



# BASINGSTOKE MODEL BOAT CLUB NEWSLETTER

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## **DECEMBER 2013**

Ho Ho Ho – Christmas is just around the corner and here we are in December and it is time for your BMBC Newsletter – Just like your Christmas presents, I bet you couldn't wait for it to arrive on your doorstep.

It doesn't seem so long ago that it was summer/autumn and the weather was conducive to good sailing and that in turn led to a good turnout of Club members visiting the pond on our sailing days. I can even remember our Gordon sitting in the shade when it was too hot for him out in the sun. Oh how different it is now – I don't mind the cold because you can always wrap up and put another layer on but it is the wet/dampness that gets to us all.

Now to kick it off, in previous issues I seem to always explain that we have been away on our holidays and yes again I, as many of you know, we were away for all of September on another trip to our favourite France. No, we are not 'loaded' but we do like to travel while we can and do it on the cheap by buying the cheapest ferry tickets a year in advance and we use camping sites that are much cheaper out of the main season, some of which are only about £10 a night including an electric hook-up to our motorhome. However, for this holiday there were no great ships or French models (and I do mean model boats, not the other kind!) to be found this time around or to discuss with you except for the DFDS Ferry we travelled on and the port of Dover that was the start of our journey to Calais and beyond.

Now sit back ladies and gentlemen because it's time for a little potted nautical history lesson.

The Port of Dover in the county of Kent is the gateway to the continent for freight traffic to and from Europe and for business people and tourists both leaving and coming to our Fair Isle, but what do we actually know about its 'recent' history ?

Originally, crossing the English Channel by sailing ship was usually at the mercy of tides and weather (nothing changed there then !). Until the late 19th century, landing on shore was a big problem - harbours on both sides of the channel were shallow and not protected against storms. Ships usually had to wait offshore at the ports until the tide was high enough to enter or else they had to ferry goods and passengers to their destination across the low water beaches in small rowing boats.

The new age of cross channel sea travel arrived with a pioneer vessel; the British-built paddle steamer 'Rob Roy'. She completed her first channel crossing between Dover and Calais on 10th June 1821 and she was able to make the journey across the Straits of Dover in around three hours. The steamboat was bought by the French Postal Administration, renamed 'Henri IV', and put into regular passenger service a year later. It proved an extremely fast and reliable service and in 1822, a Dover company purchased two paddle steamers to carry Post Office mail and passengers across the English Channel. These were very small boats compared to today's ferries and were about 80ft long and 15ft wide. These paddle steamers had wooden hulls, a very small engine of 30hp and weighed about 100 tons.

Around the 1840s most ships were still powered by sail and the paddle steamers still kept masts and sails in case their engines broke down. During the 1840s long distance railways were built and brought more passenger traffic to the channel ports. This is when the French port of Boulogne began to rival Calais and to develop their ferry trade. The English South Eastern Railway company preferred the Boulogne-Folkestone route as an alternative to Calais-Dover mainly because of problems with Dover harbour. They were able to purchase and develop the port of Folkestone (only a few miles from Dover), from where they operated a fleet of steamships with connecting train services between London and Paris. This service was initially aimed at the wealthier traveller. An advantage of these small steam ferries was that they could usually make a fast crossing whatever the direction of the wind.

Towards the end of the 19th century, better deep-water harbours were built on both sides of the channel. The Admiralty Pier was Dover's first deep-water berth and following its construction in 1850, ferries could then land their passengers at any state of the tide without having to pass the shallow inner harbour entrance.

Thoughts of the relatively 'new' Port of Dover began in the late 1800's. The British Admiralty was looking for a strategic location for a new naval harbour and in 1895 after decades of deliberation; the Admiralty decided it would be useful to build a large deep-water anchorage and naval base at Dover. This new harbour was to help in the future defence of the South east coast.

The new harbour was completed in 1909 however; new foreign armaments in the form of torpedoes and long range guns had been developed. It was then considered that Dover was both too vulnerable and too near the Continent to risk being the base for the new and expensive Grand Fleet of "Dreadnought" battleships, that were to be berthed there. These very large ships being about 160 metres in length and with a displacement of 18,000 tons.

