



April 2021

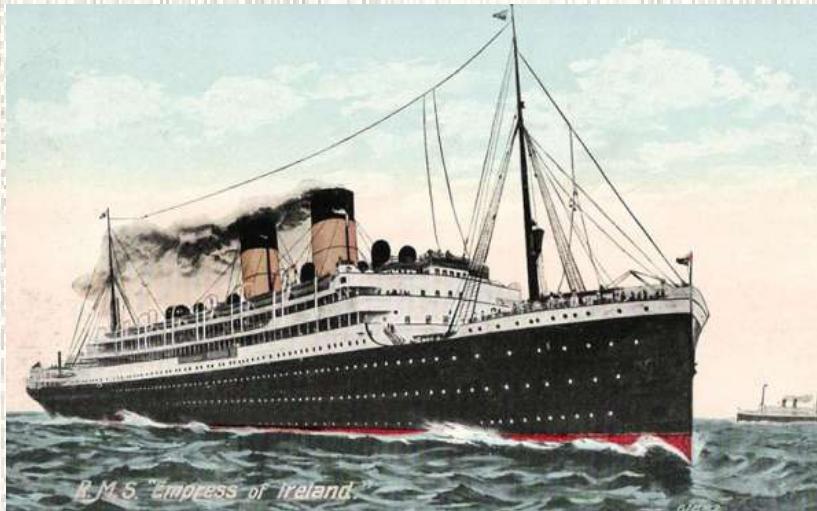
Volume 43 Issue 4

# The Binnacle

Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society  
Victoria, B.C.



Ken Lockley on  
The Empress of Ireland  
Progress on Tusker  
Now those are TUGS!



Edward White on  
Steamed Puddings, the Albanian Navy,  
and Richard Branson,  
a model boat story.  
Plus! We have rules about Scale!



Spring is here and I hope we all have new builds ready for the water. Provincial Health is experimenting by easing some restrictions. Hopefully, we will soon be able to meet outside. I think the inside gatherings are a long way off, but who knows. I am away, so I am writing this 2 weeks before our next Zoom meeting. A lot can change in 2 weeks.

To repeat the note in the minutes of the March Zoom meeting, we are allowed to have 10 people "gather" outside, but social distancing must be maintained. A mask must also be worn and the contact tracing sheet must be signed.

People will start trickling down to Harrison on Wednesday evenings now there is more daylight. Feel free too use the pond at any time. Also, the Wednesday morning group at Langford Lake is smaller than 10, so that is another opportunity to socialize and get a boat on the water.

Things are getting better and warmer, but we still need to be careful. Please stop by for a zoom on Thursday.

Ron



## 2020 Executive Committee

<i>President:</i> Ron Hillsden	479-5760
<i>Vice-Pres:</i> Dave Nelson	812-1942
<i>Secretary:</i> Elgin Smith	384-0574
<i>Treasurer:</i> Mike Creasy	888-4860
<i>Director @ Large:</i> Ken Lockley	477-5830
<i>Binnacle Editor:</i> Edward White	385-6168
<i>Quartermaster:</i> Vacant	
<i>City Liaison:</i> Mike Claxton	479-6367
<i>Membership:</i> Bev Andrews	479-2761

*All above area code (250)*

## ON THE RADAR



Upcoming Events



**Meetings:** Second Thursday 7:30 on Zoom.  
**Upcoming meeting:** 11th February

Sundays 9-11  
Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HMYP)  
Dallas Road at Government Street



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

## Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society Minutes

### Zoom Meeting March 11 2021

Welcome: 14 members zoomed in at 7:30 No new New Members or Guests online

Outreach: None known

#### Old Business

- none

#### New Business

- Hopefully we will be able to meet outside soon. Provincial Health advises gatherings of 10 people are permitted as long as social distancing is maintained and a contact tracing list is kept.. It was not clear whether this applies to us at Harrison Pond and Langford Lake or to families. It was decided to ask the city for guidance. (Mike Claxton since obtained City Parks ruling that we are included in the outdoor gatherings of 10).

- To summarize, 10 members can gather at either water, but please wear a mask, maintain 6 foot separation and sign the contract tracing sheet.
- It was also stated that some members will start going to Harrison Pond on Wednesday evenings now that Daylight Savings time is imminent.

