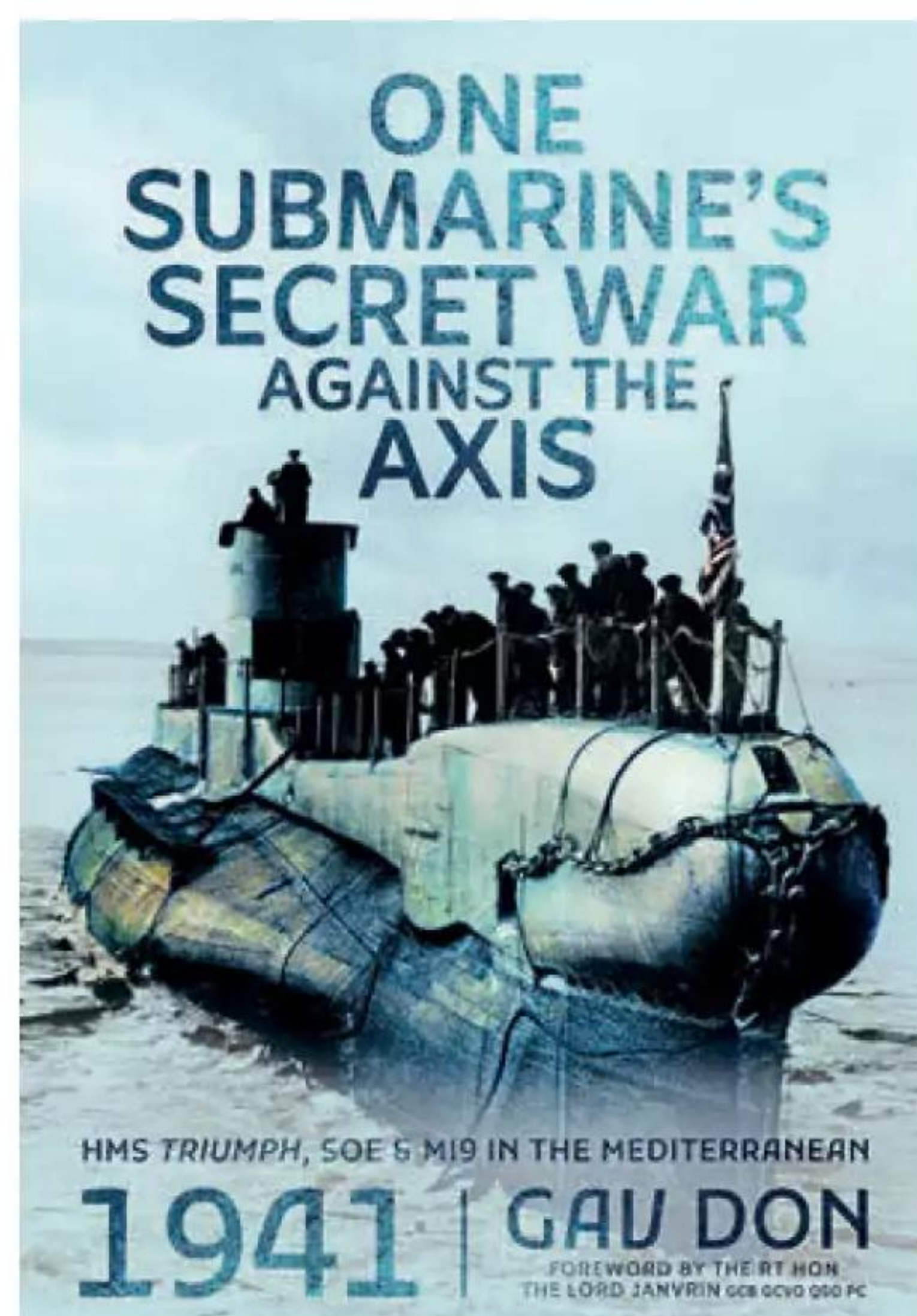
Recently released and worth catching is Christopher Middleton's in-depth examination of 12 different sea fishing disasters. Analysed in detail are the key events which led to these catastrophes, how the fishing industry and local communities were impacted by them, and the changes in laws and legislation subsequently put into place to prevent such tragedies from happening again.

The tales told serve as a stark reminder of why commercial fishing has always been regarded as the world's most dangerous peacetime occupation.

Published in hardback format, the title, which carries an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of £22 and the ISBN 9781036125011, can be purchased online via <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk> or ordered from all good bookstores.



BUY THE BOOK - *One Submarine's Secret War Against the Axis*



Former Royal Navy officer Gav Don's new book tells the story of the submarine HMS Triumph and the crew who operated her (including Gav's uncle, who served as *Triumph's* gunnery officer) role in the Mediterranean over the course of 1941.

Triumph arrived in that theatre of war in January 1941, just as 50,000 Allied troops were

being deployed to Greece to deter a German invasion. Within days, however, the Allies found 200,000 heavily armed Germans thundering towards them and a helter-skelter retreat ensued. Within 60 days Greece had fallen, and Rommel's Afrika Korps had arrived in Libya. *Triumph* remained and was to prove a major player, landing secret agents and rescuing escapees, while attacking both Rommel's supply lines and the Italian fleet at every possible opportunity.

Tragically, *Triumph's* story culminates in her

disappearance in January 1942, while on one last mission before a promised rest and refit. The discovery of her wreck in 2023 has allowed her final patrol and tragic loss with all hands to be reconstructed here in unprecedented detail.

The book, published in hardback format under ISBN 9781036132514, carries an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of £25 and can be ordered from all good bookstores or purchase online via www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

PRIZE WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT

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Absalon, Part 1

David Wooley tackles Billing Boats' 1:100 scale kit for this Danish multi-purpose frigate and explains why and how a few modifications of his own were made along the way

My first introduction to the *Absalon*, or to be correct the second unit in the class, *Esbern Snare*, was back in 2005 at HM Naval Base Portsmouth for a photo shoot soon after commissioning. Fast forward to 2020 and the opportunity arose to visit the *Absalon* at the liner terminal in Liverpool.

In the intervening years, the designated role of the two vessels was to change from Flexible Support Ship with the prefix AG to a Multi-Purpose Frigate. After visiting both vessels, and particularly the *Absalon*, the original definition would seem more appropriate, as within the interior of this 4500-ton hull is a large mission bay, or flexi-deck, 84m long x 10.5m wide x 4.5m in height. This is capable of accommodating a range of equipment, depending on the operational role; for example, seven MBTs or 55

vehicles, up to a capacity of 1700 tons of equipment, via a stern ramp aft. Also accommodated within the flexi-deck are two water jet powered LCPs (Landing Craft Personnel) launched via an extended cradle from a separate door in the transom.

The *Absalon* was built at Odense Staalskibsværft and commissioned in 2005. The ship is 137m in length x 19.5m in beam, 6.3m in draft, and powered by two MTU 8000 diesels to two shafts, giving a speed of 24kts and a range of 9000 miles at 15 kts.

The hanger space is sufficient to accommodate two AW 101 or two MH 60R helicopters, while defensive armament is quite comprehensive, consisting of 36 missile VLS launch containers, in three blocks situated in a well deck amidships, along with eight harpoon launch tubes for SSMs (Surface-to-Surface Missiles). Forward

of the bridge is an automated 5-inch 62 calibre naval gun plus one of two 35mm Millennium close-in weapons systems (the other situated aft above the hanger entrance). The ship is also equipped with 2 x Mk 32 MU 90 torpedoes.

Over the years I've opted to build models of vessels that have been reasonably well documented and photographed. There have been exceptions but to have good images is a real advantage and helps reduce levels of modeller's licence or guess work. Consequently, while the *Absalon* had been on my 'to build' list since 2005, interest really intensified in 2022 after an official visit to Liverpool to view the ship in person.

Billing Boats' 1:100 scale kit for the *Absalon* was withdrawn from the catalogue some years ago, this being one of a number of kits added to



The Danish Absalon multi-purpose frigate at Liverpool Liner Terminal.

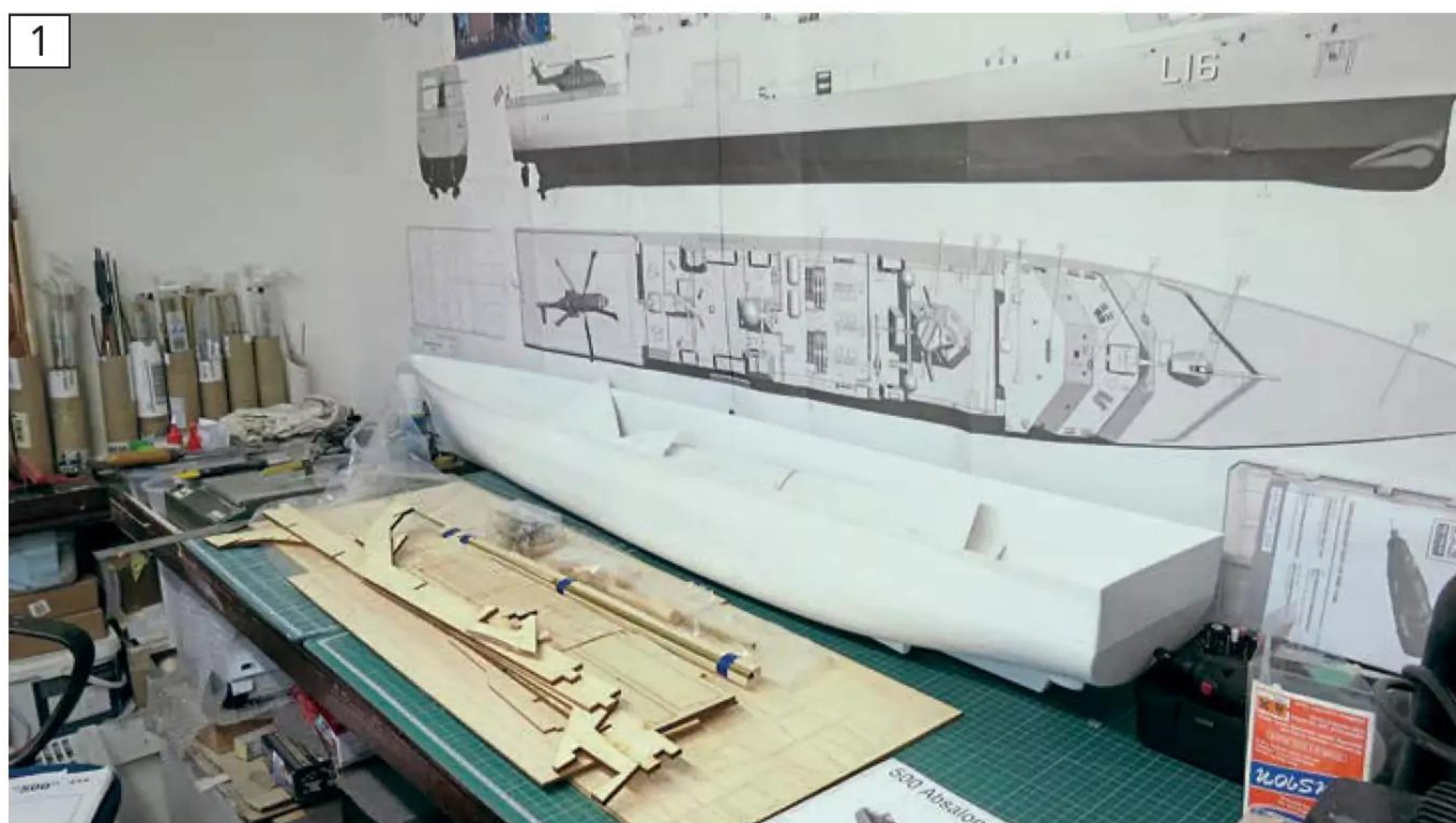
“Although Absalon had been on my ‘to build’ list since 2005, interest really intensified in 2022 after an official visit to Liverpool to view the ship in person”

the company’s list of candidates for potential redevelopment/upgrading. Thankfully, however, while not yet back on the market, the kind folks at Billing’s were able to make a kit available to me.

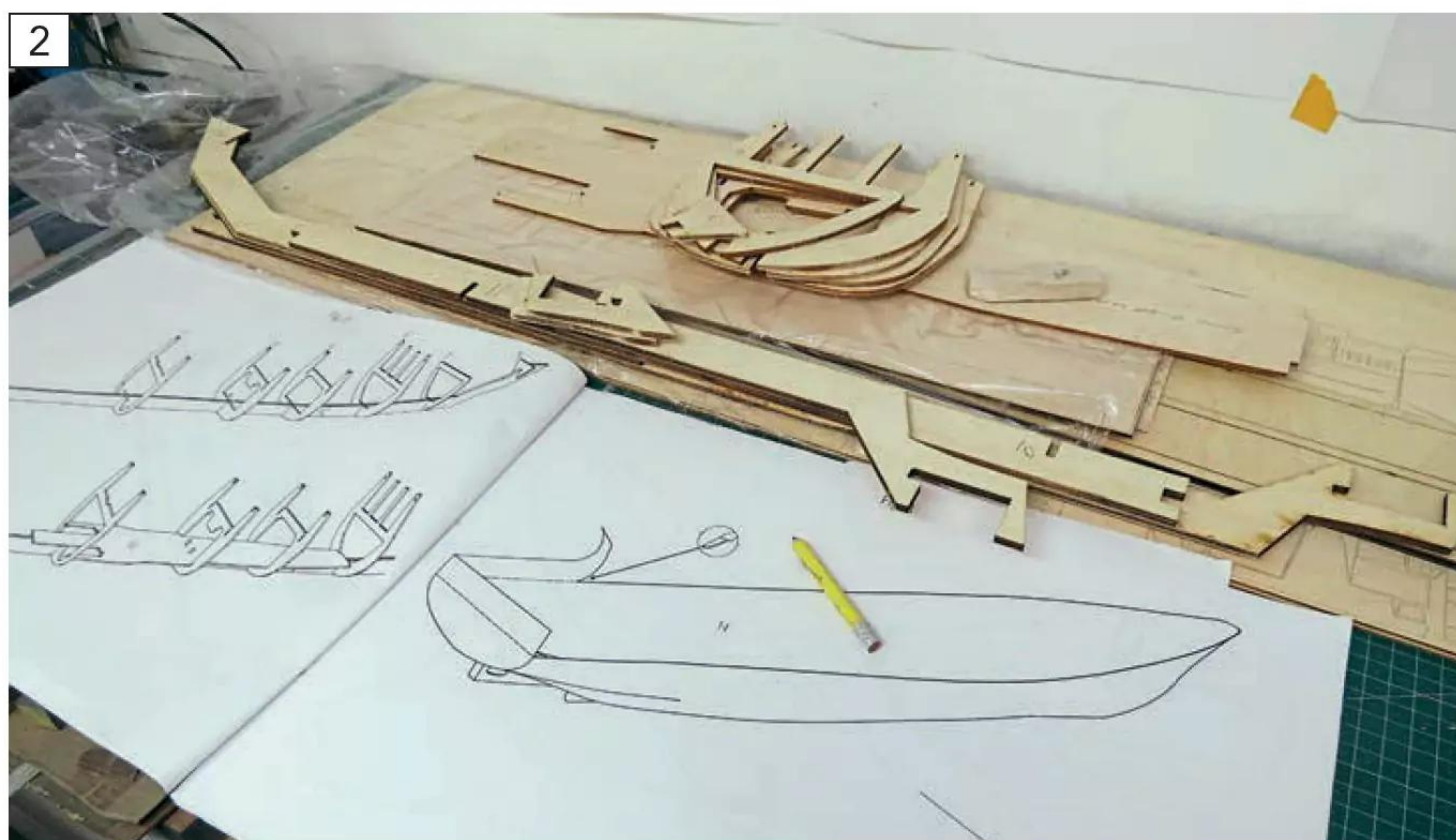
The kit

Those of you familiar with Billing Boats’ kits will recognise the method of construction here, whereby a timber frame, which consists of laser cut bulkhead frame and a keelson (see **Photo 1**) are inserted into an ABS hull. Billings also provides a comprehensive illustrative build booklet (see **Photo 2**). As with any builder’s guide, it does well to thoroughly study each stage of construction. The first of these is to double the thickness of the keelson by applying adhesive, my ‘go to’ for timber being Evostik waterproof resin (see **Photo 3**).

As you’d expect with an ABS hull, there is some waste or salvage on the top edge that needs to be carefully removed by sanding down to a



Billing Boats’ Absalon kit, a material mix of ABS, styrene and lite ply.



All the parts for the construction of the model laid out and cross referenced, along with the illustrated build booklet.



Commencing assembly of the keelson.

specific line on the top edge of the hull, remembering that this knuckle line will be critical to the model (see **Photo 4**).

Prior to the marrying up of the internal frame within the hull,

provision for the two shaft and twin rudders must be made. This is followed by fixing the frames into the slots provided within the keelson and fixing the motors and battery tray onto the keelson. Once set, the

4



Preparing the ABS hull by removing unwanted material from the knuckle line.

5



Installing the assembled framework in the hull.

6



Locating and fixing strips of timber to the inside of the knuckle line.

7



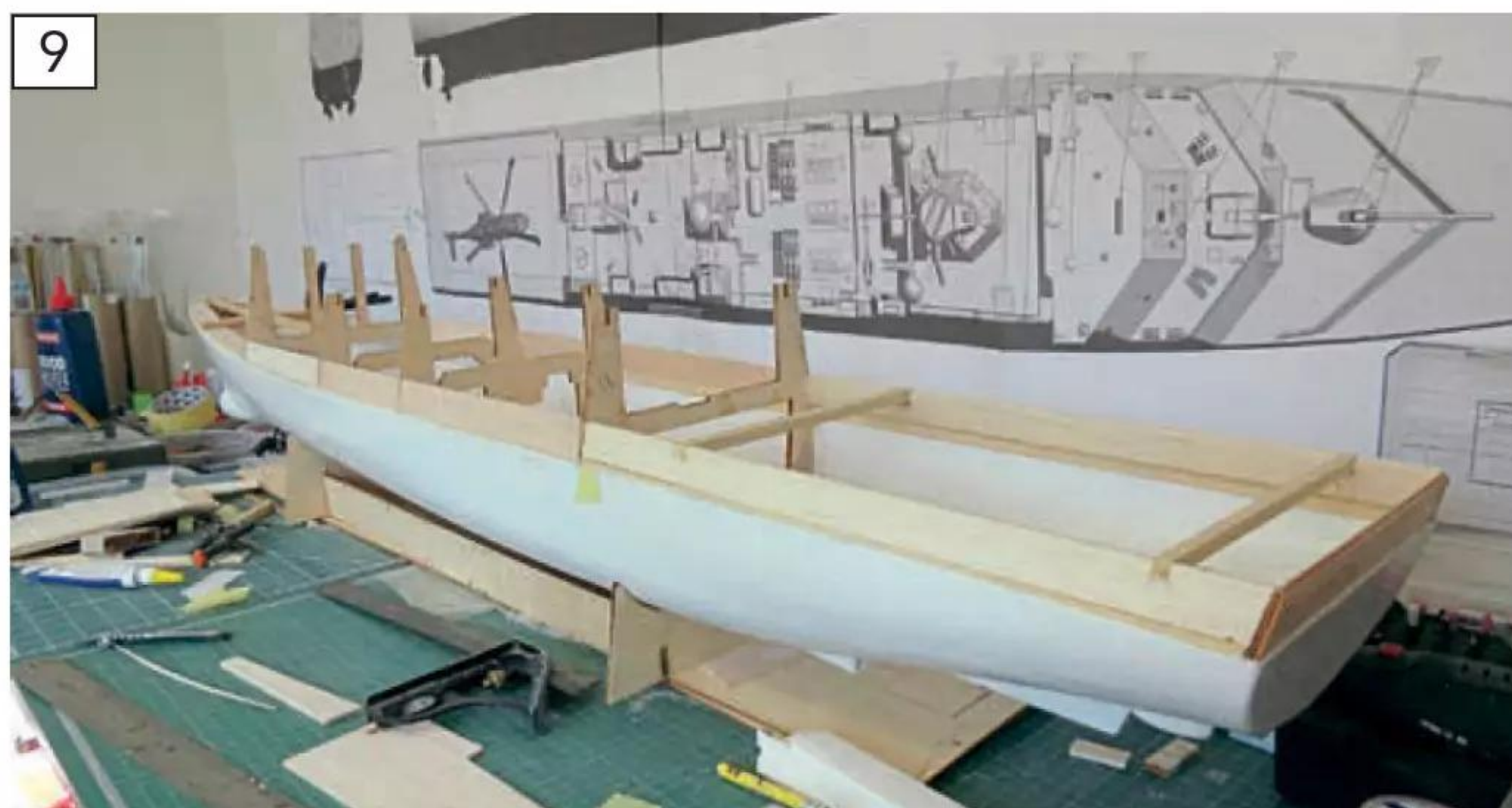
Installing the motor battery and ESC platform within the frame assembly.

8



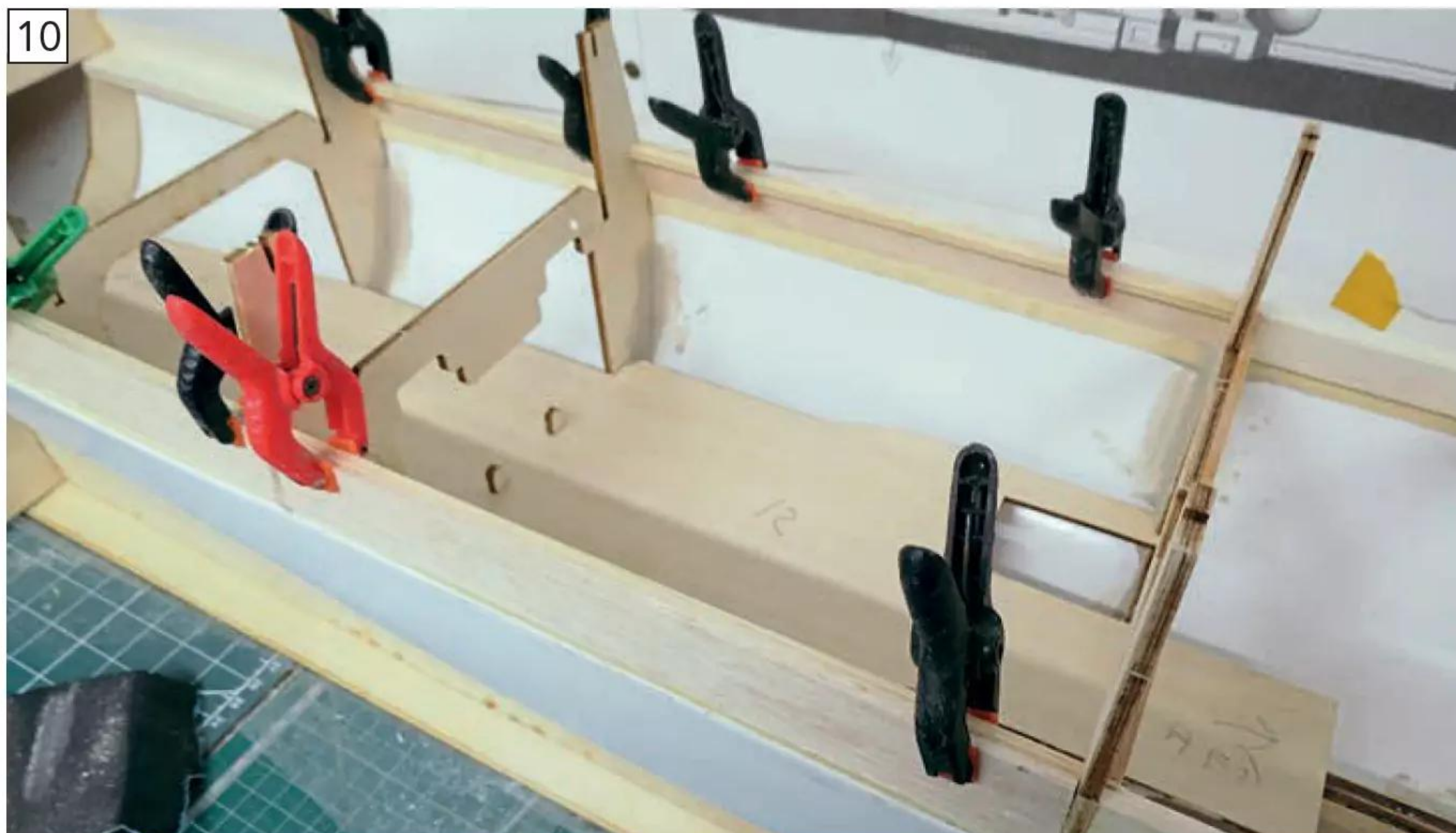
Preparing the ABS deck assembly for removal of unwanted material.

9



Discarding the ABS deck so the timber deck assembly can be built up (see article text for detail).

10



As part of the timber deck arrangement, deck edge bearers are added.

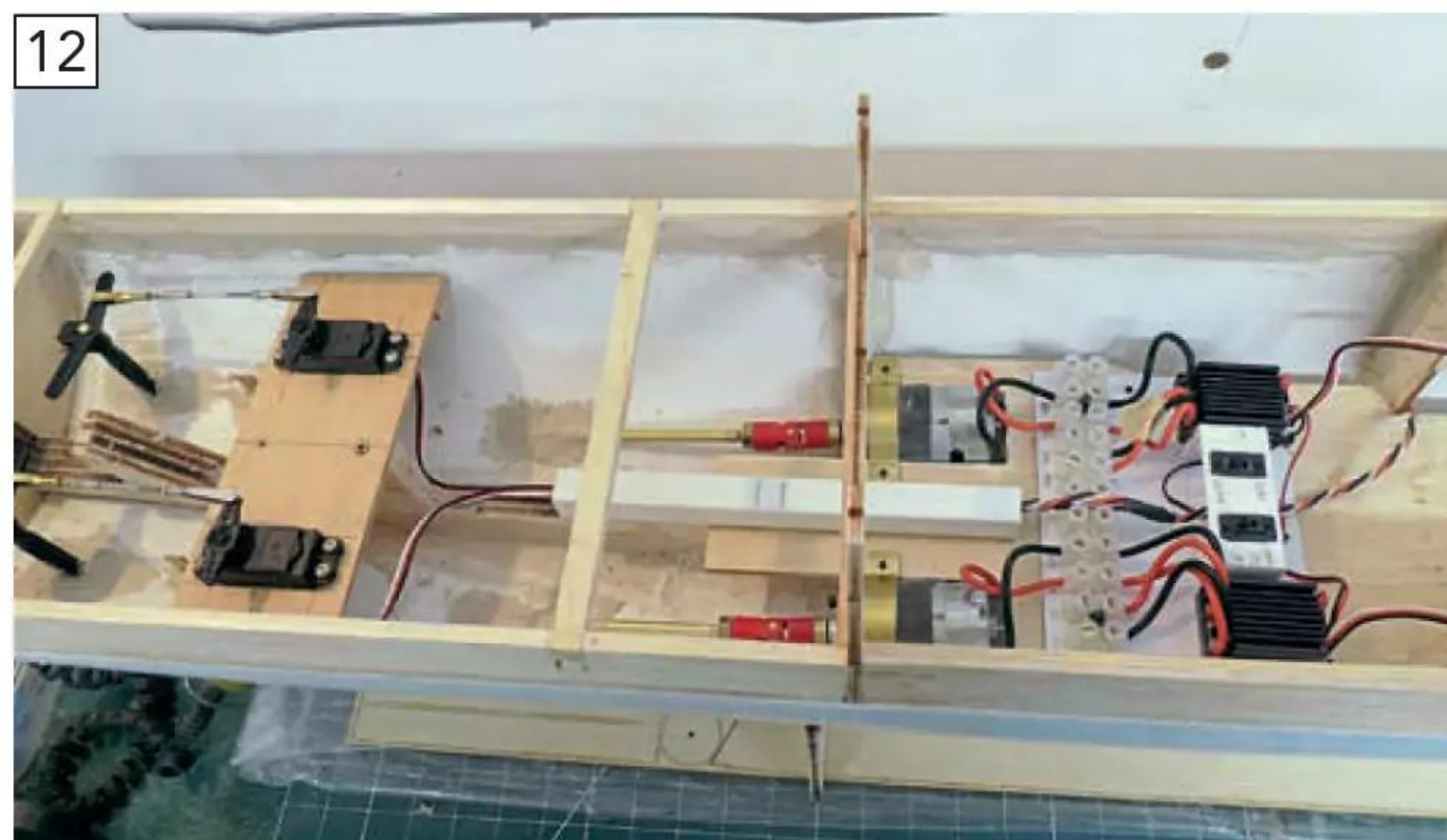
assembly is placed into the hull (see **Photo 5**). For the initial fixing of the frames within the ABS hull I used Deluxe Fusion, which has similar properties to Stabalit Express (a powder and resin mix). Once cured, timber strips were set into place between each frame and raised 2mm above the top edge of the Knuckle line (see **Photo 6**). As the hull has a slight curve, the sides needed to be pulled into the frames using masking tape (see **Photo 7**).

Forming the deck and deck supports

As mentioned, the knuckle that runs the full length of the hull is critical. As part of the kit, Billing provides an ABS deck, which when cut is intended to marry with the knuckle



The balsa forecastle deck is raised above the knuckle so as to marry with the top of the balsa side deck edge panel.



The internal power train installation. Note the use of twin servos.



Installing the twin 12v packs of NiMHs, with temporary ballast weights added right forward and right aft.



Using tape to indicate the waterline for ballasting.

to form a distinctive edge. I taped off along the line of the deck to remove the salvage material (see **Photo 8**). However, I soon found the ABS deck presented two problems: 1) locating the prepared sides of the deck with the hull knuckle accurately proved nigh on impossible, and 2) the top edge of the deck edge was slightly radiused and should present a flat 90 degree corner, this especially evident

on the forecastle right forward and the flight deck edges aft. So, after some time endeavouring to overcome these anomalies, a decision was made to follow an alternative method.

The alternative deck

I approached an alternative to the ABS deck by first affixing balsa side panels, 23mm x 3mm, between each of the frames, with cross members

“After some time endeavouring to overcome these anomalies, a decision was made to follow an alternative method”

positioned aft across the flight deck and timber lite ply strips added inboard at the top edge of balsa side panels; these were, however, raised 3mm above the balsa edge from the hanger bulkhead forward (see **Photo 9 and 10**). Once again, using hard balsa (lite ply would also work), the forward deck section, or sheer line, was raised to follow the level determined by the top edge of the balsa side panels as per the drawing (see **Photo 11**).

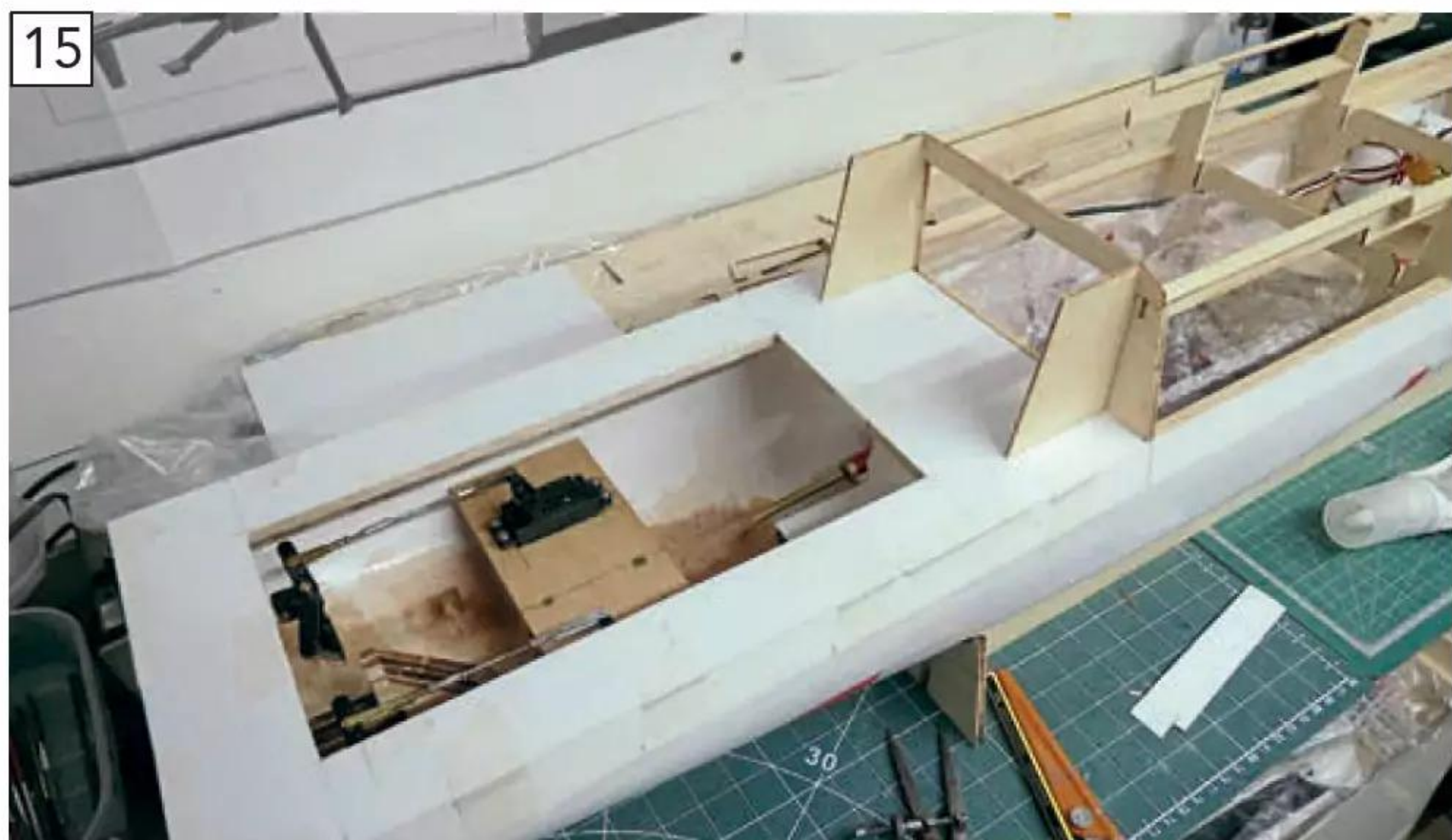
Electrical installation and linkages

Having reached this stage of the construction, the power train/electrics could now be installed. I chose to install two servos, one on each rudder, connected by a Y lead to the RX (see **Photo 12**). The pre-cut tray within the hull allowed my two 545 brushed motors a snug fit; these line up with each shaft and a strap with a rubber insert holds them firm. Two ESCs were fitted on a detachable bed and connected to give independent power control (tank drive). I prefer this arrangement to that of a mixer. The RX I located right forward and the battery packs I've used are 2 x 12v sub-C 3700mAh.

Ballast trials

Having learnt from experience, I undertake ballasting trials at the earliest opportunity (on a calm day), while access into the hull is still at its very easiest, this usually affording more choice in terms of location/distribution of weight (see **Photo 13**). As shown in **Photo 14**, ballast marks (waterline) were added to one side of the hull, these providing a visual indicator to the model's attitude on the water.

15



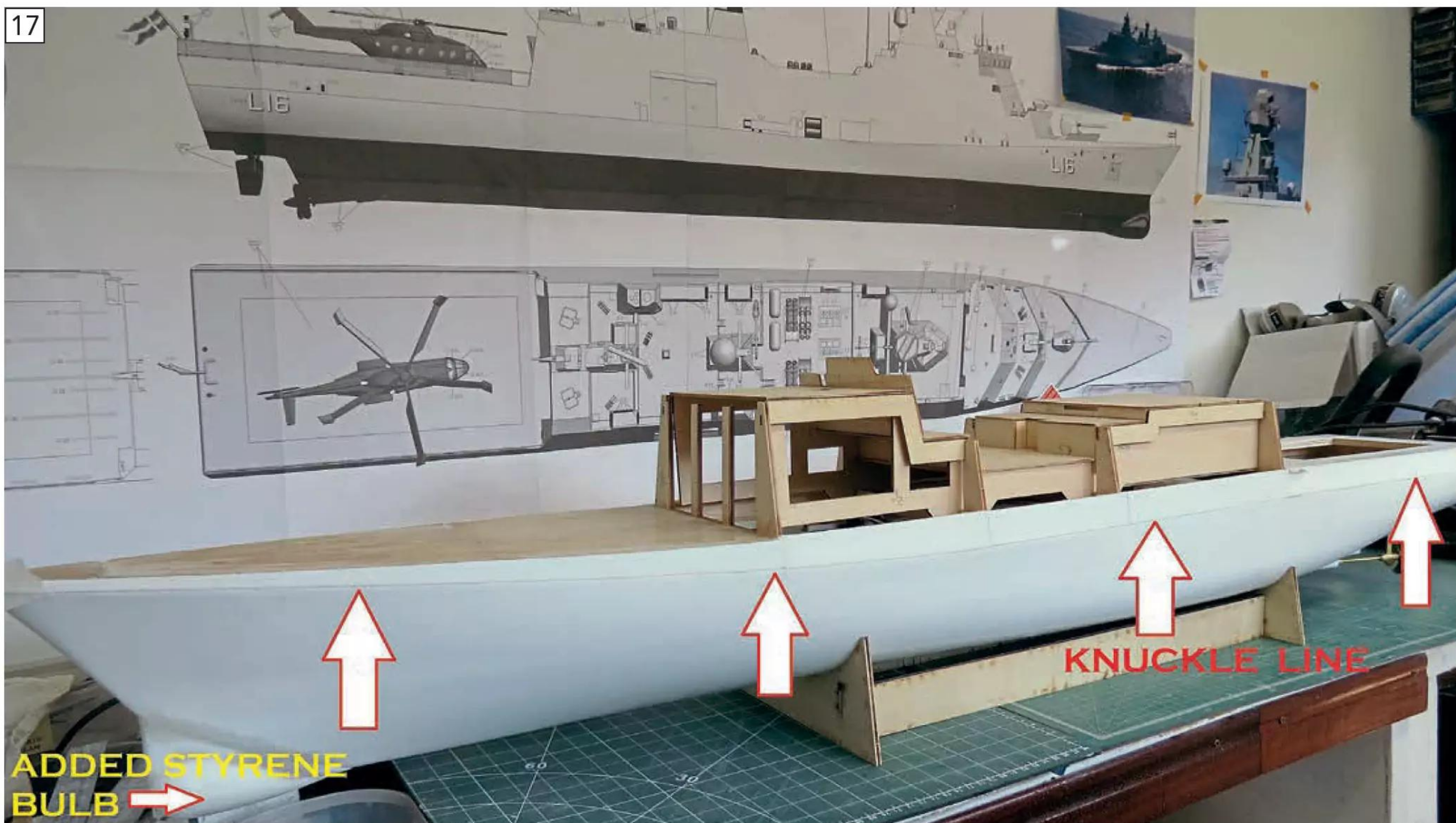
The styrene flight deck, with plenty of access for ballast and adjustments to linkages.

16



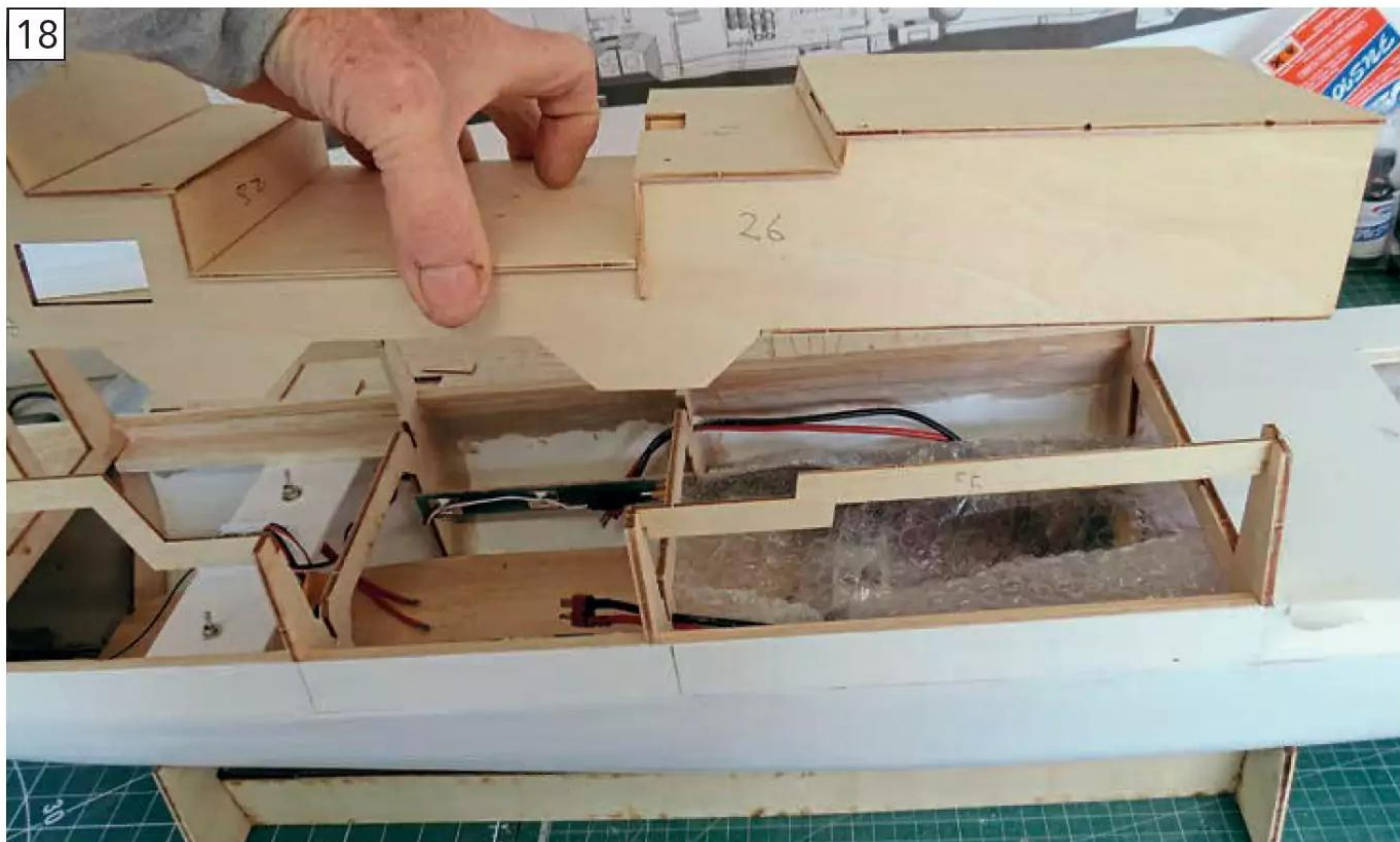
Building up the internal fixed framework.

