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August 2026
Vol. 76 No. 909

model Boats

**A ferry built
for war**

**A fascinating TF3
father & son project**



Nordkap

**A North Sea trawler
kit worth netting**



**Bournville MBC
Warships Day**

**A 4-page action packed
photo report**



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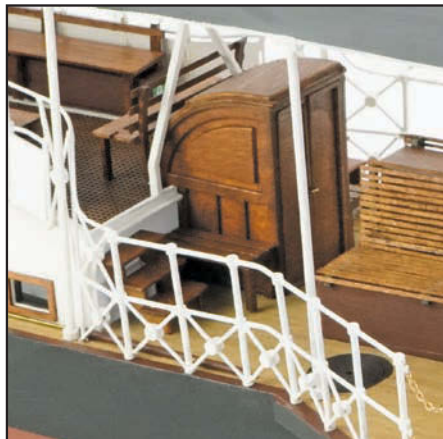
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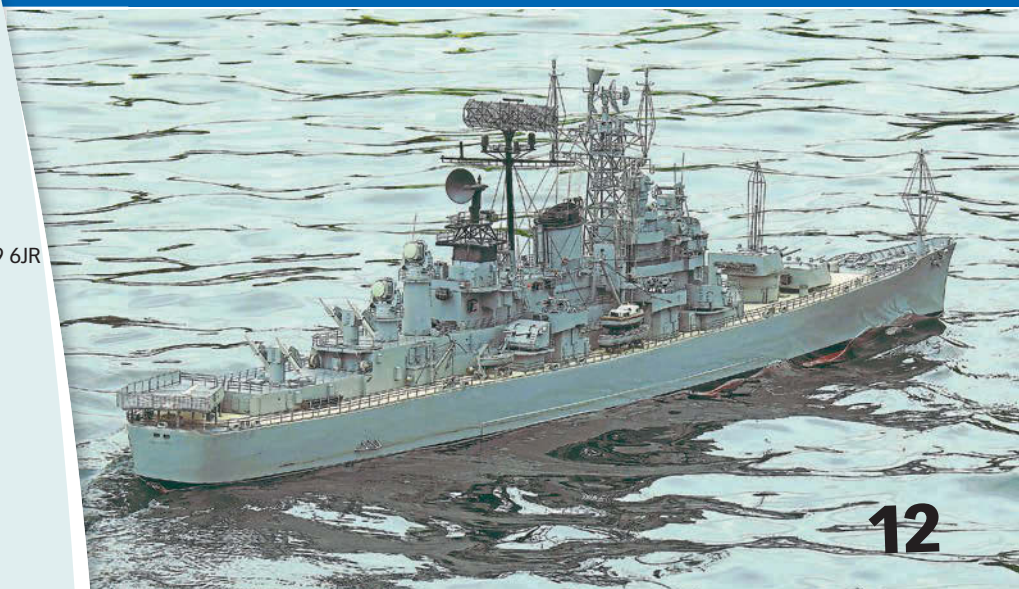
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When you have finished with
this magazine please recycle it.



12

contents

8 Compass 360

This month's hobby-related news
round-up

12 Warships at Bournville

Dave Wooley reports back from
this year's event

18 Going cold

Tomasz Klyszynski tackles
Billing Boats' 1:50 scale kit for
the North Sea trawler *Nordkap*

26 When the boat comes in...

Monika Cybulska serves up fresh
ideas for improving your catch

30 Taking a Liberty

Doug Neilson turns Trumpeter's
1:350 scale kit for the Jeremiah
O'Brien into a little R/C triumph

36 Vicksund

Nev Wade recounts how, while oth-
ers may have considered building a
working Baltic 'onker' barquentine
from scratch a 'tilting at windmills'
type project, his friend, the late Ken
Horton, threw caution to the wind...

42 Save money with a subscription!

Check out the latest print and
digital deals and get your favourite
magazine for less



18



44 TF3: a ferry built for war
Nick Brown details a fascinating father and son project

56 The Emile Robin
Brian Knight runs us through the build of Billing Boats' 1:33 scale kit for this Danish salvage/rescue boat

62 ModelU's new crew
Richard Simpson reviews the latest 3D-printed RNLI figures

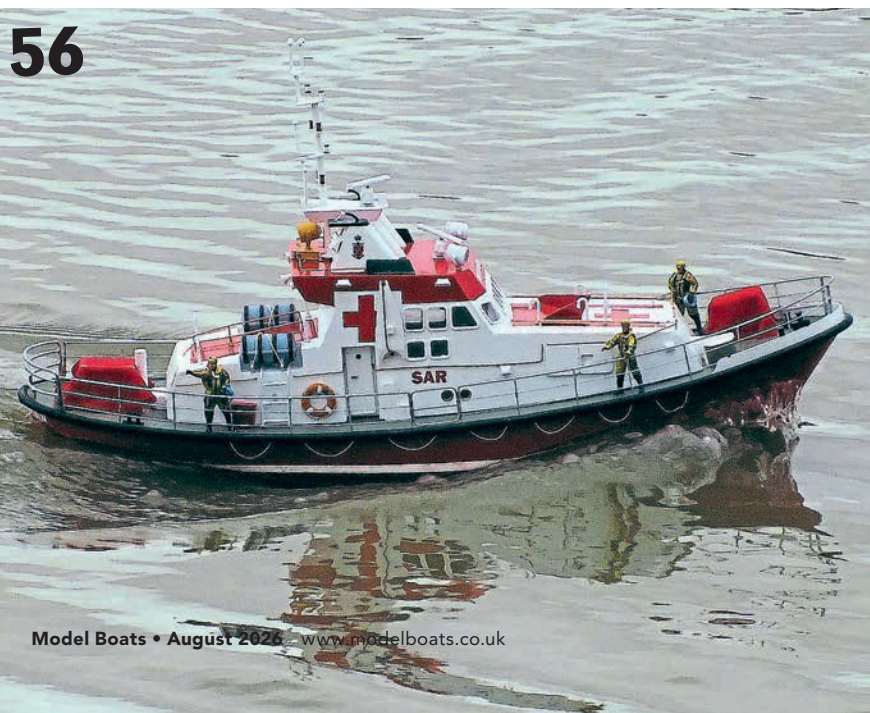
66 Flotsam & Jetsam: DIY SFX
Listen up! John Parker is about to divulge how you can create a customisable sound module for your model boat

70 Boiler Room
Richard Simpson explains how to set up an attenuator value



76 Your Models/Your Letters
More brilliant builds and hobby-related correspondence from your fellow readers

82 Next month...
Just three of the reasons why you won't want to miss the September 2026 issue of Model Boats



WELCOME TO THE AUGUST 2026 ISSUE OF MODEL BOATS

You may have seen recent news reports regarding the planned closure of a number of T.G. Jones (formerly W.H. Smith) outlets. At present, it remains unclear which stores will be affected, so, in order to access future issues of Model Boats should your local branch cease trading, we recommend considering one of the following options:

- Subscribe (see pages 42-43) and enjoy considerable savings and reliable delivery
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In the next issue, cover dated September but on sale from Friday, August 21, as well lots more great content, there'll be another free pull-out plan and accompanying build guide, so don't miss it!

In the meantime, on the pages ahead you'll find everything from news (including lots of upcoming club open days and events), reviews, a photo-led report from the Bournville MBC Warship Day, a diverse selection of thematic features and 'how to' articles, and some fascinating correspondence from your fellow readers.

So, enjoy your read!

Lindsey

Model Boats is a friendly, inclusive, hobbyist magazine that caters to everyone from the complete novice to the seasoned vet, aboard. As well as including a FREE pull-out every other issue, we report on the hobby's off beats, with content embracing everything from scale radio-controlled model boats to radio-controlled combustion engine powered and steam-driven working models. From model sailing yachts to fast motorboats, we've got it covered.

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Editor

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If you have a news story for these pages, please contact the Editor, Lindsey Amrani, via e-mail at editor@modelboats.co.uk

Runcorn Heath Park Lake campaign

Runcorn & District Scale Model Boats and local residents are petitioning Halton Borough Council as water levels in the lake at Runcorn Heath Park continue to fall.

Larry Richard, Acting Secretary of Runcorn & District Scale Model Boats tells us: "We have been using the Runcorn Heath Park Lake on and off since the 1940s in one form or another. Historically, water depth (approx. 30-36 inches) has never been issue, as for well over 30 years the group has always been allowed to regulate the levels with the feeder pipe. Two years ago, however, the Water Board, while looking for a leak, turned off the only main water supply and now refuses to turn it back on for 'environmental reasons'; the only real issue is it does not have a non-return valve.

"We have estimated that the lake should hold 660,000 litres of water. It is currently losing depth at about an inch every week. The council claims the land drains will keep it topped up, but the land drains haven't worked for as long as any of us can remember.

"In 2025 the lake completely drained, council claiming it was the hot weather, yet another pond about four miles away was not affected. The Council denies there is any leakage; we know that not to be the case.

"The water level rose over winter to



Runcorn & District Model Boats members and local residents gathered around the lake the at a protest held in 2025.

16 inches just from rain falling directly into the lake area but the depth at the point from which we measure was by mid-June only about 7 inches.

"We are fortunate in that we are surrounded by about five other clubs within reasonable travelling distance who have kindly offered us the use of their boating lakes. But, for the second year running, by the end of

July its doubtful we will be able to sail any boats on our home water."

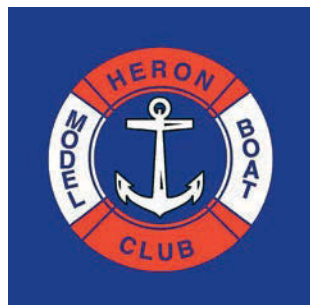
While it's lovely to learn that other local clubs are offering their support, we wish the Runcorn & District Scale Model Boats all the best in its campaign to get this matter resolved and sincerely hope to be able bring you a more positive update in the near future.



In summer 2025 the lake completely drained. Rainfall during winter saw the water level rise to 15-inches, but as the depth is now falling so rapidly concerns are that by July it will run dry again.

OUT AND ABOUT

Heron MBC (Herne Bay) Regatta



The Heron Model Boat Club will (weather permitting) be holding its annual regatta in Herne Bay Memorial Park (located on King's Road, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 5RE) from 10am to 4pm on Sunday, August 2.

Admission will be free of charge, and, as well

as watching all the on water displays being put on by Heron MBC and visiting club members, there will be numerous other family friendly attractions and activities to enjoy within in the park.

The Cwmbran Modelling Society Summer Open Day



From 10am to 5pm on Sunday, August 9, 2026, the Cwmbran Modelling Society will be holding its annual Summer Open Day at the beautiful Cwmbran Boating Lake in Llanyravon, Wales.

CSM is looking forward to hosting its friends from other societies, and, as well as all the model boats that will be statically displayed and sailed, there will also be R/C car and tank demonstrations for visitors to enjoy.

Admission to this family event will be free of charge, with facilities at the park including the Boathouse Café, public toilets and free parking at the main Boating Lake car park located off Llanfrehfra Way, NP44 8JE, with disabled spaces and electric charging points available; there is also an overspill car park adjoining the main car park if required.

Rawdon MBC Open Day

On Sunday, August 15, between 10am and 4pm, the Rawdon Model Boat Club will be holding an Open Day at its home sailing ground, located at Larkfield Tarn, Larkfield Road, Rawdon LS19 6EQ.

As well as the on water displays, there will be boats for sale, a raffle and refreshments to purchase in the club house. Plus, Rawdon MBC members will be on hand to assist anyone wishing to try their hand at sailing one of the club's 'have a go' model boats.

For further details/updates, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/373739359852934/>?locale=en_GB

The Solent Radio Control MBC Show

Scheduled for Saturday, August 29, from 10am to 3pm, at the (fully wheelchair accessible) Milford-on-Sea Community Centre, 9 Sea Road, Milford-on-Sea, Lymington SO41 0PH, is the Solent Radio Control Model Club (https://srcmbc.org.uk/) Show. Admission will be free of charge and visitors will be able to not only view some fantastic models, including

warships, tugs, square-rigged sailing ships, yachts, etc, but also chat with their makers. The event is being sponsored by Wightlink Ferries, and representatives from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight will also be in attendance, with profits raised from the sale of raffle tickets, refreshments, etc, (donations will also be gratefully received) going to this very worthy charity.



Model Boat Show

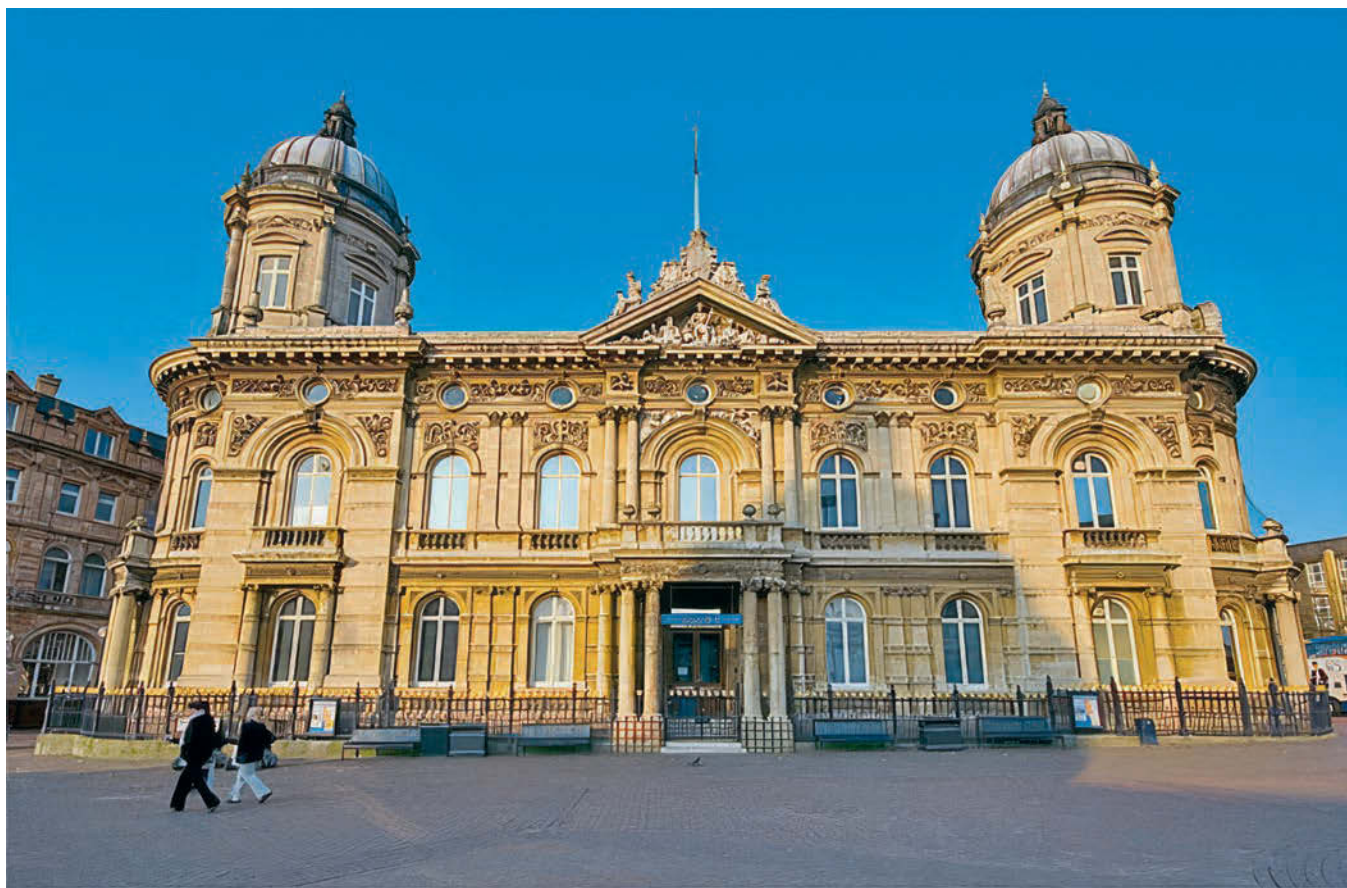
Saturday 29th August
10am - 3pm **Free Entry!**

Milford-on-Sea Community Centre
Sea Road, Milford-on-Sea, SO41 0PH

Refreshments Available



Worth going to Hull for!



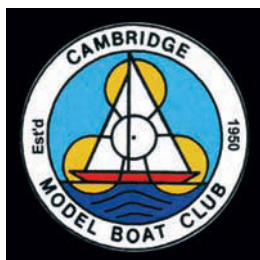
Saturday, August 8, 2026 has been announced as the date the Hull Maritime Museum will once again open its doors, after a 20.4 million pound transformation that has doubled its public display space and restored its Victorian architectural grandeur. And with environment condition control, designed to national museum standards, now installed, the museum will also be able to host major loans and touring exhibitions going forward.

Admission to the museum, located in Queen Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX, will be free of charge, and, as from August 8, opening hours will be as follows:

- Monday-Saturday: 10am-4:30pm
- Sundays: 11am-4pm

Visitors will also be able to enjoy the new cafe adjacent to the redesigned atrium.

You're invited to a BBQ!



The Cambridge Model Boat Club will be holding its annual club BBQ at Paxton Lake, PE19 6EB, on July 25, 2026, and from 10am to 5pm you will be very welcome to join members for some fun, food and a spot of sailing; you can either take along your own boat (although, please note, no IC powered boats can be accommodated) or try out one of the club's own. Both parking and food will be free of charge and the club's

onsite facilities include both ladies and gents toilets.

For more info and/or directions, visit <https://www.cambridgemodelboatclub.co.uk/>

The Lowestoft Maritime Festival

The Lowestoft Maritime Festival will take place on Saturday, August 29, 2026, from 10am to 4pm, along the historic South Pier and South Quay in Lowestoft (NR33 0AE).

Admission will be free of charge, but donations will be gratefully accepted as this will be a fundraising event in support of both the local branch of the RNLI and the ongoing restoration/preservation *three vessels considered an important part of Lowestoft's heritage and identity. Visitors will have the chance to both chat

with RNLI members about their work and step aboard *the *Lydia Eve*, *Mincarlo* and *Excelsior* and learn more about their history from Excelsior Trust and Lydia Eva & Mincarlo Charitable Trust volunteers.

Other attractions will include live music, including sea shanties, various family friendly activities, nautical-themed stalls, and food and drink from local vendors. Boat trips will also be available throughout the day from the South Pier.



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The picturesque lake at Bournville once formed part of the Cadbury family's estate.

The 2026 Bournville Model Warship Day

Dave Wooley reports back...

On June 14, 2025, for the third year running, I attended the annual Model Warship Day held by the Bournville Model Boat Club in the charming little town of Bournville in Birmingham. Before sharing some photos of the magnificent models being sailed on the park's beautiful,

kidney-shaped lake that day, I must first congratulate all those who worked so hard to make this such a well-organised event; I should stress, however, organised but not regimented, as visitors were welcome to sail their own models alongside those of club members for as long as

they wished – the only orchestrated activity being an all models clockwise sail around the lake as a grand finale – which really was quite a spectacular sight, and, amazingly, didn't involve a single accident!

I am already looking forward to next year's event! ●



The two levels of oars on this early Roman galley, kitted out and crewed as if ready for the Battle of Actium, have been mechanically co-ordinated. Can you imagine how physically taxing it would have been for the unlucky so-and-sos doing the rowing!



Another, almost as ancient, warship out on the lake was this large-scale medieval cog, complete with a full complement of archers in each of its fore and aft castles.



A thrilling display of the kind of speed typifying Thornycroft's CMBs (Coastal Motor Boats).



Excellent facilities in the clubhouse, plenty of parking close to the water, loads of great models on display and the opportunity to socialise with like-minded modellers made Bournville MBC's Model Warship Day a great out day for all.



A large scale MGB 91 with its builder ahead of being put into action on the water.



Motor Torpedo Boats displayed their teeth in more ways than one at Bournville.



HMS Bloodhound, one-off torpedo boat with an amidships mounted single torpedo tube giving a wide arc of fire.



An LST complete with functioning Sherman tank onboard.



The superbly crafted 1:35 scale RAF RTTL (Range Target Towing Launch) scratch built by John Lingwood.



A beautifully captured Fairey Huntress, as used by the Royal Navy in the early 1960s aboard such vessels as the County Class missile destroyers.



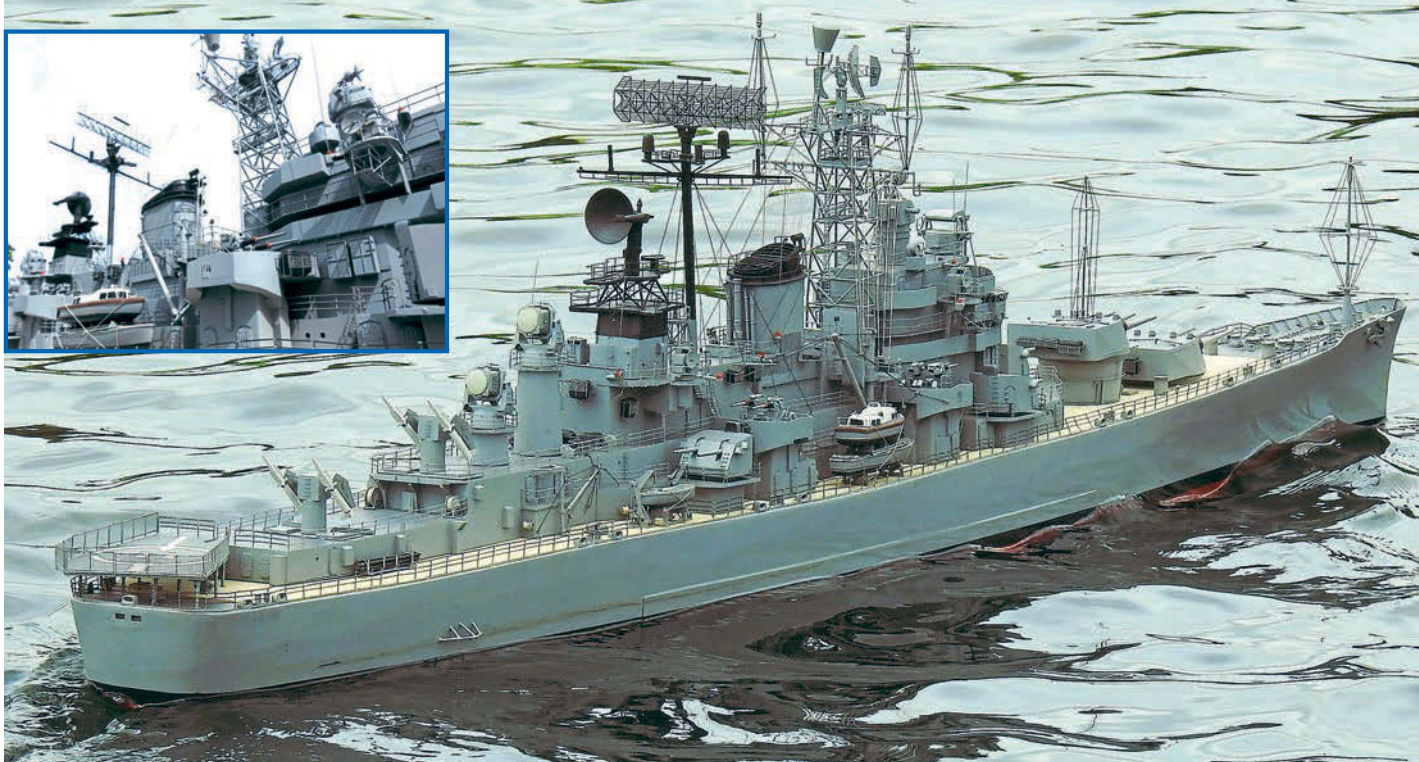
An MTB 101 model cutting through the water at full power.



A United States Navy World War II MTB in full flow, sporting its distinctive camouflage scheme.



One of the more unusual amphibious fighting vehicles.



The astonishingly detailed 1:96 scale model of the heavy cruiser USS Canberra by Paul Blyth.



Down from the Wirral was Dave Thomas with his large-scale Soviet Tarantul IV missile patrol craft.



Another superbly detailed MTB: Simon Cairn's MTB 794 model.



No warship event would be complete without a Flower class Corvette .



