

1978—2008

October 2008 Volume 30, Issue 10



# The Binnacle

Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society  
Victoria BC Canada  
vmss@shaw.ca  
<http://members.shaw.ca/vmss>



Yahoo! Newsgroup : VIRCB  
Vancouver Island Radio Control Boaters

## VMSS 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

### COLLECTORS



### EDITION



"Trumpeter"



"Off Piste"

Master modeler Norm Farley's ketch "*Trumpeter*" and skiff "*Off Piste*" (off track!) sailed at Harrison Pond recently. Both are hand-carved (no power tools!) in great detail from his own designs and the figures on the deck of the *Trumpeter* are animatronic. Both are a great hit with the kids. BRAVO ZULU Norm.

Photos by Bill Sturrock

1978—2008



## Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

**General Meeting – September 11, 2008**

Call to order: 7:30 pm (26 members attending)

1. Welcome: Four new guests/members attending the meeting. **Jim Briante, Scott Owens, Graham Smith & Bill Captain.**
2. Outreach: **Ken Lockley** fell off his deck while pruning his tree. He is away on vacation so its safe to assume he is recovering well. Also Ron Armstrong informed us that Blanche Powell is looking much better since her illness.
3. Club Finances: **Mike Creasy** reported we have been paid \$500 from the Tall Ships & \$400 from the Saanich Fair along with \$184 in donations from the fair. He mentioned that our fiscal year end is September 30<sup>th</sup> so if any member has any outstanding receipts, please submit them to him before that date.
4. Saanich Fair Wrap-up: **Dave Taylor** said people were impressed with our display and we had a good member turnout. To increase traffic next year, better signage will be used.
5. Upcoming Events: On Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, there is a boat-a-thon planned at Harrison Pond. October 19<sup>th</sup>, at Beaver lake is the Powell Cup & Power Cup. A Christmas parade of our boats is planned for Sunday evening, December 21<sup>st</sup> at Harrison Pond. Members are encouraged to put lights on anything that floats. Our next meeting is a swap & shop so bring your goodies to sell or cash or both.
6. Open Forum: Our lock box has at the pond has been vandalized. Something was jammed in the lock to prevent it from be opened. Victoria Parks is looking after it. **Dave Denton** will donate the trophy for the Power Cup. Trophy to be renamed

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**Contributions to the Binnacle are welcomed.**  
**Deadline for submissions: Sunday before the**  
**monthly meeting. Editor: [vmss@shaw.ca](mailto:vmss@shaw.ca)**

## 2008 Executive Committee

<b>President:</b> David Taylor	652-6480
<b>Vice-Pres:</b> Ken Ensor	478-6884
<b>Secretary:</b> Scott Munford	382-1673
<b>Treasurer:</b> Mike Creasy	965-6487
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<b>Barry Fox</b>	294-0350
<b>Parks Liaison:</b> Mike Claxton	479-6367
<b>Binnacle Editor:</b> Bill Sturrock	479-0239
<b>Quartermaster:</b> Bob Rainsford	383-2256
<b>Librarian:</b> Dave Denton	478-1800
<b>Sailing Director:</b> Barry Fox	294-0350
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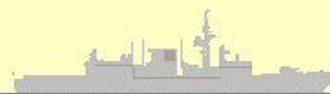
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**ON THE RADAR**

INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS

19th October Powell Cup -Beaver Lake  
 13th November Annual General Meeting



**MEETINGS: Second Thursday 7:30-9:30**  
 313 Brunswick Place  
 Next is November 13th, 2008!



**POWER: Sundays 10 – 12**  
 Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HYP)  
 Dallas Road at Government.



**SAILING: 1st and 3rd Sundays 1 – 3 PM**  
 Beaver Lake  
 Next is October 19th, 2008!



**LANGFORD LAKE NAVY**  
 Wednesdays 9:30  
 Langford Lake, Leigh Rd at Trillium



**From the Bridge**

Great crushed strawberries Batman, I think we're in a jam. Bill Sturrock phones me up and says that we don't have an input for "From The Bridge", could you please submit something right now (Tuesday AM), as President **Dave Taylor**, is in Florida, and VP **Ken Ensor**, can't get to a computer. **Dave Denton** is your next best thing.

Here we go: coming up Oct 19 we will have the Powell Cup for the sail boaters and the Denton Cup for the power boaters. The Denton Cup is essentially the same as the Powell in that it is a port to port Poker run with the best point total taking the prize. You can enter both contests if you wish. One will be run from 10:00 till 12:00, then lunch break. The next will be 1:00 to 3:00 or something like that. Weather is always a factor, but look outside and dress accordingly.

This month's meeting is a 'swap and shop' for all of you who get the Binnacle by email, the rest of you will have to rely on memory. Bring all your resale-ables and donate a portion to the club (if you want).

I went to the sailing event last weekend and met up with a bunch of fellas that I hadn't seen for a long time, it felt like coming back home...a real nice feeling, thanks for making me feel welcome. The purpose was to check out my modifications to the speed controller on my tug. It failed. I have a new controller in the tug and it will be tested Wed morning at Langford Lake.

That's about all I can send Bill. The Kitchen remodeling is calling me. Have been dealing with Lee Valley, some real nice stuff.