17



The knuckle line, blending well from stem to stern.

18



The assembled superstructure platforms slotted into place.

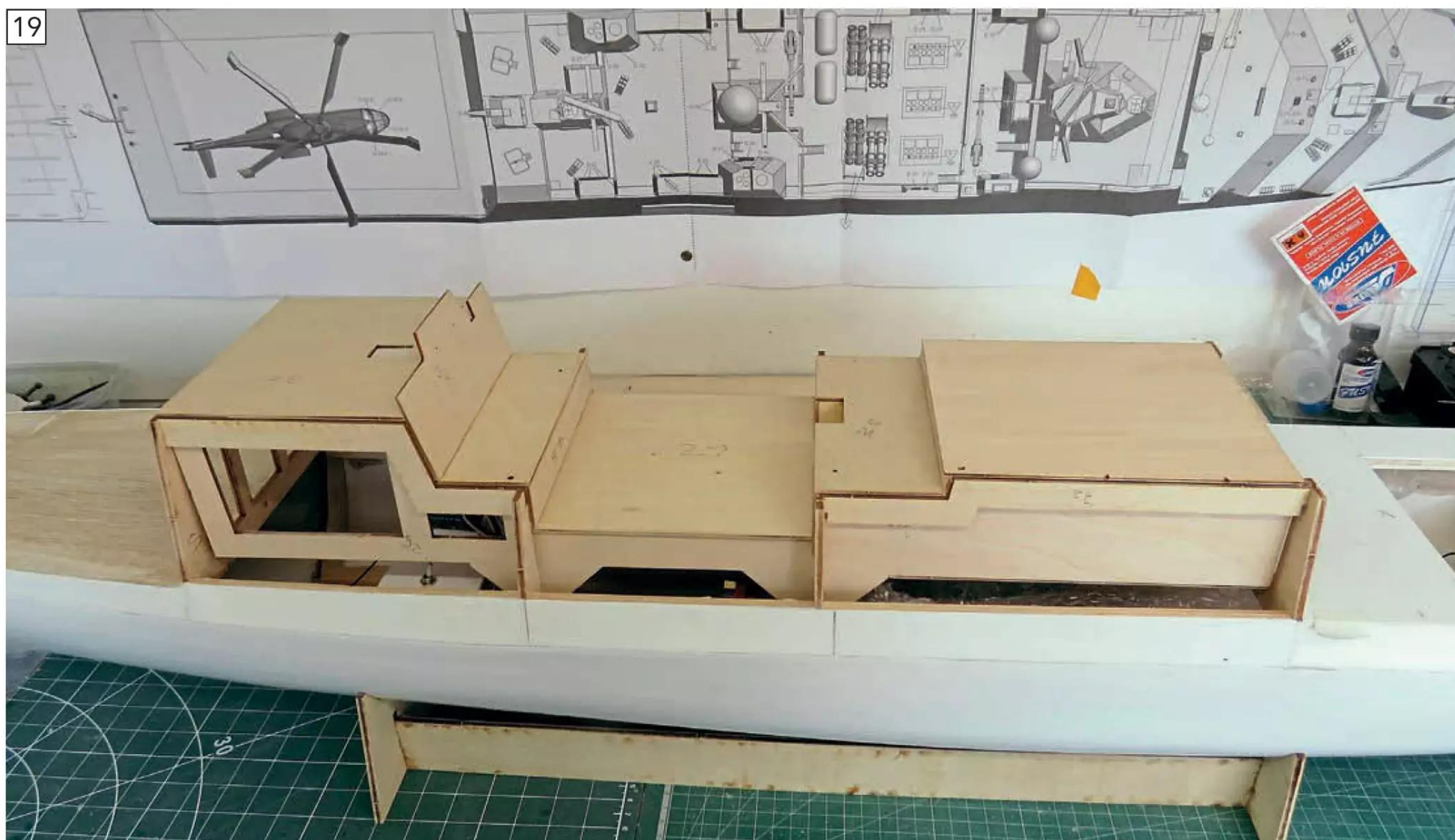
“It’s at this point in the build we will diverge from the kit’s original format”

Building up the superstructure and supports

My flight deck area provides excellent access not just for adjusting the rudders but also for adding ballast. The design for this area follows that of the original deck, which I discarded, but is styrene not ABS (see **Photo 15**).

The laser-cut parts for interlocking into the basic framework are perfect fits and considerably strengthen the assembly (see **Photo 16**). **Photo 17** serves as a reminder of the importance of correctly aligning the knuckle along the length of the hull.

19



The entire assembly fits like a glove.

20



Balsa sheet fitted into the open side panels of the fixed frame to add strength and provide a greater surface area to affix the outer ply sheets to.

To allow access into the hull, Billings has made the centre core of the superstructure removable. Once again, top marks for how this assembly fits together and slots comfortably into place (see **Photos 18 and 19**).

It was at this point in the build that I diverged from the kit's original format. Both sides of the superstructure's fixed framework were infilled with balsa sheet, the rational for which will become clear as we proceed (see **Photo 20**).

Bridge construction

The assembly of the bridge structure follows that of the main superstructure. With Billings being past experts in this method, each part slots into place accurately. However, to aid in the alignment and fixing of the bridge I

21



As an aid to accuracy in locating and fixing the bridge assembly timber guide, strips are added.

22



The bridge assembly being located into position using the guide strips.

23



The bridge assembly firmly in place.

24



A small timber platform is added to support the navigation lightbox.

added strips of timber to the deck, these aligning with the internal frame of the bridge (see **Photo 21, 22 and 23**). With the bridge fixed into place, a small platform was added to support the navigation light box as supplied in the kit (see **Photo 24**).

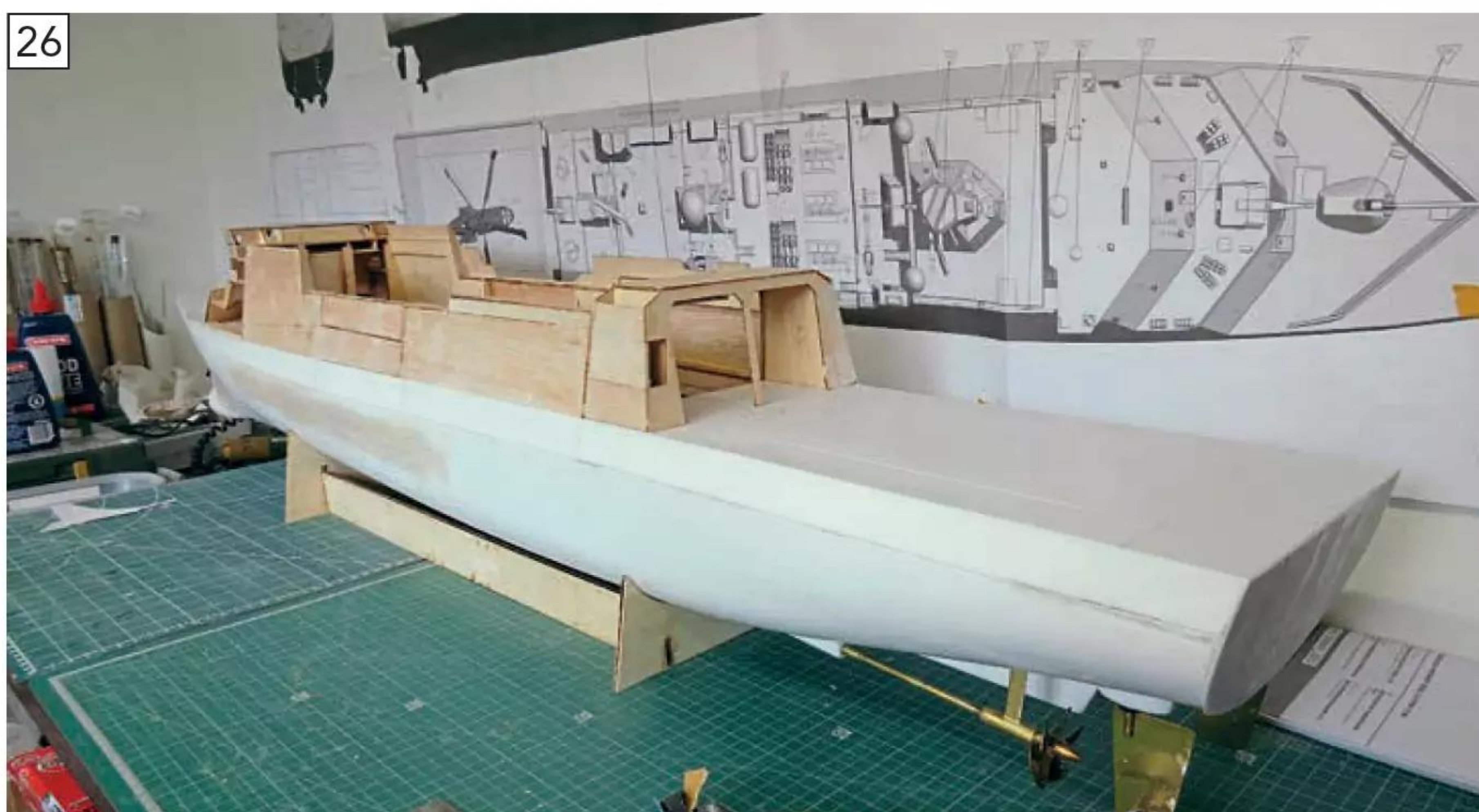
Preparing and cladding with the superstructure

The balsa sheet previously added to the sides of the fixed superstructure framework was given several coats of sanding sealer, which helped in the application and adhesion of the waterproof PVA when affixing the side cladding (see **Photos 25 and 26**).

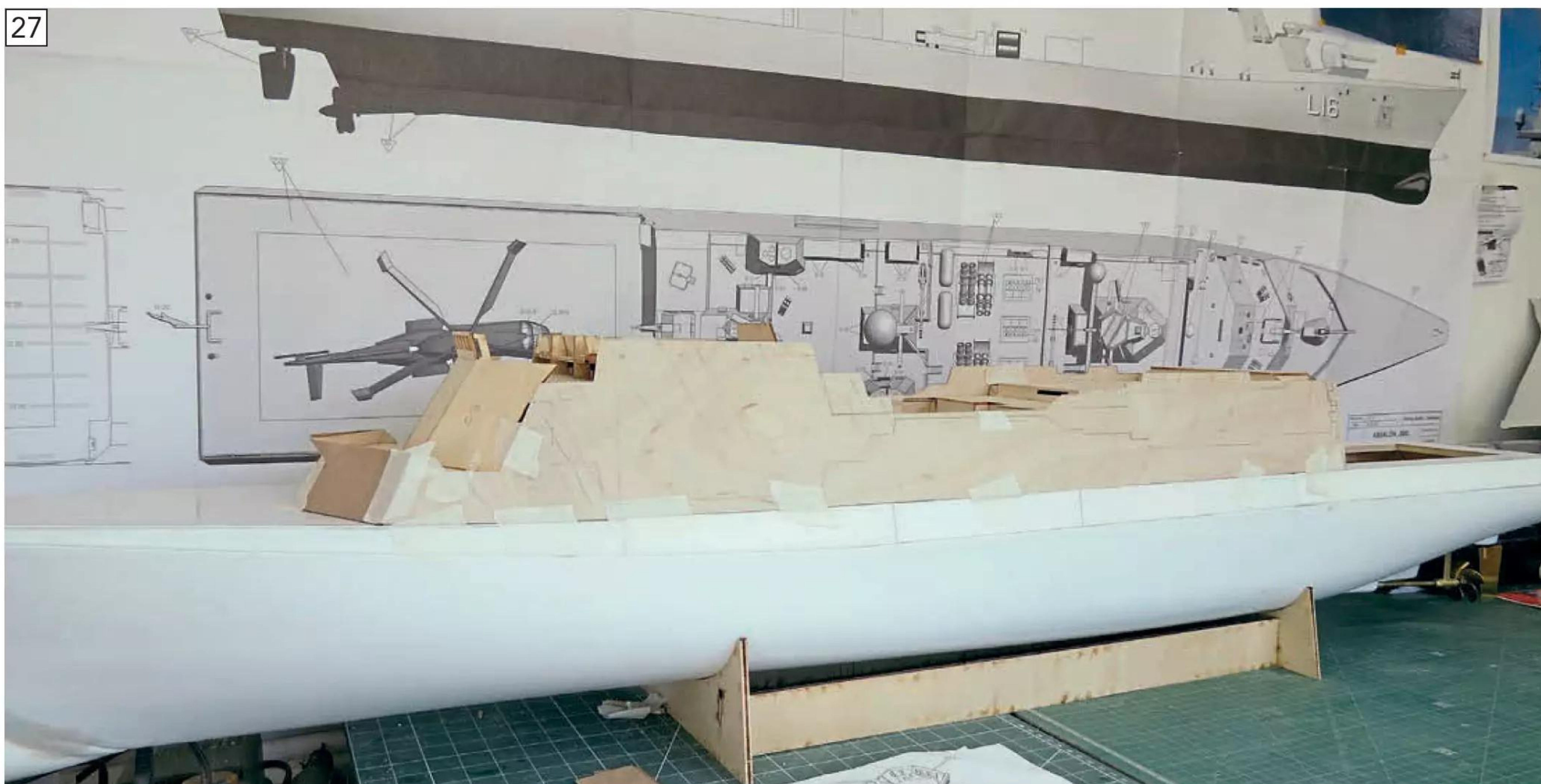
The outer cladding included in the kit is 2mm lite ply. Once again, I made my own modifications here by transferring the shape onto 1mm marine ply, this being flexible enough to follow the slight curve around the bridge and marry flush with the top of the deck edge (see **Photo 27**).



All the internal and external timber surfaces are given several coats of sanding sealer.



The dual hanger doorway, and the superstructure ready to accept the side sheeting.



The 1mm ply side sheet blends flush with the top of the styrene side panel. This joint will become invisible with the application of the filler primer.

Prepping the hull for the primer coats

Prepping a hull for painting is one of those jobs you either relish or simply have an open mind about. I fall into the latter category. The hull in parts requires fillers (I used P38) and the laborious task of wet and dry sanding, this process having to be repeated until the surface is well blended and free from surface flaws. This done, my first coat of surface filler primer (I used Hycote Plastic Primer in grey) was applied and, once dry, rubbed down, before repeating the whole process (see **Photo 28**) – on a day when the weather allowed for this task to be undertaken outdoors. Only when completely satisfied with the results did I add further coats of primer (see **Photo 29**).

Sea trials

My hull had already been ballasted, but the addition of a superstructure can, of course, alter the trim significantly, as there's more surface area to catch any slight breeze. Thankfully, the model behaved well, with little or no windage effects. Control and turns were well within one and half times the hull length and, having independent motor control, turns on the spot could be made with confidence (see **Photo 30**).

Fittings

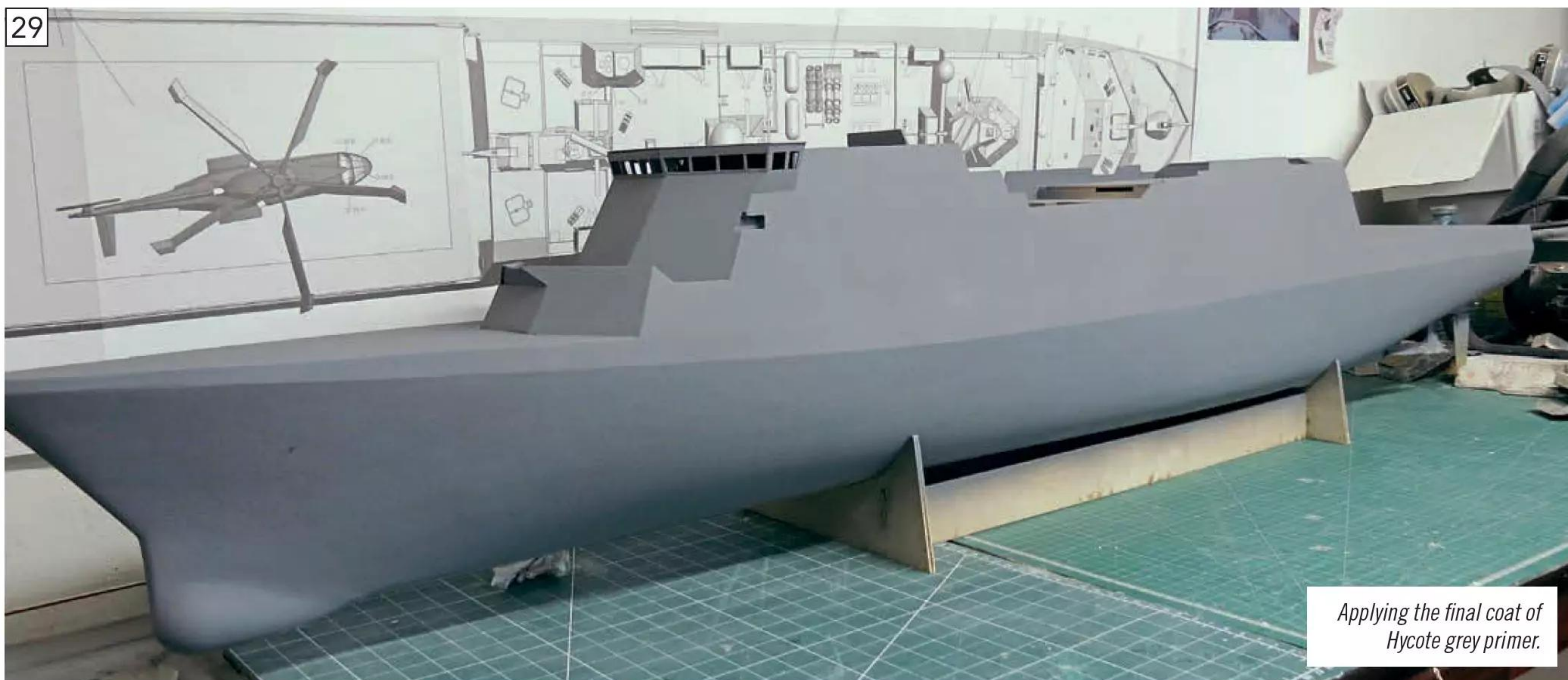
Before we wrap up Part 1 of this two-part article, I need to mention the structural fittings, such as the comms tower and main tracking radar towers.

28



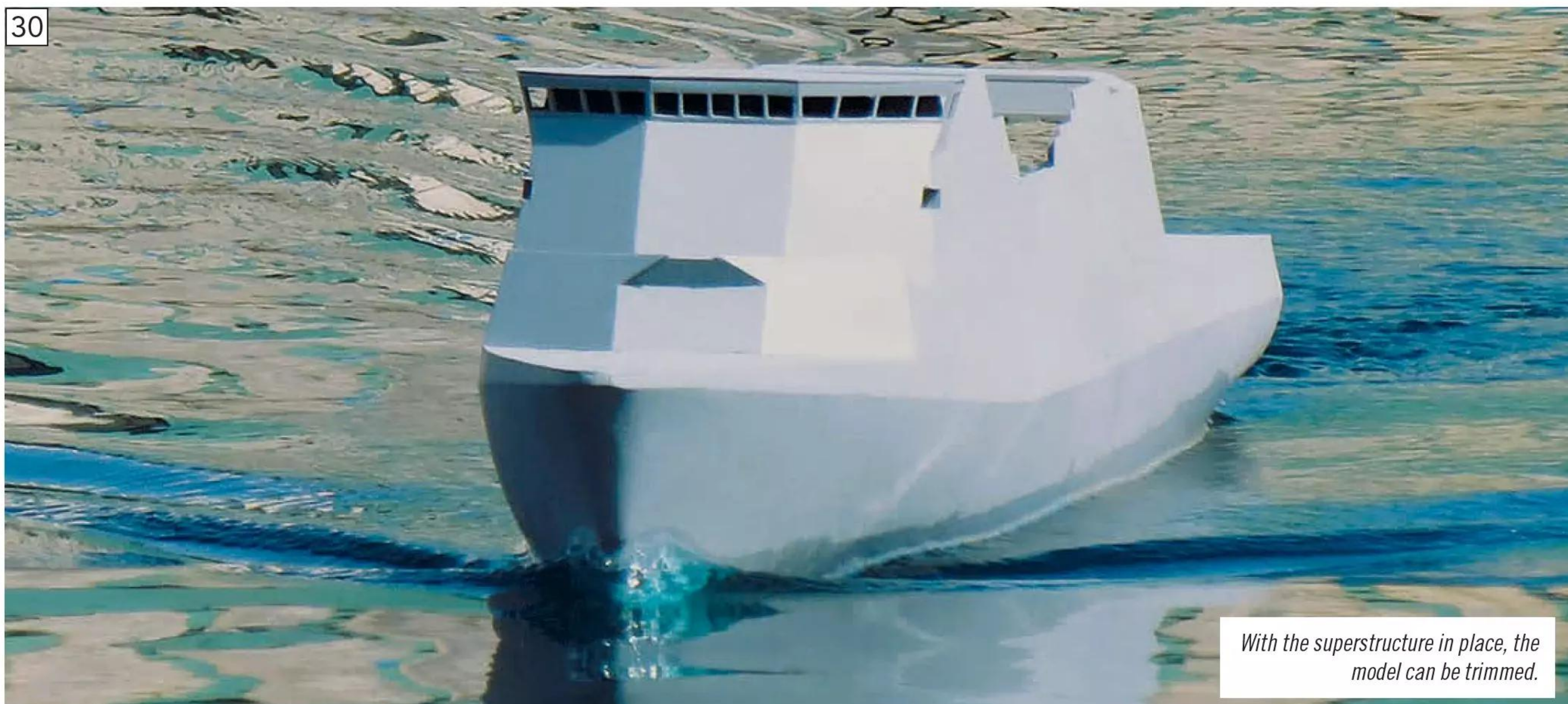
The process of filling, sanding and priming underway.

29



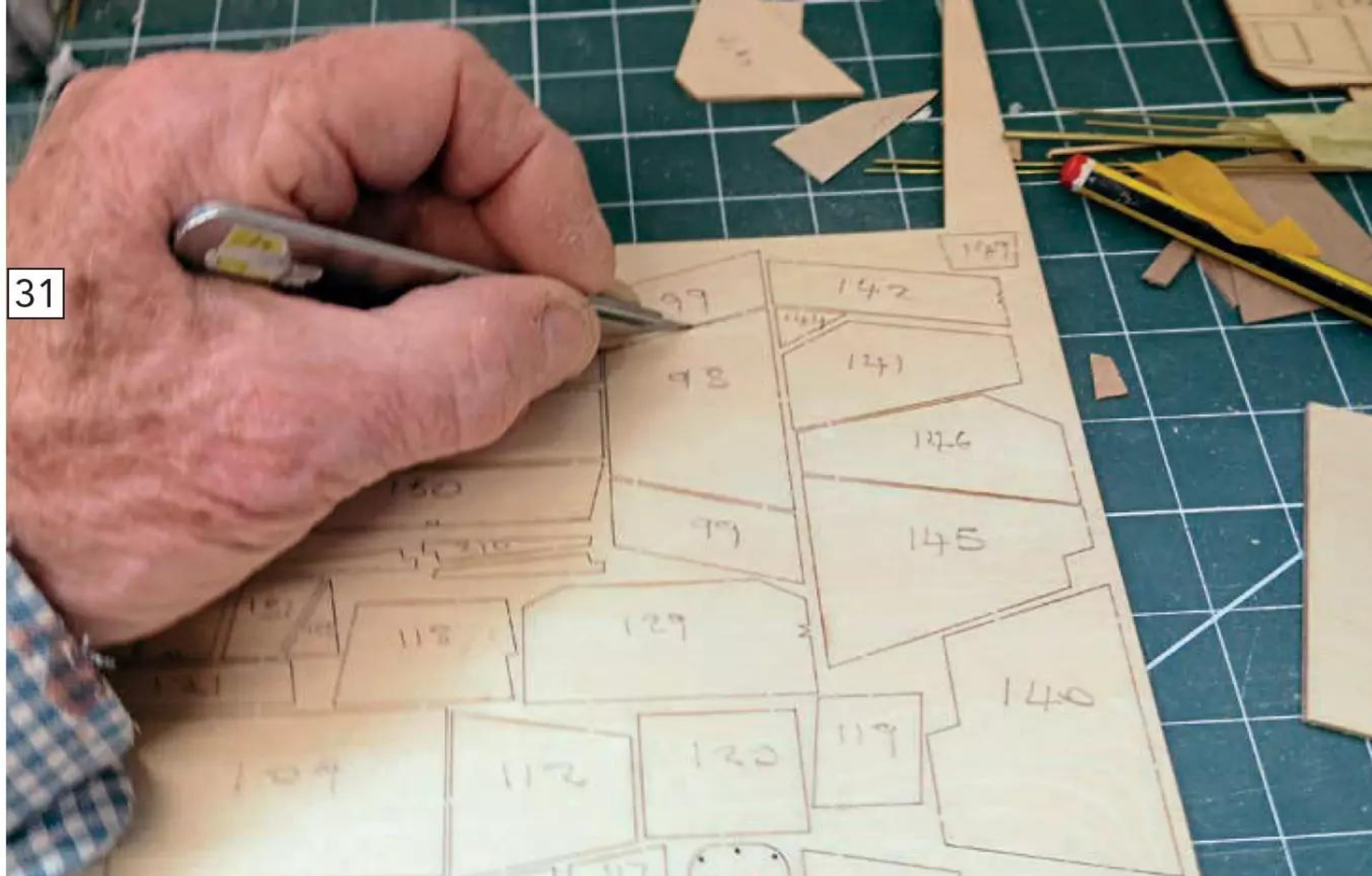
Applying the final coat of Hycote grey primer.

30



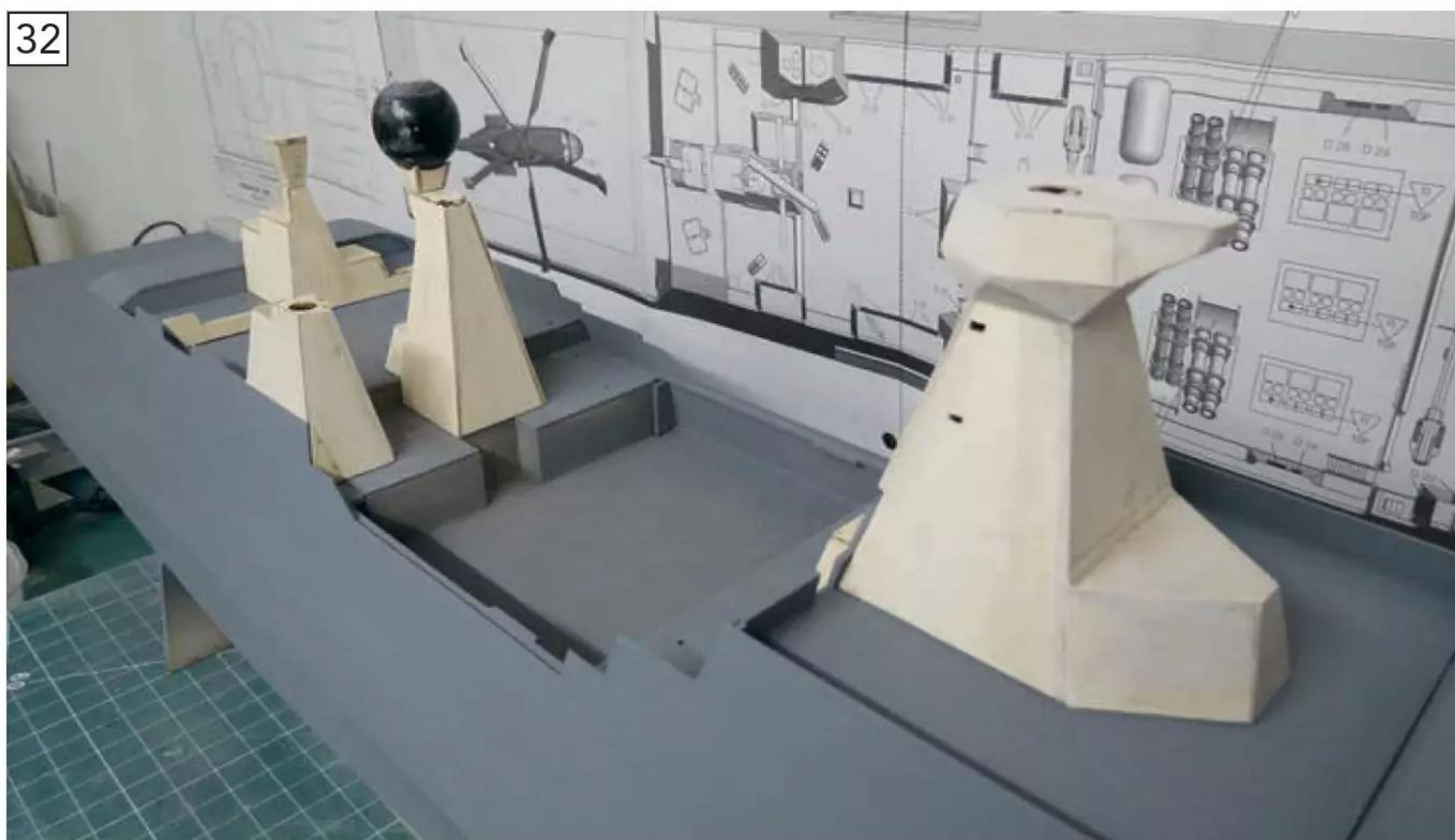
With the superstructure in place, the model can be trimmed.

31



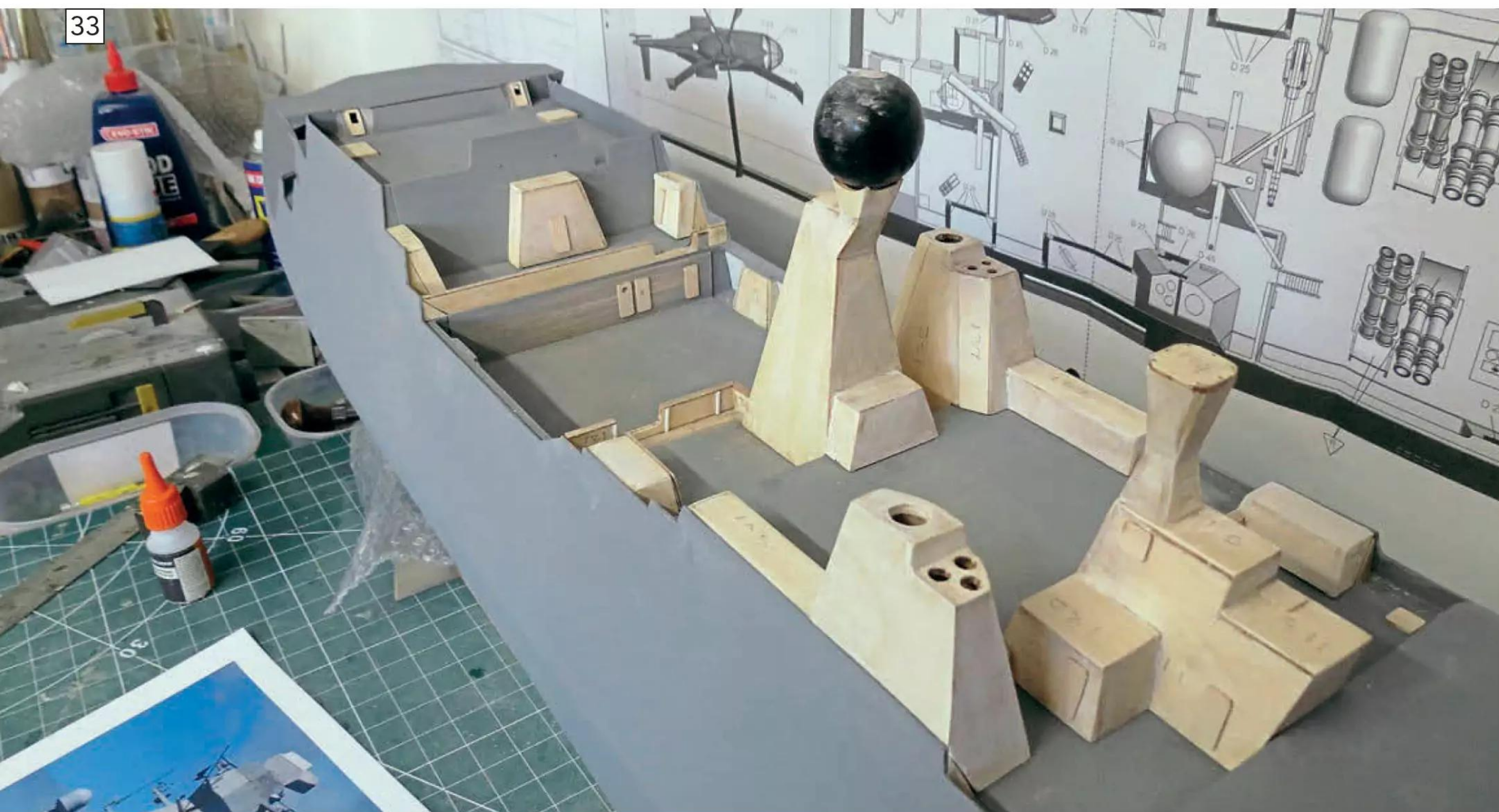
Carefully cutting the tags of the structural fittings.

32



The assembly for the forward radar tower neatly slots into place.

33



An afterview showing the prepared radar support structures located, but not fixed, into place.

All the interlocking parts for these fittings are carefully numbered and noted in the illustrated booklet. So, all that was required to assemble each structural fitting was to cut and remove the tags and clean the carbonised edgings (the result of the laser process), necessary to ensure the adhesive adhered (see **Photo 31**). As mentioned, assembly is straightforward and, using Evostik waterproof PVA, the parts bonded accurately together. Once set firm, the joints were then all sanded down. Fortunately, the 2mm fine lite ply used by Billings presents a good surface for sanding sealer and primer coats (see **Photos 32 and 33**).

Part 2

Next month we'll be moving on to the detailing, spray painting, finishing and, finally, those all-important on water trials. ●

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dave would like to thank:

- The Royal Danish Navy, for allowing access to the *Ebern Snare* and *Absalon*
- Billing Boats, for the supply of the *Absalon* kit
- Dave Howard, for sharing his up-to-date knowledge and advice on the best paints and application techniques for this model.

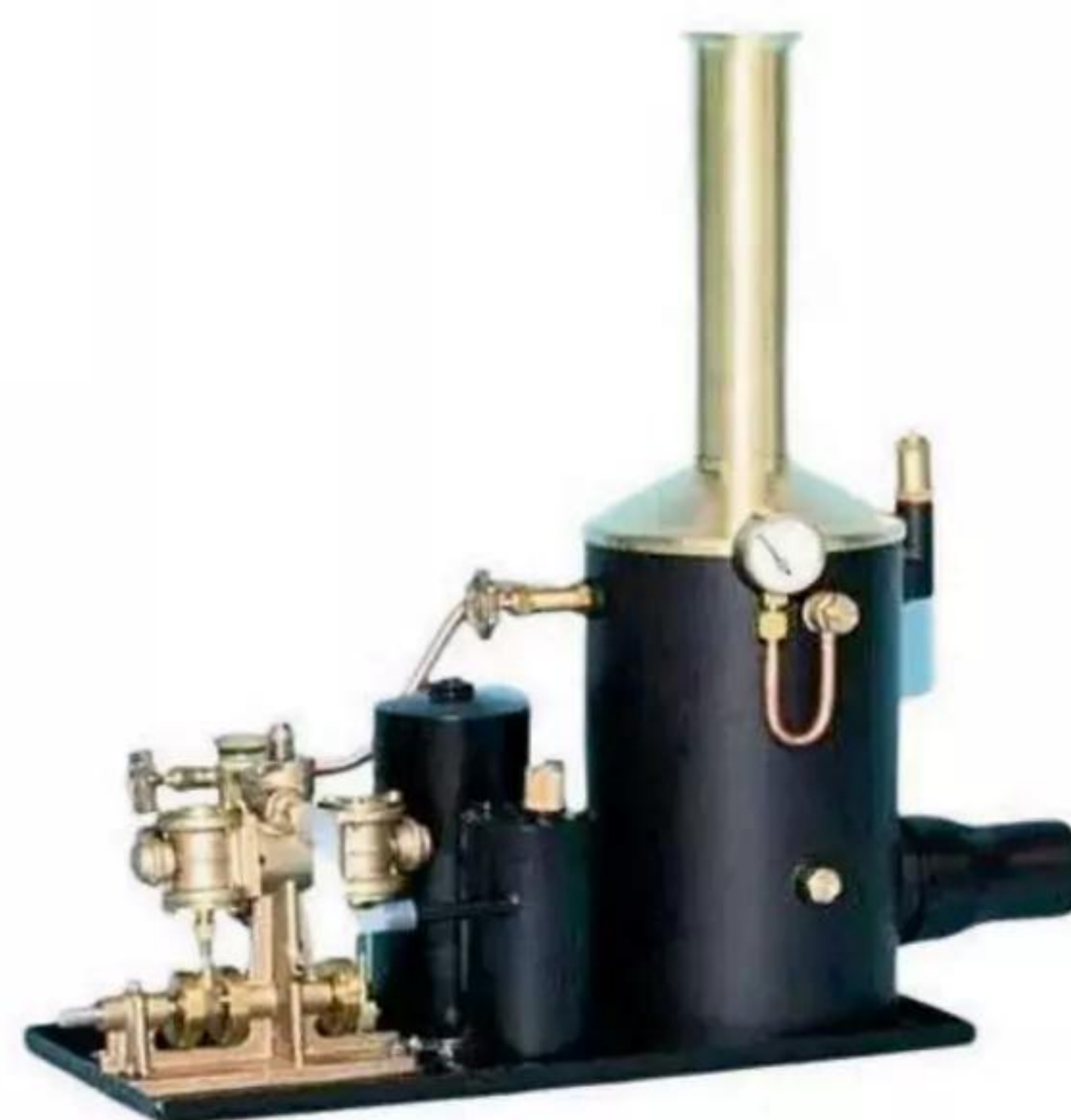


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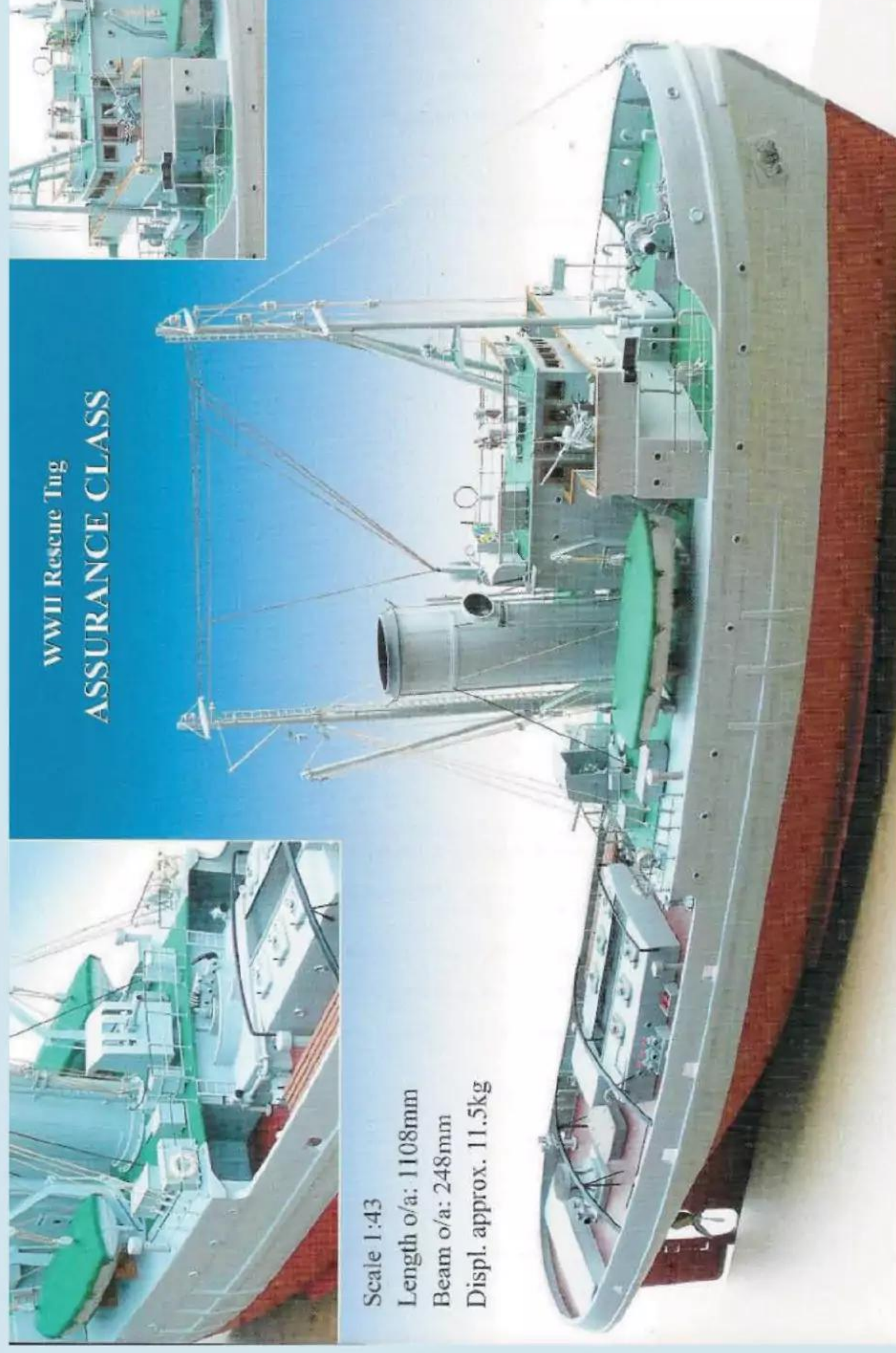
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P&O *Ferries*

Pride of Dover

Ashley Needham introduces his 'push me, pull you' P&O cross channel ferry, and proves a point!

There are those who build truly beautiful models, packed with the most exquisite detail. They slave over each and every item, even where dozens of identical parts, such as bollards, stairs, rails, and so on, have

to be made. As a result, some of these builds take years to complete.

There are others who prefer to make semi scale vessels, sometimes referred to as 'stand-off scale' models, i.e., they look convincing

"Is it actually possible to produce a respectable looking 'stand-off' scale boat that includes very little in the way of hard physical detail?"

s, In Style



ES

boat that includes very little in the way of hard physical detail?

