Luton & District Model Boat Club

… a model club ***not*** just for boats

President and Chairman Dave Abbott with Secretary Graham Rumble
20th Anniversary Open Day, 22nd April 2012

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012

Notes from your Editor

We have now entered our 21st year; see the anniversary open day report. Apart from that, the club has been busy attending away-days since the last edition, including Alford, a very wet and windy Wicksteed Mayhem show and the scale model show at RAF Hendon.

This will be the last magazine to be put together by me. I believe that the holder of this post must be able to attend home and away open days and exhibitions, in order to report upon them. In the coming year, due to family commitments, this will be difficult for me to keep up. I think in fairness to the club, a more active member should take over to keep reports timely and informative.

I've been the editor from 1995 to 2000 and again from 2004 to now, I must have misunderstood the question? During that time I've seen the club reduce and then in the new century, grow back to be one of the most popular in the region. Part of that is due to the committee and members, but the venue must also take some credit. Other clubs have struggled with either poor quality water or landlords that make life difficult. Luton Borough have been brilliant.

Kay and I will be around for as many open days and exhibitions as we can, helping with the set-up and breakdown. If I can give more attention to my models by leaving the camera in its case, I may even get the boats wet!

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Dates for you Diary

July 22 - Open & Themed day
Wardown Park - working boats
NOTE CHANGE OF DATE
July 29 - Stevenage RNLI Open Day
August 9 - Night sail Wardown Park
Sept 2 - Black Park
Sept 9 - Welwyn Garden City Open Day

Sept 13 - A.G.M. Proposals by Aug 9th
Sept 16 - Open & Themed day
Wardown Park - steam and sail
Sept 20 - Night sail Wardown Park
Sept 29/30 - St Albans show
Oct 11 - Inter Group Competition
Nov 9/10/11 - Warwick show
Dec 13 - Xmas get-together

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Take care in the park

You will all be aware that the weather has been poor, to say the least. Please use the grey matter when driving in the park, the grass must be dry and firm for you to drive on it. Failure may lead to us being banned from taking the cars down to the drop-off point.

Luton & District Model Boat Club Anniversary Open Day, Sunday 22nd April 2012.

Twenty years ago, the L&D MBC were given permission to use the lake in Wardown Park, to sail their models on Sunday mornings, by Luton Borough Council. The actual anniversary was in March but the committee, thought that the weather at that time of year, would not be conducive to standing around in the wind and rain. How wrong could we be?

The build up started in January, with letters to the model boating press then local newspapers, followed by invites to local clubs. For Kay and I, who obviously knew about the date some time ago, we annoyingly found ourselves with a logistics problem, when events beyond our control, meant we were in London until late on the 21st. In order to save having to squeeze, both harbour, boat and other bits into the car in the early hours of Sunday, I decided to bring the dock to the hut the Sunday before. Many thanks to Terry M and Peter C who helped us to tidy the hut and get all 6 pieces into a corner shelf.

The weeks preceding the 22nd April had seen the weather change from unseasonal hot and dry (March) to wet and exceptionally cold. So it was expected that we were in for a soaking. I was feeling guilty… having said in the last magazine that I hope we do have some rain to raise the level of the lake to "normal". Yes, but enough is enough!

We arrived at the lake around 09:00hrs to find a cool but sunny and calm morning. Things looked promising… Peter C and his merry men had already erected tents and marquees and had emptied the hut. So, liberating the harbour from its shelf was easy and it was up and running within the hour (with Kay's help of course).

The display stands were the usual high standard, full with examples of modellers work and they soon attracted visitors to the park to stop and have a look around.

Our guests came from The Moorhen Model Boat Club in Hertford, Stevenage MBC, Black Park MBC, St Albans Society of Model Engineers, Welwyn Garden City SME, Wicksteed Park and Cambridge. We may have even picked up some new members; Lyn was told how good Luton is at making visitors welcome…

When the free sailing was available, the water was busy with models, watched by the many visitors to the park. I even managed two 30 minute steaming sessions with the Christiaan Brunings while Kay helped in the canteen. Almost unheard of these days, as I usually spend too much time with the camera and notebook, however, on this occasion I just could not help myself!

