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EXCEPTIONAL ELLESMERE

Fine models galore
at '99 Convention

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SWALLOW

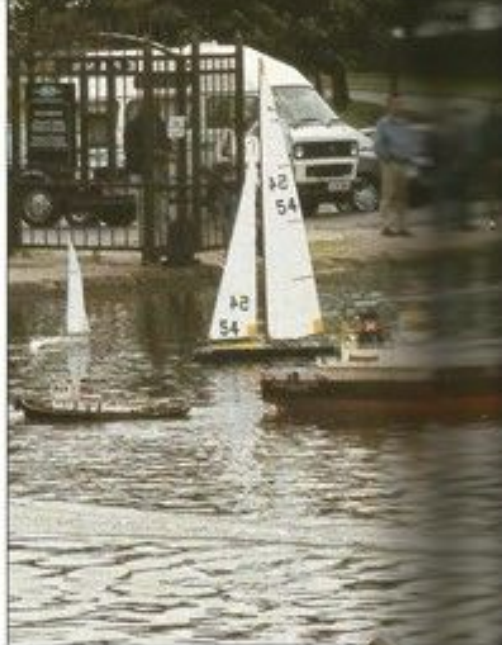
Plan Feature and review of Tony Abel's One Metre Skiff



The 'tug towing' crowd make ready.

Ellesmere Port

The 10th Convention is reported by JON GODSELL



By late afternoon all was ready, well almost. Some went off to find their accommodation, others to find an establishment for dinner, while I was left to fend for myself - not a bad thing as it allowed me to make some repairs to my entries.

On the opening day I arrived back just in time to enter my two examples, namely the Osprey and the Resolve. By now though there was little room left on the tables and it became a rather tight squeeze to place them in a viewing position amongst all the other splendid examples of our hobby.

A rather special competition had also been organised with some pretty good prizes on offer. Sponsored by Sirmar, it was for the best Hunt class destroyer built from their hull and range of fittings. This on the face of things appeared to be a splendid idea, and still does I might add. But as with most good things a fly got in to the ointment so to speak, in that although there had been almost two year's notice of the competition, one rather large fact had been missed out, and that was the length of time that it can take to build a model of this sort, even with most of the fittings being available. The result was that there were rather fewer entries than had originally been expected.

However having said that, the examples that did arrive more than justified the decision to continue with the competition this year. Every one was an example of what can be achieved at this scale, and certainly inspired me to continue apace with my example of this interesting destroyer class.

Wandering out of the Island Warehouse, and over to the other exhibits in the buildings around the basin of the museum, the visitor had a bird's eye view of models sailing in one of the locks and on the upper basin; while at the same time being able to observe full sized barges making their way through the locks. This of course did provide the opportunity for some interesting situations too occur, but I am glad to say that with warnings provided by the effervescent Max Hundleby, common sense did prevail.

Of course one of the largest draws was Bill Wilkinson with his Admiralty paddle tug Pert. As always when he emerges from the interior of the model, after having made a circuit or two of the basin, there is always a slight murmur to be heard from the assembled onlookers along the lines of "goodness gracious me, he actually sits in it."



Above & top right: Not just scale - fast electrics and yachts as well. Below: Impressive ASR showing its pace.



Well who'd have thought it, the 1999 convention was the tenth year in succession this event has taken place. Since its inception the convention has grown in size and popularity every year, and this year was no exception either. For instance all the traders had booked their positions well in advance, leaving those that had not done so to rue their misjudgement. It was also the same for the clubs who wished to enter, with one or two being turned away because of lack of space.

Those that did enter came from far and wide and from many unexpected places, including clubs from Edinburgh, Wearside, and Northampton. This resulted in a vast number of models, of all types and sizes being on display throughout the weekend.

Even as the traders were setting up, people eager to purchase items were besieging them before they sold out. This did appear initially to cause a few problems, but I don't think many begrudged that, to be honest. Though it does indicate that it may be well worth extending the convention by another day, to accommodate the numbers now attending.

When I arrived at the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum there was a hive of activity going on - models and all sorts of goodies were arriving from all directions, though I decided to leave entering my two examples until the next day.

It was obvious that the standard of the entries both in the competition classes and on the club stands was going to be exceptional this year. In point of fact, I cannot recall seeing so many outstanding examples of marine modelling gathered in any one place for a long time, if ever. I should have thought that virtually every known waterborne craft was represented somewhere in the museum during the weekend.



Other models to be seen on the water over the weekend included some high-speed electric racing boats, which naturally enough thrilled the younger elements in attendance. A few of what looked like, very expensive racing yachts, could also be seen being put through their paces, as could what I think is a new kit, a high speed air sea rescue launch. This model performed extremely well, lifting from the water in a most realistic fashion.