**Dave (from under the bridge) Denton**

**► NOMINATIONS ◀**

NEEDED FOR

**NOVEMBER'S AGM!**



Photo by Mike Claxton

Doug Allen gets barge handling lessons from Rosemary at his new pond somewhere in Cobble Hill. (Other attendees are quite disinterested).

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the "Dent-in" Cup. Our AGM is coming up in November and there are several positions to be filled. Discussion over some kind of uniform dress code during events. **Bob Rainsford** mentioned that our pool liner leaks. **Ken Ensor** to hunt around to see what's available.

- 7. Adjourn business portion & break
- 8. **Ken Ensor** continued on with lofting. Members were doing hands on work to see how it really works.

Respectfully Submitted  
**Scott Munford**, Secretary

## The Sub Subject

Here, then, Part III of the “torpedo” opus. It may be worth mentioning that the description of how contra-rotation was achieved seemed to take longer than its actual construction. I kept muttering, “Keep it simple, Stupid”, but my writing failed the clarity test time and again. What follows took five complete tries, with a month-long rest (cooling off) period between the third and fourth go.

### KRIEGSMARINE G7e TORPEDO MODELS PART III

#### True, Straight-line Runs

The goal was to be able to aim *Brätwurst* at a target, activate the release channel’s linkages, have the torpedo take off, run a true course and have it plug the intended target at an intended position.

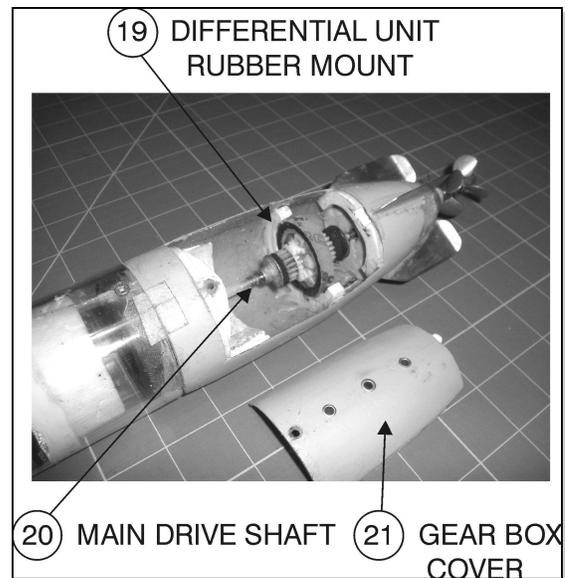
On that score, the MK-1’s ran as the torque of their single screw dictated-veering to port or starboard.

Bending or twisting and warping their four fins was less effective than praying for rain. R/C was considered but disregarded.

In search of single-motor steering, I’d salvaged the nylon front differential out of a wrecked FWD R/C dune buggy. That, then, could lead to contra-rotating, torque-offsetting screws. Good thought. But others in my circle had experimented with contra-rotation. They were stymied by the stuffing box having to seal an inner (main) shaft as well as an outer (slave) shaft. I did not solve that problem, but avoided it this way. The best way out of five tries to describe what was done goes like this: the main shaft’s power/rotation had to be fed into the differential and out again. Taking it in was done with a 1/8-inch I.D. Dubro collar to which a copper flange was soldered. To that flange I CA’d (“Crazy Glue”) a 3/16 inch-thick foam-rubber washer, which was then CA’d to the differential’s front-side gear. The three pinion gears obliged now to make the second side gear to rotate left. That motion was tapped via another foam-rubber washer glued to another flange that was soldered to a slave (outer) shaft with a slightly generous 1/8-inch I.D. The

left turning screw’s hub was drilled out to 3/16-inch and soldered onto screw numero-uno, and fit over the slave shaft. It was then a true pleasure to hand crank the main shaft and note the now contra-rotating mills do their dance.

Note that all of the described stuff sits out in the stern’s free flood space, with just the 1/8-inch main shaft penetrating the pressure hull’s bulkhead. It does NOT leak.



#### Ready Access to Battery Jacks

There may have been a still better solution, but during the MK-2’s design stage, I sort of saw the light. The battery pack, with weight distribution specifications and driveline path in mind, was placed in the very front of the pressure hull, where it is then separated from the “engine room” by an O-ringed, Lexan bulkhead. But the warhead had to be firmly attached to the hull tube. It was set up so it could be removed if needed later. A three-screw bayonet coupling was used to make minor waterproofing adjustments of tension possible.

Twist off the warhead (90 degrees clockwise) and there appears the rubber capped batteries jack. Remove that cap, plug in the 6V battery, and let the juice flow.

#### Easier Hook up of Torpedoes to the boat

The MK-1’s attachments were two copper wire eyelets with a 1/16-inch I.D. As a pair, spaced about 11-1/4 inch down the torpedoe’s

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## A History of the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society. (April 1988 Binnacle)

By  
Tony House

The club was started in 1978 by the late **Robert Stewart** after placing a card on his booth at the Victoria Hobby Show asking for interested parties to leave their name and phone number. Twelve names were collected. These people were later phoned and, with the help of **Robert Innes-Ker**, a first meeting was arranged. After some subsequent meetings, **The Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society** was born and incorporated as a society on July 28th 1978.

The aims of the society at that time were to:

1. Further the development of Maritime model building.
2. Provide an organization for the exchange of ideas, techniques, and information for both members and non-members.
3. Engage in projects for members of the society.
4. Stage exhibitions and displays for members and for others if and when required.