I did, however, miss the Demolition Derby while raising steam – oops. In my defence I thought Tony D was taking part, so kept an eye on him - when he took to the water I would follow with the camera. But too late I discovered that he was not a participant! So that plan failed miserably.

Mike Skuce put his hand up at an unfortunate time and volunteered himself, to put on some waders. I'm sure that Peter C was most grateful to have the help.

Mike appears to have enjoyed the experience? I caught him with a smile on his face.

There was some debris on and in the water which the smaller craft took great delight in finding…

A family affair… that was very good to see.

As usual with our big events, the canteen staff did a wonderful job and their efforts were much appreciated by members and our guests. Thank you…

The day proved to be the warmest and driest day of the month, in Luton anyway. However, we were very fortunate, as Kay and I found the rain not too far away upon our return to Sandy - we unloaded the car accompanied by hail, then thunder and lightning. It seems that the breeze was taking it all to the north of Luton, as our neighbours told us it was wet most of that day there.

By 15:00hrs, the promised rain was now in the wind, so many hands got stuck in to the break-down, which was very quick and organised. What a team, everyone found something to dismantle or pack away. Many thanks are due to all the members who stayed behind to help the committee.

Dave A and Graham R were delighted with the day and came away with big smiles on their faces. What an excellent day, enjoyed by all who attended.

Stevenage MBC Open Day, Sunday 20th May.

The long run of dry, warm open days in Stevenage came to an end in 2012; it was cold with an unseasonal north wind.

Note those sheltering in the tent! I don't blame them (I only went out to take the photograph).

The weather must have been to blame for the unusually low turn out; even the public were thin on the ground.

I have to confess that I left my steamer at home, not having the winter gas mixture in the house (it's supposed to be summer!!) it would have been impossible to raise and maintain sufficient steam pressure.

With no canteen staff attending, they were at an alternative indoor event, the RAF Hendon Scale model show – very wise. Kay stepped in to keep us mobile with some hot refreshments. Of course that also meant that she kept under the canvas and cuddling the kettle. No matter, you are forgiven. Thanks for doing that Kay.

Tony D kept their rescue busy, as usual, by somehow running aground on the island! Not large enough for you to see, Tony?

Lets hope the next one, 29th July, has more luck with the weather. Ah, just thought, it is school holiday time and that is when, traditionally, the summer takes a break too! Oh well…

Converting a 35/40 Mhz radio to 2.4Ghz

Part two (of two)

By Tony Dalton

The signal wire, is attached to the back of the Trainer PCB Pin 2, see **Photo 15.** (*Correction to part one)*
NOTE: do not connect the signal wire to any other pin as this may result in damage to the Radio.

Having completed all the wiring, I could now assemble the radio back together. First, I assembled the Bind PCB to the back of the radio complete with spacers, then I replaced the Trainer PCB back into its correct position, using the two self tapping screws previously removed **Photo 16.** Next, I fitted the battery into the battery compartment and connected it to the battery plug on the radio PCB. I then, carefully fitted the rear cover to the front, making sure that I did not trap any of the wires and using the four long black self-tapping screws, secured the back into position. Finally, I screwed the antenna to the gold connector on top of the Radio, **Photos 17 and 18**.