This meant that the new and hugely expensive outer harbour of Dover was now, from a British Navy perspective, redundant and thus became the property of Dover Harbour Board.

On 28th June 1928 the car ferry service was born when Captain Stuart Townsend chartered the 386-ton coastal collier *Artificer* and launched a new car-carrying cross-Channel service between Dover and Calais. His *Artificer* began ferrying cars as well as passengers between

Dover and Calais and some 2,000 vehicles were carried that year. It was, by today's standards a very primitive affair, where a maximum of fifteen cars were winched on board with a crane. However, it proved a huge success and newer vessels with greater capacities were quickly sought. The most notable of these was the Forde, which contained three lounges and three private cabins and could transport 168 passengers and 30 cars. In 1930, its debut year, it transported a total of 4,600 cars.

The Second World War interrupted the development of the car ferry port and it was another 20 years before the familiar 'drive-on drive-off' ferry terminals/ships were introduced at Dover and Calais. In the 1950's the new berths at Dover were expected to handle 10,000 motor vehicles per year and in 1953, the newly opened Eastern Docks coped with approximately 110,000 cars, coaches and motorcycles. Demand quickly exceeded estimates such that from 1 January to 30 November 1954 no fewer than almost 147,000 vehicles passed through the port.

Moving on to the 21<sup>st</sup> century; today, the number of cars/motorcycles and coach traffic transported on the short-sea routes between England and France is expected to increase from the huge 2012 figure of 2.8 million plus 3.4 million freight vehicles – that is a unbelievable amount of traffic. However, you only have to see the number of lorries and other vehicles that are stacked up daily at the ports of Calais and Dunkerque to understand how true these increasing figures are today. The ports of both Dover and Calais are presently undertaking massive construction improvements in berthing and vehicle storage capacity to enable them to handle the predicted ever increasing volume of traffic. Despite the advent of the Channel Tunnel and its speed of travel and ability to operate in any weather conditions, the cross channel ferries on the short sea routes survive and prosper.

### **A Channel Ferry as it was in the 1960's**



***Free Enterprise I – 1966 Roll On Ferry belonging to Townsend Bros Ferries and operated on the Dover to Calais channel crossing. 96 metres in length. 120 cars on 2 decks and 6 freight vehicles***

## As it is today



***Modern ferries like this, albeit not the largest, ply the English Channel or, as the French would call it, La Manche every day of the year. This ship has a capacity of about 600 cars or 120 freight vehicles.***

Now, who has a model ferry hiding away or is going to build one? I would love to see one down at the pond.

## News:

### Annual Membership fees Due

In previous Newsletters I reminded all our members that the annual membership fees were due on the 1st April. The Club year runs from the 1st April to 31st March each year. As stated previously we have again held the membership at £10 again this year, £5 for juniors - under 16 years of age.

At the beginning of our year we had a membership 'on the books' of 49, of which only 40 had paid their fees by October for this current year. Despite reminders for subscriptions from those members who have not paid, nothing has been forthcoming. I have spoken to our Chairman and we have agreed that those members who have not paid will no longer be included in the membership of our Club. On the bright side we have had 7 new members join us this year and our current paid membership now stands at 44.

If there are any former members who would still like to remain as part of the BMBC then please hand your membership money over to either myself or our Chairman, Jack Sharp, putting it in an envelope with your name on the outside, or post a cheque to me, made payable to **Basingstoke Model Boat Club** at the following address:-

**Alan Spooner**  
**Hathaway, Stratford Road,**  
**Ash Vale, Hants GU12 5PT**

We hope that you all will continue to support the club in the year ahead and enjoy the benefits of a friendly and expanding membership, complimentary Public Indemnity Insurance and use of the best model boat pond in the area !

New members are most welcome – if you have a friend that may be interested in model boating or joining the club then please let them know all about us, or tell them to have a look at our website to see for themselves - [www.basingstokembc.co.uk](http://www.basingstokembc.co.uk)

## New Members

On the subject of **new members** we continue to have new membership enquiries which is good news and this time around we must give a warm welcome to Ray Cross, Ted Hill and Paul Mott who have become members and now sail with us. Thank you for joining our Club.