The original intent was to restrict membership to those whose interests lay in period sailing ships only. After consideration, it was decided to accept memberships from those who built all types of models.

There were three categories for membership.

1. Senior membership open to those over the age of 16.
2. Junior membership open to those aged 12 to 16.
3. Associate membership with no voting privileges.

Dues were established at \$21.00 per year for Senior membership, \$12.00 for juniors and \$5.00 for Associates. Meetings were held at the **Maritime Museum** initially and later at the **Canterbury Inn**. Meetings were later moved again to the Scout Hall on Marigold Ave and then to the present location ... **The Fleet Club**.

The first directors were **M.J.Bibb**, **R.Innes-Ker**, **B.Slater**, **R.Stewart**, and **F.Walpole**.

By 1984, the club had 34 members, some of whom are still active in the club. As far as I can tell, none of the original people who signed the interest sheet are members today.

The newsletter **The Binnacle**, was started in 1984 by **Ron Armstrong** and was published quarterly.

A "Fallgatta" was held in 1984 at Mitchell Lake. Later regattas were held at Beaver Lake. The first Fallgatta held at Sandhill Lake was in September 1987.

The lake at the Saanich Historical Artifacts Society grounds was started in 1985 with water being put in it the following year.

A number of members took part in the Expo '86 celebrations in Vancouver where a number of model boating events were organized.

The club now boasts approximately 60 members who model all types of vessels.



Star 45's sailing at Mayne Island venue. (Ken Lockley)



## EXPO '86 by Ron Armstrong

The Fair that put Vancouver "on the map" had as its' major theme "Transportation". In 1985 then Seaspan tug skipper and spare-time ship modeller **Ron Burchett** realized that the marine aspect of the theme was not going to be represented as well as land and air modes. He proposed that R/C ship models do the job in the large pool beside the Air Canada Pavillion.

The EXPO Directors agreed and he put together a program of tugs and barges, including a 14 footer that loaded and dumped logs by radio control. Shows were to happen at certain times throughout the day. Ron quickly realized that a seven day week operation would exhaust his paid operators and they would burn out half way through the Fair.

So he approached the "amateurs" to offer Sundays for our participation. The result was six Sundays by us, four by Nanaimo and Burnaby clubs, and three by Northwest R/C from Washington State. All participants were given container space nearby to stow craft and gear until the next show.

This was a total club effort. Members without vessels shared in the building of barges, piers and other vessels to put on a show worthy of an international audience. Vice-president **Harry Crosby** even mounted a video camera on his 10 foot container ship to record the action at "sea level". He also masterminded the logistics of getting members to and from the site in one day, a feat that became more challenging as visitors plugged BC Ferries and False Creek access roads.

Memories remain vivid for members who took part. Of looking up from one's model to see 20,000 faces staring back! Of one designated member taking McDonalds' orders for all skippers--and returning over an hour later (on a "fast" day). Of discovering lineups for the "Mens" for the first time in BC history----and thus leaving the pool at the first hint of a need!

It was a shining moment for the VMSS, to be part of a six month fair that exposed Vancouver to the world and gave us a huge stage to show off our hobby.

We even got a grant from the City of Victoria as unique ambassadors!



## V.M.S.S. SAILING TIMELINE By Ken Lockley

Pre 1990

**Rob Woodward** developed his 60" "Ranger", mast-head rigged sloop. With help from friend **Russ Hayden**, Rob was able to organize sailing "Rangers" at Eagle Beach, Elk Lake on a regular basis.

1990 **Henk Mersing** revived the Sailors on a twice a month basis at Eagle Beach and the V.M.S.S. as a club became fully involved with a sailing program. At this time we became affiliated with the A.M.Y.C. (American Model Yachting Association) and the C.R.Y.A. (Canadian Radio Yachting Association). Henk had the help of **Roland DeSpepper** and **Ken Lockley**.

In the fall of 1990 we held a predicated log race referred to as the "Turkey Races" where the winner won a Christmas Turkey.

1991 V.M.S.S. members that got hooked on sailing were **Rob Glennie**, **Fred Rainsford**, **Derek Baker** and **Ron Hillsden**. These new sailors made a great addition to the existing sailors. Derek developed a computer scoring system that allowed handicaps as at this time we were sailing a variety of Yachts.

1992 With Henk's pushing and Rob's fiberglass abilities we were able to adopted the E.C.12 Meter yacht as a weed free racer. Rob produced 20 hulls for the V.M.S.S. sailors. This was our first V.M.S.S. sanc-



NORC 1994 EC12 gathering Eagle Beach (Ken Lockley)

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- tioned club Racer.
- 1993 The "Star 45" was also to become a club sanctioned yacht. Sundays were busy with Stars racing for 2 hours and EC 12 or Marbleheads racing for a couple of hours. Some sailors raced in both categories.
- 1994 **Ken Lockley** started his Tuesday night open workshop for "Star 45" builders to increase the numbers in that fleet. **Vic Gammer and Peter Smith** from Mayne Island joined the "Star Fleet" and also hosted "Star" events on their Mayne Island venues.
- 1995 N.O.R.C. (NorthWest Racing Circuit) events were in their 3rd season with sailors from Vancouver, Seattle and Portland being regulars to V.M.S.S. hosted racing. Saturday would be for the E.C.12's and Sunday for Marblehead racing.
- 1996 The "Reno" was developed by **Ken Lockley**, who also had a Monday night building workshop and it eventually took the place of the "Star fleet". Also V.M.S.S. sailor **Doug Gilbert** raced his E.C.12 Meter in Seattle and won the U.S., E.C.12 Meter championship.
- 1997 We finally decided that sailing near the Rowing Club was just too difficult and so moved our sailing to the present location at Beaver Lake.
- 1998 C.R.D. Parks recognizing that some type of storage would be helpful, allowing us to use the present facility for dingy storage etc.
- 1999 **David Powell**, V.M.S.S. member wanted to create a



NORC 1994 EC12 preparing for start. (Ken Lockley)

fun event that all skippers have equal opportunity to win. With the help of other members the "Powell Cup" was developed and has been raced every year since.