#### Socialization

- There was a discussion about the Maritime Museum of BC's opportunity to succeed with help from Langford. A small group meets at Langford Lake on Wednesday morning.
- The remainder of the meeting was socialization of members discussing their projects.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

**NEXT BUILD #43**

by Ken Lockley

APRIL 2021

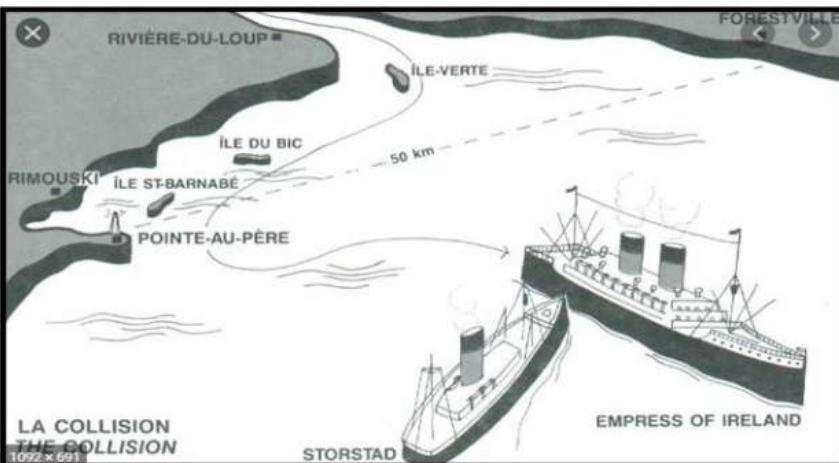
**The sinking of the “Empress of Ireland”** is over shadowed by all the movies and notoriety that the SS *Titanic* has had over the years. I have picked this subject because it’s well over a hundred years since these marine disasters took place. Both were tragic at the time, as they would be today. The Empress of Ireland was owned by Canadian Pacific Steamship Lines, a CPR company. They had a total of 1477 people on board plus crew, the lost of life was substantial with 1012 dying. A bigger percentage the “*Titanic*” tragedy of 1912. This sinking in the Gulf of St Lawrence took place two years after the *Titanic*.

The culprit was the FOG, but a fog peculiar to the St. Lawrence at this time of year, when the warm air of late Spring encounters the river chilled with ice water.

The two main actors in the drama were the “Empress of Ireland” outbound from Quebec and the incoming Norwegian freighter “*Storstad*” steaming up river. Just East of the town of Rimouski near the St. Lawrence South shore where the river opens up to commercial traffic. The Empress of Ireland had just dropped off her pilot and building up speed to proceed on her voyage to Liverpool. The “*Storstad*” was steaming into the pilot pickup area before entering the river.

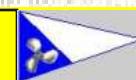
Captain Anderson of the “*Storstad*” was later held responsible for the disaster.

Among the passengers was a company of Salvation Army contingent of nearly 200 men, woman and children going to London for a International Congress. There is an excellent book by Ian Kinder, “Tale of Two Empress Sisters.”

**EMPRESS OF IRELAND TRAGEDY**

To-day the Empress sits in its permanent resting place in the St Lawrence River, two miles offshore of the small town of St Luce, Quebec. In a depth ranging from 80 FSW-140FSW.