A stern shot of a World War II German Kriegsfischkutter; these little craft were active in just about every naval theatre of operation.

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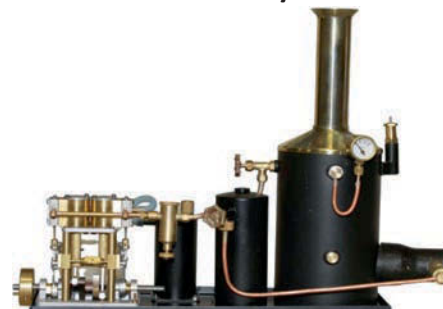
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Going cold

Tomasz Klysznski takes us fishing...

When summer first came knocking at the door here in Europe, I found myself hard at work on a boat that served in much more chilly conditions, and one which, in my imagination at least, smelt of fish: *Nordkap*.

Billing Boats' 1:50 scale kit for this typical North Sea trawler, built in 1970 in an English shipyard, is based on the original drawings for the vessel. The resulting model measures 81cm in length, so a fair amount of workspace is required for its construction and finish. Billings categorises its wooden kits into four distinct skill levels (Beginner, Advanced Beginner, Intermediate and Experienced/Expert), with this one falling into the Intermediate category, meaning it's best suited to those who already have a few successful builds under their belt. So, is *Nordkap* right for you? Well, let's take a look...

Kit inspection

Along with precise laser-cut parts of various thicknesses and a wide variety of deck fittings you'll find a fully illustrated instruction manual and a large drawing of the whole vessel for reference purposes.

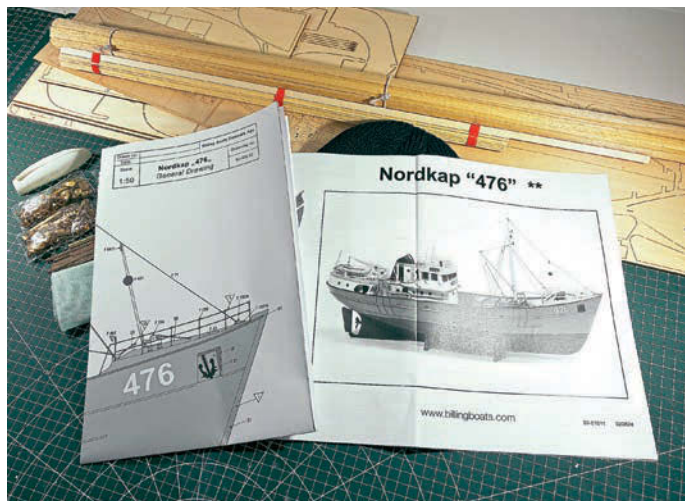
The frames for the hull are 4 mm thick to ensure a good rigid starting point, while the strips supplied for planking the hull and creating the deck (for which strips are of a 0.7mm thickness) are sufficient to cover the boat from bow to stern.

As well as the wooden parts, a lot of good quality metal components/elements are included. For example, all the railings are made of brass, which really enhances the appearance of the model, even if you decide to paint them (as always, I chose to leave mine in their natural colour). Likewise, the radars, antennas, block and parts of the winches are also supplied as brass fittings.

Some components are made of plastic, such as those for the construction of the lifeboat crane and the lifeboat itself. These simply need to be popped out from vacuum-formed sheets.

And last, but not least, the name of the boat and its hull number are supplied as easy to apply film-backed stickers.

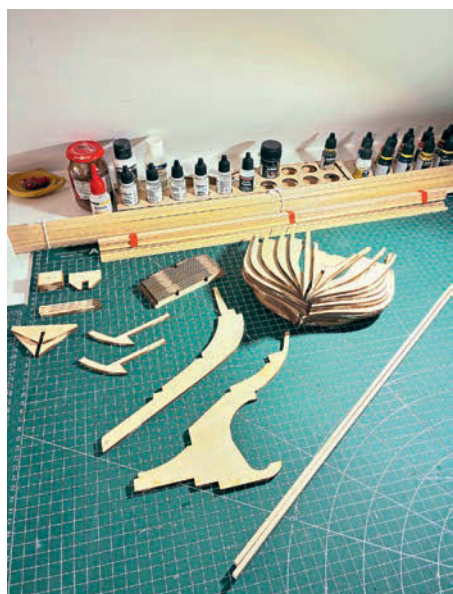
I built my model from the special 'Polar Edition' of this kit, meaning that a net and a catch of 3D-printed fish with which to fill the boat's fish crates were included. There was also another very welcome bonus item included, more on which later...



Contents of the kit.



The extras found in the Polar Edition version of the kit: a net, fish and buoys.



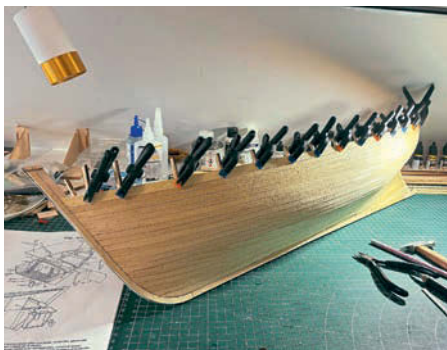
The parts for building the frame.



The frames in place.



Making a start on planking Nordkap's hull. The entire hull will be filled later, but to make work faster and easier, pins can temporarily be used to secure your planks in place.



With hull planking complete, the bulwark strips can be fixed in place,



The hull prepared for filler primer.

The build

After the initial preparation of the parts, you can start building the frames. You may, of course, only be building the model as a display piece only, but if you are planning on actually putting it on the water then this is the point at which you'll need to consider where all the gear is going to go. A propeller, rudder and

shaft suitable for R/C operation are included.

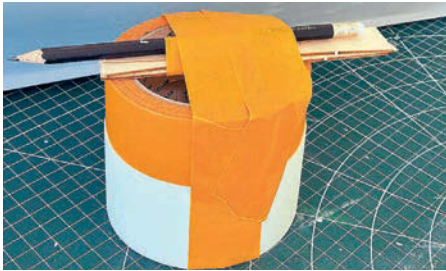
When fitting the keel, you will need to position it on your worksurface at a 90-degree angle to the frame. The kit includes pieces which, when used correctly, will help you achieve this angle. Using these pieces will also make fitting the keel easier by raising the front of the boat a little while

the back remains in contact with the worksurface.

After a few more reinforcements in the form of strips and crosspieces have been made, you can then slowly start planking the hull. Gluing in the framework for the deck ahead of this will stiffen the whole structure nicely and eliminate any movement of the frames while you are working. Before



The filler primer sanded smooth.



Tomasz's DIY tool for marking the waterline.



The rubbing strips and anchor opening.



Planking the deck, using string between the planks for better definition.



The finished deck.



The first coat of colour.

fitting, check each individual plank against the frame to ascertain if any sanding to its edges will be required to achieve the correct angle, and, likewise, where a slight increase in gluing surface may be required to ensure it sits firmly in position. Where there is any curvature to the hull, some of the planks may need soaking in water to make them a bit more pliable ahead of fitting.

Before gluing down the planks that sit above the deck, I highly recommend sanding them until they're nice and smooth, especially on the inside. Later, working between the frames will make this job more difficult, and the result will not be as good as if tackled earlier.

This done, it's time to move on to the dirty work, i.e., lots of filling and sanding until the desired result is achieved. I used

"Before gluing down the planks that sit above the deck, I highly recommend sanding them until they're nice and smooth, especially on the inside. Later, working between the frames will make this job more difficult, and the result will not be as good as tackled earlier"

automotive filler, which also strengthens the gaps, and thanks to its good adhesion to the surface, sanding even a thin layer is not a problem.

The deck on this model is something worth spending a little time on. The



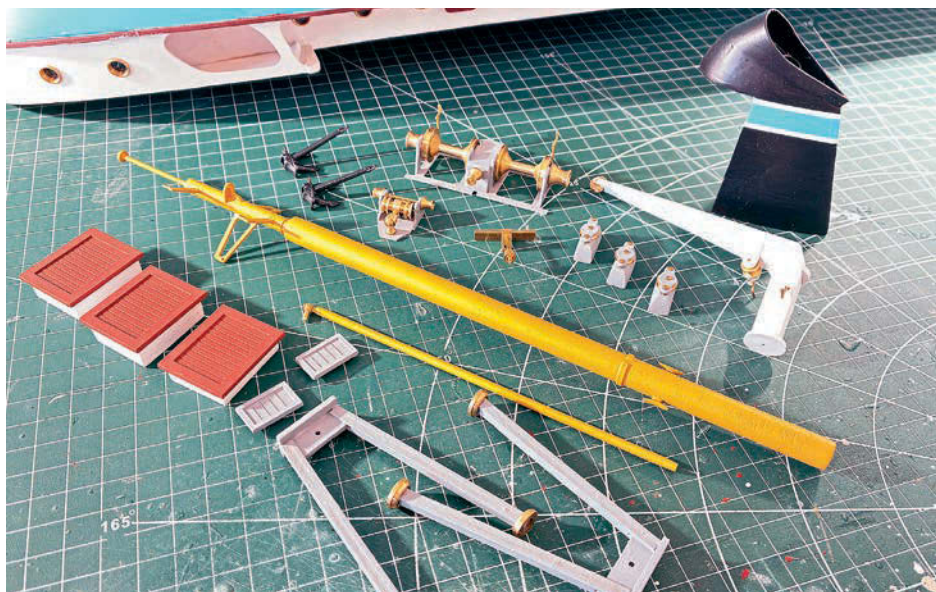
Construction of the main cabin in progress.



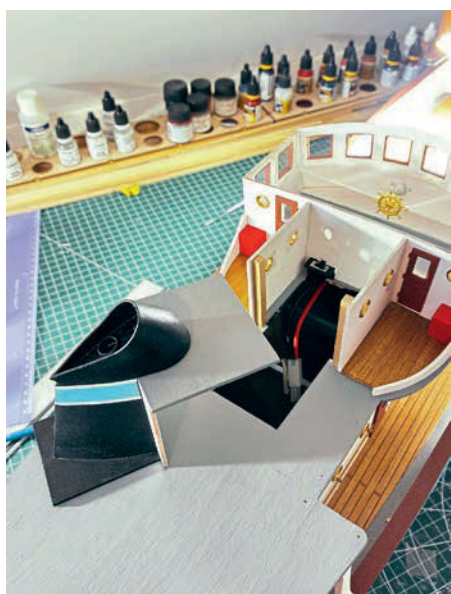
Assembling the wheelhouse.



The deck fittings laid out ready for assembly/fitting.



The mast, funnel, winch mechanisms, removable hatches, etc, assembled and laid out ready for fitting.



The removable section featuring the funnel behind the wheelhouse, provides access to the R/C gear and batteries within the hull.



“Personally, I prefer the second option. Why? Well...”

insertion of string between individual planks creates a very realistic look and adds a real wow factor. The string supplied by the manufacturer is white, but it's easy enough to dye to a darker colour of your choice. I went for dark brown.

I then painted the entire deck with Billing Boats 026 Oak Stain, before applying a finishing coat of Light Oak varnish so that the deck was both coloured and sealed. Oh, and by the way, to avoid spoiling all your hard work, it is worth masking off/covering your deck before you start painting the hull.

Painting the hull

The other thing to consider before you start painting is how you deal with the rubbing strakes to the hull's exterior. You can either paint the hull and the wooden strips separately first before gluing the strips on, or you can glue the strips prior to painting the hull. Personally, I prefer the second option. Why? Well, firstly, because you are not gluing directly onto paint (the glue will adhere much better to the primer already applied), and, secondly, because if you paint the hull after gluing the strips on you will be sealing any tiny gaps between the two against water ingress.

Once you've marked the waterline (I use my own DIY tool for this – as illustrated) you can start applying colours, firstly below the waterline while the hull is inverted and subsequently, by turning the hull the right way up again, above it. The scheme suggested by the manufacturer is very attractive, but, of course, you could go pink, or cover it with rainbows and unicorns – because who's going to stop you? I'd suggest gluing the two differently colour strips on once your paint is dry.



The front of the fully assembled and finished wheelhouse (now adorned with the boat's name: a sticker for this is supplied within the kit and a coat of clear varnish will help protect it against any contact with water), with one of the full assembled and finished winches installed to the fore.

The superstructure and detailing

With hull and deck finished, it's time to construct the cabins and add the deck fittings — and there are quite a lot of them (to keep myself busy, I prepared the winches, crane, lifeboat, etc, while waiting for the glue applied to the cabin walls to fully cure).

Once the cabins are built and the glazing to their windows fitted from within, you can attend to the portholes, doors and railings.

It's at this point, however, that if building a working model, you will need to think about which parts of the superstructure need to be kept removable so that you have access to the motor, servo and receiver, and to where your batteries will sit.

You will also need to conduct a trial float to check the trim against the waterline, remembering to place (at least temporarily) all the items that need to be accommodated on the superstructure, so that the amount of ballast required can be established. (I had to pour about 700g of ballast, steel granulate intended for filling sports equipment, into the bottom of my hull — and the hatches were all kept removable just in case some fine adjustment was going to be required on completion).

After checking what's happening on the water, you can then continue finishing and detailing the cabins.

The wheelhouse, by the way, is large enough to feature some interior lighting courtesy of a few small LEDs. However, if you do intend to add lighting, its set up really should be planned for, along with all the placement of your R/C equipment, much earlier on in the project to allow for



Nordkap's bow section with railings, anchor winch and breakwater

any necessary deviations/modifications to the build. On my model, the R/C components and battery (which sits on the upper part of one of the frames within the hull — it's worth remembering that the lower you can create the centre of gravity, the better) are accessed via the removable cabin section featuring the funnel. Secured in place by railings which slot into holes drilled in the deck, the whole unit can be easily lifted out as and when necessary.

The brass railings throughout all need to be bent to shape and either glued or soldered together. When soldering, overheating of the metal parts must be avoided to prevent discolouration or, worse still, damage to the wooden elements on which the railings rest; the paint, too, will be sensitive to temperature. Due to shape of the hull's bow, trial fitting the railing there before final installation is particularly time consuming. Also challenging are the handrails for the ladders, which need to be formed as a single unit.

There's quite a lot going on aboard Nordkap and we have now reached the stage at which the trawler is really given its working character, and the point at which you will have to decide whether to model the mechanised equipment in resting harbour or operational position.

Also, if planning on sailing the model, then your anchor and the fishing nets probably need to be hung over the side of the boat, and if you're intending to make your winches functional it's advisable to leave unpainted.

As previously mentioned, the Nordkap name is supplied in sticker form, ready to be emblazoned across the front of the wheelhouse. After affixing this, I recommend applying a clear varnish over the sticker to prevent it from loosening/peeling off if it comes into frequent contact with water.



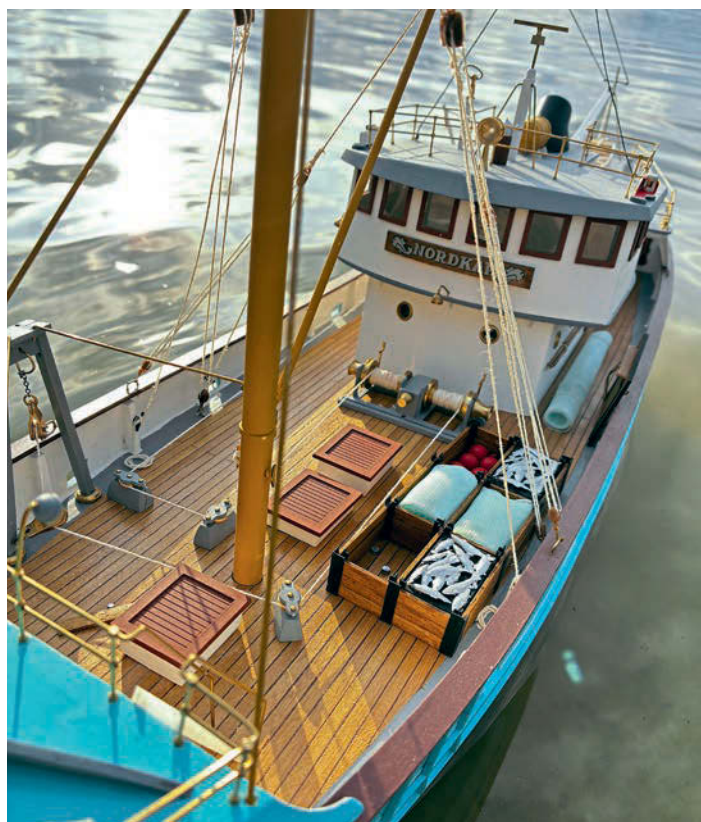
The bow rigged and complete with the main lifeboat and its winch installed.



The finished mast and rigging.

In the stern section of Nordkap there's a large main lifeboat and its davit to fit. Likewise, there's a mast-antenna, which you will need to build from bass wire, to install at the bow; make sure you construct this nice and solidly so that the lines attached to it can be tensioned. Gluing/soldering these lines down can be left to the very end of build.

Once you've completed most of the deck fittings, you can erect the mast, which you may want to first consider extending it so that it rests on the keel. This isn't strictly necessary if you only intend to put the model on static display, but for R/C use it's worth doing for sake of structural durability — for example, during transportation. Then, of course, comes rigging the mast. The blocks for this are supplied as ready-made brown plastic parts, some of which need to be attached to the mast



elements with chain. There are also several lights and brackets to be fitted.

After fitting this fixed rigging, you can then move on to the fishing gear. You will need to decide where to locate this. However, as the majority of it can be moved, this does allow for any modifications and/or additions to be made at a later stage if you so wish.

The fish crates, which on my model also serve as storage for additional gear, need to be constructed

individually from strip wood included in the kit. Before building these crates, make sure they are large enough to accommodate the fishes in your particular 'catch'.

This is a rewarding kit to building and you can have so much fun in the creation of onboard scenarios. 1:48 scale figures will work well for this model, so you can either take a look at what's available in ready-made form or perhaps consider a 3D-printed crew.

Wanna get ahead? Get a...

At the start of this article I mentioned that the 'Polar Edition' kit for Nordkap (named for the Nordkapp region— a dramatic high cliff plateau in northern Norway that plunges directly into the Arctic Ocean) comes with a bonus item; a snug beanie hat to ensure we will not freeze, either while building or sailing this model – a very welcome addition indeed (or at least, it will be once the weather starts to turn colder again!). ●



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Whether built purely as a display piece or as a working model to get out on the water, Nordkap will prove a highly rewarding project.

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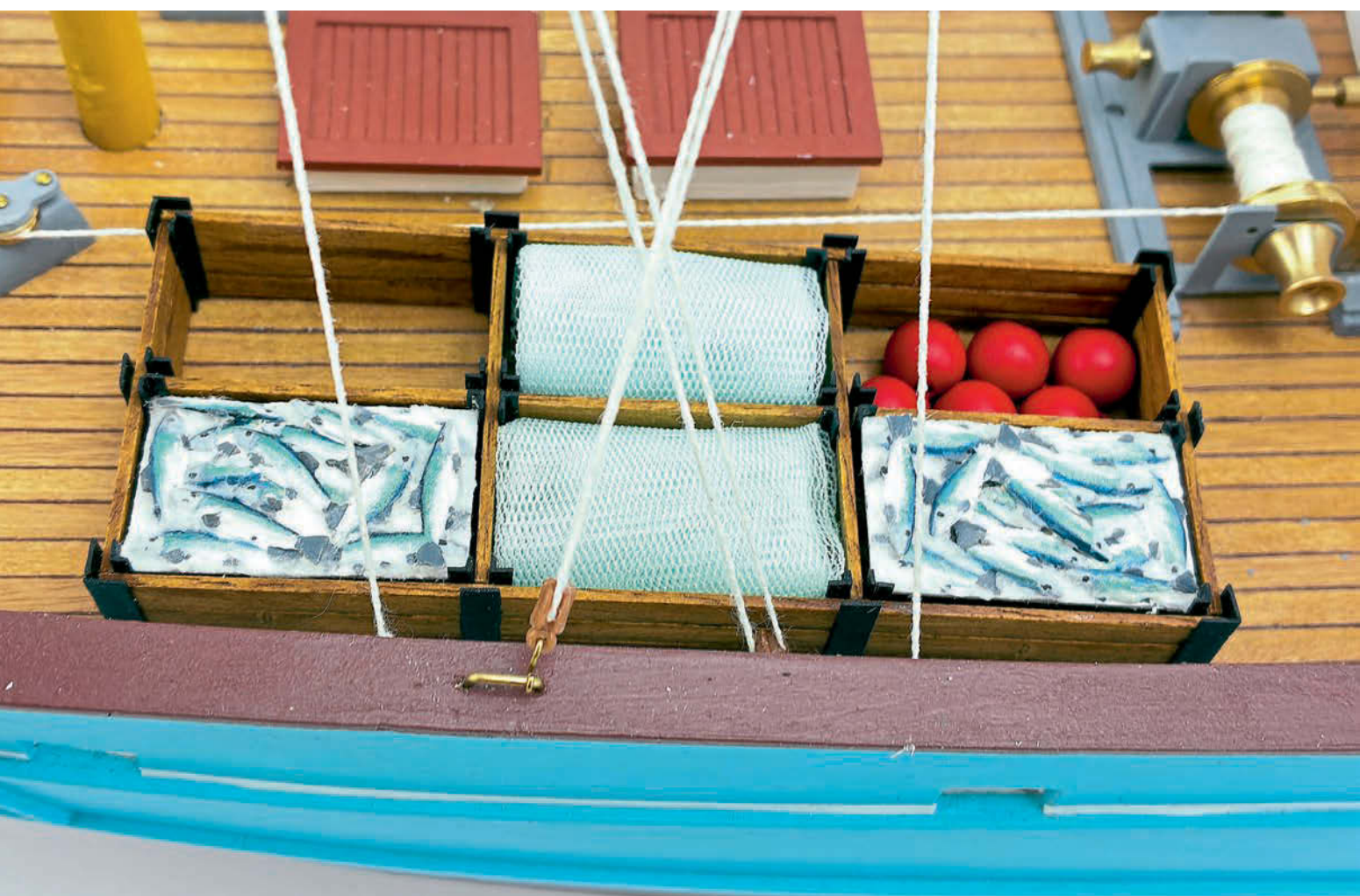


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Putting the perfect finishing touch to Nordkap

When the boat comes in...

Modeller's wife **Monika Cybulska** reveals why *she's* such a catch!

There are days when you wake up convinced the world is a wonderful place. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and – miracle of miracles – you've got the afternoon off.

Recently, on just such a day, my plan had been simple: get home from work, unfold the sun lounger in the garden, grab a book, pour myself something cold to drink and spend a blissful few hours doing absolutely nothing apart from

turning pages and occasionally waving away an over enthusiastic mosquito.

So, I got home, powered through the household chores and quietly made my way towards freedom. My hand was already hovering just a few centimetres from the door handle when a voice echoed from the place affectionately known as 'The Modeller's Cave': "*Could you please paint something for me?*". "*Oh, with pleasure*". Honestly, my lifelong dream is to glue his lips shut!

Just like that, my vision of a peaceful afternoon evaporated.

With a theatrical sigh, I trudged upstairs, wondering what would supposedly take "*just five minutes*" this time.

A raw deal

I wasn't expecting to find crates of 3D-printed fish waiting on the workbench – tiny herrings, mackerel, cod... or whatever they were supposed

to be... all in a scale so small I genuinely considered looking for a magnifying glass.

Then came the magic words – “Just these two.” Modellers have a remarkable talent for abusing the word *just*. In their language, it can mean anything from five minutes to five hours, involve half a dozen artistic techniques and consume at least fifty percent of your remaining patience.

I looked at the microscopic fish, then at my paint brushes, and asked the only sensible question that came to mind: “And what exactly am I supposed to paint them with? One of my eyelashes?”

With another sigh, I went back for the reading glasses I’d left on top of my book and cast one final longing glance at the sun lounger, basking happily in the sunshine without me.

Once I’d set up my workspace, I carefully planned my strategy. I reached one unavoidable conclusion. I needed a third crate of fish. Not because the model required it, simply because I needed somewhere to make mistakes.

Fortunately, painting has one wonderful advantage: if something goes wrong, you can simply paint over it and try again. In theory.

In practice, fish this small don’t really appreciate multiple layers of paint. Every extra coat turns a delicate little herring into something that looks suspiciously like an overfed Christmas carp.