- 2000 The sailing group without reservation decided to embrace the "IOM" (Internation One Meter) yacht and try to become a one-class group. **Rob Woodward** designed and produced the "Flatout" which is still in use today.
- 2005 The "**Taylor's**" arrived fresh from the U.K. with lots of enthusiasm and joined the V.M.S.S. sailing. They became very involved and Dave is our cur-

rent President.

- 2006 **Barry Fox** enters the scene with years of competitive car racing in his background and wants to re-develop a strong racing program for V.M.S.S. sailors. His past autosport experience enables him to rekindle competition on an Inter Island race schedule. Within a year, Barry has Saltspring Island, Lake Cowichan, Naniamo and Maple Bay all hosting events.
- 2007 **Laurie Neish**, who's past experience in fiberglass production teams up with Barry to get Bantock designed hulls available at a very moderate price for V.M.S.S. or C.R.Y.A. sailors and the fleets grows. As the fleet grows it becomes possible to assemble big enough fleets to consider moving racing to higher level competition. The Canadian National IOM Championship Regatta is hosted on Saltspring Island and attended by a good number of VMSS skippers. VMSS hosts the first Western IOM Regional Championship in years with a strong showing by local skippers.
- 2008 The sailing program is running very well with more members involved in the sailing group of the V.M.S.S. The All Island Series runs again and gains one new location, expanding to 5 events. VMSS sailing continues to grow with new members joining the action. Close to 15 IOMs are either racing or close to completion in the Victoria area and a few Victorias are starting to show.



## SANDHILL LAKE by Ron Armstrong

Sandhill Lake resulted from an invitation in 1984 by the Saanich Historical Artifacts Society, now known as Heritage Acres, north of Island View Road. The plan was to provide a mutual benefit. S.H.A.S. would turn a then useless swamp into a half acre model boat pond for the VMSS, which would become a working partner like the Vancouver Island Model Railroaders who operated steam powered passenger trains on the site.

We accepted enthusiastically for three reasons. At the time few members were aware of Harrison Pond's existence and historic purpose, the offer was without stipulations, and we would benefit from the site's controlled access.

The Island Equipment Operators Association chose the excavation for their annual community project. Three large excavators, the lowbed trailers to haul them, and the drivers were all donated. As a club we made a ma-

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## Ramblings about the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

By Ron Hillsden

My task was to read all the Binnacles and produce a list of things which formed our organization over the years. I borrowed **Ron Armstrong's** boxes of Binnacles and spent quite a few enjoyable evenings browsing back issues. It became apparent, however, that I wasn't going to develop any sort of a list because different editors saw their roles differently and they were not always informed of events or did not report on matters which everyone at the time knew about anyway. You need consistency to make lists; there wasn't much of that, but there was some interesting stuff.

Fortunately, **Tony House** wrote about the first ten years history of the club (pre-Binnacle) in April 1988, and his piece is published elsewhere in this issue.

**Ron Armstrong** started a quarterly Binnacle in 1984, 6 years after the society was incorporated. In those pre-personal computer days of the Binnacle, most men didn't type – there were sometimes credits to the wives who used their typing skills to produce an issue. While personal computers were very rare, **Tony House** did use an Apple 2e for "typing" although he "cut and pasted" the Binnacle because desk top publishing hadn't been developed. "Typing" is an old fashioned term for "keyboarding." Later, several of us used the Binnacle as an excuse to learn about personal computing when Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 were the latest thing!

The original club members built static display models. I think the first radio control models showed up in 1983. They were a real novelty. Modelers did not have our modern, light weight, digital, proportional and very dependable radios back then. Also, until April 1990, federal law required that you have a federally issued radio operator's license to operate a radio control transmitter. The growth in membership in the 1980's can be attributed to operating models, and there are very few if any static models being built by club members today.

One of the things contributing to our unique character as a club is that we have both power and sail groups within the same organization. In most areas, sailors and power boaters are separate groups because many of their needs are different. We have been able to cooperate and each group helps the other. The early sailing activities are not documented in the Binnacles, but **Ken Lockley's** piece elsewhere provides a good history of competitive sailing in VMSS.

From the beginning, this organization has participated in public displays to recruit members, educate and entertain the public or contribute to our communities. The first display was the **Victoria Lapidary & Mineral Soci-**

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for payment to defray fuel costs. One Saturday morning in May 1985 the machines created the basin, with an island off centre. This last resulted from a decision that had some unintended consequences.

The Lake was named for the creek that flows around the site from west to northeast. While the basin stayed dry into October, VMSS members laid a heavy tarp in front of the launch ramp to restrict plant growth and sandbag walls on either side to prevent sluffing.