## Liaison with Basingstoke and Deane Council

Katy Hooper, the Community Development Officer for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, has let me know that our Club now has a mention on the “Welcome to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council” website which is good news and keeps our profile on the ‘map’. She informed me in late August this year that both Eastrop Park (our great sailing venue) and The War Memorial Park were mystery shopped by the Green Flag Awards Team and both parks again received a Green Flag Award for 2013-2014 for their high standards. She said that with this great news and in order to celebrate this award they wanted to invite the Basingstoke Model Boat Club to a flag raising photo-shoot with the local rag ‘The Gazette’ at **The War Memorial Park**.



Our members, website editor Andy Clark, and Joe Harwood went along with their boats to represent the Club – see them circled on the right

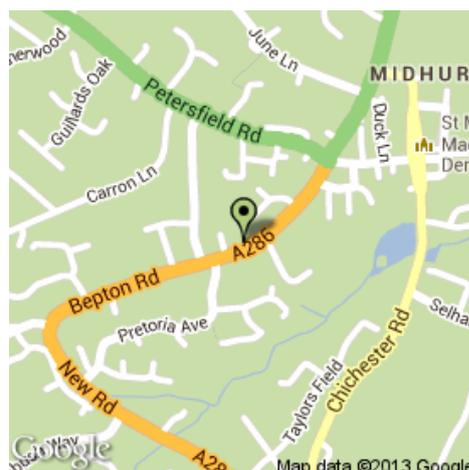
The Club has been asked by the organisers of the Old Basing Parish Carnival if a group of BMBC members would care to display their model boats and chat to the public on the day of the event. The Carnival is due to take place next year on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> of June and I have provisionally agreed with them that the Club will attend – so volunteers please ?

Earlier in the year I explained via the Newsletter that the Club was invited to attend a new model show at Sumners Pond near Horsham for June this year but due to the short notice of this event we had to decline. Apparently it was a great success and the organisers have asked us again if we are interested in attending next year. It is a weekend event with no charge to the Club and free camping/caravanning, if required. It takes place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> & Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 so if anyone is interested please let me know ASAP.

**Now for the big new and the most important. The Midhurst model engineering show is on again for next year but a little earlier than usual.** Many of us who attend this event enjoy this show, meeting up with fellow boat clubs and looking at all the other interesting engineering hobbies that are in attendance. The redevelopment of the complex at Midhurst is nearing completion but the new building is not ready yet so the old building is to house the exhibition before it is demolished. In order to work within the building programme the date for the show has had to be moved to **Sunday 05 January 2014**. I have confirmed that the Basingstoke Model Boat Club will be in attendance and I have already spoken to some of our members to support me in manning the Club stand. For those that have not been before it is a very good exhibition with all forms of hobby modelling and as usual many of our fellow model boat clubs will be there – definitely worth a visit. Doors open at 10.00 am to the public. For those that have offered to help man the stand we usually get to the Grange Centre at about 08.00hrs to set up our stand – it is a longish day for us because we usually stay until the end which is about 16.30 to 17.00 hours. For those just visiting entrance fee £5 per person, Seniors £4 or £10 per family. In 2015 the event will be held in the new centre.

For those that want to go to this excellent exhibition further details are on the Grange Leisure Centre Website and those that have not been before the address is :-

**The Grange Leisure Centre  
Bepton Road  
Midhurst  
West Sussex, GU29 9HD**



### **Alan's mutterings**

To those who complimented me on the last issue of the Newsletter, I give you an embarrassed thank you. I have resorted to trying to bring you something nautical in this issue but again this is me writing about my experiences but where are my budding writers who may be willing to send me an article or news for future publications ? If I can dredge up (there goes another pun) something to write about – so can you !!

Gordon and Gill are back again regularly attending the pond but this time they have an addition to their family (no not that !) – their lovely little Rosie the Westie who can melt your heart. It is great that Gordon and Gill have given her a loving home and I know from talking to them both that they love her to bits.

Gordon has been taking his new yacht 'Fairwind III' to the pond and he even trusted me to have a sail of her a few weeks ago and I can say that she sails very well. I think we have about 5 Fairwind yachts in the Club now, so they are quite popular. You can buy one for about £300 including radio control from many outlets.