I started with an acrylic undercoat. It brightened up the dull grey print and, more importantly, created a matte surface that would happily accept the layers to follow.

Two crates were set safely aside. The third one – my sacrificial test batch – fell victim to experimentation.

I decided to start with brightly coloured heads. Why not? That’s what test pieces are for.

With every passing minute they became more colourful and somehow less fish-like, but at least I was learning what worked and what didn’t.

Once the experiments were over, I pushed myself away from the bench and attempted to straighten my back. That was the moment I started wondering whether Geppetto had carved me out of wood. My spine produced noises that strongly suggested it had fractured in several places. Then I glanced sideways...

His Lordship was comfortably seated on a luxurious office chair with wheels while his loyal servant was perched on a wooden stool, folded into the shape of a prawn moments away from hitting a frying pan. How on earth had this become my life?



The yet to be painted 3D-printed fishes.



Making headway with Monika’s first, experimental, batch of fish.

When life gives you lemons... serve up some fish!

After restoring my skeleton to something vaguely resembling human anatomy, I returned to work with a far more methodical approach.

First, every fish belly received a coat of white acrylic paint. Then I reached for my secret weapon: glitter watercolours. It sounds ridiculous, but they turned out to be perfect for recreating the subtle shimmer of fish scales.

I mixed a pale beige paint with a beige-silver metallic pigment, creating a delicate sheen that only became visible when the light caught it at the right angle. At this stage I wanted restraint rather than sparkle.

Next came the characteristic colouring. A dark navy stripe ran along the spine, followed by a faint green tint just below it, giving the fish



After being primed with an acrylic undercoat, the fish were given their first layer of paint, creating a matte surface for the layers to follow.



a subtle marine appearance.

Once everything had dried, I added one final layer of glitter watercolour. Moderation is key. In modelling, much like make-up, there’s an incredibly fine line between elegant highlighting and looking as though you’ve been decorated for Christmas.

The fish were finally finished. Proud of my work, I presented them for quality control. His Lordship – still occupying his wheeled throne – inspected them from every conceivable angle. I was fully expecting lavish praise. Perhaps even a simple “Nice job.” One look at his face told me another request was on its way...

“Could you make them look like they’re lying on ice?”

“Of course. And while I’m at it, shall I fry them up and serve them with lemon wedges and parsley?”. At least, that’s what went through my head.



A perch for the loyal deckhand!



After lessons learnt from the first batch, and every fish belly having received a coat of white acrylic paint, glitter watercolours start to be delicately layered on.



The next layer of colours.



Two crates of fish finished – or at least, that's what Monika thought!



Getting even more creative: cosmetic cotton wool pads, Monika realised, could be used to create a layer of ice on which the fish are kept chilled.



The finished fish on ice.

Ice, ice, baby...

Outwardly, I remained the picture of professionalism. Deep inside, however, I was trying not to lose my cool while I tried to figure out how to fool the human eye once again.

After giving the matter much thought, and having reviewed the available materials, I concluded that ordinary cosmetic cotton wool pads would work best. I carefully separated them into thinner layers, teased out tiny tufts of cotton and fixed them between the fish with clear plastic glue — not to create visible texture, but simply to stop everything from wandering off.

Once everything was secured, I gradually applied small amounts of glossy varnish, gently pressing it into the fibres so the cotton soaked it up. This allowed me to sculpt convincing patches of 'ice', fill the empty spaces and create the impression of a damp, freshly chilled surface.

While incredibly simple to achieve, the final effect was surprisingly realistic.

I should admit, though, that after spending several hours painting fish the size of a fingernail, my brain began drifting into very strange territory. At one point I found myself seriously wondering, "Humans can't see air, but we can see water. So, do fish not see water, but see air instead?" Fortunately, nobody answered.

Recipe for success

Looking at the finished fishes, they look pretty cool, even if I say so myself. Combining traditional acrylic paints with glitter watercolours produced a subtle scale-like shimmer, while layered cosmetic cotton pads and glossy varnish created a convincing imitation of crushed ice. It's a simple technique that doesn't require expensive materials yet delivers a remarkably satisfying result.

When the world's your lobster...

When I finally looked out of the window, the sun lounge I'd intended to spend the afternoon on was already damp with evening dew, and the sun had long since disappeared below the horizon.

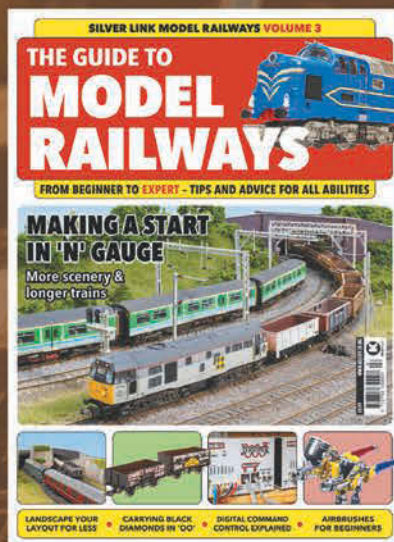
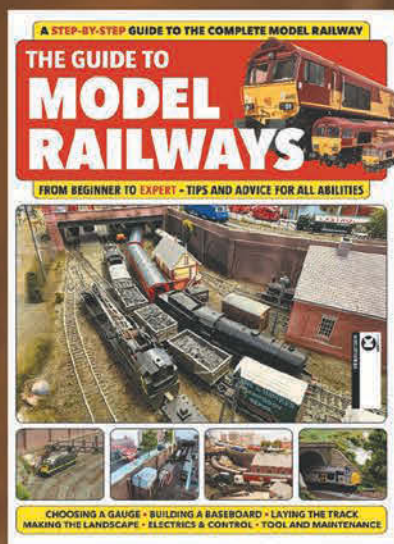
Then, out of the corner of my eye I spotted a set of 3D-printed lobsters sitting on the workbench in exactly the same scale. Thankfully, I managed not to say out loud that I'd quite like to paint those too. But tell me this... How do fish sleep if they don't have eyelids? I'll think about that later. First, I need to regain full control of my spine. Those lobsters aren't going anywhere. ●

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There once was an Ugly Duckling... No, we're not talking about Doug's build but the nickname adopted for Liberty ships such as the Jeremiah O'Brien due to their far from glamorous utilitarian design.

Taking a Liberty

Doug Neilson turns Trumpeter's 1:350 scale kit for the *Jeremiah O'Brien* into a little R/C triumph

About four years ago I finished building and radio controlling the Trumpeter 1:350 HMS *Hood* and was quite pleased by how she turned out. I especially enjoy just how realistically she handles on the water; she manoeuvres on separately controlled port and starboard props pretty much as the real vessel did (as described in the Ship Handling notes available on the excellent HMS Hood Association web site).

So, inspired by this, I set about an attempt to do the same thing to the Trumpeter KMS *Prinz Eugen*, only to discover that the MFA Como 990D motors with the 3:1 gearboxes that have worked so well on several

other 1:350 scale models are no longer available. Indeed, I believe the company has now ceased trading completely.

After a good dig on the internet, however, I came across a company called Pololu in California that was offering a six volt, very small motor with a 5:1 metal gearbox that at least looked hopeful (if a tad expensive) for use in the 1:350 scale ships. I was though, rather wary of the 5:1 ratio gearbox and the rpm that might or might not be available for the tiny props needed at this scale. To this end, I decided to experiment on a simple and quickly assembled test bed needing only one of these motors, for

which purpose the Trumpeter Liberty ship, the *Jeremiah O'Brien* looked well suited (see **Photo 1**).

That was the initial plan, and to my very pleasant surprise the motor/gearbox combo proved ideal when paired with one of the always immaculate Propshop props; in this case the 1/2" $\varnothing$, fine pitch, four-bladed screw. The hub came custom drilled as requested (a service included in the order price). This meant I had an unthreaded plain 1/16" hole in which to superglue the 1/16th inch brass rod prop shaft, running in a well-greased concentric 3/32" (outside diameter) brass tube, as is standard practice for my 'fleet'.



The Trumpeter 1:350 scale plastic kit for the World War II Liberty Ship SS Jeremiah O'Brien.

“What had started out as a quick and easy test bed project rapidly became something I wanted to do ‘properly’”

some very happy memories of a full day on the *Jeremiah O'Brien* herself in San Francisco 40 years ago rapidly took over. Thus, what had started out as a quick and easy test bed project rapidly became something I wanted to do ‘properly’. A year later its almost done (although I suspect that the rigging of this model will never be really DONE).

Kit inspection

Trumpeter's 1:350 scale plastic kit of the *Jeremiah O'Brien* includes a well moulded hull, and all parts are (generally) a good fit. Seemingly an accurate reproduction, there are a few minor irritants; the main one being the absence of any foredeck hawse pipes for the anchor chains, with the bow gun platform pedestal blocking the anchor capstan from any potentially drillable pipe access. I knew this would bother me if not corrected, so a quick bit of filing and filling to reshape the gun platform stand and there are now chains to the anchors. A couple of other small details are missing but for static display the kit goes together nicely.

R/C modifications

There were some snags when it came to R/C'ing the ship though... The front and aft decks are separate pieces, but the amidships deck on which the superstructure sits is moulded to the above-water hull (see **Photo 2**), leaving very poor access to the 'machinery spaces' – you can't ever have too much access! The first and most fraught part of the project, therefore, was to gently cut this centre section away from the hull sides, using a #11 scalpel blade and scoring along the inside deck/hull junction repeatedly, thus separating this centre section of the deck from the hull sides with no significant 'kerf'. This did need a small bit of filling and filing along the top of the hull edges to restore the fit, but it all worked out better than initially hoped.

This then left the now three sections of deck to join into one piece with some plasticard underneath. The resulting full-length deck, however, proved to

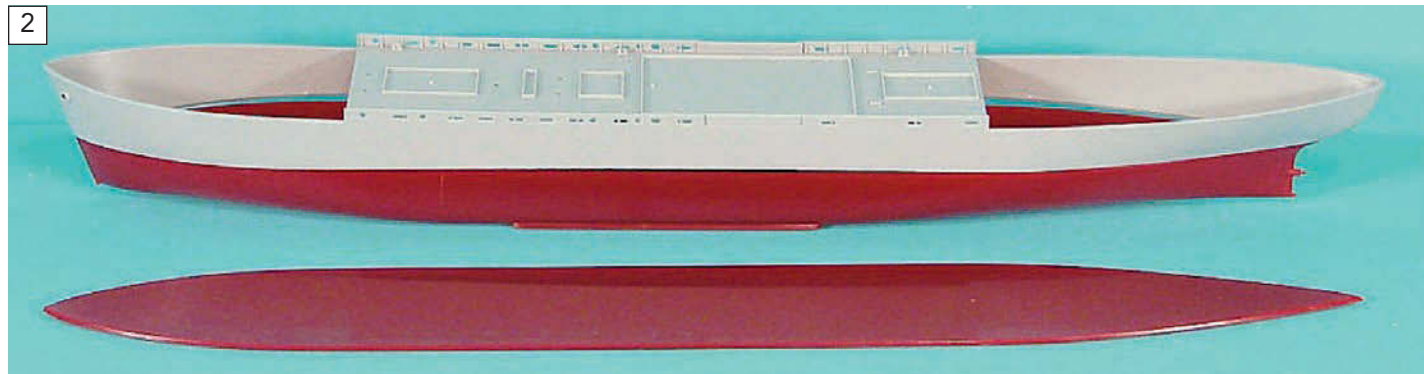
*“Trumpeter's 1:350 scale plastic kit of the *Jeremiah O'Brien* includes a well moulded hull, and all parts are (generally) a good fit. There were some snags when it came to R/C'ing the ship though...”*

Small, sturdily made and only 2.5 x 1.2 x 1cm (excluding the drive shaft), the motor weighs just 9 grams including the 5:1 gearbox. It has superb low rpm torque, surprisingly much more than adequate high-end rpm, and runs cool and very quietly, essentially perfect.

A change of plan

Finding this working so well and with lots of displacement to spare, my love of old merchant ships in general and

2



The grey above water hull on the separate red underwater hull piece, showing the central deck area moulded with the above water hull sides.

3



The three deck pieces joined and reinforced with the Plastrut I-beams to make a single, fully removable deck. The attaching brass screw bolt is also shown poking down from the funnel base.

be a rather thin, floppy, and therefore fragile, structure. Thus, a longitudinally positioned Plastrut I-beam was glued, centrally underneath, stiffening things up nicely. It was later discovered, though, in the 'Trial-and-Error' process that seems to characterize at least my approach to this hobby, that this longitudinal beam took up too much space in the quite small hull, with not enough vertical clearance for the motor and batteries. Being quite firmly attached, its removal was a source of potential disaster, but this was eventually successfully accomplished without damage. It was subsequently replaced with two smaller Plastrut I-beams, again fitted longitudinally but more off to the sides of the deck - this working well (see **Photo 3**).

The next problem was that once the deck centre section had been removed, the above water hull sides, now firmly glued to the one-piece underwater hull, bowed inwards, requiring some form of bracing to spread them for a good fit with the deck edges. This could have been easily remedied with some plastic rod glued across to the hull edges at intervals, but then there would have gone all that access I was congratulating myself on a paragraph ago. However, after much experimentation with wedges along the deck edge underneath that were then discovered to make removing and replacing the fragile deck too 'interesting', I eventually discovered

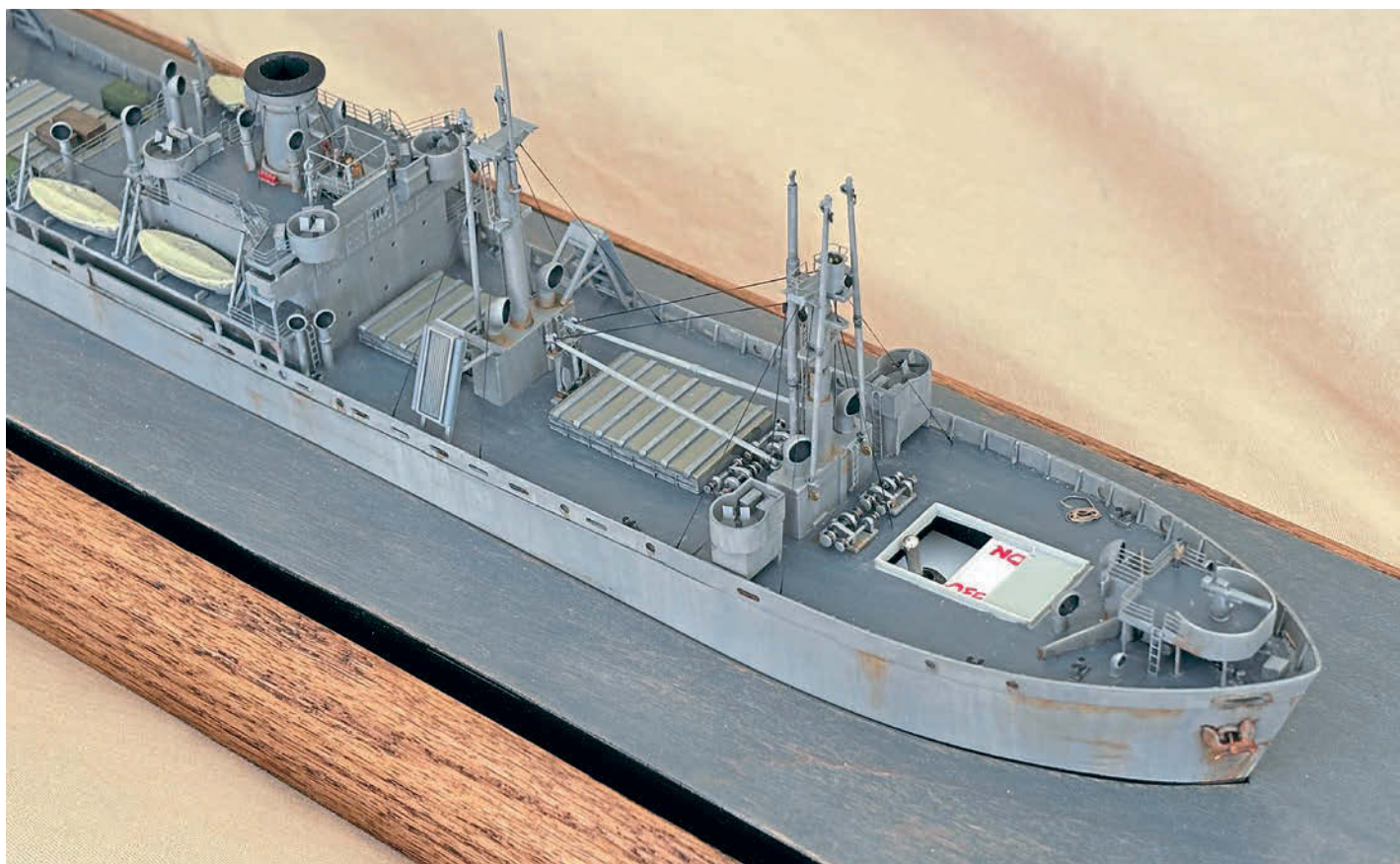
that a square section brass channel attached longitudinally to the hull's upper interior edges, with two removable small rectangular section cross beams simply wedged across at either end was the perfect solution. This arrangement pushes out the hull edges evenly over their length and preserves the full access required (for example, the battery is a LiFe one, which I like to remove from any model before charging – just in case).

More Trial, more Error, though – the square channels are pretty rigid (kind of the point), but the hull sides are flexible, so the movement eventually breaks any rigid attachment, with the superglue I had initially used to attach the channels fracturing away after not



The square section brass channel and easily removable (slide out) rectangular section brass cross-braces to space out the hull side.





With an/Off switch for the Lithium batteries being a must, the forward hatch cover is removable, held in place by a couple of the tiny, rare-earth magnets. This has the added benefit of further 'sealing' the deck down on the hull edges at the bow.

much time. A flexible adhesive has held well subsequently though, using a silicone based marine sealant/adhesive with no problems since (a simple plastic bracket at each end would work fine too, of course).

There is no seal, as such, around the deck edge, but the fit is good, and the

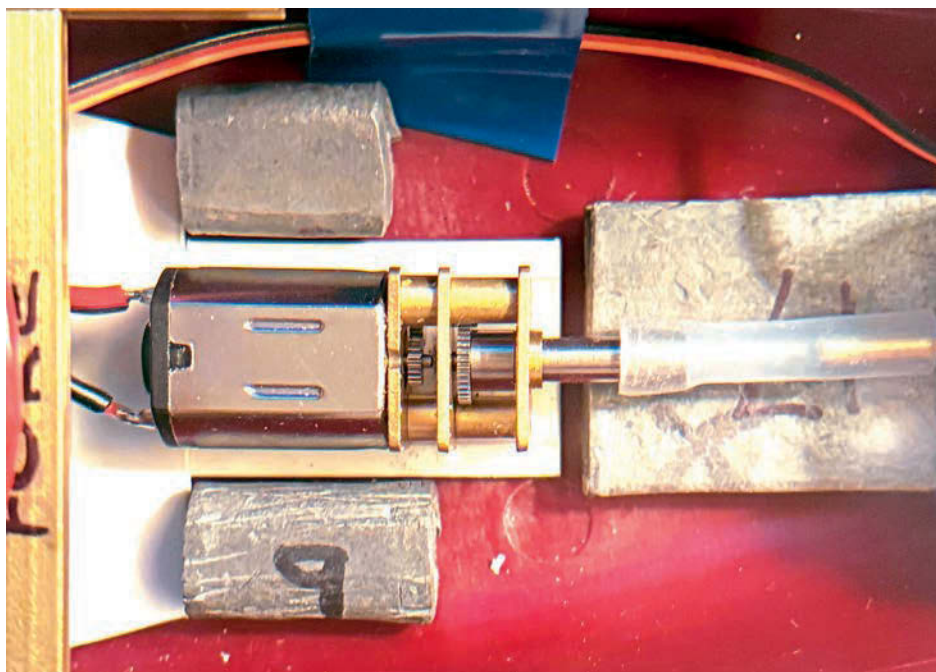
gap narrow enough that simple surface tension seems to keep out any water. However, many years ago I was trained that 'A Superior Whatever (pilot, plumber, sailor, driver, public speaker, etc) is One who uses his Superior Judgement to Stay Out of Situations that might require the use of his

Superior Skills', so this 'waterproofing' has not been tested in any sea state above Beaufort 1 (remembering, of course, that a 1-inch wave at 1:350 scale is a potentially ship-sinking 30 footer in the real world)

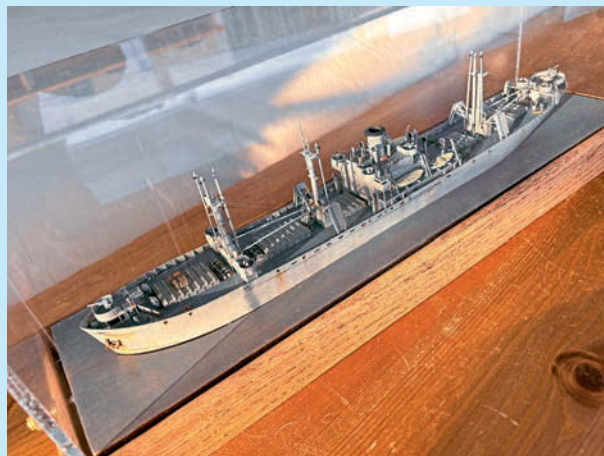
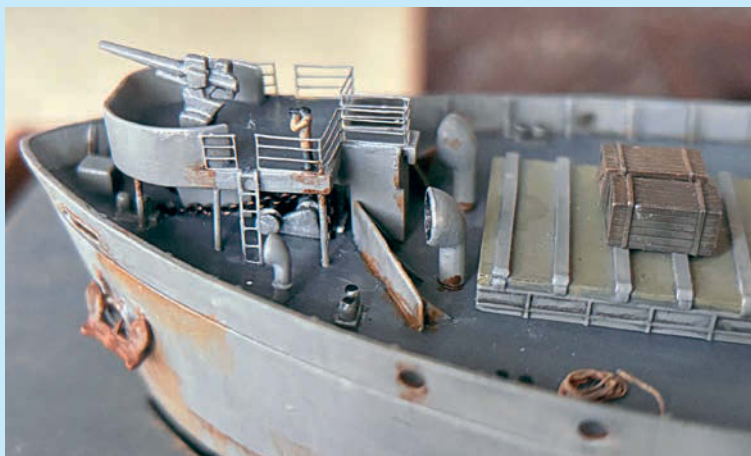
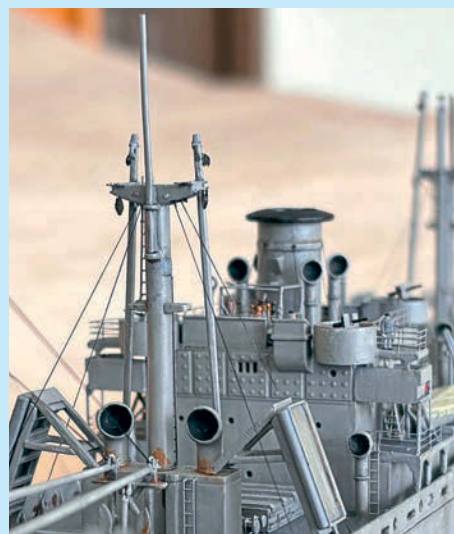
The deck is attached by a brass screw bolt placed down the drilled-out funnel (again, see **Photo 3**), engaging a nut glued to the hull bottom. This works well, with the screw bolt head easily accessible via the funnel. Being centrally placed, tightening the screw bolt pushes the bow and stern ends of the now well-stiffened deck down on the hull at either end because of the camber of the hull line, the bow and stern being higher than the centre.

Lithium batteries really don't like being run and left flat (as I've proven several times now) so easy access to an On/Off switch is a must. The forward hatch cover is therefore removable, held in place by a couple of the tiny, rare earth magnets, quite powerfully. This has the added benefit of further 'sealing' the deck down on the hull edges at the bow.

To keep this hatch fully accessible the forward cargo derricks are modelled in the vertically secured position, secured to their brackets on the foremast crosstrees up out of the way (as are a couple of other booms,



The engine room with Pololu motor including 5:1 gearbox and ballasting added.



The fine, but perhaps not final, detailing to the Jeremiah O'Brien's deck/superstructure.