The Lake finally filled in the winter of 1985-86. R/C members found it a delightful experience. Non R/C modelers who motorized their scale ships found otherwise because the vessels ran aground on the island. Rescue required wading or rowing into water up to 4 feet deep. This led to the departure of these founding members as they felt their concerns weren't shared by the great influx of R/C adherents.

Due to the the focus on EXPO 86, we didn't hold our first regatta at the Lake until September 1987. It was a great success, attracting contestants from Nanaimo and the mainland. The 1988 Fallgatta was even better, and we celebrated our 10th Birthday there as well. In fact it was too successful. The operating pen on the north bank was overrun by dogs, children and a group of Cub Scouts.

The solution was to use the island as an operators' post. SHAS cut the planks in their own mill and the resulting span included a pull-up section to prevent spectator



Club members at Eagle Beach 1996(Ken Lockley)

interference during regattas. Regattas in 1989,1990 and 1991 were very smooth and successful events, continuing to attract contestants and families from afar.

So why did such an idyll end?

We wished to keep grass on the island low for appearances and visibility. SHAS wanted to maintain good cover for geese nesting there. The disagreement, combined with other misunderstandings, led to outright hostility between the two executives. In the winter of 1991-92 we were asked to leave after being paid \$4000 for our fixed improvements.

It was a sad end to a happy experience with future promise.



ety's Hobby Show where **Bob Stewart** displayed a card soliciting the plank owners who started the club in 1978. We attended the Lapidary Club's Hobby Show every year until 1996. We have been participating in other events for awhile. Our first annual display at the Canwest Mall (now Westshore Town Centre) was in February 1987. Our first annual appearance at the Saanich Strawberry Festival was July 1988 and the Saanich Fall Fair in September 1996. There have been quite a few events for the Maritime Museum of BC as well as other private and public festivals. The previous Lt Governor enjoyed hosting us at Government House on occasions. In August 1997 we participated in an event at the Saanich Commonwealth Pool – there were 13 power boats and 5 sailboats driven by 3 large of-fice fans.

We have enjoyed various meeting places over the years. We met in members' houses until May 1985. When membership climbed to 25, we found a place at the Scout House. We moved to the Navy's Fleet Club in 1987 and in March 1992 we moved to the Royal Oak Lion's Hall. In June 2001 we moved to our current hall. These were times when we served coffee and tea, and in 1988 there was an



1992 Regatta at the Rowing Club (Ken Lockley)

impassioned plea that members not smoke during meetings. In the 1990's we held our summer meetings at Harrison Model Yacht Pond and Beaver Lake.

Judging competitions has always been problematic to some. In the days of our big regattas, your boat was judged on how well it was built and how well you operated it. The scores were combined so the winners had to be good builders and good operators. Sometimes the models didn't lend themselves well to this type of competition. One year a visiting modeller brought the

nicest 1/96 model of a WW2 destroyer I have ever seen. The level of detail was so high that the tiny air line handles on the torpedo tubes were there and painted yellow. Unfortunately, the model operated in the water just like the real ship – it was designed to go 36 knots in a straight line and didn't turn well at all. The model won on the static table, but bombed on the steering course. A more common problem was a number of single screw tugs where the modellers fitted twin screws – no winners in that group either. In 1990 we joined the Scale Ship Modellers Assn and hoped to adopt their rules (which were accepted as the North American standard), but there were those who wanted to tweak them. The rules became so bastardized that a model of a rowboat took the top scale judging points and several meetings in 1998 were devoted to sorting out the rules. I hope that a copy of those rules resides with our documents

because I don't think they have been used since.

We have twice tried to build a permanent pond for our own use. **Ron Armstrong** has written in detail about Sandhill Lake, but I do want to say it consumed all our cash and a great deal of effort by our members. We learned a lot – we even had to get a permit to move Sandhill Creek so it would fill our Lake. After our relationship with the landlords unraveled, our executive seized an opportunity to build a different pond behind the Juan de Fuca Rec Centre. The lessons learned at Sandhill served us well, this time we had written permissions and leases, etc. Three new problems cropped up. The membership wasn't consulted and did not support it, the wind coming off the ocean was spectacular, and the water flowed through the golf course picking up residual fertilizers, so the weed growth was also spectacular. For some reason, the club wasn't using Harrison Model Yacht Pond, and after we decided to use it the city informed us that there was a by-law prohibiting us from putting anything in the water. Anyway, all is well now including our relationship with the **City of Victoria Parks Department** and we are lucky to have a purpose built facility. Third time lucky!

The sailors have always used Elk or Beaver Lakes and enjoyed excellent cooperation from Capital Regional District Parks. Even the Rowing Club was supportive at one time, but that is another story.....

In 1996, the club changed focus from our big regattas with combined static and steering competitions to several small "fun-gattas" for steering competitions and one static competition which is held at the February Westshore Town Centre hobby display. This was in part due to the dissatisfaction with the joint competitions and also because quite a few groups wanted us to participate in their events – and were willing to pay us! 1996 was our last year in the Lapidary club hobby show and the first year for the Battle of the Atlantic Regatta, the Maple Bay Regatta and the Saanich Fall Fair

Members were polled in October 1997 to help develop future activities.