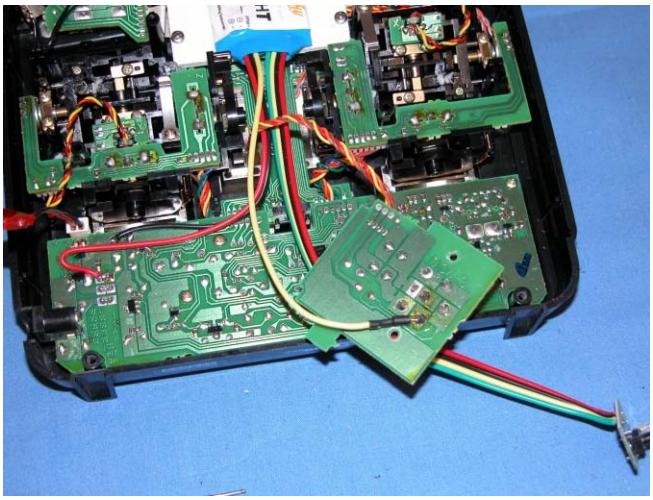


Photo 15 Signal wire connection

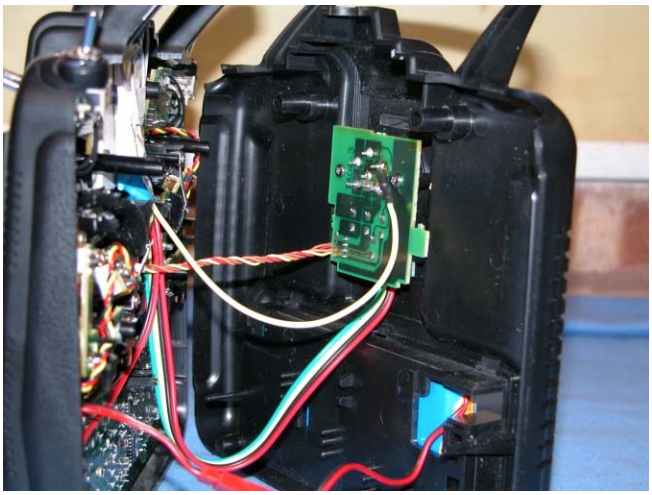


Photo 16 Trainer and Bind PCBs fitted

Photo 17 Modification completed

Photo 18 Modification completed

Now for the moment of truth, does it all work? I removed the receiver from its packaging and connected a servo (for test purposes), to one of the channels and placed a fully charged 4.5 volt receiver battery, together with the new Receiver near to the Transmitter **Photo 19.**

Photo 19 Ready for Binding/Set-up the Radio

Following the instructions provided with the 'Hack' Transmitter I proceeded to follow the instruction as follows:

1) Turn on the Transmitter while holding down the programming button on the Binding board located on the back of the Transmitter. Release it after about 5 seconds and the RED LED on the Binding board should flash, this indicates that the Transmitter is ready to bind the receiver.

2) Connect the battery to the Receiver while holding down the receiver button. The LED on the Receiver should flash indicating that the binding process is completed. Turn off the Receiver and the Transmitter.

3) Turn on the Transmitter, the ORANGE/RED LED on the Binding board should come on. Connect the battery to the Receiver and the LED on the Receiver should come on, indicating that the Receiver is receiving commands from the Transmitter and in a few seconds the system should be ready and working. Operate the Transmitter controls and verify that the servo can be controlled.

To implement the 'Fail Safe' on the Receiver carry out the following action:
With the Transmitter and Receiver switched ON and operating, set the controls on the Transmitter to their 'Fail Safe' positions, briefly press the button on the receiver and the GREEN LED on the Receiver should flash twice. This indicates that the 'Fail Safe' positions have been remembered.
Now to be fully confident in the new radio system, a range check should be carried out. To do this, place the Receiver on a bench about 1 metre above the ground, with a servo and battery connected, hold the Transmitter such that the aerial is in a vertical position and switch both the Transmitter and Receiver ON. Press and hold the Range push switch on the Transmitter for about four seconds the RED light should change to GREEN indicating that the output power of the Transmitter has been reduced to about 1/1000th of its full power. (This means the effective distance is reduced by about 1/30^{th,} the effective distance will be shortened to just above 30 metres) Walk away from the Receiver while simultaneously operating the controls of the Transmitter.