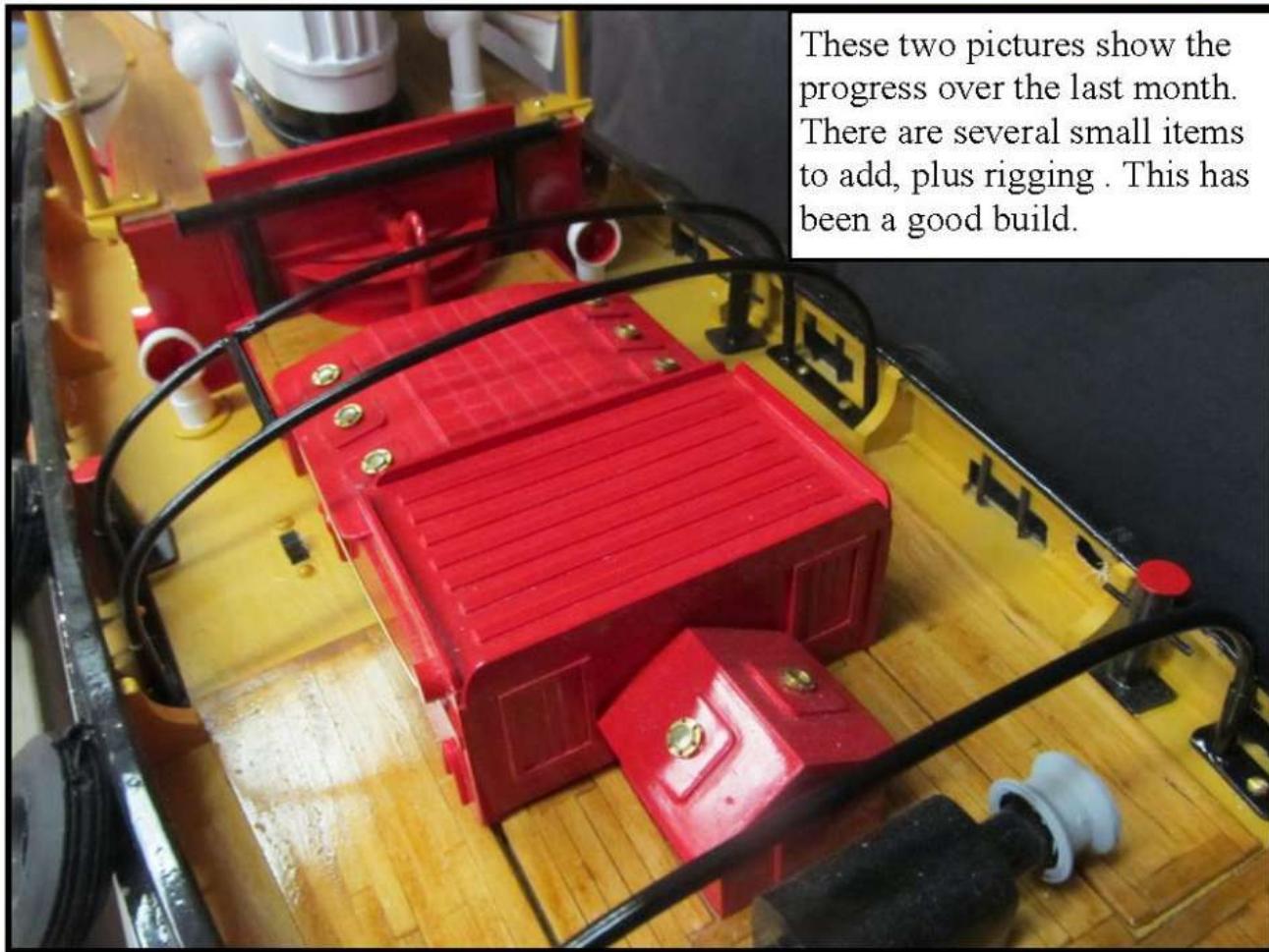
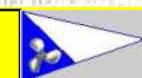
It is now a very popular dive experience.



The museum, featuring the Empress, at Pointe-au-Père Maritime Historic site near Rimouski, Que.

It also includes the submarine "Onondago", as well as the 1909 lighthouse.





These two pictures show the progress over the last month. There are several small items to add, plus rigging . This has been a good build.



ALP GUARD one of the super tugs heading to the Suez Canal blockage .

CARLO MAGNO, an Italian super tug also heading to the stuck container ship in the Suez Canal. The blockage of the Suez Canal is really one of the biggest marine incidents in many years with as many as 300 vessels waiting to make the transit through the Canal.





## The Steamed Pudding and Richard Branson, via model boats.

When I was close to 16 years old, I decided one day to cook a traditional British Sponge Pudding for the family dinner. My father had always made the claim that if Monday's main meal was to be cold meat,(from the Sunday Roast), and salad, then he was entitled to a proper pudding. So puddings were well known and popular in my family.

Well, that didn't turn out well! When I turned it out of the basin, it was the size and consistency of a 3 inch cannon ball, and nearly as heavy. Even Hunnybunch, the family Labrador, refused to eat it, the only time ever.

Families are not inclined to be charitable about such things and the story of the "Poddin" has been retold many, many, times when it could most embarrass me.

Anyway, three weeks back I decided to try to lay that ghost, and succeeded.