Toys provide the answer

I list being a toy collector amongst my many vices, so it will perhaps not surprise you to learn that I own some 90 (or more) toy/model ships, one of which provided the ideal candidate to test the theory out. This boxy structure of this die-cast P&O cross-channel ferry (of the sort sold as a souvenir on the ships) is dominated by the windows and other openings along its sides, which are represented purely by black squares or oblongs. Other than a row of brightly coloured lifeboats to either side (which are squat to the point of flatness), the deck sports little more than a procession of bench seats (depicted merely by brown bumps). Oh, and, of course, there's a funnel. Basically, it's been designed to provide a reasonable representation at a reasonable price. Intriguingly, however, the underside has two projections to suggest a prop at either end.

'Economies of scale'

MS *Pride of Dover* was a cross-channel ferry built for Townsend Thoreson in 1987 to operate the Dover-Calais route. Although the Channel Tunnel wasn't completed until 1994, its construction began in 1988, so presumably Townsend could see the writing on the wall. As a result, MS *Pride of Dover* and her sister *Pride of Calais* were commissioned as 'Channel beaters'. They were big ships, at 170m and 26,400 tons, and could carry 2,300 passengers and 650 vehicles.

The grand plan

The promotional model boat appears to be double ended, in that not only is the hull shaped similarly at both ends but there's also the suggestion of a prop shaft at each end too. These vessels would have done a fair bit of reversing in and out of ports, so a prop at each end certainly makes sense. This arrangement (more on which later) would, I felt, make for an unusual feature should I decided to model my own version – and the more I thought about the idea, the more I liked it. Top tip: never let fact checking rain on your parade. I was determined my model was going to have props at either end. Finding out that the real vessel didn't would have been very bad news, so I purposely swerved any research into this.

Deciding that scaling the toy up by a factor of four would result in decent sized model (measuring 30 inches long by about 5.5 inches wide), out came my SPAR (Sharp Pencil And Ruler) design package. Before too long a not

"Top tip: never let fact checking rain on your parade!"

very detailed drawing had been made, although that said, I did pay particular attention to getting the underwater cut-up at either end right, for reasons which will later become clear.

Propulsion

Following the conventional way of doing things, having a prop at either end would have required two prop shafts and two motors (one front and one rear). However, it occurred to me that if opted for some sort of chain or belt drive, having just one really long shaft serving both tubes might be possible. The flaw in this plan was the unlikelihood of being able to source a long enough (27 inches) piece of perfectly straight stainless-steel rod, leading to a lot of vibration. So, instead, I raided my spares box and dug out a 12-inch rod of 4mm stainless steel and two (one 7-inch and one 8-inch) prop shafts. I then linked these prop shafts to the plain rod using universal joints. Having essentially a straight drive line, though, meant it would need to be installed close to the base of the boat, thereby ruling out the use of my beloved red plastic gear wheels (with their cheap, brass grub-screwed boss and wide engagement tolerance) as they'd be too big and would lift the shaft too high above the base. I therefore decided on the alternative of toothed belt drive, using a 6mm wide belt and cogs of 18 and 20 teeth, to go on the motor and shaft respectively. Ferries of this sort don't need to be fast, but a Graupner Speed 600 ECO was my chosen motor, as it would have to power two 30mm props and a very long shaft.

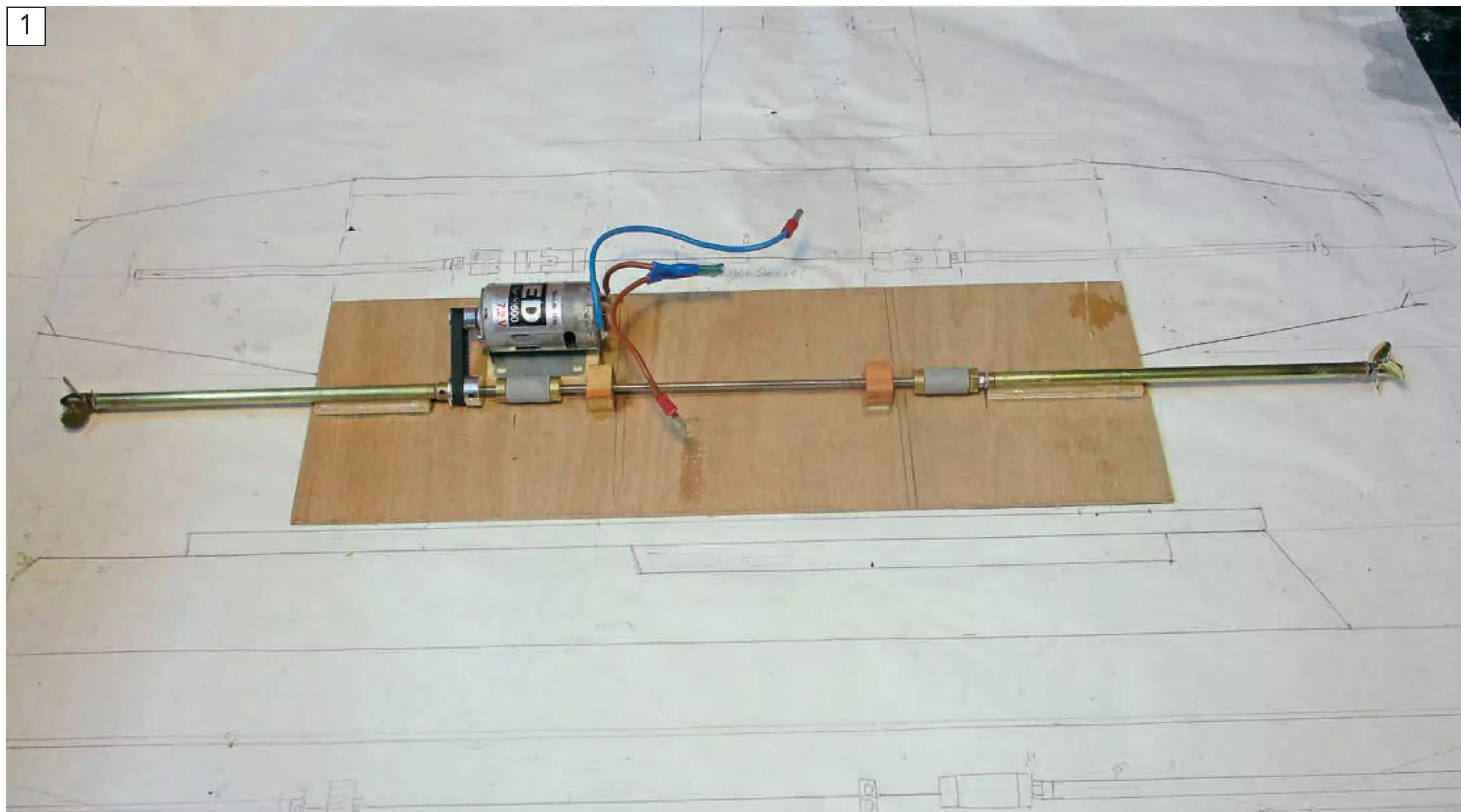
It's normal practice to sort out the shafting early on in the build while you have good access, but as the hull would be a simple box I took this to the extreme and started work on a single flat piece of 4mm ply (see **Photo 1**). From the drawing, positions of the shafts were marked, and both were then glued in situ in a straight line on strips of 9mm ply to ensure they were horizontal to the base and also to each other. I cut the centre rod to length and added the belt drive pulley before fitting a base for the motor and then glueing it in position for a test. Oh, my! More vibration than a road mender's compactor! The issue appeared to be the brass u/j inserts not being concentrically bored, and a change to silicon tube instead of the red plastic u/j did not give any improvement. Luckily, in the parts bin I had a pair of

enough – great, even – when viewed from a distance (no, not a mile away, more like 10 feet or so). These models still boast a good amount of detail, certainly sufficient to do the job, but are by no means to exhibition standard.

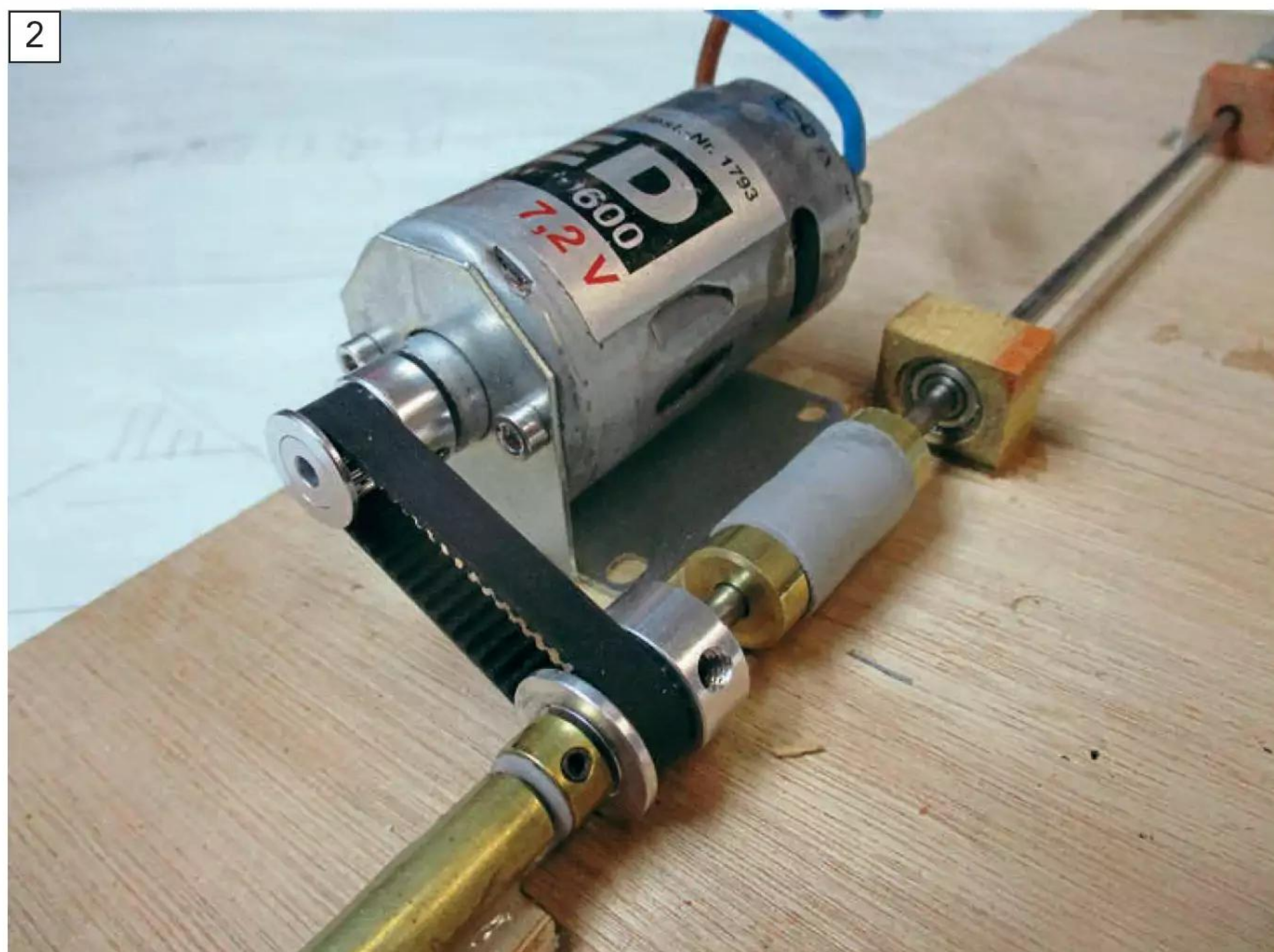
Some modellers, however, seriously call into question just how much detail is actually necessary. They really dislike the idea of having to make, for example, 20 pairs of identical 10mm high stairways and railings, preferring to merely 'suggest' detail. I am one of those modellers.

So, is it actually possible to produce a respectable looking 'stand-off' scale

1



2



small 4mm bore ball race bearings, so these were mounted in wood blocks and placed either end of the centre shafting, where, upon testing, they appeared to do the trick, and the shafts began whirring round as smooth as you'd like (see **Photo 2....but this picture shows a test-fit only**, with nothing connected properly).

Next, 35mm props were screwed to the shafts and the ply cut up ends were glued in place, resting on a single blade. This ensured that I had

the minimum cut up required and the slope would be the same at both ends! Obviously, when replaced with the correct 30mm sized items, there's just the right amount of clearance. This also means the props don't project below the bottom of the hull. Both props are handed the same. Now, I know what you're thinking: the rear prop will be correctly shaped to provide propulsion going forward, but the front one? Well, the front one will be reversing, so to speak. Clearly, there won't be the same

"Is that a bit heretical? Ah, well..."

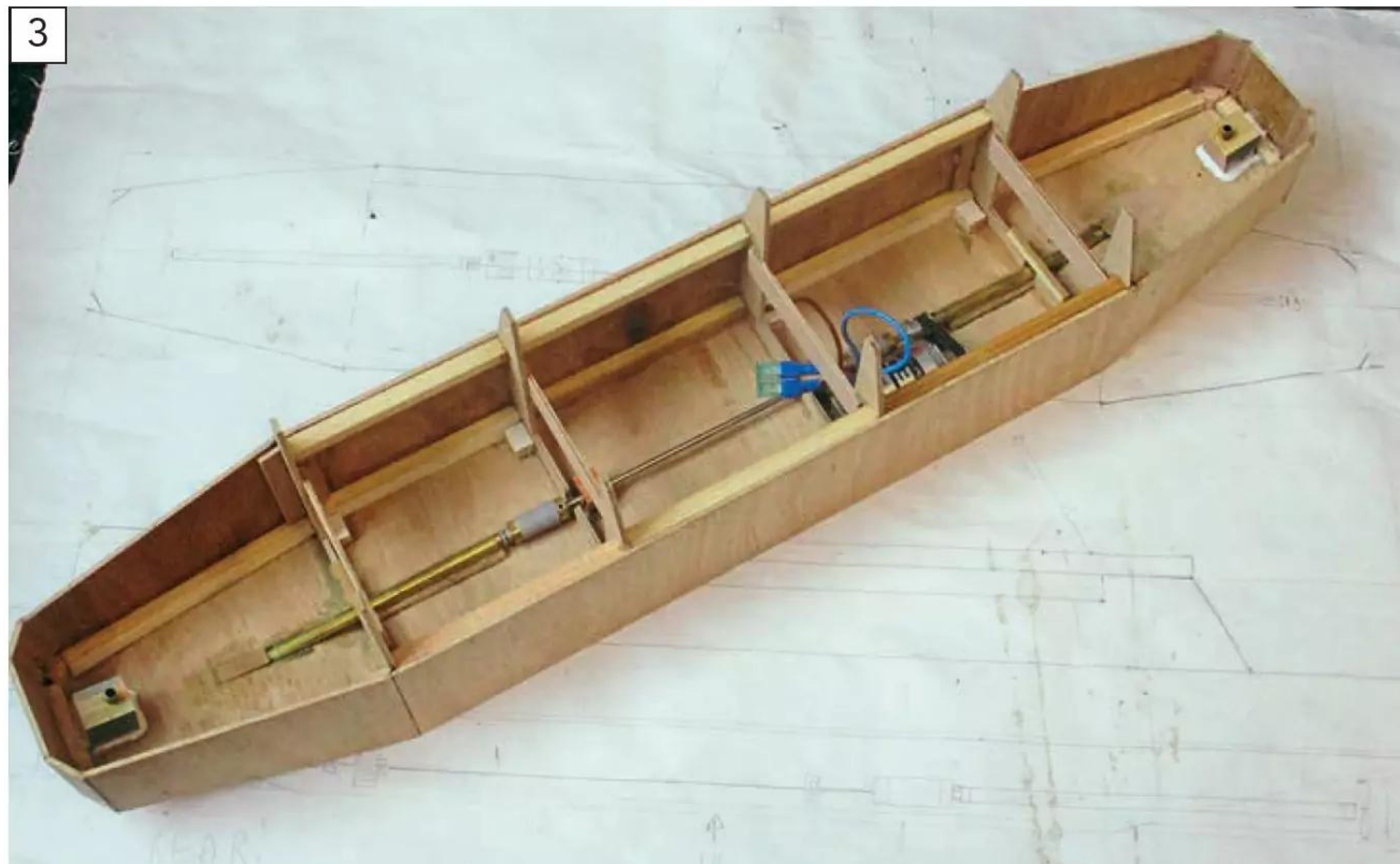
efficiency, but this hardly matters as the single prop at the rear will power the boat more than adequately for what it is, while the front will provide a bit of extra 'pull', and, more importantly, won't contribute any drag and should increase the effectiveness of the bow rudder.

It would have been much easier to simply use two motors on the prop shafts as fitted, both wired together rotating in opposite directions and using one ESC. However, I do like a bit of novelty in a boat!

Simple is the plan

I opted for 4mm ply throughout, and not nice beech ply either. It doesn't show too much in the photos but there was a fair amount of splintering on the cut edges and so on. However, this didn't matter, as a swipe of filler for the top edges sorted that out, and the bilge area was going to be heavily sanded to a curve. Internally, well nobody sees that, do they? Is that a bit heretical? Ah, well, it allowed me to crack on, and to short order four bulkheads were cut and glued in place, and some stiffeners in 10mm square pine were added, followed by the centre side panels. The bow is a curious shape, being flat at the front so as to get the boat close to the offloading ramps, with two short sides at about 45 degrees and then a longer run back (or forward) to the centre panels.

3



I started with the vertical bow end-pieces, and then the cut-in sides, before finishing with the small 45-degree bits which had angled edges to suit, which were all glued together using PVA. Internally some extra ply and 10mm square section pine strip were stuck in place to enable me to sand the side and bottom of the boat without worrying about breaking through the outer 4mm section (see **Photo 3**). One of the reasons I used 4mm ply was so I could go heavy on the shaping (see **Photo 4**). It was difficult to hide the various joints, even after lots of sealing and sanding, so P38 filler was eventually scraped over the joints, which did the trick.

I intended the boat to have a 40mm draft, and being conscious that it seemed to be a bit heavy at this stage I felt a quick test float was in order. A rough calculation of the wetted area seemed to indicate a displacement of

about 3kg. At this stage the hull alone was 1.7kg, so I loaded it with the missing gear, batteries and so on, to find it floated to a depth of about 25mm! (I knew it would, really). No worries, then, plenty of margin for ballast.

Around the waterline sits a rib of some sort, possibly a rubbing strake, and on the real ship there are some quite heroic shelf projections fore and aft, as wave deflectors presumably, to make up for the fairly blunt below water sections. My model portrays these shelves, but only 12mm worth, so not at the right sort of scale as they would look odd to those not in the know. Blocks of wood, pre-drilled, were stuck in at either end to support the rudder tubes, and lengths of 5.5mm thin wall brass tube were superglued in position. A servo mount was added near the motor. Rudder actuation at the stern came courtesy of a simple garden-wire rod, while a snake outer supports a much

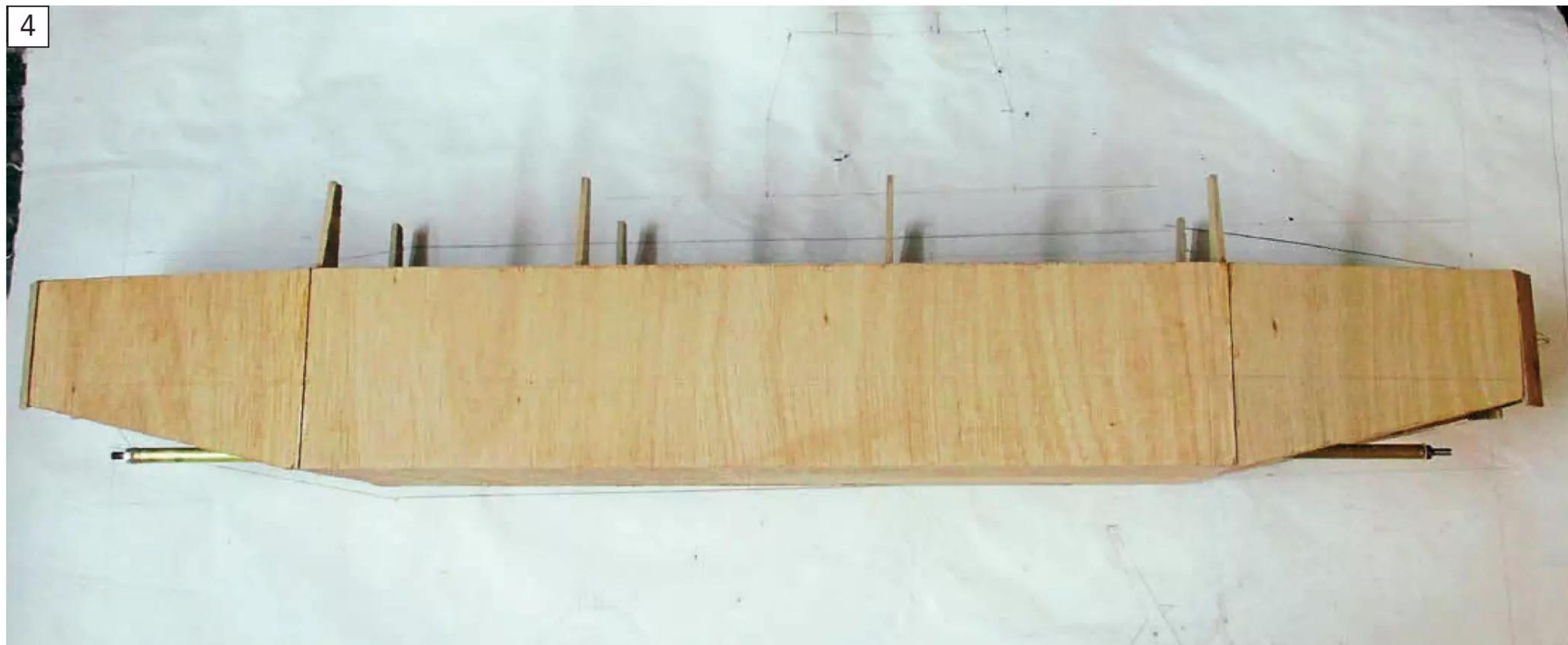
longer garden wire length to the bow (I didn't have sufficient snake nylon inner to hand!). This was smeared with grease on assembly and is quite free. In operation, the rear rudder turns anticlockwise if turning to the right, while the front rudder turns clockwise, and vice-versa when turning left.

The simple top

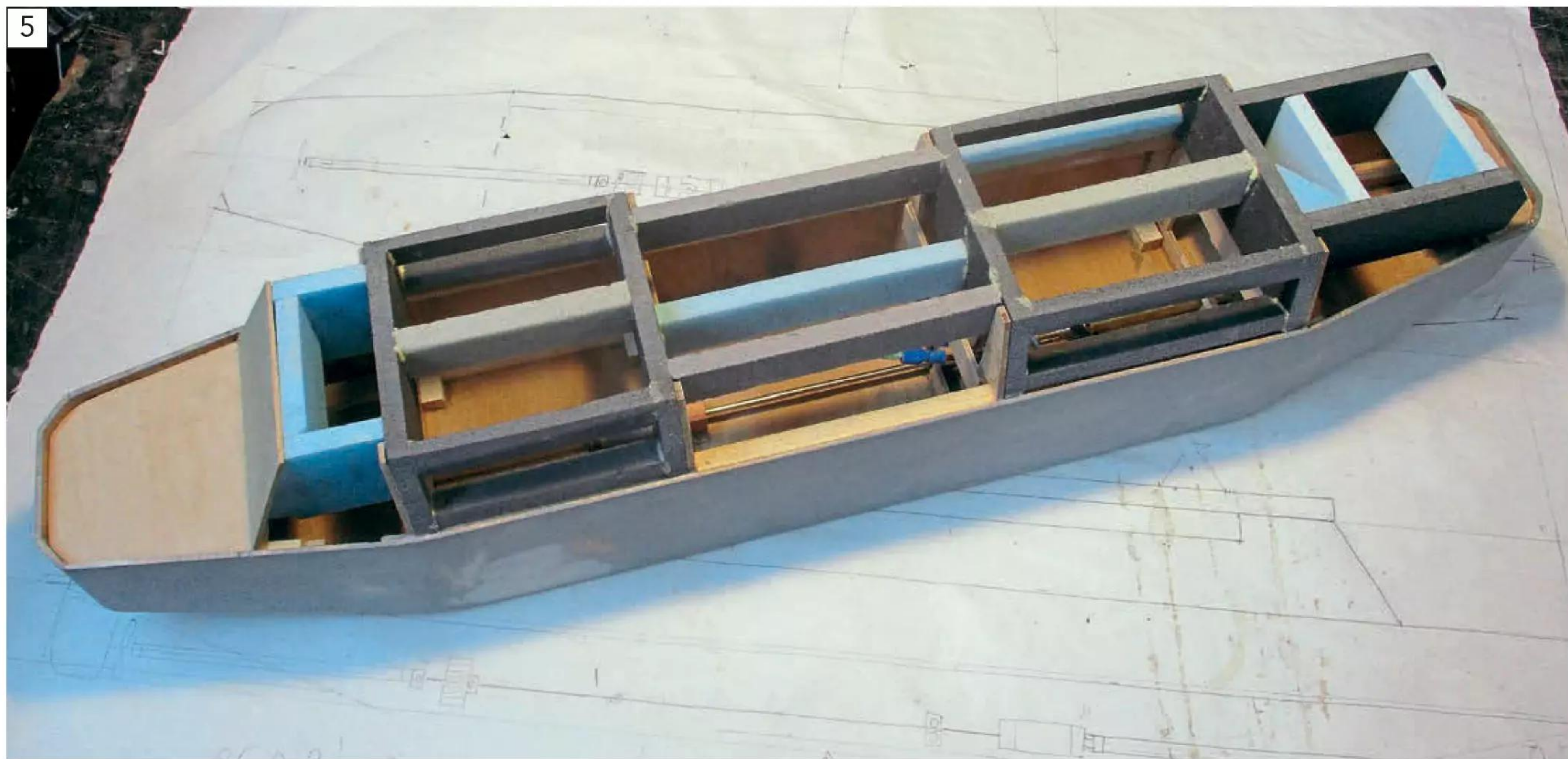
Just as there would be a minimum of actual detail on the boat, so the top needed to be kept simple too. Basically, we're talking a toy boat, with two sides, two ends and a top deck. A further central 'spine' runs along the top, and there's a funnel, mast, a few boxes (housing, whatever – air conditioning, the captain's gin store, etc) and, at the front, a bridge.

A start was made by clamping 10mm styrofoam strips to the projecting bulkhead sides (see **Photo 5**) and then using them to glue on two 1.5mm ply strips (see **Photo 6**). Not to put too fine a point on it, bits of styrofoam were glued to the front and rear foam bulkhead pieces to support the front and back ends. An amount of carving and sanding then took place to make the top flat where the top deck strip need to be glued in place. More carving and sanding ensued before all the joints were nicely blended together. The central spine is shallow and quite long, so I used a central core of foam and veneered this with 1.5mm ply, this being the easiest way to get everything square. There was no need to splash out on expensive styrofoam for this as builder's foam insulation can be found in most skips; it's useless for most things, being very soft and yet brittle at the same time, but it's free and usually available in quantity! In this instance it only needed to support the outer

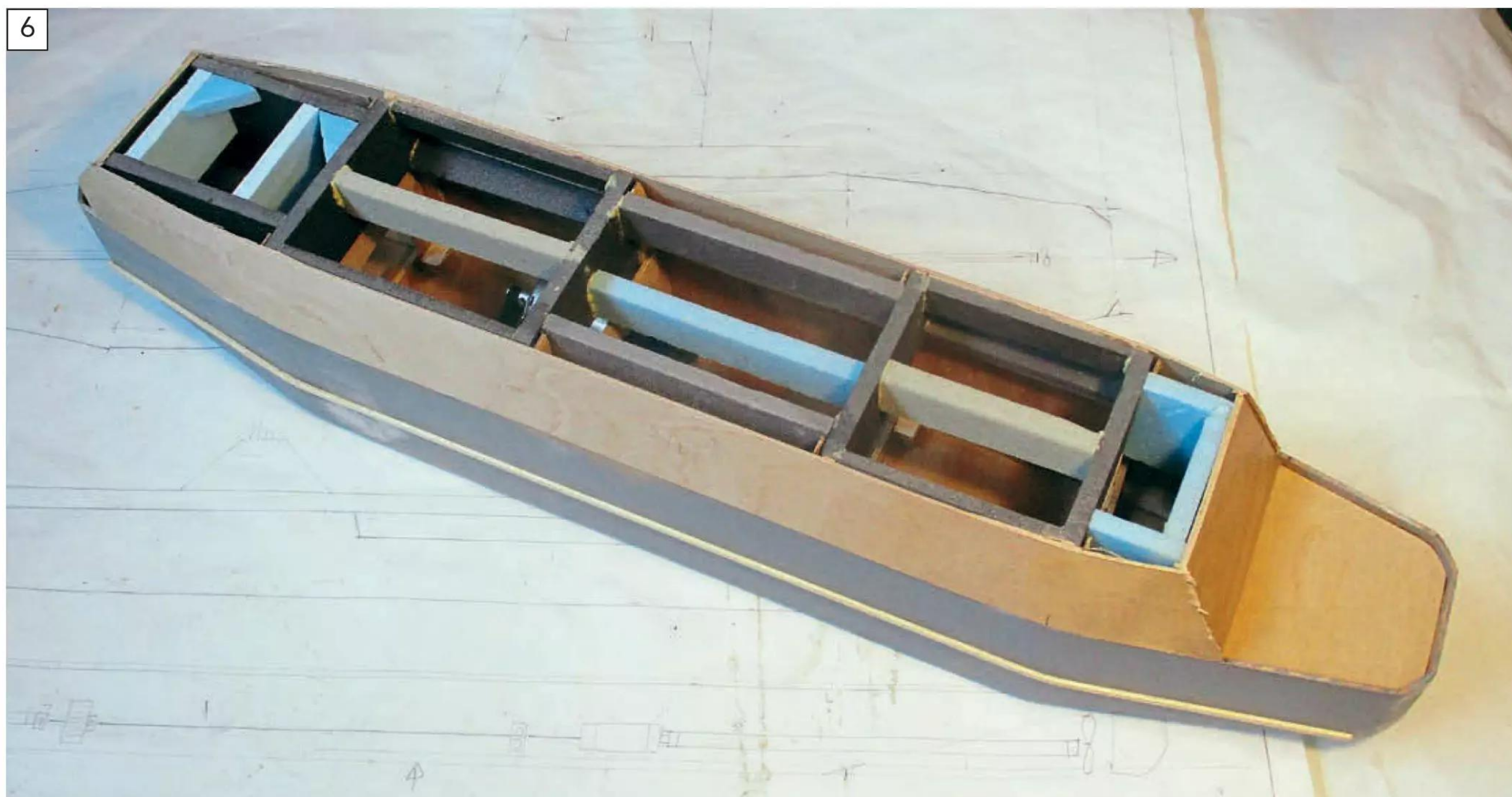
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“Oh, my! More vibration than a road mender’s compactor!”

ply, and it did the job. At the front, the bridge was constructed in the same manner but using foam and 0.8mm ply.

A funnel was easily fashioned from pine, using my band saw, as was the fore mast (there is only one mast!), while more 4mm ply provided the few anonymous box shapes between. A piece of dowel in the bottom of the funnel locates it via a drilled hole in the top, and an inset magnet keeps it

in alignment. For the mast, two inset magnets in the roof of the central spine hold this item in place via two steel washers glued to the underside of the mast seat. At the rear, two 3mm ply strips were added to the rear of the superstructure as there’s quite a big opening here, mirrored in the diecast ship. There appear to be two main decks for vehicles, which is one of the reasons the bow is so large and vertical (for the doors). At the stern, there is only a small amount of deck showing, so a piece of 1.5mm ply had been glued in place; however, with the bow

deck piece being much larger it had to be made removable in order to access the rudder post.

To detail or not to detail? That is the question...

The lifeboats on these ferries sit in large cut-outs in the front half of the superstructure. On the diecast model this is very shallow, but on mine I went all-out to minimise detail and omitted the cut-outs completely. This may seem a bit bold, but I thought that a dark patch (the colour of which was to be decided later) on the side

7



8



9



"It's definitely the way to go"

would look like a recess, while simple half lifeboat shapes stuck on the side would give the necessary 3-D look when the ship is viewed at an angle. Unfortunately, simply painting lifeboats on would be fine when viewed broadside but would look odd from any other angle. To complete the illusion, a lifeboat shaped flat cover was glued in place on top to depict the rest of the lifeboat. At normal pond viewing distance, this looks quite effective.

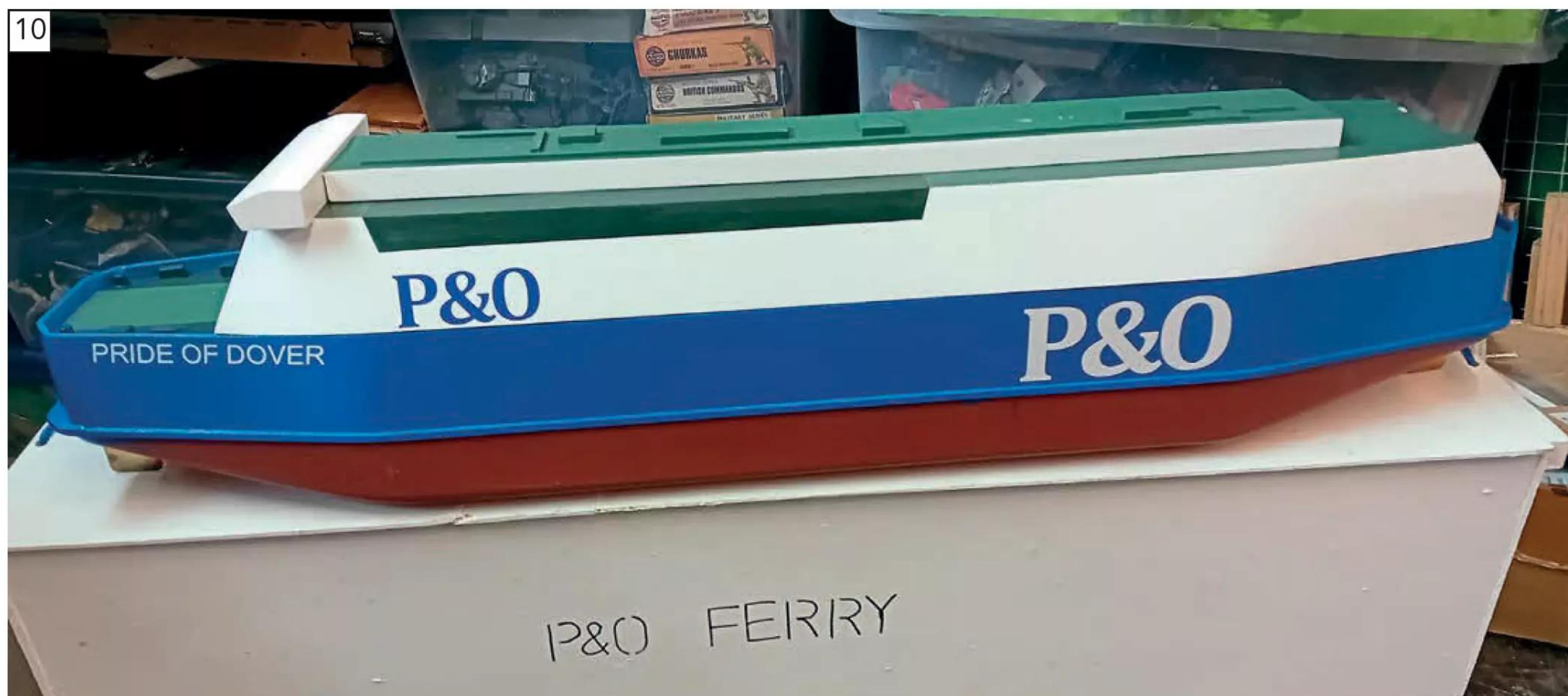
The only other physical detail on the model are the top deck seats. At 30 inches in length, the scale of the boat is, very roughly, 1:218, which matched closely enough with some 1:200 people I had left over from the *Titanic* I built. These are 8mm in height and thankfully ready painted, although they're hardly works of art! Obviously, I wasn't going to model benches at this size; a 'suggestion' of them was all that was required. To the rescue here came some Plastrut 3.2mm styrene 'T' section rods. Stuck on upside down, these rods provided centre backrests for seating either side. Painted brown, these seats, along with the tiny people, were just about the last things to be added to the model. The seats were deliberately undersized length wise (see **Photo 7**) as this allowed me to cluster the figures I'd be adding around them. I had no intention of fitting safety rails, so I didn't want my passengers to appear at risk of falling or being washed overboard. Once out on the water, though, I think the 45 or so souls aboard look pretty credible (see **Photo 8**).

One of the real-life photos I saw showed two large lorries parked on the bow, so for extra interest I knocked a couple up from MDF. 12mm wide, 16mm high and about 45mm long, a slot simulates the gap between cab and container, and after a paint job and some sticky black dots for the wheels, they look quite cute. Barely any detail is needed on these lorries, as everyone seeing them knows exactly what they represent (see **Photo 9**).

Windows

The main thrust of the non-detailing is, of course, the array of windows along the sides of the superstructure. There are about 70 windows, and it was important to get them all nice and straight. **Photo 10** shows the plain slab-sided nature of the hull to be 'windowed up'. Oddly, the diecast, besides being flat at the sides

10



(whereas the real vessel has a sort of angular gallery in which the windows sit) has four rows of windows, while the real thing has three. There are, of course, other cut-outs along the sides too, but portraying only three rows of windows meant they could be slightly larger. You may well marvel at the superbly well-spaced and precisely aligned run of windows, implying some sort of superhuman skill and dexterity, but no, these were applied in strips. Ordered from a graphics company, each strip supplied featured 12 x 8mm high, 11 mm long, windows, spaced at 8mm apart, on 'Anthracite' coloured pre-cut vinyl. It's definitely the way to go. No need to hand place each individual window, they can be applied in strips of 12. Once positioned, all you have to do

is carefully peel the clear backing film they sit on away. Of course, there are runs of less than 12 windows, and even a few single windows here and there, but it's easy enough to cut the strips down.

The various other openings I hand-cut from a sheet of self-adhesive vinyl, again in Anthracite, and similarly applied by hand.

Lettering

All logos tend to be 'unique' in style, but the P&O and *Pride of Dover* lettering can be reasonably represented by trawling through the various scripts available on Microsoft Word. On eBay there are a fair number of graphics companies who offer custom vinyl lettering and, after contacting a few of them, I was able

"It's a difficult colour to mix. It also tends to fade badly"

to order the required lettering in the colours/font and size I wanted:

- **P&O** (2 x 25mm) in Cambria Bold (Capitals), medium blue
- **P&O** (2 x 40mm) in Cambria Bold (Capitals), white
- **PRIDE OF DOVER** (2 x 10mm) in MS Sans Serif (Captials), white

My stickers arrived a week later and were super. Now in place, they look more than adequate. Yes, I could have sourced exactly the right graphics but simple and easy is the name of the game here, and these are not far off (see my on the water shots).

Trials and tribulations?

Trials? Yes. Tribulations? None. It's a fairly conventional boat; the only thing that will need adjusting is the ballast, and in point of fact for its first trial I didn't have to add any ballast to that put in initially. Inside the boat, the only weight of note is that of the motor and batteries. The batteries, two of them, sit side by side in the centre of the boat, and this puts them in a great place as regards both fore/aft trim and side/side trim, while additional strip lead was added to bring the boat to the correct waterline. Putting the unfinished boat on the water had it sitting with the water just a few millimetres below the long rubbing strip. Perfect! I have since trimmed the boat down by the stern very slightly, so any choppy waves stay underneath the front shelf.

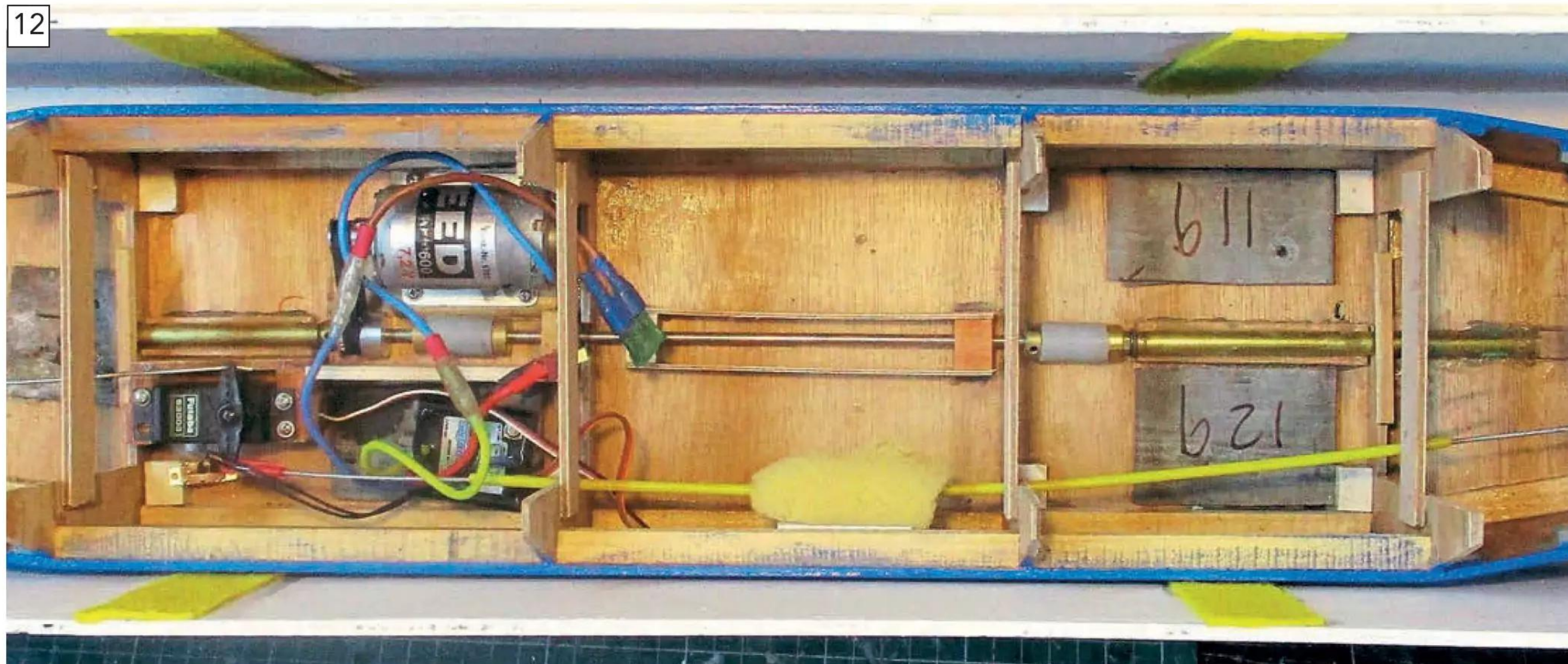
The tricky bit

Painting anything is always fraught with danger. At the time this boat needed to be painted it was too cold and

11



12



damp to chance spraying gloss on the superstructure, so there was some delay before I could go ahead. For the hull, Pebeo craft acrylic paint, in a nice deep gloss blue, was used, and was applied, very traditionally, with a wide soft brush (on the dining room table: easy clear-up, no smell!). Once the weather warmed up, the top was sprayed with Halfords appliance white gloss paint, while the horizontal surfaces were treated to some custom mixed Pebeo craft acrylic green.