- The most popular events were:
  - o Hillside Mall Displays
  - o Canwest Mall Displays
  - o Fungattas, and
  - o Saanich Fall Fair
- The least popular activities were
  - o Sidney Saltwater Festival/Sidney Days
  - o Maritime Museum events
  - o Lapidary Club Hobby Show
- Requested new activities
  - o Field trips
  - o Christmas dinner
  - Potluck suppers/Barbeques/picnics

I think we evolved over the years to keep the Society relevant to our members' interests. Well done everyone!





## Presidents

## Editors

1978 - 1983	Robert Stewart	
1984	Jim Holt	Ron Armstrong
1985	Jim Holt	Ron Armstrong
1986	Ron Armstrong	Ken Peterson
1987	Fred Haire	Geoff Walton
1988	Fred Haire	Tony House
1989	Ron Wild	Tony House
1990	Ron Wild	Dave Teece/Peter Favelle
1991	Ron Wild	Ken Lockley/Don Gorby
1992	Ray Goodacre	Gil Templeman
1993	Ron Wild	Gil Templeman
1994	Bill Huckin	Gil Templeman
1995	Bill Huckin	Gil Templeman
1996	Ron Armstrong	Ken and Lois Lockley
1997	Ron Armstrong	Dave Winter/Julie Hillsden
1998	Ron Hillsden	Julie Hillsden
1999	Ron Hillsden	Julie Hillsden
2000	Ron Armstrong	Ron Hillsden
2001	Jack Plummer	Ron Hillsden
2002	Jack Plummer	Ken and Lois Lockley
2003	Ken Scotten	Ken and Lois Lockley
2004	Ken Scotten	Ken Lockley/Ron Hillsden
2005	Ken Scotten	Ken Lockley/Ron Hillsden
2006	Dave Denton	Ron Hillsden/Bill Sturrock
2007	Dave Denton	Bill Sturrock
2008	Dave Taylor	Bill Sturrock

# 1978—2008

*[Editor's note: many thanks to all the contributors that made this 30th Anniversary issue possible]*

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY

## Old Wood & Rusty Iron

### **THE BULL OF SCAPA FLOW**

by *MIKE CREASY* OCTOBER 2008



Last month's column spoke about the sinking of the battleship **HMS ROYAL OAK** while at anchor in Scapa Flow, and inexplicably named Otto Kretschmer's **U-99** as the boat responsible. Thanks to the readers who noticed this glaring error! No excuses. It also seems that the (accurate) story of this bold attack is worth another telling...

Scapa Flow is a cold, forbidding place in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland. A natural protected anchorage about 5 miles across, Scapa is well suited to big ship movements with lots of room for all the onshore support facilities needed by the home fleet of one of the world's largest navies. Separated from Norway, Denmark and Holland by the North Sea, it provides a perfect cork to bottle up a hostile German High Seas Fleet coming out of Wilhelmshaven or the Baltic.

It was also a lightning rod for the German Navy. Here's why: In World War 1, Germany's High Seas Fleet had met the British Grand Fleet at Jutland in 1916, with no clear winner. The High Seas Fleet remained in Baltic ports for the remainder of the war, so there was some truth to the idea that the German Navy was undefeated. As the war was winding down, Fleet Admiral Franz von Hipper launched the idea of a last major naval attack, scheduled to occur October 30, 1918 but many of the sailors knew the state of the land war, and believed this attack to be nothing more than a suicide charge. They declined Hipper's invitation, starting a mutiny which quickly spread ashore as the flash point for a socialist revolution, leading to the resignation of Kaiser Wilhelm on November 9.

An armistice (not an outright surrender), was signed on November 11, 1918 and as part of the terms the High Seas Fleet - 74 of the most modern ships in the Navy - steamed into Scapa Flow for internment, a humiliating end for an

"undefeated" service. There was great concern that the ships would be seized and used against Germany, since many believed the war had been ended only so that all sides could produce a new generation of trench fodder!

Anyhow, the fleet remained at anchor - am-



munition removed, manned by skeleton German crews - until June of 1919, when German flags were raised once again and the entire fleet was scuttled. A last tweak at King George's nose or an illustration of the lack of honour in the German command, depending on your point of view.

So, twenty years later as preparations were made to resume hostilities, Scapa Flow was already a thick file in the German High Command's war plans room. In 1939 as shooting started, Gunther Prien's **U-47** was selected to carry out Special Operation P and sink the Home Fleet while at anchor in its home port.

Prien did a fine job of shooting through the tidal narrows (much like Dodd Narrows or Active Pass) on the surface and entering the huge harbour. Unfortunately for him, German command communications were very bad. Only the old Royal Sovereign class battleship **ROYAL OAK** and the seaplane tender **PEGASUS** were on hand; the rest of the Home Fleet was out chasing the battleship **GNEISENAU**, which had sortied the week before to lure the Home Fleet out of Scapa and into the North Sea - in range of the Luftwaffe. Sort of a left hand/right hand thing. Still, you take what's available and near midnight on October 14, 1939 while the northern lights played overhead, **U-47** fired four G7e torpedoes from 4,000 yards on the beam. One fish hit the battleship's anchor cable and exploded, while the others bounced off the side - misfires were common with early German torps. **ROYAL OAK'S** crew decided the explosion must have been internal (a submarine in Scapa

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Flow? you must

be joking, old boy!) while **U-47** moved off to reload. There were reports of water leaks, but the ship didn't go to action stations or even close watertight doors. 20 minutes later, three more torpedoes were on the way and this time, there were no misses or misfires. 13 minutes later, **HMS ROYAL OAK** rolled on her side and disappeared forever, taking 833 officers and men with her.