"The (Black Cat) crew figures really are quite remarkable. At 1:350 scale they have their binoculars at the ready, their socks rolled over the top their boots, duffel coat hoods either up or down and their helmet rims microns thick - making them really worth the effort of a detailed paint job"

in the hope of keeping the running rigging simpler?).

The rest of the gimbets (rudder servo excluded) are fixed by adhesive tape or glue to a removable Plasticard sheet. Some ballasting with small lead blocks and easily movable lead shot in some plasticine, and she's ready for the worst the Atlantic can throw at her. Scale empty/no ballast displacement should be around 100 grams, but with a top wartime displacement of not much under 15,000 tons (350 grams) there is plenty of buoyancy to spare once

the machinery is fitted. I like the model deep laden, so she's ballasted to around a 13,000-ton load at about 310 grams.

Busy deck detailing

Final detailing is in progress, and in my experience is never really finished. I obtained the photo etch kit from Toms Model Works and some deck fittings and crew from Black Cat Models to add a finer grained appearance to things. The crew figures really are quite remarkable. At 1:350 scale they have their binoculars at the ready, their socks rolled over the top their boots, duffel coat hoods either up or down and their helmet rims microns thick - making them really worth the effort of a detailed paint job (depending on the visual acuity/magnification available!). Consequently, though, they are very delicate, with the Jeremiah's crew now including more than one amputee. Some deck cargo, also from Black Cat, has been added, with room (and displacement) for lots more. The two trucks on deck are remarkably detailed - they have jerry cans on their running boards, a steering wheel in the cab, and even the tyres have tread patterns moulded on.

So how does she handle?

Unfortunately, this is where the so called 'Square Cubed Law' comes into spoil things for many R/C modellers.

For a 1:350 model every linear dimension is reduced by a factor of 350 (of course). The area of the ship's sides (for example) is therefore reduced by a factor of 12,250 (350 squared). The model's volume and mass are however down by a factor of 42,875,000 (350 cubed).

This means that volume and mass decrease far more rapidly than surface areas as an object is scaled down.

Thus, the wind and water forces on any model become very rapidly way out of proportion to the mass they are pushing around, as the scale ratio increases (1:50 up to 1:350 scale, for example). At 1:350 scale, a 2-knot zephyr is like a 38 knot Force 8 gale as far as surface area goes. The displacement of 14,000 tons scales to 350 cubed though, about 325 grams, so wind spoils things quickly. This is a tiny model, so it is very much a flat, calm, preferably indoor (inflatable?) pool model.



Plastic magic! The Jeremiah O'Brien on the water.

Operating the ship is a lot of fun, though, and can be a real test of skill. It takes some concentration and experience to manoeuvre alongside a dock with any dignity, for example, as it was for the ships themselves. Being single screw vessels, they experienced significant "prop walk" when the propeller was going astern, as does the model itself. This is when the stern of the ship (or model) moves off to the side as well as backwards, when the engine is going astern. Prop walk occurs because when going astern the prop wash spirals

away from the prop asymmetrically forwards over the underwater hull, with the upper component of the wash interacting differently than the lower (deeper) component. This is not a fault (on either the real ship or the model), but simply a handling

characteristic requiring consideration when manoeuvring. I think it is slightly more prominent on the model however, at least in part because water viscosity does not "scale" at all. The handling of the single prop Liberty ship is, therefore, very different from the multiple props of the other ships in my fleet (the *Hood*, *Prince of Wales*, and, of course, the *Titanic*) but certainly no less absorbing and fun.

I think that ships like this, at 1:350 scale, could be a lot of fun in indoors (think winter) steering competitions and, with a draught of one inch, a temporary 'pond' created using a big polythene sheet on a garage floor is not (was not...) a major project.

Going forward...

I hope this article might stimulate a bit of interest in 1:350 Indoor Steering competitions and, who knows, maybe prompt manufacturers to produce some more kits of merchant ships – wouldn't a 1:200 Liberty or Victory ship be great, for example? ●

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Vickensund, with the breeze behind her, ghosting across the water, with her yards squared.

Vickensund

Nev Wade recounts how, while others may have considered building a working Baltic onker barquentine from scratch a 'tilting at windmills' type project, his friend, the late Ken Horton, threw caution to the wind...

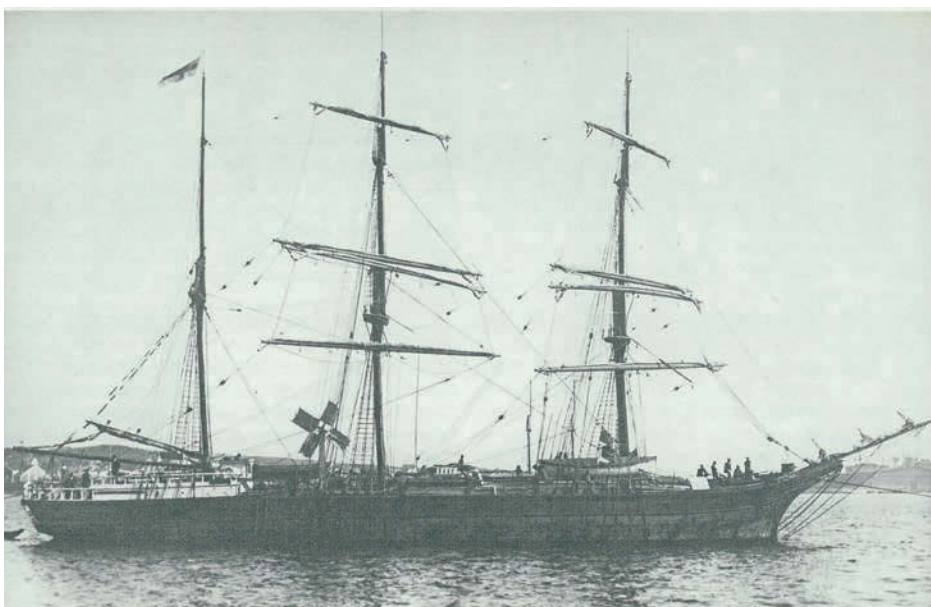
Throughout the 19th century, and well into the 20th, Scandinavian barques and barquentines traded in the Baltic and North Seas, usually carrying timber cargoes. The ships themselves were made of wood, taken from local forests, and launched and owned by the communities where they were built. Wooden vessels leak, and because of that, and with farming backgrounds to boot, these ship

operators were ingenious in the way that they coped with this perennial problem. They built onboard windmills that were coupled to the ship's pump so that they had a constant source of pumping energy – as long as the wind blew! These windmills made a distinctive noise as they worked, a familiar "Onker, onker, onker" being their trademark as they went about their business, and eventually the

vessels became known as 'Onker' barques. In their sometimes very long lives, it was often said that they had each pumped most of the Baltic through their hulls before they went to the wreckers' yards!

Scandinavian Influence

On visits to Norway in years gone by, my friend Ken Horton saw an old sailing ship, and built a model of



The 'Onker' barque Southern Belle, built in Nova Scotia in 1871, and owned in the Baltic from 1891. The windmill, which drives the bilge pump, is obvious, and, if you look closely, you'll see that the vessel is 'hogged', effectively bent up in the middle through the effects of age on the wooden hull. This picture was taken in old age, not long before she was broken up, in the early 1920s. Some of her rigging was passed on to a new 'Onker', named Carmen.



The unusual heart of this model, the tank, which takes in water as the model is sailing so that the electric pump can pump it out again as if from the windmill pump's outlet. The inlet hoses can be seen leading from the ship's sides, with the outlet hose en route to the pump in the centre of the picture.

"These (onboard) windmills made a distinctive noise as they worked, a familiar "Onker, onker, onker" being their trademark as they went about their business, and eventually the vessels became known as 'Onker' barques"

her, based on photographs that he took from the dockside. With that, he passed on to other modelling projects and gave little thought to that Norwegian ship. During 2008 that was all to change when a discarded GRP hull came his way, and thoughts of the Norwegian vessel returned. I mentioned 'Onker' barques to him, and he decided to have a go, even though, at 80, he had thought that his days of building something new and unfamiliar were over.

Now, Ken has built all kinds of ship models, including submarines, so pumps and pipe work are not the mystery to him that they are to me. His fertile imagination made the connection between the 'Onker' windmill pump, an old car screen washer pump and the hull he'd 'inherited'. After that, there was no holding him. I had to scour my records for pictures and drawings of 'Onker' barques and barquentines so that he could get an idea of proportion, and then he was off!

One thing leads to another

His first thought was to build the windmill, and its above deck outlet, using an old picture as a guide. On the real ship, the pump lifted water up out of the bilges and sent it across the deck to run over the side through freeing ports by the scuppers. Thus, the pump's outlet was simply a hole just above deck level, and Ken quickly re-created the whole thing with the addition of a 'wind vane' to turn the pump into the wind, a job which



Amidships on the model, with the starboard inlet for the pump just above the waterline to the left of centre, and the windmill to the right, forward of the mainmast.



The windmill pump. On the model, there is a 'wind vane' to turn the pump to face the wind. Aboard the real ship, it was turned manually, and the sails were like those of a land windmill, with canvas that could be furled when necessary.



The windmill 'pumping': there is dirty water on the deck, which the screen washer pump has lifted out of the tank and sent to the scuppers from the outlet of the windmill pump, which is the grey oval at the pump's base, exactly as the real thing.

would have been done manually on the real ship.

This accomplished, he then thought what an attractive feature it would be to have the pump actually lift water and pump it across the deck. To this end, he used an old wood stain tin as a tank, and soldered pipe connections into it, such that he could run two pipes to the ship's sides as inlets entering the tank at half height and one from the bottom of the tank as the outlet from it to the old car screen washer pump. The outlet of the screen washer pump was connected, in turn, to the base of the windmill 'pump' on deck so that water taken out of the tank would flow out of the windmill's outlet and across the deck of the model. The two inlet pipes were led through holes cut in the hulls' sides, each about 5mm above the waterline, so that when

the model heels in a wind water runs into the tank and becomes available to be pumped back out.

All that remained was to devise the means of activating the screen washer pump to make the feature real. Ken's answer was typically lateral in its thinking; he put a micro switch near the end of the rudder servo, such that when the rudder is hard a' port the switch is made, and the pump operates – simple as that!

An early trial had the hull in the water; a push laid it over far enough to flood the tank, and a move with the rudder saw wood stain coloured water pumped across the deck, much to everyone's delight!

Now the easy stuff...

With that kind of originality behind him, the rest of the build was a return to the



The yards are mounted on a long shaft located in front of the foremast and are supported by a bracket under the topgallant (next to top) yard. The royal (topmost) yard is carried on lifts and can thus be lowered in strong winds. The yards are braced by braces attached to the foreyard (the bottom one).

creation of a sailing model, something that Ken has done many times. I say it was a return but in fact Ken had never built operational square sails on a model, so he was still to exercise plenty of originality over the rest of the construction, as you'll see.

He decided to build a vessel typical of the 'Onkers', a barquentine – that is, a three-masted vessel with square sails on the foremast, and fore and afters on the remaining two. He chose to use a sail winch to operate the yards, and, at first, he had it connected to the booms of the fore and aft sails in a very complex arrangement. This, however, proved to be too much for



The model prior to sailing. The removable keel is attached, at the pond side, to bolts in the keel, while the vessel is supported in her stand. The launching slings are on the right. The 'inherited' hull has had its shape altered by the addition of extra wood.



The helmsman at the stern. Note the deck cargo of timber, long a feature of these vessels. It was not unusual for the entire deck to be covered in cut timber, with the top of the pile used as the 'deck'.



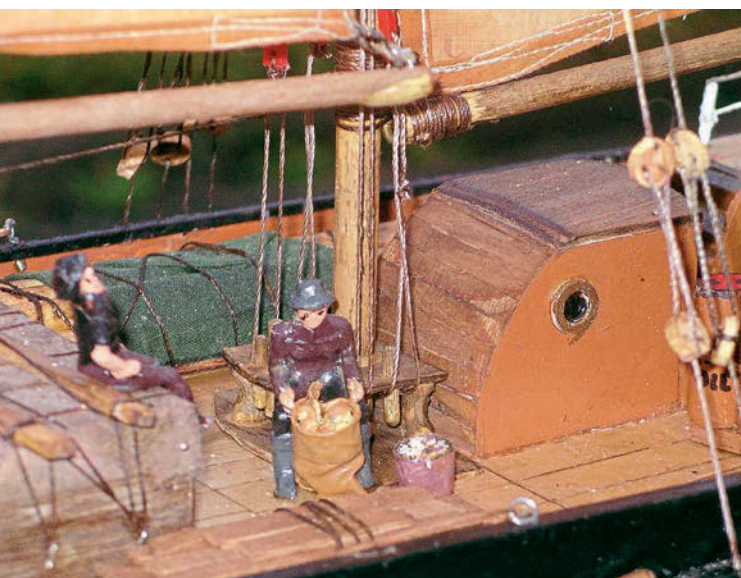
The fo'c'sle head, with mooring line and capstan.

the adjusting and tensioning systems, so was abandoned in favour of the winch simply controlling the yards, with the fore and afters being left to their own devices.

In another striking example of lateral thinking, Ken used a 'dummy' foremast on which to mount his yards. It is a shaft, on which the yards pivot, sited in front of the 'actual' mast. It allows the yards to be

braced round far enough to sail close to the wind, with their weight being taken by a support under the topgallant yard (the one next to the top). The royal yard (the highest one) is supported by lifts above it,

Onker, onker, onker...



A sailor peeling potatoes near the base of the mizzen mast.



The Vickensund in full flight, taking on a smaller scale model of a barquentine of much later vintage, the Mozart of 1905. The windmill is going at full speed, and the vessel makes a grand bow wave.



Going gently on the starboard tack. She flies the Norwegian flag, but she could be any Scandinavian nationality. Ships like this were still to be seen in British ports up to World War II.

and this yard can be lowered for sailing in higher winds. The gaff topsails (the higher sails on each of the fore and aft masts) are removable, for the same reason.

The braces, which swing the yards from tack to tack, are led from the winch traveller, up the main mast to the appropriate height, and then around

pulleys and out to the ends of the fore course yard (the lowest). Finally, the rudder was made oversized, to ensure good, quick response on the water.

The rest of the construction is conventional, apart from some additional woodwork, which gives the hull a more authentic underwater shape,

and a removable sailing keel, which is attached by the side of the pond.

Home Sweet Home

Ken has built a 'way of life' aboard many of his models, notably an *African Queen*, built from looking at stills from the famous Hollywood film, which



Beating 'up' the pond on the port tack. With a relatively shallow draught, she picks up speed quickly and will come to windward with ease.



The builder of the Vickensund, Ken Horton, with a souvenir of Norway on his head!

and all of them look like you'd get on with them! There is also deck clutter, with everything from part of the cargo of wood to barrels and spare canvas, so the whole thing looks 'lived in', a very difficult thing to achieve.

And she can sail!

With an 'inherited' hull, a rigging plan that was created out of the builder's head and a captain with no previous experience of sailing square-rigger models, there was considerable trepidation among Ken's friends when the maiden voyage came around. I'm happy to say that we needn't have worried. Apart from some teething troubles, the *Vickensund* went like a greyhound! That hull cut through the water in a far better way than anybody had the right to expect, and she could go about handily and work to windward with little trouble. The windmill, whirring round as she sailed across the pond, added a unique touch, and onlookers' comments, from thoughts about it driving the ship to generating electricity for the batteries, would often be heard from fascinated bystanders.

The builder

Lots of things can revitalise you in life, and it's my belief that this excellent boat did a little of that for my friend Ken. There was something of the young lad about him as he sailed this boat, the difficulties of handling a square-rigger challenging his long-acquired skills teamed with the pleasure of seeing it eat up the pond. It was a joy to look on.

I saw the *Vickensund* sail many times over the next few years. Inevitably, happy times such as this will come to an end – it's just how it is. Ken died five years later, not long before I left Sheffield to come and live in the north-east. I don't know what became of *Vickensund*, but I will never forget either her, or her builder, my friend Ken Horton. ●

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Lindsey Amrani

Editor

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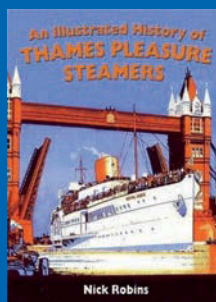
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A ferry built for war

Nick Brown details a fascinating father and son project

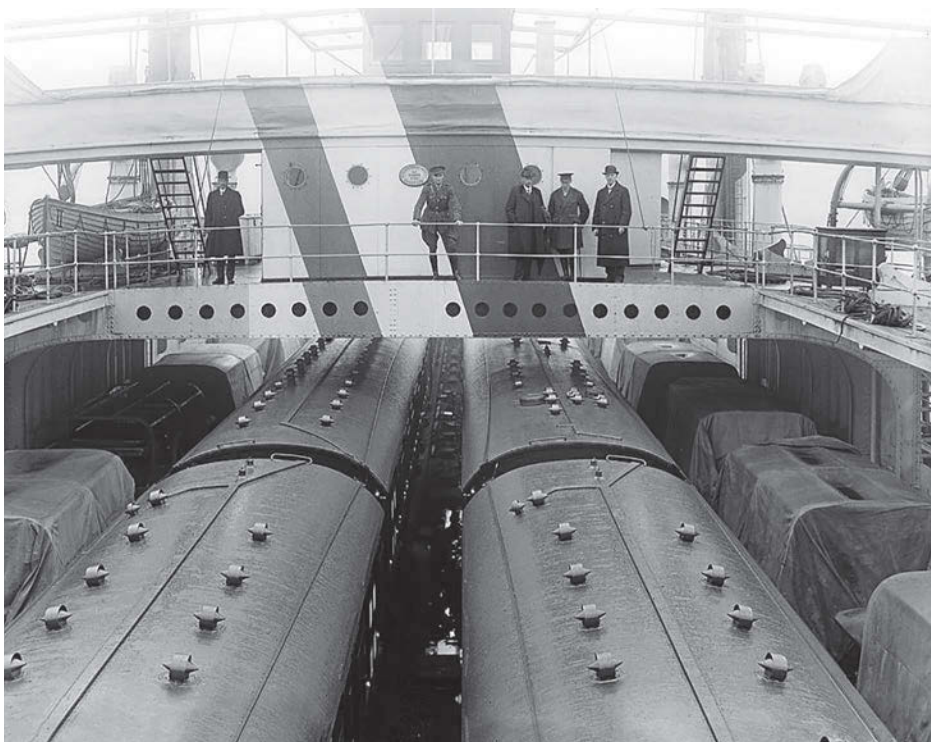
They say a picture paints a thousand words - in this case, it practically built a model! While skimming through the superb photo book *A Shipyard at War* by Ian Johnston, my dad and I stumbled across a truly peculiar vessel captured by the John Brown Shipyard photographer as it was towed down the Clyde. We'd never seen anything like it: a broad, open deck, two funnels pushed out to

the sides, and – unbelievably – railway tracks running along the hull. The caption offered only a tantalising clue: “Train Ferry Number 3”. And with that, a project was born... one that would end up taking seven years to complete.

All aboard

It was 1917, and Britain was struggling to keep pace with the demands of a grinding war. The nation had

the industrial output, but not the speed: supplies reached the ports faster than they could be loaded, shipped and unloaded to replace the relentless losses at the front. To break this bottleneck, in August 1917, the British War Office ordered three purpose – built train ferries as part of the emergency war programme – vessels that would become the earliest ancestors of the modern RoRo ferry.



The original Train Ferry during the late war years in her dazzle scheme extended onto the bridge superstructure, note the British Army officer posing (Nick Brown's personal collection).



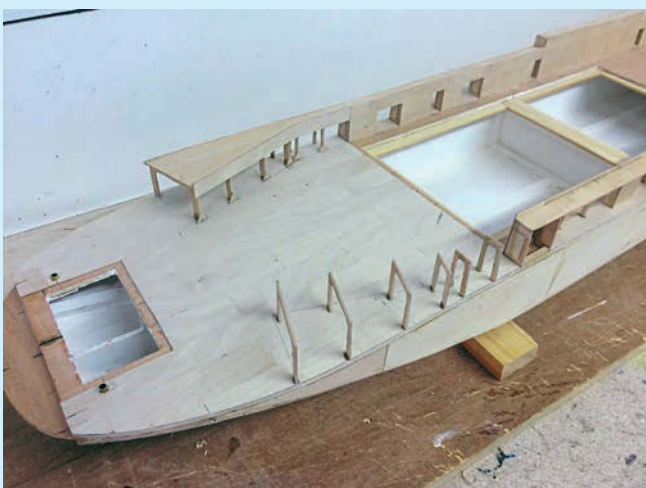
All three were named, with admirable simplicity, after their designations. Train Ferry No. 3 (TF3) was constructed by the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company and launched on September 12, 1917. She entered service on February 22, 1918, running the vital Southampton-Dieppe route and carrying entire railway wagons straight across the Channel.

The ferries measured 363.5 feet in length, with a beam of 61 feet 5 inches and a draught of 10 feet 8.5 inches, giving them a displacement of 3,634 tons. They were fitted with two 4-inch high angle guns for anti-aircraft defence and two 4-inch low angle guns intended to counter Uboats and destroyers – though in practice these weapons offered little real protection, serving more as morale boosters than effective armament.

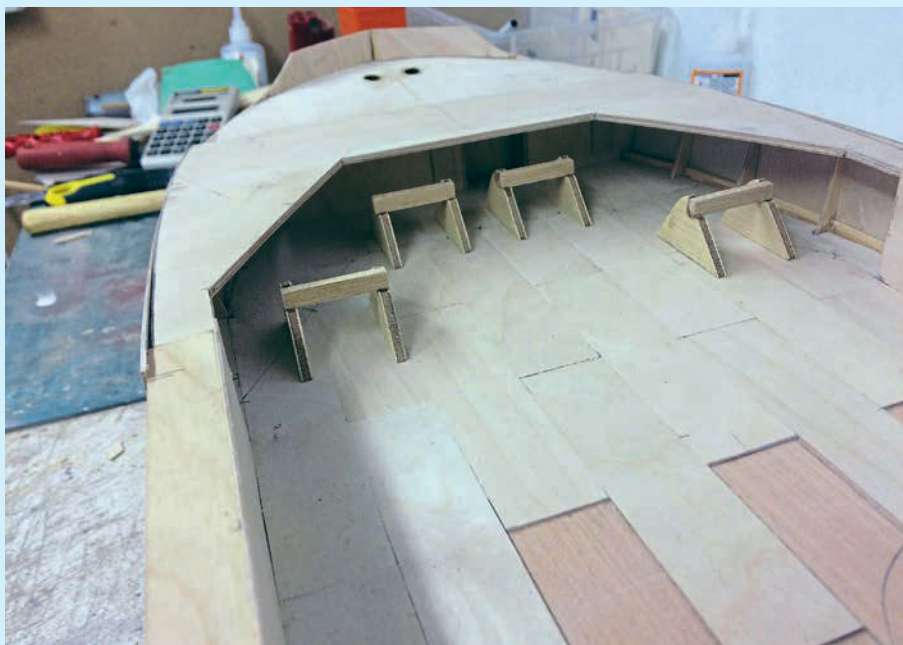
Despite this, the ferries proved invaluable. They transported an extraordinary range of war material across the Channel, including the early 'Land Ships' – the first tanks. At times they also carried complete Ambulance Trains from France back to Britain, bringing wounded soldiers and the nurses who cared for them safely home. Their heaviest and most dramatic cargoes were the massive 14-inch railway guns, named 'Bosche Buster' and 'Scene Shifter'.



The hull was built upside down working from the deck towards the keel. It was planked with thin plywood in ½-inch wide strips and then plated with scale 8'x4' sheets.



Removed from the building stocks, the hull was then flipped to start the work on the deck, with the deck plating and railway tracks being laid down.