Making my way over to the Rolt Centre, I can across the New Brighton club crammed into the foyer of the building, however, they managed to put on a compact display of the members' models.

On the upper floors, clubs from Wearside, Runcorn, etc., had set out their displays, which including many interesting and unusual models, and one of these was to be seen on the Runcorn club stand. This was a model of a rather rare aircraft carrier that had been built on the River Weaver at Northwich by Yarwoods. Aircraft carriers built on the Weaver I bear you ask? Well yes, there were one or two actually. Obviously they were not what most people would consider to be an aircraft carrier; these were vessels that were built to transport two aircraft to and from a carrier - to shore or to a repair facility. The hull of these vessels was also adapted for use as Admiralty lighters, so you can now see where Frank Hinchliffe got his idea for the C624 kit from.

Also in one corner of this display, some of the older members demonstrated a method of building ships' boats using a former, some card and PVA glue. I studied them for a while realising as I did just how quick and simple this method was in producing a strong but lightweight boat of almost any dimension or shape.

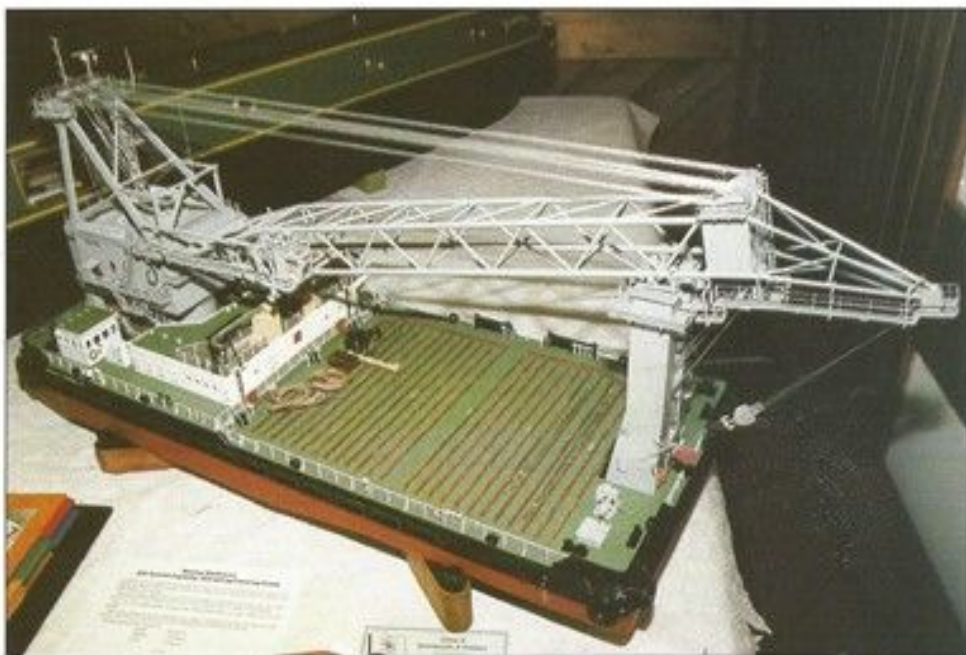
Moving on to the next room, even more clubs' stands were to be seen, all of which had models galore - in fact there were so many at times that it was difficult to focus on any one model and one was left feeling rather fatigued.

I then made my way to the area where the Surface Warship Association had their display. This again was a most impressive display of the members' abilities to produce so many models of warships, each one of which was different.

Returning to the Island Warehouse I once more stopped off at the sailing area to see if any new models had made an appearance. Of



Left: Judges Ken Daniels, Dave Abbott and Jimmy Wood were just one of a group of judges kept on their toes by the excellent quality of competition entries.



Below: The Mersey Mammoth was the best model in show.

Right: Detail on the Sirmar Hunt class competition winner by Phil Scates.



course there were one or two new ones to see for the turnover was constant throughout the two days and all were interesting to see in their natural environment.

The Island Warehouse is the area in which most if not all the traders are to be found. Every year more and more want to attend, however there is a limit on the numbers that can be physically fitted in. This year most of the places had been booked by the early Spring, though as usual there were those that had left it to the last minute to make their arrangements.

Virtually all the traders had new kits, tools and sundry items on their stands, for instance Mount Fleet Models had their two latest releases on show, the Britannia and the Highlander. The first is a former Tyne Commissioners Pilot cutter of 1923. This vessel was a standard fishing drifter, which had been purchased by the Tyne Commissioners for use as a standby tender. She was converted into a cutter by the addition of a deckhouse forward of the bridge, together with a few other alterations. This of course makes her a splendid subject to model using the Danny Boy/Osprey hull as a basis for the project. The other new example, the Highlander, is a large freelance Clyde puffer. This model is ideal for steam, and is open to a wide variety of interpretations. Both will be extensively reviewed in this magazine during the coming year so watch out for them.