**U-47** returned to a hero's welcome in Germany with a drawing of a snorting bull on the side of her conning tower, earning Prien the nickname "Bull of Scapa Flow". The entire crew was awarded the Iron Cross and Gunther Prien received the Knights Cross from Adolf Hitler himself.

It's always puzzled me why, given this background, the pocket battleship **GRAF SPEE** pulled the big plug in the River Plate just two months later (December 1939). After Captain Hans Langsdorff asked for instructions, Admiral Erich Raeder reportedly discussed the matter with Hitler who made it clear he expected the **SPEE** to

break out at all costs, sinking as many of the enemy as possible in the attempt. Raeder's subsequent instructions to Langsdorff said that he was to either scuttle the ship, or move upriver to Buenos Aires for long-term internment. Langsdorff was very troubled by the move but he followed orders, scuttled his ship, and then shot himself! Hitler was outraged when he heard about it and lambasted Raeder – who then put out a general fleet order that "The German warship fights with the full deployment of its crew until the last shell, until it is victorious or goes down with its flag flying."

There was little need for this kind of high level seat cushioning within the fleet, as proven by the U-boat arm and the inshore squadrons. Large surface units seldom got a chance to prove their mettle after the **SPEE** affair, primarily because Hitler never trusted them again. The two notable attempts – the **BISMARCK** cruise in May 1941, and the Barents Sea battle in December 1942 – both ended in failure, largely due to poor intelligence and leadership. Grossadmiral Raeder was forced to resign in May 1943.

As for the Bull of Scapa Flow? **U-47** was reported missing in March 1941 while on her 10<sup>th</sup> war patrol west of Ireland. Gunther Prien and his 44 man crew were never seen again.

#### Bibliography

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US Department of the Navy, Online Archive

U-47.org

defencejournal.com

## ► NOMINATIONS ◀ NEEDED FOR NOVEMBER'S AGM!

### In Praise of Lower Voltages

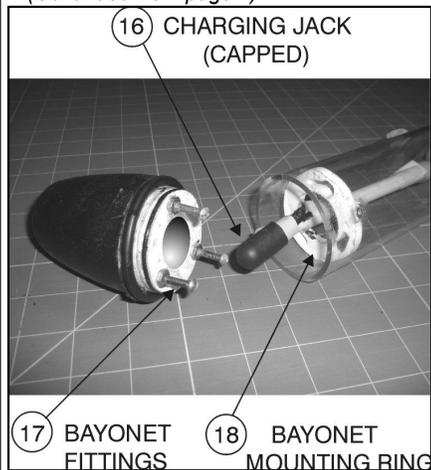
In my tug, now named **Nonsuch**, I installed a 40 volt d.c. motor (because it was free, big and strong and totally silent). It did not say what r.p.m. it would turn on the tally plate, so I ran it on 18 volts and -happy day- it turned 2400 r.p.m. with this power, I needed no gear box; so I ran it through M.C.D. speed controller (rated for 24 volts) and the tug had great power: 4.5 lbs. of bollard pull. The MCD. failed, and it is in Ontario now, waiting to be fixed.

When we had the Tall Ships Festival, one day I forgot my 18 volt battery pack, so we used a 6 volt battery; the speed was dreadfully slow, but the maneuvering was so super that it made up for the slow speed. **Ernest Reid** lent me a Pro-boat controller (only good for 12 volts) so I installed it with a 12 volt battery pack and I have the best of both worlds. Probably realistic scale speed, and a bollard pull of 3 lbs. and very good maneuvering. Both the MCD and the Pro-boat

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body, a great deal of fiddling was involved to get the ends of the two carrying/releasing shafts to line up with those eyelets. The hooking up procedure was slowed down more, because the shaft of the

mechanical arming switch had to be fitted into a notch under the sponsons that kept said switch into its "off" position.

Both problems were readily solved. The second one because the MK-2's magnetic switch only needs proximity to the boat-mounted second magnet of about 1-1/4 inch laterally, and some 1-1/2 vertically.

The MK-1 eyelets were replaced with 1/2 inch-long Lexan blocks with 3/32 inch holes; drilled first, and then flared out to 1/4 inch at their forward side. All of this has contributed to hook-ups in a matter of seconds, both the procedure does require an extra hand-held magnet to keep the MK-2's "off" until the fish gets within reach of the boat's magnetic switch.

**Ease of Maintenance and Service**

Although no conscious efforts were made toward ease of maintenance in the MK-2's design process, the maintenance and service hassles as experienced were broadly eliminated or simplified in a serendipitous way.

The toughest things to do were:  
(a) fuse replacement,

(b) driveline flex joint replacements, and  
(c) needed work or replacement of anything that dwells inside the pressure hull's confines.

Early on, the fuse business was circumvented by replacing the in-line set up with a circuit breaker.