Once painted, the lettering and windows were (as described earlier) applied and the hull was treated to a coat of clear gloss varnish. The lifeboats were finished in gloss white and covered at the top (the missing half, don't forget) with orange card. I couldn't find a ready mixed pot of orange paint a sufficiently vibrant shade, and it's a difficult colour to mix. It also tends to fade badly. Hopefully, the card will stay vibrant. In the worst-case scenario, I can always go ahead and paint the tops orange.

Some shading at the front with grey blocks gave the superstructure a more original shape, there being large cut-outs on the original.

On pond performance

So it came to pass that on a nice sunny Sunday morning the boat was plopped into the briny sea (well, Bushy Park Pond, to be more precise) and motored recklessly away for its first voyage...

First things first... It is really, really manoeuvrable for something not very short and fat, and this is undoubtedly due to the twin rudder/prop setup. As an experiment, I tried disconnecting the front rudder and prop, and the manoeuvrability was noticeably inferior!

Secondly, and it may come as no surprise, the boat goes just as well backwards as it goes forwards! In point of fact, if you come to a standstill in

the middle of the pond and then set off again after a few minutes, it's hard to see which way you are going! It's a weird experience piloting the boat backwards, I must say (see **Photo 11**).

The slightly bow up attitude (to ensure the shelf crested most normal waves) was achieved by cutting a small amount, 20gm, off the front lead weights and putting those bits at the rear (see **Photo 12**, showing the ballast weights in the hull, position of servo, etc). I didn't add ballast as this would have lowered the boat in the water, and I wanted to preserve the waterline as it was.

A very small amount of water is evidenced on the shelf in normal running, increasing for turns. The arbitrary decision to make the shelves small was correct, as the model is obviously not as solid on the water as the real thing, and if the shelves had been made to scale they would just scoop up heroic amounts of water and flood the fore deck (which is not a sealed unit).

I was worried about cavitation initially, as the props are not far below the surface of the water; this doesn't seem to be a problem until you get to something near full throttle, at which point the bow lifts and the front prop gulps air. However, this doesn't affect general performance as the rear prop is still nicely submerged and working hard, and in any event the boat is comfortably fast for a ferry before cavitation sets in. Not only that but it rears up when going too fast, which is not a great look. On this matter, the performance of the ferry up to the cavitation point was more rocket-ship than lumbering car carrier, and the merest twitch of the throttle would send the boat zooming forward (or backwards). The battery life wasn't good either, so a low power MFA 540/1 motor has since been fitted (an easy straight swap, as the can is the same

"So it came to pass that on a nice sunny Sunday morning the boat was plopped into the briny sea (well, Bushy Park Pond, to be more precise) and motored recklessly away for its first voyage..."

diameter and the mounting holes are in the same position), and this is much better. The boat now barely gets to the cavitation point but with two props still has good acceleration, and battery life is much improved, with a current draw of about 4.5 Amps.

Stability wise it's very good as the weight is low down and the bottom is relatively square. There is a bit of rolling, but not much. It probably looks worse than it is as the hull and superstructure are quite tall and 'slabby', but when you have your hands on the controls it doesn't feel like something wallowing around.

Just the ticket

The big question is, does this model fulfil the brief, i.e., perceived detail yet with very little actual detail? Yes, I think so, and not only that but it bears an uncanny resemblance to the diecast (odd, that!). Bear in mind the photos in this article are all close-ups (distance shots showing a large expanse of water with a small boat on just don't work in a magazine), so, you'll simply have to take my word for it that from pondside you're not left wanting.

This simple ferry has now become one of my go-to boats, for seaworthiness, ease of use and audience interest. It may be basic but it's still a striking model, in bold colours, with bold graphics. Now, just where did I put my duty-free shopping? ●

Don't sweat the detail



Don't sweat the detail





The Learning Curve

Stuart Deacon chronicles his progression through the various disciplines that make up our hobby, this month moving on from card kits to wooden ones

Part 2

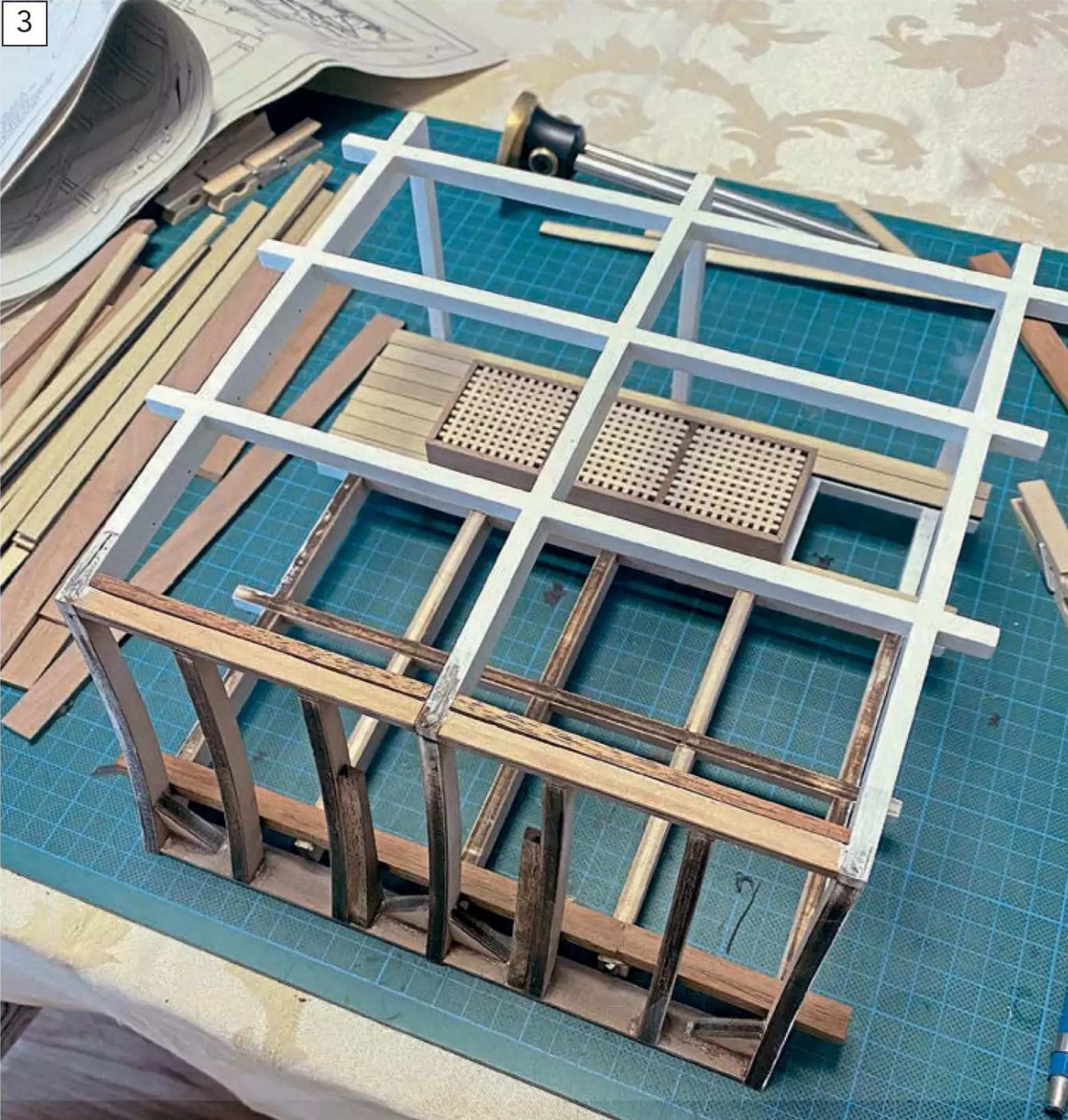
After finishing the HMCS Agassiz and HMS Wolf card kits, I was ready to try something new — a wooden model. Still deep into Patrick O'Brian's excellent novels, I wanted something that would give a feel for life aboard a warship of the early 1800s, but without being too complex for a beginner. Browsing Model Boats magazine and various model boat forums — a goldmine for tips and inspiration — I came across several builds of the Panart Gun Deck. This seemed a good entry point to the world of wooden model kits, being neither too large nor too complicated to feel daunting, even to a complete novice like me.

Getting started on the Panart Gun Deck

The Panart kit comes with everything you need except glue and paint. It's not based on a specific ship, but it's a good representation of what life



Installing toothpick 'treenails' prior to trimming flush. A flexible flush cut razor saw worked well here.



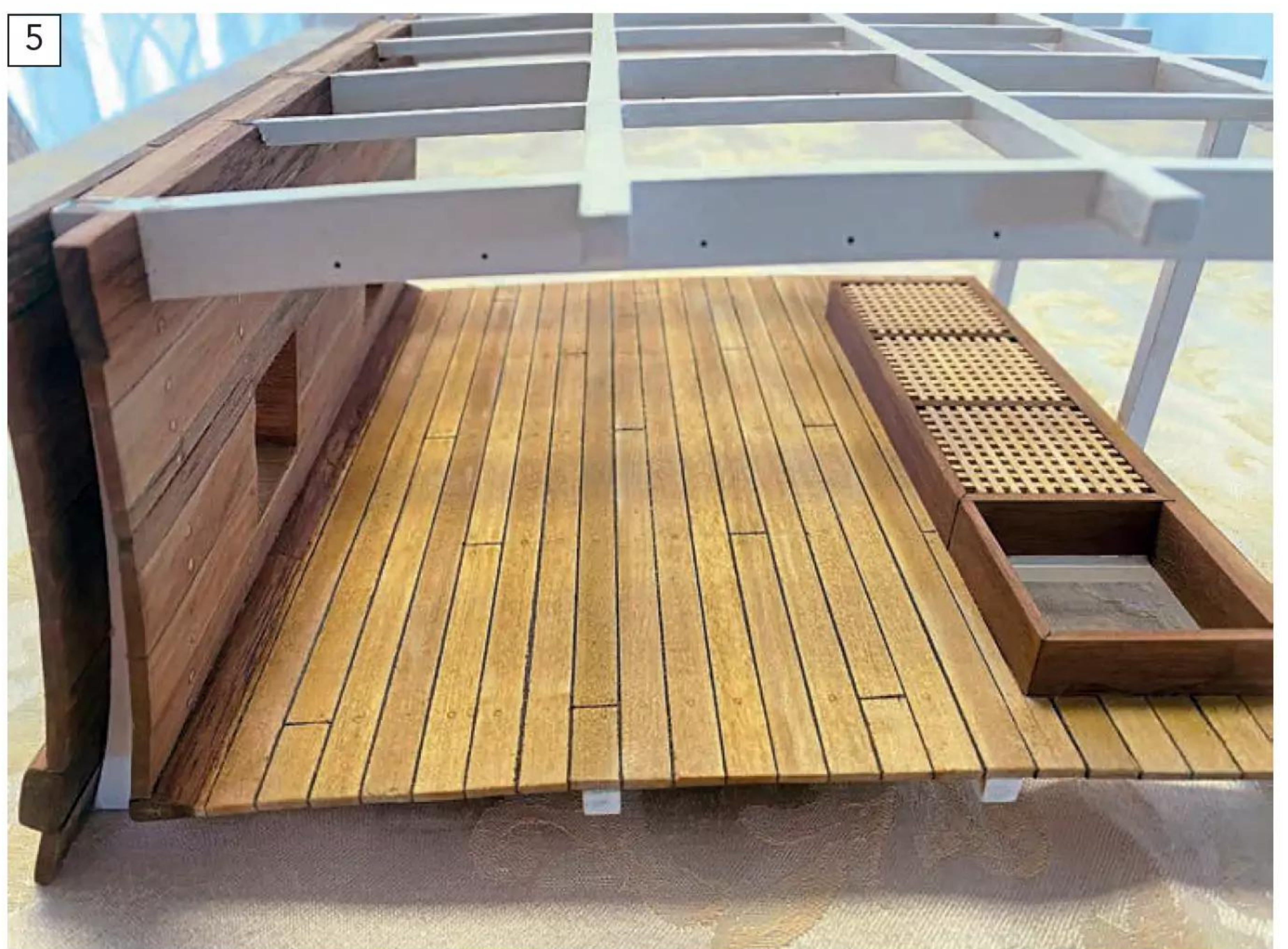
The structural frame for the hull and deck completed and ready to receive planking.

might have been like on a typical gun deck of the era. I am sure the experts would find plenty of inaccuracies in the model, but for me it was all about learning basic wood modelling techniques and ending up with a display piece that hints at the cramped world below decks (see **Photo 1**).



Deck planking installed. Note the black card caulking.

I did make a few changes. I adjusted the planking layout to open up the view from above and added a companionway leading down to the



After treating the deck planking with Old Baltic stain, the deck nails are now only just visible.

"I did make a few changes..."

lower decks. Instead of brass nails for the hull planking, I used my version of treenails – drilling small holes, gluing in toothpicks, and trimming them flush (see **Photo 2**).

The kit is made up of laser cut plywood frames forming the hull side frames and deck beams (see **Photo 3**).

Between the planks, I glued thin strips of black card to represent caulking. This was achieved by placing the wood deck planks flat face to flat face in groups of about 10 planks and gluing one edge of the stack to a piece of black card. Once set, the planks were separated from the card with a craft knife. Each plank was then positioned with the next plank abutting the first, sandwiching the black card between them. To simulate deck nails, I made a small hollow punch to press an impression into each plank. Researching historic deck planking and nail patterns from books and online gave me the confidence to get the details as close as possible (see **Photo 4**).

The timber was stained with Old Baltic stain. The stain looked great but darkened the deck just enough to hide some of the nail detail — lesson learnt, and something I'd handle differently next time (see **Photo 5**).

Metal finishes and small details

For the metal parts, I used the same Jax Pewter Black solution that I'd used on HMS Wolf's brass cannons. It's quick

6



The gun barrel and ironwork treated with Jax Pewter Black.

and gives a convincing aged finish – just remember PPE (see **Photo 6**).

The netting for the hammocks was meant to be filled with rolled-up hammocks, as would have been done when a ship cleared for action. But, after a few failed attempts at neat-looking rolls, the captain (me) threw them overboard — perhaps worthy of a

flogging, but it looked tidier in the end!

The final touches were the details that bring a model like this to life: barrels, benches, tools, hammocks and other small deck fittings. Simple additions give a sense of what life might have been like for the crew living and working in these tight quarters (see **Photos 7, 8, 9 10 and 11**).

“The stain looked great but darkened the deck just enough to hide some of the nail detail — lesson learnt, and something I’d handle differently next time”

What this kit taught me

The Gun Deck was a satisfying introduction to wooden kits. Compared to card, wood has its own challenges – shaping, sanding, and staining all need different handling. But the larger scale meant less eye strain and a nice break from tiny paper ladders and silk rigging threads.

The kit is relatively quick to build, and I finished it in good time, which left me feeling more confident about tackling something rather more advanced: a complete wood model, of the plank on bulkhead type of construction.

Building the Panart Armed Pinnacle

For the next step in my model boat building journey, I chose the Panart Armed Pinnacle – a three-layer plank-on-bulkhead hull that would really test my new skills (and teach me plenty about fairing frames and bending planks!). It’s a well-known kit among model shipbuilders, featured in *The Period Ship Handbook 2* by Keith Julier and supported by some excellent online build logs that I read through multiple times before I began. This kit makes a really nice display model.

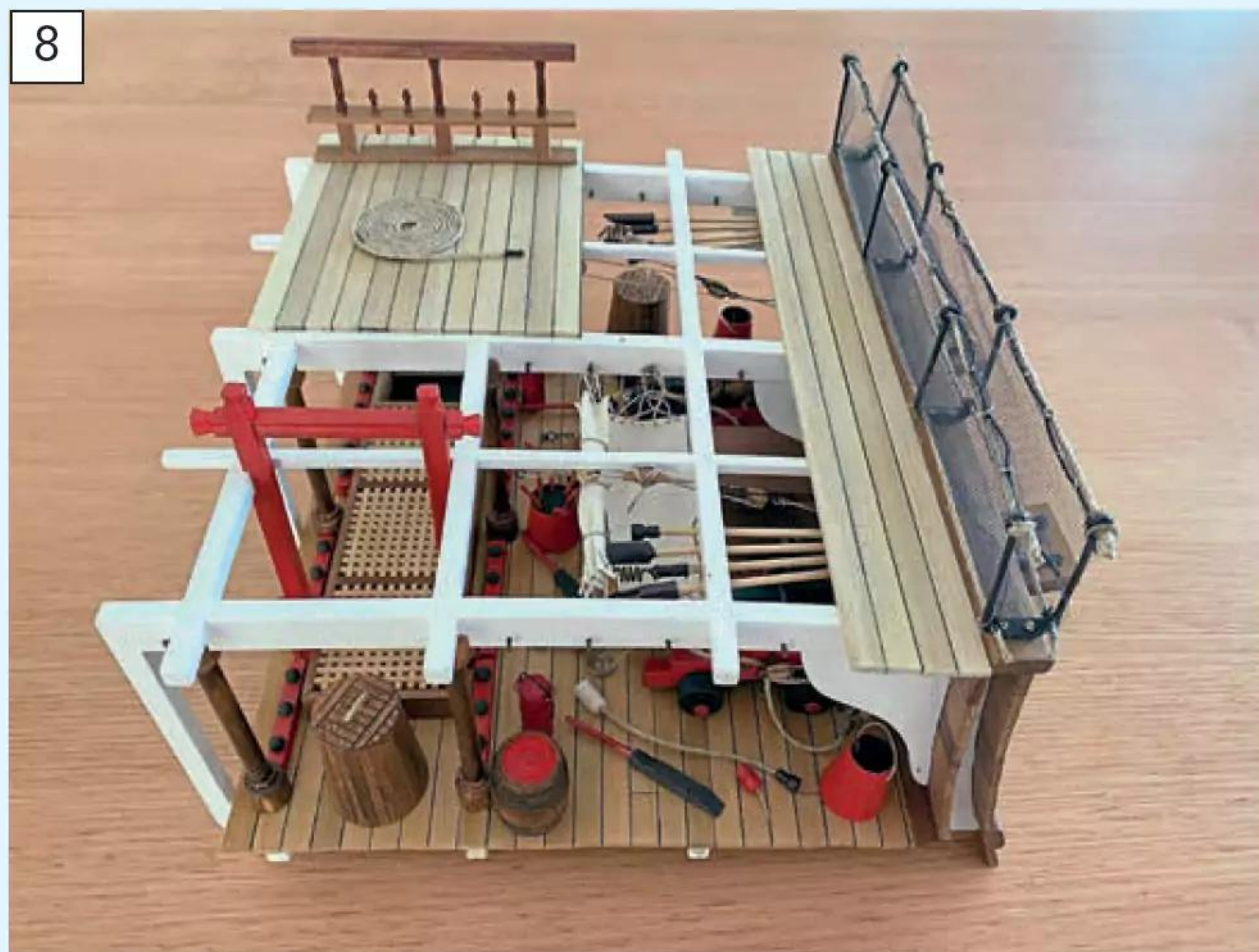
By now, I’d been permanently banished to the garage – my new ‘shipyard’ – but this wasn’t all bad. The Admiral (my wife) approved a new industrial steel workbench for Christmas, complete with a back panel

7



The completed build.

8





The Gun Deck's interior.



Enemy in sight!

for tools, parts bins and drawers that now hold my growing collection of small engineering tools and model-making essentials (see **Photo 12**).

Better timber, better tools

The Armed Pinnacle's hull is made up of three layers of planking, the reason for which I could not find any real answer to. The timber supplied in the kit is barely enough to complete the model and is noted as an issue in several forums. So, based on tips from other builders, I ordered extra 1 mm thick walnut strips from Float-a-Boat in Melbourne for the final outer planking layer. This walnut was of excellent quality compared to some of the kit-supplied wood, being both easy to shape and finish. I also replaced the laser-cut plywood for the gun carriage and rudder with 3mm walnut I had to hand and used better-quality dowels for mast and yard – an upgrade worth the effort. That said, I think the model can still be built as a nice display model with the kit supplied materials, if you take care not to waste any of the supplied kit timber.



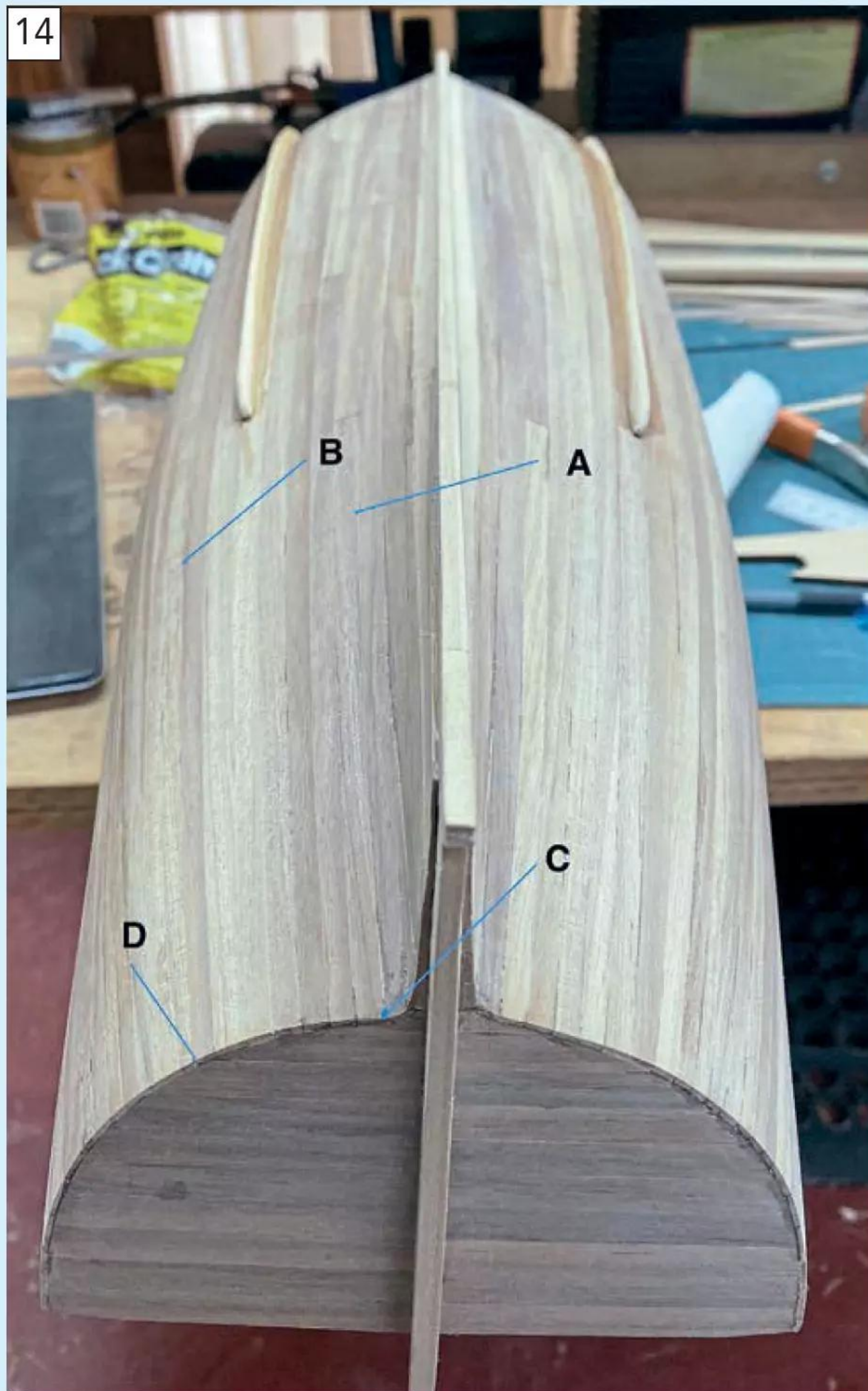
Stuart set up his 'Enemy in sight' photo by using an image from Geoff Hunt's book *The Marine Art of Geoff Hunt* as the cannon's target.



Stuart's new hobby workstation.



Proportional dividers: almost a 'must have' tool for accurately sizing and tapering hull planks.



Dividers in operation, marking out the correct width of a plank at each bulkhead.



“One of my best tool purchases for this build was a set of proportional dividers”

One of my best tool purchases for this build was a set of proportional dividers. These were purchased after reading through sections on hull planking in the book *Planking Techniques for Model Ship Builders* by Donald Dressel. These clever tools make it much easier to divide the curve of a hull section into an exact number of planks of the correct width at each bulkhead so you can then transfer the measurements directly onto the timber plank. They are also handy if you need to rescale a plan to meet your own personal requirements. (see **Photo 13**).

In practice this is how I used the dividers: I'd take a strip of card and mark the distance between a pencilled-on mark or the edge of an already fitted plank and a reference point (such as a longitudinal stringer or a pencilled turn in the bilge). As an

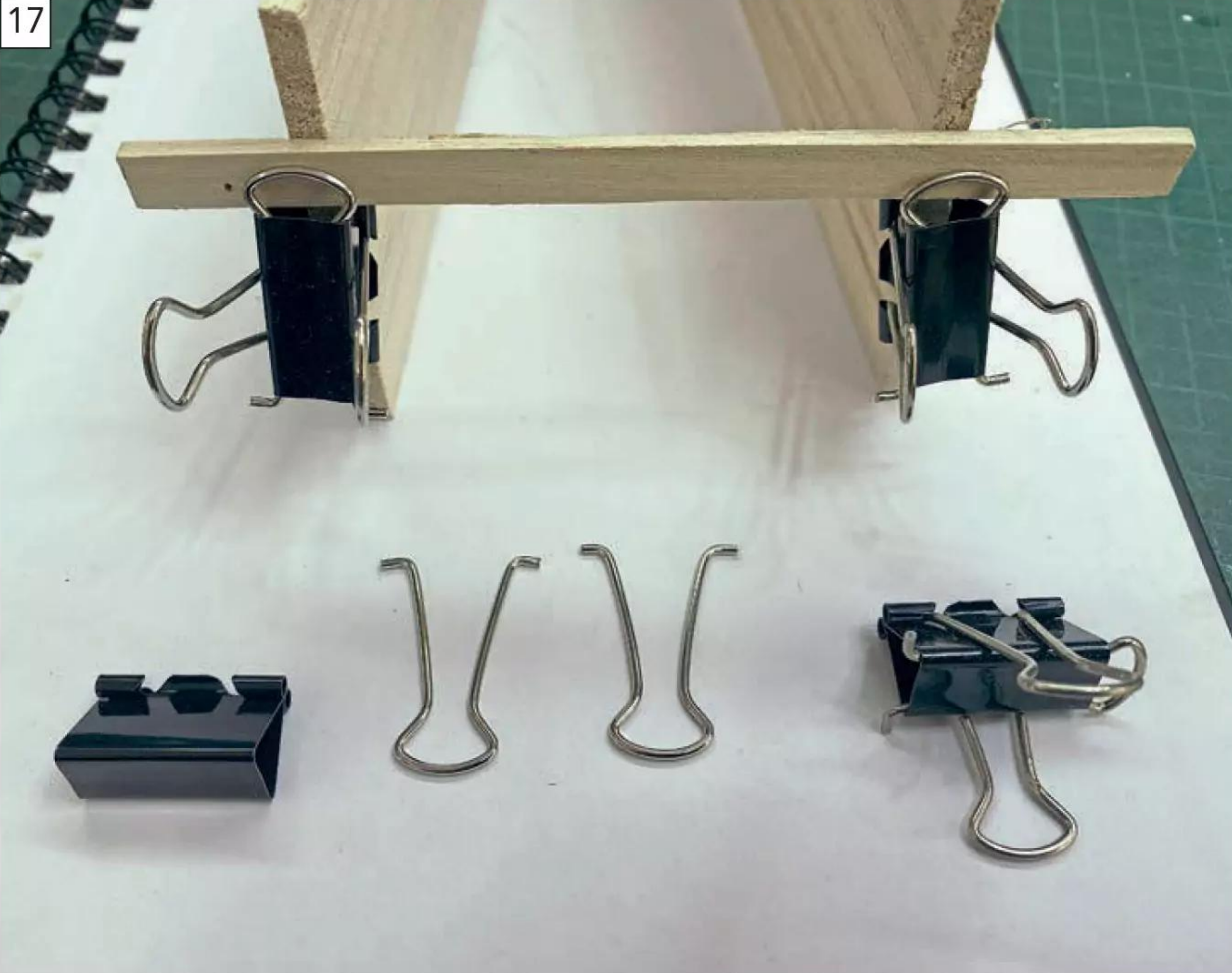
example, in **Photo 14** I have shown points A-B and C-D at the location of two bulkheads with seven planks between each pair of points. I'd then set the dividers' sliding pivot to the number of planks required to fit between say points A-B (seven in this case, seen on the left-hand scale of the divider). The long points of the divider were then aligned with marks A-B on the card strip. The short points were now exactly the required width of the plank at that bulkhead. This was repeated at each bulkhead where the plank crossed and the points marked on the plank before being joined by a pencil line to produce the required taper of the plank. Once this plank was glued in place, the same process was followed for the next plank, adjusting the setting of the dividers to six and again measuring with the card strip between two locations. This allowed for any minor inaccuracy when cutting the plank to shape (see **Photos 14 and 15**).

This simple method made a huge difference in getting tight-fitting planks that faired neatly into the bow



The third and final layer of planking being installed over the middle layer.

and stern – no awkward gaps or fiddly slivers needed (well, almost none!). While only the outer layer of planking is fully visible – with just a small portion of the inner planking showing – this approach made the whole hull look much more authentic (see **Photo 16**).

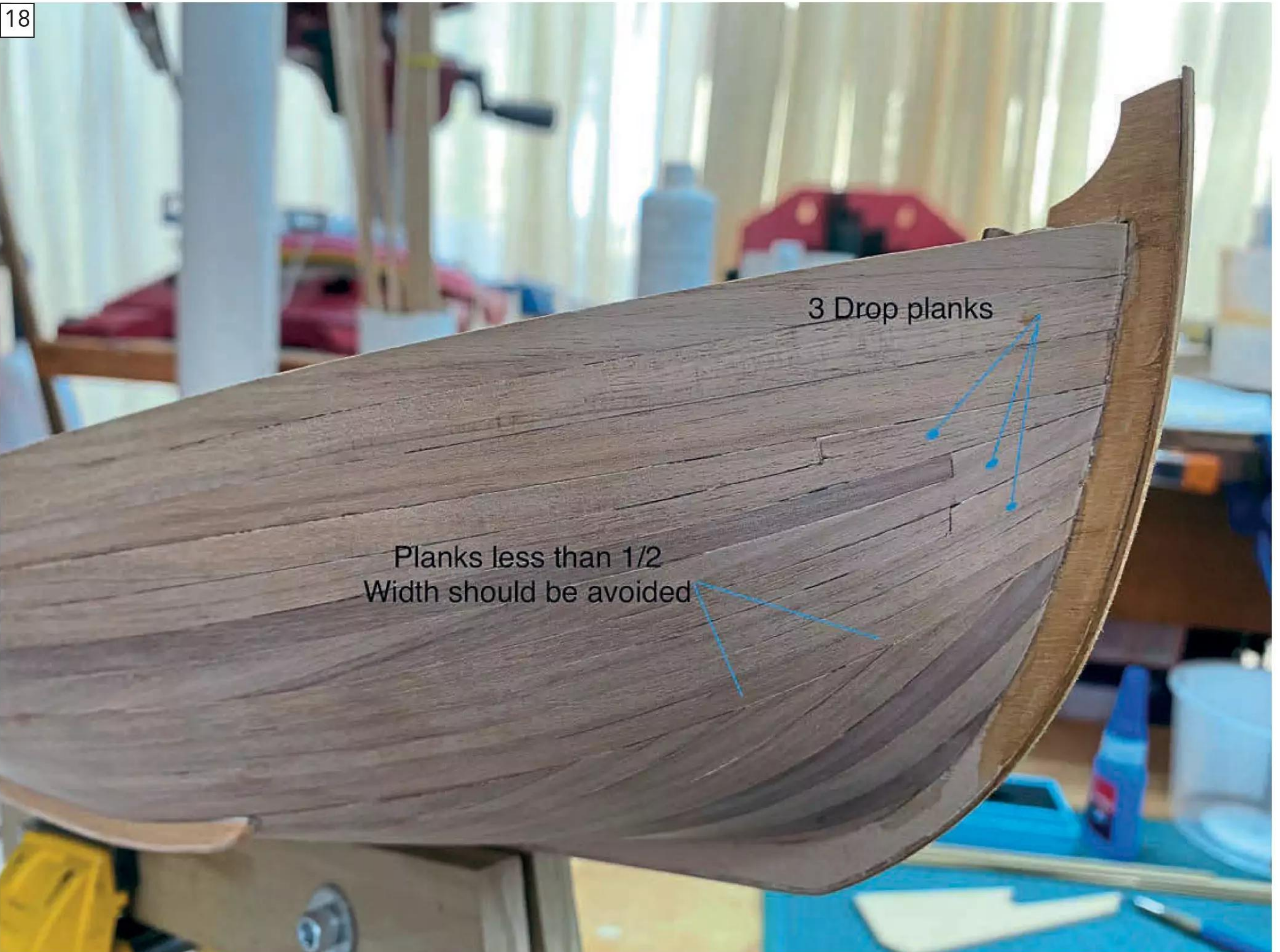


Bulldog clips dismantled and re-assembled to use as planking clamps during hull construction.

“I found another very handy tip in an online build log...”

I found another very handy tip in an online build log. By dismantling standard bulldog clips and using the handles as additional jaws, you can make a set of simple, cheap planking clamps that hold strips in place while glue sets. A small model maker's plane helped me bevel plank edges where needed so they sat flush without resulting in a large gap, in particular at tighter curves as the planks wrap over the bulkheads (see **Photo 17**). Photo AP7.

For the middle layer of planking – which is hidden – I practised the fairing and tapering techniques, so that by the time I reached the final walnut layer I felt more comfortable with the planking process and the results looked clean. I also used drop planks at the bow to avoid awkward, thin wedges where planks converge, although a few planks in the lower part of the hull did end up too thin and pointy. My understanding is that



Drop planks used at the bow to maintain a minimum of 50% plank thickness. Note the narrow-ended planks below the waterline – these should be avoided.

19



The hull painted and varnished.

20



The planking lines still clearly visible, as was Stuart's aim.

21



The interior fit-out begins.

22



False ribs nailed in place, deck planks and grates installed, along with the foot braces used when the vessel was powered under oar.

a plank should not be less than half its width at the narrowest (see **Photo 18**).

Once the hull was planked, I wanted the natural look of the hull's timber construction to show through – just like the real thing, where you'd see the lines of caulked planking. So, apart from some minor filling, I carefully masked and varnished the topsides, then painted the hull and waterline while preserving the visible planking detail (see **Photos 19 and 20**).

Fitting out the details

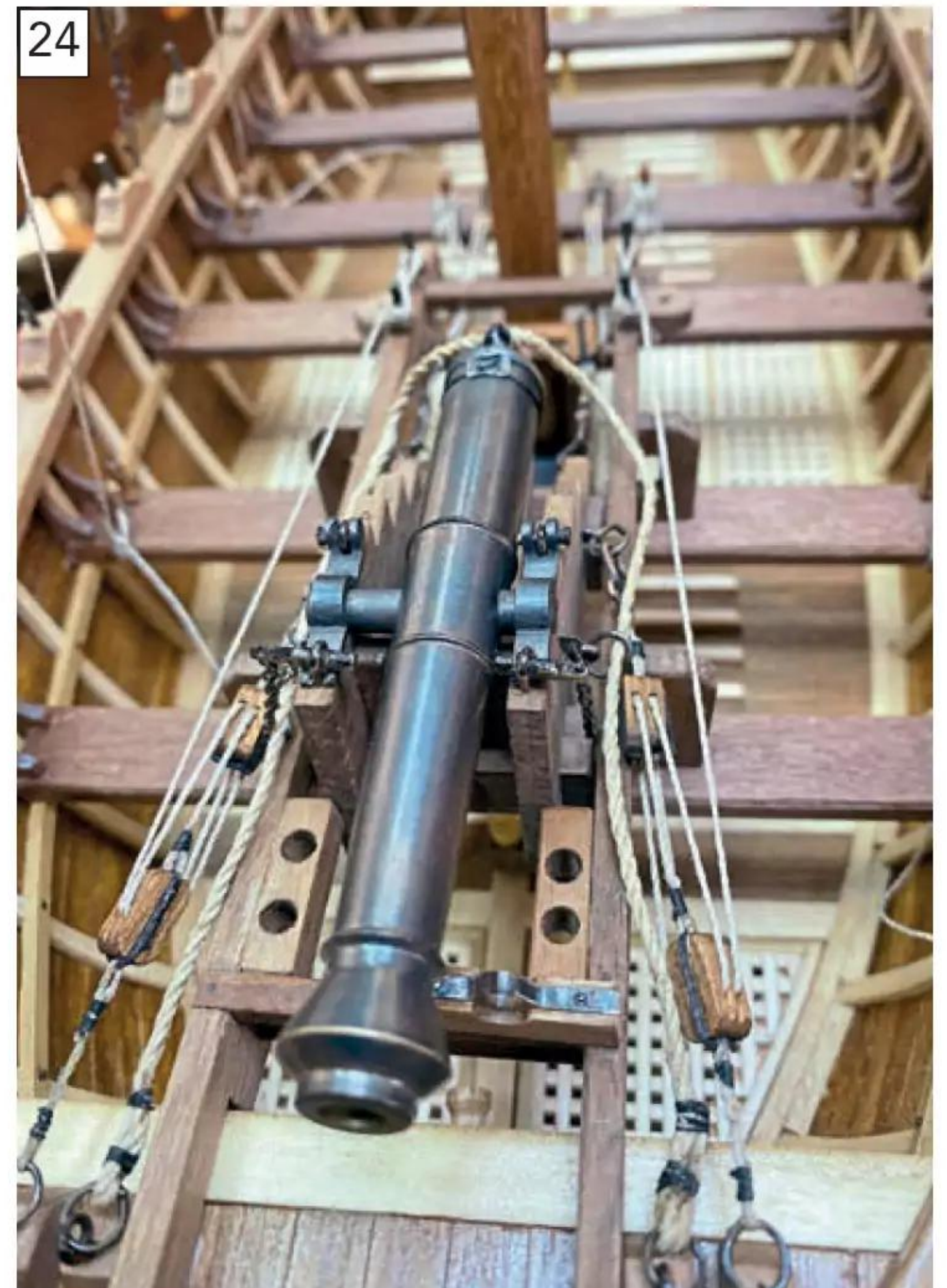
Interior work went smoothly, although I did misjudge the spacing for the false ribs. I covered this error by gradually adjusting the gaps so it wouldn't stand out – a lesson learnt for next time (see **Photos 21 and 22**). The metal parts were, again, treated with Jax Pewter Black, just as I'd done on the Gun Deck

23



The main gun under construction, with the barrel and fittings treated with the Jax Pewter Black solution.

24



The main gun installed on its slide in the hull.

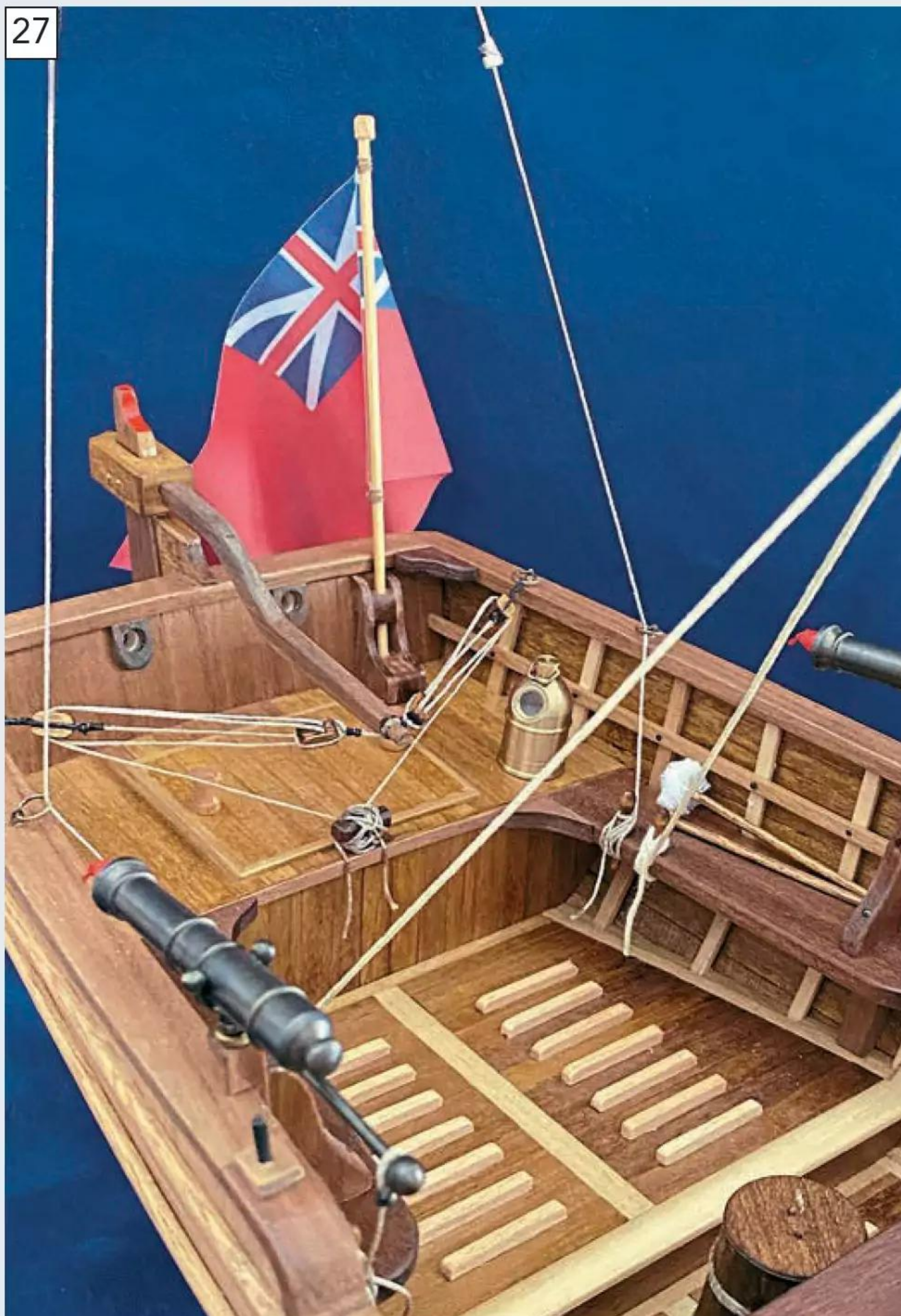
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Project complete: Stuart's fabulously finished Panart Armed Pinnacle display model.

and HMS Wolf models (see **Photos 23 and 24**).

