

September 2008 Autumn Newsletter

Scale Captain's Chat

Hello Everybody.

Welcome to our latest newsletter. I hope that you have all enjoyed the summer despite the poor weather (Global Warming seems to have missed us?).

We have had a busy time over the past few months. The 30th Anniversary BBQ held on 13th July was a great success, I have never seen so many people at the lake at one time. Thank you all for your support we hope you enjoyed yourselves. My grateful thanks go to the committee members, Andrew (Jamie Oliver!!) Soffe and my lady helpers for making the day such a success.

We displayed our boats at The Calshot Lifeboat Open Day on 20th July and despite the poor showing from club members we were able to put on a reasonable display and those who attended really enjoyed themselves. On 3rd August we set up a club display at Lymington Lifeboat Station Open Day, the attendance was excellent despite the overcast weather and we filled the lifeboat house with models, many thanks to all our exhibitors.

David Reith and Myself displayed our warship models at the "Meet Your Navy" Days in Portsmouth Dockyard on 1st, 2nd and, 3rd of August as members of the "Surface Warship Association" and will be doing so again on 27th and 28th of September at The Model Boat Weekend in the Dockyard (good displays and trade stands).

Unfortunately the Steering Competition on 31st August had to be cancelled due to bad weather and, because of that, only three possible competitors at the lake, thanks go to John Frost for all his work designing the course. We hope that it may be possible to reschedule, but it is not guaranteed at this stage and the competition for The Solent Cup may not happen this year.

The days of a few guys at the lake with model boats running on large batteries, and a "Bob's board" (a very early speed controller that fitted on to the servo) struggling to reach a scale speed, seem to be well behind us as we try to keep up with technology and new ideas. As a club we must move with the times and there are many people of the modern generations who do not have the skills to build their own boats and can now buy excellent scale RTR models such as those now produced by Graupner (not the £30 Maplin type "cheapy" boats). Also, those who wish to branch out into new technology will have to be considered in the membership applications we receive.

Taking the above into account, the committee have now had to produce additional rules for the safe operation of model hovercraft which you will find on the website and in this newsletter, this is not an attack on any particular member but is needed to protect the Club reputation, safety and insurance risks. Hovercraft are not as controllable as model boats, pose a higher safety risk to the public and members with their ability to move from water to land and can be very noisy. Despite the fact that we have not had a formal complaint from the FC, we are aware that we are possibly being monitored by wardens. So please observe the new rules. We also need to be aware that air boats and some fast electric boats can cause noise pollution and the committee requests that you take this in to consideration when running your models. We have a fantastic location at Setley Pond and are the envy of many other clubs, so please respect the rights of local residents.



The Scale Captain completes a difficult manoeuvre during Navy Day!

To finish on a "high note", I hope you have had a chance to visit the club website (" www.srcmbc.org.uk ") which has surpassed all expectations thanks to Peter Taylor. If you have not yet seen it, I suggest that it is worth a visit as it contains members' and visitors' info, club rules, history of Setley Pond, event reports, and lots of photos of members and their boats, Hints and Tips, and lots more. We are getting hits on the site from people all over the world, a fantastic advert for the club.

Well that's enough rambling on from me, See you at the lake!

David

Dates for your diary

Club Events

13th December: Christmas Lunch/Party (see Mike Hammond's contribution below).

Other exhibitions during 2008

5th October Beale Park Modelling Show (2) (http://www.bealepark.co.uk/events_item.php?id=111).

News:

Club events



The **Club's 30th anniversary BBQ and Club Day** took place at Setley Pond on Sunday, 13th July 2008. The event was very well attended, the food was delicious, and only one boat caught on fire! Chris Chattaway won the impromptu "Steering Competition" and Louis Vaisey won the first prize in the raffle (a tug and barge kit donated by Peter Oram).

The club participated in the **Calshot Lifeboat Fun Day** on 20th July. As well as our model boats there were the "Zap Cats", the Hampshire and IOW Air Ambulance, a Fawly tug, and of course the Lifeboat, and Lifeboat station.

At the **Lymington Lifeboat day** on 3rd August the Clubs display was within the station. Their RNLI shop had record takings and there was a lot of public interest despite poor weather. The Lymington Operations Manager presented the club with a framed photo of the Lymington Lifeboat "Victor 'Danny' Lovelock" as a token of thanks (right).