**Just so you know.**

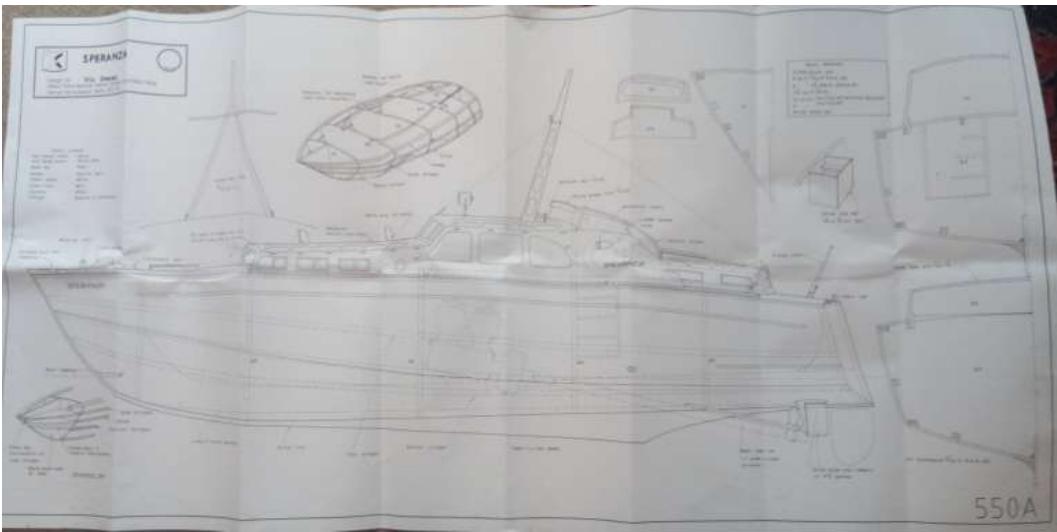
**Yes, this is a Spotted Dick!**

Of course, nowadays the diabetes more or less forbids all puddings, but damn it was good just once.

Flushed with that success, and reading Ken's article last month on Vic Smeed, I remembered that around that same time I had completed my first ever working model boat, a 12 inch Veron Skeeter balsa speedboat. Of course I convinced myself that I was God's gift to boat modelling and sent off for a "Model Maker" plan that was Vic Smeed's Speranza. It was way too ambitious!! Both for my skill and my finances! I got the basic frame together and about 1/4 of the planking done before realizing that it would take me years to finish what was already a botched, distorted, hull, and that saving for a suitable motor and radio was going to have to wait until after I finished University.

But an actual good sponge pudding can lead to nostalgia, so three weeks ago I went onto the Internet and found that the Speranza plan is still available, and I ordered it, if only to dream over.

It arrived this week, and it is as lovely a model as I remember. And actually it has a story worth the telling.



In 1926, in Karachi, India, (before partition and Pakistan), Renato Levi was born to an Italian Jewish family who had fled from Mussolini's fascism. Renato's father was an entrepreneur and a furniture maker, and when the second world war started, he built a boatyard in Bombay to build boats for the Indian, (then British) government. Renato was sent to be educated in France, India, and England, and, towards the end of the war, went to Britain to join the RAF.

After being demobbed, he studied aircraft design in England, and then returned in 1950 to become the chief designer in his father's shipyard in Bombay.

By then, in Britain, he had become friends with Ron Moulton, of the magazine "Aeromodeller", and they continued as "pen friends". So when Renato completed the design of a fast motor yacht "Speranza" and saw it built in his father's yard, he made the design available to Ron. and Vic Smeed was able to use it to design a model.

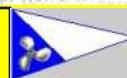
It's worth quoting the first three paragraphs of Vic's original build guide from Model Boats.

"

**Speranza**  
**by Vic Smeed.**

*When a full-size craft is designed by a modeller, should it be surprising that the result has an appeal for other modellers. There is nothing concrete to suggest a model in the design of Speranza, yet an indefinable something about this beautiful yacht gives the impression that it was designed as an ideal prototype for model-builders. Details of it came to us as a result of correspondence between our "Aeromedeller" colleague, Ron Moulton, and Renato Levi, the designer of Speranza, whose acquaintance was formed on common modelling interests some ten years ago, when Renato was living in this country.*

*Built by Afco Private Ltd. of Bombay, Speranza uses two 100 b.h.p. Perkins diesels which give*



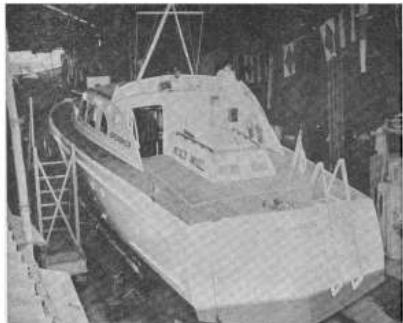
her the unusually high speed of 22 knots, remarkably fast for a boat of this type and size and arising largely from the hull form and attention to small details: a model can be expected to exhibit the same characteristic.