Despite a slip or two – like a slightly crooked bulwark capping and incorrectly aligned rubbing strake – I was pleased enough with the finished Pinnacle to seek final approval from the Admiral. Happily, it passed muster and now sits proudly on display inside the house – not hidden away in the garage (see **Photos 25, 26, 27 and 28**).

Lessons learnt?

Measure and re-measure before committing to cutting tapers on the planks. Dry fit planks and remove excess wood to get a tight fit; it's much easier than trying to add it back. Put your own take on how the model looks, you don't have to follow the instructions 100% – after all, you are the captain! Improve on the quality of wood used, if need be; any unused wood will be a useful resource for other models. Buy the best tools you can afford; good quality tools make the experience more enjoyable. Don't be afraid to admit those mistakes you make, the Admiral is the only one with a cat-o-nine tails! ●

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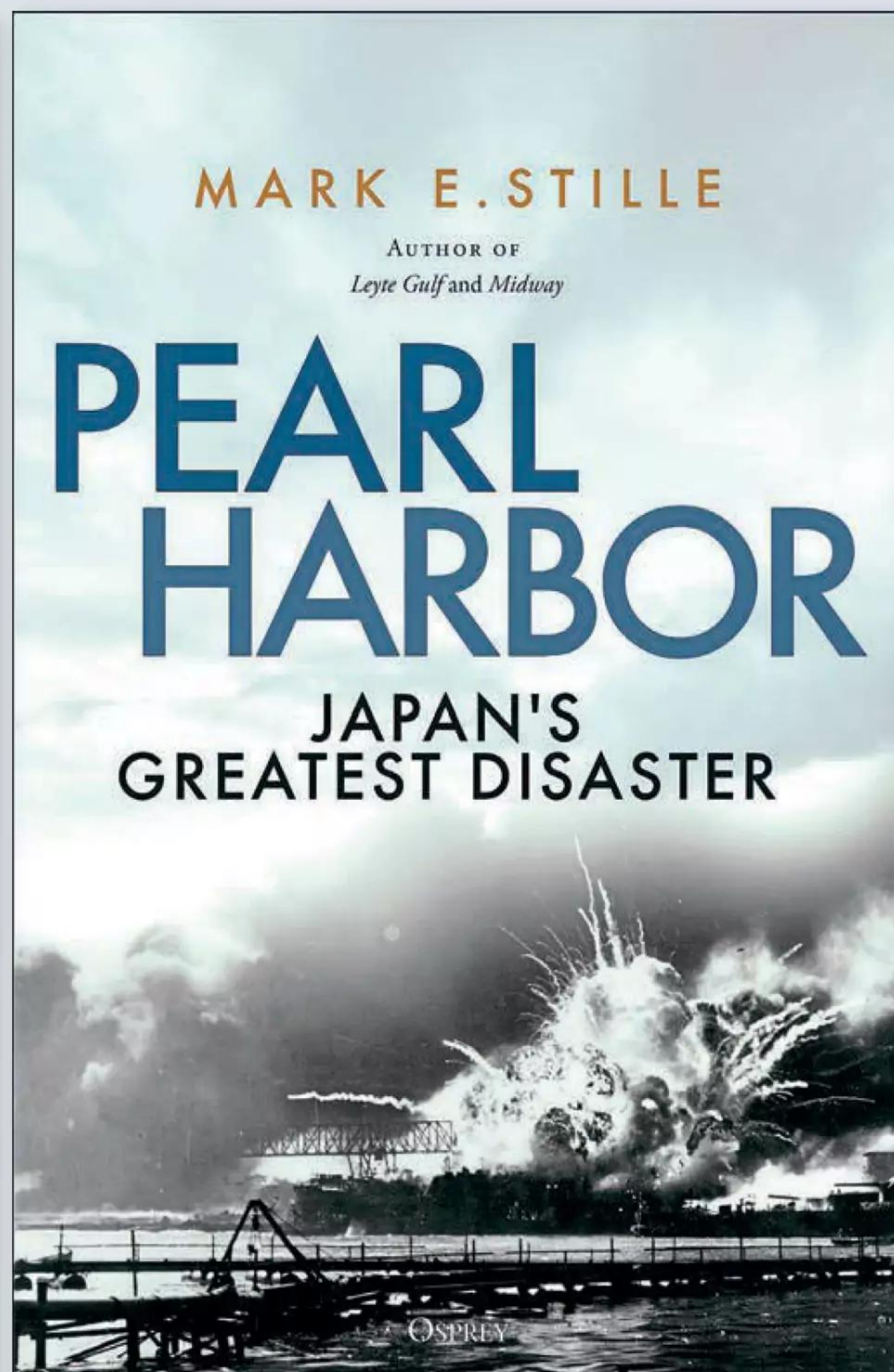
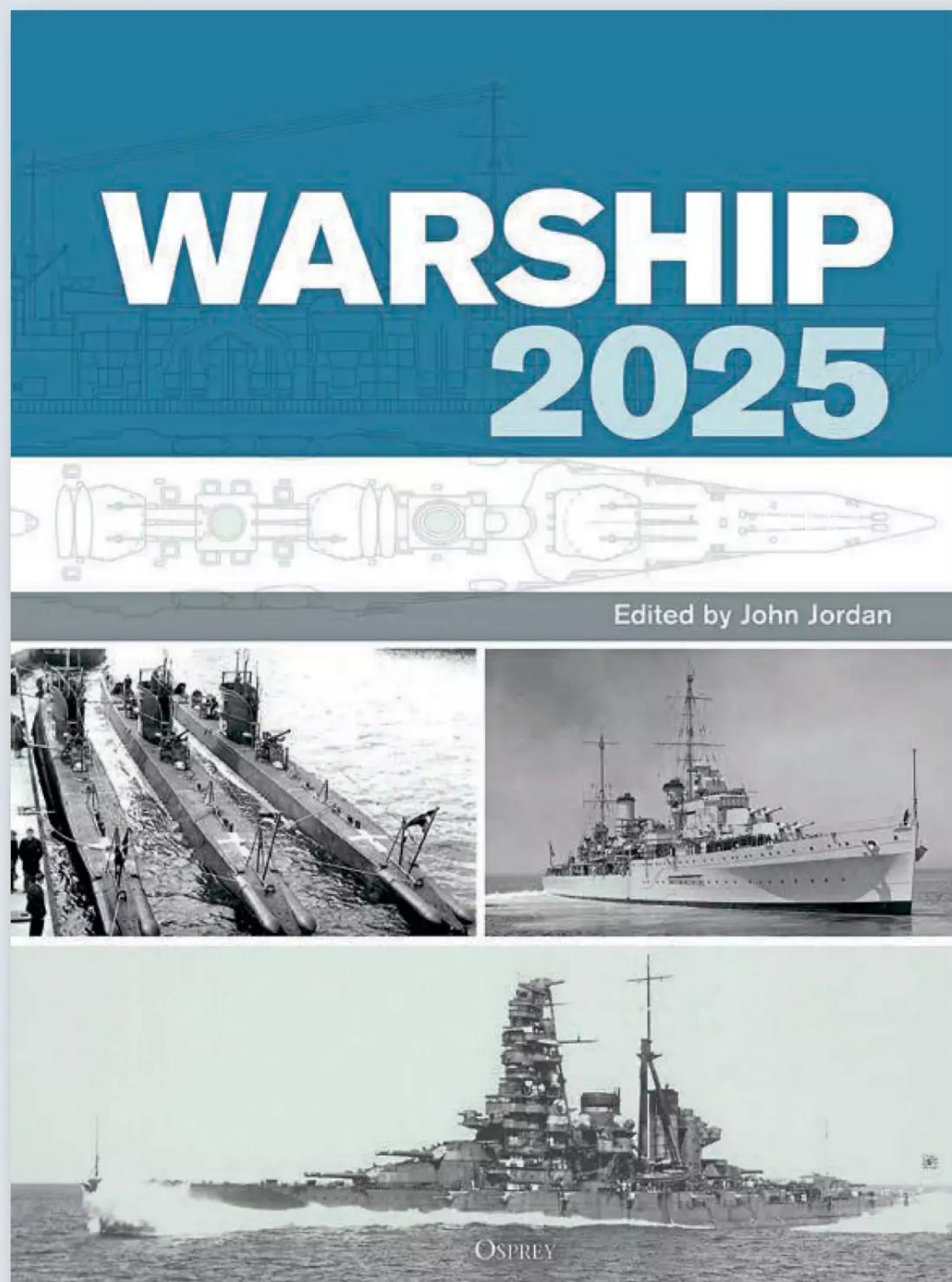
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Genning up on the Genoa

Eric Belshaw on how he tackled a project that proved less than plain sailing

Genoa? No, I've never met her before (bad joke!). Genoa? Oh, you mean the seaport in northwest Italy? Well, neither actually. The thing I want to deal with here is a fore sail configuration.

Before I delve into the technicalities, though, I better summarise the names for parts of the sails (see **Diagram 1**).

To qualify as a Genoa, the clew of the sail must come aft of the mast.

As you can see in **Photo 1**, the bottom corner (clew) is drawn back behind the mast on the leeward side. The sail clew and inner edge (leech) are inside the space between the mast, and the mast support lines (shrouds).

When the wind changes sides, the foresail clew has to travel around the mast to get to the new leeward side. This manoeuvre is called 'tacking' if it's planned, or 'jibing' if it's accidental.

Why a Genoa?

The question is, why would I want to add this type of sail configuration to a

model? Well, it's supposed to increase speed for the same wind strength, and it should make boat handling easier. Besides nobody else in our club has one!

I have many radio-controlled vessels of a wide variety of sizes, from a 'Footie' to an A class, and they all have the same

"To qualify as a Genoa, the clew of the sail must come aft of the mast"

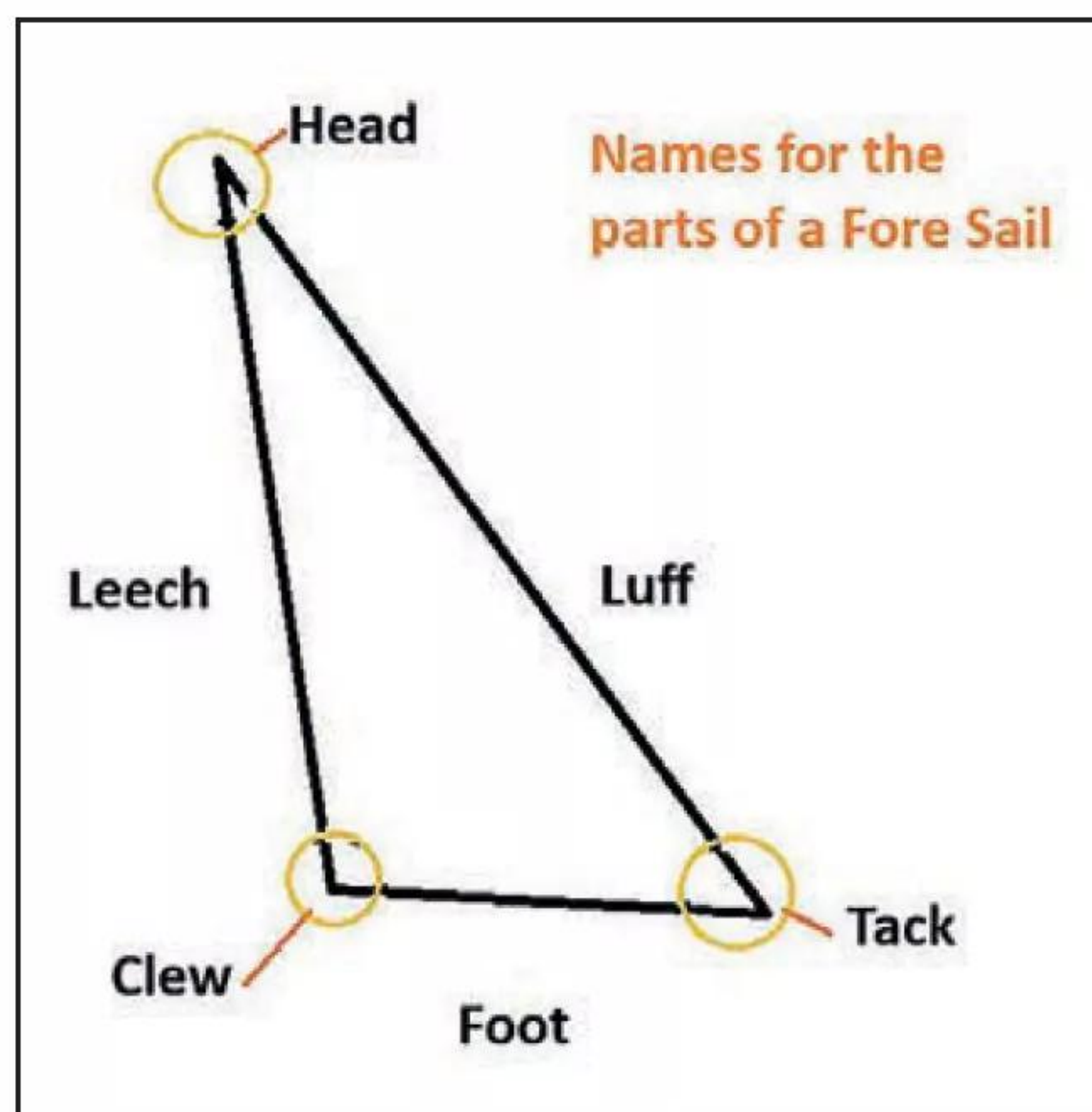
fore sail boom. In turn, this boom has a huge variety of deck fittings, none of which are used on real boats.

Comtesse candidate

I was lucky enough to buy a crumbling wreck that had no fore sail. It was a Robbe Comtesse that had been exposed to too much UV light and the thinned, moulded plastic at the deck edge and the top of the hull had become brittle. The original owner had broken off some cabin fittings, leaving random holes of various sizes.

I know what you are thinking, why buy such a load of rubbish? I can't help myself. I like a challenge!

So, I chopped off the deck and snapped away the brittle hull plastic. I then heat-curved lengths of 6mm square wood strip to reinstate the deck to hull joint. I filled most of the deck



Fore sail important part names.



Eric's Valentine sailing along nicely.

“The question is, why would I want to add this type of sail configuration to a model?”

holes in but when I came to two holes roughly the same size, one either side of the cabin top slide, I began to think of the Genoa sail.

I had to make a replacement fore sail anyway, so why not try the Genoa?

Design requirements

I proceeded to irritate my long-suffering wife by spending hours watching YouTube videos of full-size cruisers tacking and hauling sails until I understood what was necessary to make a Genoa sail work on my boat.

My system design requirements were:

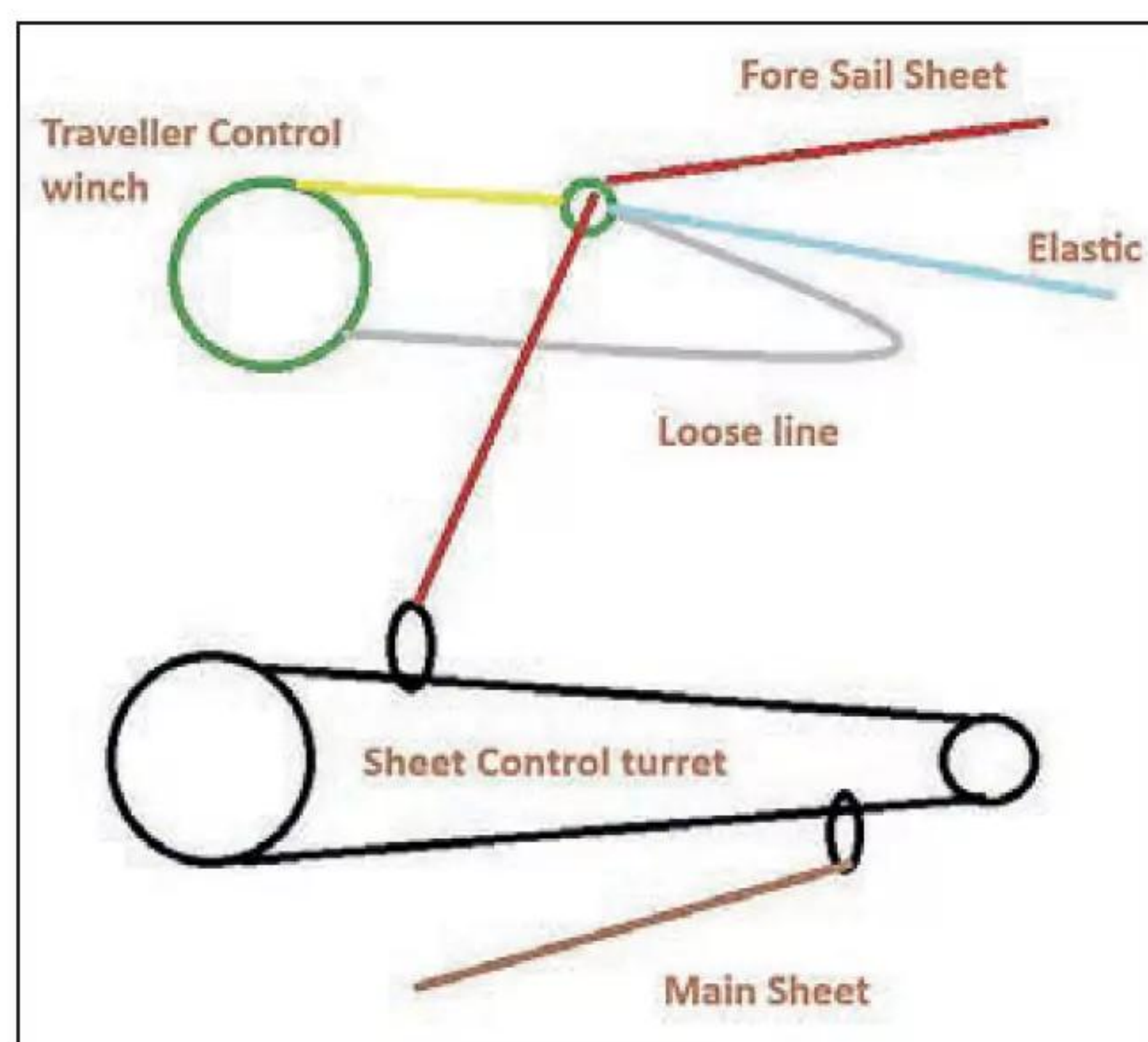
The fore and main sheets must work as on my other boats (a sheet in this case is a piece of string that goes from the sail winch to the boom, just in case you didn't know)

The eye or traveller that the fore sail sheet runs through must move from port to starboard (and back) without fouling the mast or deck fittings.

During my research I came across an American modeller who had used two sail winches, one to control the main sheet and another to control the three fore and head sails. Each of these fore and head sails had a tight sheet on the leeward side and a loose sheet on the windward side. These sheets were free of entanglements because the sails were small and high up on the fore stay. That suited his type of boat, but it wouldn't



A Genoa sail in use on a full-size yacht



Sail control lines schematic.

suit mine as the fore stay on my boat would be much shorter and I wanted the sail to stretch from mast to deck.

An additional complication was that his boat needed a 6-channel transmitter: one channel for the rudder, one channel for the main sheet and a third channel (not on the usual 2-stick configuration) to control the fore sails.

Hey, you have four channels on all 2-stick radios, I hear you say. But controlling the movement of the sails on one stick requires more dexterity than I have (I grew up before the

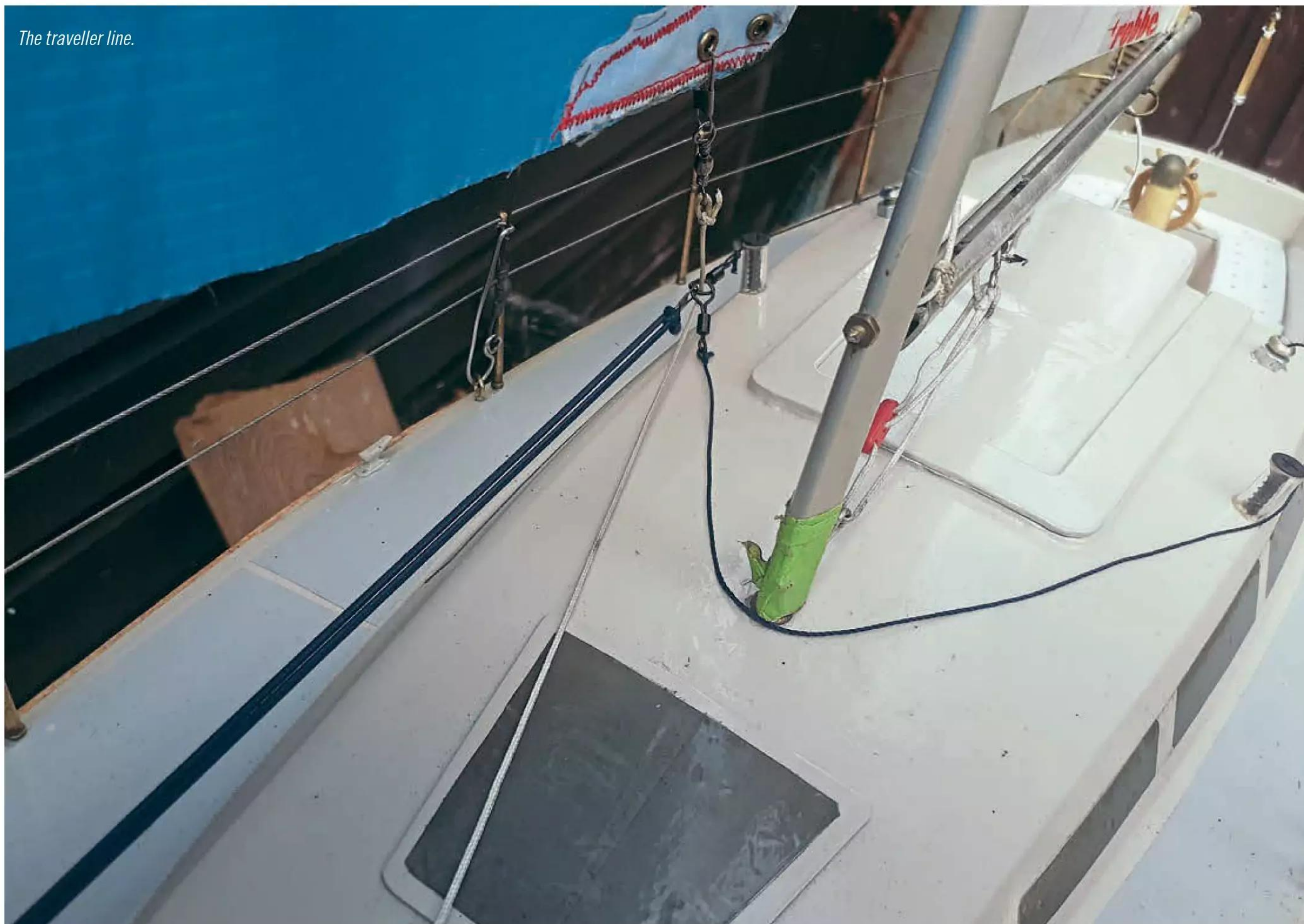


Standard sails and booms on Eric's cardboard R36R Chris P.

Xbox/ Nintendo stuff became popular, and phones were only used only for making calls).

So, for my Genoa I would use two sail winches, one to haul the fore and

The traveller line.



Traveller in mid position (elastic just tight).



Traveller hauled to port.



Traveller hauled to starboard.

main sheets and one to move the fore sail clew from side to side.

Control line schematic and a 'eureka' moment!

So, how to prevent the entanglements? I experimented with several barriers and line route control devices, but

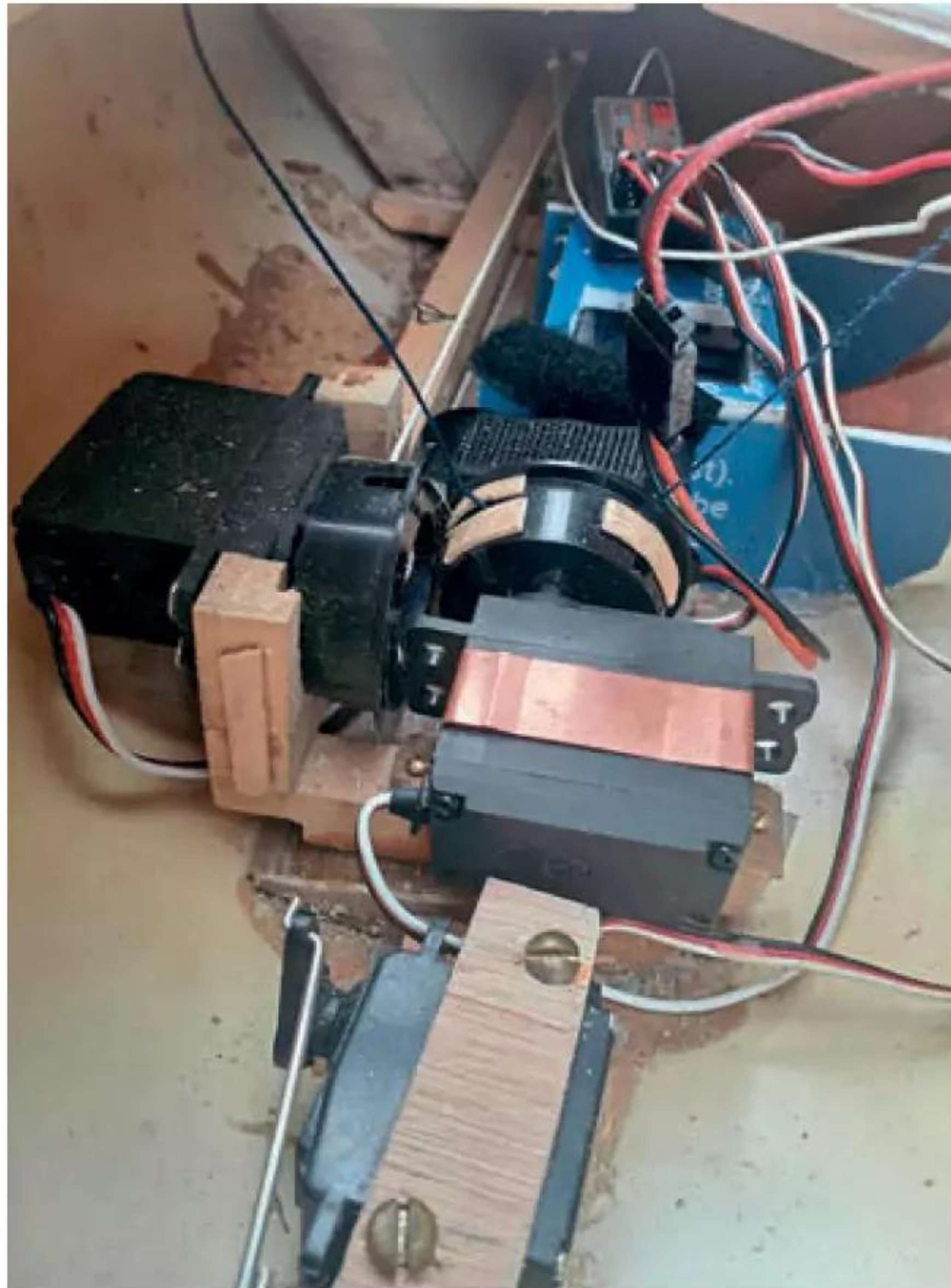
nothing proved 100% reliable.

The only success I had was when I put my finger inside the loop of the traveller line to guide the eye around the obstacles.

Frustrated with my failure, I took one of my most reliable yachts, a 51" Marblehead, to my local lake to sail

while I cleared my mind. This boat had an old-style single line winch, where the line tension was provided by elastic. *Eureka!* I could use a piece of elastic attached to the traveller to keep it away from the problem areas.

On returning home, I set the traveller to its mid position, then pulled the



The winch and rudder servo installation.

loop towards the bows so that the lines were just tight. I attached a piece of 1mm cotton covered elastic between the traveller and the fore stay deck fitting in the bows. The elastic was secured so that it was just tight, I avoided stretching it. I worked the traveller through its range of movements and at each movement limit the elastic still had sufficient stretch, thereby avoiding any binding or winch overloads.

To operate the main and fore sheets I had installed a 4-turn winch servo with a turret line. This assembly stretched from the bulkhead of the cabin to just forward of the mast step and was set towards the port. Lines were fed up

“One difficulty quickly became apparent while adjusting the sheets...”

through the original deck ports forward at the front of the cabin structure and aft through the cockpit bulkhead.

The ‘Traveller’ winch was mounted across the hull and centrally between the port and starboard deck fittings, while the rudder servo was mounted behind the winches.

I fabricated a battery holder and receiver table from foam board and that completed the internal structure.

I then finished off the assembly of the new deck and rebuilt the handrails, added a few details to the cockpit, and went for a test run. Of course, I had to check the main and foresheet movement first. Not too difficult, you would think, just put the sheets over the side and operate the radio. Yes, but this needed to be done for both traveller settings as the remaining hauls had to be the same.

One difficulty quickly became apparent while adjusting the sheets. I had no traveller fine adjustment on the radio transmitter. I had used the sixth channel on my transmitter and that had no trim settings, so when I wanted to correct the fore sheet haul on the starboard side, I had to dismantle the traveller sail winch, move the line spool around one spline, and reassemble it. This was messy as sometimes I got the spline movement wrong, and my error would only become visible once I had reassembled the system.

For those with lots of money there are 6-channel radio systems with

programmable travels on all channels. But hey, this was only meant to be an experiment anyway.

Performance evaluation

I named my finished 36" yacht *Valentine*. She sails as predicted and the traveller control functions well. Is she any faster after the modification? I don't know, as I have nothing to compare her with. If anyone with a standard *Comtesse* is prepared to sail as a reference, please let me know and we can set up a comparison.

While playing with the sails during a down-wind run I mistakenly moved the traveller out to halfway and the foresail bloomed like a spinnaker, but I have yet to get it to gullwing (a downwind sail setting with a sail on either side of the boat.)

I will publish more pictures and videos on the Alvaston Pirates Facebook page for those interested.

Over to you...

I am grateful to Model Boats for publishing this article and I hope it will perhaps encourage others to share pictures of Genoa sail-fitted craft in the Your Models section of the magazine.

On another matter, I am looking for a guineapig or two to try out some ‘How to build’ text I have produced based on my *Bottlecat* (see the June 2025 edition of Model Boats). This would be a beginner's guide, but a thinking person's view would help at this stage. If you are interested, please contact me via the Editor. ●



Spinnaker type sail form (traveller is in its mid position).

One for grandad...





One for grandad...

Coastal Motor Torpedo Boat

John Miles explains how family history and a fibreglass hull bought on a whim inspired his latest build



The glassfibre hull as purchased. The very fine surface finish can be seen in this photograph.

It was an awe-inspiring sight. To an 8-year-old it felt threatening and beyond my comprehension. This massive, truly massive, ship was within touching distance. This was the aircraft carrier, HMS *Indefatigable*.

She was moored in Portland Harbour. It was 1954, and unbeknown to me this giant would, just a couple of years later, end up in the breakers yard after her short eleven-year life.

My dad and I were in a small launch circumnavigating this giant. Strangely enough, though, it isn't only the ship I can clearly remember after all these years but a few of the buildings on the harbour side too. These, I can recall my dad pointing out, were where my grandfather used to work, at the former Whitehead torpedo factory.

It was not, though, until embarking on the project described here that pieces of the puzzle started falling into place. My dad was born in the little 'village' of Wyke Regis, in a small, terraced house. This had been built, along with many others, by the

"My grandfather worked on the development of the gyroscopes required to control the movement and direction of Whitehead's torpedoes once fired"

British engineer Robert Whitehead to accommodate the rapidly expanding workforce he employed to produce the torpedoes he'd invented in 1866 [see the June 2025 instalment of John Parker's *Flotsam & Jetsam* series]. A little further delving into our family history revealed that, in around 1908, my grandfather worked on the development of the gyroscopes required to control the movement and direction of Whitehead's torpedoes once fired. This explains why we always took our holidays in that area of Dorset.

What led me to this research was the acquisition of a fibreglass hull while at a recent open day at the

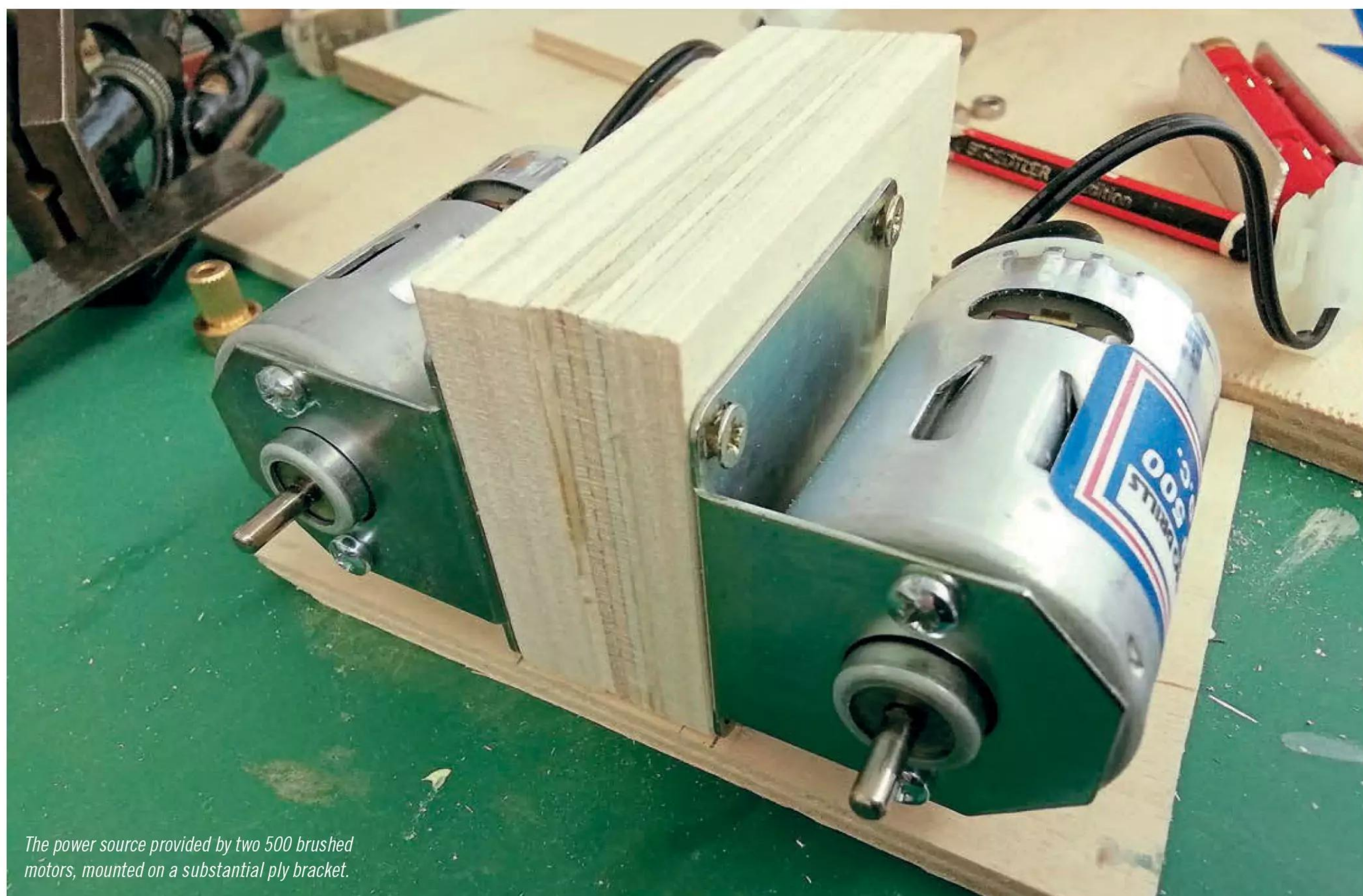


The first job was to construct the support /carrying stand. John has learnt from previous experience how important it is to make a good purpose-built stand.

Knightcote Model Boat Club (see *Model Boats Magazine*, July 2025). When I bought this hull, I had no idea what class of torpedo boat it had



The twin rudder system. This was initially set up on the bench to ensure it worked properly.



The power source provided by two 500 brushed motors, mounted on a substantial ply bracket.



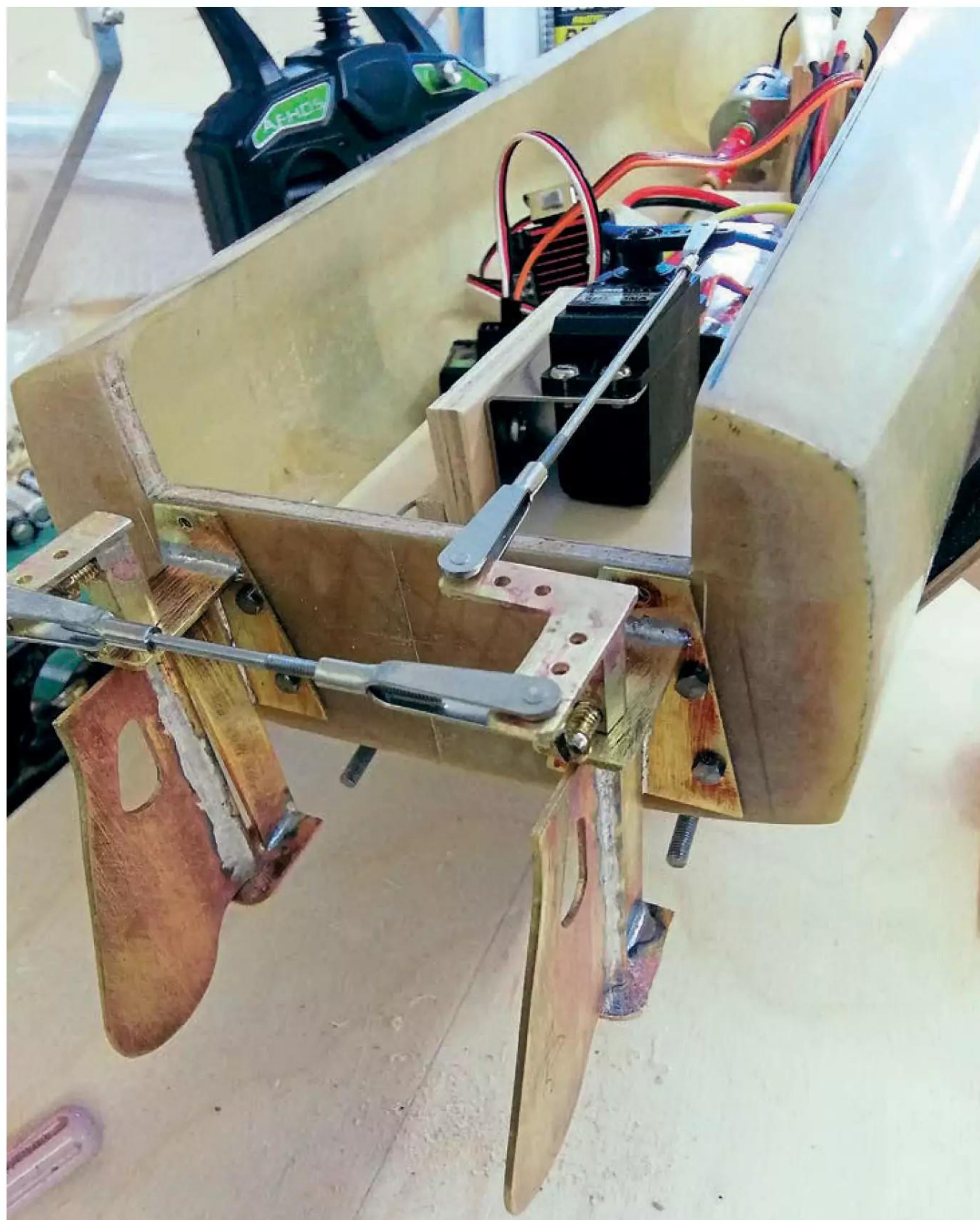
Using aluminium channel from Wickes, John's universal joints are held firmly in line while setting up the motors. Once in place, the channel can then easily be removed.