During the day a poignant moment was when the Ferry "Cenred" passed down the river behind club member Paul Nixon's model of Cenred (left).

Paul is a Ship's Master on the Lymington to Yarmouth Wightlink route. His model is going to be displayed in a glass case in the Lymington Ferry Terminal and will be removed whenever he wishes to sail it. The present ferries, in service since 1974, are being replaced and the first of the new ships, "Wight Light" arrived in Lymington on the 2nd September 2008. Thus the view of

Paul's model and its full scale version is probably the last time we will see the two together.

New SRCMBC HOVERCRAFT RULES:

DUE TO THE INCREASED LEVEL OF HOVERCRAFT OPERATING AT SETLEY POND, THE ADDITIONAL DANGERS THESE CRAFT POSE AND FOLLOWING COMPLAINTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION ABOUT NOISE LEVELS THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL CLUB RULES HAVE BEEN ISSUED.

1. Hovercraft can only be **launched and recovered** from the main launching/recovery beach adjacent to the parking area. All other operating is to be done from the small beach to the right hand side of the lake. **The operator of the hovercraft is to base himself in the small beach area and all further operating carried out from this beach.**
2. Speed is to be kept to **"DEAD SLOW"** until past the No 6 Buoy
3. If the Hovercraft comes close to any other model **it is to be put to the hover or dropped to the water and thrust motor stopped until the other boat has passed clear.**
4. **Hovercraft are not to be operated along the main beach at any time.**
5. In order to comply with our Forestry Commission Permit and to keep noise levels to a minimum **ONLY ONE HOVERCRAFT IS TO BE OPERATED AT ANY TIME.**
6. Members operating hovercraft must be able to ensure the committee that the craft are safe and comply with the operating standards with respect to correct skirt construction, correct bag pressure as well as correct settings used for land and water use (which are different).
7. Members wishing to operate these craft increase the personal injury risk to other members and the general public at the lake and failure to operate to the above rules may result in an increase in the club insurance premium.
8. It is recommended that any member wishing to operate these craft should consider membership of the Model Hovercraft Association.
9. The Committee and Members request that these craft are operated well clear of other models to avoid the need to have a separate operating day for model hovercraft .
10. **PLEASE NOTE THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE RULES COULD RESULT IN THE CLUB LOSING USE OF THE LAKE. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU COMPLY !**

Letters Section

[from Ken Dyer, long standing club member and rescue boat operator who suffered a devastating fire earlier this year. A collection was made at the 30th Anniversary BBQ to encourage Ken to get back to the pond!]

Dear members.

I would like to say a very big thank you for the vouchers that you gave to me after the fire that totally destroyed all my boats, tools and my lovely little shed, that was my way of relaxing and where I built my boats. I am slowly getting sorted out and hope to have a new workshop as part of a bigger garage. I have got a new boat in progress but have to rely on the weather being fine so I can do it outside, but our English summer has not been very good for working on the patio.

Once again thank you all and I shall be up the pond whenever I can.

Regards, Ken Dyer.

Editorial: The Scale Section Web Site is up and running!

As reported in the last newsletter the Scale Section of the Club now has its own web site: " www.srcmbc.org.uk ". I hope that those of you on email (and therefore with internet connections) will have had a look at the site

However, if you don't have a home computer or access to the web, remember that you can always go to your local library (or a friend's house) and view it from there. The magic words you need are...

" www.srcmbc.org.uk ". Give those to your friend, or to the librarian, and they will help you to view the site, it's well worth a look!

The new Club web site has a host of features. In particular, the photo galleries which used to be on "PhotoBox" are all now transferred to our own site, updated week by week and easier (and faster) to use. The old Galleries are still on PhotoBox but they are not getting updated, so go to the new " www.srcmbc.org.uk " site for a much better experience! There's also a Movie Gallery, an increasingly popular Hints and Tips section, and even a daily "Setley Weather Forecast".

However, as I said in the last issue, for those of you who do not use the internet, this newsletter will continue to come through your letter box, just as before. On the other hand, for those of you that do view the web site, I'm afraid that sometimes this news letter will contain information that you have already seen, for example the "30th Anniversary" feature in this issue. About half the club members are not on-line so some things will need to be repeated to keep everyone in touch, please understand.

Peter Taylor, Your Editor.