Did you know that the Fairwind yacht is an actual racing class in the American Model Yacht Association (our equivalent of the MYA )?

### **SPECIFICATIONS**

Length 914m  
Width 230m  
Height 1,580m  
Weight 4,000G Approx  
Sail Area 38.1DM  
R.C System **27mhz** 2 Channel  
2 servo installed (including 1 sail servo)  
Foldable Wooden Boat Stand

For more than 20 years the FAIRWIND has provided an impeccable R/C yachting experience for so many owners. The popularity of this famous yacht is set to continue with the latest enhancements including a high-precision FRP hull for even better performance. With its imposing size and realistic scale form, the FAIRWIND sits proudly in any room as a magnificent interior display, and even more so with the superior quality finish of the new FRP hull. Excellent on-water performance recreates the magic of true sailing for outdoor fun as well as competition.

This Readysset includes everything needed for sailing, just add batteries to the R/C system and join the regatta. Enjoy picking wind shifts and discover the spirit of the sea that only a real R/C yacht like the FAIRWIND III can.



Our Chairman Jack has not been so mobile of late as he has had problems with his leg. He is getting about but is not as active as he would like and dependant on how he feels on the day and how well his treatment is going may not be down the pond so often – don't worry he will bounce back and he has already confirmed to me that he will be attending the Midhurst Show with us. We wish you well Jack and we all look forward to you getting back to fitness soon.



As I said before, Christmas is upon us so what would you like Father Christmas to bring you in his sack ? Keep it clean you lot - from a modellers perspective only !!

### **How about these for starters?**

A few weeks ago I purchased a sound unit for my steam tug 'Alte Liebe' from a company called **Technobots**. I bought their Combo version and it is a micro controller with some clever programming, and has Diesel, Petrol and Steam sounds all in a single unit. Couple it with an 8 ohm 50mm diameter speaker and it sounds really good. It is designed to be used with any standard radio control system and the unit is easily installed by removing the ESC lead from your receiver and plugging in a lead from the sound unit in its place. The unit costs about £36 pounds and add a speaker for about another £3 – so not bad value and you can swap it between your boats. **Look for them on <http://www.technobotsonline.com/>**

**Model Boat magazine subscription** – A great magazine and they are doing an excellent deal at the moment (December Issue) with 13 issues delivered to your door for £45 and no need to sign up for direct debit (if you want direct debit you can get it for £41) and you get a free Planet T5 Transmitter (2.4GHz) for your troubles – note that it is only a transmitter and you will have to buy your own receivers. But this is still excellent value – a good read for the year plus the transmitter for 'free'.

**Marine Modelling International Subscription** - It is full of feature articles covering kit reviews, scratch built specialist models and reports from major maritime-related shows from around the world. Regular articles on: electronics, scale model building, racing yachts, plastic kits, waterline models, fast electric racing and internal combustion-powered models, in fact they try to cover anything that floats. They are doing a special offer at the moment UK Subscription **12 issues for £38.95** (normal price £49.80).

**For details look on <http://www.trapletshop.com/gb/p/12899/marine-modelling-international-subscription-renewal>**

**Spektrum DX6i DSMX (Mode2) Transmitter**. This is a 6-Channel transmitter that is fully programmable and features a ten model memory it can store each models unique settings, and as they are saved with a multi-character name, accessing them when out sailing is very easy. The cheapest price I have found is **Kings Lyn Models retailing at £79.90** but receivers are extra. One of our members, Brian Osborne, has one and he has set it up for each of his boats / yachts. I believe you can buy the Orange Rx R615 compatible receiver for about £10 on certain model accessories websites plus of course on Ebay for that price or lower including postage – not bad. **Look on <http://www.kingslynnmodelshop.co.uk/>**

I must close now as Christmas is around the corner and I need a rest from all this work!

In this newsletter there are **3471** words of wisdom or even more rubbish which goes to prove that you are now getting even more for your money and all I have left to say is that on behalf of the Basingstoke Model Boat Club and myself I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year (for us pensioners that would be something !!) **Ta,Ta, for now.**

**Newsletter by Alan Spooner – Secretary / Treasurer Basingstoke Model Boat Club**