Prototype length is 38 ft 6 in., and beam 12 ft, and our model is at 1 in. to 1 ft. For anything like scale performance a 3 1/2 cc diesel would be the minimum, and weight would have to be a shade under 13 lb. (which would give a scale waterline) but quite reasonable performance would be had with 2 1/2 cc.

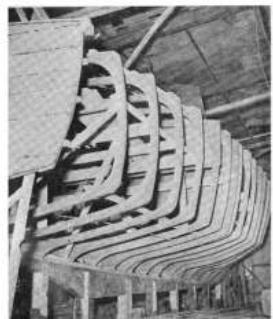
Larger motors, up to about 10 cc., could be fitted, and we have shown the new Taplan Twin on our drawing: with full throttle on this motor, you should stand a good chance in any speed event! If you don't mind floating a trifle deep, the all-up weight can go up to around 17 lb., but as it should be feasible to build to an empty weight of 8 lb., plus motor, etc., plus radio, it should not be difficult to come out at the lighter figure.

Apart from the design itself, the structure of the full-size Speranza is interesting. All frames are continuous laminations, including deck beams, and double skinning in teak is used throughout, the inner skins on sides and bottoms being laid diagonally and the outer fore and aft. With the slight convexity of the surfaces, diagonal planking is the simplest method of skinning, and is recommended for the model version."

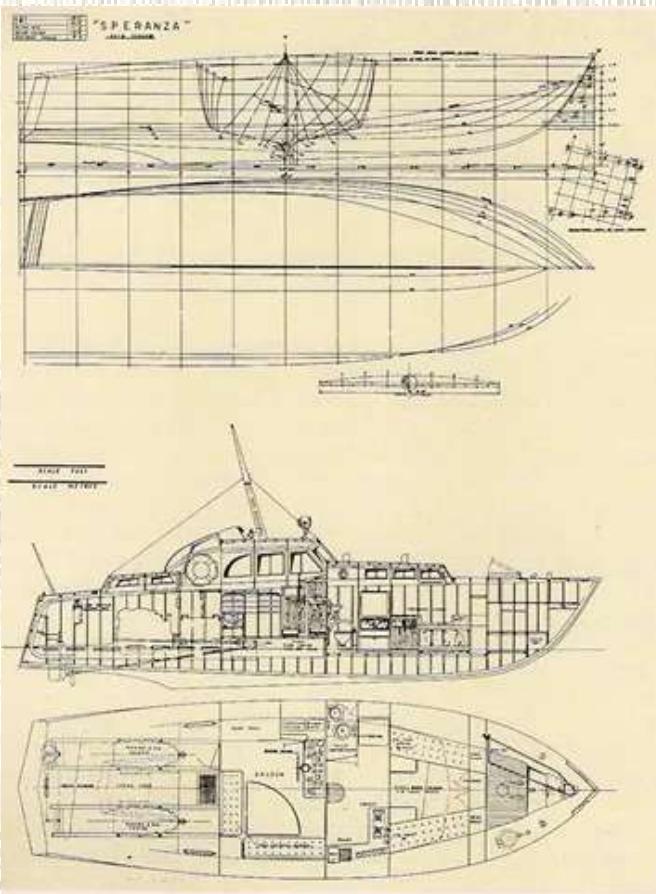
Here are the pictures Vic used in the original build guide of the full-size Speranza, building and complete.



Photos, courtesy of Afco Private, Bombay, show the prototype in the building sheds. The picture below clearly shows the laminated frames and a close look will show that full-size boat-builders have their truing-up stage too!



And below is a, regrettably poor, copy of the full-size plans. You can make out that her two diesel engines were mounted right astern, with vee drives connecting them to the two props. So the centre of gravity and of floatation is well aft of centre, and careful weight distribution fore and aft is going to be required in an electric powered model.



Smeed published the model plan and build guide in 1959, so likely Speranza herself was launched in 1958.

Anyway, as the model plan came out, Renato Levi was still in Bombay, 33 years old, established as a luxury boat designer, with a special interest in speed, speaking at least three languages, and with family money behind him. I guess he had British citizenship, and could claim Italian citizenship through his parents, and he was looking for the high life among people rich enough to afford the boats he wanted to design. He also had considerable personal charm, which wasn't destined to hurt him at all in sales.