Christmas Lunch arrangements

The 2008 Christmas Lunch will again be held at the South Lawn Hotel, Lymington Road, Milford-on-sea, on Saturday 13th December. This time it will be in the Cornwallis Suite (Conference Room) and not in the Hotel Dining-room.

Members and Guests are requested to arrive around 12.30 pm. to sit down at 1.00pm. This year wine will not be provided by the Club, and those requiring wine or drinks at the table will need to order it at the bar before the meal.

If attending, you are requested to select beforehand from the menu below; cost per head is £17.50.

Those wishing to attend, along with any guests they would like to bring, must send a letter to: Mike Hammond, 1 Laurel Close, Christchurch, BH23 4PG., giving Names, and their choice of Menu, and enclosing a cheque for payment in full, to arrive by October 31st. at the latest.

Those wishing to sit with, or near, other friends or members should indicate it in their letter, and I will do my best to accommodate their requests, but it cannot be guaranteed and it will depend on the number of people attending, and the table layout.



Anyone who has anything to donate as a Raffle Prize should give it to a Committee Member at any time prior to the occasion, the more valuable it is, the more likely you may be to win the next Steering Competition!

I hope to see you all there,

Bon Apertit, *Mike Hammond.*

When replying to Mike, please make sure to give your choices from the following Menu:

STARTER choice:	Winter vegetable Soup, with Croutons. Prawn, Apple, and Celery, bound in a citrus & dill Mayonnaise. Chicken liver Parfait, with spicy apricot Chutney.
MAIN COURSE choice:	Roast Turkey, with Trimmings. Grilled Salmon Supreme, glazed with lightly curried White Wine sauce. Ricotta and Asparagus Ravioli, with Spinach & Sherry Cream, and Tomato Concasse.
DESSERT choice:	Christmas Pudding, with Brandy Sauce. Fresh Fruit Salad, with Chantilly Cream. Tangy Lemon Tart, set on Raspberry Coulis.
AFTERWARDS:	Coffee and a Mince Pie.

Hints and Tips

A VERSATILE MARINE ENGINE SOUND UNIT

NOTE: The article below has been condensed from that appearing in full on the club website and those wishing to access audio-visual examples of the petrol/diesel and steam engine sound units in operation, and read a more technical account of how they work should visit the club website. The circuit diagram, assembly drawings, parts list and the software (which are required to actually build one!) can be downloaded from the TECHNOBOTS website, where all the specialised components required for this unit (including the option for supply of pre-programmed PICAXE chips) are available as a 'kit'.

CLUB WEBSITE:

http://srcmbc.org.uk/ht_afb_sound-units.php_marine-engine.php

TECHNOBOTS:

http://www.technobots.co.uk/acatalog/Online_Catalogue_PICAXE_Controller_66.html

Overview

This is a general purpose engine sound module that can produce a variety of different engine sounds. In all cases the hardware module remains the same and the type of engine sound and its character are varied by firmware (i.e. the fitted software) alone.

The software build currently available implements a 3 or 4 cylinder 'petrol' or 'diesel' engine (choices by a user selectable jumper link). A program for a steam engine unit is currently under development and a three cylinder marine type has been prototyped. In all cases the engine sound varies smoothly and proportionally with the throttle demand. The petrol/diesel engine variants have an idling time-out of around one minute after which they run down and stop. Opening the throttle again causes the engine to re-start. The steam engine variant stops immediately the throttle is closed.

The petrol/diesel unit may be built 'as is' using the released software, or the more adventurous of you can experiment by tweaking the values in the code to change the number of cylinders and their individual exhaust pulse characters, the tick-over speed, the rev range, the idle time-out period etc. The code has been specifically written to make such experimentation easy and has been commented accordingly. I am keen that you experiment with the code yourselves and will be only too delighted to be put in the shade by your efforts – so please share your results for the benefit of us all, via the site feedback page!