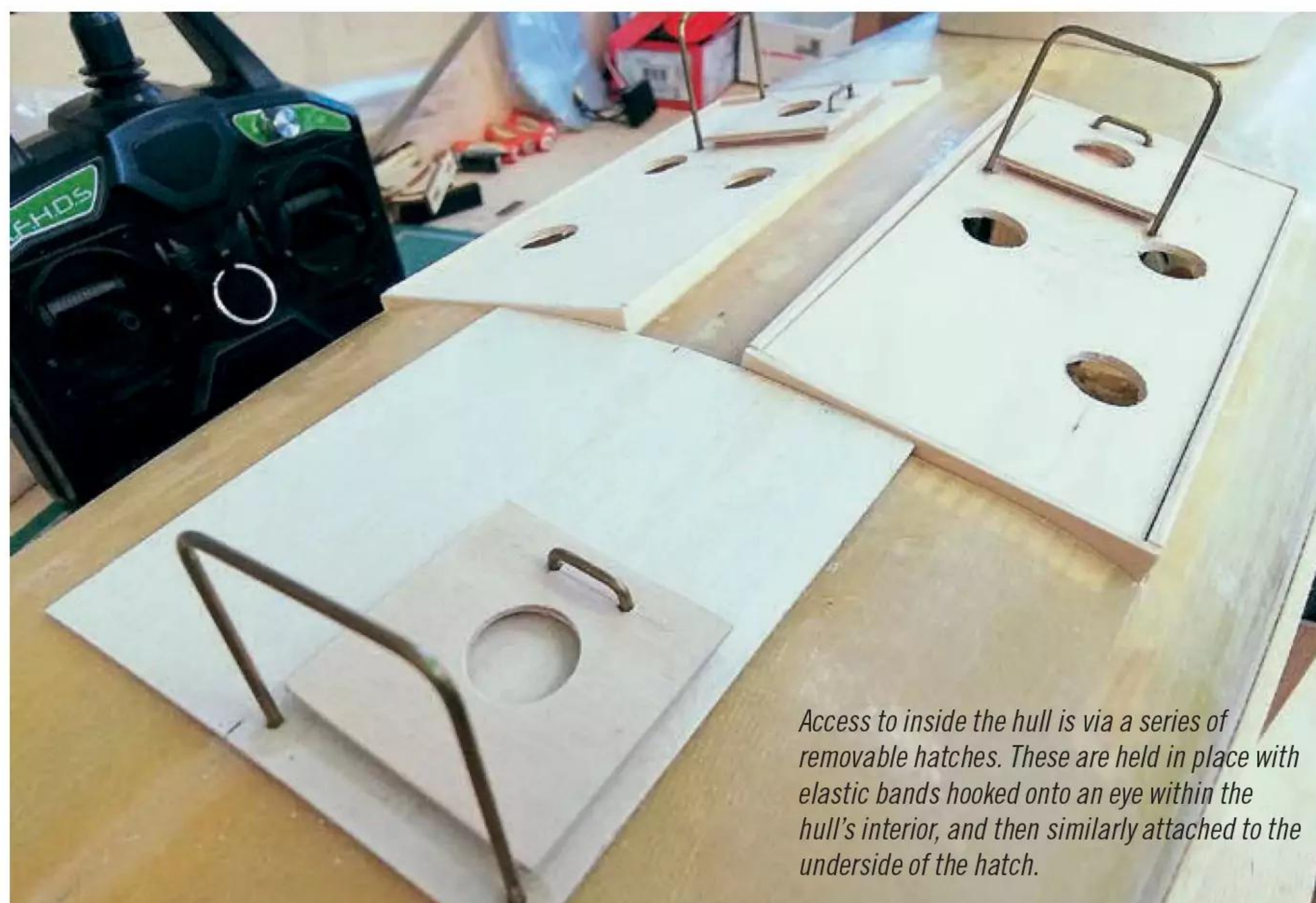
The two motors bonded into the hull. The aluminium channel can be clearly seen. The propeller shafts are firmly glued to a plywood 'plate', which in turn is bonded to the hull on pads of P38.



Setting up the propeller shaft external rear mounts. The bracket legs pass through slots in the hull and are bonded in place inside it using P38.



The rudder assembly bolted onto the fibreglass stern, which has been strengthened with a pad of plywood. The threaded ends of the propeller shafts are visible, and (John hopes) in alignment with the rudders.



Access to inside the hull is via a series of removable hatches. These are held in place with elastic bands hooked onto an eye within the hull's interior, and then similarly attached to the underside of the hatch.



The stern, showing the removable torpedo chutes. Forward of these is the cockpit.

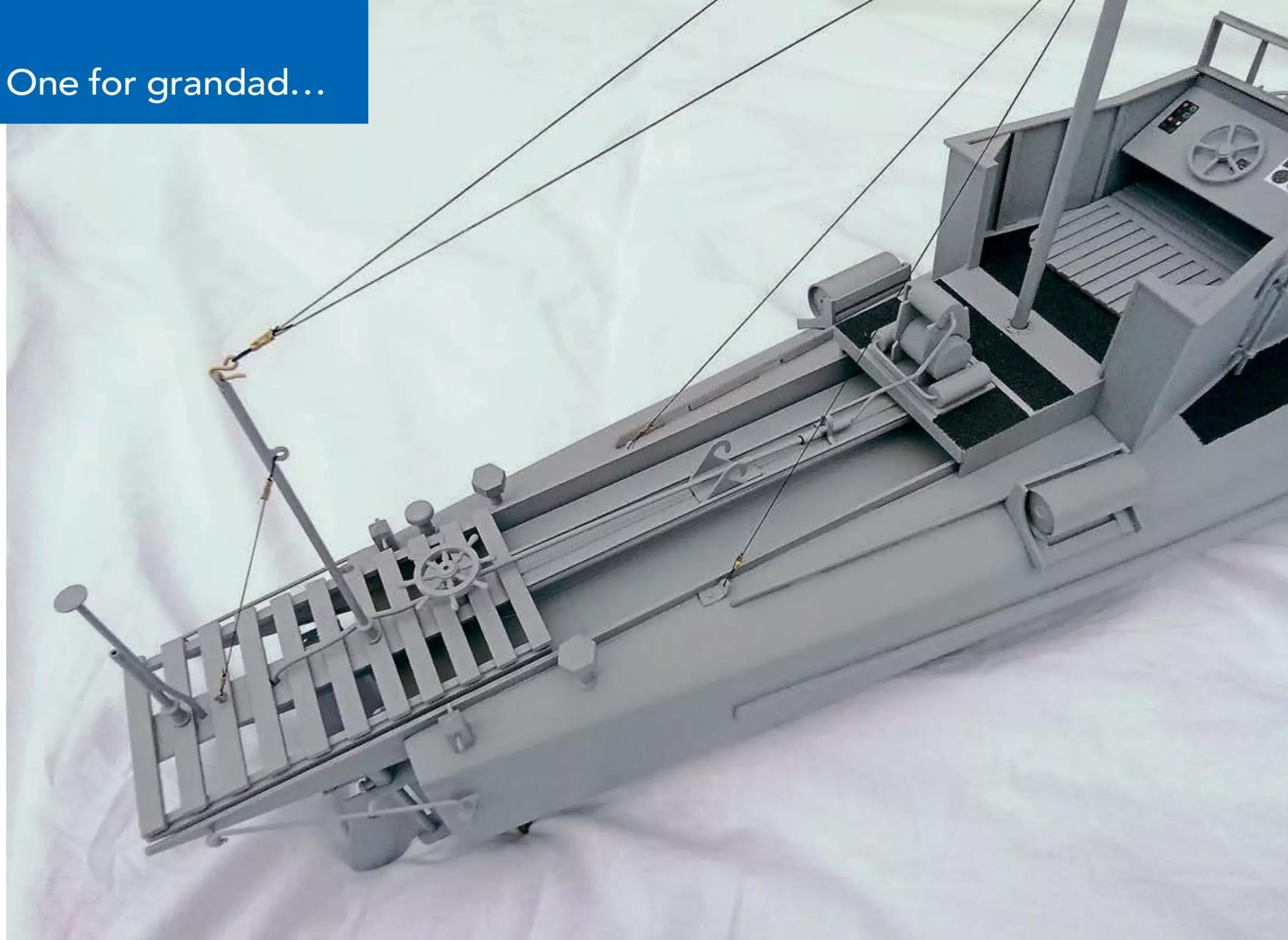


In this bow shot, details are starting to be added. The first coats of Halford's grey primer have been applied. It will take six coats of paint to produce a reasonable finish, followed by a coat of protecting matt lacquer.

been designed for. I was later reliably informed it was for a Thornycroft 55ft coastal motor torpedo boat, although I was none the wiser, hence the need for some research.

Thornycroft's wooden wonders

Developed by John Thornycroft and Co. during World War I, as the name suggests, this coastal motorboat was designed specifically to carry torpedoes. Made from wood (not unlike the World War II De Havilland Mosquito), it was relatively light and therefore capable of speeds around 40 knots. The hull shape featured a stepped hydroplane design, giving



The completed stern. John has restricted the amount of detail fittings used, as he feels the more there are, the more are likely to be knocked off during transportation and sailing! Indeed, he now wonders if he has made a mistake adding all the overhead cables, etc, as he fears they will make access rather more difficult.

the boat the potential for skimming across the water's surface. The displacement was around 11 tons.

Similar craft were powered by a single Thornycroft /Vosper engine, others by two.

The torpedoes, sometimes one but in other designs two, were carried on rails in the afterpart of the boats. They were fired backwards, tail first, being jettisoned over the stern by a

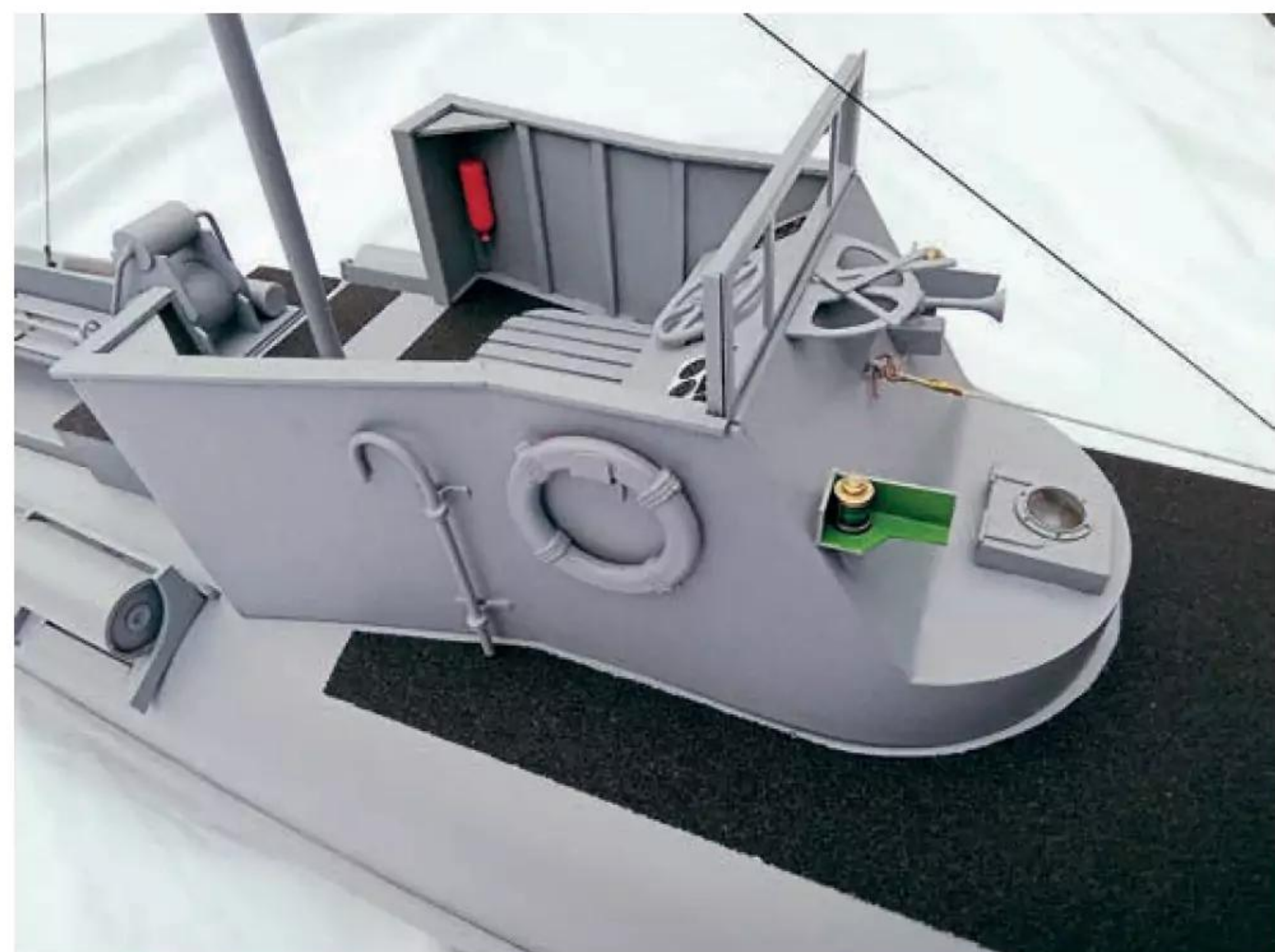
long steel ram operated by a cordite cartridge.

This, then, was the model to be constructed.

Fitting out the hull

The fibreglass hull moulding was first class and the external finish highly polished. It almost seemed a shame to roughen the surface so as to create a key for the paint.

The official builder's plan that came with the moulding was of some help but lacked important detail. A second plan, loaned to me by fellow Wicksteed Park Model Boat Club member Nick Brown, was rather dark and appeared to contradict some of the detail shown on the other drawings. These plans were possibly for boats of different specifications, so, I ended up incorporating elements of both!



The cockpit in position. For the black 'nonslip' surface John used emery cloth cut to shape and glued to the hull using PVA adhesive. He used his wife's fabric cutting scissors to cut the emery cloth – not a good idea really, as the abrasive has the ability to blunt scissors instantly. He is going to have some difficulty explaining this away!



An overall view of the completed boat.



On the water and looking striking!



The first job was to make a support /carrying stand to keep this very 'slippery' boat locked in place while work was being carried out.

The next was to fashion a pair of twin rudders. I made these up from brass, believing (rightly, as it happened) it would be easier in the long run than having to repair or replace those made using lighter materials. Once made they were screwed to the bench to ensure they would operate successfully.

I was concerned that, due to the very thin fibreglass, the boat may have been subject to flexing. Struts of obeche were, therefore, glued in place around the several apertures to combat this.

The photographs illustrate the build programme, which, once the motors and electronics were installed, was a fairly simple cosmetic exercise. A lot of detail is missing; some items intentionally, so as to avoid them being knocked off during operation, others because I was unsure of their use or because they weren't clearly illustrated on the original builder's plans. I am currently awaiting the arrival of a couple of torpedoes and the crew.

To be continued...

In the meantime, I have just returned from Wicksteed Park where the boat had her first sea trials – a bit

disappointing really. She appeared to be underpowered, and the steering was slow and didn't react as I expected. The twin rudders, which were made to scale, obviously didn't have sufficient surface area to elicit crisp handling. So, next week it's over to my chum Mark's workshop, where he will cast his wand over the electronics. For me, these are a black art and should be avoided at all costs. We will wait and see!

While not completely finished, however, this has been an interesting project and has unintentionally broadened my understanding of our family history. ●

Operation Jaywick

John Parker unpacks the history of the *Krait*



The MV Krait (Australian War Memorial).

There was nothing particularly special to set the 21-metre *Kofuku Maru* apart from the many other wooden Japanese fishing boats operating from Singapore in December 1941. Until that is, at about 6:45pm on December 11 that year, she became the first enemy vessel to be apprehended in the area, intercepted by the Royal Australian Navy corvette HMAS *Goulburn*. From that moment on she began an active new life that was to see her attain fame as the transport for an audacious long-range attack, ultimately resulting in her becoming

a floating memorial at the Australian Maritime Museum.

The fall of Singapore

Singapore fell to the Japanese Imperial Army on February 15, 1942. In the mad rush to rescue civilians prior to the collapse, Australian master mariner Captain Bill Reynolds commandeered the salvaged *Kofuku Maru* to evacuate hundreds of them to safety in the islands of Sumatra. Being a Japanese built and registered vessel, she did not attract the usual attention from Japanese warships or aircraft. A chance meeting with a British intelligence

“From that moment on she began an active new life that was to see her attain fame as the transport for an audacious long-range attack”

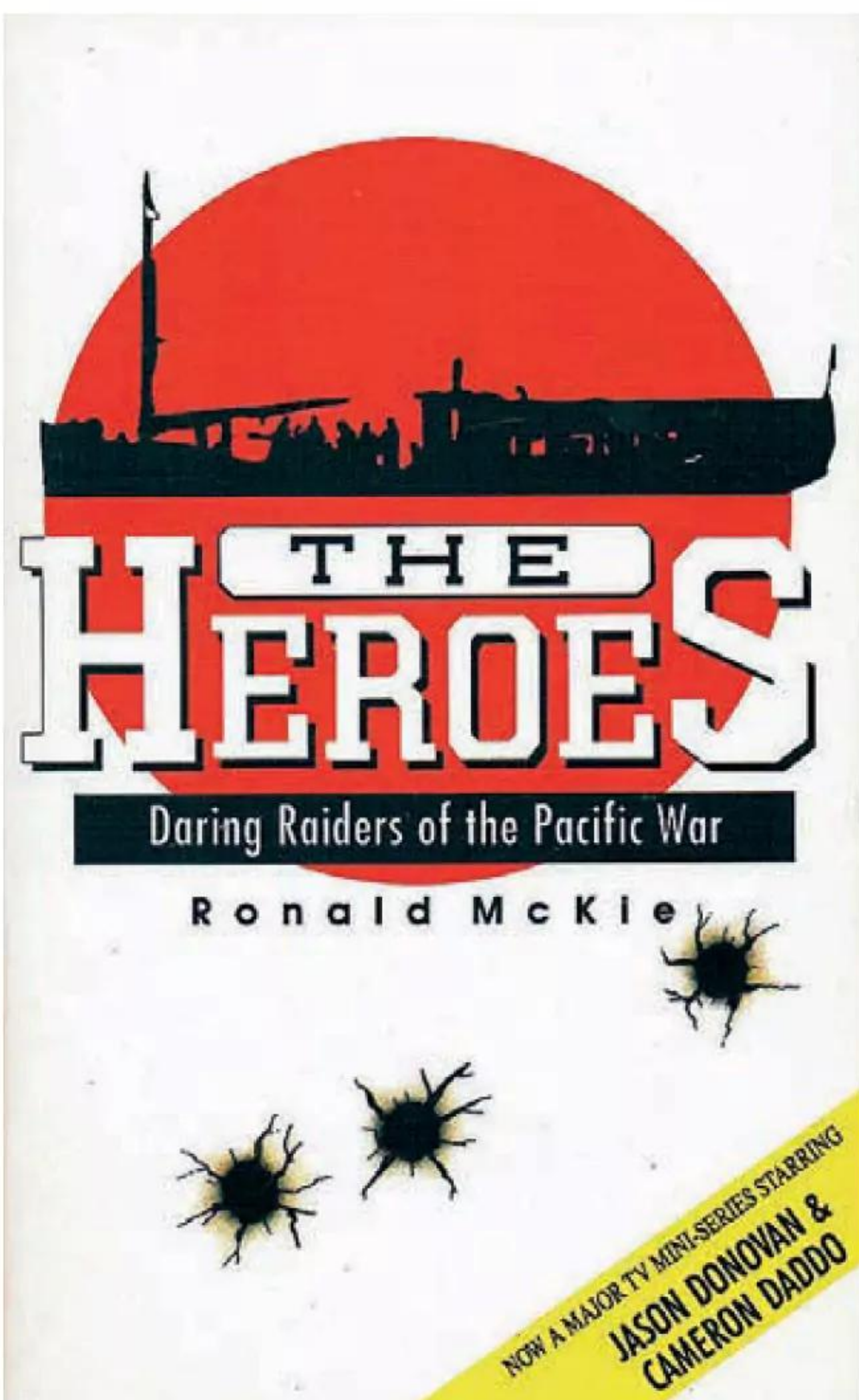
officer, Captain Ivan Lyon, when their vessels collided, led to the realisation that the *Kofuku Maru* could, due to her effective disguise, prove useful if the need arose to insert agents or clandestine operatives back into Singapore. Lyon therefore ordered that the vessel, which by now had been



Crew of the Krait (Australian War Memorial).



The Krait's journey



Heroes by Ronald McKie tells the full story of Operation Jaywick and Operation Rimau.

renamed *Krait* after a deadly Malayan snake, be brought back to Australia. This had to be done as deck cargo aboard a British freighter as the *Krait's* engine was worn out.

A new mission

The *Krait* arrived in Sydney Harbour in November 1942 to be prepared for the new mission that Lyon has gained



Model of the Krait at the Australian War Memorial (Australian War Memorial).



Krait's wheelhouse (Wikimedia)

approval for — a long-range attack on shipping in Singapore Harbour by the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department, or Z Special Force. The code name for the mission was Operation Jaywick. Chosen as Lyon's second-in-command was Englishman Lieutenant Donald Davidson, an expert in canoe work and jungle warfare. The *Krait* was overhauled and taken to Broken Bay, north of Sydney, where the 14 selected soldiers and sailors who had been training for the raid were embarked. Next came a trip north to Cairns in Queensland where a new Gardner diesel engine was fitted, followed by a long voyage across the top of Australia to the US Naval Base

at Exmouth, Western Australia, which was to be their jumping off point from the Australian mainland.

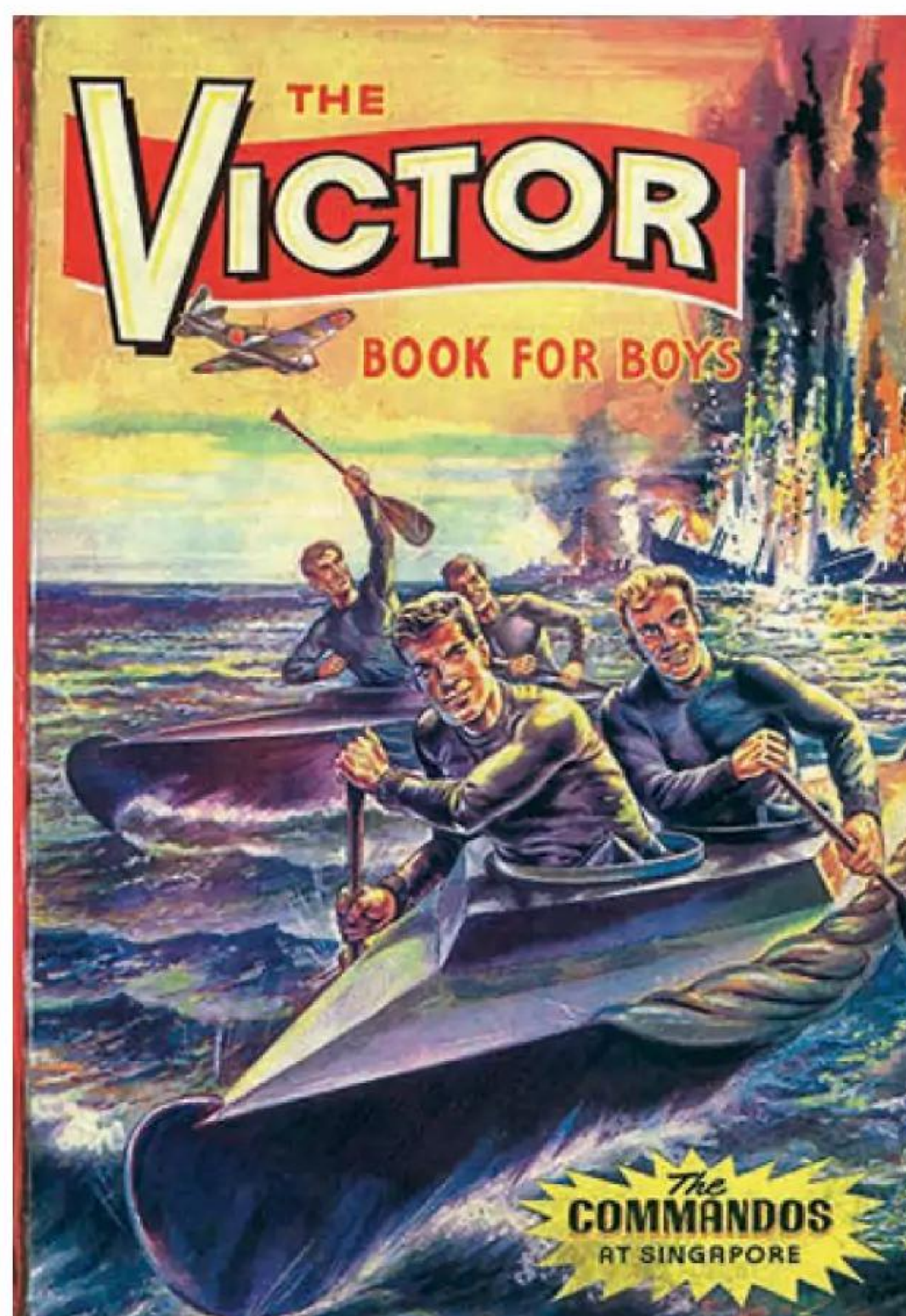
The *Krait* finally set off from Exmouth on September 2, 1943, with sufficient fuel for a 13,000-mile voyage, her holds laden with a considerable quantity of explosives in the form of limpet mines and grenades, three two-man canvas canoes or fol-bots, radio equipment, food and other supplies. Conditions were very cramped on board for the 14 crew members and the boat sat low in the water. The plan was to lay up at a suitable island hiding spot close to Singapore Harbour and launch an attack using the canvas canoes. To avoid suspicion, the crew used dye to darken their skins and wore sarongs like the local fishermen; they had to be on constant alert for Japanese shipping for they knew they would not pass close scrutiny.

Having passed through the hazardous Lombok Strait they had to cross the Java and South China seas and weather a force nine gale before reaching Panjang Island, just 35 kilometres from Singapore, on September 24. Six men were landed with three fol-bots, each of which carried limpet mines as well as food and water for a week. The *Krait* then vacated the area, having arranged a return rendezvous for October 1. The canoeists paddled around 45 kilometres that night to establish a forward base in a cave on a small island close to the harbour.

On the night of September 25/26, 1943, they managed to

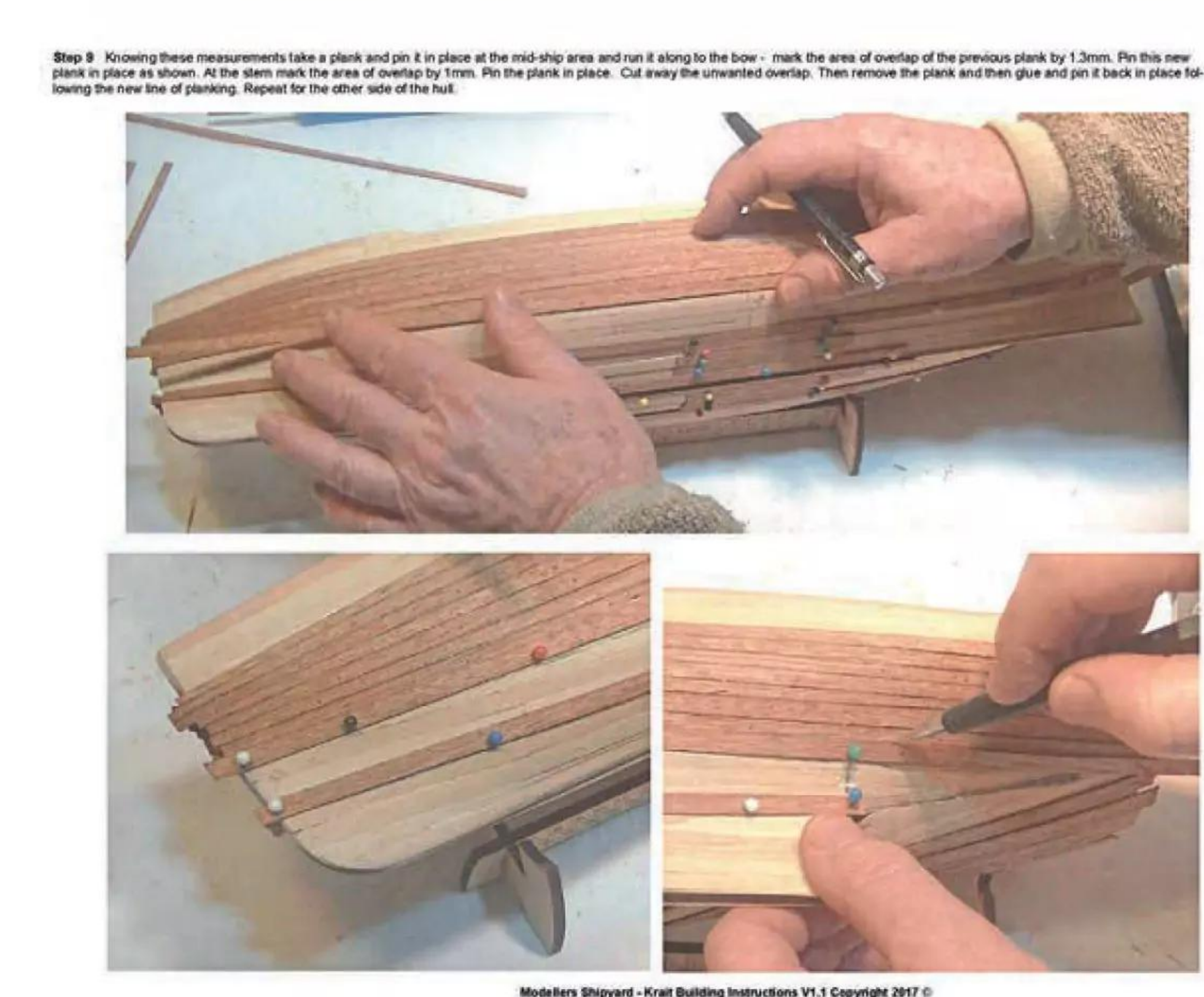


Memorial plaque fitted to the wheelhouse of the Krait (Wikipedia).

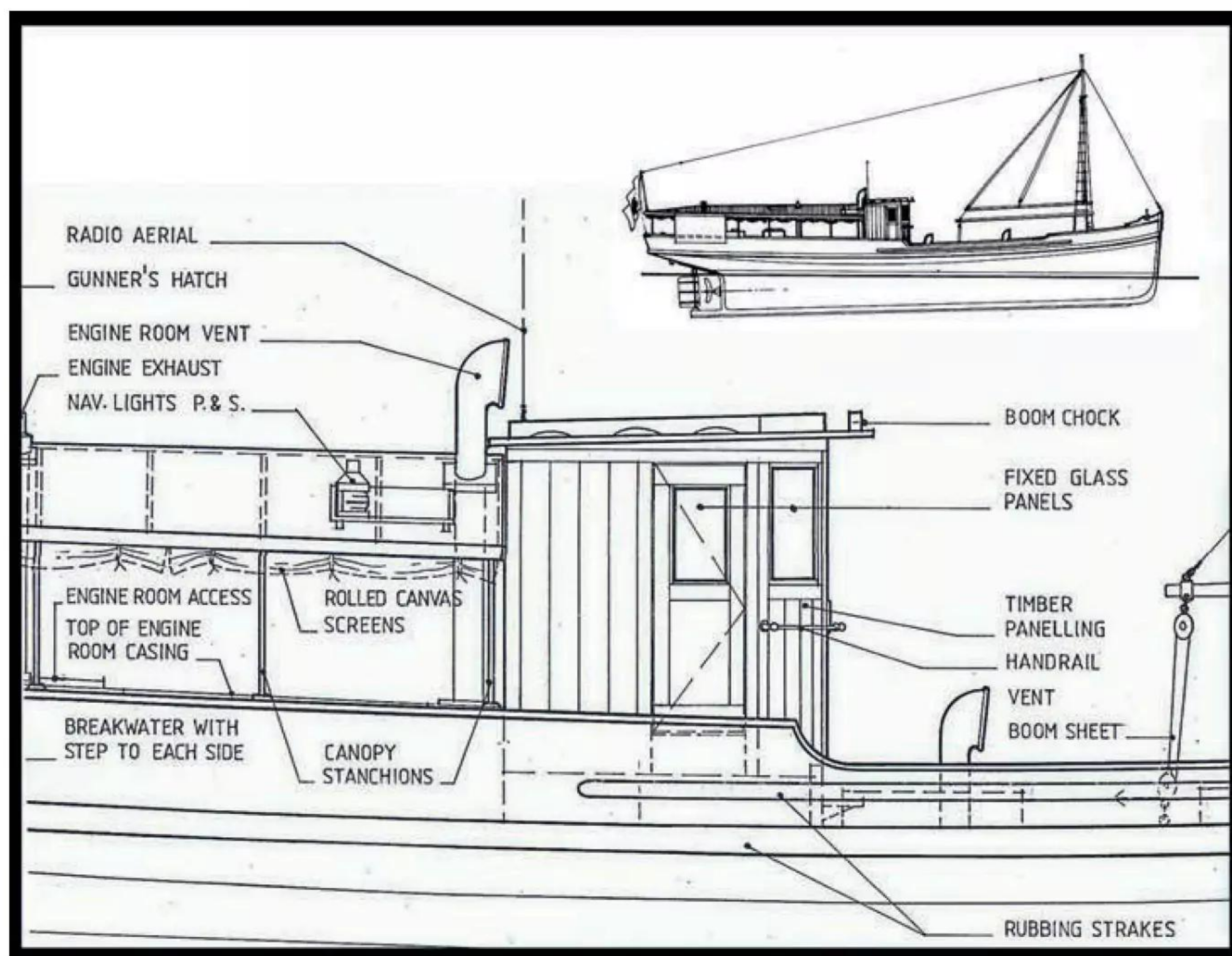


Schoolboy fiction inspired by Operation Jaywick.

paddle undetected into the harbour and plant their charges before returning to their hiding spot to await the outcome. The next morning, nine explosions ripped through the air, leaving seven Japanese transport ships, totalling some 39,000 tons, reportedly sunk or sinking. After waiting for the hue and cry to settle down a bit, the canoeists returned to make their rendezvous with the Krait on October 2 and



A page from the Modelers Central instructions for its kit of the Krait (by kind permission of Modelers Central).



Detail from the plan of the Krait from Float-a-Boat.

subsequently made a safe return to Exmouth Gulf on October 19.

Aftermath

Post-war analysis did not support the claimed results, reducing them down to three ships sunk (one salvaged) and three damaged. Nevertheless, the three ships sunk were tankers, and their loss was a significant blow for Japan. Furthermore, the success of the raid buoyed Allied confidence at a time when all the news was of further

“The success of the raid buoyed Allied confidence at a time when all the news was of further Japanese victories”

Japanese victories. The Japanese never suspected the raid came from far away Australia and details of it were kept secret for possible future raids. One such further raid was planned for October 1944, Operation



Krait at Noake's Boatyard for restoration, 2022 (Wikipedia).

"I know of two options for modelling the Krait"

Rimau, using motorised submersible canoes (see Flotsam and Jetsam, July 2024 issue). Unfortunately, this did not go well and resulted in all the crews being killed by the Japanese, including Lyon.

The *Krait* was used for a time at the end of the war as the support vessel HMAS *Krait*, and then by the occupying authorities in Borneo, after which she was sold to a trading company and plied the Borneo rivers for nearly 20 years carrying timber. As awareness grew in Australia of the role she had played in the Pacific war, efforts were made to acquire her and bring her home. This was achieved on Anzac Day 1964, when she sailed into Sydney Harbour and was dedicated as a floating war memorial. She is now in the care of the Sydney Maritime Museum and undergoing a sympathetic restoration.

Modelling the Krait

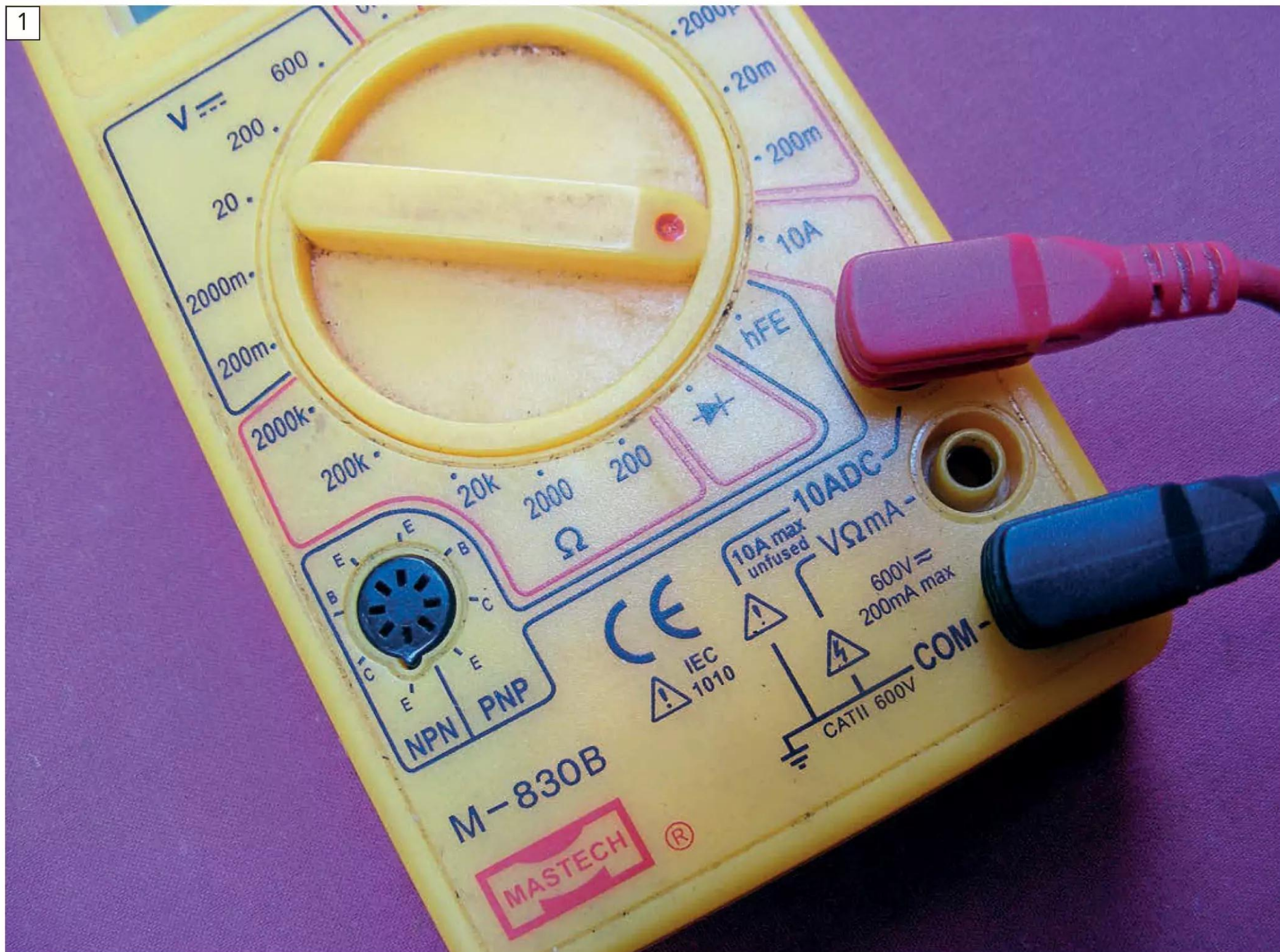
I know of two options for modelling the *Krait*. Firstly there is a kit available from Modelers (note the single 'l') Central of Australia: <https://www.modelerscentral.com/model-ship-kits/modellers-shipyard/mv-krait/>. This is a laser-cut kit to 1:35 scale, featuring a double-planked hull. It is intended for static display only but no doubt could be built as a working R/C model by someone with experience of fitting out a smaller model — the size works out to about 610mm long by 115mm wide. The instructions provided with this kit are very comprehensive, as a sample page shows, and for anyone wanting further information on topics such as planking and rigging, an e-book and series of DVDs are also offered.

The second option is for scratch-builders: a two-sheet plan of lines and general arrangement of the *Krait* as she appeared in Operation Jaywick by Adrian Brewer of Float-a-Boat, Australia (<https://floataboat.com.au/product/m-v-krait/>). This

time the scale is 1:24, resulting in a size of 895mm long, quite ideal for a working R/C model capable of running in open waters. Wooden construction would be the natural choice, with the wheelhouse and aft deck canopy providing the opportunity for the modeller to reproduce some of the homely details that make such a model come alive. ●

Full-size Krait particulars

- Originally built as a fish carrier by Hamagami Shipyard, Nagahama, Japan in 1934.
- A gaff-rigged motorised ketch with topsail
- Sail area 101 sq. metres
- Length: 21.33 metres on the deck
- Beam: 3.35 metres
- Draught: 1.5 metres
- Displacement: 23.44 tonnes
- Engine: Gardner 6LW diesel
- Maximum speed: 6.5 knots
- Range: 12,800 kilometres.



Glynn's Multimeter set up to test currents.

Ammeter advice

Glynn Guest explains how to get more out of your multimeter

Having covered the use of a Voltmeter for locating faults in electrical circuits (see the June 2025 issue of Model Boats), this month we're going to take a look at how to use the current measuring function in a multimeter. As will be explained, this necessitates using your multimeter in a totally different fashion to how you would when it's in Voltmeter mode.

First caution

Before getting started, it's worth pointing out that to use a multimeter as an Ammeter it must be switched into the current measuring mode and have its leads plugged into the correct sockets (see **Photo 1**). This might

seem obvious, but I have witnessed people failing to do this and at best becoming confused, and at worst causing damage. So, without wanting to seem patronising, make sure you read the instructions that came with your multimeter.

Your meter also has to be 'big enough' for the job. The small meters may only have a limited current measuring capacity. The one I always take when sailing can only measure up to 300 mA, so it can't cope with the motors that drive my models (see **Photo 2**). For most scale types of model, a meter with a 10 Amp scale is probably going to be OK. Another useful tip is that if your meter offers a

"This could cause damage, and the meter connections must be broken and reversed immediately"

range of currents to measure, always start in the highest range. If you find that is too high, you can safely move down to a lower range.

It's worth noting that digital meters will usually show the current no matter which way around they are connected into a circuit. Connected one way they might display a negative current value, but when connected the other way around you will get the same value but now it is positive. Analog meters (the ones with a moving needle in

2



A handy small Multimeter, but it cannot measure currents greater than 300mA.

front of a scale) are not so obliging and connected the wrong way around will have the needle driven against a physical stop below the zero position on the scale. This could cause damage, and the meter connections must be broken and reversed immediately.

How to install

A Voltmeter is used to measure the potential difference or 'electrical pressure' that wants to drive electrical charge through a component or circuit. The Ammeter is used to measure the rate at which electrical charge flows through the component or circuit under test. To do these things, the Voltmeter must be placed across the item you are interested in testing, whereas the Ammeter must be in series (see **Figure 1**).

This leads to one big difference when using the multimeter to measure Volts or Amps. With a Voltmeter, you can test the circuit by using the supplied probes to prod and poke about inside your model – but carefully, mind you! When using it as an Ammeter the circuit must be broken, the meter inserted, and the circuit restored. It is always a good idea to switch things off, perhaps even disconnecting the battery, before you try to put the Ammeter into the circuit.

There is another thing to be wary about when using an Ammeter. To avoid significantly changing the circuit they are connected into, they have a low resistance. In other words, the ammeter tries to act as if it were not there and lets the current flow through

“There is another thing to be wary about when using an Ammeter...”

as easily as possible. This can lead the careless to place an ammeter into a circuit such that it 'shorts' out some or all of it and allows a large current to flow. If too large then damage can occur, which is often accompanied by glowing wires, bright flashes, smoke and other expensive effects. This is the opposite of a Voltmeter which tries to divert as little current through itself by having a very high resistance, and is usually much safer to use. The moral could be, if you're not sure about electrical circuits, steer clear of using an Ammeter, but a Voltmeter could still be used with some confidence.