Sirmar also had a fine range of their GRP hulls and fittings, including their new 1:48 V&W destroyer hull, as well as other new products. I was also informed that they had sold all but one of their Hunt class hulls, so in the future I expect that we will be experiencing a plethora of these models around the country as well as abroad. During our conversations, new additions to the 1:48 range are being actively discussed. I'm pleased to report that there are some very exciting projects under consideration.

A little farther along, another of what seems almost a permanent feature of these shows could be found, this of course, was SHG. Quite what we would do without Sue and Jerome and their stall of multitudinous maritime wares I'm not sure. Their little piece of space was busy from the outset, and continued as such throughout the weekend. Of course there were other traders selling various other tools and equipment, batteries, electric motors, steam engines, lifeboats and other sundry fittings.

One of the most prolific manufacturers of fibreglass hulls and fittings, Mobile Marine

Models, under the auspices of Bryan and Ann Ward, had a rather intriguing device on their stand. This was a piece of equipment that fits between the coupling and propeller shaft and allows a fouled propeller to disengage from the motor, thus eliminating burnt out motors. Brian explained how the device worked. It was covered in Test Bench in the January issue.

No event these days can hope to be a total success unless there is some sort of social occasion during one of the evenings. Over the last two years the organisers have to some extent lead the way by having interesting trips on a Dutch barge initially, and last year a trip on the river Dee from Chester was arranged. Both were a success, I believe. This year a change was instigated, and a social evening was held at the premises of a well-known hotel chain nearby. During the evening much ice was broken, in the sense that people began to talk to one another in the relaxed atmosphere. As the evening developed many differing view points about marine modelling were aired, leading to new initiatives as to how the hobby can and hopefully will develop in the future.

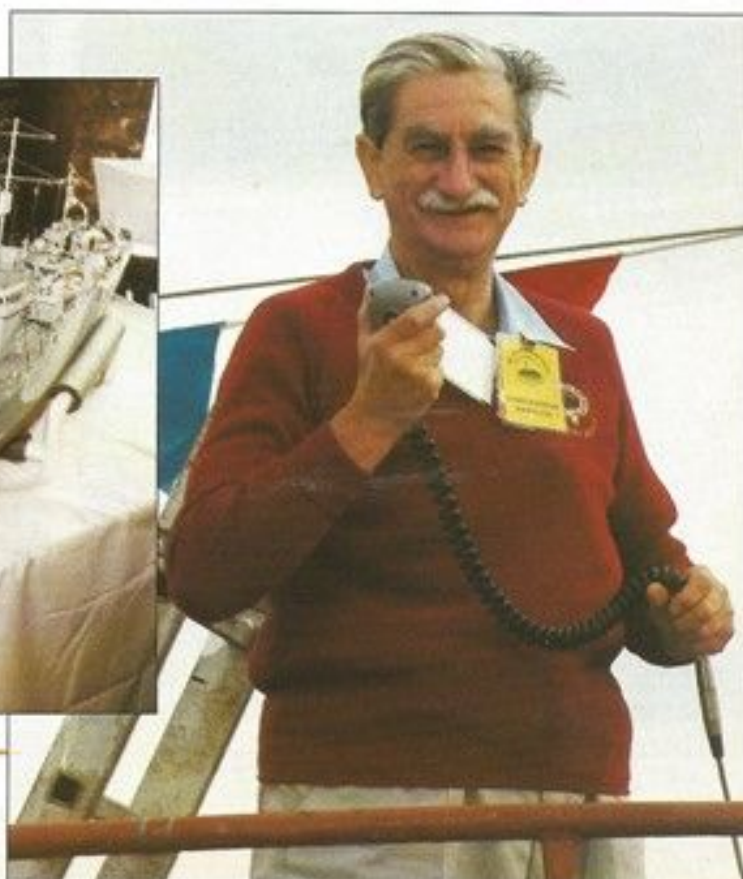
Of course it was not all-serious talk. Light hearted moments did occur, especially on the dance floor, with one or two normally dour members of our clan letting their hair down in spectacular fashion.

After the revelries of the previous evening, the second day got off to much quieter start than the previous day. This gave me the opportunity to visit the stands in the basement of the Island Warehouse. Here again could be found another vast array of models, most of which I had not seen before. I found the display of World War 2 German E boats and their British counterparts from a club in Edinburgh to be fascinating and informative. The Colwyn Bay club also put on a splendid display of their members' models, some of which were under construction at the time and hence displayed some of the many methods used in the construction of models.