Give it a few seconds after a blow and the circuit restores itself. Should driveline or wiring problems arise, inside access to the pressure hull is accomplished in mere minutes. Here's what's done in those minutes: three countersunk screws, set at 120° separate the stern cone from the main body; the worhead is twisted off; a stick that passes through the bayonet coupling's amounting ring is used to push the whole pressure hull assembly out of the body; the driveline's second U-jont in the free flood space is undone at its input shaft; the two pressure hull bulkheads are pried out, and a length of tubing with an 1 11/16 O.D. is used to push the electronics' from back to front. That leaves the battery juacks unaffected. I haven't clocked the time it takes, but know that between four and five minutes is a close estimate. (It took at least 20 for the MK-1's)

For November's issue, Part IV, narrated "X-ray" views of the assembled (but unpainted) Mark 2's will hit **The Binnacle**. Should they fail as sleep inducers...Gravol is sold over the counter.

Romanus Unicum



**VMSS MODEL BOAT PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**

OPEN TO MEMBERS OF ANY MODEL BOAT CLUB

**Just a few Rules:**

1. Maximum of 3 entries per amateur-photographer/member: **DIGITAL (jpg) only!**
2. Send by email attachment to: [vmss@shaw.ca](mailto:vmss@shaw.ca) **subject line: "PhotoContest Entry"**
3. Model ships and related topics only, please. **Limit of 3 entries per person.**
4. **Deadline November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**
5. Judges decision final; prizes to be announced at a later date in the Binnacle.

**NOTE:** It is intended that the top 12 BEST entries will be used in our VMSS Calendar for 2009. **Questions:** email to: [vmss@shaw.ca](mailto:vmss@shaw.ca)

**GOOD BOATING AND SHOOTING!!**



## October Sailings

Happy Birthday/Anniversary to all of us at VMSS. I've only been here for about 10% of it but it has been an active time for me and lots of good on the water activities. Also a lot of good hints and tips at the meetings. Extremely good value and a lot of good and interesting personalities.

For the next few months we will settle into our normal schedule of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays. The swimming season looks to be mostly done so we are back to being able to walk the shoreline with our boats which makes for better mark roundings and better racing.

Last Sunday saw two power boats show up to run around.

**Dave Denton** brought out his monster tug to try out his new cooling system for the speed control but it looks like the one he was using decided that would be its last run. It worked intermittently but never quite reliably enough. A little birdie tells me a new one is getting plugged in about the time you are reading this.

I also resurrected my Vac-U-Tug and gave it a shakedown as well. My modifications appear to have all worked out and it ran well for the entire time. I started the first race of the day with the sailboats and did my two laps before the first sailboat had finished its first downwind run. Kind of fun. It had everyone laughing out loud when I gave it full throttle and it picked the front half of the hull out of the water, made a 2 foot or so long rooster tail and took off.

Oh, and we sailed too. Not a lot of wind but we had an hour or so of decent stuff and some good close races.

All this in preparation for the combination Powell Cup and Dent-In Cup event on October 19<sup>th</sup>. We should have a good entry for both so get your boats ready and come on out. The day will start with the Powell Cup run but with enough boats we may alternate between the tow events so that everyone is

kept busy. Come on out and have a good time. The rescue boat and motor will be at the ready in case we have any runaways or dead in the water situations. If we find a volunteer we might even keep the rescue boat out on the water to make its response times quicker.

This is a fun event and a good time. Hotdogs and hot chocolate will be available so you can boat, heckle your competitors, and have a snack all at the same place.

After we get through the formal events we will reset the course and have an afternoon of good sailing to make it a full day.

See you at Beaver Lake on the 19th

**-Barry**

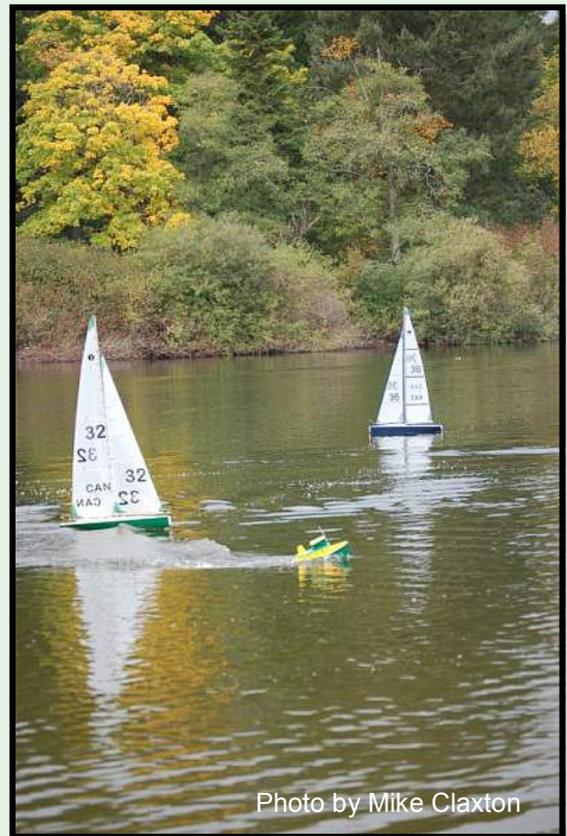


Photo by Mike Claxton

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speed controllers are not too good at dead slow operation, so I think that is why the lower voltage works better.

Now I have to get my speed controller to run cooler, I think that running it at low speed it

interrupts the current for a longer period of time, thus building up heat. I will be cutting a hole in the bottom of the tug and mounting the cooling fins in water.

**Dave Denton**