One should be able to walk about 30 metres away from the Receiver without losing control. Press the Range switch on the back of the Transmitter again to exit the Range check state and return to normal operation

The modification of the 40MHz Radio to 2.4GHz has now been completed and I have a fully functional computer controlled 2.4GHz Radio System for under £30, this is good value for money in my opinion.

If you wish to convert your radio to 2.4GHz and require some help please do not hesitate to ask me for assistance.

Notes:

1) If you do not like the idea of drilling the Transmitter case for the Binding board there is no reason why the board should not be left loose inside the Transmitter. Once the Receiver has been bound to the Transmitter it will not be required again until another Receiver is purchased and requires binding.

2) If you need to modify the bush on top of the radio that supports the gold aerial connector, use a small hack saw to remove the bulk of the bush and then file the remainder away with a flat file.

3) If you have no access to a method of soldering, do ask for some assistance. That is what our Club is all about, helping each other in order that we can all enjoy our hobbies.

Web sites of interest:
www.giantcod.co.uk Supplier of Radio 'Hack' Module and matching Receiver, telephone number: 01872 572335.

http://users.belgacom.net/TX2TX/tx2tx/english/tx2txgb7.htm This gives the information about the connections associated with the Trainer connector on the back of the Receiver. If you have any problems downloading this information, I can E-Mail you an attachment.

Reworking The Old Puffer

By Tony Martin

When I started model boating, I purchased a simple scratch built puffer from our club secretary (Graham) for a modest fee. After a year or so of constant use, I decided it could do with a bit of updating .The superstructure on the stern was basic, consisting of two odd shaped boxes to simulate the bridge and engine room with a Steredent tube for a funnel. The only thing in its favour was a working set of navigation lights.

After looking at other puffers (i.e. the Caldercraft Northlight), my wife Lyn, was of the opinion that if I were to do any modifications, then a six sided bridge would be the one to make. At this point, my dad (Terry) began to take an interest in boat modelling and by chance purchased a part started puffer kit by the fore mentioned Caldercraft.

On closer inspection it was noted that the bridge had been assembled badly. In fact, it was so lopsided that to correct it would lower the roof to such an extent, that the crew would have to be good at Limbo dancing to get in! It was decided it would be much easier to build a completely new puffer using the plans supplied with the kit.

I agreed to do this, with the proviso that I could make one for myself at the same time. This in turn, led to the fact that the engine house on my puffer would also need replacing. I decided to make both structures from plastic and add detail later.

The two new bridge section panels were cut from 1MM plastic sheet that was then assembled and painted black as an undercoat.

This was done, as I had decided to plank the outside of the structures using strips of veneer and the white plastic might show through the joints.

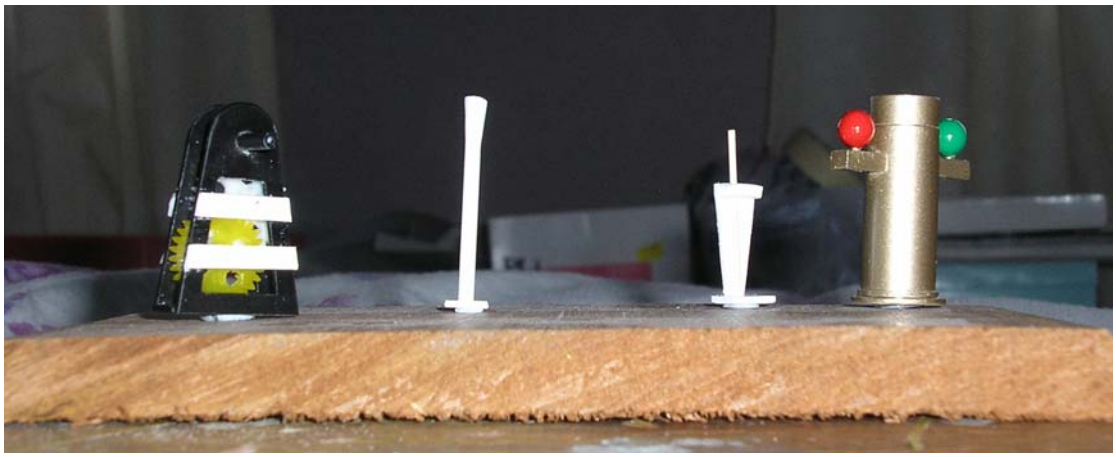
While I was doing this, I also made an engine room out of 4mm plastic sheet, as the one on my boat could not be salvaged. Detail was added to this in the form of portholes from Mantua Models, two oil drums on a frame, an air vent and the funnel.