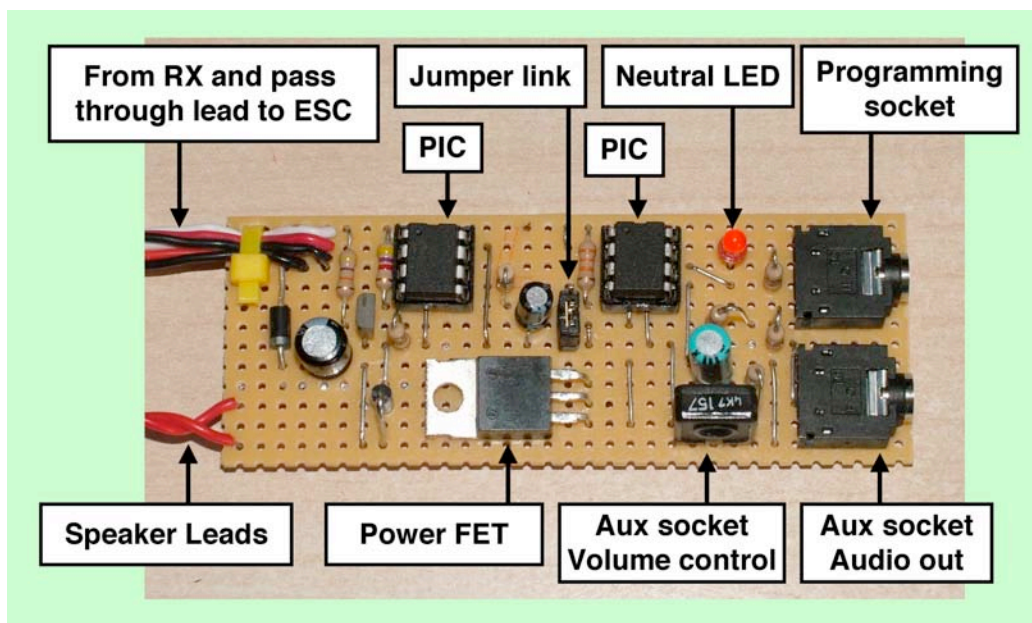
With club members in mind, this project has been tagged as a 'marine engine' sound unit, but clearly this module could also be used for steam or diesel locomotives and maybe even tanks etc.

Hardware/Software

The high degree of re-configurability of this module is made possible by using chips called PICs (programmable interface controllers) - aka microcontrollers.

The particular variant of PIC I am using is called the 'PICAXE' which is programmed in BASIC. As well as being easy to understand and use, this particular dialect of BASIC has many specialised commands intended for radio control and robotics applications which renders it ideal for this project. A good starting point to see the entire range of PICAXE chips, their support hardware and accessories – not to mention downloading the free programming editor software - is on the TECHNOBOTS site.

Arrangements have been made with TECHNOBOTS to supply all the specialised components required for this unit (including the option for supply of pre-programmed PICAXE chips) as a 'kit'. The software (source code) may also be downloaded from the TECHNOBOTS site for those wishing to program the chips themselves and/or tweak the code.



As will be seen from the above photo, the unit uses two PICAXE chips. The first chip interfaces to the receiver and receives the throttle demand, which is passed out unchanged to the boat's ESC on the flying socket, thereby obviating the need for a 'Y' lead. The software in this chip converts the incoming radio control signal into a smoothly varying DC control voltage from zero to 5V.

This DC control voltage is passed to the second chip which is responsible for generating the engine sound. In fact the unit produces 32 distinct speed sounds which in practice appear to be smoothly continuous – some commercial units only use 8 steps! To assist users with setting their transmitter throttle trim, when the zero speed 'step' is selected the neutral LED is illuminated. In the case of the petrol/diesel variants, the one minute time-out counter is also started whenever the throttle demand is zero, and of course it is reset should the throttle be re-opened prior to the timeout.

The actual exhaust pulse noise is implemented using the PICAXE's 'sound' command, which can be set to output various pseudo random digital pulse trains, from a rumble to a hiss. It can also vary the duration of the sounds, so that short staccato pulses of rumble can be used for internal combustion type engines, or long pulses of hiss for the steam sound.

The character of the sound (especially the perceived 'beat') is varied by assigning different noise pitch values to each cylinder. For example, a repeated loop of three different sounds can be used to create a three cylinder internal combustion engine or a three cylinder marine steam engine. A single cylinder engine can be simulated by reducing the sound loop to a single element. Alternatively the loop can be expanded to embrace four or even six cylinders.

A low level audio output is available to mix into an existing boat sound system or to drive "iPod docking" speakers and the like during experimentation. As the sound signal is generated in a digital form, rather than using a special amplifier chip, a power FET can drive the speaker coil directly which is both simple and efficient for stand-alone sound systems. The speaker can be powered from the RC system's 5V supply or from a higher voltage (e.g. 12V) whence the output volume is, of course, considerably increased.