“Although the plans depicted the lead ship, Train Ferry No. 1, we were able to adapt them into an accurate representation of TF3 by cross-referencing a set of photographs acquired from a well-known auction site”

military duty to transport trains and vehicles between Harwich and Calais. On June 24, 1940, the Royal Navy took her over and converted her into an LSS (Landing Ship, Sternchute). In this new configuration, TF3 could carry 13 LCM Mk I landing craft on her train deck, with four more hoisted onto the bridge deck. The LCMs were moved aboard using trolleys hauled up the stern chute – a practical, if unconventional, solution that made the most of her original train ferry layout. In October 1940, she was renamed HMS Daffodil and, from September 1941 onward, took part in Combined Operations exercises, transporting landing craft for training and deployment. In May 1944, she received

On April 24, 1924, TF3 was sold into civilian service and began operating on the Harwich–Zeebrugge train ferry route, a role she maintained until the

service was suspended on September 1, 1939, at the outbreak of World War II. Just 24 days later, she was requisitioned once again, returning to



The girder work was one of many repetitive tasks made easier thanks to the purchase of a new pillar drill. The result was worth the effort and looks remarkably like the photos of the real vessel.



The propellers were purchased from Prop Shop as finely cast lost-wax bronze pieces that suit the model perfectly. The twin rudders were scratch built from brass sheet and rod and, as we shall see, give the model excellent manoeuvrability.



Detail work on the hull and deck continued. The railway track sleepers were covered by the walk boards visible in many of the photographs, while portholes from RB Fittings were added to the hull.



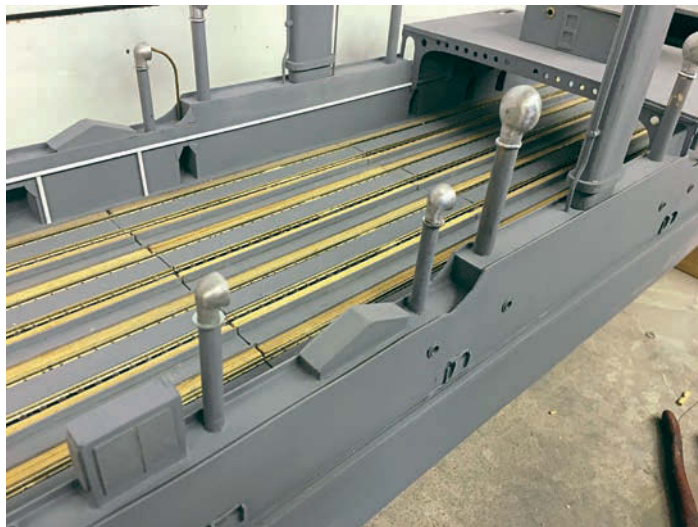
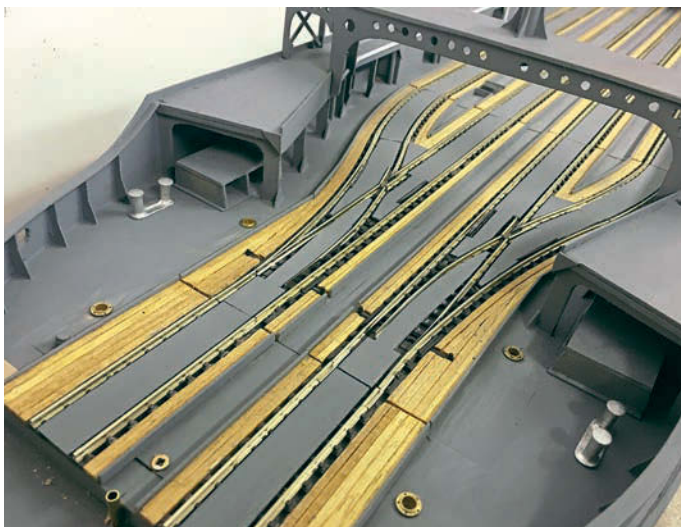
One of the twin funnels, built from softwood and skinned in thin plywood, then detailed with brass tube to represent the steam whistle.

a specially designed locomotive ramp bridge, allowing her to operate at ports that lacked railloading facilities.

On March 17, 1945, at 23:07 hours, while en route to Southampton, *Daffodil* struck a mine north of Dieppe. The tug *Lynch* was dispatched from Dieppe to bring the damaged vessel into harbour, but by 05:40 the following morning, *Daffodil* foundered while under tow. Today, she rests off the coast of Dieppe as a well known diving wreck and a poignant relic of her long and varied service.

Rolling on

We opted to build TF3 at 1:72 scale, which conveniently allowed us to use standard OO gauge stock (1:76 scale) for the locomotives and rolling stock.



Final details were added before painting, after which the extensive masking began. At this stage, the docking bridge and aft gun platforms were trial fitted, then removed again to allow the paintwork to proceed.



The main hull with its paintwork applied. Halford car primer was used as the base for the Humbrol acrylic spray paints, followed by a final coat of lacquer to seal the finish.



The forward section being fitted with the anchor winch and its associated equipment. The Carley floats were borrowed from an old Matchbox Snowberry kit.



The propulsion system consists of two Johnson 500 motors linked to the prop shafts by very long U/J couplings. Although this arrangement is not ideal, it allowed the motors to be mounted clear of the box structure floor on which they sit.

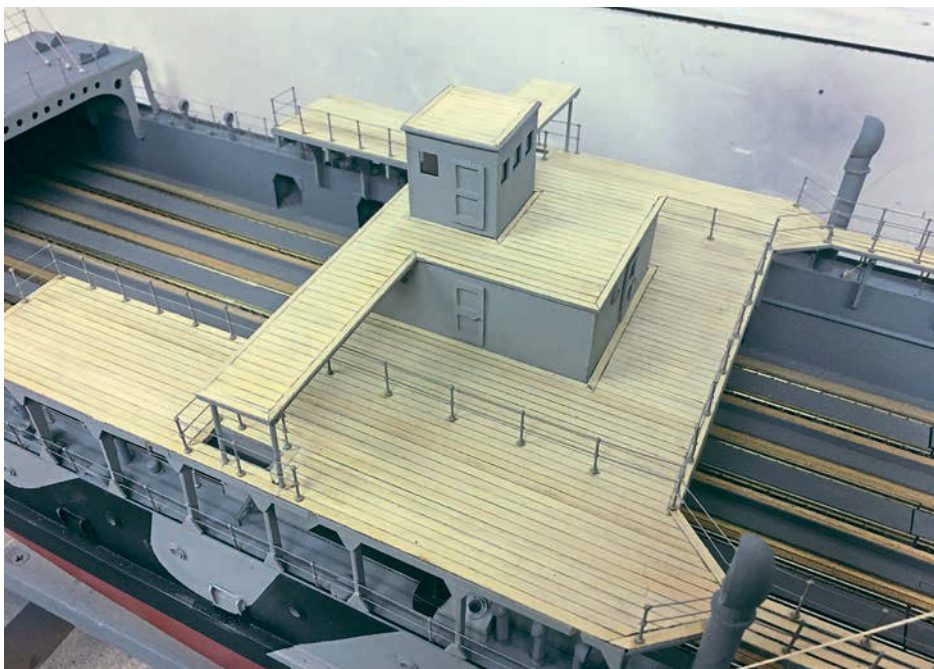


The prominent girder structure between the funnels was originally intended to be made from brass, but that proved too difficult. Instead, an unscaled version was built from plastic strip.

The drawings were sourced from the National Maritime Museum Plans Section and included GA profiles, deck layouts with bridges and walkways, and full hull sections. Although the plans depicted the lead ship, Train Ferry No. 1, we were able to adapt them into an accurate representation of TF3 by



Work began on fitting the 420 two-ball stanchion uprights. These beautifully made RB Fittings parts saved a great deal of time during the build.



Nick planked the bridges, upper walkways and docking bridge drawing on experience from his two battleship builds. He used 2 mm and 3 mm wide, 0.5 mm thick limewood strip, with graphite pencil lines to create the effect of caulking.



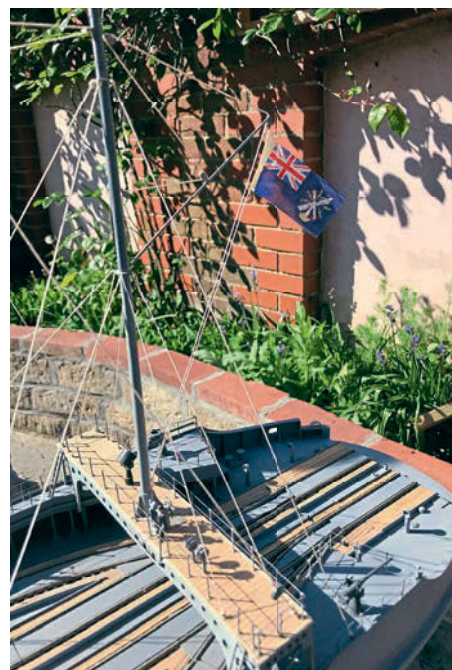
Detail work continued on both bridges. The docking bridge was fitted with an offset signal lamp to port and a speaking tube made from brass rod, while the main bridge received railings covered using Dave Wooley's tape-over-wire-and-uprights method.



The main bridge is fitted with a canvas cover, a feature not always seen on the original vessels, the supporting structure for which was created with some fine brass soldering work.



The upper walkway is shown with an OO gauge figure to give a sense of scale. The figure came from a model railway supplier. He represents a 1950s' station crew member but closely resembles the smartly dressed crew seen in some original photographs.



As noted in the main text, eagle-eyed readers will notice a change in the flags. Nick and his dad originally flew a White Ensign but later discovered that the correct flag was the blue Royal Engineers Ensign.

crossreferencing a set of photographs acquired from a well-known auction site.

The hull was constructed upsidedown, working from the underside of the rail deck. We used 4 mm softwood to form the hull frames, which were then planked with 1/32 inch plywood strips. Once the planking was complete, the entire hull was overlaid with another layer of 1/32 inch birch ply, cut into 8x4 foot plates in scale. This produced a strong yet relatively lightweight structure ready for detailing.

Next came the rail deck. The rails themselves are from the Hornby

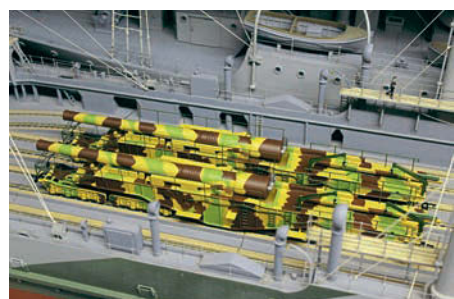
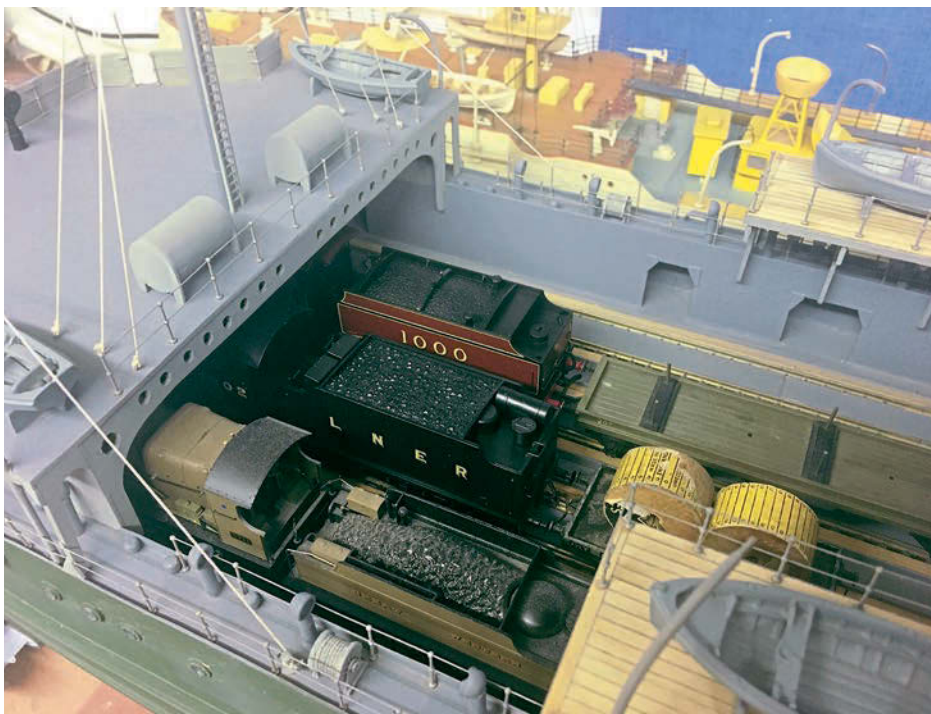
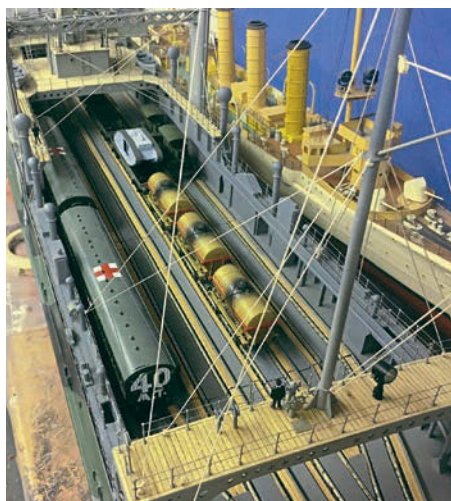
OO gauge range and took several attempts to fit into the layout required for the ferry. The main challenge with using premanufactured track was the presence of sleepers – something the real vessels did not have. We disguised these by adding the walking boards seen around the rails in the WWI reference photographs, which effectively hid the sleepers while keeping the deck visually accurate.

Fitting out the running gear proved to be a straightforward task. We installed two 10-inch propshafts from SHG Models paired with 35 mm three-bladed bronze propellers supplied

“This disruptive scheme extended onto parts of the superstructure and bridges, and it became one of the key visual cues distinguishing TF2 and TF3 – otherwise almost identical sister ships”

by Prop Shop. Power comes from Johnson 500 motors, each driven by its own Electronize 15 amp ESC for independent control.

As with our other builds, we chose to operate the model using a Robbe



A selection of OO gauge rolling stock was assembled to fill the deck and create the crowded appearance desired. The collection includes models from Bachmann, Oxford Rail and Hornby, all of which are now readily available but were much harder to find when the build began.

F14 Navy Twin Stick transmitter, which suits twin-screw vessels particularly well. The rudders are scratchbuilt brass units linked to a standard Futaba servo.

For power, we selected a single 6 V, 12 Ah SLA battery – a practical choice that not only supplies ample runtime but also contributes a useful amount of ballast weight.

Next came the repetitive but essential job of fabricating the girder work that supported the bridges and walkways above the rail deck. Dad initially thought producing more than 20 near identical pieces would be a nightmare, but our newly acquired pillar drill made the process surprisingly straightforward.

With the structural work progressing, it became clear that the hull needed painting before any

further detailing; leaving it any longer would have meant an impossibly complex masking job, something I was keen to avoid as the designated painter. The real challenge, however, was determining the original colour scheme. Anyone who has tried to interpret tones from black & white photographs will know how deceptive they can be. I had been documenting the build on the Model Boat Mayhem forum and was regularly in touch with another TF3 builder, Sandy Barclay. Between us, we eventually pieced together the vessel's wartime appearance: a base of light Admiralty Grey, broken up with a dazzle pattern of dark green, black, white, and two contrasting patches of medium blue and sky green/blue. This disruptive

scheme extended onto parts of the superstructure and bridges, and it became one of the key visual cues distinguishing TF2 and TF3 – otherwise almost identical sister ships.

After further research, we concluded that TF3 carried dark grey funnel tops, while TF2 featured dark grey diagonal stripes, giving each vessel its own subtle signature within the class.

Dad moved on to the long, painstaking job of fitting the hand stanchions around the ship. Rather than scratchbuild all 420 uprights, he sensibly opted to buy them readymade. Although the original plans showed the general layout of the handrails, the photographs revealed several differences around the bridge and the boat deck, so adjustments had to be



The completed model on display.

made. The cowl vents came from various whitmetal fittings manufacturers, but Dad still had to produce more than 30 tiny mushroom vents from three pieces of brass rod and tube – a task that tested his patience to the limit, judging by the muttering coming from his workbench.

Next, it was time to plank the bridge decks. With my experience from building two battleships, Dad handed that part of the project over to me. I used 2 mm and 3 mm wide, 0.5 mm thick limewood strip, with a graphite pencil to simulate the plank seams. Once glued down and fully dry, the decks were sanded smooth and finished with a coat of satin varnish, giving them a clean, authentic appearance.

Dad has always preferred working in larger scales – nothing smaller than 1:48 until this project – so he decided early on to use six Quaycraft resin boats rather than scratchbuild the ship's boats. These comprised four 20 foot lifeboats and two 16 foot dinghies, positioned on the bridge deck and the forward superstructure. For the forward superstructure companionway, we added two large Carley floats sourced from a Matchbox Snowberry kit, which matched the look and scale perfectly.

The four 4-inch guns were troublesome to initially source and Dad considered scratch-building them, but after searching on the Internet I found some available from Mark Hawkins' 3D-printing shop.

One of the vessel's most distinctive features was the gridlike girder structure spanning between the two funnels. Dad initially planned to build this intricate assembly from thin brass rod but, after a first attempt at soldering it together, he quickly realised that producing such a delicate framework in brass at this scale would be completely impractical. He switched instead to 1.0 mm Evergreen plastic strip. Using a jig made from 1/16 inch ply, he built two identical sides, then

created a second jig to assemble the full three-dimensional box structure. The only real challenge came when trying to remove the finished girder from the jig without destroying it. Once freed, it was sprayed grey and fixed in place between the funnels.

Much of the rigging has been added, though some lines were left off to maintain access to the battery bay. The final touch was a silk Royal Engineers ensign from Mike Allsop (better known as 'FlagMan'). Eagle-eyed observers will notice that we originally flew a White Ensign; after speaking with a researcher, we confirmed that the train ferry fleet was operated by the Royal Engineers, so the correct ensign was fitted accordingly.

Steaming up

Final ballasting was carried out during trials at our local water at Wicksteed Park in Kettering. Two 11lb sheets of lead were added in the battery bay to bring the model down to its designed waterline. With that done, the motors sprang into life and TF3 slipped away from the lakeside for the very first time. We put the rudders hard over to port and starboard to check the servo response, which proved satisfyingly crisp. The model then spent the next hour and a half cruising the lake until the battery finally ran down.

On the water, the model behaves exactly as you'd expect a flat bottomed barge to. It has more than enough speed to get itself out of trouble without looking unrealistic, and with the twinstick transmitter it can spin neatly on its own axis. With a bit of practice, it will even reverse cleanly into a docking bay – a very pleasing party trick for a vessel of this shape,

Rolling off

What we really needed next was an accurate wartime load for the model.

I originally wrote this article a few years ago, but I think it's finally time for it to be published – for one very important reason...

Unfortunately, World War I rolling stock isn't exactly abundant in the model railway world. We did manage to secure a Bachmann Ambulance Train, but we wanted TF3 to look fully loaded, just as she would have appeared in service. Eventually, Oxford Rail came to the rescue with its superb 14-inch railway guns and the locomotive that hauled them. A few well-timed online auction finds filled more gaps: 14-ton war tanks, some Lima coaches to stand in as command vehicles for the guns, and several eight-plank wagons fitted with WD tarpaulins. Finally, a few incorrect flatbeds were pressed into service and loaded with Mk IV tanks, WD traction engines, or a steam roller to complete the scene.

So, is a model ever truly finished? In my case, I'd say there's always room for improvement – and as of 2026, I'm still collecting rolling stock for TF3. I've recently managed to acquire the all-important ammunition wagons for the railway guns, and, with luck, Rapido will release a correct flatbed with Mk IV tanks next year.

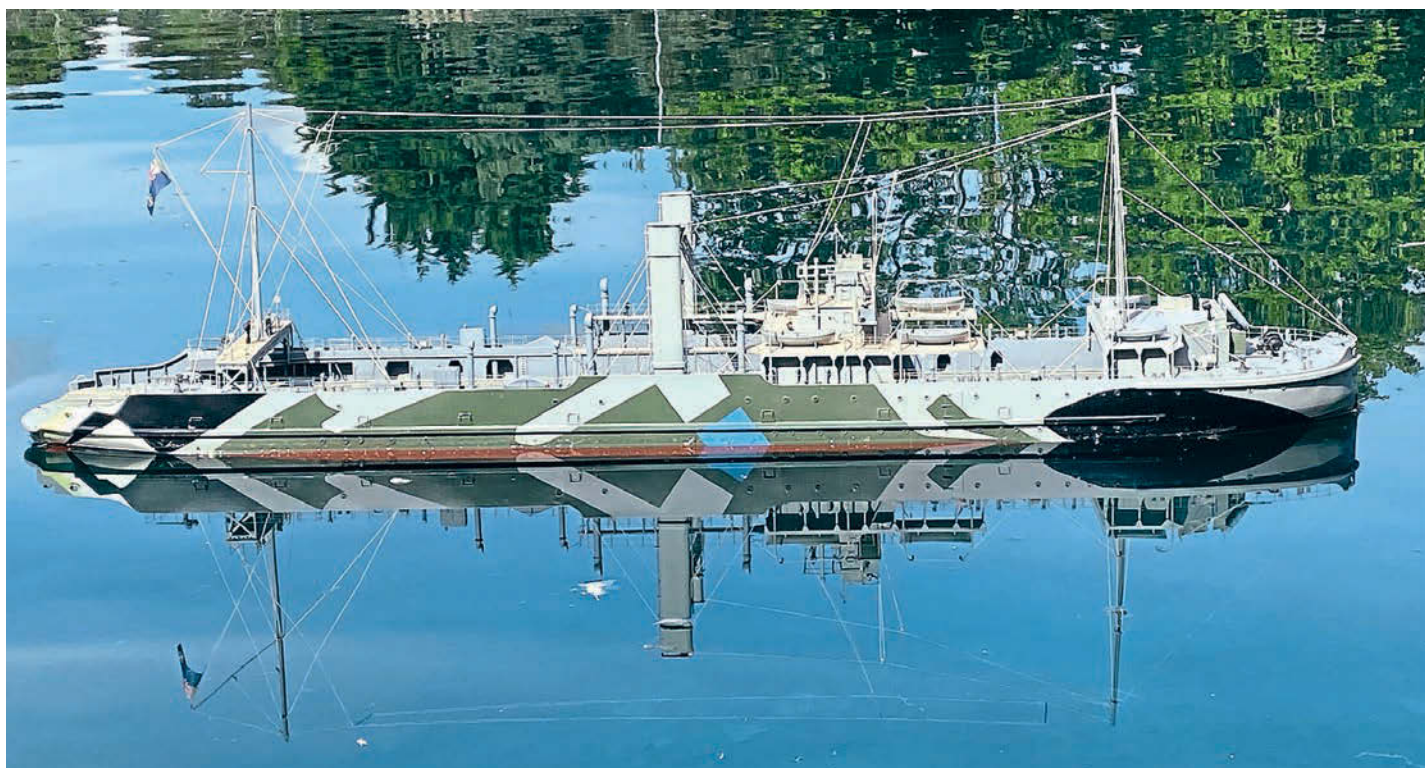
Will I dare to sail TF3 with a fully loaded deck? We'll have to see. Perhaps a future edition of *Model Boats* will feature Train Ferry No. 3 in her ultimate form, decks packed with wartime rolling stock, and maybe even a linkspan bridge to complete the display.

In addendum

I originally wrote this article a few years ago, but I think it's finally time for it to be published – for one very important reason: I would like to dedicate it to my dad, Steve Brown. Last year he was diagnosed with midstage Alzheimer's disease, and this model stands as one of his final fully completed builds before the illness began to take hold. We will always have this model to remember him by – a lasting reminder of his skill, his patience, and the many hours we spent building together. ●

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The model on the water at Wicksteed Park.