Also in this area a number of plastic modellers could be found, some of which belonged to the IPMS. The models they displayed varied a great deal but all were produced to exceptionally high standard. I find it rather strange that marine modellers and members of the IPMS who build marine

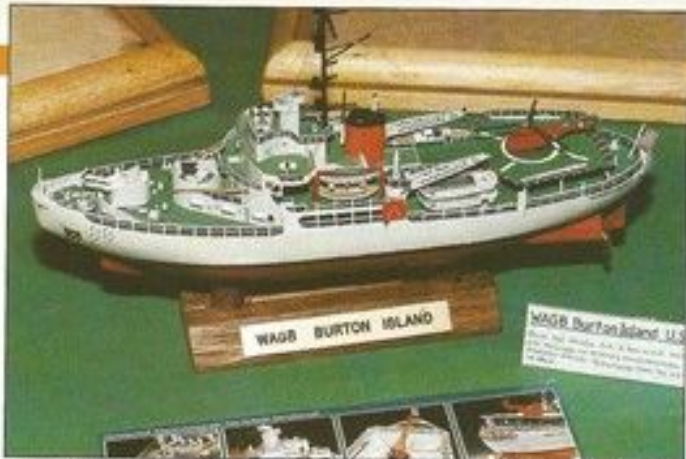


Above right & opposite: Great warship action - an Oliver Hazard Perry, a Type 22 Batch 3 frigate, an HDML, and a Black Swan class frigate. Right: Max Hundleby was his usual informative self on the PA. Below: Three Simar model kits.





Above left: A model of a rather rare aircraft carrier that had been built on the River Weaver at Northwich by Yarwoods, seen on the Runcom Club stand. Above right: Just one of the hundreds of plastic kit models on the IPMS stand.



Above: New Brighton Model Boat Club.
Below: Wearside Model Boat Club.



Great for atmospheric models - just look at the life and realism on these four models.



Below: E Boats from Edinburgh Model Boat Club.



Etherow Model Boat Club.





The happy winners.



models don't collaborate more often, surely we have something in common? In fact models built from plastic kits are far more popular in other countries than radio control or even static models are. Here I am thinking of Japan especially, but it also appears to be the case in the majority of other countries of the world, if the Web sites devoted to plastic modelling on the internet are anything to go by.

However, all good things must come to an end. By mid afternoon it was time to present the prizes and for people to pack up and wend their way home. I know everybody had a good time and the traders sold most of their

stock, which put a smile on their faces.

It was also a tremendous success for the Museum and for the organisers of the Convention. It seems trite to say every year that this was the most successful show to date, but this year this was the case, and congratulations should be extended to all concerned. Even I went on my way with more than a few photographs as souvenirs, because my two entries both received awards, much to my surprise, so even I now have an Elbsmere Port Convention plate on the mantelpiece. Roll on next year, I've got the bug now, so watch out!



Above: Members of the Runcom Club demonstrate their method of building light weight boat hulls from card and white glue. Below: Just some of the club stands and their wonderful displays: this is the Surface Warship Association.

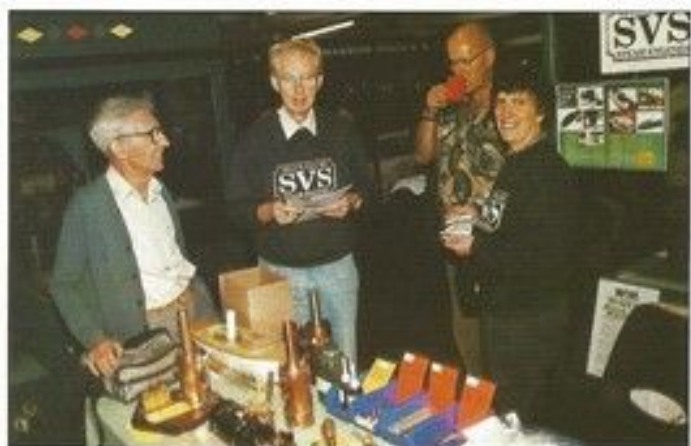


Above: Colwyn Bay Model Boat Club. Below: Northampton and District Model Boat Club.





Above left: Hunter Systems showed their range of electronic 'glomos'. Above right: Calder Craft showed their impressive range of period ships - this one is HMS Snake. Below left: The White family prepare for action on their Model Slipway stand. Below right: Sue Grainger makes a sale on the SHG stand.



Above left: Stour Valley Steam Engines take a break. Above right: Who is instructing who? Bill Wilkinson (glasses) talks to Allan Miller whilst Mick Bond talks to a visitor who has obviously visited SHG's stand. Below left: Sue Hinchliffe on Mount Fleet Models' stand. Below right: Bryan Ward of Mobile Marine Models.