The Build

The photo shows a strip-board layout which has been designed with the less experienced constructor in mind (see the website article for a full set of assembly drawings). A personal computer serial interface has been included so as to give a means of uploading the published programs into the two PIC chips. The layout also assigns the serial interfaced PIC chip to the sound generation task, as that way it is easy to experiment with loading different values into the sound commands or the speed lookup table (idle and revs range) without having to remove the chip.

For those club members who feel unable to attempt the precision assembly and soldering or chip programming, I might be conned into making a unit for you at cost, for some assistance in return with glamorizing the temporary cardboard decking and superstructures for which my models are famed, or maybe I could be tempted by some article from your junk-box.

The Installation

I must point out that I have no previous experience of installing sound systems in boats, so all I can do is give some guidance based on my own experiments. Those of you who have already fitted commercial sound units, and maybe have been doing so for years, are invited to share your experience with us on the club website.

It can't be stressed too much that the final quality of the sound is highly dependent on the size, and type of speaker used and the 'character' of that sound is modified – for better or worse – by the speaker's mounting and location in the boat. For example a bench test using my music-centre speaker gives awesome results, but any speaker I have that is capable of fitting into my boats is, by comparison, a serious compromise!

For the petrol/diesel version, the more bass your speaker can create, the better – it will also benefit enormously from fitting a resonating tube approximately the diameter of the cone on top of the speaker and/or coupling the speaker to the hull on a large area cross-deck. Bench experiments with the resonating tube will also show a large change in sound 'character' as the open end of the tube is gradually occluded. You can expect some final result between these two extremes when the boat's superstructure is in place. It has been suggested that there may be some mileage in experimenting with the satellite speakers from computer surround-sound systems, or MP3 docking stations, which reportedly give a punchy bass even without their sub-woofer.

If you chose to fit a regular speaker, then it should be noted that paper coned speakers generally have a much lower resonant frequency than the mylar coned (splash-proof) types and if you can get one dubbed as a 'woofer' or 'bass' unit with a long-throw rubber cone surround so much the better. Unfortunately the latter are generally very heavy, as well as bulky, though in some cases you may be able to remove ballast to compensate for that. The steam sounds are of much higher frequency and the resonating tube is not required. Good results have been obtained with mylar coned speakers, and free access from the cone to open air is beneficial.

The Future

The program for the steam engine variant will be released soon, following the conclusion of my experiments to make a more universally adjustable 'steam' sound which it is hoped will cover everything from Clyde Puffer boats through to steam locomotives.

My long term aim is to build sound units utilising real recordings of boat engines, naval guns, ship's horns, sirens etc so I don't plan to put too much more effort into these engine sound units, but I think you'll find they compare favourably with commercial units that employ similar sound synthesis techniques. I am however considering a de-luxe version of the unit where engine parameters can be adjusted in real-time rather than by code tweaking – watch this space.

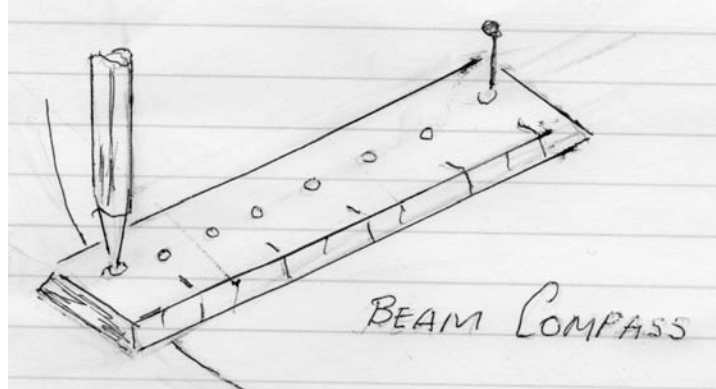
I look forward to discussing all or any of the above with you, at the pondside or by e-mail (afb@srcmbc.org.uk)