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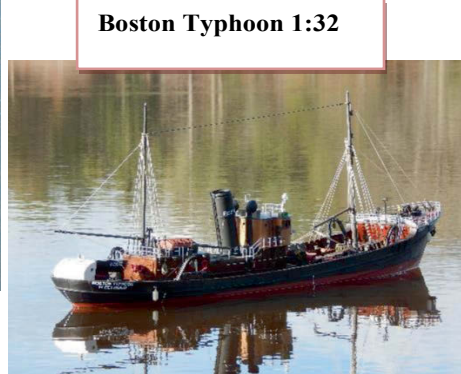
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The *Emile Robin*

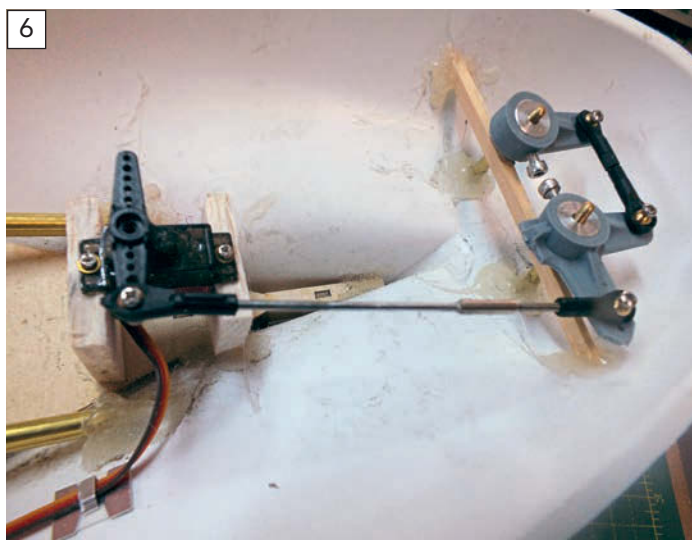
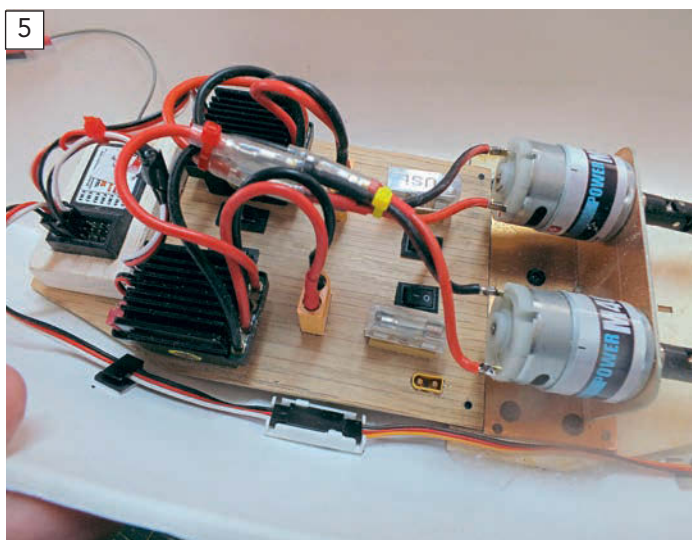
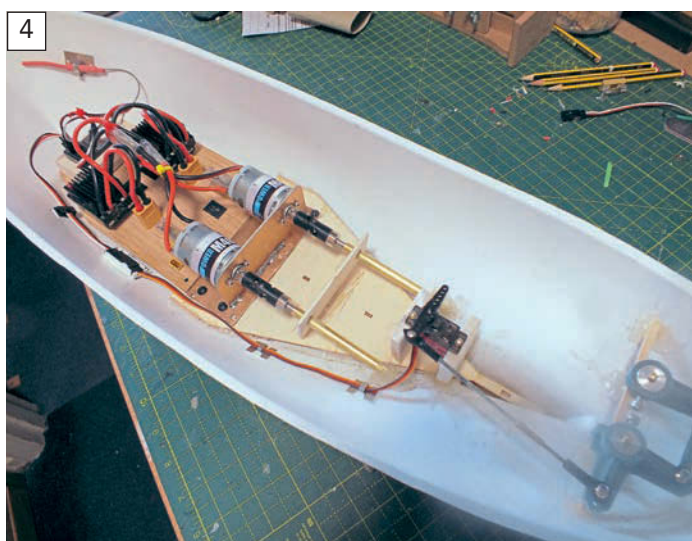
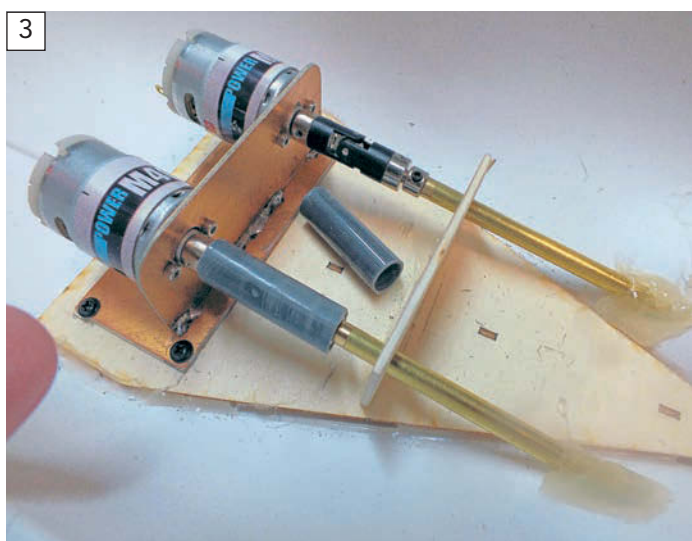
Brian Knight runs us through the build of Billings Boats' 1:33 scale kit for this Danish SAR (Search and Rescue) boat

The majority of model lifeboats I've built have been UK RNLI vessels, such as the Severn, Trent and Tamar class craft. These are fantastic in all respects and crewed by volunteers who go above and beyond when it comes to saving lives at sea. But while these three types are technically and operationally different, to the untrained eye they all look remarkably similar. So, when considering what to build next, I decided to look at some of the vessels other countries are using as rescue craft. There's a huge variety to choose from, some of which are of very basic design.

The one I found myself most drawn to, however, was the Danish lifeboat that Billings Boats has produced a kit for, the *Emile Robin* – the relaunch of which was announced in the April 2023 edition of *Model Boats*.

As the resulting model is a very close facsimile of the full-size vessel, with enough detail to keep even me happy, I endeavoured to gather as much information about the *Emile Robin* as possible. For the purposes of this article, however, the following brief synopsis, though, comes courtesy of Billings...

MRB 20 *Emile Robin* was delivered from the North Sea Shipyard in Ringkøbing, Denmark, in 1989. The lifeboat was named after the Parisian merchant Emile Robin, a philanthropist, cognac manufacturer, Vice-President of the French charity *La Société Centrale de Sauvetage des Naufragés* (Society for the Salvation of Shipwrecks), and one of the most important benefactors in the 150-year history of the Danish Lifeboat Service. MRB 20 *Emile Robin* is now permanently stationed at the lifeboat station in Hvide Sande on the western coast of Denmark.

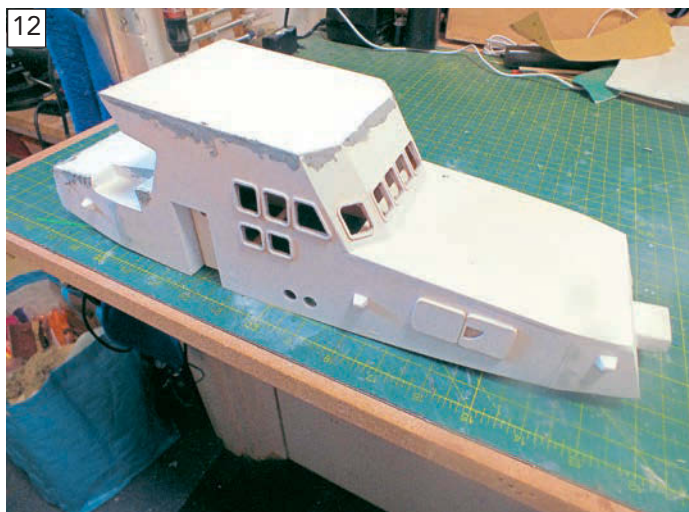
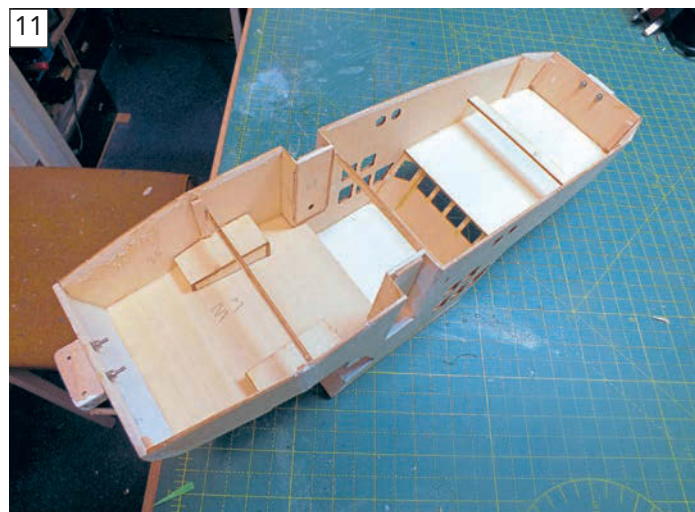
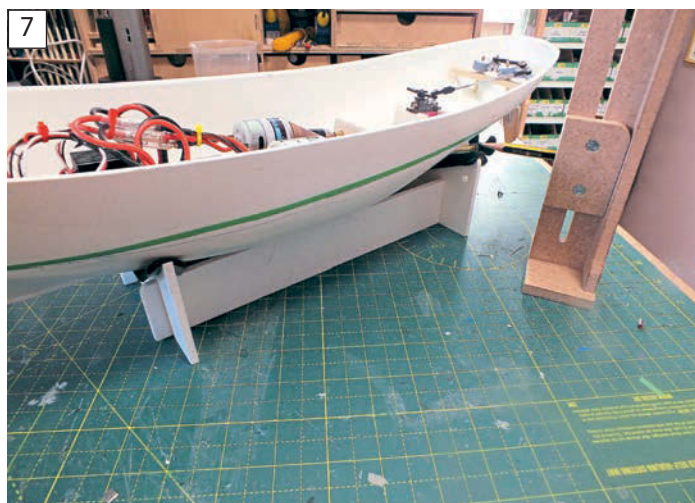


Kit inspection

After having achieved a better appreciation of the vessel I would be modelling and the kit had arrived, the build could begin. On opening the box (see Photo 01), I was pleasantly surprised to find that along with the photo manual and full-size plans was

another 28-page booklet entitled 'Building Instructions' which included a wealth of additional and detailed information. The laser-cut wooden parts are easy to remove from their sheets (of various thicknesses), as are the plastic parts, also supplied on sheets. The kit also includes all the wood and brass

strip needed, along with a large number of highly detailed brass fittings. These brass fittings are a welcome change to the white metal ones more usually supplied in kits – although, to be fair, the moulding of white metal parts has improved drastically over the years; even so, well done Billings!



Launching into the build

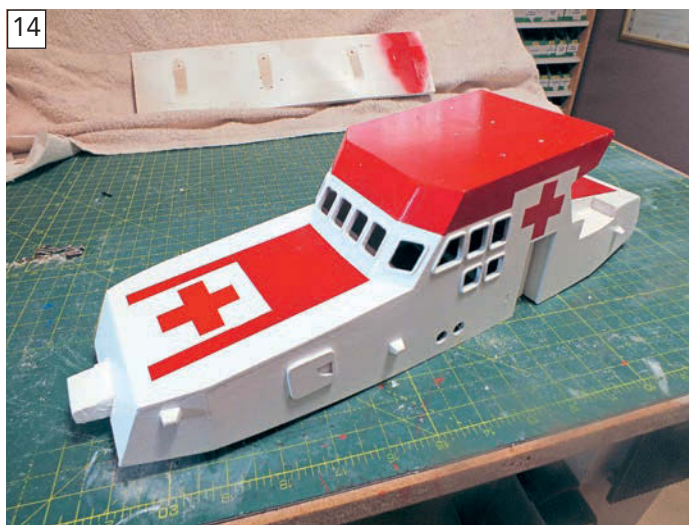
The hull is supplied as a vacuum-formed article and must be trimmed as per the instructions, i.e., 4mm needs to be cut away from the pre-formed plastic to leave a protrusion for the split rubber fender (described later). I marked this using a piece of 4mm plastic but then discovered I had 4mm flexible masking tape, so I used that as my guide (see Photo 2). Trimming

vacuum formed articles can be carried out in a number of ways, as I am sure many of my fellow modellers are aware. I normally use a knife to cut the plastic, although this can take some time, even with a sharp blade, and requires considerable care to be taken. Following Nick Brown's excellent review in the June 2026 edition of Model Boats, in which he described how the ultrasonic knife he was testing

"I decided to give this tool a try and was impressed with how much easier it made the job"

out cut "like a hot knife through butter", though, I decided to give this tool a try and was impressed by how much easier it made the job.

Before the build itself begins, the stand needs to be assembled. The



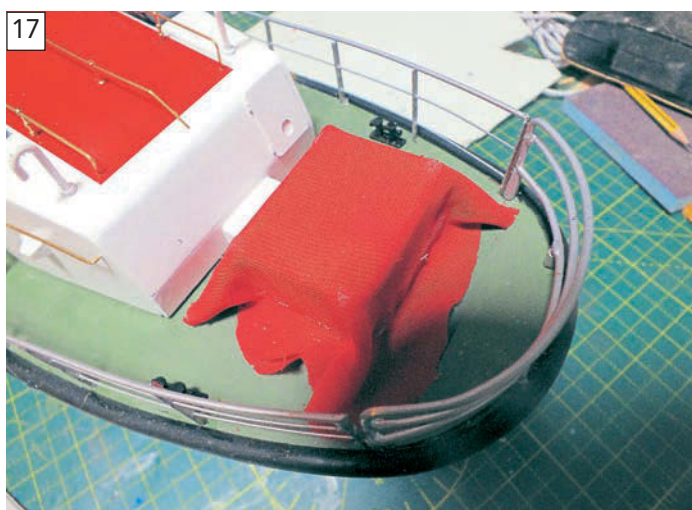
"I would advise you construct a longer, more cradle-like support structure (than that of the stand supplied in the kit) of your own for use during the build"

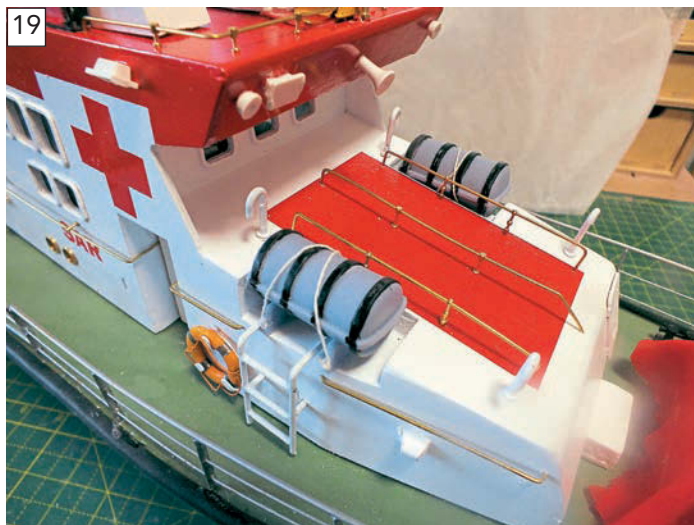
parts for this supplied in the kit are fine, and the resulting stand is OK. I would, however, advise you construct a longer, more cradle-like support structure of your own for use during the build.

Standard practice for me is to fully fit out the interior before the deck or any obstructing sections are fitted, so my prop and rudder shafts where fitted,

followed by the motors. This operation always requires very accurate alignment. I use a piece of tight-fitting plastic tube over the couplings (see **Photo 03**). The layout of all the mechanical and electrical hardware in a smaller hull requires some thought. Make sure you constantly check, with the deck held temporarily in place, that any future replacements or repairs

will be possible via your access points once the deck has actually been fitted. The mountings for the batteries on my model would only be finally decided upon after a water test to establish best weight distribution for the correct waterline. **Photos 4, 5 and 6** show the final installation. I marked the waterline





“Although fairly straightforward, here I would suggest constantly referring to the manual to ensure every part is placed correctly in position”

temporarily with a length of thin masking tape and then used my faithful waterline marker (see **Photo 7**).

Happy with the above, I could then fit the deck. Before doing so, however, I jumped ahead a bit and completed the hull and deck painting. I then assembled the railings and fitted these and the black rubber bumping strip; the latter comes pre-formed and split to fit – a very nice touch from Billings (see **Photo 8**). I also constructed and fitted the forward hatch just before adding the rest of the deck furniture.

Next came the assembly of the cabin. Although fairly straightforward, here I would suggest constantly referring to the manual to ensure every part is placed correctly in position. The window frames are a nice addition and fitted perfectly into their apertures (see **Photos 9 and 10**). As you will see in **Photo 11**, inside the protrusions fore and aft contain magnets to match with those fitted under the deck to ensure the cabin remains securely attached when the boat is out on the water.

Photo 12 shows the cabin in the process of being touched up prior to receiving its final paint finish and the fitting of various components/ accessories.

Before doing this, I completed the mast and the attachments that would be fitted to the top of the cabin. Their assembly requires time, patience and a lot of care. I highly recommend referring to both instruction manuals and the full-size plan often during this process. My finished units are shown in



Photo 13, ready to be screwed to the top cabin once I'd glued some scrap wood into any hollow parts.

After painting the cabin, the handrails and attachments (of which there are plenty) were fitted (and are shown painted in **Photo 14**). You will notice on my model the brass handrails and some of the other brass attachments have not been painted.) I decided to use a little modeller's licence here, as I do like my boats to have a little dazzle! I also spent many hours adding authentic extras, verified by referencing a photo of the actual boat (see **Photo 15**). Note the simulated red canvas covers seen in

the bow (**Photo 16**) and stern (**Photo 17**) areas, and the close-up shots of various other additions in **Photos 18, 19, 20 and 21**). To finish off the overall look, I crewed the boat with figures purchased from Model Dockyard (see **Photos 22 and 23**).

Cable considerations

Before commenting on the model's performance on the water, I think it's worth addressing here something which, as an electronic engineer, I am frequently asked about: the importance of cable size. For those of you not already in the know, it's worth pointing out that the voltage at the

"As an electronic engineer, I think it's worth addressing here something which, as an electronic engineer, I am frequently asked about..."

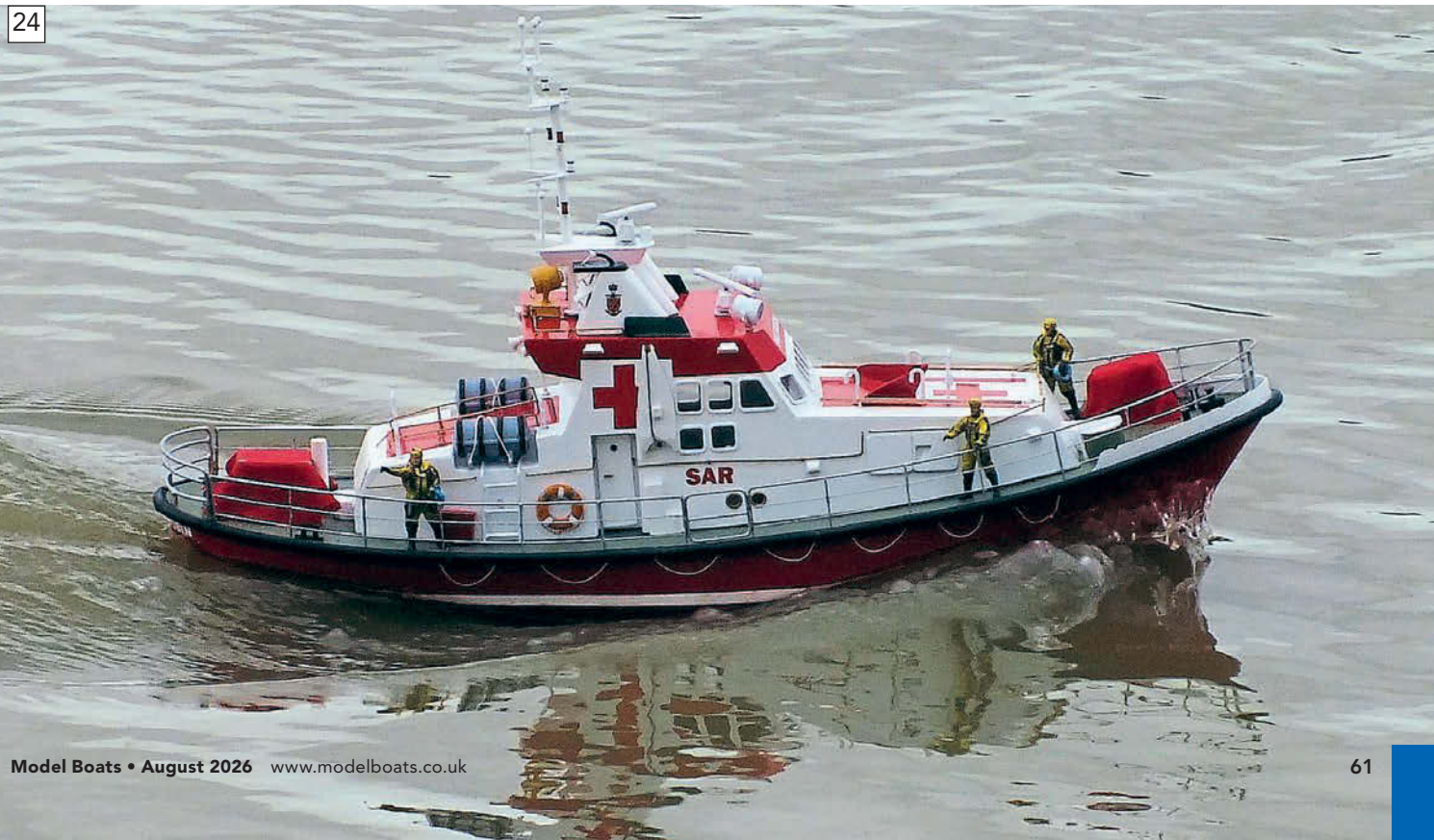
motor will always be slightly lower than the supply voltage due to the resistance of the cabling and the speed controller. If significantly lower than the supply voltage when tested, it will drop even further when the model is under load on the water. To minimise this, therefore, use a larger-gauge cable, preferably silicone-insulated cable.

On the water

After weeks of inclement weather, I was finally able to get the *Robin Emile* out on the water for her first 'shout' (see **Photo 24**). On cornering, she exhibits a slight roll, but it's barely noticeable. Other than that, she handles exceptionally well, with a very good turn of speed. She is also, for her size, a very dry boat. All in all, then, a very worthwhile build! ●

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ModelU's new crew

Richard Simpson reviews the latest 3D-printed RNLI figures

Those of you with a good memory might just be able to recall a Test Bench review I did in the October 2022 issue of the magazine, and the more in depth article in the November 2022 edition, on a range of newly released fishing boat crew figures from a company called ModelU. As a very brief recap, ModelU (<https://www.modelu3d.co.uk>) provides a huge range of 3D-printed figures, primarily aimed at the model railway enthusiast but also embracing various other scale model applications. The company also attends model shows up and down the country with its mobile scanner unit, where customers can be

scanned while dressed as they wish their resulting figure/s to be. From these scans, a 3D-printable file, and then a 3D print, can be created in the customer's own choice of scale. This gives an amazing degree of flexibility and opens up endless possibilities, limited only by your imagination.

In the Compass 360 news section for the June edition, the company's latest offerings were announced, these being sets of RNLI figures to man our modern lifeboat models. These however are not just another set of 3D-printed figures generated from a scan, they are the next level up in terms of technology. Consequently, the editor asked me if I would review the new crews for

"The grey resin 1:72 scale sets retail at £19.95 each, while the 1:72 scale sets in pre-coloured resin retail at £29.95 each. I guess the question you have to ask yourself is whether you could match the finish on the latter. I honestly think few of us could achieve an equal standard – and even if we could, not all of us would want to spend the amount of time it would take to do so"



The figures in the RNLI Crew On Shore set come in more relaxed poses, not yet in full kit (i.e., minus their helmets and lifejackets).



The figures in the RNLI Crew On Deck sets, however, come sporting full kit and are posed for action.



As the figures in these sets are not supplied fitted to sprues, to avoid damage in transit they come packaged in more substantial plastic boxes.

the following issue. I enthusiastically agreed, but must now apologise for the delay – the reason for which will become apparent as you read on...