Limitations

Unlike a Voltmeter, which can be used to track down and locate breaks in an electrical circuit, the Ammeter just tells you what current, if any, is flowing. This can still be handy should something not be working as expected. An example could be a model with multiple motors which are clearly not all performing the same. Each motor could be tested individually to check for any differences. Similarly, a poor (high resistance) connection in a circuit can show up as a lower current than expected.

Motor testing

Ammeters can be very handy tools when installing an electric motor into a model. This requires just a little understanding of the motor's characteristics as its rotational speed changes (see **Figure 2**).

A motor unconnected to anything will have a maximum speed on any given voltage, termed the '**no load**' speed. When running at this no load speed, the current consumption is at a minimum, as electrical energy is only used to overcome internal losses such as friction inside the motor and electrical resistance. As soon as any load is applied to the shaft, its speed will reduce and the current rises; this is a more or less linear relationship.

Now the motor is doing some useful work and output power is produced. As the external load increases the motor slows, more current is drawn and so produces more power. This carries on until you reach a maximum power at around half the no load motor speed. Any increase in load beyond this point actually reduces the power output from the motor, even though the current is still rising. Going to the limit and completely stopping the motors rotation with the battery still connected results in

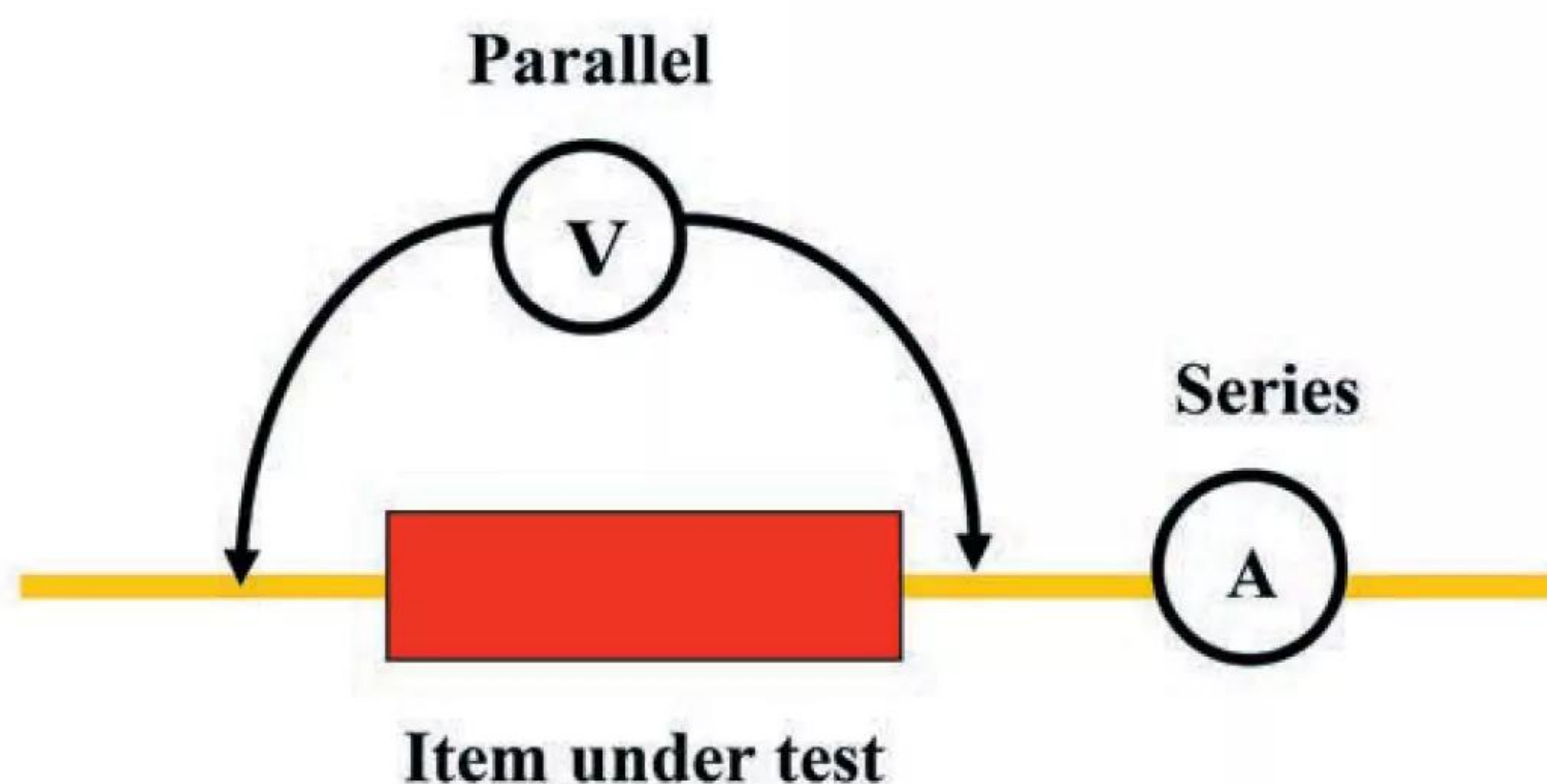
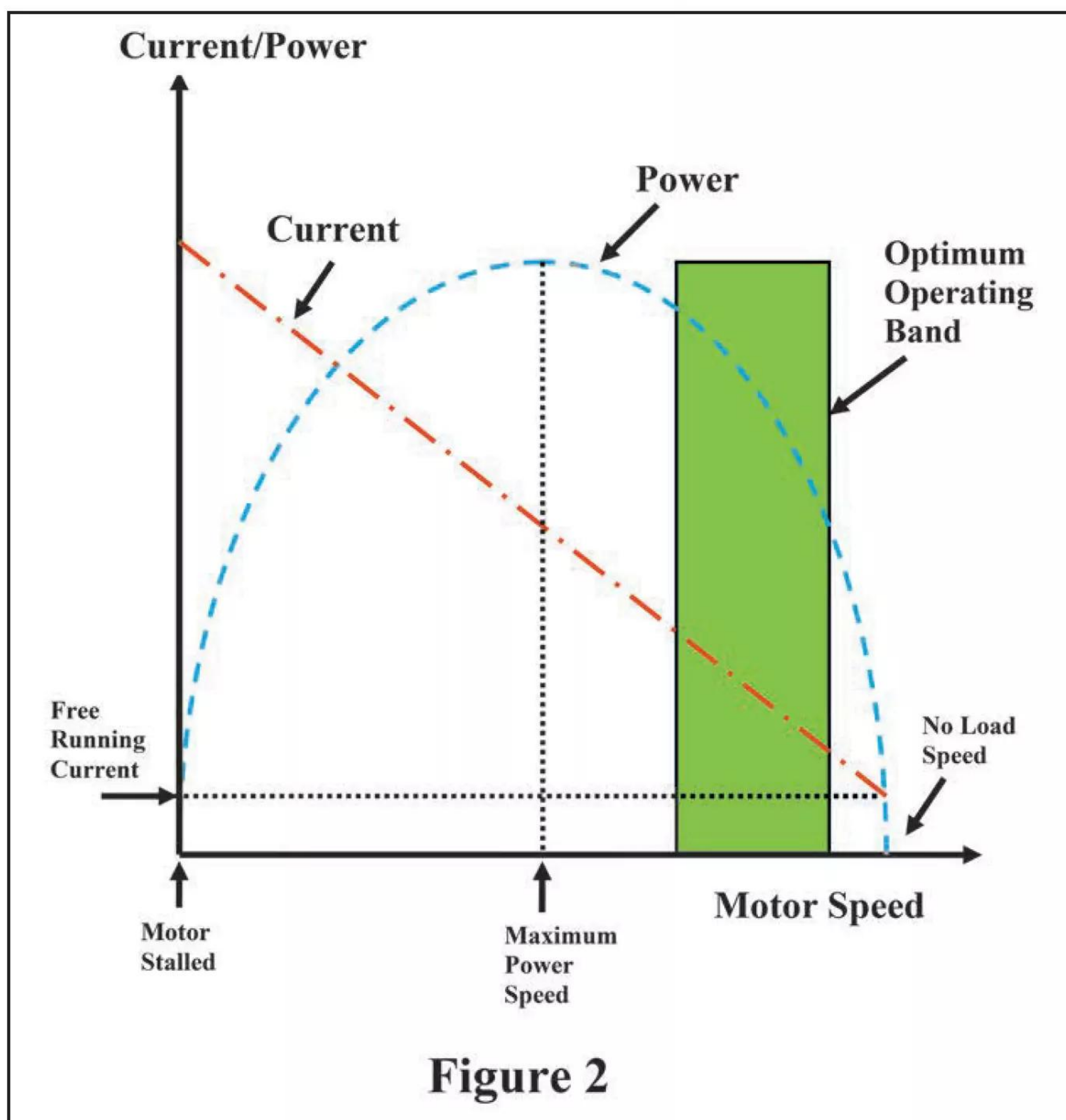
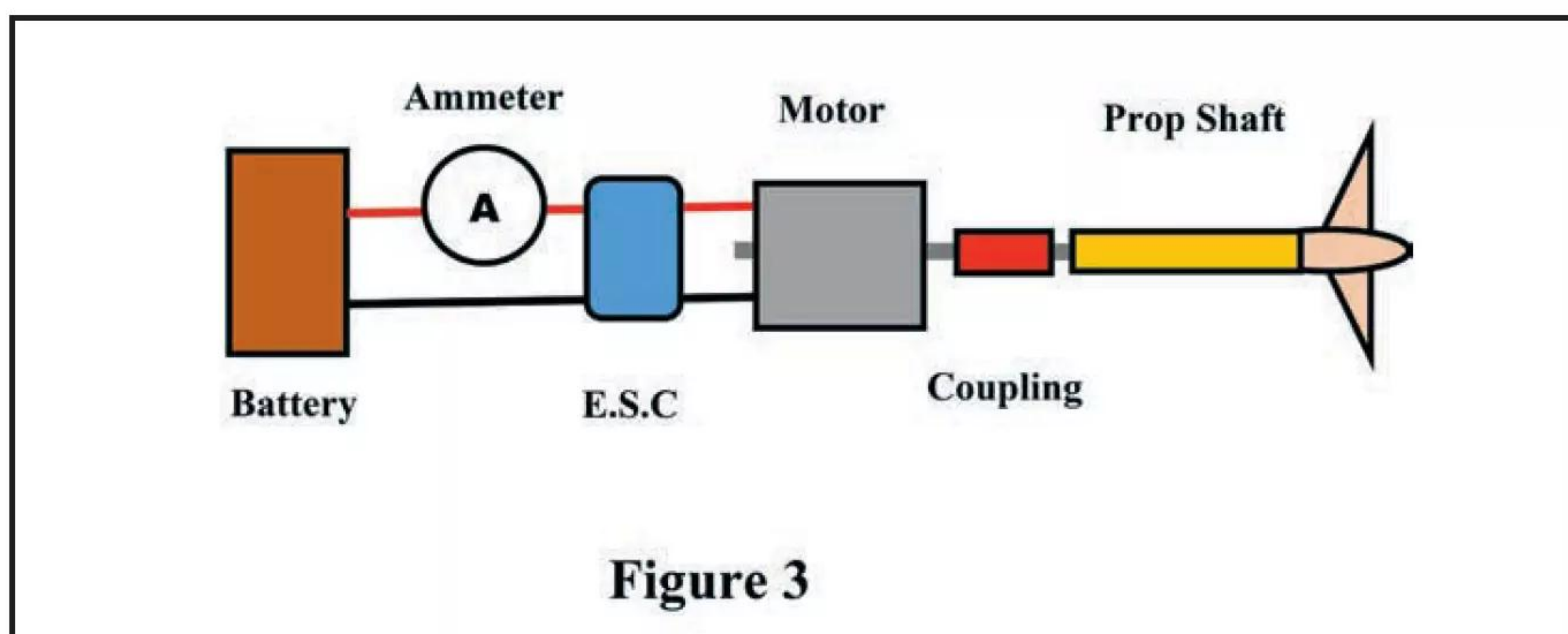


Figure 1

The correct position of Volt and Amp meters in a circuit.



Basic electric motor characteristics.



Where to place an Ammeter when testing the motor in a model.

zero mechanical power output and a maximum current, the stall current. This can confuse people as the motor still generates torque (the twisting action felt on the shaft) but, as it's not rotating, no usable mechanical power is produced. All the electrical energy supplied is being turned into heat inside the motor, and this is never a very good situation to remain in!

Some suppliers of electric motors for our models do supply information about free running and stall currents, and sometimes also suitable operating currents. For example, the Component Shop includes this information for the

range of MFA 'Mabuchi can' style of motors it supplies.

Motor alignment

When fitting the driveline into a model it's always a good idea to connect an Ammeter in series with the battery and motor (see **Figure 3**). The best place for the Ammeter is in between the battery and the ESC; in fact, this is essential with brushless motors. By the way, it doesn't matter if the Ammeter is installed in the lead from the batteries positive or negative terminal, the same current is flowing in each lead.

"A few moments work adjusting the motor mounting ought to reward you with reduced current drain, better performance, longer battery life and probably a quieter driveline"

Perfect alignment of the driveline parts means the lowest possible friction losses, which corresponds to the smallest Ammeter reading. In practice, the propeller shaft and tube position will probably be fixed within the model, so it just leaves you with the motor mount and coupling to play with. A few moments work adjusting the motor mounting ought to reward you with reduced current drain, better performance, longer battery life and probably a quieter driveline.

The best motor, coupling, propeller shaft alignment is often easiest to adjust during a model's construction. Good access can make it a simpler and maybe safer job than when working inside a completed model (see **Photo 3**).

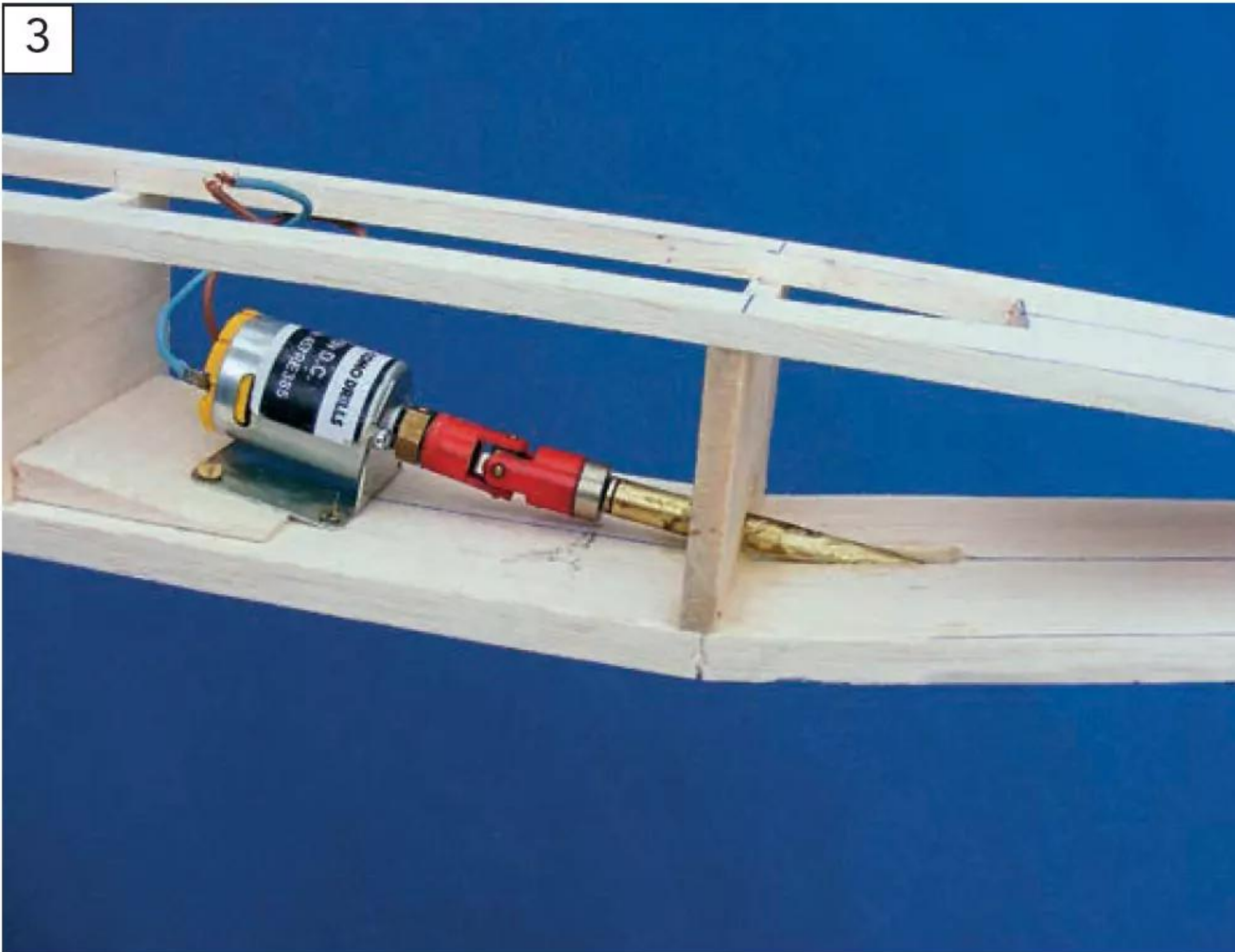
This was dramatically brought home to me when testing drivelines that used gears or pulleys. Seemingly, small adjustments could make a large difference to current flowing. It was useful to find that a pulley/belt or band drive was most efficient with just sufficient tension to avoid slippage. Extra tension just pushed up the current and pulled down the performance (see **Photo 4**).

Wet Amps

That covers testing the motor out of the water, but Ammeters are also valuable if you want to get good sailing performance. Referring back to **Figure 2**, it's not rocket science to appreciate that the best place to operate the motor is to the right of the maximum power speed. This contains the region of greatest efficiency, where the best combination of power with low current consumption occurs.

Measuring the current drawn by holding the model stationary in the water and applying full power is not too difficult. If you cannot place the Ammeter safely onboard the model, then some long leads will allow the meter to sit on the bank side (see **Photo 5**). Admittedly, such 'static' power testing doesn't give you exactly the same reading as when the model is travelling at full speed. The motor should turn faster when moving through the water and so the current ought to be reduced. However, for most scale types of model it will be close enough to avoid any risk of overloading the motor.

3



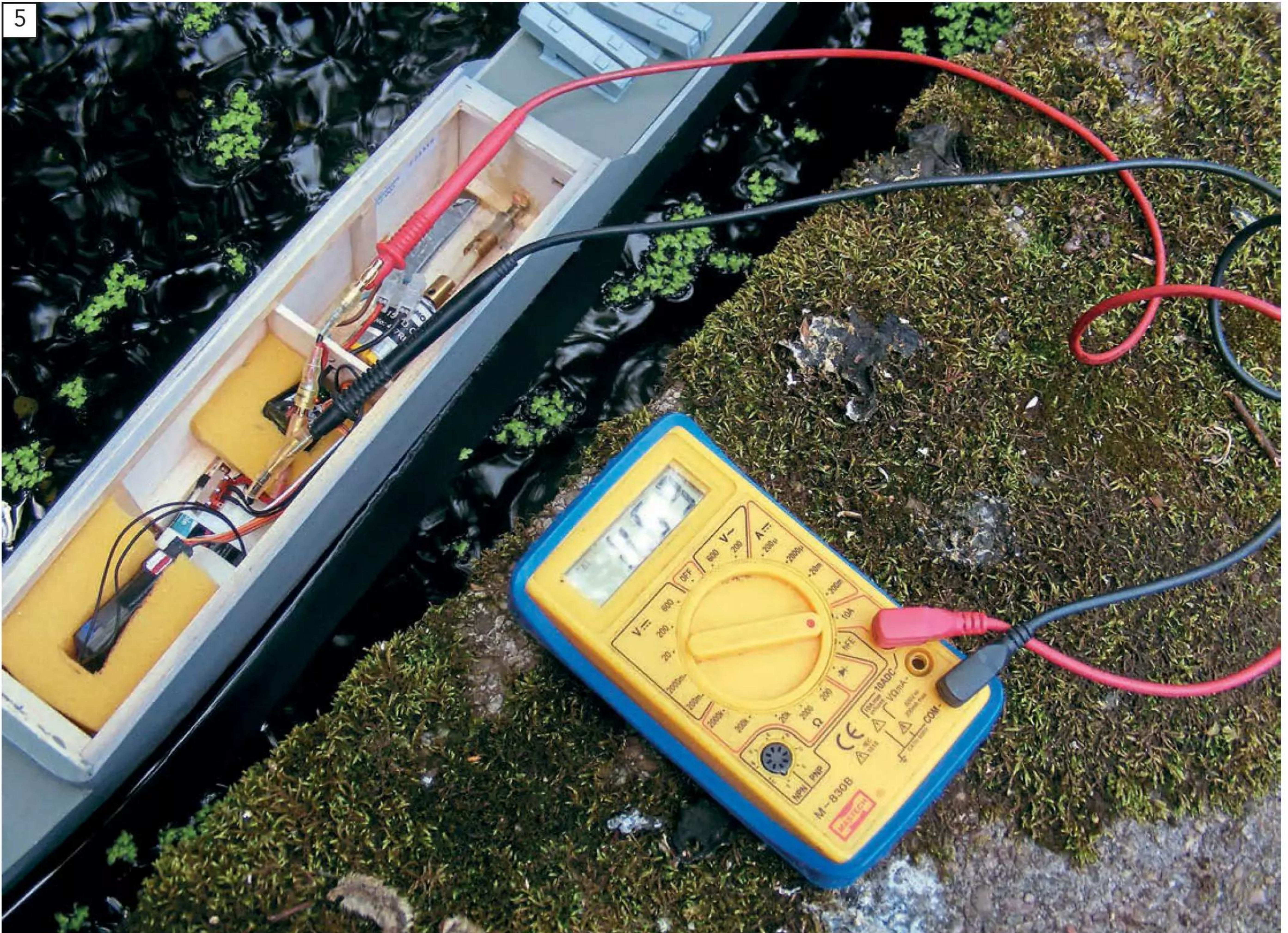
It's much easier to best position a motor before completing hull construction.

4



A pulley drive adjusted for correct belt tension.

5



Testing the current drawn when the model is in the water.

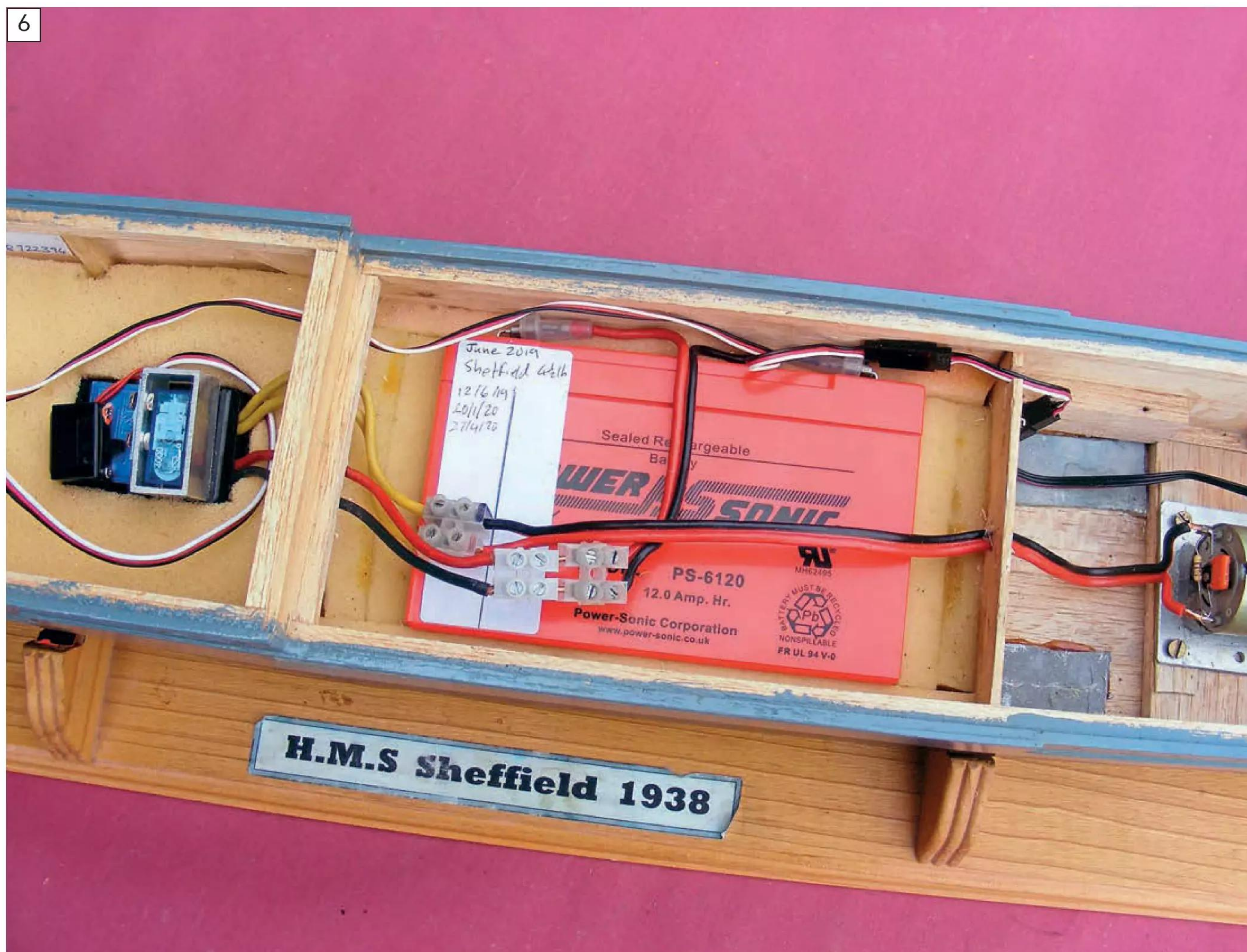
For general guidance, I suggest that you try to get the motor's speed under load at no less than 75% of the no load speed. Without a tachometer to measure the motor's rotational speeds this could be a problem. Fortunately, a good approximation is to avoid motor currents higher

than a quarter of the stall current. This ought to give you good efficiency, with an ample reserve of power should the propeller become entangled with debris.

If the model's sailing speed is less than you desire then a larger propeller (in terms of diameter and/or pitch)

could be tried, but still with the proviso of keeping the motor current to 25% or less than the stall current. If the current exceeds this value and the model's speed is still too low, then a more powerful motor might be a safer bet rather than increasing the propeller size.

6



The large battery installed in Glynn's HMS Sheffield means it remains unstressed during a sailing session of a couple of hours.

“Both propellers gave me the desired performance but, on checking with my Ammeter, one drew significantly less current. This made the propeller selection a true no brainer”

Some years ago, when testing a warship model, I felt its top speed was a little below what it ought to be. Two different propellers were tried; one with a larger diameter, the other just had the same diameter but a greater pitch. Both gave me the desired performance but, on checking with my Ammeter, one drew significantly less current. This made the propeller selection a true no brainer and I went with the lower current propeller to put less load on the driveline and get a longer powered run.

Running time

Having an indication of the size of the current a model will draw from the battery when sailing can allow you

to estimate the length of time you can safely sail a model for. This needs the capacity of the battery, which is given in Amp-Hours (sometimes Milliamp-Hours are used, which is just one thousand times larger than the batteries Amp-Hours value). This figure is the product of the current flowing (in Amps) and the length of time it can flow for (in hours). So, a 6 Amp-hour battery can deliver 6 Amps for one hour, 3 Amps for two hours, or 12 Amps for half an hour.

If testing your model at full power in the water gave you a current of 4 Amps and the battery you plan to use has a capacity of 10 Amp-hours, then:

$$\text{Duration} = \text{Capacity} \div \text{Current} = 10 \div 4 = 2 \frac{1}{2} \text{ hours.}$$

It has to be mentioned that a battery's capacity can be quoted using a current that takes something like five to ten hours to discharge it. Drawing much larger currents can significantly reduce the effective capacity of the battery. This could be important if you plan to discharge the battery in minutes, but for more sedate sailing,

with something like a typical scale model, this effect is not as important. With lead/acid batteries, if the numerical value of the current drawn is no more than half the value of the battery capacity, then I know that I should be safe to sail at full speed for a least an hour. This is usually an unlikely situation with most scale models, which makes it even safer. An example is the 12 Amp-hour battery in my model of the cruiser HMS Sheffield (see **Photo 6**), which only has to supply a current of up to 5 Amps at full power. This current will not be an excessive strain on this size of battery and is more than large enough to guarantee a pleasurable couple of hours of sailing.

An essential piece of kit

So, there you have it: to avoid being a modeller with the reputation of always turning up with electrical problems, go buy and learn how to use a multimeter. They are cheap enough and can pay for themselves with the first problem they solve. ●

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BOILER ROOM

Richard Simpson reviews an innovative new multi-purpose oil

You may remember in the October 2025 instalment of Boiler Room my brief look at lubricating oils for our engines. I identified the two different types of oil that you might use for internal and external lubrication and proposed one or two possible oil types that meet these requirements. At the very end of the article, I mentioned a new oil manufactured by Morris Lubricants, specifically for Heritage Steam Supplies, which is supposed to meet the requirements of both internal and external lubrication for our steam engines, and promised a review. Heritage Steam Supplies, based in Fareham, Hampshire, supplies a wide range of items/products, mainly aimed at the full-size steam enthusiasts operating such machinery as steam locomotives, traction engines, showman's engines and steamboats. But while the spare parts are almost exclusively full size, many workshop materials, tools, equipment and products can be equally valuable to steam powered model boat operators.

So, I duly ordered a 1-litre bottle of Morris Lubricants' Golden Film Universal Steam Oil and waited for it to arrive. The very next day a large and surprisingly heavy cardboard box arrived via courier, which when opened much to my surprise contained not only the oil but Heritage Steam Supplies' extremely comprehensive and beautifully illustrated catalogue (see **Photo 1**). A brief flick through this revealed a vast range of products, including a wide range of oil products (see **Photo 2**) and, particularly of interest from a modeller's perspective, pages of gauge facias that can be scanned, resized and used to create authentic model gauges (see **Photo 3**). This would have been very useful when I followed precisely that process while building the engine control dash Hereward open launch model, as back then I'd had to resort to downloading gauge facias found on the internet (see **Photo 4**). I must admit I did feel a bit like a kid in a candy shop when

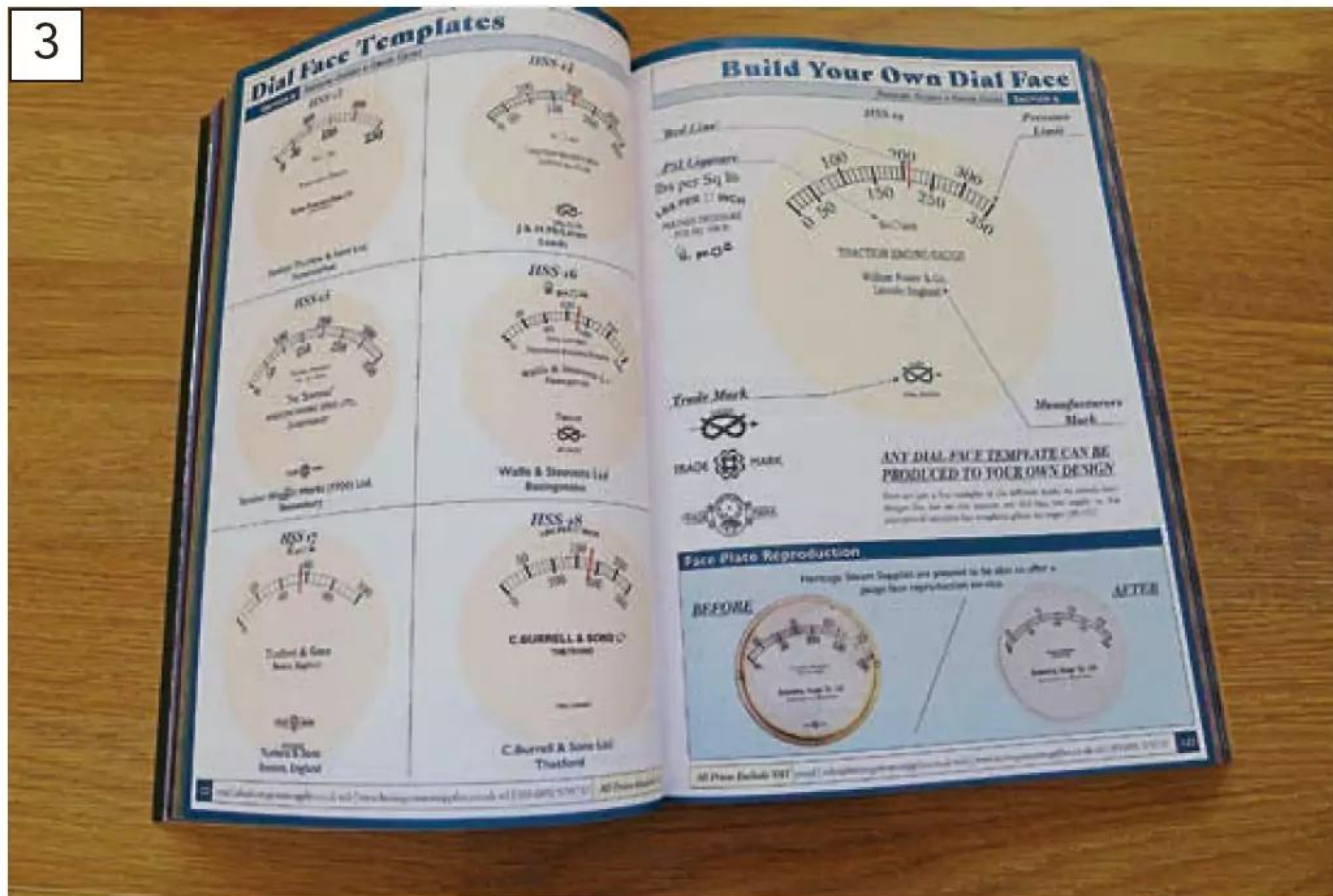


Richard's 1-litre bottle of Morris Lubricants Golden Film Universal Steam Oil, marketed exclusively by Heritage Steam Supplies, arrived, well packaged and with a beautifully produced free catalogue, just two days after Richard ordered it.



The Universal Steam Oil is also available in a 5-litre bottle, which would last several years for most steam modellers.

3



Original facias from long forgotten pressure gauge manufacturers featured in the Heritage Steam Supplies catalogue. These images could be used to create accurate bespoke gauges for your model boat.

4



These dumb gauges were all created by downloading facias from an American gauge supplier, resizing them and printing them off using an inkjet printer onto photo paper.

5



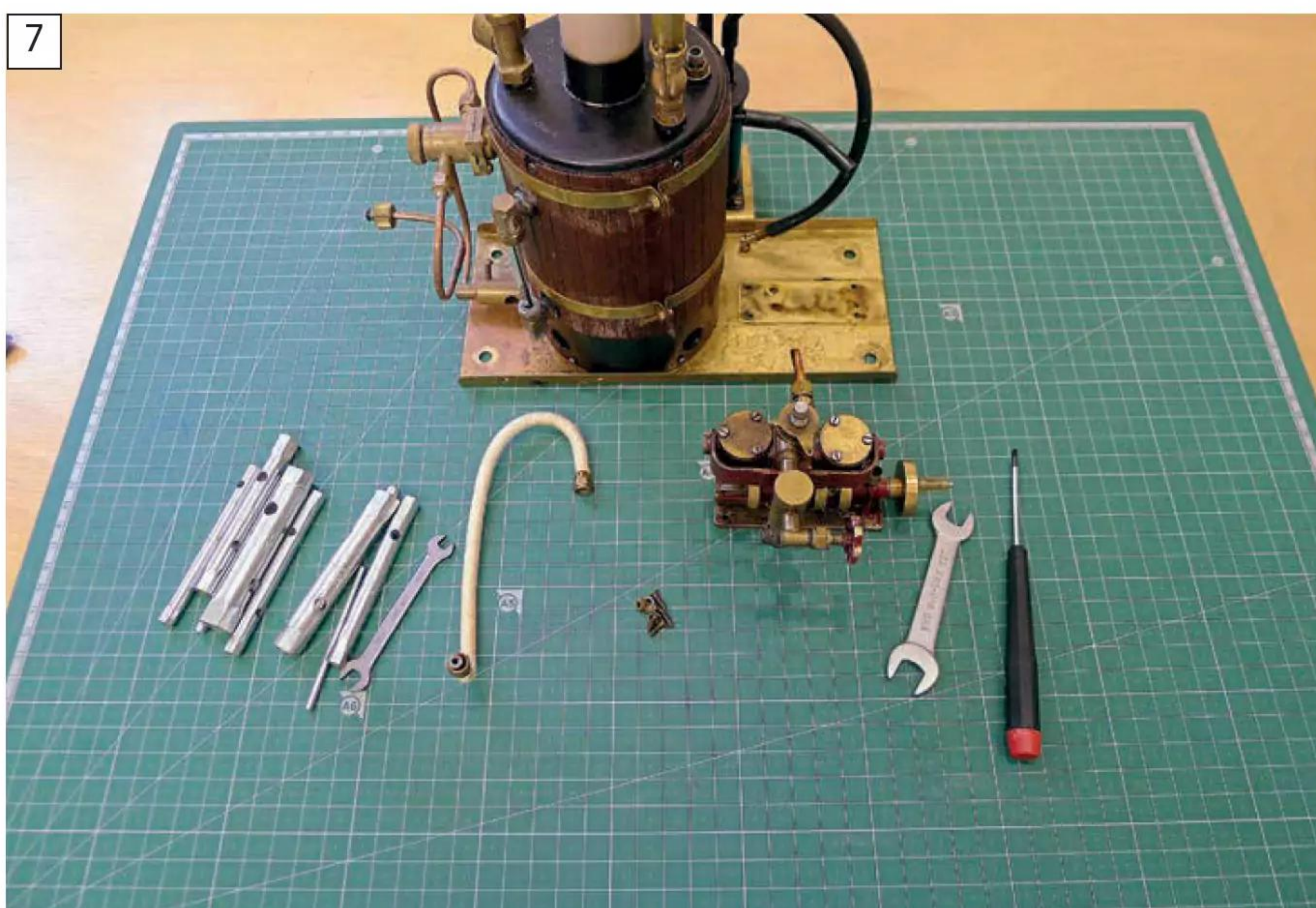
Richard's old faithful test bed, Borkum. He has had this model well over 20 years now and it wasn't new when he bought it, so it has a good few hours under its belt. It is, therefore, an excellent model to try anything new out on, as Richard is so familiar with all aspects of its performance.

6



It only took a couple of minutes to get the complete plant out of Borkum and have it ready on the workbench for a strip down. Before this review, it had been looking a little grubby after a long period sat on the shelf, so Richard used this opportunity to give it a good general clean as well.

7



Only a couple more minutes saw the engine off the baseplate and sat on the workbench as well. Having an open hull and the whole plant on a single base makes life so much easier for maintenance and is why Richard always recommend the arrangement to newcomers.

“Until very recently most of us have used a thick viscous steam cylinder oil to lubricate cylinders, port faces and control valve faces, and a much lighter oil (more like a normal vehicle engine oil) externally to oil bearings, linkages and running faces”

I started looking through the various tools and materials pages and had to make a conscious effort to put the catalogue down.

Morris Lubricants Golden Film Universal Steam Oil

As mentioned back in the October issue, until very recently most of us have used a thick viscous steam cylinder oil to lubricate cylinders, port faces and control valve faces, and a much lighter oil (more like a normal vehicle engine oil) externally to oil bearings, linkages and running faces. This new

8



WD 40 can easily be decanted into a dish so that parts can be soaked in it and washed down with a stiff brush. It makes a great degreaser and general cleaner while at the same time not harming your seals or paintwork.

9



Once clean, everything was simply wiped down with kitchen roll (a lint free rag can also be used). Ports and bearings were also run through with pipe cleaners dipped into the WD 40, before being blown through with an airline.

oil, however, is the result of Heritage Steam Supplies' request to Morris Lubricants to design a single product that can meet all of these requirements. It's only suitable for pressures up to 180 psi/12 bar, which aims it as the smaller, lower pressure end of the market, which is where model engineering sits. The oil has been specifically designed to meet the needs of a cylinder lubricant, in that it adheres to internal surfaces, resists the scouring action of wet steam and prevents the effects of steam temperature reducing viscosity. It's also an oil that can be poured and syringed into oiling cups so that it flows suitably into bearings; this is indicated by its good wicking ability. What's more, the oil doesn't use tallow as a viscosity modifier, as this can be slightly acidic and therefore have a detrimental effect on paintwork and brightwork on a steam engine over time.