Alan Bond

Peter's Toolbox

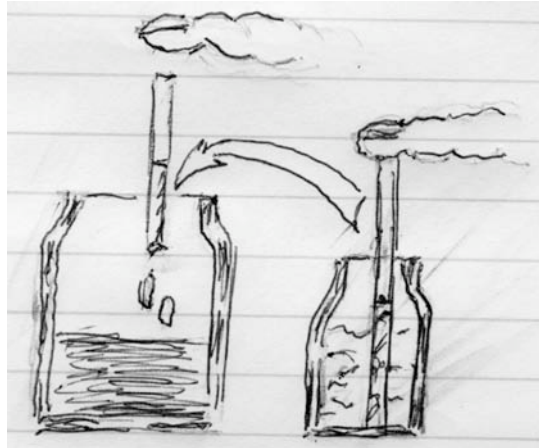
(1) BEAM COMPASS

Use an old scale or ruler with a number of holes drilled through it as an effective beam compass. Place a pencil in an appropriate hole, then swing the scale around a large pin or map tack.



(2) THINNER TRANSFER

Transfer thinner the clean way. Place a tube in the thinner, and "seal" its top with your finger. Transfer the loaded tube to the dope jar, remove your finger and the thinner will run out.



Peter Dram

30th Anniversary Year

The very first "Highcliffe Show" took place at Greystones House, Highcliffe, in 1988. There was a report in the Evening Echo (Bournemouth) on Friday February 12th, 1988.

The text of the newspaper article says:

"SEA-LOVERS and landlubbers got together in Highcliffe for an exhibition of hand-crafted model ships. More than 50 vessels were on show at the first-ever Solent Model Yacht Club exhibition at Greystones House, Highcliffe.

From Humble tugs to liners, and from battleships to submarines, the craft were displayed in all their splendour. But it was the liner Sea Princess which scooped pride of place. It took more than 4,000 hours to perfect over a period of three years. And for the local man who made it, the only chance to get the detail just right was to take a Mediterranean cruise on the actual ship. A seven-foot submarine also held a special place for visitors to the exhibition.

Mr. Bob Jeffries said: "It has given us a chance to show off our handiwork and get together. We all get a lot of satisfaction working with our hands and making something."



Others on show included paddle steamers, barges, and speedboats. The model section of the Solent Radio Controlled Model Boat Club meet at Setley Lake on Thursday and Sunday mornings to test their boats."

The 1996 Highcliffe Show took place in the Methodist Hall, Lymington Road, Highcliffe (where it still takes place to this day). The report was in the Evening Echo (Bournemouth) on Thursday March 14th, 1996.

The text of the newspaper article says:

"Trawling for members

FISHING trawlers, submarines, and lifeboats were crammed into a church hall to help raise money for the RNLI at the weekend. More than 40 intricate model boats, painstakingly made by members of the Solent Model Boat Club, were on show at the Methodist Hall in Lymington Road, Highcliffe.

Richard "Harbourmaster"

Graham said: "It can take up to two years to make a model boat. Most boats are fully radio

controlled although some are electric or steam driven. We sail them on Setley Pond, near Brockenhurst, every Sunday. Last year we raised £550 for the RNLI and although none of the boats on show is for sale, we rely on people making donations."

Richard is called the "Harbourmaster" because he constructs a miniature harbour on Setley Pond every summer. He said: "We build boats because it's pure enjoyment and provides an escape from our everyday jobs. A trawler I recently built is worth £800 but I wouldn't sell it for anything." The club, which has 50 members, is always looking for new recruits....

With regard to the RNLI the tradition continues. This year the Highcliffe show alone raised over £800 and at the Lymington Lifeboat day the RNLI shop recorded record profits of several hundred pounds.

Model boat enthusiasts raise vital funds for the RNLI



Peter Oram and Geoff Causebrook with their detailed model lifeboats

Trawling for members

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Members Adverts

Happy Hunter

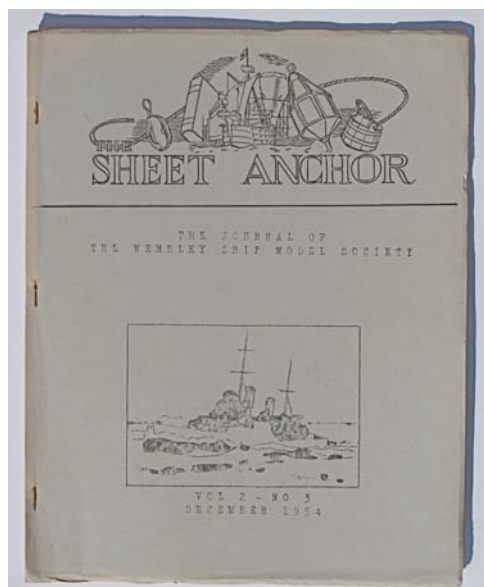
Following his retirement Allen Kaye is looking forward to constructing a 'Glasgow' Paddle Tug. In the meantime he will occasionally sail the "Happy Hunter" which sails well in all conditions - even in rough weather at the Pond! However, ideally he would like to find a buyer for the "Happy Hunter" - 'reserve price' £300.