First impressions

When the sets of 1:72 scale figures arrived, they were beautifully packaged, as ModelU figures always are (I already have a considerable number of figures produced by ModelU on my model railway layout). On extracting them, I immediately noticed that the figures in the RNLI Crew On Shore and RNLI Crew

“Bearing in mind my figures are to 1:72 scale, so measure up at just a fraction over 25mm high, the detailing is quite astonishing”

On Deck I received were all pre-finished – not painted but actually 3D-printed in different colour resins. Sets in grey resin are also available for those who prefer to paint their own figures. The grey resin 1:72 scale sets retail at £19.95 each, while the 1:72 sets in pre-coloured resin retail



The figures are around 25.4mm high, which equates to a height of 6ft in real life.



Bearing in mind the figures shown here are to 1:72 scale, the level of detail is quite astonishing.

at £29.95 each. I guess the question you have to ask yourself is whether you could match the finish on the latter. I honestly think few of us could achieve an equal standard – and even if we could, not all of us would want to spend the amount of time it would take to do so.

Also of note was the fact that the figures were not attached to supporting sprues, as we’ve come to expect from 3D printed parts, and so, because this makes them that little bit more vulnerable, they come protected in a sturdy plastic box.

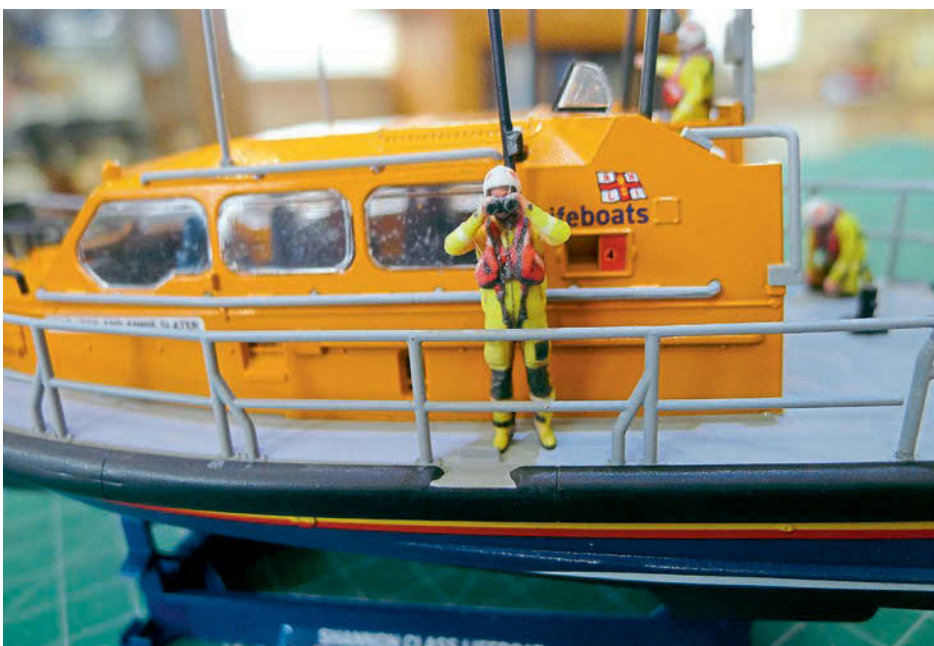
The Crew on Shore set of figures depict the crew in relaxed mode (one even has a mug of tea in hand!), minus their helmets and lifejackets; whereas the Crew On Deck figures are all fully kitted out and posed so they can be positioned as if performing the various tasks necessary when the boat goes out. Bearing in mind my figures are to 1:72 scale, so measure up at just a fraction over 25mm high, the detailing is quite astonishing.



In order to show the figures off to best advantage, Richard decided they needed a proper lifeboat backdrop. So, the crew were left to chat amongst themselves, one of them even grabbing a cup of tea, while an Airfix kit was constructed!



Enhanced by airbrushing with Tamiya acrylics (as opposed to using the paints supplied with the 1:72 scale Airfix kit), Richard was pleased with the resulting lifeboat model.



The addition of the ModelU Crew On Board figures, however, take this, aimed at complete beginners, kit-built model boat to a whole new level of realism.



The not quite set delay

In order to present a decent review of these figures, I didn't want to simply take a few shots of them on the workbench; what I really needed was a ready-built model of a modern lifeboat. No problem, I thought, I'll ask on a couple of model boat related forums, where I'm sure someone will happily lend me a model of a Shannon or a Severn class lifeboat. Absolutely no response. The only solution, therefore, was to buy the smallest and cheapest Airfix lifeboat kit, a 1:72 Shannon class vessel, and build it myself. (Don't forget the ModelU figures can be produced in a wide range of scales, making them worthy of consideration for many other manufacturer's modern lifeboat kits). The idea had been a quick, out of the box, throw together build; unfortunately, it didn't quite work out that way as I still wanted

"Not only can these figures be placed in different onboard locations, and posed as if performing various tasks, they balance so perfectly they stand up on their own!"

a boat worthy of its ModelU crew. Consequently, the provided paint was set aside in favour of Tamiya paints, airbrushed on, and the build took around three weeks as opposed to the few days I was originally anticipating. Eventually, though, I had a completed 1:72 scale Shannon on which to pose my figures. It wouldn't win any prizes, but it was neat enough.

Lifesaving and life enhancing!

Now, the Airfix Shannon without the deck crew figures is a fairly ordinary

model, with the railings noticeably over scale and the windows not the best of fit (as a result of them all being in one single piece). But, add the incredibly convincing ModelU Crew On Deck figures and, all of a sudden, the model really springs to life. Not only can these figures be placed in different onboard locations, and posed as if performing various tasks, they balance so perfectly they stand up on their own! Everything from the graphics on their helmets to the binoculars being used by crew member, elevates the look of the entire model. My Shannon is now crying out to be mounted on a realistic sea scape to turn it into something even more special!

As for the On Shore crew, they would be perfect for a diorama setting including, say, a lifeboat station or a scratch-built tractor pulling the boat. ●



Although shown here simply using Richard's Shannon class lifeboat as a backdrop, the Crew On Shore figures would be perfect for a diorama setting including, say, a lifeboat station or a scratch-built tractor pulling a lifeboat.

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DIY SFX

Listen up! **John Parker** is about to divulge how you can create a customisable sound module for your model boat

Sound effects (SFX) can really improve the realism of your model boating. Used sensibly and with regard for others (who may be enjoying their peace and quiet lakeside), an onboard sound effects module might offer the sounds of a harbour, the cry of seagulls, the ping of sonar in search of a submarine, a strident blast of air horns when collision looks imminent, the phut-phut of a simple engine, or the plangent moan of a foghorn from a model that has got stuck under the pier.

A do-it-yourself approach

Commercial sound modules are available of course, but they can be expensive and limiting in the variety or quality of sounds offered.

The DIY approach presented here uses a readily available MP3 player module and R/C switches to reproduce a variety of sound effects. This has a number of advantages that will be important to the average boat modeller. These are:

- It's inexpensive
- It's powerful (up to 30W output)
- It's downloadable, with up to nine different MP3 files you have either

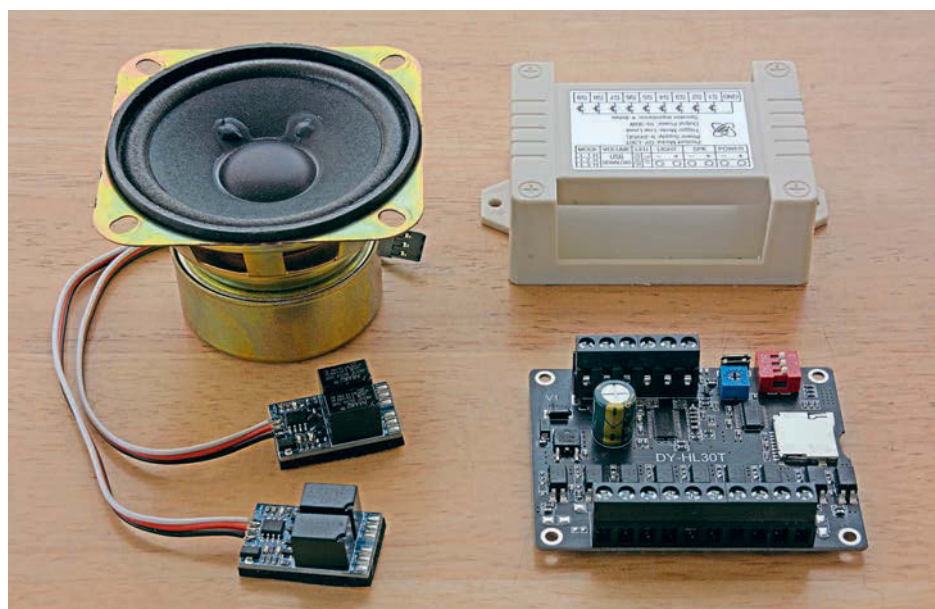
found on the Internet or recorded yourself

- It's capable of 'high fidelity' output for realistic sounds
- It's capable of producing a (non-proportional) engine sound

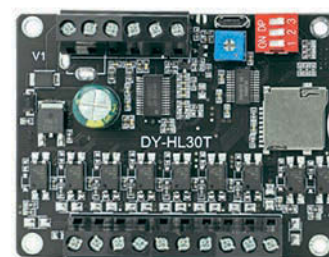
The full SFX (sound effects) system requires a DY-HL30T module, an R/C (radio-control) interface and a speaker, which will now be covered in turn.

The DY-HL30T module

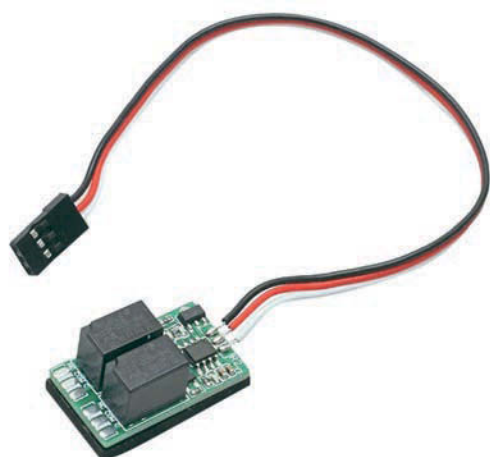
This is available from AliExpress (www.aliexpress.com) for under US\$20 including postage for the version that comes with a case (recommended). The price will



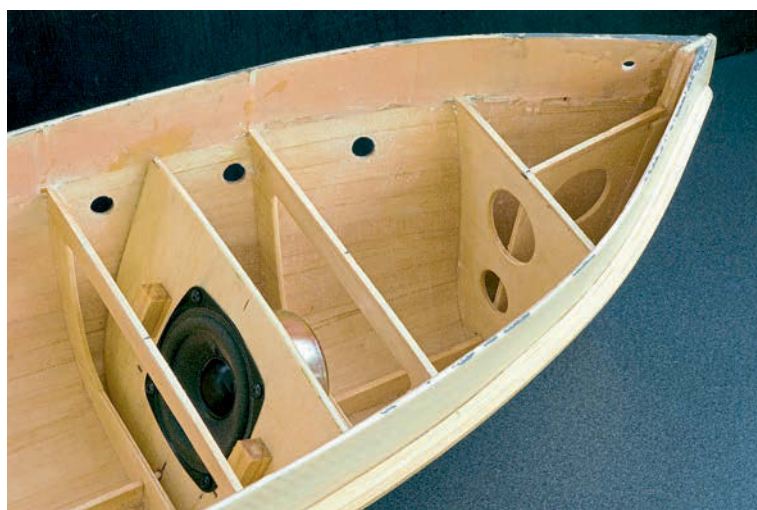
The basic components: speaker and housing (above), relay switches and MP3 module (below).



The DY-HL30T circuit board, shown bare (above) and mounted in its housing (below).



The two-way relay switch type used.



A speaker mounted on an angled bulkhead.

vary according to various promotions that may be current. Go for the high-level version which has opto-coupling to isolate the input. The unit should come with a USB lead and screwdriver, but you will also need a TF/SD micro memory card (the lowest available capacity and performance rating should be fine).

The RC interface

With up to nine sounds recorded on the module, a means of selecting the required one is needed. On my current model I have two R/C channels not being used, so I've connected a two-channel relay module to each of them, and this enables me to select from a total of four sounds at any time. Two extra sounds can be selected for each spare channel you have fitted with a two-channel relay module. For example, moving the right-hand (steering) stick up or down could give you two of the sounds, and moving

“Commercial sound modules are available of course, but they can be expensive and limiting in the variety or quality of sounds offered”

the left-hand (throttle) stick left or right could give another two. If you have spare channels that utilise a three-way switch on the transmitter, this can be a very convenient way of triggering the sounds, as you won't be doing it inadvertently as you control the boat. Only a momentary trigger is needed for the sound effect to be reproduced in full once only. The relay modules I used came from AliExpress at about US\$10 each and are described as “6-12V 2A Two-way Electronic Switch 1CH”.

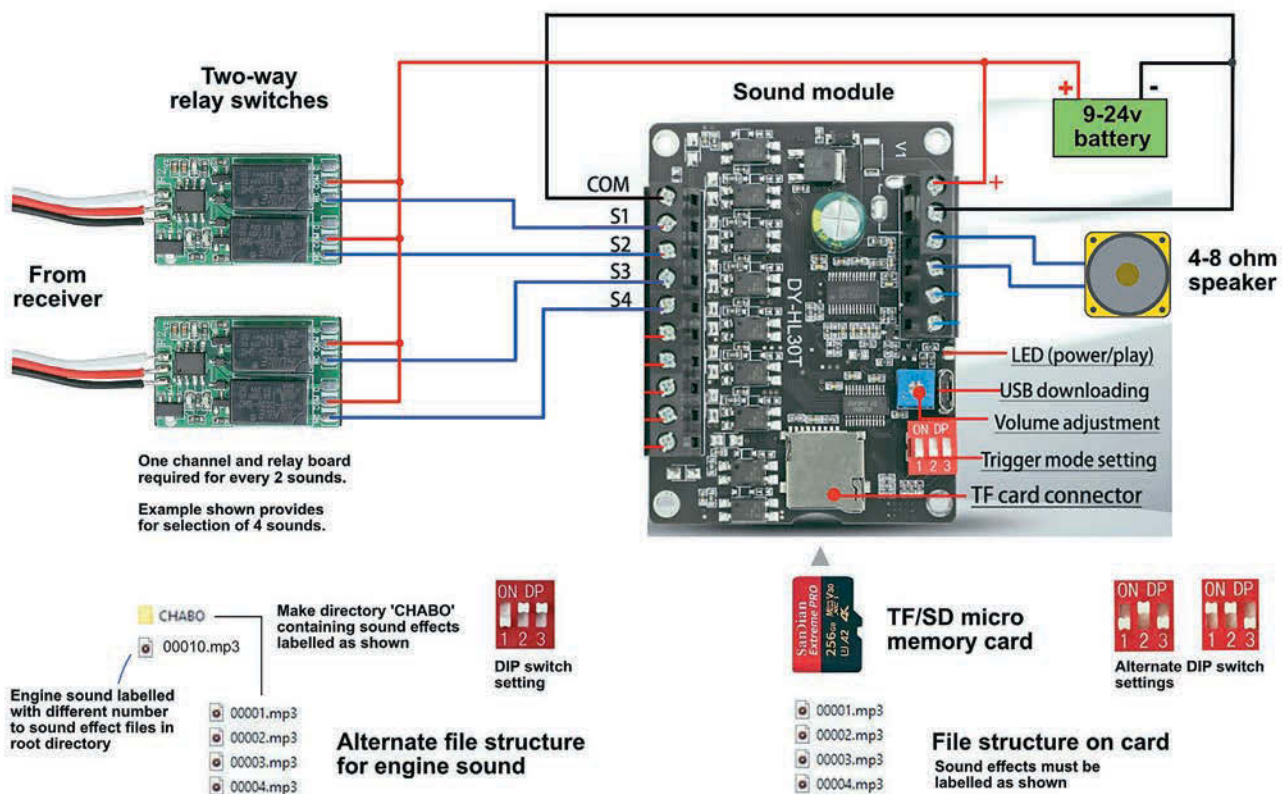
The speaker

It's no use fitting a tiny 50mm speaker in a cardboard box with this module. It requires a quality 4-to-8-ohm speaker of 76mm-100mm diameter that can handle at least a few watts, mounted in a sealed speaker box or at least on a rigid baffle board. This makes all the difference to the quality of the sound. I have always used speakers from old, wrecked cars, obtained at little or no cost, or old PC speakers.

For the speaker box, I usually seal off the bow section of the hull to make it airtight and surface-mount the speaker onto the upwards-angled bulkhead that closes it off. Obviously, you won't be able to do this in an existing model but give some thought to mounting the speaker as best you can. A metal speaker grill can protect the paper speaker cone against



A speaker mounted in the bow of a warship



WIRING THE SOUND MODULE



John's USCG picket boat and the installation within the hull's interior.

screwdriver jabs, while funnel apertures, doors, windows or portholes left open can help the sound escape. Be careful not to mount a heavy speaker high in your model, which can affect its stability.

Set-up and testing

Read the notes about the MP3 player on the AliExpress website to familiarise yourself with it, then wire it up as per the diagram. I suggest doing this on a test board first before fitting it to the model. Double check that all connections are correct. Sample sounds can be found on the Internet – try pixabay.com for starters, and search for boat sounds. When you've found a suitable selection (or recorded your own), download them onto your computer and relabel them 00001.mp3, 00002.mp3, 00003.mp3, etc, up to a maximum of nine files, then download the set via the supplied USB cable onto a TF/SD card plugged into the MP3 module. Alternatively, if your computer has a port for the TF/SD card, save the files directly to it and then transfer the card to the module.

With the DIP switches set to 1 DOWN, 2 UP, 3 DOWN and power connected, triggering one of the sounds via your R/C transmitter should result in that sound playing once only. If you want the sound to be interruptible by a second sound, change the DIP switches to 1 UP, 2 UP, 3 DOWN. You may have more sounds available than R/C switches for them, but the selection of sounds can be swapped around by changing the wires connected to the screw terminals S1 to S9.

Audacity

At this point it's worth mentioning the freely downloadable program Audacity, which can be found at www.audacity.org.

com/. This program lets you look at the waveform of a sound and modify it in various ways. For example, you can increase or decrease its duration, or have it repeat several times; you can join sound effects together and massage the transition so that one sound merges into another and so on. If some of the sound effects you find are in .wav or some other format, Audacity will quickly and easily convert them into the required .mp3 format – just import them and then export them as .mp3 files.

Engine sound

It is also possible to provide an engine sound with the module, but this will not be proportional to the throttle setting and will therefore only suit certain models, such as slow puffers or steamboats. To do this, the required engine sound must be loaded onto the memory card and renamed to, say, 00010.mp3. Then any extra sounds, such as horns or whistles, are named 00001.mp3, 00002.mp3, and so on, as before, and put into a directory named 'CHABO' on the memory card. The DIP switch settings must be changed to 1 DOWN, 2 UP and 3 UP. The engine sound will commence as soon as the sound module is turned on and will loop continuously. When an auxiliary sound is triggered, the engine sound will pause to allow it to be heard and then continue as before.

The model

I chose to fit the prototype sound module in my US Coast Guard Picket Boat (Sarik Hobbies Plan code MM2098, Model Boats Winter Special 2014). This made for an easy installation because of its commodious cabin with multiple

"This program lets you look at the waveform of a sound and modify it in various ways..."

portholes and open hatches to let the sound out. I hadn't built a speaker into the hull as I would have preferred (the wheelhouse would block the sound too much); it is instead mounted in a removable sealed box that is fitted to the inside of the main cabin with Velcro, with the MP3 module and switching relays mounted on the outside. I had to move the batteries forward a little to enable this, having previously verified that the boat could handle the increased weight of about 650 grams. Although the module is rated at 9-24 volts, 12 volts may be a more realistic minimum in most cases. My picket boat runs on only 7.2 volts, so I included a separate 14.4-volt lithium battery to power the module. I estimate the module is producing perhaps 5-8 watts into the 4-ohm speaker at this voltage.

The picket boat has a prominent bell and horn mounted on the wheelhouse, so I found a suitable alarm bell sound and a small air horn 'parp-parp-parp' sound to load into my module (I understand a triple horn sounding like this actually signifies 'I'm travelling backwards', but I am trusting my fellow sailors not to know that!). For the other two sounds I chose a burst of distorted VHF radio chatter to indicate a distress call (my driver figure has a microphone in his hand), and a rousing rendition of 'Anchors Aweigh!' to play on completion of a successful rescue mission or during ceremonial sail-pasts. ●

BOILER ROOM

Richard Simpson explains how to set up an attenuator valve

Many years ago now, in the May 2011 edition of *Model Boats*, we had a look at attenuator valves. Back then I described how these valves are supposed to work, and how they can save on gas consumption and reduce the gas cooling effect in our steam-powered models. Recently, however, on mentioning the use of electronic gas control valves and attenuators during a conversation with a fellow modeller, he confessed that while he understood how an attenuator valve was supposed to work, he wasn't at all sure of how to properly set one up. As the latter really is key to getting the best out of our plant, in this instalment of *Boiler Room* we will be revisiting the subject.

Before getting started, though, I first did a bit of market research. The attenuator valve I have fitted to my *Borkum* is a quite old example purchased from Forest Classics (see **Photo 1**); I was, however, aware that subsequently, this manufacturer had, for a period of time, supplied a

different type of valve, which wasn't quite as successful as the first type. Now, after a few years of collaboration with Martin Baylis Engineering (<https://www.model-steam-engines.co.uk/>), Forest Classics (<https://forestclassics.co.uk/>) has a new version of the valve available, which it very kindly agreed to let me have an example of to review and test for the purposes of this article.

How an attenuator valve works

The prime objective of the attenuator valve is to prevent the waste of steam, and hence water and gas. This has the additional advantage of prolonging a model's time on the water as well as helping to prevent the challenges of the gas cooling effect. I'm not going to go into the issue again here of why our gas cools as it's used in our model boilers, as this has been covered many times in the past, most recently, and in some depth, in the May 2026 instalment of *Boiler Room*. Suffice to say, the liquid and the gas in our gas tanks cools as

the gas is consumed by our boilers. Preventing this can be approached from an operational or a constructional point of view. Considering the constructional aspect, we can fit an electronic gas control valve such as supplied by either Stuart Models or Denes Designs, or we can use an attenuator valve, such as the new Bix 029 valve as supplied by Forest Classics. It's still possible to find secondhand versions originally produced by the likes of John Hemmens (see **Photo 2**), but obviously these no longer come with a support or spare parts availability service so could prove to be a challenge to get operational.

What, then, does the attenuator valve do for us? Well, the burner operating on a boiler must be set so that it can accommodate the highest steam demand of the engine. Failure to meet this demand would mean that if the engine was kept at full throttle, the pressure would start to drop off, impairing engine performance. The trouble is that with the burner set up

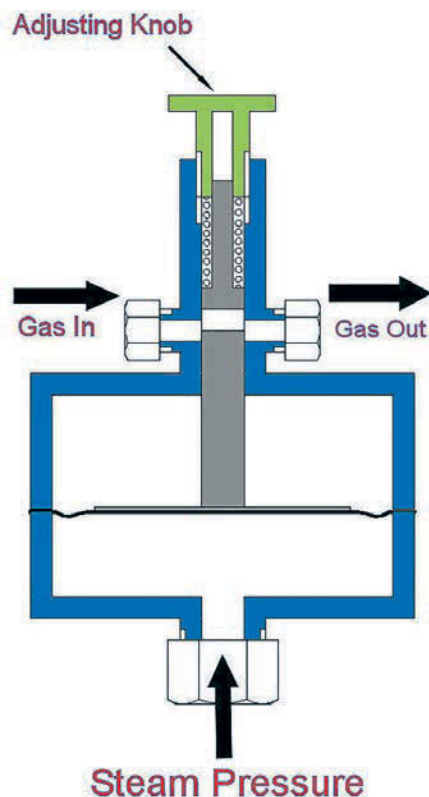


This original Forest Classics attenuator valve has seen many years' service, working well on a Cheddar 3½-inch boiler in Richard's Borkum model. Unusually mounted directly onto the boiler shell, the only challenge was that its control knob used to get quite hot.



It is still possible to find a John Hemmens attenuator valve. With Hemmens no longer in business, however, you will be on your own should you need to replace its diaphragm.