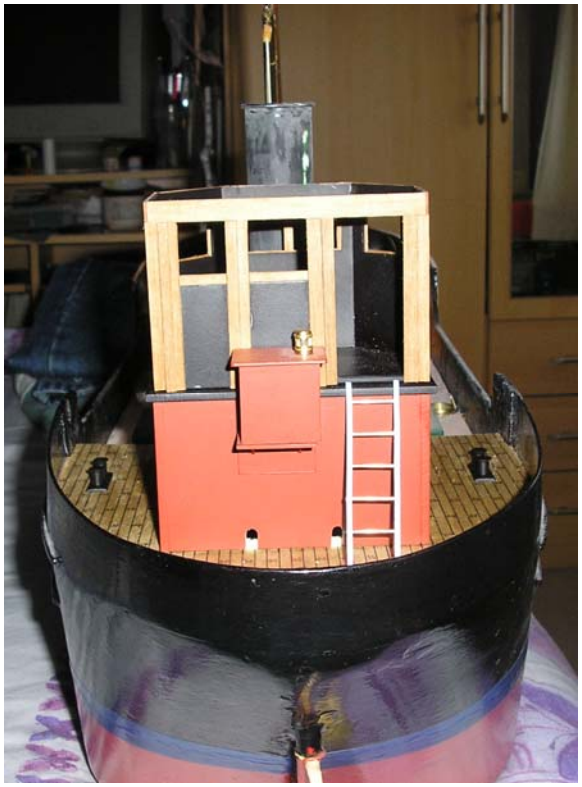
The funnel on the boat was too tall, (being a Steredent tube), so I cut it down and sleeved it with a slotted piece of plastic pipe to get a good fit. With these glued together a bit of filling and sanding was required. Once this was done, the top was sprayed dark green and once it had dried, was masked up and sprayed black, leaving two green rings around the funnel once the tape was removed.

With the wheelhouse planked, the next job was to fit out the interior. The steering gear was scratch built from some old plastic gears and a wooden ships wheel from Mantua Models. The compass, voice pipe and throttle control were also scratch built from odds and ends and sprayed a brass colour. I also thought it would be good to have a light on the bridge, so a plastic deck lamp from S.H.G was purchased. The lens was removed and a slot was cut out in the back to fit a yellow grain of wheat bulb. The interior of the lamp was painted silver and the outside a brass colour and the lens replaced.

I had noticed at this point that the fore and aft decks were looking shabby, so I used some card to make templates and then cut some ply to fit. I then used a very fine tip black pen, to line the decks to give the effects of planking. A set of steps, were also required for the bridge and this was made from plastic strip and copper wire. When fitted, the engine room sides were sprayed in red primer with black used on the roof. With the bridge and engine room assembled, I scratch built some navigation light housings using plastic sheet, grain of wheat bulbs and some billings fittings that I had salvaged from the old structure. A stern light was also made and another bulb fitted in the engine house.

With the wiring secured and checked, the bridge windows were made and fitted. The rear deck looked fine but the fore deck with its rather weedy winch did not. This was solved with a white metal kit, steam windlass from Mobile Marine Models. This was assembled, painted black and given a worn look by dry brushing it with a light grey. The final result looks quite pleasing and can be seen chugging about the lake many a weekend.





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