Email: allenk@srcmbc.org.uk.



SHEET ANCHOR

(THE JOURNAL OF THE WEMBLEY SHIP MODEL SOCIETY)



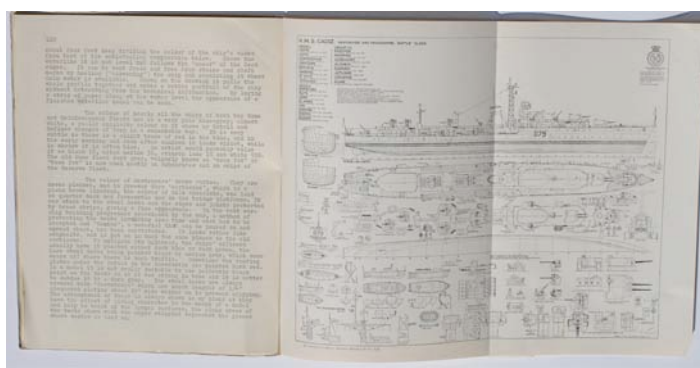
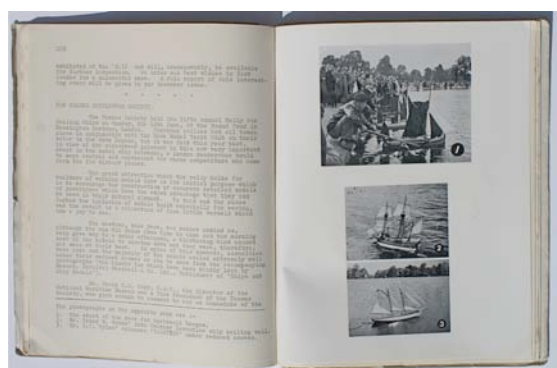
A Typical Cover Page

A newsletter, initially published by the Wembley Ship Model Society. In around 1957, the newsletter became the Journal of the "Ship Model Societies".

I have some 11 issues published between December 1954 and sometime around 1960... Vol 2 Issue 3, Vols. 3, 4 (3 issues each) Vol. 5 Issues 2 & 3 and Vol.6, Issues 1 & 2) Each issue is substantial, around 50 pages long and contains photographs and fold out ship plans. Given the technology of the day, producing each issue must have been a major undertaking and it's no surprise that they slipped from a 3 times a year schedule to a less taxing timetable. It's an intriguing glimpse into model boat making in the past. I will be putting more details of contents etc. on the web site.

The set is for sale with the proceeds to be divided equally between the RNLI and The Samaritans. For that reason I will be advertising the volumes in a number of model boat sites in order to try to get the best return. However, I'm advertising it here first, so if you are interested, give us your bid and, when I've seen what is on offer, I will let you know the outcome.

I've found a web site in the States advertising a similar collection of these magazines for \$350... but it has been on sale for quite some time, so don't be put off making an offer! Contact me, Peter Taylor (details below). Meanwhile, here are a couple more photos...



Contact details

If your address, email, or other membership details change please make sure you contact:

Lorna Soffe, 1 Stoneleigh Avenue, Hordle, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 0GS.

Email: membership@srcmbc.co.uk . Phone: 01425 615305

For the newsletter: please send your favourite hints and tips, adverts, or other contributions to:

Peter Taylor, 84 Priory Road, St Denys, Southampton, SO17 2HS

Email: info@srcmbc.org.uk . Phone: 023 80554670 (you will get my answering machine; say who you are and I'll either answer if I'm there, or get back to you!)

For any other queries contact:

David McNair-Taylor, 18 Wilton Gardens, New Milton., Hampshire, BH25 5UT

Email: scalecaptain@srcmbc.org.uk . Phone: 01425 618900

Cut off date for entry in the next issue is : 31st December 2008

But don't wait till then, send it to me now, and especially give me more time if you are submitting on paper or want me to do the "art" work!