A little planning

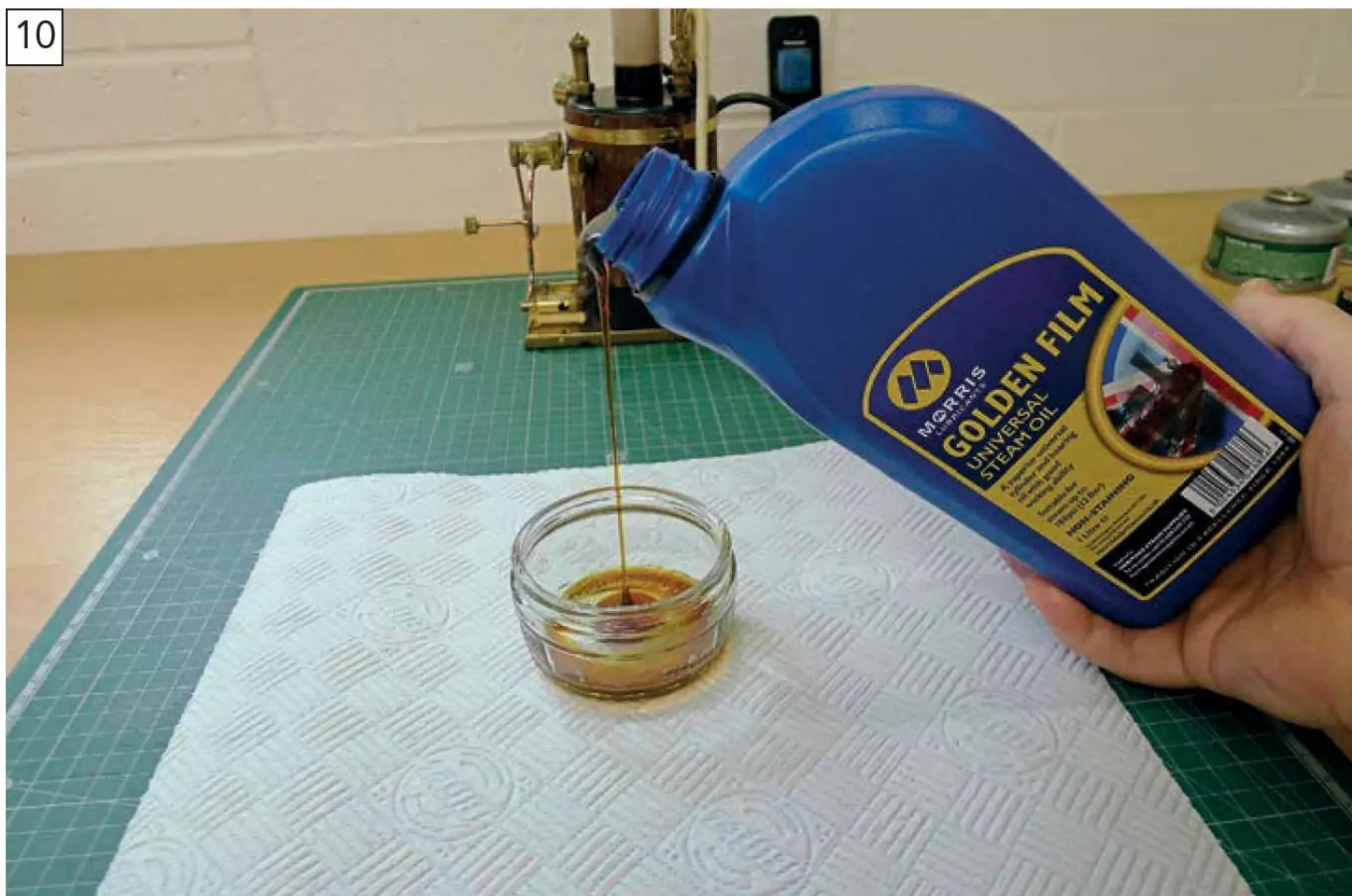
It was at this point I started to realise that objectively evaluating a universal steam oil wasn't going to be entirely straightforward. Comparing the various property statistics would quickly get rather boring and probably not tell us a great deal anyway, so I needed to come up with an operational test in as close to normal conditions as possible.

The obvious test bed was my *Borkum* model, as over the course of its life this has been used to review both alternative boilers and complete steam plant.

It's probably the model I've spent the most hours with, so I'm especially familiar with everything about it.

What I didn't want to do was simply fill the displacement lubricator with Universal Steam Oil, liberally throw it around the engine and give it a run. The best option was a total strip down, clean, degrease and re-oiling of everything with Universal Steam Oil, before giving the engine a trial run on air and then steam.

10



A first look of the new oil. It's slightly more viscous than a vehicle engine oil but it pours easily, so handles so much better than any steam cylinder oil, especially as ISO 1000 oil which tends to be more like treacle at room temperature.

This would enable handling the oil in the same ways I would at pondside and allow me to best judge performance against a well-known standard. *Borkum* was, therefore, brought down from its shelf and taken into the workshop (see **Photo 5**).

The test

Preparing for the tests to be undertaken served as yet another excellent example of why I'm such a keen advocate of open hulled models and steam plant all mounted on a common base. The steam plant in *Borkum*, a Cheddar Puffin plant, was removed in a couple of minutes. All I needed to do was disconnect the engine control servo, which I attach to the horn with a clevis, and unscrew the four wing nuts that secure the base into the bottom of the model. The plant could then be further dismantled very easily on the workbench (see **Photo 6**).

“Preparing for the tests to be undertaken served as yet another excellent example of why I'm such a keen advocate of open hulled models and steam plant all mounted on a common base”

A couple of minutes later the engine was off the base and ready for a strip down (see **Photo 7**). For the cleaning out of all the old lubricants I like to use WD40. It actually works very well as a cleaner; it doesn't harm seals, paintwork or bare metal, and it dissolves lubricants quickly and effectively. So, having decanted some WD40 into a dish, this was applied with a stiff paintbrush and pipe cleaners (see **Photo 8**), before everything was dried off with kitchen roll (see **Photo 9**).



Universal Steam Oil easily paints on with a soft brush and was noted as being nice and sticky on the port faces, bearings and shafts.

It was finally time to closely inspect the Universal Steam Oil itself. So, a small amount was decanted into another dish. It pours freely, with a viscosity that I would say is slightly higher than an average vehicle engine oil, but not by much (see **Photo 10**). When I spoke to Morris Lubricants, I was told the oil was in the region of ISO 360, which seems about what I would expect. Apart from that, there isn't really much else to report from simply looking at it.

I decided the easiest way to apply it while I had the engine apart was to paint it on with a small soft brush, so all relevant surfaces were coated with oil as the reassembly progressed (see **Photo 11**).

One thing I did want to test out was whether it could, with very little effort, be sucked into a syringe so I could take some with me to the pondside in a handy, ready to apply state. I was pleasantly surprised to find it could (see **Photo 12**).

It was then time to see how it behaved in the lubricator, and by pushing gently on the syringe it filled this in a few seconds (see **Photo 13**). When I think of the time I would spend back in the early days trying to get ISO 1000 oil into a lubricator, I can't believe how easy this now is!

With the lubricator topped up and the engine all reassembled, the first thing I wanted to evaluate was the feel as I



Richard frequently keeps oil with him at the pondside in small syringes, so he was interested to see if the Universal Steam oil could be sucked up into a syringe. It could, and so much easier than trying to pour steam cylinder oil into a syringe.

"I know this engine very well and I always expect there to be a little hesitation on starting, but this time there wasn't"

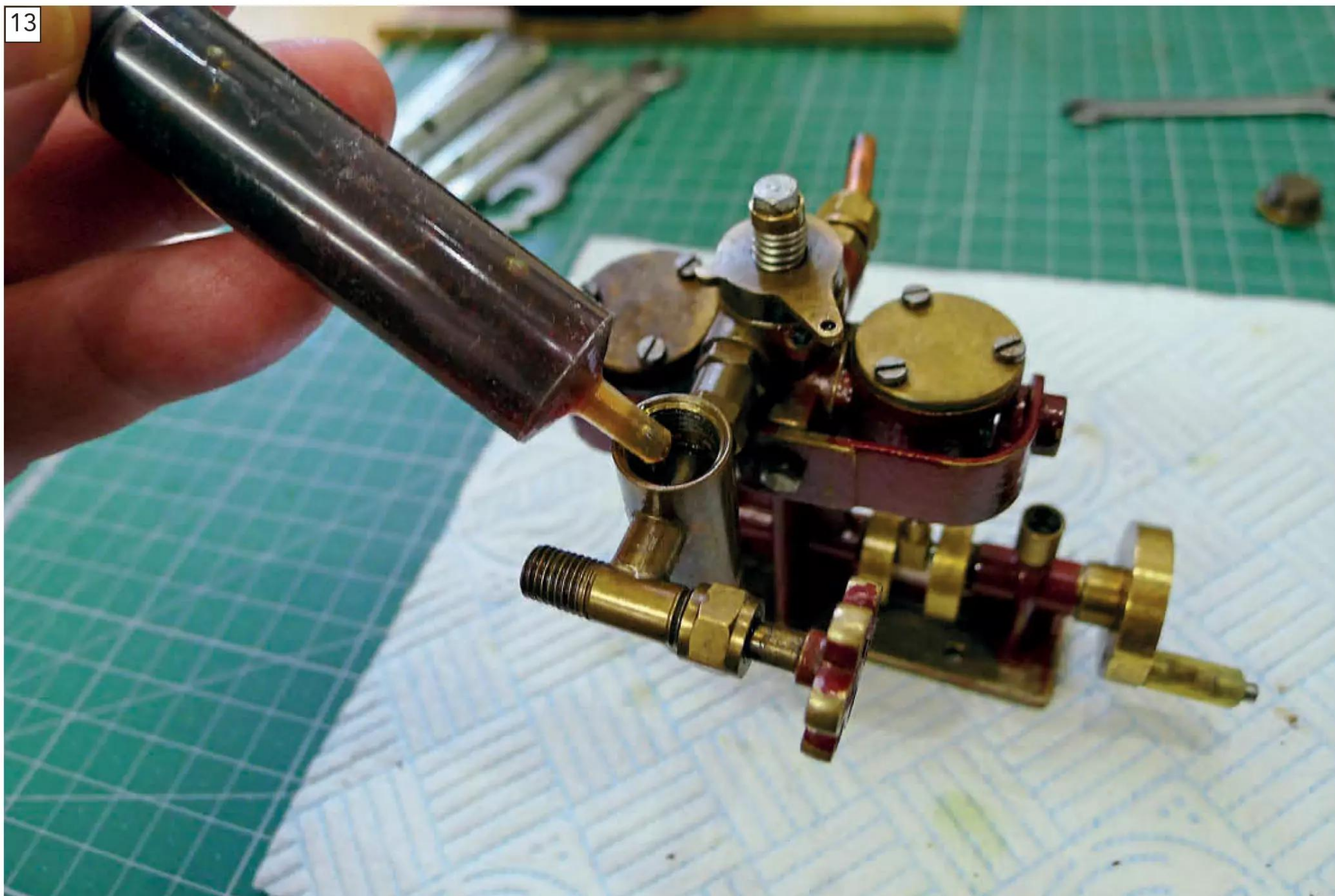
turned the engine by hand. It certainly felt very smooth. One good test of an engine is to put the control valve into a neutral position and try to rotate the engine. Ideally, you shouldn't actually be able to rotate the engine, as all the ports are closed by the control valve, so I was, therefore, very reassured when my engine would not turn over. When I moved the control valve into a running position, however, it then turned over very easily, thereby proving that there was good compression and the cylinders and port faces were all sealed.

Giving it a run

At this stage I carried out a very brief run on air just to check that everything was in working order before replacing the engine on the plant base. After connecting up my airline, I adjusted the pressure down to 20 psi and opened the isolation valve on the engine (see **Photo 14**). On nudging the control valve off its neutral position, I must admit to being quite surprised. I wasn't really expecting to notice anything different at this point, I was just checking that the engine ran OK – but it not only ran, it ran very smoothly and started without any hesitation. I know this engine very well and I always expect there to be a little hesitation on starting, but this time there wasn't. It ran beautifully on very little air. Was this because I'd just cleaned everything up and re-oiled every surface? Or was it because the universal oil was making the engine run that bit better? Difficult to say at the moment, but I was surprised.

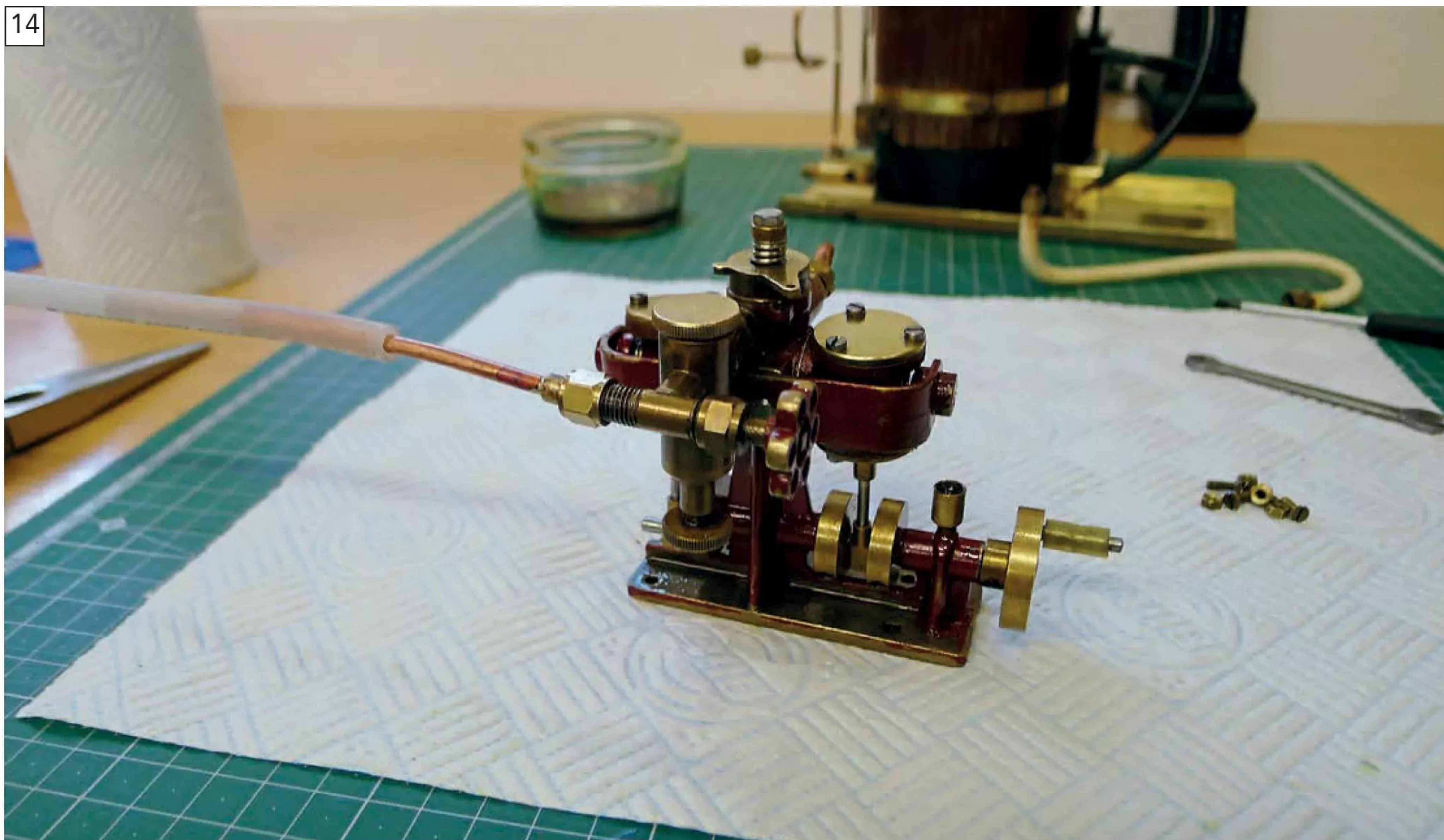
After that, the engine was replaced onto the plant base, reconnected up and made ready for a run on steam. As soon as I had 20psi on the boiler pressure gauge I opened up the isolating valve and tapped the control valve off the neutral position. Again, the engine started immediately and ran noticeably smoother than I was used to. I ran the engine at a good speed with only 20 psi on the gauge for around 10 minutes, not noticing any leaks from the cylinder port faces or the control valve port faces. I then stopped it and allowed everything to cool down. I then tried the compression test again and found that the engine was still tight with the control valve in the neutral position but turned over smoothly when it was moved into a running position. I also checked the lubricator and discovered that the oil in it had gone through (see **Photo 15**).

13



Richard found this the easiest product he has ever used in terms of filling up a displacement lubricator. The Universal Steam Oil was effortlessly pushed out of the syringe, travelled down the side of the internal steam pipe and filled the lubricator in just a few seconds.

14



A run on air proved surprising, with no stickiness or hesitation from the engine. It ran beautifully smoothly with very little air pressure and could be reduced to a very slow speed.

15



Finally, a run on steam, and the engine performed just as well as it did on air. Smooth and responsive, it ran perfectly well on only 20 psi of steam and, Richard reports, better than it ever had done previously.

Conclusions

It's difficult after just a quick run on steam to evaluate the performance of an oil used on an engine. What I can say at this point, though, is that the oil handles perfectly well as an external oil and is easy to use in a displacement lubricator.

"I think the idea of combining the properties of the two oil types to make a single universal oil is an excellent idea, and the oil certainly seems to match the expectations I had for it... I'm sure that many reading this will be looking for the catch and expecting it to be the price, assuming that is why I haven't mentioned it yet. Well, ..."

I think the idea of combining the properties of the two oil types to make a single universal oil is an excellent idea, and the oil certainly seems to match the expectations I had for it. The engine runs beautifully smoothly, starts easily and runs incredibly slowly when the steam is turned right down – always a good sign that things are OK.

As a final test I frequently use a syringe with a fine needle fitted to make external lubrication that bit more convenient and accurate. After sucking the universal steam oil into the syringe without the nozzle fitted, I then fitted the nozzle and tried to lubricate the external surfaces. It required a bit of

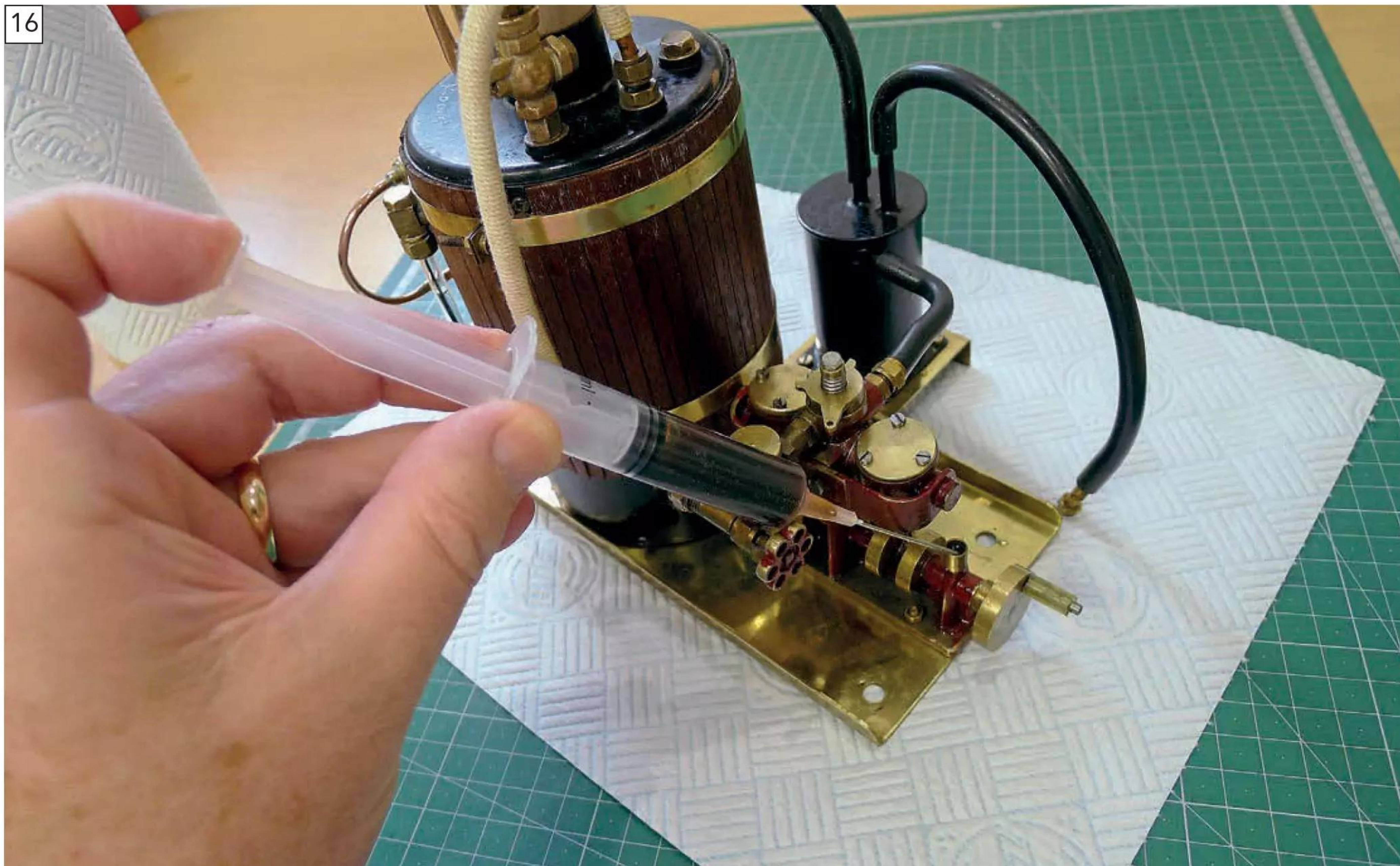
effort, but it did work (see **Photo 16**).

My intention now is to give the engine a much fuller run on the pond at my club's next open day, when I hope to be able to put *Borkum* on the water several times throughout the day.

I am, however, already so positive about this universal oil I will have no hesitation about using it for more of my models.

Finally, I'm sure that many reading this will be looking for the catch and expecting it to be the price, assuming that is why I haven't mentioned it yet. Well, there is no catch; a 1-litre bottle of Morris Lubricants Golden Film Universal Steam Oil from Heritage Steam Supplies is currently priced at £8.02, and one bottle will likely last the majority of model steam boaters a good number of years. The 5-litre bottle is £30.69. The only catch, if it can be called that, is that, because it's an oil, it has to be shipped by carrier, and the carriage charge for the 1-litre bottle, as it weighs over 1kg, was £15, making the total £26 inc VAT. I'm sure that shipping costs can be reduced by one or two modellers getting together and sharing the shipping. Having said that, the catalogue is well worth having and many suppliers would be selling such a volume for a substantial sum as well. ●

16



Richard ran a quick final test to see if he could still use the nozzle on his syringe and was pleased to find he could. This did require a bit of pressure, but the oil could be very accurately placed exactly where he wanted it.

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

Thornycroft torpedo boat ('2nd class') design

Seeing the feature on HMS *Lightning* in your October issue, one was reminded of another Thornycroft torpedo boat ('2nd class') design, reportedly built in limited numbers, also around 1875.

I came across some plans offered on the Internet, built the model and trialled her at Wicksteed Park some years ago.

The photos I am sharing show the design having certain features in common with *Lightning* (conning tower, funnel) but some significant differences too (bow and stern hull shape, torpedo tube arrangement and cabin superstructure).

The design originally incorporated a spar torpedo but later had two Whitehead torpedoes fitted. A small number of such boats were bought

by New Zealand, but the design proved remarkably unsuccessful in use. Somewhere in the ether, there is a sketch of a conning tower, upside down in a pasture, in use as a cattle drinking trough!

CHRIS GILL
EMAIL

What a slick job you've done on this first class '2nd class', Chris! Ed.



Chris Gill's striking scratch build of a Thornycroft torpedo boat ('2nd class').



River Styx Ferry

I thought I would send a few pics of my latest boat. It started off, a couple of months ago, as a harbour launch but has ended up as a Halloween project. I will be taking it out on Halloween night for a cruise with all the lights on. Should be fun.

JOHN GIBBS
EMAIL

Love this, and I bet all the local kids will, too! Tricky, but if you're able to take some on the water night shots, I'd love to see them. Ed



The River Styx Ferry conjured up by John Gibbs.

Far less spendy super yacht

Me, again – probably your reader with the shortest arms and longest pockets! A friend of mine recently mentioned me that his wife had asked him (OK, told him!) to clean up the garden and especially his shed and that he was about to take a whole carload of wood and timber to the local tip. Well, I was in there like a lion after his dinner!

In amongst this haul was six sheets of plywood. I used one to make a stairgate to prevent our little granddaughter attempting the climb, that leaving me with five sheets for modelling purposes. After pondering a few ideas, along came my next edition of Model Boats, which included plans for the Lysander. This, I thought, I would give a go, but, like so many modellers, I'll often start a project only for it to morph into something completely different! So, I ended up with the yacht in the photos I am sending you.

The hardest thing was finding someone to sew the edges of the sails for me. Fortunately, our local tailoring shop seamstress tackled these. First time she had ever done sails! Then came the keel, which I discovered would be very costly, so I made my own, using a

length of pipe which I filled with Meccano nuts and bolts. I made everything else with things I had lying around in the shed, building line, draught tape, etc.

All in all, my yacht has cost me around £30, and I must say she sails far better than I dared hope. Another great example of how you really don't need to spend a fortune to thoroughly enjoy this hobby!

TERRY FARROW
EMAIL



I am always so impressed with your champagne taste, lemonade money builds, Terry. Who'd have thought a lovely model like this could be had for such a modest outlay – clearly, where there's a skill there's a way! Ed.

Alligator

I am sharing some pictures of one of my more unusual models, which I based on the oldest known surviving example of a Russel Brothers' Alligator.

Alligator tugs were a type of amphibious vehicle used in the logging industry throughout Ontario, and various other parts of Canada and the US from the mid-19th century to the early part of the 20th century. They were so named because of their ability to travel between lakes by pulling themselves with a winch across land. Serving as 'warping tugs', they could tow log booms across lakes

and then portage themselves using a winch to the next body of water. This versatility made them the pioneers of forestry mechanisation.

The old vet I based my model on was once employed by the T.S. Woollings' mill near Connaught in Ontario, Canada. Subsequently discovered derelict on the shore in the 21st century, a controversial battle about its restoration then ensued (you can read more about this online by keying the following link <https://russelbrothers.com/images/martenriverpark/1collectionindex.html> or simply typing Russel Brothers Alligator into your browser.

Naturally, there were no plans for this model, and I only had photographs to work from. It has had a flotation test and is buoyant, but I haven't made it 'seaworthy'. It is instead currently displayed in transit (see photo).

LORENZ SCHMUKI
SWITZERLAND

What an interesting subject choice and, likewise, method of display, Lorenz. As my brain tends to be wired like a human jukebox, I've now got one of my favourite David Bowie opening lines (from the track Moonage Daydream) playing on loop in my head!
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**

Hot tip and Night Glow

In the free plan build guide for Spooky (see the November issue of Model Boats), Mr Goodyear gives a very good description of how to cast the keel bulb and includes some important tips on Health & Safety issues. One crucial precaution he omitted to mention, however, is that you need to ensure the previously wetted mould is absolutely dry before hot molten lead is poured into it. If not, any moisture will be instantly turned into steam, which, seeking to escape, could, potentially, explode the mould or send a jet of steam and hot lead heading the pourer's way. I am no expert in casting, but I suspect/hope you will get further advice from them what knows!

While writing, I am sending you some pics of Night Glow at the Warminster Model Boat Club – an annual event where we dress our boats with lights for the last Thursday evening sail of the season before the clocks go back, the nights draw in, and we revert to afternoon meets again until late spring.

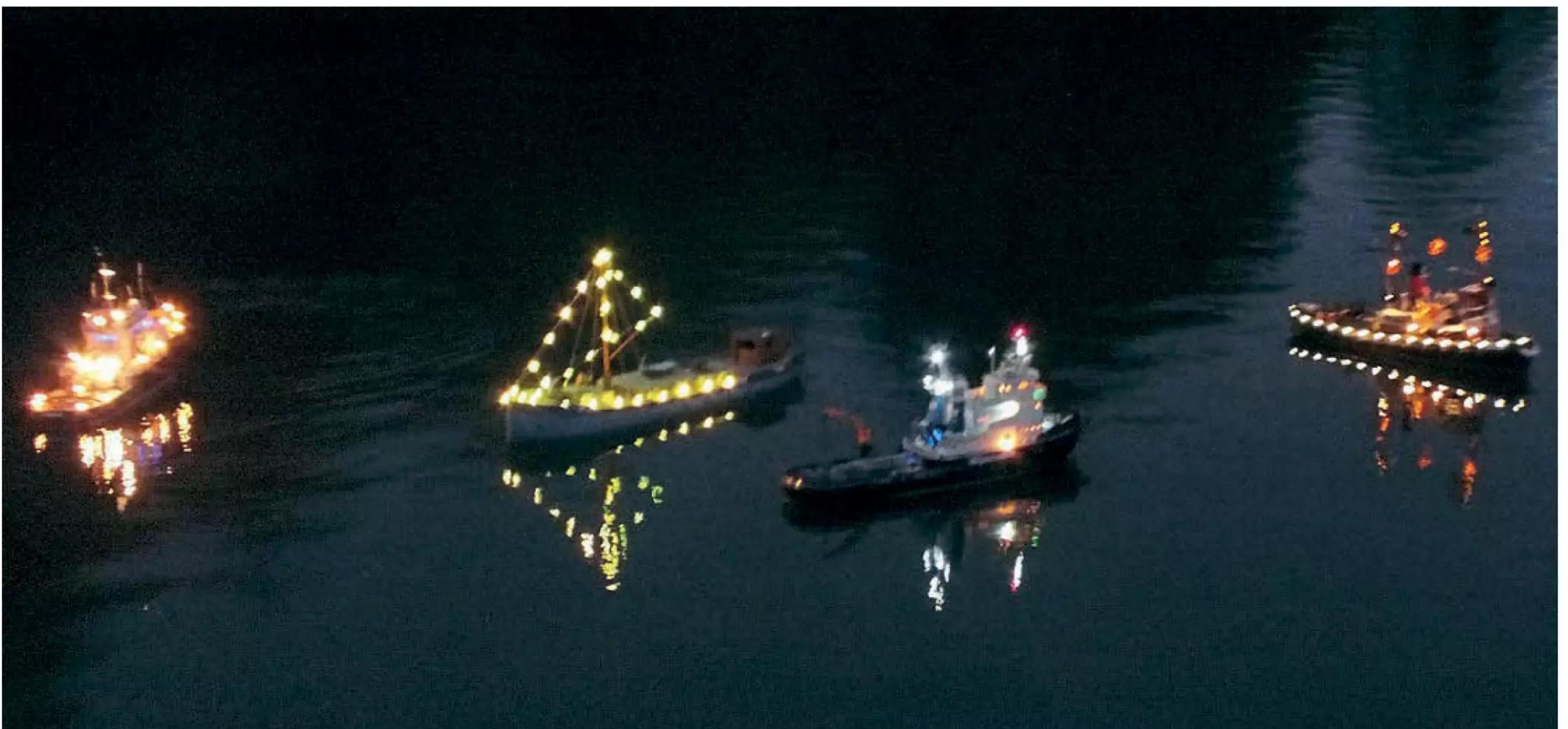
Unfortunately, this year the good old British weather on October 23 scuppered my plans to sail RNLB *Solomon Browne*. I arrived at 5.30pm hoping the rain would, as the forecast had suggested, stop, but an hour later nine of us were still sat huddled together in the unheated boat-house store uttering dry weather incantations under our breath, all to no avail. So, in the end, we decided to pull stumps. Frustratingly, while shopping for vittles in a local supermarket on my way home, the rain finally stopped. Too late – “*Bother!*”, or words to that effect.

The following day, however, I got the usual sailing report email from the Committee, which revealed

that five members, obviously made of sterner stuff than I, had hung on and managed to get afloat. Another series of bothers, but congratulations to them.

Sadly, photography usually results in a series of brilliant worms wriggling across a dark void, but hopefully you will get the gist from the photos shared.

MIKE PAYNE
WARMINSTER MBC

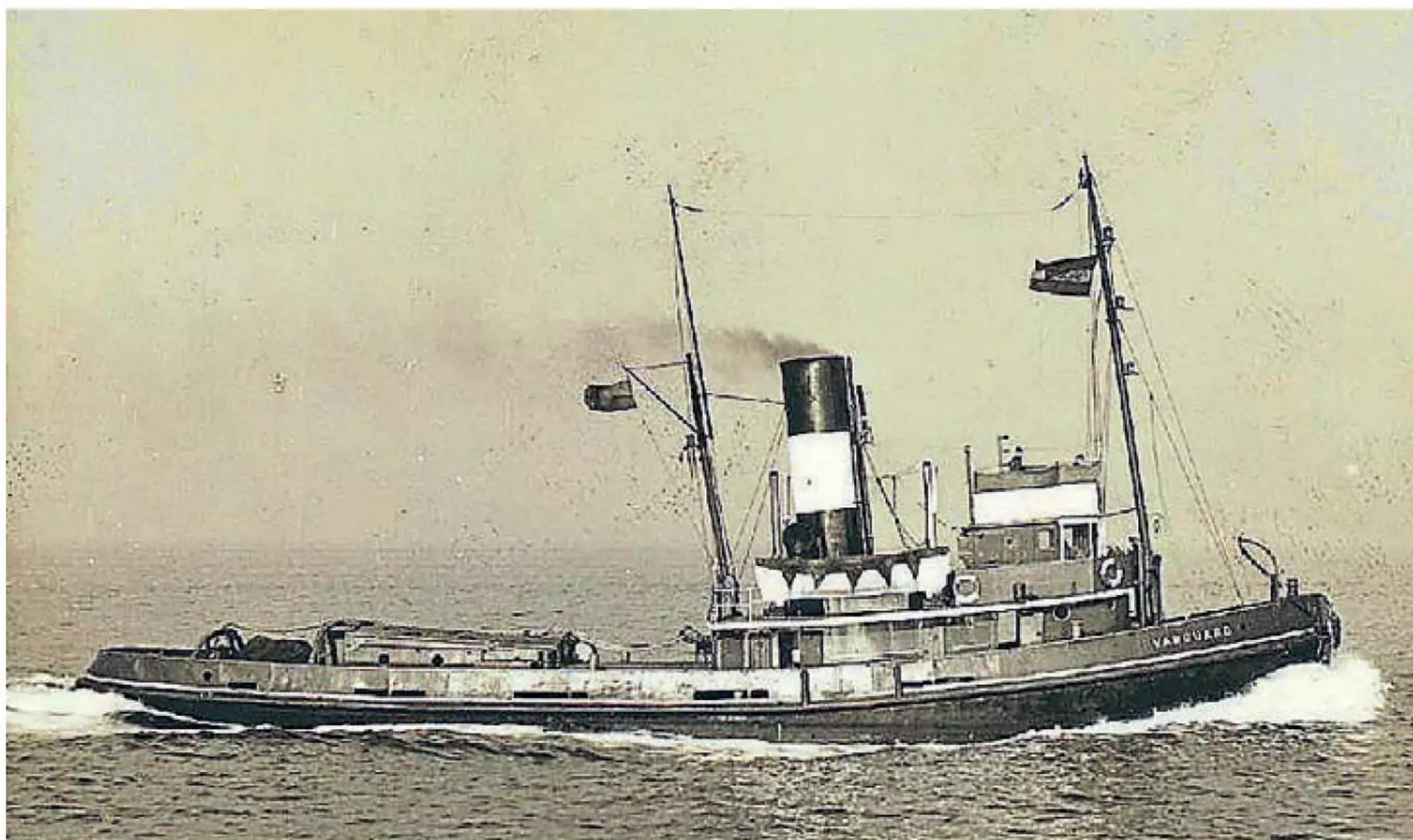


Vanguard

I was interested in Elaine McFarland's excellent model of tug *Vanguard* and thought she, and other readers, might like to see a couple of photos from my own personal archive. The first (shown left) is one I took of the original full-size vessel, while the other shows a second diesel-propelled tug of the same name on the Clyde, this having been launched as Yard No. 401 by builders James Lamont & Co. Ltd of Port Glasgow on February 26, 1964.

JIM POTTINGER
EMAIL

Thank you so much, Jim. It's always a pleasure to be able to share your lovely, atmospheric photography. Ed.



For your viewing pleasure

As I sail with your correspondent Dave Wooley, every week, at New Brighton lake, I thought your readers might be interested to know that I video most of our sailing sessions for the Wallasey Model Boat Club and they can all be found on YouTube. There's over 120 to date!

Many of these videos include the boats that he writes about in the magazine, including two of the CB90s recently featured, his landing craft and many others. So, for those who'd like to see Dave's boats in action as well as in static pictures, the links to my videos are as follows:

- <https://youtube/tFQtGUQ9qJc>. Landing Craft
- https://youtube/341uwr9UY_U. Landing Craft - 13 mins in
- <https://youtube/pilWA5DTRy8>. Landing Craft - 4 mins in
- <https://youtube/Hx2aSUz7hKs>. CB90 - 4 mins in
- https://youtube/B_ejf9_8rSE. CB90 - 11 mins 15 sec in.

Also, the playlist for all the Wallasey Model Boat Societies videos can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLL64bSv_5Ne5C8pVjody4QwI0thOqOeDB. Or just search YouTube for me: iansimpson@thescalemodelshed



IAN SIMPSON
EMAIL

What a great resource! Thank you so much, Ian. Ed.

North West Ship Show

Shared are some photos I shot at this year's North West Ship Show in Liverpool on Saturday, September 27. The event is hosted annually by the World Ship Society at the deconsecrated Christ Church at Seaforth, a rather fitting venue as it's in the shadow of the mighty Liverpool One Container Port. While well supported by model clubs within the region (meaning there are lots of superb builds to inspect and admire), this is not strictly a model show. On other stands, visitors can also browse some fascinating marine memorabilia, books, posters, photographs, etc.

DAVE WOOLEY
EMAIL

Thanks so much for this little taster, Dave. It's such a shame the organisers didn't get in touch so we could flag this event up in advance and enable more readers living within striking to get along and enjoy what looked to be a great show. Hopefully, next year.

I am now looking forward to featuring your reports from the 2025 Blackpool Model Show and Scale Model World events in next month's issue. Ed.



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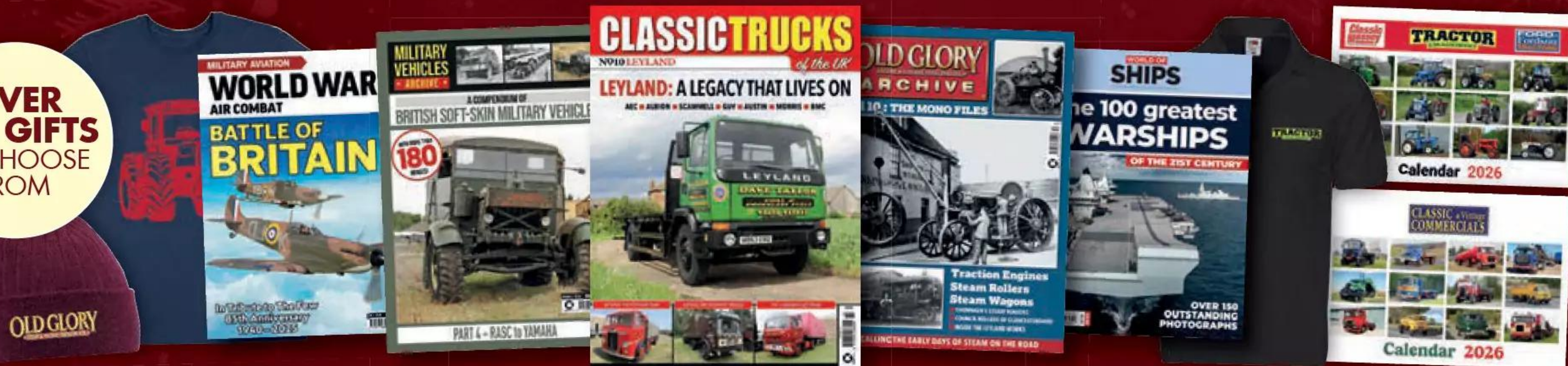
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You can, of course, order your copy of the January 2026 issue, which goes on sale at all good newsagents from Friday, December 19, 2025, now, but why not treat yourself to an annual subscription, as monthly copies will then be delivered directly to your door.

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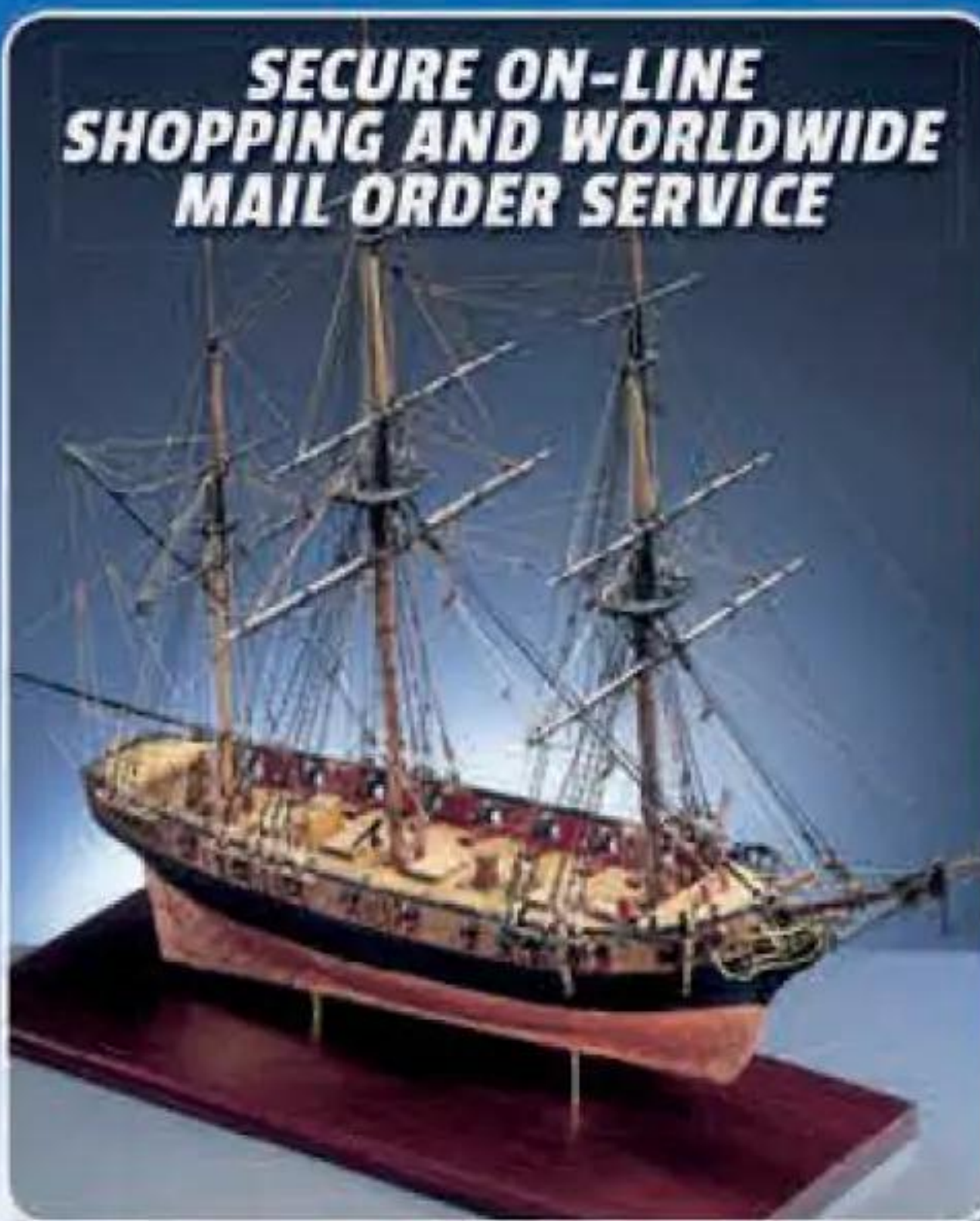
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