So, in 1960, he set up in Anzio, 40 km south of Rome, and founded Navaltecnica. He found there that he could not only sell to the rich, but actually sell the same designs to the Italian government as fast patrol craft.

He also had a knack of persuading his clients to take risks on him with innovative designs that might, (or might not!) turn out to be the coolest thing on the water.

### Pretty Much Eh!

### G. Cinquanta.



One of his earlier designs he called Super Speranza, and the Italian Coast Guard took a number of them. At least two or three of them got passed on to the new Albanian navy when it was reformed after the Balkan conflicts. I don't know if they are still in service.

But he became most famous for his contributions to the new sport of Offshore Powerboat racing, and in 1967 actually won the Daily Express Offshore Powerboat race with "Surfury". (That's MM1057 plan at Sarik Hobbies.) He was a major contributor to the development of the deep vee hull, and of the surface propeller design for very high speed craft.



Perhaps the peak of this type was Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic Challenger II, 72 feet long and packing two 2000 horsepower diesels. It broke the record for the Atlantic crossing in 1986, 80 hours and 21 minutes from New York to the Bishop Rock, an average speed of 36 knots. That was two hours and nine minutes faster than the record set by the 990 feet long passenger liner United States in 1952. United States was packing 240,000 shaft horse power.

I am left with the impression that his genius as a fast boat designer was producing hulls that made the very most of the horsepower put into them. And I think that Speranza was, in the old fashioned sense, his masterpiece, the boat that proved he was a master. Somehow it's very nice that a plan for a model was drawn by the great master of model plans early in the career of both.

Levi retired to the Isle of Wight, and died there at the age of 90 in 2016.

As for my building of a model of Speranza, well, I have two very beautiful boat models that are "stalled out" at home waiting to be completed, both very close to being launchable. They will have to be finished first, and then it's going to be a choice between Speranza and an attempt at the Sutton Hoo ship. Who knows what I am going to fall in love with in the meantime? Roll on the end of the pandemic!



## What's a Scale model?

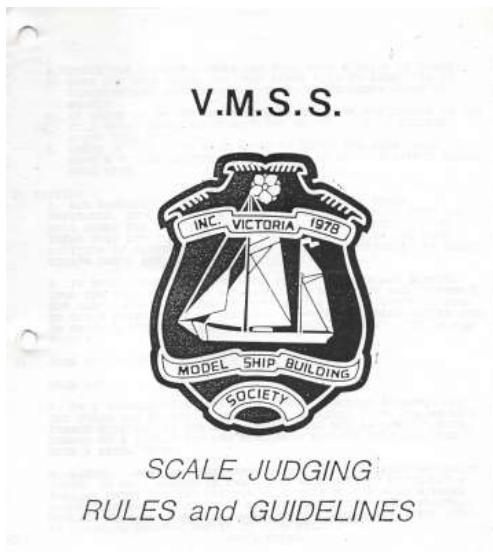
This last month I have been making a bit of a push to get further with the Binnacle Archive on the Club website. Ron Armstrong has lent me his collection of paper copies of the Binnacle right from the first in 1984, and I have been slowly getting them scanned and then processed into PDF files to make available on the website. It's not complete yet but you can now read and download from 33 years of our club history.

In the process I came across a document that the club published in the 1990's "Scale Judging Rules and Guidelines."

I have long been fascinated by the decisions we are forced to make in modelling between scale and workability. Physics dictates that a perfect scale model will not have the stability to behave realistically on the water, so compromise is always necessary. I kind of evolved my philosophy in building my Thames Barge, that some scale detail is too much if the model is actually to perform on the water, either because it will actually interfere with the radio control linkages, or it will make the model too delicate to actually handle. (My barge leeboards don't work, and the deck is missing three of the hand winches and the rigging that were a very essential part of the barge's gear in controlling both the leeboards and the sails. Also I really like the idea of using Playmobil figures on the model to give a visual clue to the scale, and to let it be taken a little more lightly. I like very much to feel that my model explains some things about the full size craft, but also says "I am a toy". Now this is personal! I admire very much the work I see on the pond from our masters of scale, as well as delighting in those who choose to play with non-realistic things that move on water.



So I think these Scale Judging Rules are worth re-publishing, to help all of us decide when we want to make or break them, and to give us targets to aim at. Here they are:-



The person entering a boat for scale judging must have actually built the boat. If questioned, the entrant assumes the burden of proof that he or she actually built the model. Models built by a father or spouse cannot be entered for scale judging on behalf of a child or spouse.