Diagram 1

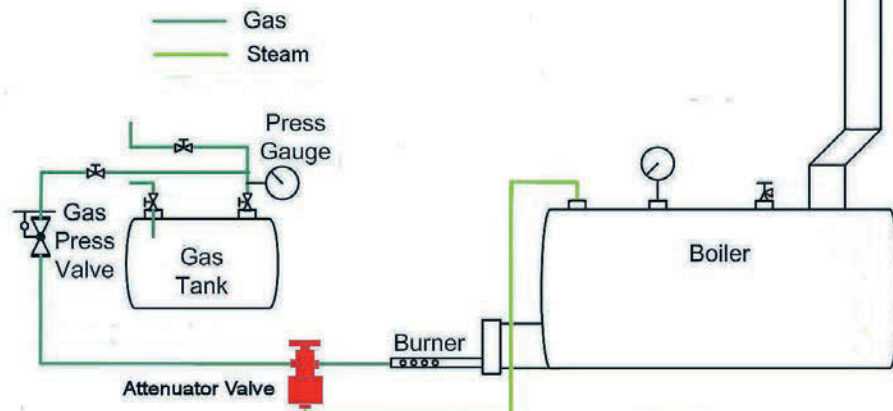


A rough diagram of an attenuator valve. An increase in steam pressure will push the diaphragm and the piston upwards, shutting the gas off further and reducing the flame. The set point is determined by the pre-loading on the spring.

for maximum engine demand, when the engine is operating slowly, the boiler pressure starts to rise, eventually reaching the point where the safety valve has to lift. Consequently, not only is the valuable steam that's been produced in the boiler and the even more valuable gas burnt to produce the steam and water in the boiler wasted but there's an increase in the cooling effect on the gas tank, thereby affecting the evaporation rate. What we ideally want is for the burner to be on high when the engine is going fast and on low when the engine is running slowly or stopped. This is where the attenuator valve comes in. The attenuator valve does exactly that; it turns the gas up to give a hotter flame when the pressure in the boiler starts to fall, and it shuts the flame down to a pilot flame when the pressure in the boiler rises to a pre-set level. It does all this mechanically, so there's no requirement for additional batteries or control units – all you need is the valve and a bit of additional plumbing.

How does the attenuator valve achieve this? Essentially, inside the valve is a diaphragm that features a spring on

Diagram 2



A typical line diagram installation in a horizontal boiler. Ideally the valve should be higher than the boiler and connected via a syphon tube, this ensuring any condensate forming in the steam connection will fall back into the boiler and help prevent scale and sludge accumulating in the valve.

one side with the boiler steam pressure acting on the other. As boiler pressure falls, the diaphragm moves towards the steam-pressure side, allowing the spring to extend until its force once again balances the steam pressure. The valve then settles at a new equilibrium position where the spring force matches the reduced steam pressure. On the other hand, when the pressure in the boiler increases, the diaphragm moves towards the spring, again until such point the compressed spring becomes balanced with the higher steam pressure.

Attached to this diaphragm is a valve which incorporates a port, this being arranged in the body so that it either opens or closes the passage of gas from the gas tank to the burner. As the steam pressure in the boiler falls, the diaphragm moves and opens the port in the valve, thereby increasing gas to the burner so that the pressure recovers again. As the pressure rises, the diaphragm moves the other way and partially closes off the port so the gas to the burner is reduced – again, until the system is again balanced (see **Diagram 1**)

The compression of the spring determines the steam pressure required to balance it. Consequently, having the means to adjust the pressure on the spring means we effectively have a means of adjusting the boiler pressure. There have been attenuator valves in the past that have balanced gas pressure, rather than a spring, against steam pressure, but because of gas pressure varying with ambient conditions these proved inherently unstable. The new Forest Classics/Martin Baylis attenuator valve balances the steam pressure against a spring, as described above.

So, with the new attenuator valve fitted in the plant (see **Diagram 2**), not only do we have the means to

prevent the safety valve from lifting and wasting steam and gas but also a reliable way of adjusting the pressure the boiler works at. Consequently, if we think we're using too much gas during a Sunday morning's sail, we can simply adjust the attenuator valve and reduce the pressure in the boiler. The engine will then run slightly slower on full throttle, but the gas will last longer, which may be more convenient than having to refill or change gas bottles.

The Forest Classics/Martin Baylis attenuator valve

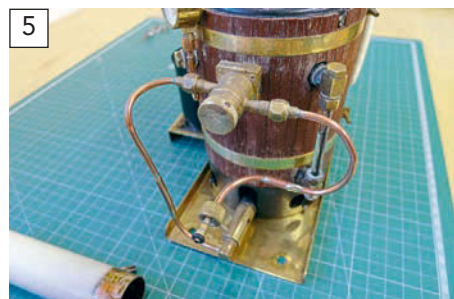
As mentioned, Forest Classics kindly agreed to send me an attenuator valve to review and test, and a couple of days later this valve duly arrived in a stout cardboard box. On removing from the bubble wrap (see **Photo 3**) I immediately noticed that A) the valve was a little larger than the original valve I already had fitted, and B) the quality of the machined surfaces on this new valve were superb. The top and bottom covers of the valve were held in place by a ring of extremely fine set screws, and all three connections were fitted with 1/4" x 40 tpi nuts and compression cones, ready to fit to the end of a suitable piece of pipe (see **Photo 4**). Also, the fitting for the steam connection was for 5/32" diameter pipe to give the valve a bit more support from the steam pipe; consequently, care had to be taken not to mix the fittings up. Included was an instruction sheet, with guidance for fitting and operation of the valve. While the instructions suggest that this valve should be fitted in a vertical attitude, the original valve I already had fitted to my Cheddar boiler was screwed directly into the boiler and hence was horizontal. Martin Baylis, however, confirmed that this valve should work in either attitude, although it is best fitted vertically and



The new Forest Classics/Martin Baylis attenuator valve Richard took delivery of arrived well packed and complete with an instruction sheet detailing installation and operation.



Nuts and cones came fitted to all three connections and ready to solder to pipework. Richard did, however, find the fitting for the steam connection was designed for a slightly smaller diameter pipe than used with his previous valve.



Richard's old attenuator valve has seen many years of service and still works well. The control knob was always a bit stiff, though, and adjusting the pressure setting frequently led to burned fingers.



Being held together by only four screws put inconsistent pressure on the diaphragm, which can be seen by the fact that it squeezed out at the sides.



A sound reason for not keeping a valve directly attached to the boiler shell is the fact that scale and sludge can build up inside the valve steam space. While Richard's old valve was still working when last used, he knew it was only a matter of time before it seized up.



A twist of PTFE tape on the valve steam connection threads ensured a sealed joint on the boiler.

via a syphon tube to protect it from excessive moisture.

So, believing my old valve could simply be replaced this new one, I set about what I thought would be a five-minute job. It wasn't until I'd extracted the plant from the model (see **Photo 5**) and removed the old valve (see **Photo 6**) that I discovered this new valve has slightly different threads on its connections, meaning the unit couldn't simply be slotted into the existing pipework. What I therefore decided to do was to fit it, again horizontally and



Richard was hoping for a direct swap over using the same original pipes, but the threads on his new valve differed slightly from those on his old valve, so new pipes had to be made up.

directly to the boiler, simply so that I could see the valve operate and report my observations.

The scale and sludge deposits that had formed inside the steam connection to the old valve made me realise that while the new valve may work successfully when mounted horizontally, long term, it, too, would also accumulate deposits (see **Photo 7**). What's more, plans to just quickly fit



Back in the Borkum with everything looking neat and ready for a run. The control knob certainly proved easier to turn, probably because the spring rate is quite a bit lower than that of the original.

the new valve to the boiler for testing were soon thwarted by the old cones refusing to simply de-solder from the ends of the pipes, meaning I had to first make up some new pipes before plumbing it in. At least, though, I was able to use the old pipes as templates. The new valve was then fitted with PTFE tape on the thread and screwed into the boiler boss (see **Photo 8**).

Having completed the pipework



Once the pressure reached Richard's desired point, the control knob was backed off until the flame was heard to die down. Depending on your boiler, you may have to listen carefully for this, but you should be able to tell.

and fitted the valve (see **Photo 9**), I dropped the plant back into the *Borkum* so I could give the boiler a test run (see **Photo 10**). Before that, however, I read through the instructions again, just to make sure I hadn't missed anything, before firing up the

boiler. The instructions specify that the control knob should be screwed in until resistance is felt; this is not the point where the spindle touches the spring but the point where the internal spring is completely compressed, which effectively fully opens the valve,

allowing full gas flow to the burner irrespective of the steam pressure.

I lit the boiler and waited for the pressure to come up. Once it had risen to the pressure I wanted the boiler to operate at, the control valve was unscrewed until I heard the flame die down (see **Photo 11**). If you're not quick enough to unscrew the control knob and the pressure rises too much, shut off the gas, vent a bit of pressure and bring it up again. After a couple of goes at this, I found that the gas was shutting down to the pilot flame setting at just below my working pressure. I then left the valve to do its job while I opened the boiler outlet valve and ran the engine for a few minutes. The valve worked perfectly. When the engine was running, the valve opened just enough to increase the gas pressure and therefore the burner to prevent the boiler pressure from falling, and when I stopped the engine, the boiler pressure quickly settled at the set pressure and the flame shut down (see **Photo 12**). The valve worked beautifully in proportion to engine demand, no matter how I ran the engine, and when the engine was stopped the flame shut down to a pilot



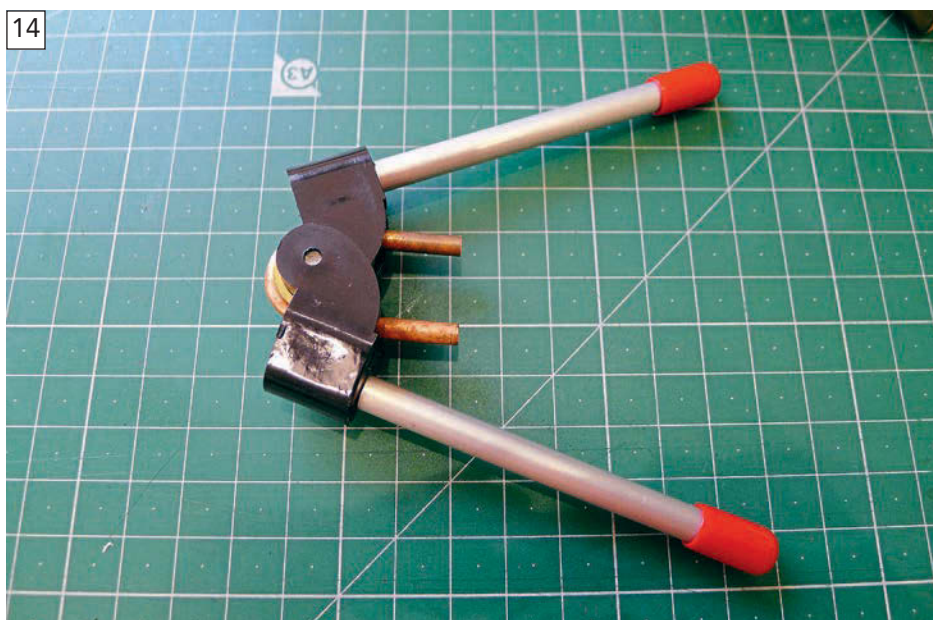
On opening the steam to the engine and running the engine a few times, Richard saw very little variation in boiler pressure. When the engine was stopped, the pressure settled at the set point and stayed there without the safety valve lifting.

13



Visible down the flue is the burner turned down to a pilot flame. The screwdriver on the safety valve is there just to prevent a bit of weeping, which was misting up Richard's camera.

14



As luck would have it, Richard's pipe bending tool had exactly the right radius of bend to suit the distance he wanted the valve from the boiler fitting, so a nice easy pipe to make.

flame that was just enough to maintain pressure (see **Photo 13**).

It was only on attempting to put everything back together that it became apparent the new valve, being just that bit bigger than the old version, wouldn't allow me to refit my gas tank cover. I therefore decided I needed to

do the job properly, as I should have in the first place. Studying the valve location made me realise that I could remove the valve from the boiler, rotate it through 90 degrees so that it became upright, and then fit a 5/32" pipe from the steam connection to a 90-degree elbow mounted on the boiler. As luck

15



The bits laid out ready to silver solder the cones onto the ends of the pipe. For the pipe to work as a siphon, the valve should be mounted higher than the boiler elbow, but that would have required the other pipes to be remade as well. This is a task Richard will tackle in the future.

would have it, my pipe bender gave a radius perfect for the distance between the valve position and the elbow, so I made up a pipe (see **Photo 14**) and soldered the two cones onto the ends of it (see **Photo 15**). It was then a simple job of refitting the valve to the new steam pipe and the existing gas pipes (see **Photo 16**). What I also noticed was that the steam connection isn't strictly a correctly configured siphon pipe as the valve isn't mounted higher than the connection on the boiler, so that's a modification that will have to be attended to on another day as all three connecting pipes will have to be redesigned and remade.



A much better arrangement both for isolating the valve from the boiler and accessing it when the boat is in operation. The control knob and the valve should remain a lot cooler.



Mounting vertically also allowed the bunker to be replaced, so a much better arrangement.

With the pipework finished, I dropped the plant back into the *Borkum* again to give it another run (see **Photo 17**). As previously, the valve performed flawlessly and, this time it proved to be significantly more convenient to operate the valve when in an upright attitude. I also noticed that the control knob remained cool; with the old valve, the control knob used to get quite hot after a bit of running. Once again, the valve operated to follow the demands of the engine and worked beautifully proportionally (see **Photo 18**).

When I get around to putting the model on the water, I will probably mark the control knob at the point where I know it controls the pressure I normally want in the boiler with a spot of paint.

The final job was to make a note on the boiler test record card describing the change that had been made. The boiler will now need to be issued with a new pressure test certificate.



Another test run proved that the valve worked perfectly proportionally to the requirements of the engine. Before Richard puts the model on the water again, he will mark the control knob with a spot of paint at the point of normal working pressure.

Conclusions

Of all the possible constructional enhancements to reduce the likelihood of wasting steam and gas, some form of gas control is the best bang for your buck you can fit.

The attenuator valve from Forest Classics follows engine demand perfectly and so prevents the safety valve lifting while still ensuring there's performance from the engine when you need it. The price of this valve, currently £150 as of April 2026, may seem like a lot of money, but when you factor in the price of gas and how much more efficiently you're going to be using it, that initial outlay can be quickly offset. It also improves operational duration and saves the embarrassment of the safety valve lifting while your model is out the water because you've been temporarily distracted, perhaps while stopping to have a chat with someone for a few

minutes. Compared with an electronic gas control valve, you also have the advantage of not needing to find space for an additional battery, control unit and servo, and/or remembering to have a charged battery fitted. So, for anyone thinking of putting together a steam plant, I would highly recommend this valve. Don't forget that you need to select the right valve for your model's operating pressures. There are two options available:

- Option 1: suitable for engines that operate between 5-30 psi.
- Option 2: suitable for engines that operate between 30-80 psi.

The majority of model boat plant that I come across work in the region of around 45 to 60 psi, so the Option 2 valve would be the one to go for.

Just a few final words of advice... Rather than set up the attenuator valve and then ignore it from that point on, get into the habit of operating it

every time you put the model on the water. A good routine to adopt before every sailing session is to screw the control knob down to keep the burner on full flame until the safety valve lifts; this will ensure the attenuator valve and the safety valve both get regularly exercised, thus keeping them operating reliably. This is where adding a paint mark on the control knob will prove useful, as you can return the valve to its normally set position quickly after lifting the safety valve. ●

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Your Models

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

HMS Vanguard: a work in progress

Just a quick message to say a belated thank you (having just returned from several weeks overseas) for my *British Battlecruisers of the Second World War* book prize [from the April 2026 edition Osprey Publishing prize draw]. After a quick flick through it, I am now looking forward to a proper in depth read, as I have long been an admirer of the fine vessels designed and constructed during this period.

As for my workbench, I am currently building Victory Models HMS Vanguard of 1787, a third rate 74-gun vessel of the Arrogant class. She was Nelson's Flagship at the Battle of the Nile. The project has unfortunately stalled at present – I think it had something to do with the fitting of 2,500 copper plates to the underwater



part of the hull! I have attached a couple of photos for you if you should wish to use them.

You and your team are doing a great job with the magazine and its content. I always look forward to it dropping through the letterbox.

GORDON HAIG
EMAIL



Thanks for your lovely email, Gordon. What a magnificent model that's going to be. Please do send some more photos when you eventually get her finished, or better still (she says, hopefully!) consider documenting the build photographically and writing it up as a future feature for Model Boats. Ed.

Carrier case

As my model of the HMS Victorious (R38) is getting a bit too much for me nowadays, I've made a display case for her, so she now has a second career as a piece of entertainment.

The case was constructed from 5mm ply and sheathed in GRP to strengthened it/protect it from the elements, and I had some fun creating a backdrop for Victorious and fitting lighting within its interior.

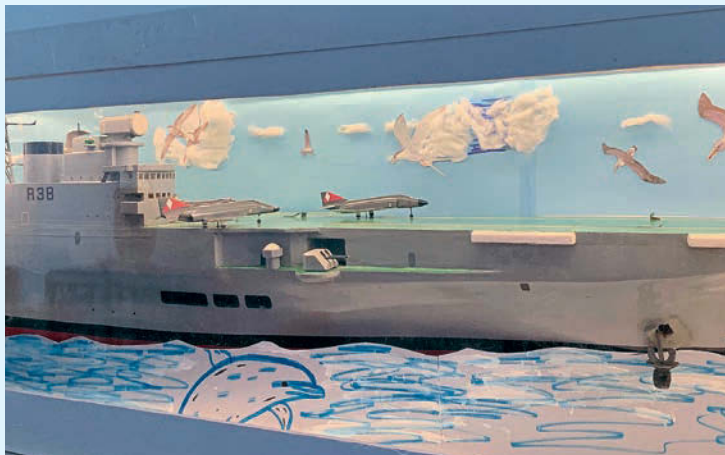
The case will also serve to securely transport the model should I eventually take her back to England.



TREVOR BRUCE
AUSTRALIA



I absolutely love this, Trevor! Many thanks for sharing. 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**

Project offer

I have inherited a lovely, British made, wooden Siglo XIX clipper model, which requires a bit of work/restoration. Not being a modeller myself, I would really like to pass it on, free of charge, to someone who would enjoy doing it up as

a project (as you will see from the photos, the rigging and sails are in need of repair). Due to its size/fragility, anyone interested would need to be able to collect in person from Lutterworth in Leicestershire.
SUZANNE COATES
EMAIL

What a generous and thoughtful offer, Suzanne. I am sure someone reading will be delighted to take this lovely, albeit in need of a little TLC, model off your hands, and I will happily pass on the contact details of anyone who expresses interest to you. Ed.



Grow your own!

Last year you published my letter outlining an idea I had for converting the raised vegetable bed in my back garden into a makeshift model boating pond. Before the very early start we had to summer this year, I

actually completed the project and thought you might like to see a couple of photos of the result (taken while still waiting on a bit more rain!).
DARRYL FOXWELL
EMAIL

Great fun, and in the close up the vessel actually looks like it's cutting its way through cold, choppy seas. Cheers, Darryl. Ed.



A much bigger build!

I read with interest the article in the May edition regarding the building of Billing Boats' Oseberg Viking long ship kit.

It may be of interest to readers that at Woodbridge in Suffolk, they are in fact building a full-size replica of a burial boat excavated at the Sutton Hoo site. I have recently spent some hours there observing the build and talking with the people doing the work in the manner in which the boat was originally built about 1600 years ago.

It's well worth a visit and is free!

The work is being carried out in the Long Shed and launch expected sometime next year.

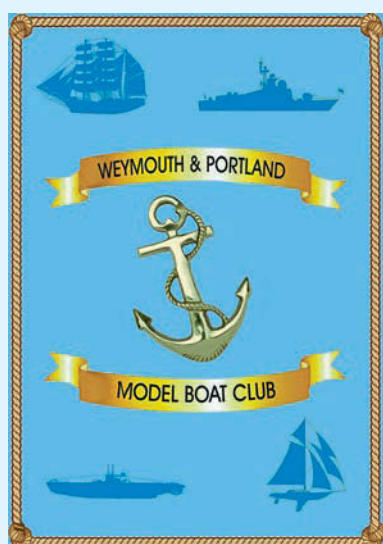
**ROGER TRUE
EMAIL**

Ooh, thanks, Roger. I've just Googled this and found a video of a Team Time Special about this project on YouTube that looks worth a watch for anyone not able to pay a visit the site itself. Ed.



A still from a home movie made by H.J. Phillips (now released into the Public Domain) of the 1939 excavation of the Sutton Hoo burial ship. Work is currently underway to build a replica of this long ship, working with the same tools and techniques that would have been used on the original.

Weymouth & Portland MBC



On behalf of the Weymouth & Portland Model Boat Club (<https://wpmbc.co.uk>), of which I am a member, I would like to extend an open invitation to anyone interested in coming along to one of our social meetings, held at the church of St Francis in Littlemoor, Weymouth, West Dorset on the first Wednesday of every month (starting at 7pm) and finding out more about us.

We are a friendly, inclusive bunch and currently have three different sailing locations: Radipole Lake in Weymouth, where you will find us on most Sundays, Mangerton Mill Lake (just outside from Bridport on Beaminster Road) and Symondsburry Lake (again, just outside from Bridport on Lyme Regis Road, where we sail on Wednesday mornings). We sail, electric and steam powered models – although please note IC powered models cannot be used on any of our lakes) and we also put on static and on water displays at various local shows and events.

**ROBIN SEARLE
WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND, MBC**



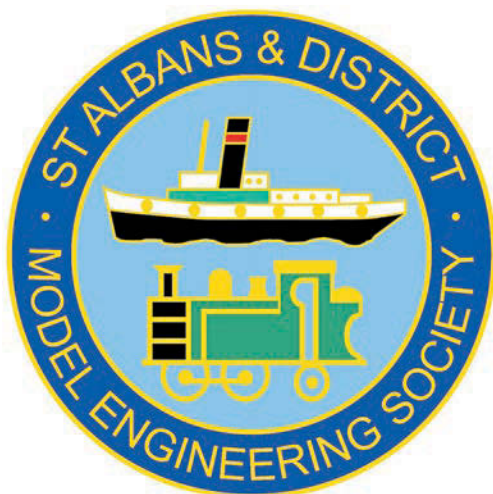


Work, rest and play: Symondsbury Lake needed a little TLC at first sailing this year – all part of the process, and very much part life out in the sticks! Members, however, have since been able to reap the rewards of some lovely, leisurely sailing sessions.



Members of the Weymouth & Portland enjoying their lovely, well maintained, lake.

St Albans & District Model Engineering Society



For any readers not already aware, I'd like to draw attention to the fact that at the St Albans & District Model Engineering Society we have always catered for model boat as well as model engineering enthusiasts. Members of the boating section of the Society currently use the purpose-built lake in Verulamium Park and will always be more than happy to chat with any potential new members there during sailing sessions (details of membership can also be found at <https://stalbansmes.com/join/>).

Sailing dates for the remainder of the year (usually on Sundays between 10am and 1pm, unless otherwise agreed) will be as follows:

- July 19
- August 23.
- September 20
- October 25
- November 22

We will also be running The BIG St Albans Model Show over the weekend of September 26/27 [more details of which will appear in the Compass 360 section of a future edition of Model Boats].

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You can, of course, order your copy of the September 2026 issue, which goes on sale at all good newsagents from Friday, August 21, 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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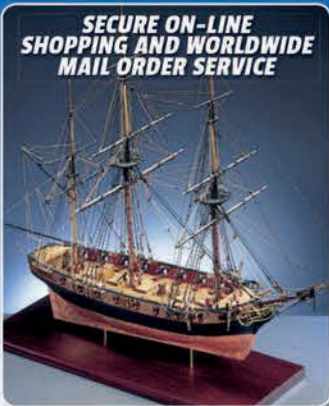
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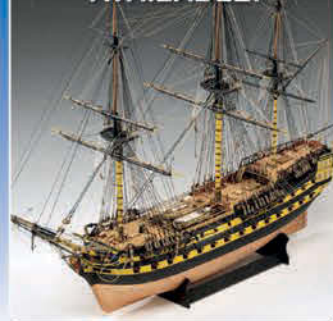
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