A person entering a boat but did not actually build the boat, can enter in the steering course judging.

## CONSTRUCTION CATEGORY

- 1. KIT**
- 2. KIT MODIFIED**
- 3. SCRATCH**
- 4. SEMI-SCRATCH**

## DEFINITION

### KIT

Vessels entered in the kit class will be required to conform to the following qualifications: Everything (for the most part) is provided in the kit and utilized by the modeller. The hull, superstructure and miscellaneous fittings are provided (not including the means of propulsion or radio).



The basic hull and superstructure have not been altered therefore not changing the silhouette of the vessel. Some accessories can be added such as cleats, figures, etc., but no major changes have been made.

Example: PT109 Linberg kit - Some figures and guns could be added as well as some animation (lights, torpedoes) but the basic building of the kit was done by using the material supplied in the kit. Documentation on the model and prototype is suggested.

#### KIT MODIFIED

A basic kit was acquired (including the hull, superstructure, and miscellaneous fittings) and some major alteration has taken place. The hull and/or superstructure have had a major change such as the hull was rebuilt, shortened, lengthened, or the superstructure was built from some other material other than what was provided in the kit. Additional fittings may have been added and/or scratch built but to qualify for the kit modified, the hull and/or superstructure change is required.

Example: A Billings trawler kit is purchased and the hull, the fittings, and figures are used but the superstructure is completely rebuilt from material not provided in the kit. The silhouette of the model may not have changed but not all of the kit was used. Documentation on the changes to the kit are required.

#### SCRATCH BUILT

The basic hull and superstructure were constructed by the modeller and not by someone else on behalf of the modeller. Purchased or acquired plans, drawings, etc., can be used in the building of the vessel. Fittings and figures can be either purchased or constructed but the remaining part of the vessel was built and not acquired in a complete or semi-complete state.

Example: An oil supply vessel built by constructing the hull on plank on frame basis and the superstructure completely scratch from plastic sheet.

#### SEMI-SCRATCH

The hull and/or superstructure in this category are acquired from some source and are not built by the modeller. Plans and some fittings may have been included with the hull and/or superstructure.

Example: As Iowa class battleship is purchased from a manufacturer as well as plans and some fittings. The remaining parts of the vessel were acquired or scratch built. The key to this category is that the hull and/or superstructure were purchased.

## JUDGING.

### 1) HULL

- a. Check for symmetry. Does the hull have a built in twist?
- b. Does the hull share the same lines side to side? (Is it symmetrical?) Stem exactly vertical? Properly sharp or blunt?
- c. Is there an in and out ripple effect down the length of the hull where there isn't supposed to be? (ie. a planked speedboat hull.)
- d. Sheer of the upper hull where it meets the deck. Does it have a roller coaster effect or an in and out effect along this line?

### 2) FITTING

- a. Are hawsepipes, underwater hardware, bilge keels, portholes, etc., in their proper position, blended into the hull correctly, fastened securely, aligned properly? Are items that are supposed to be symmetrical and in the same position on either side actually done so? Portholes in line? Square doors and windows?
- b. If multi-screw, are the prop shafts in line and blended into the hull properly? Scale rudders and props are preferred but can't always be used as some models simply won't respond to scale sized props or rudders. However, exposed rudder arms or grossly out-of-scale hardware should be reason for losing points.

### 3) DECK ASSEMBLIES

- a. Is a planked deck done with properly scaled planks? Are the plank end joints at the proper location (ie. Planks on a framed hull should end at bulkheads and not randomly spaced. Planks on a battleship are staggered because they are laid over a steel deck.)
- b. Actual planks are preferred over inked, pencilled, or scribed lines, if this method is used, how well does it represent a planked deck? Did the builder take care to use wood without highly contrasting grain lines that run across many planks, thereby spoiling any illusion that separate planks were used? Is caulking present and is it done well?
- c. Steel Decks. Are the edges blended into the side properly? Decks should have a waterway and scupper if they were fitted to the prototype. Higher points awarded should be considered if weld seams and buttjoints are shown where appropriate unless they are not scale and excessively obvious.
- d. Deck Camber. Most ships are supposed to have deck camber (a slight bow to the deck). A comparison of two otherwise identical models would be separated into winner and runner up if one has deck camber and the other doesn't. (Providing of course that the models in question are supposed to have camber).
- e. Inclusion of non-scale hatches to permit interior access should cost points. A bit of imagination and forethought can usually provide an alternate solution. Interior access hatches should be confined to actual working hatches or removal of superstructure parts.

#### 4) SUPERSTRUCTURE

- a. Does the superstructure blend in well to the model or does it look at though it were simply plopped down on the deck: (ie. mismatched or ill fitted joints, mismatched shades of colour where two pieces should be the same colour, upper decks not parallel).
- b. Finish - Is the finish proper for the ship being modelled? (ie. gloss paint on a warship?) If the model is constructed of wood but is representative of a steel or fibreglass ship, no wood grain should be visible beneath the paint.
- c. Long rows of portholes should be absolutely straight and each porthole perfectly round or documentation showing otherwise must be provided.
- d. Inspect for visual seams, rough glue joints, unfilled wood grain and workmanship around windows, door and corners. Poorly done work will usually show first in these areas. If poorly done, the modellers usually try to cover up their mistakes with paint or weathering.
- e. Is the paint used suitable for model work? Spray can and heavy duty paints will obliterate fine detail, as well as causing a very heavy built up appearance.
- f. Are ladders, lockers, first aid boxes, fire hose reels or other details cleanly attached? Small details should not show the effects of heavy painting that makes them look like they grew out of the bulkhead or excess glue squeezed out around the edges.
- g. Windows or other transparent areas should have actual glazing of some type. More points will always be awarded for this type of construction than painted on portholes or windows. Framing should be sharp and square, with well defined corners. Watch for glue smears or warped or otherwise glued or sloppy transparencies.

#### 5) FINE DETAILS

- a. Watch for symmetry. Masts and funnels should be straight and true and symmetrical when viewed either head on or from the stern. Tapered shapes, such as masts and funnels should taper evenly on both sides. Faulty workmanship here leads to parts with decidedly lopsided appearances. All masts and funnels should be truly vertical.
- b. Rigging should follow the original ship's layout and not be greatly simplified. Has the builder included correct attachment points or has he simply tied thread to masts and attachment points? Does the rigging actually reflect what it is supposed to be? (ie. Cable or rope) or is it obviously just thread and the wrong size thread to compound the error.  
Has the rigging thread been waxed to remove the fuzziness? Are flags stiff and oversized or well finished, correctly proportioned and hanging correctly? Real flags don't stand out stiffly at all times.
- c. Have purchased fittings been re-worked to remove mould lines or surface defects?
- d. Railings are usually a sore point. Has the builder simply used purchased railing and stanchions without regards to true scale? Admittedly, railings that are exactly scale are very fragile on working models. However, an otherwise good model can be ruined by using straight pins (or worse, nails) as stanchions that are grossly out of scale. A 1/96th destroyer with wire rails that scale out to six or eight inches in diameter should lose points. Ladders for the most part, should scale out with



rungs one foot apart. Many decent models can be see with ladders totally out of scale.

## 6) FINISHING

a. Check for obvious flaws such as runs, orange peel, excessively heavy coating of paint and proper colour and matte or gloss finish. Look for clean masking lines, not lines with fuzzy edges. The use of inaccurate or inappropriate brightwork. Using pinstripe tape instead of painted waterlines and stripes should be considered a flaw especially if overly thick tape is used or the tape is sliding off corners or curves. Decals should not have bubbles and the clear carrier around a decal should be trimmed as close as practical

## 7) DOCUMENTATION

Good documentation is necessary as judges cannot possibly be expected to know everything about the many different models and ships. Plans, magazine articles, and pictures of the real vessel are classed as documentation.





## This Month's Websites.

Canada History:- <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/transportation/empress-of-ireland-remembered>

Model Boats Website:-<https://model-boats.com/blogs/29411#70577>

VintageModelPlans:- [https://www.vintagemodelplans.com/products/motor-yacht-scale-1-12-38-1-2-speranza-full-size-printed-plans-for-radio-control?\\_pos=1&\\_sid=7b45661da&\\_ss=r](https://www.vintagemodelplans.com/products/motor-yacht-scale-1-12-38-1-2-speranza-full-size-printed-plans-for-radio-control?_pos=1&_sid=7b45661da&_ss=r)

Renato Levi:- <http://sonnylevi.com/>

**The Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society is a non-profit club, open to all, established in 1978 under the Societies Act of B.C.**